

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

With the rise of online learning, the digital age has brought about tremendous changes in education. Education has become more accessible, flexible and interactive than ever before. Learning through digital technology requires the student to be actively involved through the entire teaching learning experience. Therefore, student engagement in a digital environment has become a vital aspect for academic success in this current era. Engaging students is a vital component of effective learning, and it is critical to understand the mechanism and techniques to engage students in the digital environment. This research paper aims to explore the concept of student engagement in digital environment, its benefits and challenges and examine the various strategies to engage students digitally.

Keywords: *Student engagement, Digital environment, Online teaching learning, Artificial intelligence, Gamification, Digital platform.*

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has altered the way we live, work, and learn. The use of digital tools and resources in education has become increasingly prevalent, particularly in the post-pandemic phase. Education has become more accessible, flexible and interactive than ever before. Learning through digital technology requires the student to be actively involved through the entire teaching learning experience. Therefore, student engagement in a digital environment has become a vital aspect for academic success in this current era.

Engaging students digitally is vital component for effective learning yet complex task at hand for the learners as well as the educators. It is essential to understand the mechanism and techniques to engage the students in the digital environment.

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OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explore the concept of student engagement in the digital environment
- To examine its various dimensions, including its benefits and factors affecting student engagement
- To determine the strategies and techniques to engage students digitally

The present paper is conceptual highlighting concept of student engagement in digital environment, its dimensions along with the strategies and techniques for promoting student engagement in digital learning environment.

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

Student engagement refers to the level of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion displayed by students when learning or being taught, as well as their motivation to learn and progress in their education. Student engagement is an important part of learning that can influence academic performance, retention, and overall success. This is a critical component of effective learning, and it is essential to understand how it operates in the digital environment.

Digital learning environment- The use of technology in the classroom to promote learning is referred to as the digital learning environment. Students can share their thoughts and experiences in a digital setting while getting assistance from other students and professors. Online platforms, virtual simulations, and interactive whiteboards are the various modes of digital learning which are increasingly being used to improve students' learning experiences.

Student engagement in digital learning environment Student engagement is an essential component in the teaching learning process. COVID-19 pandemic has digitalized the learning, making it an online process embedded with technological resources. Student engagement is a complicated and complex phenomenon to comprehend, but it has been recognized as an important aspect in promoting student learning and growth (Kahu, 2013). Engaging students digitally is a complex task as it is need of the hour but making it safe for the learners and relevant are some of the challenges for the educators. To ensure that students are able to achieve their full potential, it is essential that educators place a focus on student engagement as digital technology continues to play an increasingly significant role in education.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Student engagement is an essential component that every educator aspires to achieve in traditional as well as digital learning environment. The previous research shows that various

methods and forms of teaching strategies and tools are implemented to improvise the student engagement in digital mode of learning. According to Schindler (2017) digital games, followed by web conferences and Facebook, have the most impact on various forms of student engagement. Student engagement is a multifaceted notion- cognitive, emotional, and behavioural that should be investigated holistically rather than separately. Huang & Liaw, (2018) present three essential aspects influencing learner intent to use the virtual reality learning environment are ease of use, utility, and learning motivation. Student engagement is a multi-dimensional aspect. According to Bergdahl and Hietajärvi (2022), there is growing interest in including a fourth dimension in the engagement construct, in addition to the existing dimensions of behavioural, social, and cognitive: the social dimension. Hollister B, Nair P, Hill-Lindsay S and Chukoskie L (2022) in their study revealed that majority of students felt better at ease asking and answering questions in online classrooms, implying that there may be aspects of online learning to which students are receptive, and which may also benefit in-person classes.

BENEFITS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

There are several benefits of promoting student engagement in the digital environment, including the following:

- **Better Learning Outcomes:** Students who are engaged are more likely to attain greater learning outcomes. The digital learning environment has the potential to give students with personalised learning experiences that are tailored to their specific needs, resulting in improved learning results.
- **Improved Motivation level:** Students can get a sense of autonomy and control over their learning in the digital environment, leading to improved motivation and engagement.
- **Better Communication/Interaction:** The digital environment can increase feedback and assistance by facilitating interaction between students and teachers.
- **Captivating attention of the learners-** Digital learning tools like gamification and game designing software are known to captivate the attention of the learner due to their interactive features.

DIFFICULTIES OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

Fostering student involvement in the digital environment presents a number of difficulties, such as the following:

1. Technical Issues: Poor internet connectivity, software malfunctions, and device compatibility concerns can all hamper student engagement in the digital environment.
2. Digital Distractions: The digital environment can supply students with countless distractions, such as social media, gaming, and other online activities, which can limit their participation in the learning process.
3. Lack of Social Interaction: The digital environment can lead to a lack of social engagement between students and teachers, which can weaken a sense of community and connection.

FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Research has identified several key factors that influence student engagement in digital environments. These include:

1. Course design: The design of the online course can have a major influence on student engagement. Courses that are well-structured, aesthetically appealing, and easy to browse can assist to keep students interested and motivated.
2. Quality of resources: The quality of accessible digital materials can also have an impact on student involvement. Interactive, engaging, and relevant to course topic resources can aid to attract students' attention and foster active learning.
3. Technology used by teachers: The usage of technology by the teacher can also have an impact on student involvement. Teachers who are at ease with technology and utilise it effectively to assist learning can contribute to the creation of a pleasant learning environment that encourages engagement and involvement.
4. Social interaction-The importance of social connection in digital contexts cannot be overstated. Pupils who feel linked to their classmates and teachers are more inclined to participate in the learning process. Online discussion boards, group projects, and collaborative learning activities can all aid in the promotion of social interaction and the development of a sense of community.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DIGITAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Based on current research and best practices, there are several strategies that educators can use to promote student engagement in digital environments. These include:

- Creating a supportive learning environment: Instructors must foster a welcoming learning atmosphere that encourages interest and participation. This can involve giving feedback, facilitating cooperation, and setting clear expectations for student behaviour and participation.
- Designing engaging digital courses: Online courses should be engaging, interactive, and relevant to the course material. The utilisation of multimedia resources, interactive activities, and gamification approaches are engaging ways
- Using technology effectively: Instructors must successfully employ technology to support learning. This includes the use of online discussion forums, video conferencing technologies, and other digital resources that encourage participation and interaction.
- Providing opportunities for social interaction: Student engagement in digital contexts requires social connection. Instructors should give students opportunities to connect with their peers and teachers, such as through group projects, online discussion forums, and other collaborative learning activities.
- Incorporate Gamification techniques- Employing game elements into non-game context can be a real game changer to engage the students and make the learning a fun interactive activity.
- Flexibility- Providing flexibility to the students to choose their course, duration of the course, assessment strategy makes the learning truly learner-centred.
- Encourage collaboration- Social interaction is a key feature to incorporate into digital learning platforms. Encouraging collaborations of students in the form of the group projects or group activities is yet another way to engage students digitally.

Student engagement in digital environments emphasises the necessity of designing an engaging and dynamic learning environment, utilising technology to improve engagement, and implementing measures to encourage engagement and academic outcomes.

SUGGESTIONS

Awareness about the latest digital technologies need to be created so as to enhance the engagement of the learners. Several factors influencing the student engagement should be taken into account for designing curriculum in the digital and online mode of teaching learning process. Educators must be well equipped with the resources to make the best of the technologies available digitally.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a key element of successful learning in a digital environment is student engagement. Personalized learning opportunities, greater access to information and resources, and enhanced student-teacher contact are just a few advantages that the digital environment can provide. Educators should take into account the several factors affecting the learner engagement in the digital environment to enhance the teaching learning experience.

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