



REVIEW OF RESEARCH

ISSN: 2249-894X

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.7631 (UIF)

UGC APPROVED JOURNAL NO. 48514

VOLUME - 8 | ISSUE - 9 | JUNE - 2019



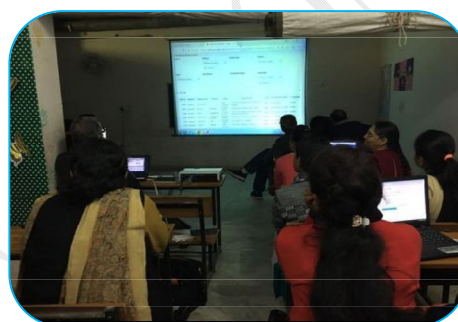
DIGITAL LEARNING AS A TOOL OF INNOVATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Dr. Dipak Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor, Ananda Chandra Training College, Nayabasti, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India.

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to analyse the need, role and significance of digital learning as a tool of innovation in teacher education programmes specifically in Indian context. It is the need of the hour to integrate the idea of digital learning in teacher education programmes. Teacher education programmes play a significant role in the education system of any country directly or indirectly. It shapes the destiny of an individual, a society as well as a nation generation after generation. Hence, it must be highly effective, creative and innovative to make a better India. The quality, effectiveness and productivity of any kind of teacher education programme can be enhanced, if it gets integrated with digital learning. Now learning is no longer restricted within the four walls of the classrooms. Technological advancements have given learners the ability to learn anywhere and everywhere. Digital learning has brought revolutionary changes in the world of education throughout the world. It gives opportunity to a learner to learn according to his or her own pace, place and path. It has changed the traditional ways of learning. It enhances the creativity, innovation and out of box thinking of learners. It helps in connecting people to share their ideas, thoughts and experiences beyond barriers and boundaries. It helps in exploring the unexplored, reaching the unreached and seeing the unseen.



KEYWORDS: digital learning, teacher education programme, education system, out of box thinking, innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental right of each and every individual. It influences each and every aspect of life as well as the personality. It plays a significant role in the development of a man, a society and a nation. Quality education is the need of the hour to make a better India. It is the duty of teachers and policy makers to provide quality education to every child for shaping the great future of a nation. In this

journey of quality education, teacher education programmes play a significant role directly or indirectly. And teacher education programmes can be made effective, creative and innovative, if these programmes are integrated with the platform of digital learning.

The innovative digital technology of modern world is giving chance to every individual to connect, communicate and collaborate irrespective of barriers and boundaries. This

situation has converted the world into a global village where people can share their ideas, thoughts and experiences. Digital technology has the potential to connect people in an effective, productive and innovative manner. It helps in building relationships, associating people and making partnerships. These kinds of bonding among the people facilitate the process of learning. History gets made, when great and ignited minds get connected. And this technology

has the potential to connect minds.

Modern lifestyle is intimately connected with digital technology. This connectivity affects the way we behave, the way we learn and the way we live together. Digital technology has opened the new channels of communication which plays a significant role in the process of learning. It is reshaping the dream, design and destination of learning. Innovative use of this technology enables a learner to connect with more content, peer and people more quickly and effectively. In the present era of globalisation learning is not confined to books. Learning is not confined to classrooms. Learning is not confined to schools, colleges and universities. The whole world has become a laboratory for an enquiring mind. Digital learning gives abundant opportunities to a learner to connect and interact globally and to get innovative ideas and diverse experiences. Therefore, it is advised that teacher education programmes should be integrated with the idea of digital learning to make these programmes more effective, innovative and collaborative.

CONCEPT OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Digital learning is the need of the hour. It is getting an integral part of modern education system. It can be defined as a web based learning which effectively makes use of the information technology to impart knowledge to the learners. It is facilitated by technology that gives learners some element of control over place, path and pace (Chauhan, 2007). It is accompanied by instructional practices that make effective, creative and innovative use of technology to enrich a learner's learning experiences. The essence of digital learning is connecting people. This connectivity leads to the exchange of knowledge, wisdom, ideas, skills and experiences worldwide. Technology has entered within the modern classrooms. And this technology makes the classrooms without walls through connecting learners and experts on common platforms globally.

Digital learning is the learning facilitated by technology that gives learners autonomy, convenience and flexibility to a great extent. It makes effective, creative and innovative use of technology (Maccoy, 2009). The digital environment is transforming the nature, pattern and design of learning. Digital learning provides abundant opportunities to reach and get connected more and more people. It does not confine a student to his classroom, but it takes him to the entire world where he is free to explore according to his needs, interests and desires. It creates a classroom without walls, a school without boundaries and a world without borders. It enables the learners to create possibilities of learning beyond the limits (Waxman, Lin, & Michko, 2003). Digital learning environment helps us to better equip with the knowledge, skills and innovation to succeed in the 21st century economy.

PLATFORMS OF DIGITAL LEARNING

There are a number of digital platforms which can be used as tools in the hands of a learner. YouTube is one of the most popular platforms of digital learning where a learner can watch educational videos in accordance to his own interests and convenience. Online databases, web based interactive learning, online courses etc. are popular platforms of digital learning (Higgins, Xiao, & Katsipataki, 2012). Digital learning is such a platform where a learner can share his or her ideas and experiences, interact with others freely, comment and criticize others' ideas and give constructive feedback. This platform of digital learning has emerged as a tool of innovation in the hands of learners of 21st century.

In the present scenario it is difficult to imagine a world without Google. Google has penetrated all the walks of modern lifestyle. In the field of education, Google and YouTube have emerged as vital digital platforms where people can share ideas, exchange knowledge and get connected with each other. According to net market share, Google is the world's most popular search engine. And YouTube is the second largest search engine. Every day people watch hundreds of millions of hours on YouTube and generate billions of views. Google and YouTube have connected huge number of people throughout the world (Waxman, Lin, & Michko, 2003). Here a learner can comment, criticise and give his or her feedback on any digital content. These technological platforms basically help in sharing ideas, thoughts and experiences. Learning is being shaped by these technological advancements in the present era of globalisation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DIGITAL LEARNING

Digital learning is the product of technological advancements. Since technology is penetrating every field, modern education system is getting integrated with technology. The pattern of education, economics and entertainment is getting altered drastically because of this innovative technology (Chauhan, 2007). Learning, unlearning and relearning have become the need of the hour. Digital learning has emerged as a tool of innovation as well as a platform where a learner can interact with the whole world. It is giving opportunity to each and every learner to learn in accordance with his or her convenience, to interact with others and to share his or her own ideas, thoughts and experiences with the entire world. The platform of digital learning links the people globally. Linking people leads to diffusion of ideas, sharing of experiences and exchange of thoughts. (Higgins, Xiao, & Katsipataki, 2012). This further leads to learning and consequently leading. Technology acts as an equalizing force as well in bringing equality of learning opportunities and connecting individuals irrespective of caste, creed and colour. The barriers of region and religion are being broken through technology.

Digital learning helps the learners to get connected with the experts, analysts and thinkers worldwide. It makes the process of learning interesting, innovative and imaginative. It helps in expanding the notion of learning environments and ecosystems more than physical space to provide students with more opportunities for meaningful learning. Digital technology connects the learners to their own world, make them experts and give their voice a platform. It uses innovative technological tools that help students in developing higher levels of thinking. Digital learning can be used as an instrument of innovation as well as self-directed learning strategy in the hands of present day learners. Further, in the context of teacher education programmes the significance of digital learning increases a number of times (Waxman, Lin, & Michko, 2003).

TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Teacher education is a continuous, ever-evolving and dynamic process. In the broader sense, the term 'teacher education' refers to the total of educative experiences which contribute to the preparation of a person for a teaching position in schools. But the term is more commonly used to designate the programme of courses and other experiences offered by an educational institute for the announced purpose of preparing persons for teaching and other educational services and for contributing to their growth in competency for such services (Arora, Sharma, & Siddiqui, 2009). Such teacher education programmes are offered in teachers' training colleges, institutes and universities. The teacher education programmes in India have evolved over time and is based on recommendations given by various committees and commissions on education. Within the broad objective of improving the learning achievements of school children, the purpose of teacher education programmes is to prepare teachers for the school system and to improve capacity of existing school teachers. The crux of the entire process of teacher education programmes lies in its curriculum, design, structure, organization and transaction modes (Newman, 2002).

Teacher education programmes include the policies, procedures and provisions designed to equip future teachers with the knowledge, attitude and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and community. According to National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), these programmes are concerned with education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level. Teacher education is level-specific in nature. It means programmes on teacher education vary according to the needs of pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher education and vocational education. There are specific methods and strategies for classroom transaction at different levels. There is no uniformity in the country in the teacher education programmes (Arora, Sharma, & Siddiqui, 2009). These programmes widely vary in content and process from one state to another state.

DIGITAL LEARNING - MAKING TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES MORE INTERACTIVE AND INNOVATIVE

Technological advancement is reshaping the world. Every aspect of life is getting altered. In this process the way of learning as well is getting changed. Digital learning has become the part and parcel of modern education programmes. It takes us in a new age of learning. It makes the process of learning more interactive, innovative and collaborative through connecting more and more people together on common platforms. It is a well known fact that feedback motivates a learner in the process of learning. And digital learning offers the learners quick feedback regarding their understanding a particular concept. In this way they can concentrate their efforts where further understanding is most needed. Digital learning helps the learners in learning their own way. It also helps a learner to formulate his or her own strategies according to the needs, interests and circumstances (Conner, 2012).

Digital technology helps us to develop and expand our relationships. Since we are surrounded by the technology, the interactions among the people are very frequent. The more we interact, the more we learn (Waxman, Lin, & Michko, 2003). The more we learn, the more we grow in our lives. And the more we grow, the more we can contribute to the society. In the present scenario teachers and learners are using more and more digital contents and spaces to have more diverse experiences. Digital learning enhances the interaction and communication among the people. People's connectivity is at the centre of digital learning. The great minds can interact globally in the era of digital environment easily, quickly and creatively. This leads to build a better world of learning societies, learning cultures and learning environments.

Digital learning is shaped by people's knowledge, skills and wisdom. It creates an environment where people get stimulated to share their own knowledge and skills freely and happily. In this process of sharing, relationship grows, connectivity widens and thinking develops (Douglas, 2012). Thinking is shaped by original and innovative ideas which are the products of ignited minds. The mind gets ignited, when it interacts with others and imagine freely and fearlessly. And this interaction and imagination which leads to innovation is the decisive product of digital learning. If teacher education programmes get integrated with digital learning platforms, they will become more exciting, interactive and innovative. The need of the hour is to integrate the idea of digital learning as an inseparable part of the curriculum of teacher education programmes for making these programmes more innovative, productive and collaborative.

DIGITAL LEARNING AS THE URGENT NEED OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

21st century is the era of digitalization. This process of digitalization in the age of globalisation has connected the people throughout the world beyond national boundaries. The people are being empowered through the power of internet and other innovative technological gadgets. Technological innovations and advancements have made digital learning as the need of the hour. The essence of digital learning is connecting people through technology on common platforms like Google and YouTube with the purpose of exchanging ideas and sharing experiences. Digital learning has changed the way we learn. It helps in learning according to the needs, interests and place of the learners (Waxman, Lin, & Michko, 2003). Technology has become an integral part of modern classrooms making the process of learning borderless, limitless and endless.

Digital learning can take place anytime, anywhere and with anyone a learner likes. Technology has become an integral part of modern classrooms. Virtual tools and open source softwares create borderless learning territory of learners of all ages anywhere and anytime. Digital learning connects not only people, but cultures as well. Learners of 21st century need creativity, communication and collaboration which are facilitated by the platforms provided by digital learning. Digital learning has enabled instant global communication and access to information (Cervantez, 2011). It empowers a learner, creates global classrooms and makes the process of learning learner driven. It helps a learner to have a voice, to create and to participate. The success of digital learning depends on the ability to use technology wisely, innovatively and productively. The rapid development of digital technology has changed the way a learner learns.

Digital technology has provided a platform to each and every learner irrespective of race, region and religion where he or she can share his or her own ideas and thoughts globally (Lou, Abrami, & d'Apollonia, 2001). This is the urgent need to realize the power of digital technology and integrate it with different learning programmes including teacher education programmes which are the backbone of any education system. Integration of the idea of digital learning with teacher education programmes in Indian context would change the scenario and bring innovative and revolutionary changes in the productivity of these programmes. Therefore, the government and the policy makers have the responsibility to take necessary steps to make digital learning as an integral part of the curriculum of teacher education programmes.

CONCLUSION

Teacher education shapes the destiny of a nation. It influences the entire education system directly or indirectly. It is the responsibility of the nation to maintain the standards and quality of teacher education programmes to ensure a better society. The idea of digital learning plays a significant role in the quality, innovation and effectiveness of teacher education programmes. This is the need of the hour to make digital learning as an integral part of the curriculum of teacher education programmes specially in Indian context. Digital learning gives opportunity to a learner to learn according to his or her own pace, place and path. It has changed the traditional ways of learning. It enhances the creativity, innovation and out of box thinking of learners. It helps in connecting people to share their ideas, thoughts and experiences beyond barriers and boundaries. It helps in exploring the unexplored, reaching the unreached and seeing the unseen.

REFERENCES

- Arora, L. G., Sharma, A. K., & Siddiqui, M. A. (2009). *Teacher Education*. Member Secretary, National Council for Teacher Education, New Delhi.
- Cervantez, V. A. (2011). *The influence of classroom community and Self-Directed Learning readiness on community college student successful course completion in online courses* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Open Access Theses and Dissertations.
- Chauhan, S. (2007). A meta-analysis of the impact of technology on learning effectiveness of elementary students. *Computer and Education*, 105, 14-30.
- Conner, T. R. (2012). *The relationship between Self-Directed Learning and information literacy among adult learners in higher education* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Open Access Theses and Dissertations.
- Douglas, H. (2012). *E-portfolios as a strategy to support the development of self-directed-learning skills* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Open Access Theses and Dissertations.
- Higgins, S., Xiao, Z., & Katsipataki, M. (2012). *The Impact of Digital Technology on Learning: A Summary for the Education Endowment Fund*. EEF, London.
- Lou, Y., Abrami, P. C., & d'Apollonia, S. (2001). Small group and individual learning with technology : A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 71 (3), 449-521.
- Newman, R. S. (2002). How self-regulated learners cope with academic difficulty: The role of adaptive help seeking.
- Waxman, H. C., Lin, M. F., & Michko, G. (2003). *A Meta-Analysis of the Effectiveness of Teaching and Learning with Technology on Student outcomes*. Learning Point Associates, Illinois, US.



Dr. Dipak Kumar Singh

Assistant Professor, Ananda Chandra Training College, Nayabasti, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India.