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Pathology of the e-learning system in art workshop courses and presentation of effective solutions

Abstract

Problem Definition: The current atmosphere of the society has directed many workshop and laboratory courses in some academic and educational fields towards e-learning, although being associated with many challenges in the education, especially learning and virtual communications of the students. Although electronic learning (e-learning) has been common in many theoretical courses in some fields and universities since previous years, today the nature of e-learning, requires the need to carefully examine the factors affecting learning and effective teaching methods with emphasis on e-learning management systems, virtual classrooms and associated activities, etc. However, such issues have always criticized the e-learning and virtual learning in a variety of contexts and approaches.

Objective: The present study, while introducing some effective learning methods in some courses with the aim of investigating the e-learning system in the case of art workshop courses and effective factors, has dealt with various approaches in this field and explored the existing and forthcoming challenges with a pathological approach in this space.

Research Method: This research has been carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner and based on the content analysis of related topics, by predicting the future possibilities in this area, and has benefited from the documentary and library studies.

Results: In the e-learning system, the main burden falls on the learning part, not electronics. The present analysis can pave the way for proper planning proportionate to the effective teaching and learning technique. There are some suggested educational capacities and methods in the way of giving exams or starting classes throughout the country, which are mentioned in the suggestions section.

Keywords: Pathology, Electronic learning system, Workshop and practical courses, Art fields, Teaching and learning.

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Introduction

Learning is becoming an interactive process through which the learner is guided only by the faculty member, and the faculty member is a supervisor and facilitator who develops the learning process through the use of new technological instruments and provides access to multiple information resources (Faraskhah, Mehr Mohammadi, & Davari, 2004, 84). Distance and blended higher education and remote learning have been among the most effective and well-known mechanisms for increasing access to the higher education, in which the education exceeds the restrictions of full physical attendance and time allocation in the classroom and becomes more flexible using capabilities of the multimedia system and various communication patterns (such as correspondence, tutorial and semi-tutorial books, self-assessment tests, radio, television, audio and video tapes, counseling and guidance). In recent decades, the advent of computers and emergence of a network society, internet and intranet capabilities and e-learning phenomenon, have further developed the dimensions of blended and remote higher education (Farasatkah, 2013, 92). Despite the quantitative growth of education, including distance education, and also the emergence of some e-learning institutions, the current culture of education and learning in the current Iranian society still faces obstacles to achieving a desirable situation. The available opportunities for access to computers and the internet are considered unequal in our current society. Also, the trend of using internet in the current Iranian society, like most development trends in a society in transition, has been uneven and unbalanced. The educational culture appropriate to today's world is more dynamic, fluid and pluralistic than ever before, and demands appropriate ethics from education. It should be stated that e-learning is not the only issue, but the important point is the space created and e-learning. E-learning has overshadowed the workshop contents in some academic and educational fields and has confronted tutors and teachers with various issues in the teaching process. This is especially evident in the art and laboratory disciplines, which require a two-way communication between tutor and student, trial and error and fixing practical problems in presentation. There are many factors which might affect the e-learning of students in the fields of art, technology and workshops, and overshadow their future careers and studies, because these students are in environmental and sensory spaces and are closely encountered with the color, smell, space, nature and various expressive, tactile, visual and auditory emotions, without which, passing some courses will be inefficient or ineffective. The formal education systems and existing policies, structures and processes in the country have not yet been able to develop the requirements for the modern educational culture in the country. In fact, the model of distance and blended education has not gone beyond the traditional style and does not benefit from the capabilities of an institutionalized network society. The distance education in Iran still belongs mainly to the first and second generation of remote learning. The use of virtual

education in the long vacations imposed on schools due to the outbreak of the coronavirus has opened a new chapter of education in the country's schools, a kind of education that has been practiced for many years in some countries, but is a new experience in our country and has been widely experienced for the first time during the recent shutdown. In the field of information and communication technology (ICT) and use of its capabilities in the field of education, e-learning has become an accepted way to provide training in various fields alongside in-person training (Momeni Rad, Ali Abadi, Fardanesh, & Mazini, 2013, 76). However, in the case of not managing properly and moving away from the main mission of the software in the electronic affairs system, this tool can turn against itself and cause damages to the education system and people's trust in school and university as a consequence (Javidnasab, 2020). Therefore, some educational approaches have been criticized, which requires pathology and removal of obstacles in this field. According to the above-mentioned points, in response to removing these obstacles, the present research has concerned with the pathology of issues related to this subject via different approaches and finally has proposed effective solutions. The previously conducted researches have dealt with the way students perform and learn theoretical courses under normal social conditions and in some centers while not being of high necessity. However, in the present study, due to the critical situation of society and outbreak of coronavirus, learning has become necessary and inevitable in cyberspace for all education levels and academic disciplines and included all geographical regions of the country. Depending on the climatic and geographical location and the type of academic disciplines in the field of laboratory and workshop, there have been problems in the field of communication and information or the availability of facilities. Therefore, the present study is of high importance regarding the consideration of effective dimensions of the virtual education in workshop disciplines, especially art ones.

Research Method

Based on a descriptive-analytical manner, the present study has benefited from the findings, online reports and news related to art students in today's conditions that require the use of e-learning. In this regard, attempts have been made to discuss the contents of university education courses and tools and methods of teaching practical and workshop courses to art students and their education and related damages in this area from four dimensions of educators, learners, educational space and learning tools, in which some indicators have been extracted and compiled from the relevant studies.

Research Background

Kuhpayehzadeh; Khoshnevisan & Beralvand. (2016) acknowledged that with the rapid growth of technology and internet-based education, the combined learning methods have expanded and traditional classrooms have shifted to virtual learning

environments. Saeedi Nejat and Vafaei Najjar (2011) investigated the effect of distance education programs on the students' academic achievement and concluded that the only thought-provoking factor is the performance of students due to the infancy of the technique which needs to be studied and followed up. According to Rublier, MC Daniel, Web, Herman & Whitey (2010), some tutors in the education system see the virtual social media platform as an efficient and commercial technology and a way to connect with their students.

Challenges and obstacles of cyberspace

The "development and improvement of the quality of distance education" has been among the policies presented for the country's development plans. However, not only the electronic network and ICT infrastructure capacities face various technical constraints and setbacks, but we are still far from the soft preconditions of cognition, thinking and legal environment regarding the communication and thinking paradigms and new culture of teaching and learning. The tough preconditions such as equipping with modern technologies, computers, internet and telecommunications are very necessary and vital, but may not have the desired effectiveness without cultural preconditions (Farasatkah, 2013, 95). It is necessary to internalize the exemplar of "learning community" in the country through socialization and acculturation institutions such as education, develop interactive behaviors and provide a suitable legal environment in the country. The failure to provide these preconditions will not only leads to a significant distance from the networked society and cyberspace and their cultural and normative requirements, but also causes the formal and virtual distance higher education to face some problems in terms of the content and quality, even though it grows in appearance and in terms of quantity, and also be associated with complications such as academic failure and the like (Ebrahimzadeh, 2003, 1; Farahani, 2001, 10).

Pathology and discussion based on different experiences and approaches

The spread of the coronavirus has led to an unstable situation in different issues of many countries. The damages caused by this situation in various educational dimensions which has caused the cessation of education in Iran, has always been a concern for school and family to find ways to prevent the loss of material and spiritual capitals. Under such a condition, the informal groups usually usually take steps ahead of governments to meet the demands of the target community, which face hidden and obvious opposition. The e-learning system comes from a system that respects polyphony and has a pluralistic foundation, while our society is still dominated by the teacher-pupil and tutor-student power systems. In the e-learning system, the main burden is on the learning sector, not electronics.

The e-learning system of Iran is a technocratic one. Since the main adapters and implementers of this approach have been technical people, applied their method

based on their expertise. However, the main burden in the e-learning system should be on the learning and training, instead of being worried about an ever-increasing automatization of these processes. Often, instead of thinking more about how to use the capabilities of information technology in education, sometimes it forcibly cover the education, especially if we believe in the cultural context in the education and training. The result of such a technocratic view of e-learning is the application of purely behavioral approaches to the education. In other words, most people seek to profit from this crisis.

In the field of e-learning within the country, issues such as educational design, scenario writing, problem solving, cognitive load, learning community, learning styles, interaction, etc. are not examined. Since there has never been any discussion of technology adaptation in the field of educational technology, e-learning has also been accepted in its raw form in order to impose power structures and technocratic system of the West, without any criticism. However, many of the manifestations of this space are in conflict with our traditional and religious view which must be planned. On the other hand, the important missing part of Iran's education system is the issue of motivation which should not be easily ignored ([Momenirad, Ali Abadi, Fardanesh & Mazini, 2012, 56](#)).

Fields such as photography, theater, cinema, painting, music, architecture, restoration and handicrafts and various artistic disciplines will be meaningless without the space, decor, light, color, smell, observing and hearing, being together in groups, feeling and touching, natural spaces feedback and its effects on the understanding and creating motivation. Also each of these artistic fields and several others which could not be mentioned in this article, in proportion to their educational units, require equipped devices and spaces except the above-mentioned ones that are available only at the university and due to the space and cost limitations, it is not possible for the students to learn and practice at home or in another environment. Also, in the case of cinema and theater, which require practice and diligence in the studio and group working space, appropriate solutions should be considered to solve this educational problem so that the student is not harmed in this past and remaining academic opportunity, and does not face the skill problems if she/he enters the labor market. In the fields such as traditional arts and crafts, which require special workshop and practical training tools, it is only the practice and diligence along with the tutor accompaniment that make the student aware of his/her weaknesses and assist in having a good practical presentation or judgment at the end of the semester. Otherwise, the mere virtual education is unable to improve the student's learning skills. In-person and group technical skills in such practical laboratory and workshop fields can make a balance between the student's hands, eyes and feelings and create a harmony between these factors to understand the desired art. Hence, the damages of academic disciplines in the e-learning system are examined from four dimensions, including the educational and academic tools, teachers and instructors, students and

trainees, educational platforms and spaces. These dimensions are presented in [Figure 1](#).

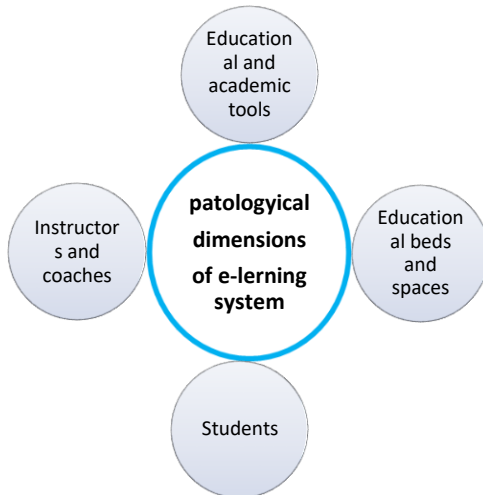


Figure 1.

Pathological dimensions of e-learning system.

Source: [Author](#)

Harms and challenges of educational platforms and spaces

In this area, one can point to the weakness of the advanced technology space in some workshops and laboratories in different regions or deprived, underdeveloped and less developed geographical areas of the country. Several villages and places in cities and provinces are still suffering from backwardness in terms of internet line technology or standard classroom educational space.

Harms and challenges of educational and academic tools

The educational space is one of the most important factors determining the success of the educational program and the quality of the educational environment has been recognized as a very important determinant in effective learning. Some teaching methods are still neglected due to requiring in-person classrooms, while could be considered as an auxiliary tool for teaching and learning students before the coronavirus crisis. However, they were overlooked due to lack of need or updating of educational technologies, and now that they might be helpful under the current circumstances, the software or the basic familiarity with them or the ease of access is slightly delayed.

Harms and challenges of the instructors and tutors

The previous conventional instructions were subject- and cognitive-oriented, while the new exemplars are process- and communication-oriented. The closed and one-way educational patterns, i.e. one-way and vertical transfer of information from the tutor to the student, are transitioning to open and two-way ones and horizontal interaction of free information exchange. The model of a single instructor for several students has been replaced by that of several instructors with

several students, and instead of the teacher booklet, one should talk about the scenario of a lesson with a group of actors, and instead of managing a lesson by a single tutor, lesson management is presented by a research-educational group with a diverse combination of specialties, semi-specialties, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary specialties. A team of experts, engineers, graphic designers, producers and directors need to work together on a curriculum.

Harms and challenges of students and trainees

Among the limitations of e-learning, one can point out to the unfavorable internet speed and lack of knowledge of some students while using the Internet, which caused problems in the implementation of this training process. It should be noted that a study conducted in 2012 indicated that other teaching methods, such as the use of multimedia or PowerPoint, can not fill the gaps existing in the traditional education to the extent of virtual education. It has also been found that e-learning leads to the creation of a new environment for students and develops their skills and knowledge. According to the above-mentioned points, a number of educational methods are introduced and defined in the following:

(A) Introduction of modern e-learning methods from 2018 onwards

Examples of e-learning which are the best methods in recent years are listed in the following. Some of these methods have existed from the beginning and some other ones are new and modern. These methods can only be employed in some theoretical courses of art students having less practical and workshop understanding.

1. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)

The VR and AR technologies have been the most popular e-learning techniques since 2018. VR has been existing for a long time, but the advent of AR has created new opportunities for the e-learning. Although, AR and VR are commonly used for the games and movies, but they are also used for e-learning. Moreover, VR can be used for laboratory and workshop lessons as well as for situations that are dangerous or where complex work has to be done. However, AR is used for online learning. In fact, learners often use AR in order to learn more about a place, tool or technology. Using an inclusive QR code, one can scan the object and acquire more information about it (See Figure 2).

The organizations tend to use AR and VR for training with decreasing price of glasses and headsets of these technologies. These technologies have been used more in e-learning in 2018.

**Figure 2.**

Virtual reality in e-learning.

Source: www.pafcoerp.com

2. Personalization of learning according to the learners' needs

The personalized education is created in such a way that the modules existing in the libraries are customized. Based on the user performance, modules are provided to help them progress in cases where they are weak. The trainees will have a set of auxiliary tools to improve their academic status. Hence, the schools no longer need to invest more. They only conduct and evaluate an online test once, build a library of modules for the users, without requiring additional costs. Each learner learns only what they need to learn, the process of which is implemented by the lms e-learning system.

3. Micro-learning

Micro-learning is now a very effective method and has many benefits for the organizations and schools. It has special benefits such as fast training, increased productivity and easy tracking through constant updates. Micro-learning has been known as short videos or clips, but it has been shown that it can be a short game, test and interactive video. It is effective and practical when organizations need modules for specific purposes. In fact, micro-learning is learning through short-term activities in small formats. The impact of this type of e-learning has been more significant in 2018.

4. Content curation

There are open source tools which can provide information to learners online. The content libraries can be expanded to teach students the right and complete concepts. The organizations focus primarily on the common e-learning methods as well as m-learning.

5. Video-based interactive learning

Due to the ease of visual learning, video is considered as a great medium for conveying information because it is both attractive and easy to understand. The organizations can increase the popularity of educational videos through enabling users to chat and interact with each other or post videos to internal sites. The organizations' employees are more involved in learning in this way and spend more time learning using e-learning software. This technique is a step higher than watching YouTube tutorials. The 2018 e-learning videos were including questions,

summaries and quizzes to attract employees and help them not to forget what they have learned.

6. Social learning

Social learning is not the same as social networking, although they are often assumed to be identical. Tools like Facebook or Twitter are not used for professional environments and specialized discussions. Professional environments need more powerful tools to learn, not to share personal information. Using lms e-learning system, which provides the desired features of social learning, the organizations can benefit from social learning, and this method was very effective for e-learning in 2018.

(B) Introduction of some combinative tools for teaching some students' courses

Based on the existing conditions, the educational and academic centers took measures for the education suspension. Hence, the use of social networks in university teaching was suggested which faced many problems such as the insufficient infrastructure required by the universities, lack of executive experience of educational centers to use virtual methods, reduced learning efficiency in this method, lack of infrastructure required by most students and lack of students' experience to use this method. The combinative methods should be based on increasing students' motivation and better understanding of course objectives and in most cases, while increasing the students' interest, should lead to a significant reduction in the number of missed courses (Hajian, 2020). These methods include the following items:

1. Use of supplementary compact disk (CD)

The supplementary CD which contains the desired PowerPoints, articles, related photos, definition of related projects, audio files of the classroom and other required files as well as a collection of exam questions of the previous semesters in detail may be effective in the current situation for students in some courses. In this method, some technical concepts and basic lessons are intelligently presented in one or more slides in such a way that the student can easily perceive them.

2. Using lesson summaries

For different courses, it is necessary to provide summaries in simple and comprehensible word using various resources in such a way that a student or an individual could benefit from the scientific and comprehensive content and sometimes the proof of content in the required conditions by studying, further to easily learning the content in a very short time.

3. Using various problems and exercises

This involves solving lesson-related projects which include most of the topics of that lesson. in such a case, if a project is designed so that the student learns a real problem from beginning to end during the semester, it will increase the motivation and interest and make the lesson easier to learn.

4. Recording audio files

The use of lesson-related photos and videos can be effective in increasing motivation, and even in some cases, it is possible to present and solve problems with the aid of corresponding photos and videos provided to the student.

5. Solving various problems using photos

Some university courses are a prerequisite for the next ones and several lessons are hypothetically a series of prerequisites for other lessons. The assignments should be prepared for a series of related courses in such a way that the student completes a series of project's parts in the first prerequisite course and only reads the subsequent sections knowing that this is the foundation of the other course. The use of virtual networks in the current conditions, which is compulsory, should be conducted in such a way that these experiences are employed simultaneously with virtual methods (Hajian, 2020).

Conclusion

The informal groups take steps ahead of governments to meet the needs of target community, which is facing both overt and covert oppositions. Therefore, the educational spaces must be planned based on the objectives, policies, guidelines and requirements of the educational unit, such as the number of students and trainees, physical atmosphere of the course, etc. and help increase the attendance via empathy, persuasion of the audience and high-quality service delivery. Given the above issues, instantaneous and daily growth of science and technology during the last decade and considering that the scientists and those in charge of educational sciences have taken effective steps to keep up with this trend so that everyone can use equal opportunities to learn and to get acquainted with and use new methods and human discoveries in all parts of the world, the scientific and educational institutions have also made great attempts toward the use of up-to-date knowledge. Holding educational sessions through video conferencing, cyberspace, educational software, audio-visual media, online and offline applications with the power and ability of interactive feedback, is one of the human inventions which has been well established in educational systems from the elementary school to the university. These tools complement the training process and provide a great opportunity for educators to use them as an alternative method in the case of emergency and inability to attend the classroom. While being optimistic about the use of software, it is essential that administrators and planners examine the public use of virtual networks, software and training tools in order to prevent the impending damage and minimize bugs. In this regard, several strategies have been developed such as holding theoretical courses online in a virtual manner using advanced electronic research and teaching tools for art students and postponing practical courses each semester to one month intensive by observing the distancing in the form of dividing students into several groups and training practical lessons in several series in parallel so that all students can be

educated and for those who are outside the city of teaching, there should be simultaneous live broadcast of the same workshop. It is also possible to specify one month intensive for each semester, within which the students can refer to the university separately for each field and educational degree, attend the workshop several times in groups of several people and a maximum of 4 or 5 by observing the standards of dormitory complexes and the recorded video should be provided to them. For this purpose, for example, the university can hold a one-week in-person workshop for senior students in one of the art fields, during which the same students should only be present and attend the classroom by division and return to their place of residence after one week. In the sections related to the theater, restoration and fields that require teamwork and the use of some senses, an intensive workshop course should be held for students at a specific time. Finally, for incoming students from 2019 onwards who faced the coronavirus crisis, it is necessary to consider an internship course in the city of their residence in practical courses that have not been presented or can not be understood virtually. Only in this case, the students will be both skilled and aware of their weaknesses in internships and make attempts to resolve them upon consulting with their tutor.

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