Chapter 3
Information Technology Leadership and Change in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Higher educational institutions are widening participation through the introduction of new programs, using different approaches to deliver learning so that many people can have access to education. With the growing number of students in our higher educational institutions, coupled with learners who are working and by virtue of their job commitments cannot do traditional face-to-face education, using information technology (IT) to support lessons in higher education institutions has become very laudable. The introduction and use of technology have brought changes in the way we teach and support students in our higher education institutions. This, therefore, calls for effective IT leaders who will be able to motivate, inspire, and meet the learning needs of the diverse students in our institutions while improving teaching and learning. The IT leaders should not only be individuals who can only lead the change crusade but should be able to manage the change process.

INTRODUCTION

Information technology (IT) is changing the way we learn, the way lessons are delivered to many students, more especially when it becomes very problematic to effectively impact and transform learning with conventional approaches (LaBonte, 2008). IT leadership is not about leading learning or promoting lesson delivery using IT but it includes; taking good decisions that affect IT and learning, mobilization of IT resources, strategic planning, management of various forms of learning management systems (LMS), leading people in the IT industry, among others. Being an IT leader is a demonstration of leadership skills, commitment and having a good IT knowledge that would enable the individual lead instructions using IT and the implementation of something new or different from what is being delivered that would add value not only to what is being provided but also what could be a quantifiable gain or beneficial to the institution and to those going through the learning process. Being an IT leader is about being innovative and be able to marshal the resources and skills available to the leader's disposal for the benefit diverse learners.

The major levers of technology are rapidly changing and in some countries governments commitment to technology in higher educational institutions continuous to grow, so technology leaders must change the way they lead to so as to become effective and successful (Richardson & Sterrett, 2018). Introduction of IT in higher education is capital intensive while instructional delivery using IT requires special skills and commitment on the part of both lecturers and students, so there should be value for money. Being a leader of technology means the individual should have a 'balance between advocating for special needs and looking out for the larger interests of the institution that ultimately determines the credibility and the respect given to any senior administrator responsible for leading information resources and technology' (Hawkins & Marcum, 2002, p. 130). Leadership is about teamwork; while technology leadership in education is about putting together the relevant technological skills from different sources and effectively using the skills of different facilitators with different expertise to make teaching and learning effective, enjoyable and beneficial to learners. With the ever-increasing importance of technology in our higher educational institutions, technology leadership development needs to be strengthened to improve the work of IT leaders (McLeod, 2015; Mishra, Henrikson, Boltz & Richardson, 2016).

According to LaBonte (2008), many education institutions are embracing the use of technology in the delivery of lessons, and are determining how, when and where instruction should be provided for learners. However the ingredients of effective leadership include strategic thinking, planning, motivating, inspiring establishing direction and doing the right things rather than doing things right. This chapter

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