



Digital Self Instructional Material: Benefits And Challenges In The Field Of Education

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Abstract

'Digital India' is an ambitious scheme of the Government of India through which the people of the country are being connected digitally. It is also being used in the field of education in various forms like online education, instructional aides, digital books etc. Over the years, digital self-learning materials have been used successfully in different countries in different subjects. Through which education and knowledge has become accessible in such an interesting way that a student in remote areas of the world can learn at his own pace and according to his own time, as per his need and capacity. This has proved to be a boon for the learners. Despite the increase in digital facilities and increasing use of digital self-instructional material, even at present there are many challenges in its path which are preventing it from joining the mainstream of education.

Keywords

Digitization, Digital India, Digital Self-Instruction Material, Benefits and Challenges of Digital Self-Instruction Material, Nature Conservation

Introduction

In the present times, technology has made its noticeable presence in every field. In all this 'digitization' has played the most important role. 'Digitization' refers to the process of converting information into a digital (i.e. computer-readable) format by generating a series of numbers describing an object, image, sound, document or signal (usually analog signals). After digitalization in various fields, digitalization has also played an important role in the field of education. Especially after the introduction of the 'Digital India Program' run by the Government of India, whose objective is to connect all the government departments/sectors digitally with the people of the country, so that every citizen can directly access the various facilities provided by the government, there has been an improvement in all areas, especially in the field of education digitalization accelerated. Now not only books and libraries are available to us in digital form but schools are also available. Digitally available instructional materials through which learners are self-instructed are called digital self-instructional materials. Through these, education and

knowledge have become so interesting and accessible that students in any corner of the world are able to learn at their own pace and at their own time, as per their need and capacity. Apart from all this, there are many benefits of digital self-instruction material which are as follows-

- 1. Deeper Knowledge** - Digital self-instructional material provides deeper knowledge to the learners. Through this, the learner can learn any subject as deeply as per his need. In these learning materials, along with the main content, some hyperlinks or reference lists are also given which helps in enhancing the knowledge of the students. Curious students can get as detailed or in-depth knowledge as they wish by only one click on the given link/hyperlink or digital reference list to satisfy their curiosities in the related subject.
- 2. Self-paced and voluntary study** - Through this, the student can study as per his capacity, at his time, as per his wish, whenever he wants. It can be studied through any digital device like Smartphone, laptop, palmtop and computer, hence it provides freedom to the learners that they can study at their own pace whenever and wherever they want.
- 3. Globally accessibility** – Digital self-instruction material can be read from any corner of the world. That means, if it is uploaded somewhere with the help of the internet or shared with someone, then it can be easily accessible from anywhere. There is no restriction of any country, direction or condition for this. This content is available globally in a few moments.
- 4. Interesting presentation**- In digital self-instruction material, the content is presented through three-dimensional pictures, audio-video and animation etc. The digital self-instructional material is definitely more interesting than the traditional instructional materials because it is designed keeping in mind almost all the psychological aspects of the learners. Different types of self-instruction materials are made for students of different ages, keeping in mind the psychological characteristics of the students of that age.
- 5. Easily share** – We can provide any digital self-instruction material to anyone at our convenience. This can also be sent through email, social networking sites like WhatsApp, Messenger. For this only the link of the content has to be shared with people. While sharing the link we can also give the option to edit it. With the help of this technique, students can write their answers and some notes for memory along with the provided material on the available blank space. By reading through this manner, remembering the facts and mind mapping also becomes easier.
- 6. For all levels of learners** – It can be used for all levels of learners. In fact, it takes more care of the individual differences of the students. If a student is talented then he can finish his lessons quickly through it, whereas if a student is a slow learner then he can gain knowledge from it by taking more time according to his needs, than other students.
- 7. Suitable for students with special needs**- Students with special needs or students who are unable to attend school due to any reason, such as students who are forced to stay at home or in hospital due to an accident, natural disaster or social disruption such as a shutdown, rally etc. can study easily and effectively even while staying at their place through this digital self-instruction material. Students with special needs who have visual problems can take advantage of audio equipment, those who have hearing problems can learn by video (sign language), educational info graphics, PPT, text material. Also, for these students with special needs, digital self-instruction materials can be prepared by special teachers by adopting specific strategies.
- 8. Eco friendly** - Digital self-instruction material is not only beneficial or convenient for us but it is also suitable for the conservation of nature, especially trees. Because a lot of paper is consumed in the making of one book or note book we can say that teaching-learning through digital tools saves paper. We are also

aware of the fact that 2700 liters of water and 25 trees are consumed in the production of one tone of paper. Thus, if we use digital self-instruction material in place of traditional books and answer sheets, there is no need of paper and thus both water and trees are conserved. Hence we can conclude that digital content is also eco friendly.

Challenges - As much as digital self-instruction material is beneficial for all of us and solves our many problems, there are also various types of challenges in the way of its use. These challenges prevent people from taking full advantage of digital self-instruction materials. Some of the main challenges are:

1. Availability of digital devices- At present, most of the population has availability of digital devices. But still a large population is deprived of it. Therefore, we cannot say that we will be able to deliver education to every person through digital self-instruction material. This learning material will be limited only to those people who have any type of digital device.

2. Physical problems- There are some disadvantages of using digital devices. Its biggest side effect is seen on the eyes. Its excessive use causes irritation in eyes, various types of vision defects as well as headache, sleep problems and mental health is also affected. It has been found that people who are exposed to digital devices for a long time also have to face the problem of spinal or back pain.

4. Electricity - Any digital device always needs to be charged. This also requires electricity. In India or rather in the world, availability of electricity is still a serious problem. There are still many areas where either there is no electricity or there is irregularity in the availability of electricity. In such a situation, availability of electricity emerges as a serious challenge in the way of study through digital self-instruction material.

5. Digital Friendly - At present, digital devices are being used in abundance and some people are also deprived of it. But in reality, still not everyone is aware of the functions and correct and proper use of these digital devices. Therefore, to get full benefit from digital self-learning content, there is a need to be digital friendly along with digital literacy.

Conclusion

Thus, we saw that digital self-instruction material proves to be very useful in the field of education in the present time due to its various features and capabilities. This helps students in learning according to their interest, time, pace and ability. It's also sustainable and eco friendly. That makes our life easier and bright. But there are some small and big challenges in the path of learning, although these can be overcome. We just need to find suitable solutions to overcome the challenges that come in its way. Despite all this we can say that digital self-instruction material will be our future.

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