Transition from on campus to online classroom in COVID 19: Preparedness on part of university students and faculty

Umar Ali Khan[1], Khadija Iqbal[2]

Pandemic of COVID -19 has changed the outlook of the whole world. Suddenly the whole world has changed its psyche from meeting and greeting to social distancing. Having its impact on all the things starting from daily life routines to socioeconomic impacts the biggest and challenging affect is on educational system[1]. The educators have been challenged to engage students in online teaching. The busy campuses have become barren, while computers, laptops and mobile phone are the new campuses. Apps used for online teaching are now talk of the day. Google classroom and Zoom are the hot selling articles nowadays[2].

Online teaching has abolished the social distancing between a teacher and a student but at the same time has helped to achieve the parameter of social distancing as a prerequisite for prevention from the virus. Use of technology on part of universities is perhaps the first and most important requirement[3]. An affective online system known as learning management system should be present for each campus. This system should have its SOPs for an effective approach for the teacher as well as students. The online system should be operated by the IT experts to prevent the lapses during sessions and to train the faculty as well[4]. Online library with main educational content like books and videos should be made available to the students as well as faulty. One the system is ready then comes the preparedness of the faculty. Actually the main character for an affective online are the faculty members[2].

Engaging the students is an uphill task but perhaps the turning point for mastering an online session. Uploading the outcomes for the sessions is an effective way for engaging the students but the most loved way is to let the students lead the discussions[5]. Once they are given the driving seat they would be the most valuable asset for running the system. The bold approach should be to uncover the content rather than cover it. Videos are also a source for engagement. Taking regular feed backs from the students will help to ensure quality of the sessions. The most drastic mistake is when we start demanding originality like a traditional classroom[6]. Online students have the advantage of reflection time which is not available in traditional classrooms plus they can use online resources during the session which is an additional advantage. Hands on work and assignments can boost the engagement of the students. Evaluation of the online activities is a must for the working of the system[7]. The facilitators who do not reward and grade the students make this whole exercise unmeaning full.

Students are the end users of this whole exercise. Their problem may range from the connectivity issues to the understanding issues[4]. Learning cycles of students are variable and some use visual aids better than auditory stimuli. Some are affected more by the learning environment while some have their own mental environment capable of learning in any condition. Actual problem is to transform their learning into long term memory skills. Short and focused sessions can make the task easy[6]. Balance of text and images is also a requirement to make students focused on learning. Make the students in charge of their own learning instead of giving them lecture interact to deliver the content. Responsiveness on part of the students is the crux of learning. Logging on and then going to sleep is a major problem. Synchronizing with the facilitator will built the session into health activity[8].

Pakistan is a third world country. To cope with this situation, a joint effort on part of the students, faculty, university and it's administration, is direly required to build the curriculum and save the precious time for building the nation and to participate in this time of crisis.

REFERENCES

1. Mian A, Khan S. Medical education during pandemics: a UK perspective. BMC Med. 2020;18(1):100. doi: 10.1186/s12916-020-01577-y
2. Pei L, Wu H. Does online learning work better than offline learning in undergraduate medical education? A systematic review and meta-analysis.Med Educ Online. 2019;24(1):1666538. doi: 10.1080/10872981.2019.1666538
3. Rees EL, Quinn PJ, Davies B, Fotheringham V. How does peer teaching compare to faculty teaching? A systematic review and meta-analysis. Med Teach. 2016;38(8):829-37. doi: 10.3109/0142159X.2015.1112888.
4. Sinclair P, Kable A, Jones LT. The effectiveness of internet-based e-learning on clinician behavior and patient outcomes: a systematic review protocol. JBI Database System Rev Implement Rep. 2015;13(1):52-64. doi: 10.11124/jbisrir-2015-191

5.   Marton GE, Mccullough B, Ramnanan CJ. A review of teaching skills development programmes for medical students. Med Educ. 2015 ;49(2):149-160. doi: 10.1111/medu.12571.
6.   Pusponegoro HD, Soebadi A, Surya R. Web-based versus conventional training for medical students on infant gross motor screening. Telemed J E Health. 2015;21(12):992.
7.   Pei L, Wu H. Does online learning work better than offline learning in undergraduate medical education? A systematic review and meta-analysis. Med Educ (Online). 2019;24(1):1666538.
8.   Bettinger EP, Fox L, Loeb S. Virtual classrooms: how online college courses affect student success. Am Econ Rev. 2017;107(9):2855–2875.

1.   Professor of Physiology
2.   Professor of Anatomy

Correspondence:
Khadija Iqbal
Professor of Anatomy
Al-Nafees Medical College and Hospital,
Isra University, Islamabad Campus, Islamabad.
Email: khadijaiqbal1972@gmail.com