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IMPACT OF ONLINE CLASSES AMONG STUDENTS during covid 19

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Abstract

In view of the Covid-19 outbreak all across the world, everyone is taking all precautionary and preventive measures to combat this pandemic. We are following the norms of social distancing and keeping ourselves in the confines of our homes or offices. All schools, varsities, workplaces have been shut down to contain the spread of this novel virus. It was expected that the shutdown would impact the learning process to a great extent. But it is actually not the case. All thanks to technology. Someone has rightly stated that learning should never stop even at the time of crisis. ICT, which a great enabler and facilitator of online learning, has kept the learning process intact even at this time. Various Digital platforms and ICT initiatives are accessed by teachers, students, researchers and corporate officials round the clock. These tools enable constant learning and offer several benefits such as flexibility, comfort, and interactive user interface. In this digital era, even when the students and faculties are having a barrier of social distancing, several industries are getting impacted including education industry but ICT has reduced this barrier of social distancing and lockdown with the help of so many digital and online initiatives and tools. Students can be in constant touch with their faculties with the help of online classes conducted through Skype, Zoom, google hangouts, google classroom etc. At the same time, one more important question is: can students actually benefit from technology at home? Here we clearly have an equity issue. While financially well-off families can afford computers and multiple devices, students from struggling families can hardly afford simple devices and may likely not have the internet at home.

INTRODUCTION

Online lessons are helping educational institutions around World beat the Covid-19 lockdown to push ahead with the academic calen-

dar. But the trend has raised many concerns among educational experts, including those at UNESCO and UNICEF.

1. Assistant teacher

While some have expressed alarm about the potential dangers of internet exposure for young children, others say they are scared the digital shift may alienate economically disadvantaged students who don't have access to the technology digital lessons require.

On 15 April, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which is engaged in humanitarian aid for young ones around the world, said "millions of children are at increased risk of harm as their lives move increasingly online during lockdown in the Covid-19 pandemic".

According to the statement, the internet exposure puts children at the risk of "online sexual exploitation and grooming, as predators look to exploit the Covid-19 pandemic". Online grooming, a worrying product of the internet and social media age, involves predatory adults building online relationships with gullible children and tricking or pressuring them into sexual behaviour. Under the shadow of Covid-19, the lives of millions of children have temporarily shrunk to just their homes and their screens. We must help them navigate this new reality," the statement quoted UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore as saying.

In a report issued on 21 April, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), a multi-dimensional agency, highlighted another concern about the online shift.

Giving a global perspective, UNESCO noted, "Half of the total number of learners — some 826 million (82.6 crore) students — kept out of the classroom by the Covid-19 pandemic, do not have access to a household computer and 43 per cent (706 million or 70.6 crore)

have no internet at home, at a time when digitally-based distance learning is used to ensure educational continuity in the vast majority of countries

BENEFITS OF ONLINE EDUCATION

An online education is preferred by individuals who may not be able to make it for classes in a traditional brick and mortar kind of college due to various reasons. Below we'll examine some of the benefits this exciting education provides to such students.

1. Flexibility

Students have the freedom to juggle their careers and school because they aren't tied down to a fixed schedule. In a traditional classroom setting, class meeting times are set, and the student has no power over this, forcing them to work their schedules around these dates. Most people who choose online learning tend to have other commitments, and prefer this mode of learning as it gives them power over how they will delegate their time towards their different projects.

2. Reduced Costs

Online education can cost less due to a variety of reasons. For example, there is no cost for commuting. Assorted costs that are related to transport, such as fuel, parking, car maintenance, and public transportation costs don't affect the online student.

3. Networking Opportunities

Online education also provides students with the chance to network with peers across nations or even different continents. This often leads to other opportunities in terms of collaboration with other individuals in the implementation of a project. At the same time, it

makes them culturally sensitive and able to fit into other environments easily given their exposure to other cultures.

4. Documentation

All the information that you will need will be safely stored in an online database. This includes things like live discussion documents, training materials and emails. This means that if there's ever anything that needs to be clarified, the student will be able to access these documents fast, saving valuable time. This is especially useful for individuals that need to carry out research for a project and submit their findings to a panel.

5. Increased Instructor - Student Time

Students in traditional classrooms may not get the personalized attention they need to have concepts clarified. Although class sizes are small at CCA, most colleges have classes of students that number in the hundreds. This is not a problem for this type of education because online guided discussions and personal talk time with their professors and lecturers is a hallmark of online classes. This increases the chances of a student performing well due to the time their instructors give them. This also enhances their problem-solving and communication skills, as well as knowing how to defend their arguments to superiors if needed.

6. Access to Expertise

An online college education might give students access to specialized degree courses that may not be available in an easily accessible or local institution of learning. Online classes allow the sharing of expertise that helps more people have access to education that is not readily available in certain geographic locations.

This type of education has grown over the last few years and has experienced mainstream acceptance. With an online class, you get to control your learning environment, which ultimately helps you develop a deeper understanding of your degree course. New models of learning are always springing up in the market, providing students with varied opportunities to fashion their education into something that fits them, not the other way round. It also provides individuals an opportunity to finish a degree they might have started and were unable to continue with for one reason or another. The future of online degree education looks promising, and opens up education to a larger section of the population than ever before.

WEAKNESS OF ONLINE LEARNING

While online programs have significant strengths and offer unprecedented accessibility to quality education, there are weaknesses inherent in the use of this medium that can pose potential threats to the success of any online program. These problems fall into six main categories:

1. Technology

Equity and Accessibility to Technology

Before any online program can hope to succeed, it must have students who are able to access the online learning environment. Lack of access whether it be for economical or logistics reasons will exclude otherwise eligible students from the course. This is a significant issue in rural and lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Furthermore, speaking from an administrative point of view, if students cannot afford the technology the institution employs, they are lost as customers. As far as Internet accessibility is concerned, it is not universal, and in some areas of the United States and

other countries, Internet access poses a significant cost to the user. Some users pay a fixed monthly rate for their Internet connection, while others are charged for the time they spend online. If the participants' time online is limited by the amount of Internet access they can afford, then instruction and participation in the online program will not be equitable for all students in the course. This is a limitation of online programs that rely on Internet access.

Computer Literacy

Both students and facilitators must possess a minimum level of computer knowledge in order to function successfully in an online environment. For example, they must be able to use a variety of search engines and be comfortable navigating on the World Wide Web, as well as be familiar with Newsgroups, FTP procedures and email. If they do not possess these technology tools, they will not succeed in an online program; a student or faculty member who cannot function on the system will drag the entire program down.

Limitations of Technology

User friendly and reliable technology is critical to a successful online program. However, even the most sophisticated technology is not 100% reliable. Unfortunately, it is not a question of if the equipment used in an online program will fail, but when. When everything is running smoothly, technology is intended to be low profile and is used as a tool in the learning process.

2. The Students

While an online method of education can be a highly effective alternative medium of education for the mature, self-disciplined student, it is an inappropriate learning environment for

more dependent learners. Online asynchronous education gives students control over their learning experience, and allows for flexibility of study schedules for non traditional students; however, this places a greater responsibility on the student. In order to successfully participate in an online program, student must be well organized, self-motivated, and possess a high degree of time management skills in order to keep up with the pace of the course. For these reasons, online education is not appropriate for younger students (i.e. elementary or secondary school age), and other students who are dependent learners and have difficulty assuming responsibilities required by the online paradigm.

3. The Facilitator

Lack of Essential Online Qualities

Successful on-ground instruction does not always translate to successful online instruction. If facilitators are not properly trained in online delivery and methodologies, the success of the online program will be compromised. An instructor must be able to communicate well in writing and in the language in which the course is offered. An online program will be weakened if its facilitators are not adequately prepared to function in the Virtual Classroom.

4. The Administration and Faculty

Some environments are disruptive to the successful implementation of an online program. Administrators and/or faculty members who are uncomfortable with change and working with technology or feel that online programs cannot offer quality education often inhibit the process of implementation. These people represent a considerable weakness in an online program because they can inhibit its success.

Sometimes administration cannot see beyond the bottom line and look at online programs only as ways to increase revenues and are thus not committed to seeing online programs as a means of providing quality education to people who would otherwise not be able to access it. In such a case, an institution that is not aware of the importance of proper facilitator training, essential facilitator characteristics, and limitations of class size would not understand the impact that these elements can have on the success of an online program.

5. The Online Environment

Levels of Synergy

Online learning has its most promising potential in the high synergy represented by active dialog among the participants, one of the most important sources of learning in a Virtual Classroom. However, in larger classes (20 or more students), the synergy level starts to shift on the learning continuum until it eventually becomes independent study to accommodate the large class. At this point, dialog is limited as well as interaction among participants and the facilitator. The medium is not being used to its greatest potential.

What Should Not Be Taught Online

In the excitement and enthusiasm for online programs that has been generated recently, it is important to recognize that some subjects should not be taught online because the electronic medium in its current state of development does not permit the best method on instruction. Examples are hands-on subjects such as public speaking, surgery, dental hygiene, and sports where physical movement and practice contribute to the achievement of the learning objectives. These subjects are probably best

taught in a face-to-face traditional learning environment

6. The Curriculum

The curriculum of any online program must be carefully considered and developed in order to be successful. Many times, in an institution's haste to develop distance education programs, the importance of the curriculum and the need for qualified professionals to develop it is overlooked. Curriculum and teaching methodology that are successful in on-ground instruction will not always translate to a successful online program where learning and instructional paradigms are quite different. Online curriculum must reflect the use of dialog among students (in the form of written communication), and group interaction and participation. Traditional classroom lectures have no place in a successful online program. Education of the highest quality can and will occur in an online program provided that the curriculum has been developed or converted to meet the needs of the online medium.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The COVID-19 has resulted in schools shut all across the world. Globally, over 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom.
2. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms.
3. Research suggests that online learning has been shown to increase retention of information, and take less time, meaning the changes coronavirus have caused might be here to stay.

CONCLUSION

While countries are at different points in their COVID-19 infection rates, worldwide there are currently more than 1.2 billion children in 186 countries affected by school closures due to the pandemic.

Today is a very exciting time for technology and education. Online programs offer technology-based instructional environments that expand learning opportunities and can provide top quality education through a variety of formats and modalities. With the special needs of adult learners who need or want to continue their education, online programs offer a convenient solution to conflicts with work, family and study schedules. Institutions of higher education have found that online programs are essential in providing access to education for the populations they wish to serve. In order for an online program to be successful, the curriculum, the facilitator, the technology and the students must be carefully considered and balanced in order to take full advantage of the strengths of this format and at the same time, avoid pitfalls that could result from its weaknesses.

What does this mean for the future of learning?

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 un conducive to sustained growth, others believe that a new hybrid model of education will emerge, with significant benefits

There have already been successful transitions amongst many universities. For example, [Zhejiang University](#) managed to get more than 5,000 courses online just two weeks into the transition using . The [Imperial College London](#) started offering a course on the science of coronavirus, which is now the most enrolled class launched in 2020 on [Coursera](#).

Many are already touting the benefits. It has changed the way of teaching. It enable teachers to reach out to their students more efficiently and effectively through chat groups, video meetings, voting and also document sharing, especially during this pandemic. Students also find it is easier to communicate on Lark.

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