

E-Learning and COVID-19 (Six Important Pieces of Advice for Teachers and Academic Teaching Staff)

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Abstract

At the time of writing this article there are over 3,946,118 reported cases in many countries and 271,715 deaths. So, due to the fast spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), there will be increasing reliance on the e-learning for school students. This paper presents some important advices to take into our account when delivering information and online instruction. From our perspective as an academic members in the higher education foundations, We propose a six important advices and explanations for educators in Libya and all countries to take into account when supporting the students' e-learning, these six considerations are purpose, directives, information content, stimulus, relations, and the mental health.

Keywords: E-learning, Coronavirus, Online instruction

INTRODUCTION

The e-learning can be defined as the science of learning without using of paper printed instructional material. Also, E-learning can be defined as the use of telecommunication technologies to deliver and connect information for education and training [1].

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With the progress of communication and information technology development, E-learning is emerging as the paradigm of the modern education. The best advantages of E-learning include liberating interactions between instructors and learners, from limitations of time and space through the asynchronous and synchronous learning network model [2].

E-learning is commonly referred to the intentional use of communications and networked information technologies in learning and teaching and. A number of other terms are also used to describe this mode of teaching and learning. They include virtual learning, online learning, network and web-based learning, and distributed learning. The term E-learning comprises a lot more than online learning, as the letter “E” in E-learning stands for the word of “electronic”, E-learning would incorporate all the educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline [3].

Due to the recent events in the world, many countries have inquired about some options for providing online learning. Countries should be aware of the considerable thought and planning which must occur prior to fully transferring the traditional instruction to the online information delivery. Understanding that countries want to ensure continuity of learning to the extent possible, suitable planning is critical to providing an equitable, quality learning experience for all students around the world.

The six important considerations that important to take into account when applying the e-learning and online instruction are:

1- Purpose

At the time of writing this paper, there are about 3,946,118 reported cases in the world countries and 271,715 deaths. Over 1,300,000 people have experienced the virus and have recovered (World Health Organization, WHO). While the situation in Libya is contained -just 64 cases and 3 deaths. Because of large number of reported cases, the governments purpose of all countries should be optimize the e-learning process to deliver information to all students.

Children and young people are global citizens, powerful agents of change and the next generation of scientists, caregivers, and doctors. Any crisis occurred presents the opportunity to help them learn, increase resilience, and cultivate compassion while building a safer and

more caring community. Having information and facts about COVID-19 will help all diminish students' fears and anxieties about the disease and support their ability to cope with any secondary impacts in their lives. This paper provides a key message for engaging school administration, teachers and academic staff, parents, caregivers and community all members, as well as children themselves in knowing the online learning process.

2- Directives

When students are learning new or difficult subject matter, it is very important for online directive or instruction to be as explicit, orderly, and well-organized as possible particularly. In the traditional learning, teachers can monitor whether the students understand things and can adjust instruction as they go. In the traditional classroom it is easier to deliver information incrementally so student does not get lost and it is easier to providing feedback in real time. In case of an online environment it is harder to monitor students' understanding, and there is a significant risk that lessons are poorly organized and big material of information is delivered too early leaving learners lost. We have identified Load Reduction Instruction as a method to reduce these risks. Following the principles of Load Reduction Instruction, online lectures and lessons must be very clear and well structured, delivered in manageable chunks, allow good opportunities for students to practice what should be learnt, and enable opportunity for the teacher and lecturers to see students' work to provide feedback on time. When the teachers are satisfied the students have the basics, they can then provide more and more independent and self-directed activities due to online learning.

3- Information Content

Alongside explicit directive is the need for good and high quality content of delivered information that is appropriate to know and skill the learner's level. There is a vast amount of poor quality online learning and information materials. It is thus very important that educators first do careful selection and vetting of the online materials and programs to ensure that all students are working with the best material possible. In the traditional learning and classrooms, if the material is not such a good quality, teachers and lecturers can see this and explain it better to provide a real-time clarification and one-on-one

help. This is consider much harder in online environment. Also, reiterating an earlier point, it is very important that the information content is not too difficult too soon. It should be delivered in doable chunks so learners are not overwhelmed or confused early due to the learning process. Finally, remember that references and text books are often well targeted and achieved to the education syllabus, written by experts in the field, reviewed by other experts in the same field, and designed to incrementally raise the bar on the learner as they move through a given chapter or section. Many of these references and textbooks are available online, so easy to use them. On a related note, universities and schools might also send a hard copy materials to the home especially in cases where the online connections or technology are unreliable.

4- Stimulus

Stimulus or motivation refers to students' effort and energy as they learn. There are several parts to motivation. The Engagement and Motivation Wheel captures the major ones that are critical to any learning environment and situation, including the online learning. However, there is one area of motivation particularly relevant to the online learning: self-regulation represented in the Wheel by self and task planning, management, and persistence. In the online environment there is vast potential for student to go off track, try to do too many things (multi-task), dive down deep rabbit holes which are interesting but irrelevant, continually monitor and respond to the social emails and messaging, or abandon school work altogether in favour of gaming, etc. In essence, poor control can be a big problem. High quality online learning and content which keeps learners engaged and on track can minimize these risks (see the two above considerations, instruction and content). Reminding the students frequently of these risks is also very important this time. Setting some job that can be completed and printed in hard copy separates our students from online temptations for a while and separates them from technology. Also, schools request to parents to control and monitor students' online activities can be helpful. Negotiating a timetable with student for when he does online schoolwork and he can catch up on the social media, games, etc. may be viable also. Encouraging all students to remove all things related to technology from bedrooms during sleep time is important self-management strategy. The important point of all

this is that the students who can effectively regulate their use technologies will be better placed to learn in an online learning process and environment. Other aspects of self-management strategy include: setting more frequent due dates for small units of work (good to receive teachers feedback), students maintaining bed time and wake up times that align with the school day, developing a schoolwork timetable for student for each school day, and parents identifying a place at home where student can concentrate while they do schoolwork.

5- Relations

People are social creatures (COVID-19 has capitalised on). Personal relations are integral to learning process. The traditional learning or classroom is the ideal place where relationships of teacher-student and peer relationships can flourish. Student is pretty good at connecting online with peers, so here we want to discuss the online relationship of teacher-student in the case of e-learning. In the online environment it is advisable that teachers and academic staff maintain contact with the class in numerous methods, such as via emails, blogs, the online learning platform of school, video, and chat-groups. From a relationship-perspective, ample opportunities for face-to-face online instructions are important. If in doubt, teaching staff should over-communicate rather than under-communicate with the classes. Some of this can be pre-recorded and pre-prepared. Some can be in real time. Teachers should maintain online contact with their class, schools will need to ensure appropriate teacher-student boundaries also and uncompromised professionalism are recorded. Connective instructions have been developed and improved as an educational way that helps teaching staff keep connectedness with students in everyday course of learning including e-learning. This way to teaching obtains how educators in all education foundations can connect to the student on three channels: the interpersonal channel that emotionally supporting students, the content channel that delivering content that is well-matched to students' ability and interests, and the instruction channel that means supporting students through Load Reduction Instruction (LRI). The more teachers get these three channels, the more they will be connected to students in the courses of their learning.

6- Mental Health

The good mental health for people is not only a vital outcome in itself, it is also a means to other important outcome such as learning. If mental health suffers, that means the learning usually suffers. When students attend schools in person, teachers and other education staff can observe students who may be struggling, provide real time assistance, and guide the students to appropriate professional learn and support. This is more difficult to do in an e-learning environment. During times of online learning, school will be aware of some students with whom they should maintain closer contact, including students with additional educational needs, such as those with dyslexia, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, etc. But it is very important that all students are informed clearly of who to contact outside or inside schools if they are struggling.

In the age of COVID-19 it is likely students will be anxious and some may also lose loved ones or have family and friends who are seriously sick. As soon as a school is aware of this, it is important they immediately reach out to the student, probably via the school's counselling support unit, or other approach and provide an appropriate support and professional referrals needed.

Conclusion

The e-learning environments offer a good educational opportunity during times when there are difficulties for students to attend schools, institution, and university in person. At the same time, there can be a significant barriers to learning if poor quality online instructions are delivered. The six important considerations which presented in this paper provide a means by which education foundations and teachers can deliver and develop online learning to optimize the students' learning.

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