

CHANGING EDUCATION IMPERATIVE: ONLINE LEARNING A CATALYST TO CREATE EFFECTIVE METHOD OF EDUCATING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Many Institutions offer distance education courses and programs to address the diverse educational needs of students and to stay current with advancing technology. Students were apprehensive many indicated they were interested in taking distance education courses. Six recommendations informed by interpretation of students' responses and the literature, are offered to assist institutions who want to offer distance education as part of their educational strategy. The teaching and learning environment is embracing a number of innovations and some of these involve the use of technology through blended learning. This innovative pedagogical approach has been embraced rapidly though it goes through a process. The introduction of blended learning (combination of face-to-face and online teaching and learning) initiatives is part of these innovations but its uptake, especially in the developing world faces challenges for it to be an effective innovation in teaching and learning. Blended learning effectiveness has quite a number of underlying factors that pose challenges. This paper investigates the effectiveness of a blended learning environment through analyzing the relationship between student characteristics/background, design features and learning outcomes. This article focuses on educational technology as applied in the context of programs and institutions that offer completely distance education courses. All education in the 21st century is digital education in that the use of networking, text and image creation and editing and search and retrieval of information punctuates the life of almost every teacher and student. With this sudden shift away from the classroom in many parts of the globe, some are wondering whether the adoption of online learning will continue to persist post-pandemic, and how such a shift would impact the worldwide education market. Though online education has always been embraced by academics as a supporting tool, switching over completely to the online mode of learning has raised some serious concerns pertaining to its efficacy and the reluctance of learners in embracing it as a substitute of the regular mode of learning.

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