ONLINE TEACHING: THE NEW WAY OF LEARNING

- **Dr. Sayanika Borah**

"Read More,
Grow More"

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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic has led to secure disruptions in normal life, including closure of colleges. It has impacted over 240 million students of the country who are enrolled in colleges. Extended school, colleges closures may cause loss of learning. To mitigate the impact of the pandemic, colleges will not only have to remodel and reimagine the way teaching and learning have happened so far, but will also need to introduce a suitable method of delivering quality education through a healthy mix of learning at home and learning at college. While digital or online education cannot replace classroom learning, it has some advantages. It allows flexible and personalized learning at the speed of the learner and one can continuously augment and expand content through digital means. The rapid increase in internet penetration and various government initiatives such as Digital India campaign have created a conducive environment for moving towards digital education. This shall be complemented by the recent launch of PM e-Vidya by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), a national campaign which will unify all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education. This includes, DIKSHA (one nation – one digital platform), TV (one class-one channel), SWAYAM (online MOOCS on various topics), IITPAL (platform for exam preparation) etc. All these areas of e-learning shall be expanded and developed further in a systematic and unified manner by the MHRD in a phased manner.

A virtual learning schedule is not the same as a traditional school schedule. Now the teaching practice is moving to the online environment calls for adjustments in not only how to deliver instruction, but in how the time is spent during the course of the working day. Rather than planning lessons to deliver in front of class and activities for students to do at their desks, It will need to reimagine how to best provide instruction to the students, how they can practice and apply what they have learned, and how you are tracking their progress and providing additional support. Online learning should not rely on teachers streaming instruction all day, nor should students be expected to work and learn entirely independently. Effective virtual instruction includes a combination of independent work for students, phone/email communications and "live" instruction through video conferencing.

GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE CLASSES

Education experts recommend that students spend no more than 50 minutes on independent study at a time, and no more than four hours of total independent study time a day. While four hours might sound like a lot less time than students spend studying in a regular college day, keep in mind that the independent learning that students do at school/ college is limited too.

Following guidelines have been developed from the reviewed of various articles related to online classes, from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online/blended/digital education for students who are presently at home due to lockdown. These guidelines also provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward online education to enhance the quality of education.

There are two kinds of online teaching and learning that colleges will need to balance based on the feasibility:

• **Synchronous:** This is real-time teaching and learning that can happen collaboratively and at the same time with a group of online learners or even individually, and usually a teacher, or some method of instant feedback; examples of synchronous learning are online teaching through video conference (two-way video, one-way video, two way audio), audio conference (two way audio) using satellite or telecommunication facilities.

• **Asynchronous:** This is anytime, anywhere learning but not connected on real time, for example, emails, SMS, MMS, surfing e-content on DIKSHA, podcasts, watching TV channels, etc.

MODEL FOR ONLINE CLASSES

Online Mode	
Model 1	Guide learners to go through the online resources shared by teachers through instant messenger/ mail etc. students come prepared and then discuss their queries during online interaction through videoconferencing tools.
Model 2	Conduct scheduled online classes through any one of the videoconferencing tools.
Model 3	Conduct a scheduled live class through any of the learning management system and students interact during live sessions or through/forums groups. All the resources to be shared in the learning management system itself and assignments submission also happened in the system.

PEDAGOGY

• Reading content related from the textbook- reflecting upon that, making some important points and discussing either with groups created for online discussion or with the teacher.

• Watching a video-link provided by the teacher, noting down important points, texting the teacher or discussing them with peers, doing exercises related to the theme, answering questions provided with the video link, etc.

ASSIGNMENT

Teachers need to guide students on how they will do their assignment, what resources they will use, and through what mode they will share this assignment with teachers.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers need to guide students on assessment of students' work as well as the process that they have followed to complete their assignments. Teachers may also guide students on self-assessment and peer assessment.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

As a course teacher, it is anticipated that you will.

1. Follow the established course start and end dates.
2. Follow consistent guidelines for managing your online course.
3. Monitor assignment submissions and communication with students to remind them of missed and/or upcoming deadlines.
4. Early in the course, establish a regular schedule for when you will be logging in to the course and communicate this to students.
5. Give prior notice to your students and to the administrative unit overseeing your course in the event that you will be unable to log into the course for several days or more (e.g., during professional travel and leave).
6. Provide feedback to student inquiries within one business day.
7. Provide timely and meaningful feedback on student work using clear and concise language.
8. Communicate to your students in advance when you will grade and return all assignments and exams.
9. Provide a teaching and learning environment that supports academic freedom.
10. Make sure you have immediate and predictable access to the same technology that is required for students in your course.
11. Contribute to the continual update and improvement of the course content.

Specific Guidelines

- Online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than four sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days as decided by States/UTs.
- Give 10-15 minutes break between two consecutive classes for students to freshen up, relax and re-energize themselves to focus on the next class.
- Encourage peer discussion and interaction during online classes.
- Develop and use formative assessments for immediate and continuous feedback, this would help the teacher and students improve in the learning process.
- Talk regularly to students in understanding and encouraging the responsible use of the internet and netiquettes.
- Give importance on Cyber safety and ethical practices including precautions and measures for maintaining cyber safety.

Guidelines for Students

The most important stakeholder and primary beneficiary of education are students. The following are guidelines for students to maintain health and mental wellbeing while ensuring continuity in learning.

Balanced Online/Offline Activities

- Maintain a schedule for sleep, food, noting time spent on the internet for learning and time spent on the internet for socializing etc.

- . • Besides online learning, every day read from textbooks and read other books as well.
- As a follow up to online class, explore further through activities, experiments, creative expressions etc.
- Access the digital resources provided through the various national ICT initiatives.
- Take notes during the online class and review them offline
- Restrict time for surfing and regulate screen time for scrolling/reading information on every issue (not more than 2 hours for students)
- During online activities take small breaks to stand up and move away from the screen. During this break, take a quick walk indoors, do few stretch exercises, practice deep breathing, catch up with family members etc. Do not continue to sit and surf or chat online.
- Avoid using mobile/internet surfing 40 minutes prior to going to bed because engaging in passive communication just before sleeping makes the brain active and makes it difficult for the brain and body to relax.

TEACHERS' PREPARATION

Teacher Preparation for digital education is a twofold process. The first is the requirement of teacher preparation for adopting digital technology for teaching their students more efficiently. The second is to use digital medium to keep abreast of new development in education for their own professional growth. Teachers must be ready to harness the potential of digital technology to keep them professionally up to date.

THE TEACHER MAY:

- Explore digital technologies (LMS, apps, web portals, digital labs etc), repositories of Open Educational Resources (OERs) at national/ State/global level.
- Attend webinars, online training programmes, online courses on ICT-Pedagogy Content integration.
- Use appropriate technology for teaching learning & assessment.
- Be part of forums, interest groups and online communities to interact with peers and know how the rest of the world is doing with digital education
- Get acquainted with copyrighted as well as Free and Open Source (FOSS) e-contents and tools for learning. Teachers can be made aware to use open resources as everything on the Internet is not available for free download or sharing.

- It is important to have presentations which are easily readable, slides must follow certain rules like not more than 5 bullet points, maximize use of infographics, graphs, charts, avoid tables as much as possible

GUIDELINE FOR PARENTS

The mentioned guidelines help to understand the need for physical, mental health and wellbeing along with the cyber safety measures for students at home. Guidelines for physical health and mental wellness is stressed across the guidelines for all stakeholders' measures so that students do not get overly stretched or stressed, or get affected negatively (postural defects, ophthalmic issues, and other physical problems) owing to prolonged use of digital devices. Also, it provides sufficient dos and don'ts regarding ergonomics and cyber safety.

CONCLUSION:

Online teaching is very useful and effective medium of teaching learning process in this technological era. During this pandemic people take the advantage of full use of this medium due to demand of the situation. But it will be more effective if everyone follows the mentioned guidelines. Because the virtual learning schedule is not the same as a traditional school schedule. Now the teaching practice is moving to the online environment calls for adjustments in not only how to deliver instruction, but in how the time is spent during the course of the working day. If teachers, students and parents strictly follow the mentioned guidelines, it will be very fruitful.

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