Synchronizing Pedagogy and Technology in Post COVID Scenario

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Abstract

The abnormal is our next normal. This pandemic has an enormous impact on global education in a general and massive impact on our Indian education system in particular. This article deals with the use of technology in a pandemic condition. How teachers and students are using different synchronous and asynchronous mode in teaching and learning. The article will also talk about how the pandemic has unveiled the vulnerability and dearth of both school education and higher education in India. The article will bring out in the open the challenges the stakeholders are facing during a pandemic. The focal point of this article is the suggestions to revamp our pedagogical skills using technology. Lastly, to conclude, we as a teaching fraternity in this present situation have a role to play. A role to be independent, knowledgeable, skilful, educated to hegemonize technology and not the other way round. We cannot deny the truth; there are many opportunities available online, more than the excuses we construe for not availing it.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Eductaional Technology, Post COVID, Losk-down

Introduction

Dealing with the foreseen challenges of the 'virus' has taken a significant toll on people around the world. There is an unprecedented rise in the cases of individual affected by this virus. Even our policymakers are battling with the horrific ordeal to decide whether the lockdown will flatten the curve and save lives. The real question that we are struggling today is the uncertainty that is lurking around us. How long do we have to close down our normal routine functioning? The abnormal is our next normal. This pandemic has an enormous impact on global education in a general and massive impact on our Indian education system in particular.

With the sudden lockdown announcement on 22nd March 2020, many of us were mentally unprepared about the duration of this lockdown. The month was crucial for all the students in schools as their academic session was coming

to an end, and they were in the final threshold of their year-end exams. This uncertainty has left the students and teachers in eternal limbo. Not knowing how to make the period we have in our hand productive. In Higher Education, students were involved in their projects, assignments, sessional and practicals. All came to a halt in a moment. Many outstation students left the residential hostels to be in safe havens of their home. The way they scuttered off, not all the students packed their study materials for their home. Many of their books, handouts, and notes are locked upon their hostels. Teachers, too, have left their academic activities and files in their departments and schools. As we all are accustomed to rely on the hard copies. The halt in all the normal functioning and processes left everyone distressed and wrecked.

Technology and Pandemic

The only ray of hope in this situation is the'Technology' we had in our hands. The same tehnology which we were instantly using for human communication because of social distancing. This social isolation devoid us of human touch as a result internet and technology is being extensively used to revive the human connection. Education Sector is also one area in which the pandemic made all the stakeholders move from their comfort zone and experience what technology has to offer. Though needless to say, this technology may not have the same impact in all the socio-economic groups of our society. Children from low socio-economic backgrounds do not have access to what educational technology has to offer.

However, it can be seen with each passing day that how teachers, who were once mostly accustomed to the physical classroom and face to face interaction, are moving forward to adopt new methods of e-teaching and e-learning. In fact, both teachers and students are learning together as to how to make full benefit of serviceability of educational technology. The more they are getting hands-on experiece of it, the more they are motivated to experiment with it.

Pandemic has acted like a catalyst and has pushed teachers, students and administrators to devise innovative solutions in a short time. The true essence of time may be felt now in this lockdown condition, especially for a student. Therefore teachers are tempted to develop learning material using an interactive app, asynchronous online tools like google classroom, Whatsapp group, facebook messenger or email. Synchronous face to face audio and video interaction and learning tools ZOOM, GoToMeeting, WEBEX, Skype etc

The pandemic has unveiled the vulnerability and dearth of both school education and higher education in India. There are many schools and institutions which do not have the facilities for e-teaching or e-learning. The faculty members, especially the senior faculty, are not tech-savvy, and they lack the skills required for e-teaching. Realizing this, the Human Resource Development Centre in the University has instantly launched on online faculty development Programmes for all the teachers. Several online courses have been initiated by SWAYAM, UG/PG MOOCs, e-PG-Pathshala etc.

Another critical transformation we observe in online education is the plethoras of mails inviting the faculty members, research scholars, and postgraduate students to attend webinars. These webinars are addressing the burning issues of using and familiarizing the participants with learning tools. The main objective is for the participants to shed their inhibition. To create motivated learners is crucial. We are facing a digital divide between motivated and non-motivated

learners. We, as learners have to develop the internal locus of control so that we are better equipped to control our environment. There will be consequences for every action of ours.

Challenges Ahead

It is for all of us to reweigh and reassess whether the post-COVID has altered our society for the better or for worse. Grave apprehensions are being felt in our higher education system. By and large, there is the limited usage of e-resources, ineffective delivery content and the pliancy of examination which reflects that we have yet to match up with other emerging countries who are using educational technology to its fullest. Another distressing issue is the economic recession we are facing which has a massive impact on the employability of our students, paying capacity of students in private institutions and visa restriction of offshore students enrolled in universities abroad. The impact is also on the hiring services of the faculty affecting the quality and excellence. Even the low fee can prove major obstacles in managing the working capital. The online teaching-learning has also affected the differently-abled students. The course developed online is not in compliance with the educational need for visually and hearing challenged students.This is another key area in which the teachers have to be trained to use educational technology according to their needs.

Techno-pedagogy

As the pandemic has made online teaching, as the only surviving mode to teach the students in future. Therefore that time is not far away when the best faculty will be sought across the globe with no political boundaries. The best faculty will be the one with subject expertise and IT skills. Our teaching methods need severe revamping and amelioration.

Techno-pedagogy can be defined as *"Electronically mediated courses that integrate sound pedagogic principles of teaching/learning with the use of technology"*. For a teacher, it is undoubtedly exhilarating to see their students face light up when they are explaining something perplexing and difficult comprehend. The efficient teacher takes complicated topics, boils them down to their bare essence and draw the connections between different concepts. This helps them to understand and retain the subject matter. When teachers are using online teaching pedagogy, they should know it is not putting the slides together and whipping through 40-50 slides in an hour, where everything pops up on the screen. You cannot pour vast cascade of knowledge into a cup. The thing we educators should understand is that we have a bigger audience online that we need to satisfy. And also we have to satisfy our students *at the same time*. To teach somebody through some medium (in this case, is the online teaching-learning apps) we better know it well enough to be able to use it to teach them. Using technology effectively is what we have to master now. Each one of us is trained to teach and explain. We have to adopt *'Learning at the speed of explanation'*, very imperative to explain it to any level of learners. One way is to use chalk and talk online, which allows us to cater to the different educational needs of the students. They can record, pause and replay the video. And they can also control our speed of presentation by clicking on 1.5 or 2.0 speed and get the essence.

Another thing is, using the vocabulary to get to the audience and help them to understand. If we can explain something well, then we should be able to explain it to just about any level of learners, by having a good reservoir of words,

diction and phraseology. The bottom line is, we have to sustain the motivation of the student with short video clips of concepts, as it is difficult to wrap the human brain around some concept or idea with lengthy videos or verbiage.

Conclusion

Luckily the pandemic has given us the opportunity to use this time productivity. We have to equip ourselves with the latest *know-hows* of different learning apps. Keeping touch with faculties in different countries will help us to analyze the best possible solutions we have in our hands with limited resources. This is a trial and error phase for all of us. There will be technical glitches and some issues of security concern. These too will be dealt with passage of time. The silver lining in this situation is that lockdown has on the whole reduced our stress by slowing our lives down, giving us the time to reflect, think and plan. It has also improved our mental and physical health by the changing our lifestyle and eating habits. Tools like quarantine and isolation will be used as we have to live with this virus. It is vital to instil in our minds; it's not like we learn in 1st half of our life and work in the 2nd half of our life. Leaning has to continue throughout our life. In terms of being educated, one should not look at the time or how long it will take to acquire the knowledge- 1 month, 6 months, a year. Even if it takes years, the years will come and go. It's essential to get involved in educating ourselves at every front. Though we are trying to educate students online, we really are not investing in our education. Let not this virus feed our mental sanity and our self-efficacy. Whatever the strategy is adopted, we in this present situation have a role to play. A role to be independent, knowledgeable, skilful, educated enough to hegemonize technology and not the other way round. You cannot deny the truth; there are many opportunities available online, more than the excuses we construe for not availing it.

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