

# E-Learning Pedagogy to promote ethics of Global System Education

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## ABSTRACT

*In the digital era, technological advancements have influenced every aspect of human life. In the education sector, the digital boom is breaking all learning barriers of space, time, efficiency and location. In India, the opulent e-learning industry is projected to flourish into a colossal 1.96 billion dollar industry by 2021 at an annual growth rate of 24 percent. As the education paradigm shifts to the online mode, imparting transformational education to inculcate ethics of global citizenship in the learners becomes a challenging task. There is a growing need to integrate service-learning in online learning. E-Service learning is the new teaching-learning paradigm that supports social engagement of the students through online courses along with providing enhanced learning outcomes by virtue of experiential learning. This paper explores the potential of E-Service learning pedagogy to promote community engagement and ethical development in the students along with their academic and cognitive development.*

## 1. Introduction

Service-learning is a teaching and learning approach that involves engaging students in community-based service activities that are aligned with their course concepts and learning goals. Service-learning may be defined as “the integration of academic material, relevant community-based service activities, and critical reflection in a reciprocal partnership that engages students, faculty and community members to achieve academic, civic, and personal learning objectives as well as to advance public purposes” (Bringle and Clayton, 2012). Drawing upon this array of interrelated components, service-learning has a wide variety of forms, projected outcomes, and links to a range of academic and social initiatives (Beatty, 2010).

While student learning and transformation are critical outcomes of service-learning experiences, Dubinsky (2002) asserted that service-learning should not merely seek to benefit students, rather, it should offer real, measurable benefits to the service organization in addressing community needs. Service-learning has led to several advantages for participating students, including improved academic engagement, enhanced critical thinking and writing skills, augmented interaction with faculty, and increased sense of civic engagement (Brownell and Swaner, 2010).

## 2. Growth of Online education Market

Online teaching and learning has become pervasive in higher education. Owing to growing demand for distance learning and growth of digitization has led to a tremendous increase in the growth of online education market. In this rapidly changing world of technology, online education market is projected to show major growth prospects during the next five years. Online Education Market is growing rapidly over 24% of CAGR and is expected to reach at approx. USD 423 Billion by the end of 2023.

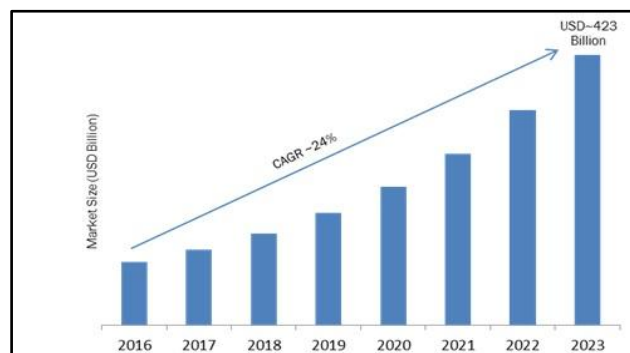


Fig 1: Projected Growth of Online Education Market (2016-2023)

## 3. E Service-Learning

As the education paradigm shifts towards the online mode, e-Learning principles and pedagogies are being unified into what is now referred to as “E-Service-learning” (Waldner et al, 2012) or “serviceeLearning” (Dailey-Hebert et al, 2008). E-service-learning occurs when the instructional component, the service component, or both are conducted online.

EService-learning is defined as a “teaching-learning pedagogy that engages learners through technology in civic inquiry, service, reflection and action” (Dailey-Hebert et al, 2008). It provides online students with opportunities for community service while extending their engagement with their course curriculum and their learning outcomes” (Waldner et al, 2012). He identified four distinct types of eService-learning: hybrid type I, hybrid type II, hybrid type III, and extreme service-learning. In a hybrid type I course, the course is conducted online, but the service is conducted onsite. A hybrid type II course is conducted onsite while the service component is conducted entirely online. In hybrid type III courses, the academic and service components are conducted both onsite and online. Finally, extreme service learning occurs when both the academic and service components are conducted online only.

## 4. Promoting Social Engagement using E-Service-Learning

E-Service Learning offers several benefits for online learners while over-coming the limitations of both service-

learning and online learning. It frees service-learning from geographical constraints. E-service-learning also helps engage people who otherwise may be unable to participate in a service-learning activity, such as the disabled people (Malvey et al., 2006), people living in rural areas without a higher education learning institution nearby (Strait and Hamerlinck, 2010), or even shy or reticent individuals (Seifer&Mihalynuk, 2005). In the absence of geographical constraints, regional, national, or even global partners may be connected with for service projects (Malvey et al., 2006). Generally, online learning is often alleged to be lacking in interaction and engagement (Hill et al, 2009). E-service-learning overcomes this limitation by augmenting engagement in online courses. In fact, E-Service learning allows an online course allows individuals who cannot otherwise attend an onsite class to engage in service-learning.

Generally online learning is often said to be afflicted with limitations like lack of opportunities to practice skills with the instructors, limited practical experiences and so forth. But online learning when combined with Service learning helps to overcome all these limitations by adoption of techniques that lead to enhanced engagement. E-service-learning can help enhance this engagement by making the instructors utilize effectively the course management software features that enable them to actively engage the students in the learning process as well as with other students enrolled in the same course. Conrad and Donaldson (2004) in their study concluded that the major elements of engaged learning in an online course include student's defining their own learning goals, students teaming with others, and students exploring online or offline resources. To make the students connect with the external communities, the instructors must assign multidisciplinary tasks having real-world applications which require the students to establish social associations.

To further provide a comprehensive learning experience, continual feedback and assessment are essential. These elements are suitably addressed by E-service-learning using meaningful questionnaires related to real-world issues. Lehman and Conceicao (2010) in their study found that self-reflection is also an essential aspect to successful online learning as it instills higher order thinking skills such as problem analysis, its comprehension, problem solving, and evaluation while helping them synchronize their thoughts and actions. Mills (2001) advocated web-based journaling for feedback, inspiration, and inquiry. The technique involved engaging students on a daily basis to envisage their own thoughts and activities as well as those of others. This helps in self-reflection of thoughts and actions necessary for successful service-learning. Horton (2006) in his study recommended use of games and simulations to engage the learners and foster confidence and team spirit in the students. Online simulation softwares can be effectively used to enhance decision making skills in the online learners.

## 5. Implementation Challenges of E-Service Learning

Although E-Service learning can help promote social values in the students but currently E-service-learning courses face certain implementation issues and challenges.

One of the major challenges in successful implementation of E-Service learning courses is the reliability of hardware and software. Breakdown of machines in the E-service learning environment can have seriously affect the teaching-learning process (Malvey et al., 2006). McGorry (2006) in her study observed that a majority of students faced some or the other kind of technical problem due to hardware or software malfunctioning. Waldner et al. (2010) also reported technical problems related to audio and video during live video conferencing sessions in the e-learning environment. Sometimes, lack of hardware and software compatibility also poses connection problems. Such kind of issues can be mitigated if there is a technical support team. Further advancements in software and hardware may also help in overcoming these shortcomings.

Another challenge that faces E-Service learning is the inadequate technical and service-learning training of instructors. Since e-service-learning combines both service and online learning, instructors must be proficient in both service learning and online teaching techniques. Strait and Sauer (2004) recommended adequate prior training of the instructors. They also recommended service-learning orientation before the commencement of the course. Community partners also need to be adept in use of technology for smooth interaction with the students. An instructional design team can help the instructors create training and orientation resources for both the students and the community.

Establishing and maintaining effective communication is another challenge faced by E-Service learning courses. This is generally due to lack of accountability of the community partners to students and instructors and vice versa. In such cases lack of response from either side in terms of failure to reply to the e-mails or queries may hinder the ultimate purpose and goals of E-Service learning (Hunter, 2007). Memorandums of Understandings between the stakeholders can help improve accountability.

Conflicts in schedules and other communication barriers are some of other challenges that might be faced in these online service learning courses (Hunter, 2007; Killian, 2004). Proper scheduling through course management softwares can help resolve these conflicts.

Online E-Service learning courses require additional time commitment as well as extra efforts from the instructors for meticulous design of these courses as well as for proper conduct of online service courses through proper coordination with the community partners.

## 6. Conclusion

In the era of digitization when there is a paradigm shift from onsite classroom learning towards virtual classrooms, imparting transformational education to inculcate ethics of global citizenship in the learners becomes a challenging task. In this context, E-Service learning holds the potential of equipping online learning with a tool to promote social engagement of the students. It holds the potential of providing the students with astral benefits of service learning by

connecting with the community and working for its welfare along with providing enhanced learning outcomes. The paper discusses some of the limitations and challenges of effective implementation of E-Service learning. These limitation and challenges can however be overcome with enhanced research focus on understanding better the learning outcomes of E-

service learning, increased funding for development of E-Service learning and its associated research activities and development of well-planned training programs for the E-Service learning faculty and the community partners. This would help in quicker, efficient and smooth transition to the E-Service learning platform.

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