Using Ict to Create Effective Teaching-Learning Partnerships

Abstract

FCT has tremendous potentials for ensuring effective teaching-learning partnership. The paper examines the new roles and responsibilities both for teacher's and learners in forging appropriate teaching-learning relationships through ICT It makes a pointed reference to some innovative learning environments in this regard and the barriers which need to be addressed.

Keywords: Please add some keywords

Introduction

There is a growing trend in education across all sectors to move from a focus on teaching to that of learning. Evidence of this trend is reflected in many aspects of emerging educational reforms including:

1. Moves in many countries to outcomes-based curricula;
2. Emerging use of information and communication technology as an instructional aid; and
3. The development and increased use of student-centered learning environments.

Teacher education sector has not been spared from these trends and strategic plans and policies have been developed or are being developed to ensure that teacher education curricula, especially for the University level, reflect the mainstream. Various factors that are currently shaping and forming the nature and style of teaching at higher education level include public sector reforms, globalization of the economy, privatization and liberalization.

Many institutes of higher education such as universities or colleges of education that have been predominantly funded by operating grants from government are now seeing increasing moves by government to remove much of the cost of higher education from the public purse. Increasingly, a significant component of university/college budgets is now being derived from other sources such as student fees, commercial courses and external consultancies.

The need of the day is to create partnership in the learning process itself, that is, between teachers and learners. Teacher education is criticised often as too content-oriented, providing knowledge, which is narrow and limited. There has been no shortage of advice and guidance on what effective teaching entails. Some critical features of effective teaching and learning suggested by Ramsden (1992) are:

1. Clear learning goals;
2. Appropriate assessment tasks and strategies;
3. Appropriate work-loads; and
4. Emphasis on learner independence.
5. ICT has great potential for creating effective teaching-learning partnership.

Review of Literature

According to Daniels (2002) ICTs have become within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society. Many countries now regard understanding ICT and mastering the basic skills and concepts of ICT as part of the core of education, alongside reading, writing and numeracy. However, there appears to be a misconception that ICTs generally refers to 'computers and computing related activities'. This is fortunately not the case, although computers and their application play a significant role in modern information management, other technologies and/or systems also comprise of the phenomenon that is commonly regarded as ICTs.Pelgrum and Law (2003) state that near the end of the 1980s, the term 'computers' was replaced by 'IT' (information technology) signifying a shift of focus from computing technology to the

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capacity to store and retrieve information. This was followed by the introduction of the term 'ICT' (information and communication technology) around 1992, when e-mail started to become available to the general public (Pelgrum, W.J., Law, N., 2003). According to a United Nations report (1999) ICTs cover Internet service provision, telecommunications equipment and services, information technology equipment and services, media and broadcasting, libraries and documentation centres, commercial information providers, network-based information services, and other related information and communication activities. According to UNESCO (2002) information and communication technology (ICT) may be regarded as the combination of 'Informatics technology' with other related technology, specifically communication technology. The various kinds of ICT products available and having relevance to education, such as teleconferencing, email, audio conferencing, television lessons, radio broadcasts, interactive radio counselling, interactive voice response system, audiocassettes and CD ROMs etc have been used in education for different purposes (Sharma, 2003; Sanyal, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sharma, 2007)..

Aim of the Study………………. Write here

Teaching-Learning Partnership: New Roles and Responsibilities both for Teachers and Learners

In many instances, teachers implementing new technologies will hear few words of disquiet from learners. Learners usually accept quite willingly actions of their teachers if they see them as contributing to the quality of their programmes. However, sometimes difficulties can occur, especially when expectations and perceptions of teachers and students differ and also when requirements of technologies seem to set barriers to students' learning. One strategy that enables common ground to be created and maintained between teachers and learners is to ensure that both the parties view teaching and learning as a partnership.

Meaningful partnership enables students to have some choices in the form of learning environments in which they engage. Naturally, the choices made by the students may impinge on the scope and extent of their learning, but this is where good teaching should come into play. Effective teachers are likely to encourage and motivate their learners to move to the more effective forms of learning activity, despite the difficulty and inconvenience that may be incurred. Good teachers can help to inspire intellectual curiosity in their students, which will allow them to value learning. Again, this will occur more effectively when the relationship is a partnership of each party accepting the rights and responsibilities of the other (Oliver 2000).

Opportunities Provided by ICT

ICT could be a powerful tool in providing learning environments where teachers and learners are partners, and where learners have scope and prospect for choice in the nature and form of their learning. ICT-supported learning environments offer many opportunities both for teachers and learners including:

1. Provision of improved access to education;
2. Flexible modes of content presentation and delivery;
3. Presentation of content and information in authentic contexts;
4. Provision of a myriad of information sources offering many wide and diverse perspectives on content and information;
5. Interactive and engaging learning settings;
6. Communicative elements to support the independent learner;
7. Collaboration, communication and co-operation between learners for active and engaging learning environments;
8. Support for customized educational programmes to meet the needs of individual learners;
9. Place, time and independence for learning; and
10. Provision of tools that can enhance students' cognitive powers and processes.

The value of using ICT in forming and sustaining learning partnership is based on its capability in providing for many different types of learning activities, and its capacity to sustain the forms of communication needed to maintain the partnership. There is an emerging pattern in higher education for new technologies to be used in the delivery of student-centered courses and programmes. These moves must include active support for learning partnership. Already, the use of communicative capabilities of technology both in synchronous (e.g. chat) and asynchronous (e.g. e-mail and bulletin boards) modes provides means for communication.

Some Innovative Learning Environments

In recent years, there have been a proliferation .of innovative learning environments and learning experiences that learners may come across during their life in an institution. They are:

1. In case of learning, develop in the learner's knowledge and understanding of content through interactions and joint activities with other learners (Freeman 1997).
2. In case of student-centered modes of teaching where the teacher plays a facilitating role supporting learner autonomy and self-regulation (Hannafin and Land 1997).
3. Constructive environments provide students with active and engaging learning experiences which enable them to construct personal understanding of the content (Candy 1991)
4. In case of problem-based learning, learning occurs through a systematic inquiry of tasks and problems with 'solution spaces' within the academic context (Raidal, 1997).
5. In case of situated learning, learners are exposed to the content in realistic and authentic settings and the learning activities reflect the way in which the knowledge is intended to be used in real life (Herrington and Oliver, 1997).

Remarking An Analisation

These innovative learning environments transform the learner from a traditional passive mode to one which is more active and self-regulated, involving high degrees of reflection, personal judgments and heightened responsibilities for one's own learning and academic progress. Several educationists, however, suggest the need to create learning environments that are flexible in their approaches and that cater more fully to the various needs of individual learners. Undoubtedly, these active forms of environment are able to provide substantially enhanced forms of learning and prospects of making meaningful use of the learnt knowledge. The challenge for teacher educators is the exploration of the opportunities within and across all teaching domains and a meaningful reflection on the outcomes achieved in relation to the costs incurred, ultimately leading towards an effective teaching-learning partnership.

Barriers

Some barriers need to be dealt with while implementing teaching-learning partnerships through IeT. Some examples are as given below:

1. Difficulty in accessing servers that appears to be down or overloaded;
2. Problems with pages requiring unexpected plugs-in and helpers;
3. Long download times caused by bottlenecks in external systems;
4. Frequent instability of software and systems;
5. Lack of familiarity and experience with the *www* and appropriate search engines not only on the part of learners but also the teachers;
6. More burdens and responsibilities are placed on the learners as the learning activities require higher levels of cognitive engagement and processing than others;
7. Not all learners are willing participants in changed learning environments, so sometimes; lot of convincing is required by the teacher;

Some learners hold that the best teaching takes place in a face-to-face mode through direct instruction. Student-centered learning can be uncomfortable for these students because they feel that it generates distance between themselves and the teacher; and Many teachers are reluctant to take up the challenge to use the new online- media. Some have deep-rooted concerns about changes in work practices, and others see a huge gap between the rhetoric surrounding technology and the reality of educational settings, while others boldly embrace new media with seemingly little pedagogical concern.

Conclusion

Evidence suggests that the use of ICT in teaching-learning can enhance the quality of learning, make learners more independent and capable of sustaining their own lifelong learning. But, student-centered learning can be a difficult process for some learners. It aims at promoting understanding and deep learning as against shallow or surface learning that usually occurs in the conventional mode. The onus is placed on the student to explore and inquire, to reflect and articulate, to collaborate and co-operate in active

tasks requiring enhanced degrees of initiative, interest, motivation, and cognitive and physical efforts. Teaching-learning partnership through ICT holds strong and exciting prospects for ensuring that the needs and interests both of students and teachers are met.

So, educators need to take lead in the design, development and effective use of ICT to convey specific content to any learner, no matter the location or goal of study.

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