Challenges and Successes: A Teacher’s Reflection on E-Learning Exertion

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Abstract. Electronic-learning (E-learning) has been extensively utilized and gaining more impact in higher education. Some studies have compared face-to-face teaching to online learning to decide which of the design provides the highest learning outcome and create the most students’ satisfaction. This paper references some of the research work on the use of e-learning in higher education. I would like to share my 12 months teaching experience utilizing e-learning in my day to day teaching activities, from the challenges faced from the beginning of the e-learning utilization to the successes that I got from that e-learning that I got.

Challenges did appear in the first month of the e-learning exertion. As can be expected there are many challenges faced by academics regarding the use and success of e-learning in an academic environment. Further, it can be divided into five categories: learning styles and culture, pedagogical e-learning, technology, technical training, and time management challenges.

1. Introduction

While the learning process and the use of educational computers has undergone a great development, the concept of e-Learning starts to emerge. The term e-Learning spreads as a new approach in education where it emphasizes on its flexibility in learning without enclosed to a certain place and to provide educational content to the students better and efficiently (1). E-Learning is a system that aids online learning, processes, stores and distributes teaching materials and supports administrations and communication in the context of teaching and learning (2).

The use of e-learning tools and systems in higher education is becoming increasingly popular due to its advantages over traditional learning. The use of e-Learning permits for more effective learning, better content retention through personalized learning, quick access to information, better collaboration between students and teachers, and effective interaction between a teacher and a teacher; thus decreasing costs and disadvantages in gathering students and teacher at the same time in the same place and improve the efficiency and quality of the education system (2). Haythornthwaite (3) indicated that the term e-Learning has been linked to the implementation of institutional learning management systems or LMS, where LMS is an integrated tool for exciting, meaningful and active learning experiences. Through the LMS, it is possible to upload a series of learning activities created in some authoring software into the learning modules and track students’ progress including training, evaluating, and results (2).

A book from Epignosis (4) mentioned some benefits of e-Learning are: The first is no boundaries, no restrictions, as it facilitates learning without having to organize when and where to do face-to-face class. The second is it is more fun because it enhances not only the engagement factor but also the kind of course material. The last one is cost-effective because there is no need to constantly get new editions like books.

Despite its potential in aiding learners with its flexibility, the use of e-Learning still faced many challenges. Many pieces of research mentioned the challenge in e-Learning. There are five categories of challenges (5). They are learning styles and culture, pedagogical e-learning, technology, technical training, and time management challenges. Learning style and culture challenges are dealing with cultural learning differences where it has an impact on learning outcomes as students from
different cultures have different skills to work with e-learning technology. Pedagogical e-learning challenge is dealing with the best way to achieve learning; it is not about uploading information to a website and expecting students to learn it, but a learning process that institutions should consider extremely important. Technology challenge is the problem with the system or software, such as errors, features that do not work properly while in the learning process. The last one is time management challenges when the learning class runs for 12 hours a day, the teacher will have difficulty in managing their time as the students can ask about the material no matter what the time is.

As reported by Felea et al. (2), the challenges encountered in integrating the e-Learning systems are insufficient infrastructure, the students' different levels of technical skills and shortage of resources to provide the necessary equipment or teachers' training. Another challenge is the readiness by people related to the use of e-Learning. For students' readiness, Rasouli et al. (6) mentioned five factors that affecting students in dealing with e-Learning: communication and participatory skills, meta-cognitive skills, access level, and skill to work with computer and the internet, cognitive skills, and self-direction. Then, for the teachers (as believed by Tyilo, (7)), they may feel that integrating of technology is too much of work, considering the time and effort required to prepare materials, teaching methods or matching schedules, even the availability of the software. Tyilo also mentioned the challenge faced by the staffs which are the absence of Internet access, networks problems, outdated hardware, software upgrades, and inadequate technical support (7).

From those experts above, it can be seen that there are many benefits of e-learning especially as the technology still developing rapidly, the need for flexibility is even more prominent in this fast world. It helps students a lot and caters to their needs, even engage them even more in learning. Many researchers believed that e-Learning as a new way of teaching-learning with interesting possibilities. However, it can't be ignored that many people, teachers especially, still don't utilize this in the teaching and learning process. With the issues that have been mentioned above, many people still think that e-Learning is a hassle or still have no idea how to practice e-Learning. Also, some technical difficulties still present in the implementation.

Yet, with all of the demand and the trends that keep growing, the widespread of computer or smartphone ownership, and the increase of internet mobile speed, as quoted from Epignosis (4), “E-learning is here to stay.” Accordingly, I would like to share my 12 months of teaching experience utilizing e-learning in my day to day teaching activities, from the challenges faced from the beginning of the e-learning utilization to the successes that I got from that e-learning that I got.

2. Methods
The approach employed in this study was a qualitative and interpretive approach, which relies as much as possible on the teacher’s view of the situation being observed. I was the primary participant in the research and my interpretation of my teaching experience was being the core thought in this study (8). Since this study utilized a narrative study, I drawn my teaching experience exerted the e-learning through the electronic journal provided in the e-learning programs.

Reflection on teaching practice can be used as a tool for professional development or to gain insights into particular teaching contexts (9). In this study, my experience using the e-learning program during my last one-year teaching experience helped me to negotiate the flow of thoughts through all the challenges and successes I got during the implementation of the e-learning program to all the courses I taught.

The present study is situated in my 12 months of teaching experience utilizing e-learning in my daily teaching activities. At the beginning of every semester, every teacher must upload the teaching devices into the teacher's e-learning account. The teaching devices consist of the syllabus, course contract, and lesson plan. Besides, the teacher is supposed to upload the teaching materials and the course texts used during the teaching and learning activities. There are many features provided in the e-learning platform. Yes, it is a huge deal of challenges for the teacher to master all the features, however, it would turn to be a big success if the teacher could master and implement it. I write all my teaching journals for all my courses in the e-learning and that e-learning recorded my teaching activities.
3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Result of the Study

The utilization of e-learning in the teacher's teaching activities was begun a couple of months before this study begins. However, the first two semesters were used as the introductory semester for the implementation of e-learning in teaching and learning activities. Since then, I used to learn how to incorporate my teaching activities through the use of an e-learning program. Challenges did appear in the first month of the e-learning exertion. As can be expected there are many challenges faced by academics regarding the use and success of e-learning in an academic environment. Further, it can be divided into five categories: learning styles and culture, pedagogical e-learning, technology, technical training, and time management challenges (5).

3.1.1 Learning Styles and Culture

Everyone has their learning style. So do the students. I faced difficulties by the time I have to construct the teaching materials on the e-learning programs. Some students are visual learners, which mean the students are easy to understand the materials being taught when the teacher provides the pictures during the teaching and learning activities. Some students are audio learners who grasp materials much better when the teacher explains the materials orally. Some other students are kinesthetic students who tend to have dynamic classes that require physical movement during the teaching and learning activities. The challenges related to students’ learning styles imply that the teacher should be able to accommodate all those different students' learning styles and cultures in designing the teaching and learning activities.

3.1.2 Pedagogical E-Learning

In pedagogy, teacher supposed to be able to provide the best way for students to learn. Further, teachers need to be able to define how students learn the teaching materials to achieve successful pedagogy. Thus, refer to that, the teacher would design and deliver the course materials accordingly, mentor the students appropriately so that students can master both skills and knowledge successfully.

3.1.3 Technology

Islam et al. (5) discussed that technical challenge refers to development issues such as the bugs, the speed, the errors, functions, and features not correctly working or do not work according to what academics require. There are various issues related to the technology used in e-learning. In this case, the most frequent problem related to technology in my study is about technical errors and slowness. It is crucial when those technological problems arise during the teaching and learning activities.

3.1.4 Technical Training

Training challenge refers to the training requirement that will enable academics to learn the e-learning features and functions correctly and to use them effectively (5). The e-learning training is needed to ensure that all teachers can utilize the e-learning correctly in everyday teaching activities.

3.1.5 Time Management Challenges

Time management challenges frequently happen in day to day teaching and learning activities. Teachers should sign up for the e-learning platform before the class begins. In every meeting of the course, there are only 50 minutes allocated for 1 credit for each course. In one meeting for 2 credits course, I have 100 minutes to teach in the classroom. In those 100 minutes, first, I have to connect my computer to the available classroom network. Then, I have to sign in to my e-learning account followed by writing my teaching journal there. These procedural steps should be finished before I start the class. Sometimes, technical problems occur and it does disturb the whole time management of that course.

3.2. Discussion

As an English lecturer at the University of Jember, I have implemented the utilization of e-learning in my day to day teaching activities since 12 months ago. Since then, I incorporated that technology to help me having better quality in conducting online teaching. Although I use e-learning in my every day's teaching, however, I still do the face-to-face teaching activities. In addition to having my teaching journal recorded in the e-learning platform, I made the best use of e-learning as a platform to share my teaching devices to my students. I share the course syllabus, the course contract, the lesson plan and the required and additional course text to my students there. Besides, I give the assignment and quizzes online. As stated previously, there are many challenges I faced regarding the use of e-learning in an academic environment. The challenges can be divided into five categories: learning...
styles and culture, pedagogical e-learning, technology, technical training, and time management challenges. By the time goes, the quality of e-learning technology is getting much better. The academic staffs show great cooperation in improving the quality of the e-learning platform. The frequency of the challenges appears decreases and at the same time, the successes of the e-learning exertion are getting much better.

4. Conclusions
Educational research and practice, demonstrate that different ways of integrating computer technology and the context in which computers are used have varied effects on students’ learning (10). Studies reveal there are several challenges arise in the teaching activities. They are divided into five categories: learning styles and culture, pedagogical e-learning, technology, technical training, and time management challenges. These challenges are crucial to concern in the e-learning implementation. During my 12 months of teaching experience utilizing the e-learning platform during the teaching and learning activities, those five challenges frequently appear. Each challenges related to one and another. In other words, one challenge could not be separated from another challenge. If one challenge appears, it would cause the rise of other challenges. Thus, academics should wisely concern the whole challenges to maximize the use of e-learning in the daily teaching and learning activities. All the academics in the University of Jember should keep the today’s good quality of the e-learning while at the same time improving the best support for the better improvement of the e-learning quality for the future outcome of the teaching and learning activities in the University of Jember.

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