

The Transition from Traditional to Online Learning: what are the new approaches and challenges for higher education during the pandemic?

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I. Abstract

Many universities have moved from traditional forms of 'in-person' lecture-based teaching to other modes, utilising online, distance or electronic learning (Moran et al., 2018) during COVID-19 outbreaks. Online learning helps to minimise disruptions in teaching and compromising students' learning outcomes (Tuah & Naing, 2020). The most commonly used approaches in distance learning (DL) consist of blended learning (BL) (Sajid et al., 2016); (Kiviniemi, 2014), live teaching (tele-teaching) (Mian & Khan, 2020), flipped classroom (flipped virtual classroom), online practice questions, video conference, teleconference and telehealth (Chick et al., 2020; Tuah & Naing, 2020). BL is a current teaching method and is considered vital to education in the context of pandemic COVID-19. BL refers to a combination of two instruction modes: e-learning and didactic (face-to-face) teaching (Kiviniemi, 2014; Sajid et al., 2016; Tuah & Naing, 2020). It offers flexibility, a student-centred approach and a collaborative learning atmosphere (Kiviniemi, 2014; Sajid et al., 2016). Nonetheless, it may aid or impede active learning, technological use (challenges with information technology), support (due to stress in managing worklife balance) and communication (between students and teachers) (Jowsey et al., 2020) while practising social distancing measures during COVID-19 pandemic. Educators may consider the critical factors when designing and implementing BL: interaction and communication rules, the teacher's role, careful selection of collaboration tools, and technical preparation (de Jong et al., 2014). Educators must examine the nine practical approaches before transitioning from traditional to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators must account for the availability of internet access (using broadband, mobile phone) on sites, teaching and learning online platforms that are freely available (such as CANVAS) and free video conferencing software (for example, skype, zoom) which individuals widely use when setting up the virtual classroom (VC). Also, educators need to choose appropriate pedagogy, including using flipped classroom (FC) approach to facilitate students' collaboration, communication, building and applying the concepts during learning. It helps increase student engagement with content, increase and improve faculty contact time with students, and enhance learning (Rotellar & Cain, 2016). Besides, educators need to plan teaching/learning activities for pre-class (lecture MS PowerPoint slides, notes, articles, videos, quizzes) and post-class (online discussion and feedback) using pages, links, and file features in CANVAS. The purposeful design of teaching plans for courses covering only useful information and estimating ample time to complete assigned tasks to achieve the learning outcomes. These approaches can influence how students engage with content during online learning (Jowsey et al., 2020).

The teaching methods to enhance active learning can promote collaboration, interactions and participation among students (e.g. small group work and discussion, quizzes, case-study). Then, educators can set online discussions, case studies, and short answer questions (SAQs) after VC. Also, students can use online discussion to enhance their experiences in blended learning (Sajid et al., 2016). The assessment options include quizzes, assignments, writing reports, and voiceover slide presentations (using readily available software such as Microsoft PowerPoint and ShareX). The typical online assessment methods used at higher education institutions (HEIs) include online quizzes, continuous feedback, multiple-choice questions, and automated assessment for essays. The online tools for formative assessment in higher education include feedback, self-test quiz and discussion forums. The critical strategies recommended managing online examination, setting up online questions using freely available software and utilising free video conferencing tools such as mobile phones for invigilation purposes. Educators must consider readiness among students and teachers, cheating practices and student diversity when employing online assessment at HEIs. Also, educators must evaluate the methods and their impact on students' learning outcomes. (Tuah & Naing, 2020). At the end of the workshop, the participants will learn practical approaches for educators transitioning from traditional to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, using freely available software and resources.

II. References

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