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**SHABIR HUSSAIN KHAHRO**

Educational Research Lab (ERL), Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**YASIR JAVED**

Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**ZUBAIR AHMED MEMON**

Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**IMRAN HUSSAIN**

Prince Sultan University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

## **TEACHING TRICKS & TOOLS: A CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

### **Abstract:**

COVID-19 has impacted nearly every industry, including education, and its repercussions will be observed for years. The global lockdown of educational institutions would result in substantial disruptions in student learning, confusion in assessments, and the cancellation or substitution of public performance examinations. Several governments throughout the world briefly halted educational institutions in the early stages of the COVID-19 epidemic to try to stop it from spreading, but with time and experience, they all got back on track. This paper presents the key approaches chosen by higher educational institutions to meet this challenging situation. A detailed literature review has been carried out to identify the key approaches and tools used during hybrid teaching and its effectiveness is also analyzed by interviews from faculty members. It is concluded that various tools were used for lecture deliveries including google meets, zoom and other modes of online platform. The open book assessments were introduced and the assessments were changed with time. The students struggled initially but the learning went better with time throughout this pandemic.

### **Keywords:**

COVID-19, Pandemic, Higher Education, Teaching Tricks, Online Education

## 1. Background

Several countries throughout the world suspended educational institutions to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. More than 72 percent of the student population in the world is affected by these countrywide school closures. Several other countries have implemented localized closures that impacted millions of students [1]. The COVID-19 virus had an extremely devastating impact on education, with 1.53 billion students out-of-school affecting 87.6% of all enrolled students worldwide [2]. Many countries decided to close schools, colleges, and universities to resist the pandemic spread. Such difficult situation during pandemics forced that educationist choice between closing schools which reduces contact and saves lives. Leaving them open means allowing teachers to work and maintaining the economy during pandemic would not be a better choice.

Not only do school, college, and university closures affect students' education throughout the world; they frequently coincide with a critical assessment period, and some examinations have been delayed or cancelled [3]. The information technology sector was the main relief to all sectors including education sector but this sector was under huge burden, traffic and pressure. Due to a catastrophic information technology failure in Denmark's testing system, students were unable to take the exam [4]. All major public education examinations in the United Kingdom were also canceled.

Depending on the length of the lockdown, similar actions were found all across the world. Using 'predicted grades' as a remedy for the cancelled examinations is utilized as one of the possibilities [3] but [5] indicates that these are frequently incorrect, and even among high-achieving students. Those from poor origins have lower projected grades than those from more privileged ones. Another option used was instructor assessments instead of blind examinations. Evidence from a variety of situations demonstrates systematic differences between unblinded and blind assessments, with the direction of the bias frequently depending on whether the student belongs to a group that traditionally does well [6][7].

Numerous universities and colleges increasingly replacing conventional tests with online evaluation tools in higher education. Because this is a new area for both instructors and students, assessments will almost certainly have a higher measurement error than typical. It was just as new experiment for student, administration and even teacher. Employers rank applicants using educational credentials such as degree categories and grade point averages, according to research [8]. As a result of the increased distortion in candidates graduate attribute achievement, the matching efficiency for new graduates in the job market may be reduced, resulting in slower pay growth and greater job separation rates. This is disastrous for both the person and society as a whole [9].

Online enforced education has many drawbacks. Though learning progresses, it does not consider the instruction or, for that matter, the instructional methods and personalities in the face-to-face classroom. There are technological possibilities, but they are not the same as face-to-face, and students using outdated equipment may find it difficult to stay up. The tasks and instructional schedule have been revised as a result of the crisis. During shutdowns, alternates have to be constructed to fulfill points / percent for missing tasks. These are difficult times and will be the need for versatility and innovation, which are crucial to getting through the crisis successfully. With little or no initial guidance on how to develop or teach online courses, many teachers / professors were thrown into the online world. Unfortunately, the students get the brunt of this lack of preparation, and hence the busy work.

COVID19 isn't online learning, to be exact. It was called Remote Emergency Teaching. What most institutions have converted traditional lectures into electronic (recorded) lectures that students at home can view and hear. The stuff most of us supplied during this pandemic was not intended for distribution online. We had to prepare content for students quickly so no time wasted. Remote internet learning is enticing but it's difficult. It takes a concentrated amount of time for both the learners and the teacher to set apart. Given that the learner and instructor may not be in direct visual contact, it may be difficult to get immediate input about what was being taught, as opposed to the classroom where input occurs minute to minute. Luckily in many countries we see plenty of innovation. Rightly so, many education ministries are worried that relying exclusively on online approaches would mean reaching only children from better-off families. In most countries the correct approach is to use all feasible distribution modes with today's current infrastructure. Using online tools to ensure that students, and certainly most teachers, have lesson plans, videos, tutorials and other resources available. But also podcasts and other resources which require less use of the data.

The transition from face to face to emergency remote teaching has led to many creative ideas on how to support our students' learning. COVID-19 has taught us how to be even more resourceful and supportive of our colleagues not only within our institutions but across the Globe. Following are the key elements which must be applied during such crisis.

- **The Agility of University:** It includes the effective learning management system, soft and hard resources including computers, mics, high speed internet, agile policies for teaching and assessment, online attendance monitoring system, student engagement and progress track system, emergency plan. An emergency response cell should be made functional for faculty, staff and student support.
- **Faculty Training:** Faculty members should be trained on basic tools used in emergency cases. The faculty should also be trained for new hybrid teaching methods and alternate assessment methods.
- **Technology and Infrastructure:** The technology needed for delivering online classes should be made ready at adequate number as per student enrollment. The proper safety protocols should be designed in labs for better safety of each student in the labs. Online lab platform can also be created and lab visual material should be prepared for hybrid teaching.
- **Student Awareness and Adoptability:** The students should be trained and made aware of tools used for teaching and assessment. All possible challenges should be highlighted and proper policies should be made to assist students.

The specific tips for teachers and students are presented in the following section of this paper which can be suitable solutions in such cases in future pandemics.

## **2. Tips for Teachers**

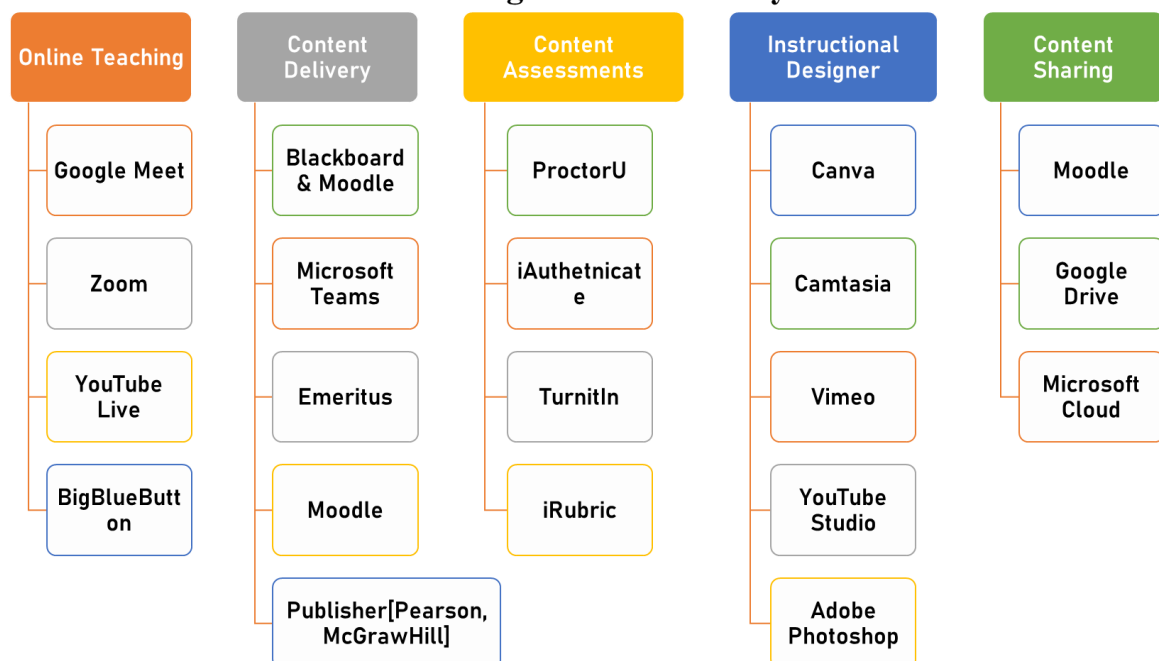
Experience has shown that quality online learning requires that a professional instructional designer plan the teaching content, that the lecturer is pedagogically trained in delivering the curriculum, and that the students are equally exposed to online learning pedagogy [10]. Unprepared delivery online will affect the efficiency of the programs. This is disappointing at a time when important advances in improving the standard of teaching and learning were being made.

1. Establish different types of interactivity at least three types: Teacher to student, student to student, student to content.
2. How to build in collaboration
3. Create activities that promote interaction with movement
4. Be ready with technology B if something happens (the dilemma of the frozen screen)

In our current situation is to create a community of inquiry model. How to establish or promote teacher presence. This is extremely important as it brings the “human” element into the learning environment and helps the students to not feel alone. Communication is the key to online education. There need to be various avenues for staying in contact with our students as they need to feel our presence and know that they are not alone with our move to online education.

Videos, virtual meeting spaces, using an avatar/photo, the general organization so that it is consistent every time the students sign in, class notebooks (teams).

### E-Learning Tools for Faculty

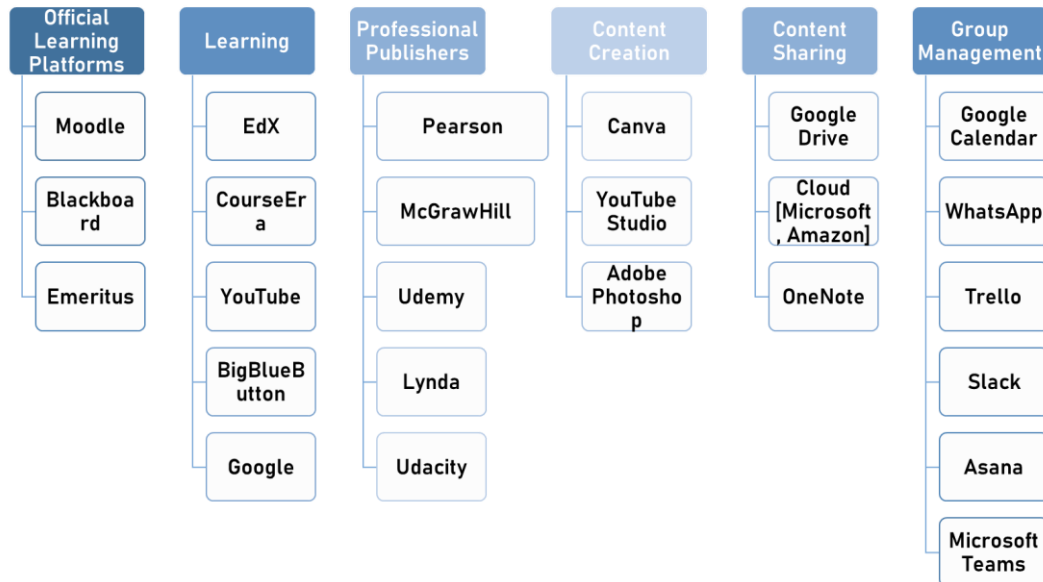


During the pandemic instructors faced the challenge of teaching the students and keeping their engagement at highest. For teaching online the faculty used number of tools such as Google Meet, Zoom, Youtube, BigBlueButton and other tools as live teaching tools. The live teaching tools were only used for online teaching. After teaching, content sharing with student was a crucial part but it requires security and privacy so for this Moodle, teams and other tools were used. For conducting the assessment Google Quiz, TurnitIn, iRubric, ProctorU was used. In most cases, cameras were used for monitoring. For creation of contents Adobe Photoshop, Vimeo and Camtasia and Windows MovieMaker is used. These tools are not the only ones that instructor uses rather there are numerous other small tools that are used but this research enlist only the most popular software tools.

### 3. Student Engagement

It is a mistake to believe that online learning can be effective simply by posting online notes from a lecturer or having a lecture video recording. And, this is usually what is happening right now.

#### E-Learning Tools for Students



Students are the key element of the teaching process. For online education, the platforms that students use for learning are Moodle, Blackboard, and Microsoft Teams. For sharing content and information, students use WhatsApp, Slack, Telegram, Github, and Google Drive. For support learning, students tend to learn from Udemy, CourseEra, EdX, and Lynda. In order to effectively manage the courses, students use Asana, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, and Trello. Students use Powerpoint, Windows MovieMaker, Visme, and Prezi. These are not the only tools that students use for learning, communication, and course management, but only major tools are listed.

### 4. Conclusion

On an untested and unexpected scale, education was transferring online. Student evaluations are frequently completed online, with much trial and error and confusion for all involved. In higher education, several institutions and colleges have replaced traditional assessments with online evaluation techniques. Because this is a growing paradigm for both teachers and students, assessments may have a higher measurement error than usual. The best accessible public policy resource for improving skills is going to school. While school may be pleasurable and beneficial to social skills and societal knowledge, school is about more than just learning math and science; it is also about making social ties and interacting with classmates. It's about developing social skills and learning how to be a citizen. As a result, staying connected to the school in any way possible is critical. This is also a good opportunity for all children to work on their social-emotional skills and learn more about how to contribute to society as a citizen. Parents and families play a critical part in that purpose, which has always been tremendously important.

The COVID-19 pandemic would have a significant impact on next year's university graduates' jobs. They have had huge teaching disruptions in the latter stages of their studies, they are having significant gaps in their assessments, and they are expected to graduate at the commencement of a severe worldwide downturn. Also, students take as a matter of course, they entered the class and then disappear. Efficient teaching is a major issue beyond network issues. Teachers are making preparations for that transition. But as its time demand we need to explore new method of teaching and diversify our skills too.

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