



ONLINE LEARNING AND IT'S POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACT IN HIGHER EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Education sector presently going through a crisis. The lockdown has restricted classroom teaching and students are completely relying on on-line content and remote learning features to study these days. The various platforms through which students are interacting with their mentors are variable. The present study explores the impact of the online learning on Post graduate students. Teachers are using Zoom; Go to meetings, Hangouts and other platforms to deliver their content and lectures. However, there are many issues regarding availability, access and affordability for the students. The students are stressed on account of various things as many of them are from distant places. Lack of interaction with teachers and peers is affecting the learning process and may have consequences on the results. The concern regarding the examination and evaluation is the major cause of concern. Technology cannot replace teachers but teachers can use technology for the betterment of the sector. The impact of Corona is huge and long-lasting on the sector. Many institutions are going for digital classes to ensure studies for their students. Technology has been changed a lot in the last few years. We need to change the mind-set of faculties, as technology is not a threat to them." Technology can be used as a resource in learning and can open new opportunities in the education sector. The online learning has transformed education. Technology is just a facilitator and we must use it wisely for providing education to students. The usage of technology has changed the higher education and people found new ways. Virtual education is developing and is creating e-classrooms to tackle such crisis in the future. But virtual classrooms will never replace the physical ones. "In this article efforts have been made to throw light on the positive and negative impact of online learning in higher education during Lockdown.

KEYWORDS: Education, lockdown, technology, online learning ,highereducation

INTRODUCTION

Higher education's current move to online learning may be leaving a sour taste in the mouths of students and faculty across the country, but there is a silver lining.

By Michael Horn

The physical classroom learning nowadays is no longer applicable for the current younger generations. Internet and distance learning which is generally known as online education plays a vital roles in the country's education system. The lockdown has resulted in schools, college universities being shut for more than a month now. Universities work in full swing during this time of the year as it is the time for semester assessments and completion of the syllabus is on wheels. The decision of the Government needs to be appreciated as the schools and other educational institutes cater to the younger, dynamic, and most productive chunk of our population and it is the duty of the Government to

protect the youth and hence the closure was inevitable. ICTs are making dynamic changes in society. They are influencing all aspects of our life. The influences are felt more and more at schools levels. Because ICTs provide both students and teachers with more opportunities in adapting learning and teaching to individual needs, society is forcing schools aptly respond to this technical innovation. Tinio (2002) stated the potentials of ICTs in increasing access and improving relevance and quality of education in developing countries. ICT in this review paper refers to the computer and internet connections used to handle and communicate information for learning purpose.

Technology can be understood as a tool or technique for extending human capacity. In this sense, ICTs extend our human capacity to perceive, understand and communicate. The mobile phone enables us to speak from wherever we are to others thousands of kilo meters away; television permits us



to see what is happening on the other side of the planet almost as it happens; and the Web supports immediate access to, and exchange of information, opinions and shared interests. In the field of formal education, ICTs are increasingly deployed as tools to extend the learner's capacity to perceive, understand and communicate, as seen in the increase in online learning programs and the use of the computer and internet as a learning support tool in the classroom. Although universities were certainly leaders in engineering the Internet and interoperable computer systems to connect researchers for e-mail and data exchange, the use of ICTs for education and data exchange. There's the optimistic and the pessimistic side. The more optimistic side is that everybody stuck at home allows us to think much more about personalized learning. In many respects, teachers can actually personalize tools and support much better using resources online. In some ways, we can't hide the way that we used to, and so teachers can be even more attentive to the needs of their students.

If we are using functions like chat and so forth, people who don't tend to speak up can ask questions. Teachers are better able to gauge who understands versus whose not. In other words, technology can make it easier for struggling students to signal their need for help and revisit resources like videos so that they have more time to digest them.

As teachers, our main aim is to make students learn effectively and efficiently. For doing so, a teacher has to do several activities such as plan properly, provide effective instruction and evaluate the learning using appropriate methods and techniques. That means, a teacher has to perform a host of activities inside and outside the classroom. You also know that effectiveness or ineffectiveness of teaching is closely linked to teacher competence. Competent teacher would also create classroom conditions and climate, which are conducive for student learning.

IMPACT OF ONLINE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION SOME POSITIVE EFFECTS OF ONLINE LEARNING DURING ' COVID-19 Efficiency

From the student's perspective online learning allows the exploration of finding more flexible ways to learn. The learning through text has now been replaced by interactions, opportunities with instructors and other student with anytime-anywhere basis. Hence it cultivates the competency and learning skills among the students. It also offers wide avenues for students to continue learning to acquire new and upgrade knowledge, skills, and values by understanding and interpreting at a time and at a place of their choice. Learning with the help

of ICT skills enable to attract and enrich the student learning experience.

No Boundaries

Online Learning offer the student the flexible time of place and time of delivering or receiving learning information. In e-learning environment various tools and technologies are employed such as internet mediated teaching, web-based education, TV and radio broadcast, Virtual Classroom, distributed learning, audio chatting, video conferencing and on-line discussion are the major tools which help the students to access the upgraded information from any corner of the world. In a blended course there was face-to face classroom discussion which is now replaced by on-line content.

Cost-effective and Saves Time

E-Learning offers incredible educational improvements through on-line learning services, greater information access, greater communication and cost efficiency. These days learners are well versed in operating the smart phones, text messaging, and using the internet, so running an on-line course has become a simple affair as itself the cost is reduced because every individual now carries a Smartphone and the usage of ICT has led the information on our finger tips. Overall traditional learning is expensive as it takes a long time and the results may vary. E-learning has now become a substitute that is faster, cheaper and potentially better.

Ease in Learning

With the invention and introduction of computer and internet in the late 20th century-learning tools and delivery methods expanded. The on-line delivery content material has been helping the people who wouldn't have able to attend school, college or further education due to time or geographical constraints. However E-learning has proved to be a best platform to provide content material at their door step. It helps to build knowledge base, expand their skills sets and enrich their lives through expanded knowledge. At times it becomes impossible to engage and attend the on-line lectures at such those who missed out the lecture can view the recording as per their convenient time or can watch it further for their understanding. Again language barrier can be resolved as the content are available in different regional languages. Practical skills are somewhat difficult to grasp but you can easily share the information about it.

Meet different Ends

It is the fact that we all do respond to the teaching aid in a different way- some of us learn visually, repetition, writing numerous times, some prefer to learn by themselves, some needs guiding from someone, some are extroverts while some are introverts and feel scared to speak up openly, thus E-learning proves to be an asset to meet these different styles of learning. E-learning also offers audio-



content or interactive testing to attract young learners than traditional book learning. Through e-learning learners can communicate through email, forum, and chat room allowing each other to participate in the same and significantly reduces the time needed to locate information.

Transformation from traditional to modern learning

E-learning in modern education and training system undertakes continuous self-improvement. The increasing influence of globalization and the emerging ICT tools fulfils the new requirement for all areas of social life. E-learning in the digital age which creates student-centered learning offers flexibility to explore the new learning methods. Undoubtedly, the implementation of e-learning systems in higher education has enabled dramatic change in teaching and learning practices. Transformation through e-learning has brought a change in the cultural expectations and the continuing development of technological skills which are enhanced through the appropriate use of technological blend.

Research

If a school's library is outdated or lacking in a selection of titles, a student might find it difficult to compile the necessary research for an essay or research paper. As long as the school has a computer lab, students are able to use the Internet and digital encyclopedias to obtain the research they need. While students should be wary of the legitimacy of some of the content they read online, many schools use software like the Encyclopedia Britannica to help students do research.

Globalization

When schools in different parts of the state, country or world connect, students can "meet" their counterparts through video conferencing without leaving the classroom.

Educational Games

In younger grades, teachers expose children to computers through educational games. Instead of playing board games that focus on education, students can learn the basics of spelling, counting and other early educational lessons through computer games that make learning fun. Because many schools have at least one computer in each classroom, the teacher can make that computer a vital part of learning for young students.

Distance Education

In the past, students could take distance or continuing education classes, also called "correspondence courses," at community colleges and universities. After enrolling in a course of this style, a student would receive course documents in the mail and would be required to mail assignments to his teacher at the educational institution. The process could be long and complicated. Thanks to

technology, continuing education students can take courses over the Internet at their convenience.

Web Seminars

When this is the case, the students' education can suffer. But thanks to technology, students can use the Internet to virtually attend Web seminars put on by educational institutions. NASA, for instance, offers a program that allows students to talk to astronauts in space.

Negative Impact 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 main categories:

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 neighbourhoods. 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. However,



breakdowns can occur at any point along the system, for example, the server which hosts the program could crash and cut all participants off from the class; a participant may access the class through a networked computer which could go down; individual PCs can have numerous problems which could limit students' access; finally, the Internet connection could fail, or the institution hosting the connection could become bogged down with users and either slow down, or fail all together. In situations like these, the technology is neither seamless nor reliable and it can detract from the learning experience.

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.

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.

An online instructor must be able to compensate for lack of physical presence by creating a supportive environment in the Virtual Classroom where all students feel comfortable participating and especially where students know that their instructor is accessible. Failure to do this can alienate the class both from each other and from the instructor. However, even if a virtual professor is competent enough to create a comfortable virtual environment in which the class can operate, still the lack of physical presence at an institution can be a limitation for an online program. For the faculty as well as the participants, such things as being left out of meetings and other events that require on-site interaction could present a limiting factor in an online program. .

The Online Environment

Some environments are disruptive to the successful implementation of an online program. These people represent a considerable weakness in an online program because they can inhibit its success.

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. Some subjects are probably best taught in a face-to-face traditional learning environment. On line teaching cannot satisfy all educational needs and goals. Just because it may be technologically possible to simulate a physical learning experience, this does not necessarily mean that it is the best way to teach it.

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.

CONCLUSION

Education sector presently going through a crisis. The lockdown has restricted classroom teaching and students are completely relying on on-line content and remote learning features to study these days. 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 to make 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.

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