

Chapter 7.29

EBS E-Learning and Social Integrity

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to support public education, the Korean government utilized e-learning and established EBS e-learning system. Educational Broadcasting System (EBS) e-learning is developed especially for high school students who are preparing for the Korean college entrance examination (KSAT). This case study is to introduce EBS e-learning and analyze its merits and weaknesses in order to investigate some meaningful implications for future use of a similar learning system. First, this case study analyzes characteristics of EBS e-learning; secondly, this study identifies its outcomes and issues. Lastly, some implications are presented for further development and more effective use of e-learning system. The outcomes of the case study showed that EBS e-learning system has brought (1) cost reduction on private education on a short-term basis, (2) positive effect on social integrity, and (3) a possibility of supporting public education. Some issues identified in this case study are in the following areas: (1)

contents, (2) school use, (3) learning management and operation strategies, (4) faculty members, and (5) user interface. Lastly, some implications and suggestions are made to ensure the provision of quality programs in the future: (1) it is necessary to reinforce interactive ways of learning; (2) customized education and level-specific learning programs should be developed and provided; (3) it should utilize effective learning management systems; and (4) it needs to provide qualified, specialized learning contents to the learners.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we witness rapid growth of knowledge production and distribution more than any other age in human history. Also, knowledge does not belong to particular groups or dominant classes anymore, and it has become public goods to share with grassroots. In the past, social oppressions have been operated by exclusive accessibility to knowledge and information. Currently, however,

the general public is able to access knowledge at their convenience and can change the quality of their lives through utilizing this accessible information and knowledge. Moreover, both accessibility and utility of knowledge and information allow even people who have limited educational opportunity to receive quality education.

However, it is obvious that there is a need to bring new communication tools in order to achieve meaningful educational experiences. People can exchange information and knowledge beyond the limit of time and space using the Internet, collaborate with other people for study at any time and any place, and take e-learning courses, which are developed in other countries for their individual achievement. E-learning, a revolutionary method of learning in this global age using the Internet, seems to have a special value in realizing meaningful learning and achieve equal educational opportunities to everyone regardless of their ethnic, local differences, and income gap. It is clear that people can be no longer competitive if they depend only upon off-line, formal education from the traditional educational institutions because of the extensive growth of information and knowledge. In order to learn newly produced knowledge along with creating new knowledge, learners need to take life-long learning and self-directed learning. E-learning can be considered as one of the best alternatives. E-learning enables people not only to get beyond the limitation of time and space, to have a good education anytime and anyplace, but also to build learning communities with other people including peers, teachers, and professionals. Building learning communities through e-learning is a realistic alternative for people to learn in authentic learning environments.

By far, e-learning has been developed in various arenas. But, the benefits of e-learning were mainly enjoyed by a few who belong to urban, middle class until now. So it is necessary to make e-learning affordable and accessible to anyone who wants to learn. In this purpose, the Korean

government made a grand project in 2004 and initiated the EBS e-learning program especially for high school students who are preparing KSAT (i.e., college entrance examination in Korea). The predecessor of the Educational Broadcasting System (EBS), the Broadcasting Department of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), produced and broadcast radio programs for the Air and Correspondence High School in 1974. EBS was established as an affiliate of the KEDI with two channels (EBS TV and EBS FM) in 1990. It was separated from KEDI in 1997 and started e-learning services from the year 2004. EBS, headquartered in Seoul, Korea, is the only broadcasting corporation dedicated to public education in Korea. EBS has grown into a major broadcaster for entertaining and educational programs. Accordingly, this case study is to introduce the EBS e-learning and analyze its merits and weaknesses in order to gain some educational insights from them, especially in terms of social integrity.

EBS E-LEARNING PROGRAM

Background

The Korean government has energetically carried out a policy of utilizing information technology in public education since 1996, which results in connecting every school across the nation with the high-speed network, EDUNET, which provides educational portal service in national scale. Another development is EBS e-learning. From the year 2000, not only ISST (ICT Skill Standard for Teachers), and ISSS (ICT Skill Standard for Students), but also contents such as teaching guides and multimedia materials were developed and disseminated widely. In the year 2004, the EBS e-learning program and National Center for Teaching and Learning opened. Figure 1 shows e-learning history in public education from 1966 to 2004.

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