

Pitfalls in Online Teaching & Examinations

Someone had said that world will never be the same after corona virus; how true! Of course, we cannot comprehend “never” as no one knows the limit of this never! But for the conceivable near future, we may say that until corona pandemic is gone the world will not be the same.

One big change with corona pandemic is institution of online teaching across the world; for all age groups and all types and all levels of students. No doubt online teaching and learning have several distinct advantages such as saving time and money on travel and home convenience etc. but it also has several disadvantages and limitations for students, teachers, parents, institutions and the society as a whole. These problems are worse for the underdeveloped and resource depleted countries.

Online teaching requires good computer literacy and reasonable command on web-based technology. Not surprising children and teenagers are faster to learn these comparing to the elder population. Some people have computer phobia and some are bitten by too much commercial advertisements on web pages and easily distracted by these imposed and unwelcome advertisements. Many find it quite boring and have difficulties in focusing and keeping attentive.

Poor internet connections may pose severe problems. At times students are not aware of timings of their lectures or sudden changes in scheduling. When teachers can't see the students, can't perceive their facial expressions, then they feel like delivering a useless speech in a desert or in a vacuum that has depressing effect on the teachers. Also, when teachers can't see all the students, many students just sign in and slip away.

There are also serious problems with online examinations! Cheating is rampant. Students are cleverer than their most teachers adopt innovative ways to copy and paste with some “wise” modifications. Of course, all students do not do this,

but when someone does cheat there is temptations for others too to do the same! This fails the entire purpose of education.

As noted above, such problems are less severe in more scientifically advanced and resourceful countries. But in underdeveloped countries there are rural areas with poor internet connections. Not all students may afford smart phones or computers. Disadvantages of online learning include.¹

- Requires self-discipline and time management skills.
- Diminished social interaction. ...
- Not suitable for every topic. ...
- Lack of practice-based **learning**
- Too much dependence on technology

The online learning and training seem more suitable for corporate sector with relatively small number of participants.²

As eLearning has many advantages, it will be far better to have a blend of traditional and eLearning so that we may retain the advantages of both systems and get rid of disadvantages of both.³

I conclude by saying that routine classes with all precautions and observing social distances and using eLearning where appropriate is a much better option

References

1. <https://www.easy-lms.com/knowledge-center/lms-knowledge-center/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-online-learning/item12529>
2. <https://elearningindustry.com/advantages-and-disadvantages-online-learning>
3. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0747563217301437>