



Digitalization Of Learning- A Paradigm Shift To The Online Trend

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Digitalization of learning is the new normal whether it is in the interest of the teachers or the students or not. What this exemplifies for the current and future learners is still an enigma but no doubt inevitable. Much has been spoken about robots and artificial intelligence replacing the teachers and the possibility of completing basic education remotely from home. COVID-19 Pandemic came as a jolt and in a flash the learning trend took a paradigm shift from the confines of the school, colleges to the confines of one's home, from the learning from books in hand to the learning from e-books and virtual teachers. Suddenly everything was online and android became a necessary inevitable part of student and teacher life. I recall as a teacher working in a school how much hue and cry we raised when a student brought mobile to school or when we came to know from a parent that a child is spending too much time on mobile. Academic year 20-21 started online to begin with on whatsapp , switched over to app and then zoom classes and Google meet.

This article is an attempt to understand the nuances of this shift in the trend of imparting Education.

“Change is the voyage which needs to continually discover its own landscape, avoid potential pitfalls and enjoy unique scenes of digitalization.”

— Pearl Zhu, The Change Agent CIO

Lockdown changed the style of learning. With the sudden closure of schools for months, e- learning took the lead in every nook and corner across the globe. Teachers adopted the new trend learning, unlearning and re-learning. Earlier when there was a natural catastrophe and schools were on holidays, it was

complete holiday with no classes via internet but COVID-19 brought in a different learning platform for the student fraternity. Suddenly everything was online and android became a necessary inevitable part of student and teacher life. Since the pandemic it is all about the online saga.

“There is no alternative to digital transformation. Visionary companies will carve out new strategic options for themselves — those that don’t adapt will fail.”

—Jeff Bezos, Amazon

Since the pandemic it is all about the online saga. With technology as a reagent of change, education is moving from a knowledge- transfer ideal to a shared, self-motivated, self- directed, and appealing model. Due to the Corona crisis, there is a gush in digitalization witnessed in school and higher education. Technology and online teaching has created its hall mark and power in education sector.

The modes of teaching in education have considerably changed in last few years. While some still stay with the old chalk and talk technology, it is very unusual that in these days teachers do not use some modern technology in class-room delivery. But with advent of the pandemic, the teaching community is duty-bound to use technology in education. Ample information on any topics from any subjects is a readily available on internet sources such as Youtube, Facebook, Wikipedia, and Google. The lockdown stimulated education patrons to take up creative ways of making children learn in the best possible way. Many apps like flip learn, Byjus and the like came in to help. Teachers had to learn about the nuances of Zoom meetings, Google meet, Google forms, test application apps like testmoz in whatever ways they could. Teachers learnt even about augmented reality and brought them into the online classes

Teachers across the length and breadth of the country generated innovative ways to impart education to students against all odds by embracing technology. The pandemic has changed the outlook of education sector and the infiltration of technology has unlocked up new prospects for the education technology performers.

As the online saga seeped in to begin with parents had to forgo their mobile timing so that their kids could learn things from their teachers. Teachers had to form different groups for various subjects and their mobile memory was always on the rise. Some students always remain absent due to poor net connectivity in remote areas and how are they going to compensate for the lost classes is a matter of great concern for the teachers. Yet there were students whose parents did not have an android mobile and had to miss everything that their friends studied.

Then came the training to teachers on how to handle classes online using apps, zoom meeting, Google meet and the like. It was not an easy task learning things but then it was worth the effort to learn. Tech savvy students knew the nuances of digital technology better and they seemed to enjoy the online classes. At the same time interaction with them revealed that they missed their school, teachers and friends. Some students used to enquire about homework through ordinary phone as their parents were either away on work or they could not access a phone through which they could view their homework. After the United States and China, India has been rated as the third largest internet consumer. The core existence of online education

platforms is being possible with the internet. Most schools and colleges in India make use of the internet and they basically use it for conducting online exams and quizzes.

Then the burden of maintaining attendance for each class after the online session got over too takes a toll on the teachers. They have to spend extra screen hours to do so. Apart from this the screen time on class preparation, video preparation, selection of the best study materials and preparation of E-Notes made teachers spend more time on the screen. Teachers had to correct and give feedback for the online assignments sent by the students.

Children's spending too many hours on screen is something we have got to view seriously as more screen time will surely take a toll on the student's eyesight. Children also get allured into the mobile distraction world due to these online classes.

I had an online interaction with students of various classes that I handle on how they feel about the sudden switch over to online mode of learning. Most of the children responded that they do like the online line classes as teachers send interesting information via videos related to the topic being taught .Also related links are shared by the teachers which evokes interest in them. Another thing they mentioned is that since they have no restriction on gadget usage by parents now, they feel a little more empowered now. On the contrary, they also put forth their thought that they missed being with their friends and seeing their teachers face to face. Children also shared that school life is fun in spite of the discipline that is imposed on them. As a teacher, I too missed the chattering sounds of students in school and the beautiful world of being amidst the student fraternity in real though the virtual contact remains.

The right technology plays a vital role in guaranteeing optimum output – without losing the core. One such technology is the Interactive Flat Panel (IFP), with a friendly user interface to support educational institutions in the new normal as they build towards an increasing dependency on the virtual world.

Education opens doors, and creates opportunities. It can help someone claw their way out of poverty, provided the child applies himself/herself. It can make the difference between a life spent in darkness and one spent continuously learning. Given that the majority of India's population lives in rural and semi-urban areas, it only makes sense if the infusion of technology into education is done on a larger scale, and at the grass-root level.

To sum up let's view the advantages and disadvantages of Online schooling:

Advantages :

1. More leisure time for pursuing activities meant for personal growth like yoga, general reading, creative activities like drawing ,painting etc.
2. No hurry to rush up to school, a little relief for parents who have to generally hurry up to pack snacks and lunch for their kids. Children can also have their breakfast and lunch in a relaxed way. Warm food at home does have its health benefits.
3. Children get time to spend with their parents /grandparents and other family members.
4. Parents can comprehend the Comprehension ability of the child and know how far the child is interactive in the class.

5. Works well with kids who are tech savvy. With the gadgets at hand, they feel powerful and this in turn soars up their spirit to learn effectively.

6. The presentations, videos uploaded by teachers can be made use of whenever the student wants.

Disadvantages :

1. Too much of screen time is counter-productive for the eyes of the children. Many children have complained about irritation, watery eyes, redness in the eyes and problems like headache.
2. Most of the times, the teachers instruct the students to keep their microphone muted in order to prevent online disturbances. This creates less chances for the students to interact with the teachers.
3. Too much investment on screen time:

The burden of maintaining attendance for each class after the online session got over too takes a toll on the teachers. They have to spend extra screen hours to do so. Apart from this the screen time on class preparation, video preparation, selection of the best study materials and preparation of E-Notes made teachers spend more time on the screen. Teachers had to correct and give feedback for the online assignments sent by the students.

4. Laptops being expensive; some kids have to use a mobile instead which makes it difficult to see notes or smaller print.

5. Assessing learning gets difficult as kids writing, aptitude and learning speeds differ. Most of the test which teachers conduct are MCQ based, students don't get a chance to project their descriptive understanding areas. Their writing skill part is also difficult to be assessed specially in languages. It is difficult to assess the students mathematical ability in a step by step manner too.

6. Some times parents too have to spare their mobile and spend time to guide children when downloading of files becomes difficult due to certain issues .

7. Sometimes students miss out on information due to poor net connectivity.

8. Children also get allured into the mobile distraction world due to these online classes.

9. Children miss their friends and peers. This is a psychological impedance in their learning .

As we come out of the pandemic, fundamental education will continue to be offered in schools but schools will look and act very different. There will be far greater permeation of systems and technology to make schools run effectively.. But on careful analysis and with the help of latest technology, it seems like an obstacle not too difficult to overcome. Schools have been taking up the path of live streaming or recording their classes, with teachers in front of cameras recording their classes as if students are right in front of them. One can also go on streaming platforms like YouTube to find a number of videos where teachers are using various gadgets and technologies to ensure students are able to understand concepts without any difficulty. Let's embrace the change that flows in with time.

Reference :

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