**Roles and challenges of Teachers in effective instructional delivery of E-learning in Nigeria**

**By**

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***Abstract***

*Effective instructional delivery can only be achieved in a functional environment. This article examines the various roles of teachers and challenges they face in facilitating e-learning in Nigeria educational sector. Based on the review of related literature, it was gathered that e-teaching and learning plays a vital role in bridging the gap between learners that are within and outside the classroom environment. However, instructors and learners still face challenges ranging from erratic power outage, inadequate funding, inadequate skilled teachers, and poor attitude to change among others. This paper is of great relevance to teacher’s mind set and preparation towards the changing context in modern pedagogical practices in education. Based on this, recommendations were made accordingly.*

**Keywords:** Challenges, E-learning, effective, instructional delivery, Nigeria.

**Introduction**

E- Learning innovative technology is a new electronic device which existed with the advent of electricity, internet, computer and other digital Medias for the purpose of knowledge acquisition and delivery. E-learning is also commonly referred to as the intentional use of networked information and communications technology in teaching and learning which include terms such as: Online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, network and web based learning (Pushpanathan, 2012).

Many researchers believe that e-learning facilitates learning anytime and anywhere (Amzi, 2004, Gana, 2012, Kamba, 2009); improves retention, provides feedback and allows learners to customize learning materials (Okiki, 2012). Students and teachers get a better chance of reaching out to books and journals that are made available in the internet. A broader interaction is gotten from the outside world through interaction in the internet. However, these functions depend on the readiness of the implementers of the new media technology. In Nigeria, it is believed that most tertiary institutions are still struggling to adopt e-learning instructional delivery into their teaching and learning (Olaniyi, 2006). As knowledge is changing and transforming, it is expected that learners and teachers change with it in order to transform. Nevertheless, with the unprecedented explosion of students in Nigeria tertiary institutions, it becomes imperative to use e-learning which will reach out to many at a time and in different places.

            The growing interest in e-learning seems to have come from several directions. These according to Pushpanathan (2012) include organizations that have traditionally offered distance education programs either in a single, dual or mixed mode setting. This was an idea to curtail costs of in-house staff training activities and also making programs accessible via a range of distributed locations, including on campus, home and other community learning or resource centers (Pushpanathan, 2012). Growing numbers of teachers according to Pushpanathan are increasingly using information and communications technology to support their teaching. The contemporary student populations known as net generation are groomed to using information and communications technology. Pushpanathan believe that despite the level of interest in e-learning, it still has constraints and limitations such as lack of access to the necessary technology infrastructure, poor or insufficient technology infrastructure, high costs of infrastructure support and its maintenance, and inappropriate training of staff which may cause more damage than good to teachers, students and the learning experience. These observations made could be globally related or diversified in Nigeria context.

**Concept of effective instructional delivery**

Instructional delivery is a process of facilitating learning which is expected to bring about change in behaviour of the learner (Gray, 2006). Knowledge is acquired individually at varied interest, pace and ability and learners’ construct their time to suit their learning. This kind of learning from constructivist point of view fosters critical thinking and creates motivated and independent learners (Gray, 2006).

Effective instructional delivery systems according to UNESCO (2004) are those that use knowledge, skills, beliefs and background of each child to maintain high expectations for them. Schools with such operations are usually learner-centred. Educators in such schools use well-designed assessment tools to measure student learning, provide continuous feedback to learners, and also utilize data from their assessments to revise learning experiences. Such schools have strong leadership with clear vision for the school within the community or society. Teachers in these schools are believed to be highly qualified, which is reflected both in the content they teach and in their knowledge of relevant pedagogy (UNESCO**,** 2004). In other words, they know how to create a learner-centred environment and to engage students actively in the learning process. This could be done by integrating learners and teachers into the utilization of modern technologies which brings efficiency into instructional delivery in schools.

However, Meydayese (2010) argued that effectiveness of teacher’s instructional contents delivery lies greatly on the use of tangible teaching aids; where young people learn most readily about things that are directly accessible to their senses via visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. Research also showed that approximately a third of children’s population has a preferred learning style which is visual, a third is auditory and a third is kinaesthetic (Duckett & Tatarkowski, 2012). There are a number of reasons for the need of variety: different methods are appropriate for different areas of knowledge; students have different learning preferences i.e. some are more visual learners, some like working in groups, some prefer the written word etc. a monotonous diet of the same teaching style will cause even the most keen student to lost interest. With experience, they grow in their ability to understand abstract concepts, manipulate symbols, reason logically, and generalize. These skills develop slowly, and the dependence of most people on concrete examples of new ideas persists throughout life. Effective teaching and learning takes place when a ***variety*** of ***teaching strategies*** are provided in the classroom and when the emphasis is on gaining understanding rather than just right answers.

**Role of teachers in effecting e-learning**

Learning is seen as the process by which people acquire new skills or knowledge for the purpose of enhancing their performance (ELT NEWS, 2012). Invariably, learning is a change in behaviour that results from interaction with teacher and the environment. According to ELT NEWS (2012), effective learning is monitoring and reviewing whether approaches and strategies are proving effective for the particular goals and context one is dealing with at a specific time. Be it practical or theory it remains a process of getting and assimilating new experience for future achievements. The use of internet-based technologies improves quality of teaching and learning related activities. E-learning invariably reduces the burden of the teacher. Work can easily be edited if adjustment is needed. The instructor could take a holiday and work from any spot. It also increases independent learning. Learners can work at their own pace, which motivates learning and preserves the health of the instructor.

Teachers who know their subject matter thoroughly can be more effective and efficient at organizing the subject matter, connecting the subject with the students' previous knowledge, finding useful analogies and examples, presenting current thinking on the subject, and establishing appropriate emphases. Teachers' knowledge of the subject matter is essential to the implementation of important teaching tasks. Effective teachers set high standards for students regarding curriculum content, articulating clear goals and using appropriate instructional techniques; such as audiovisual presentations, discussions and inquiry, practice and application; use of appropriate questioning techniques among others. Tries innovative approaches and refines instructional strategies, to increase student learning confidence.Weimer (2009) however, contends that ***independence, control and active engagement* fosters good teaching.**  Good teachers create learning tasks appropriate to the student’s level of understanding. They also recognize the uniqueness of individual learners’ thereby promoting equity and appreciation of diversity among individuals anywhere at any time (Weimer, 2009).

The ability of teachers to communicate via the Internet, accessing and publishing information is very diverse (Pushpanathan, 2012). There are some who are pre-e-literate and others who utilise the Internet for regular school and classroom activity according to Pushpanathan, but not unusual to find teachers storing information so that it is web-accessible.

In many small group teaching situations, the role of the teacher is that of facilitator of learning: leading discussions, asking open-ended questions, guiding process and task, and enabling active participation of learners and engagement with ideas. Teachers therefore adopt a range of roles and skills to suit specific situations, often and during the same teaching session. Making the shift from teacher as expert to facilitator is sometimes seen as diminishing a teacher’s power and authority, but this should not be the case according to Pushpanathan,( 2012) because facilitating learning is empowering for both the learner and the teacher which frees the teacher from many of the burdens they might face being an expert (Pushpanathan, 2012).   
 Teles, Ashton, Roberts, & Tzoeva, (2001) identified four instructors roles in e-learning environment as - pedagogical, managerial, social, and technical. The pedagogical role according to them encompasses everything done to support the learning process of individual students or working groups. The following role behaviors fall clearly into the dimension of pedagogical functions: direct instruction; direct questioning; providing modeling or examples; giving advice or suggestions; fostering student reflection or self-awareness; pushing students to explore other sources of information; prompting students to explain or elaborate on their ideas; providing feedback or praise; cognitive task structuring; 'weaving' students’ contributions into a single summary in order to capture and re-focus students on the essence of ongoing or completed discussions.

The managerial role also refers to activities designed to make the course run smoothly at an administrative level (Teles et al., 2001). These management roles they believe fall into three categories: managing individual students; managing discussion and working groups; managing course functions. Without these managerial skills, there would be no efficiency and control in academic organization.

The social role is believed to be the impersonal, interpersonal and hyper personal interactions during activities in fulfilling instructional roles from virtual online classroom interaction (Teles et al., 2001). In one of their findings, it is believed that instructors spend the bulk of their managerial time coordinating the receipt of assignments.

In addition, a great deal of technical roles such as preparation and organizational maintenance occurs in an online course which is also not captured in the online conferences such as developing lesson plans and assignments, marking, meeting with teaching assistants, and other activities. The types of tutoring identified were:

- **Proactive tutoring**, where the tutor takes the lead by encouraging learners to take part in activities or study meetings in order to fire up their enthusiasm and get them back on track.

- **Reactive tutoring**, where the tutor waits for learners to contact them and answers their questions or deals with their problems as and when they occur.

**Challenges of teachers in facilitating e-learning in Nigeria**

In spite of the bright prospect of e-learning in the country, it is so worrisome that there are some hurdles militating against the effective use of the educational technology in Nigeria. Some of these obstacles as identified by Suleiman (2012) are:

* High cost of hardware such as bigger bandwidth and other internal gadgets like smart boards
* Less price competition and high import tariffs
* Transmission cost is also high
* Internet access is mainly through foreign ISPs due to unreliable local ISPs
* Dearth in skilled manpower for implementation and management
* Inadequate training of staff in institutions especially related to educational technology
* Poor condition of telecommunication infrastructure
* Low literacy level in computer technology among personnel
* Cost of acquiring and installation of the gadgets required for e-learning
* Ceaseless interruption of power supply all over
* Deficit in having well furnish/equipped e-learning centres
* Faithlessness/ trustworthiness.

Challenges such as: inadequate trained personnel to the use of ICT, lack of computers, broken down computers, lack of electricity, burglary and lack of internet or slow connectivity in most Nigerian higher institutions were also identified by Aduke (2008); while inequality to access of e-learning was also pointed out by Arikpo, Osofisan, & Usoro, ( 2009).

The World Bank (2009) summarily declared also that many Nigerian institutions are faced with challenges of inadequate ICT infrastructure, high cost of bandwidth access, lack of skilled manpower, inadequate training facilities, resistance to change from traditional pedagogical methods to more innovative, underfunding among others. In other countries, e-learning innovations are believed to have advanced so fast especially in Asian countries. However, in Nigeria, this setback in innovations has affected so many ways instructions are implemented. These challenges are really endemic and can only be resolved with a change in mind set, attitude, and sincerity in knowledge transfer.

**Conclusion**

In as much as e-teaching and learning has brought learning to our door steps, making life easier and enjoyable in a globalised world, it is also of vital importance to put every resources (human & material) in place for quality to be achieved in Nigeria. It is also imperative that teachers as curriculum implementers should be conversant with the existing innovations so that they can enhance quality teaching and learning in schools using electronic media. Effort should be made in securing the little technology at the countries disposal.

**Recommendations**

Four items Nigerian University education could learn from the experience of developed countries on e-learning were listed as: funding, electricity, awareness/training and motivation (Oye, Salleh, & Iahad, 2011). For e-learning to succeed in Nigeria according to Suleiman (2012), there is the need to build on another important pillar i.e. the existence of befitting infrastructure and some degree of viable connectivity.

Individuals that are well to do should continue to support the crusade of generous donation to university education in Nigeria. University administrators on their own part should also embark on awareness and training of staff on the use of electronic media in teaching and learning with motivation attached (Oye, Salleh, & Iahad, 2011). These would improve funding and enhance the level of literacy using e-media and proper monitoring of instruction.

Constant and poor voltage electricity supple need to be put in place for effective instruction at all times. Well trained and qualified electricians should be employed to do this risky task. This would reduce erratic power supple and maintain efficiency in teaching and learning in Nigeria schools.

Early introduction of youths and adults to e-learning and independent project training is necessary to avoid resistance to innovation when the time comes. This would also guide peoples mind set and attitude towards learning.

Powerful security system should be put in place to check theft of installed equipment which could sabotage the country’s effort to success in realizing globalization education.

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