

CHALLENGES TO ONLINE TEACHING DURING PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has fundamentally reshaped the way global higher education is delivered. When the novel corona virus grew into a worldwide pandemic, school districts around the world made a tough decision to close their doors—forcing an abrupt and almost universal change to distance learning that proved disruptive for teachers, pupils, and parents alike. As a result, universities are rapidly shifting how they communicate and operate to meet the evolving needs of staff, students and parents. The corona virus pandemic is not only transforming the way we live, it's even changing the way we learn. The education sector is facing a huge impact as a result of COVID-19, with universities forced to shift their face-to-face teaching to online teaching. For teachers, the shift to online education has meant rethinking lesson plans to fit a very different format. While some believe that the unplanned and rapid move to online learning – with no training, insufficient bandwidth, and little preparation – will result in a poor user experience that is uncondusive to sustained growth, others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits. Online teaching in its entirety is dependent on technological devices and internet, instructors and students with bad internet connections are liable to be denied access to online teaching. Lack of appropriate materials and resources, Technical problems, Lack of in-service training, difficulty in assembling all the students for the class, Lack of cooperation from the parents, Lack of internet facilities to the students, difficulty to follow up the learning of students are the major challenges faced by them. Further, teachers have a highly positive and favourable attitude towards online teaching but due to lack of efficacy and training in online mode of teaching they feel that they can teach better in traditional teaching. So, the present paper has focused on the challenges to online teaching during pandemic and some tips for making online teaching better.

Keywords: Challenges, Online teaching, Pandemic

Introduction

COVID-19 pandemic has resulted to total closure of educational institutes in about 130 countries all over the world with 56.6% of the total number of enrolled learners in these countries

temporarily forced out of school. It is reported that over 990,324,537 learners across the world are currently compelled to stay out of educational institutes as social distancing is being enforced locally and regionally around the world in order to contain the spread of Corona virus disease (UNESCO, February 8, 2021). Though the world has dealt with other pandemics in the past, COVID-19 has spread very fast. In addition, the virus is very infectious and can spread through individuals before any signs arise. The virus's worry, and the attempt to control it, derives from a lack of prior contact with it. Since the virus is historically unknown, extremely infectious and quickly transmitted from one human to the next, public health and government authorities around the world are working hard to contain the spread of the virus while the vaccine is still inaccessible. Corona viruses are a family of viruses that range from the common cold to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The most recent corona virus (sometimes referred to as the novel corona virus) is called COVID-19, and was first detected in Wuhan, China in December of 2019. After its first cases in China, COVID-19 has spread to almost every country in the world. According to the World Health Organization, 106,008,943 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 2,316,389 deaths, as of 09February, 2021 (WHO, 2021) and this data alarmingly increasing every day.

Educators and students all over the world are going through a phase quite unknown to them due to the rapidly spreading of the corona virus. Within weeks, students saw a drastic change in education which they have been experiencing continuously for years (Vnaya, 2020). Covid-19 has fundamentally reshaped the way global higher education is delivered. As a result, universities are rapidly shifting how they communicate and operate to meet the evolving needs of students and staff (Symonds, 2020).

In this period, online teaching has become a critical lifeline for education, as institutions seek to minimize the potential for community transmission. Technology will make it possible for teachers and students to gain access to advanced resources far beyond textbooks, in various formats and in ways that can bridge time and space. Further, in response to the closure of educational institutes and to avoid total curriculum disruption while Covid-19 pandemic lasted, universities had introduced technology-based pedagogy and the use of different types of media like Zoom, Google classroom, Google meet, Face book live, Video- conferencing etc. to deliver the online lectures and to ensure that learners must have access to learning materials while staying homes through Online teaching mode. There are primarily 2 types of online teaching (UrbanPro, 2014):

- (i) *Synchronous*: This type of teaching involves a real time online teaching experience. This involves time-bound sessions in which both the tutor and the pupil must be on-line at a given time, such as *online instructor-led courses*.

(ii) *Asynchronous*: In this type, courses are not conducted in real time. This ensures that a teacher-student engagement will arise as per their convenience. Recorded training sessions are a perfect example of this type of teaching.

The Internet has fundamentally changed how we interact with each other and how we access, exchange and promote information. Along with the fruitful benefits of online teaching there are number of cons, limitations and problems being faced by the teachers while teaching online during this covid-19 pandemic? Some of them are as follows (McIntyre, Watson, & Mirriahi, 2015):

1. *Access to technology*: In some instances, students and teachers may be limited in their regular access to reliable or appropriate technology. Several people can share a computer or mobile device in one household or rely on computers on campus or in a public place (e. g public library, Internet cafe, etc). Students or teachers may also only have limited access to require software as their membership is very expensive.

2. *Access to the Internet*: Not all students and teachers have regular or reliable access to the Internet. In certain cases, Internet access may be restricted to dial-up speed, or there may be limited monthly Internet use, which may hinder their right to use the Internet or engage with information in Covid-19.

3. *Ability to use technology*: Some technologies and tools require training. In certain circumstances, advanced instruction may not be immediately accessible to students or instructors. Teachers without peer encouragement for their online projects may be a solitary and insulating experience.

4. *Overloaded Information*: In many instances, the amount of information, ‘how to’ guides, help and resources provided online can have a tendency to become overwhelming and confusing if not properly managed. It can be challenging for students and teachers to see which ones are significant or important.

5. *Teaching online means a lot of hard work*: Many believe that teaching online is not nearly as time-consuming as teaching in the classroom. For the most part, the reverse turned out to be true. Taking the time to create an online course takes a lot of time, so the lesson may not translate well from a classroom to a more virtual point of view.

6. *Students don't always complete assignments at the same time*: This means that as an instructor you must be in constant communication with your pupils. This is not a bad thing in retrospect, however, can be time-consuming when you continuously search your email. As well as putting up with the student's endless texts that may or may not comprehend assignments.

7. *Students may not have access to individual pieces of technology:* Now most students are indeed much more tech savvy than before. However, not everyone has access to the new technologies. This means that you should avoid using video and audio effects to make your website look appealing. Although they are good but these features can cause frustration and hindrance to students when they try to learn them.

8. *Assignments can take longer to complete:* Most tasks that take a simple classroom period to complete take much longer to complete virtually. This is because students in classroom environments typically discuss these tasks together and, more than likely, students will not be online at the same time during the discussion cycle. This totally throws the process of reflection to the side, leaving your students to find out these issues on their own. Besides, it typically takes a lot of time for students to discuss assignments over the internet so they need to do a lot of reading and writing.

9. *Online teaching can make you feel isolated:* While teaching online, you usually don't meet with your fellow instructors and students in a classroom setting. This will find it impossible to discuss what works well, and it doesn't work at all for your fellow students. Usually, the only way to overcome this is by using online chat groups that are made for online educators (Urgent essay writing, 2016).

10. *Data Privacy:* From the very beginning of school shutdown, teachers and students have been connected using multiple digital tools without paying due attention to the amount and nature of the personal data they collect. Reaching the main objective of a quick transition to online teaching, we had to neglect our privacy, especially when large e-teaching software suppliers offer temporary free subscription plans. The latest case of Zoom, a remote meeting services provider that appeared to store all video conference recordings in a storage facility without a password, proves we have to *thoughtfully* approach choosing the digital tools for online teaching delivery.

Online teaching is new for most of the teachers and professors especially for those who belong to public sector institutes or who doesn't have the previous experience and exposure of online teaching. They are facing so many problems in conducting online teaching during this lockdown situation due to Covid-19. So, here are some quick tips to make online teaching better, from an expert in online learning (Lee, 2020):

1. *Record your lectures – don't stream them:* If students are sick or struggling with internet access, they will skip a live streamed lesson. Instead, record the videos and give them to the students so they can watch them on their own time.

2. *Show your face:* Research has found that lecture videos showing the faces of teachers are more effective than plain narrated slideshows. Intersperse your slides with video of yourself.

3. *Keep videos short:* Videos longer than 15 minutes will cause problems with slow downloads and learning distraction. You've got something more to say, film two or three brief videos.

4. *Test out slides:* Before filming the lessons, make sure you test the slides on your mobile so that all text can be viewed on small screens. Font sizes, colors, sample templates and panel ratios can be double-checked. Many students may be using their smart phones to navigate online learning.

5. *Use existing resources and make sure they're open access:* It is unrealistic to expect that you, on your own, will produce a semester's worth of high-quality videos. You can use readymade resources available on internet and provide the students direct links. The use of open tools helps discourage students from experiencing trouble accessing them. If all of your recommended tools are not available, you will receive an inbox full of student emails and inevitably lose all of your troubleshooting time. Spending a few extra minutes to diligently check for fully open access content will spare you a hassle later.

6. *Give specific instructions:* When you suggest online media, which runs for longer than 15 minutes, students will be put off watching. Instead, recommend the exact pieces they need (e.g. 13:35 to 16:28) as this will make students more interested. When you have more than two tools, mark them in the order that you want students to address them. Easy counting, based on the level of difficulty or value of each resource object, will be of great benefit to the students.

7. *Provide interactive activities:* Most learning management systems, such as Moodle, Edmodo and Blackboard, include a range of functions to create interactive learning activities such as quizzes. Step-by-step instructions to their development are readily accessible online. Use them and it's important to create videos those videos that show your face in it.

8. *Set reasonable expectations:* When you create quizzes, you should make sure all questions can be answered by referring to the given learning resources. If you invite students to write a review of the lecture recordings, you should make it clear that this is not a serious study. Making this as a mandatory task will produce the best outcomes and responses from students. A set of 10-15 questions for a quiz or a 250–300-word limit answers will be sufficient to engage students for 20-30 minutes.

9. *Use auto-checking to measure attendance:* If you tell students that their attendance will be measured by their participation in a quiz, it will increase compliance. However, you won't have time to review all of them, so use the automatic screening and ranking functions of your learning management systems.

10. *Use group communication carefully:* Group communication shouldn't be used for direct teaching. Instead, set "virtual office hours" to a video conferencing tool like Zoom. Only log in at the scheduled time and wait for the students. Focus on delivering emotional care and ensuring that all problems need to be resolved promptly. This will be a perfect way to gain input from students about the online teaching. Make meetings optional and be relaxed. There's no reason to be disappointed when no one turns up: students are already glad to know that this alternative is open. Students will work together in small communities to help each other online.

11. *Let students take control:* You can set up online group spaces for small groups of students and ask them to support and consult with one another before sending emails to you directly. You should post a few questions to help students crack the ice and start a dialogue. Encourage students to choose the communication methods they choose to use. Some classes can click well and others won't, so this little tip will help students feel emotionally supported and will their inbox flow.

12. *Don't hide your feelings:* Online teachers' emotional openness is a great instructional strategy. Tell your students that you've been teaching online for the first time, and that you're learning while teaching. Ask them to encourage you, to tell them that you would do your best to promote their learning as well. They're going to be compassionate and they express the same feelings, and you're going to be set up for success.

13. *Repeat:* Online students do not like frequent changes in their learning style. They're able to replicate the same structure and activities. When you discover a teaching style that fits for you, feel free to repeat it every week before you're back in your classroom.

Conclusion

Online Teaching has become a popular activity in lockdown situation to deliver uninterrupted learning material and to take care of the academic needs of the students. Online teaching experience, unlike conventional classroom experience, consists of a variety of computer-assisted teaching techniques requiring certain computer equipment and applications. While there are positive and negative sides of online teaching, it can be a very satisfying work to help you develop certain viable skills. By being an online instructor, you can learn how to be more organized, manage your time better, become more comfortable with technology, learn software skills and will become an influential writer. There are some challenges of online teaching like extra hard work, requirements of equipment's, problem of equality and equity, unaffordable for children of poor families etc. However, if the teacher overcome all these challenges then he will be able to learn new skills which will of better help in the classroom along with the advancement in career and personality. With the lockdown resulting in the closure of schools and universities,

students and teachers have switched to end-tech outlets to help sustain academic traction. Online teaching and learning in the Indian market have gained tremendous traction in recent years.

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