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Online Teaching and Learning: Issues and Remedies

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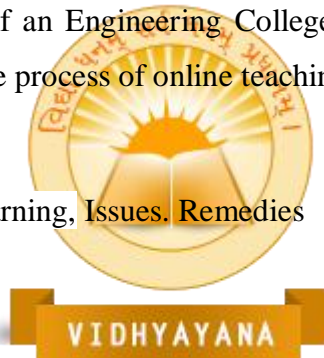
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Abstract:

The world of education is shifting towards online teaching and training during this period of Covid 19 pandemic. The positive aspects of online mode are undeniable: reduced costs, convenience and flexibility for the student and the ability to train thousands of people all over the globe at the same time. You can monitor what students are doing at any given moment, and it breaks with the inertia and passivity of classroom courses. However, e-learning has its own weaker sides in respective domain of education. It would be too optimistic to see E-learning as a panacea. The only way to know and understand the issues regarding e-teaching and e-learning is to interact with those who actually are doing this: the teachers and students. Having the knowledge of both – strength and weaknesses of online mode of teaching and learning, we can implement it with its full potential. This paper is the result of interaction with the students and teachers of an Engineering College in which the author has tried to highlight some major issues in the process of online teaching and learning.

Keywords: Online Teaching – learning, Issues, Remedies



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Introduction:

The world of education in India has entered into a new era of imparting education in schools and higher education institutes in Post- Covid period. The teachers have to resort to the online mode of education to maintain social distance. In the same manner, the students also have to be ready to learn through online sources. No one deny the advantages of online mode as reduced costs, convenience and flexibility for the student and the ability to train thousands of students all over the nation at the same time. Even the monitoring and assessment are practiced through online modes. The traditional classrooms are getting replaced by online classrooms. Though we are sailing ahead creating new milestone through online teaching and learning, it has some weaker sides in respective domain of education. It would be too optimistic to see E-learning as an ultimate solution. The possible major issues and challenges of online education are discussed in this paper. These are based on researcher's interaction with the teachers and students of engineering stream in which the author has tried to highlight some major issues in the process of online teaching and learning in the present scenario.

Students' struggle to Adjust

The prospect of having an entire university experience shrunk into a personal electronic device (Mobile or Computer) is bit unusual for those students who have been taught through traditional classroom settings. Traditionally, a degree of passivity is expected during lectures, particularly when note-taking and listening, while discussion with tutors is allotted a limited time. Online learning demands springing into action, accepting course material in a variety of multimedia formats, and taking part in online discussions which can continue indefinitely. Before initiating the online learning the students have to be made aware that an open heart and mind is necessary to be able to accept change and reap the many benefits like, flexibility, personal tutor guidance, access to course materials any time, 24/7 student support system etc. in e-learning making them realise the positive sides of online education. Once they realise the importance and benefits of the online mode, they will surely respond to it in a positive manner.



Is Online teaching boring?

Yes, As per the feedback of the students and teachers, online teaching – learning results into boredom if the session is too long and informative in nature. Many e-learning classes and courses consist of never-ending texts followed by a long list of multiple choice questions that fail to engage students. More than e-learning, it feels like e-reading. It is also difficult on the part of the teachers to keep students engaged for a longer period of time with such kind of content. For the said reason, Students are simply not interested in taking the training on MOOC platforms (massive open online courses), do not access the platform and ‘those who have joined are not able to complete the course. MOOCs are a good example: only 54% of students who registered for a course actually completed it. To prevent students from getting bored, be sure to make your teaching interactive, dynamic and interesting. This has become easier with the help of interactive training, providing challenges, videos, storytelling, gamified solutions, simulators to ensure practice and [game-based learning](#).

Technical difficulties for Students

Technical problems are one of the main stumbling blocks on the way of online teaching. There are compatibility issues (with operating systems, browsers or smartphones) and the network problems (as the students may belong to remote area). These issues add to their frustration and reduce students’ engagement which result in to inconvenience and loss of interest and they will probably not be able to catch up with what is discussed and taught in the online teaching. While dealing with this issue, try to choose the content that do not require much internal memory or a high-speed Internet connection. Also the students do not have to download any bulky programs or print documents. You also need to pay attention to the sound quality (an issue that is often neglected) and be sure that the students can join you through several smartphones, and browsers. Preparing FAQ can help you to guide the students in advance regarding certain routine technical problems.

Students don’t have time (can’t manage time)



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Actually, the e-learning format offers students great flexibility as they can view and review courses, whenever and wherever they like, at their own pace and without any physical limitations. However, so much flexibility often results in inaction. Time passes and the student still hasn't accessed the online material (thinking that they will do it later as they have enough time). They have so much time and flexibility that they can never actually find time to do it. This procrastination actually results into burden piled up at the end of the term or the online course. As the engineering students are actively involved in online mode of teaching – learning. The students were asked about The students of engineering college said that they do not have time because they have to write lengthy assignments for all the courses of the semester and have to follow the deadline of submission. They also have to prepare for examination. Students can be guided by experts regarding time management is a vital asset in the overall professional development. Keeping prioritised to-do lists, making a study calendar, keeping a diary, using phone apps, are all good habits to nurture.

Isolation : Students need to talk to people



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Though online interactions have lots of advantages, the most affecting limitation is that students may sometimes get frustrated due to the lack of human contact, the absence of a teacher and an inability to discuss it with their classmates. They do not feel the live environment as such. In most of the cases, the online world becomes too small for the student and they may need a physical space and presence of human being around where they can communicate and resolve their queries and practice with real tools. The only solution to this issue is to foster personal interaction within the online frame as much as possible. Group work or forums can help students discuss and resolve their queries through discussion. It is important that students have a teacher whom they can contact through any other medium. The use of social media can be promoted to provide additional opportunity for social interaction and humanizing the learning process.

Students can't have hands on practice

The best way to learn something is by practicing it (learning by doing). It is only by practicing the things we do and experience (experiential learning) that we are able to



internalize and recall the content and skills we learn. However, many online classes and interactions overlook this essential component in technical education and focus solely on theoretical content and external lessons. Thus, it is difficult to be understood by the students without practice and the learning process does not reach its full potential. Use of virtual labs and simulators can be of great importance in dealing with this issue to recreate real-life situations so that students can practice and experiment in safe and controlled environments. If you incorporate simulators into your training course, you will be able to solve this problem and ensure that your students put their new knowledge and skills to practical use.

Making the Content Presentation Interesting

Other important aspect of online teaching learning is the ways in which the content is being introduced to the student. Students must feel excited, must feel eager about “what is next?” as well as experience the variety and innovation in the nature of presentation of content. Using PPTs only for online presentation has now become common so you must add some other type of presentation and discussion tool like video, audio, animation, students presenting some part of the topic, question answer sessions based on the provided content in advance etc.

Appropriate Sources of Information

Online classes must have to be supported by the sources of material which can support what the teachers have taught in the class. The internet is the vast ocean of information where a student may feel confused with abundant information for the same topic. The teachers have to plan well in advance about the sources to be shared with the students in support of the taught lessons or topics. Searching appropriate content online is a kind of challenge on the part of teachers as well as students. Experts of the subject can help the teachers in dealing with issue.

Self-Discipline and Motivation

There can be unlimited distraction of already being on the internet i.e. social media and chats side by side. YouTube and news websites are as present as your next assignment. A lot of valuable study time may get wasted if you don't monitor your internet usage closely. Self-



discipline is expected in the sense that it is prudent to treat your studies as if they were an extra part-time job; complete with working hours and repercussions for arriving late and underperformance. Because of the flexibility of online learning, you can choose a location that you love; a café, a park, a museum, or your favourite library, the choices are endless and complete the tasks assigned.

Expert's Blind Spot

With continuous and deliberate practice, Teachers become experts in their subjects and this very fact separates them from recalling what it felt like to be a novice learner. Internalizing new ideas until they are almost intuitive, it turns out, is a key component of learning. But unpacking these ideas for novice learners, laying out every concealed gear and spring, is a key component of teaching. It is in this unpacking of ideas where many experts fail.

The expert's blind spot is a hypothesis that suggests that instructors are not always good at predicting the difficulty level of new ideas for students. The study by [Koedinger and Nathan](#) showed a deviation between how math teachers rated the difficulty of problems and actual student performance on the same problems. In other words, the teachers tended to believe certain problems were easier than they actually were. This is a challenge for teachers everywhere including those teaching online.

Thus, these are the major issues faced by the teachers and students in the pursuit of the novel approach of e-teaching and e-learning during the Corona pandemic. Still, there may be more issues come up to surface as we move ahead. The dissemination education through online mode can be effective and fruitful if these issues are resolved and taken care of.

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