

Online Learning: An emerging trend in Present Scenario

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*Abstract

The education industry is currently in crisis. Covid-19 has currently curtailed classroom instruction, and pupils solely rely on online learning. To offer information and lectures, a variety of platforms including Zoom, Go to Meetings, Hangouts, and others are employed. There are other concerns with accessibility, pricing, and availability for students, though. For a variety of reasons, pupils are anxious. The learning process is being hampered by a lack of interaction with peers and teachers. The main source of concern is with reference to the evaluation and examination. Although it cannot completely replace them, instructors can use technology to further their field. To ensure that their students are learning, several institutions are switching to digital classes. In the previous few years, technology has undergone significant transformation. Technology may be a resource for learning and can create new opportunities for those working in the field of education. Online education has revolutionized the field of study. Since technology is merely a facilitator, we must use it carefully to give pupils an education. Technology use has altered higher education, and people have discovered new approaches. E-classrooms are being developed as a result of the development of virtual education to address future crises. However, virtual classrooms will never completely replace real ones. This article discusses the advantages and disadvantages of online learning in the classroom.

Introduction:

Any learning that occurs online is included in the flexible method of instruction delivery known as online education. Online instruction helps students who need to do their work on their own time and at their own pace and gives teachers access to students who may not be able to enrol in a regular classroom course. Every subject is witnessing a rapid increase in the amount of distant learning and the awarding of online degrees. The number of institutions and schools that provide online education is likewise increasing. Students who are seeking degrees online need to be meticulous in making sure that they finish their coursework through a reputable and accredited university. Synergy is a well-known benefit of online learning. Here, the chosen format allows for lively dialogue between the students and the teachers. Sources are exchanged through these communications, and a synergy that is open-ended develops as a result of a learning process. It helps the learner learn more when each person shares their point of view or opinion through conversations and comments on others' work. This distinct advantage can only be achieved through online learning, which creates a virtual learning environment focused on the needs of the students.

We don't need to commute over vast distances or travel to a different place because we can take classes online. While pursuing a degree online to advance our careers, we can remain where we are and keep our current jobs. Digital nomads—those who advocate a technologically enabled or location-independent lifestyle—are also helped by online schooling. No matter where we are, we may finish our schoolwork and view lectures.

The online education experience offers a lot more reasonable schedule, whether we are a full-time or part-time student. The low cost of online education has contributed to its popularity. Online courses are less expensive than those provided at schools or colleges because of this. While attending a university, we might need to pay for things like transportation, lodging, and meals; however, online education might not.

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One of the important aspects of online learning is its inherent flexibility, however, there is a catch, one has to be extremely self-motivated. The best online students develop various approaches for staying up to date on their coursework. Things like setting aside time every week to study and create a workspace with minimal distractions can help immensely.

Online Learning or E-Learning:

One method for making the teaching-learning process more inventive, flexible, and student-centered is online learning. It is described as educational experiences that take place in real-time or asynchronous settings on various internet-connected devices, such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. Students can learn anywhere, at any time, in these settings.

Advantages of Online Learning:

There are lots of advantages of online learning:

Efficiency

Online learning offers teachers an efficient way to deliver lessons to students. Online learning has a number of tools such as videos, PDFs, podcasts, and teachers can use all these tools as part of their lesson plans. By extending the lesson plan beyond traditional textbooks to include online resources, teachers are able to become more efficient educators.

Accessibility of Time and Place

The ability for students to attend classes from any location of their choosing is another benefit of online education. Additionally, it frees schools from the limitations imposed by geographic limits and enables them to connect with a wider network of pupils. Online lectures can also be recorded, saved, and distributed for later use. This enables students to access the instructional materials whenever it is convenient for them. Online education provides students with the convenience of time and location in learning.

Affordability

Another advantage of online learning is reduced financial costs. Online education is far more affordable as compared to physical learning. This is because online learning eliminates the cost

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points of student transportation, student meals, and most importantly, real estate. Additionally, all the course or study materials are available online, thus creating a paperless learning environment which is more affordable, while also being beneficial to the environment.

Improved Student Attendance

Since online classes can be taken from home or location of choice, there are fewer chances of students missing out on lessons.

Suits a variety of learning styles

Every learner has a unique learning path and a unique learning style. Some kids learn best through visuals, while others learn best through sounds. Similar to this, some kids excel in the classroom while others study best on their own and become easily distracted by huge groups.

With its variety of options and resources, the online learning system can be tailored in a variety of ways. The greatest way to design an ideal learning environment that meets the needs of each student is to use this method.

Disadvantages of online learning

Along with lots of advantages online learning has its disadvantages also.

Inability to focus on Screens

One of the largest difficulties of online learning for many students is their inability to maintain their attention for extended periods of time. Additionally, there is a higher likelihood that online learning will cause pupils to get easily sidetracked by social media or other websites. To ensure that students remain attentive to the course, teachers must maintain their online lessons as concise, interesting, and interactive as possible.

Technology Issues

Another key challenge of online classes is internet connectivity. While internet penetration has grown in leaps and bounds over the past few years, in smaller cities and towns, a consistent connection with decent speed is a problem. Without a consistent internet connection for students

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or teachers, there can be a lack of continuity in learning for the child. This is detrimental to the education process.

Sense of Isolation

Being around peers allows for a wealth of learning opportunities for students. There are fewer in-person interactions between students and lecturers in an online course. The students frequently feel alone as a result of this. It is crucial that the school permit other methods of communication between the kids, peers, and teachers in this circumstance. This can involve sending emails, online messaging, and video conferences that enable face-to-face communication and lessen the feeling of isolation.

Teacher Training

Teachers who use online learning must have a fundamental understanding of using digital learning tools. This isn't always the case, though. Teachers frequently possess a very fundamental understanding of technology. They occasionally even lack the equipment and resources needed to conduct online classes. Schools must make an investment in providing teachers with the most recent technological advancements in order for them to conduct online classes smoothly.

Manage Screen Time

Many parents are worried about the health risks associated with letting their kids spend so much time staring at screens. One of the greatest concerns and drawbacks of online learning is the rise in screen time. Due to spending so much time slumped over a screen, pupils can also have poor posture and other physical issues. Giving the pupils frequent pauses from the screen to rest their minds and bodies might be a wonderful answer to this problem.

Impact of Online Learning on Students

Loss of motivation and a sense of self-discipline needed to study online are some of the major struggles that children face. A school classroom provides a structure and an environment of effective learning which learning at home lacks. This ensures a cycle for students struggling to finish their assignments, leading to a lack of motivation and lower goals for themselves. In

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In addition to that, a classroom and interaction with peers are very important in the school years. It provides students with a neutral environment for social interactions that aids in developing skills like setting boundaries, learning cooperation, and empathy. These skills are extremely important for building social relationships as a child but also as an adult.

Problems Associated With Online Teaching and Learning

- • There are many technologies accessible for online schooling, but they can occasionally cause significant problems. These challenges and troubles with modern technology include things like download glitches, installation problems, login issues, audio and video issues, and more. Online instruction can occasionally be tedious and uninteresting for students.
- Online learning has so much of time and flexibility that students never find time to do it.
- Personal attention is also a huge issue facing online learning. Students want two-way interaction which sometimes gets difficult to implement.
- The learning process cannot reach its full potential until students practice what they learn. Sometimes, online content is all theoretical and does not let students practice and learn effectively.
- Students feel that lack of community, technical problems, and difficulties in understanding instructional goals are the major barriers for online learning.
- Students were found to be not sufficiently prepared for balancing their work, family, and social lives with their study lives in an online learning environment.
- Students were also found to be poorly prepared for several e-learning competencies and academic-type competencies.
- Also, there is a low-level preparedness among the students concerning the usage of LMS.

Possible Solutions for Problems

A lot of issues are attached to online education but we cannot ignore the perks of it in times of such crisis. We can always have solutions to fix these difficulties.

- Technical difficulties can be solved through prerecording video lectures, testing the content, and always keeping Plan B ready so that the teaching–learning process cannot be hampered.
- Online courses should be made dynamic, interesting, and interactive.
- Teachers should set time limits and reminders for students to make them alert and attentive.
- Efforts should be made to humanize the learning process to the best extent possible. Personal attention should be provided to students so that they can easily adapt to this learning environment.
- Social media and various group forums can be used to communicate with students.
- Communication is the key when it gets difficult to try reaching out to students via texts, various messaging apps, video calls, and so on—content should be such that enable students for practice and also hone their skills.
- The quality of the courses should be improved continuously and teachers must try to give their best.
- Online programs should be designed in such a way that they are creative, interactive, relevant, student-centered, and group-based.
- Educators must spend a lot of time in making effective strategies for giving online instructions.
- Effective online instructions facilitate feedback from learners, make learners ask questions, and broaden the learner horizon for the course content.
- Institutions must focus on pedagogical issues and emphasize collaborative learning, case learning, and project-based learning through online instructions.

The challenge to educational institutions is not only finding new technology and using it but also reimagining its education, thereby helping students and academic staff who are seeking guidance for digital literacy.

Opportunities

Generally speaking, there are many options for online learning, but because so many academic institutions have shifted to this approach during current recession, online learning will flourish. During the Corona Virus crisis, online learning, remote work, and e-collaborations proliferated. Academic institutions can take advantage of this opportunity by implementing online learning methods for both teaching and learning. People have never attempted any new learning methods since they have always been complacent. This crisis will usher in a new era of online education and give users a chance to consider the positive aspects of e-learning tools. At this point, there is a lot of opportunity to introduce unexpected breakthroughs and new developments. By assisting in the fight against the epidemic and keeping education going, EdTech companies are already contributing in some little way. Teachers can use technology and create a variety of adaptable programmes to help pupils comprehend concepts better. The use of online learning will put both teachers and students to the test. It will improve the pupils' ability to think critically, solve problems, and be adaptable. Users of any age can use the online resources in this crucial scenario and benefit from the time and place flexibility associated with online learning. In this anxious situation—now known as Panicgogy—teachers might create novel instructional strategies. EdTech startups offer many chances to make significant changes in almost all areas of education, including teaching, learning, evaluation, assessment, outcomes, certification, degrees, and more. A fantastic potential for EdTech start-ups to bring technological disruption to the education sector is presented by the growing market demand for e-learning.

Challenges

Online learning faces many challenges ranging from learners' issues, educators' issues, and content issues. It is a challenge for institutions to engage students and make them participate

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in the teaching–learning process. It is a challenge for teachers to move from offline mode to online mode, changing their teaching methodologies, and managing their time. It is challenging to develop content which not only covers the curriculum but also engage the students (Kebritchi et al., 2017). The quality of e-learning programs is a real challenge. There is no clear stipulation by the government in their educational policies about e-learning programs. There is a lack of standards for quality, quality control, development of e-resources, and e-content delivery. This problem needs to be tackled immediately so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of quality education via e-learning (Cojocariu et al., 2014). One should not merely focus on the pros attached to the adoption of online learning during the crises but should also take account of developing and enhancing the quality of virtual courses delivered in such emergencies (Affouneh et al., 2020). A lot of time and cost is involved in e-learning. It is not as easy as it seems, a considerable amount of investment is needed for getting the devices and equipment, maintaining the equipment, training the human resources, and developing the online content. Therefore, an effective and efficient educational system needs to be developed to impart education via online mode.

In these difficult times, it is essential to ensure digital equity. Not all teachers and students have access to the internet, Wi-Fi, and other digital gadgets. Lack of appropriate digital tools, no internet, or shaky Wi-Fi connections can be quite problematic and result in many students missing out on educational possibilities. Institutions should make an effort to guarantee that all students and faculty have access to the necessary materials. In case pupils don't have laptops, they must also make sure that all the instructional apps are compatible with mobile devices. It is necessary to take action to bridge the digital divide.

Practice makes a man perfect is a famous and very true proverb. Students and teachers across various universities have never really practiced e-learning. Most of them are complacent and are stuck with traditional modes of teaching. The Corona Virus outbreak is the chance to make out the best from the current situation. We can learn a lot in this challenging situation. A lot of tools are available, teachers are required to choose the best tool and implement it to

impart education to their students. A step-by-step guide can be prepared by academic institutions that can guide the teachers and students on how to access and use various e-learning tools and how to cover major curriculum content via these technologies thereby reducing the digital illiteracy. Teachers can present the curriculum in various formats, that is, they can use videos, audios, and texts. It is beneficial if educators complement their lectures with video chats, virtual meetings, and so on to get immediate feedback and maintain a personal connection with the students.

Conclusions

The education industry is currently in crisis. Due to the lockdown, students are now solely reliant on internet resources and remote learning tools to accomplish their schoolwork. Technology and education are experiencing a very exciting time right now. Online courses give students with access to technology-based learning environments that increase learning opportunities and deliver top-notch instruction in a range of formats and modalities. Online programmes provide a practical answer to difficulties with work, family, and study schedules because they are designed specifically for adult learners who need or want to continue their education. Higher education institutions have discovered that online courses are crucial to giving the people they want to serve access to education. The content, the facilitator, the technology, and the students all need to be properly studied and balanced in order for an online programme to be effective. This will allow you to fully capitalise on this format's advantages while also avoiding potential problems brought on by its flaws.

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