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E-LEARNING IN EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

Introductions. Higher Education is struggling to continue its efforts for promoting quality education in order to avoid the loss of the academic semester. In such a situation, the higher education institutions will be left with no other choice than distance learning. Higher education is usually required to ensure strict monitoring and reporting mechanism to ensure quality standards in online teaching, but it comes with many challenges. Some challenges in developing economies include the unavailability of internet services all over the country and limited resources accessible to a large community to earn and learn during such epidemics.

Aim. In this article, we will attempt to puncture the process and provide some signals as to where potential online teachers can go to gain the skills and experience needed to perform this role successfully.

Materials and methods. Millions of students and faculty members have shifted from the classical face-to-face setting to online learning mode around the world in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 infection. Since online learning is already known to the academic community, the biggest challenge faced in the current situation is how to transform from face-to-face to online mode for which neither the students nor the faculty members are accustomed with.

Online learning for students is education that takes place over the Internet. It is often referred to as “e-learning” among other terms. However, online learning is just one type of “distance learning” - the umbrella term for any learning that takes place at a distance and not in a traditional classroom.

What online teaching is. To find out the answer, we must first look at what online education, or e-learning, is - and what it isn't. If an educational institution decides to put a course online, they put a number of text files online, download the documents, read them. This is not online learning; this is an online bookshop. If an educational institution decides to provide courses for learning English online, they put a number of self-study exercises online, do a few drag and drop or gapfill exercises, develop tests online and upload them to the platform. This is also not online learning as yet. It is a self-study platform in a digital format. True e-learning attempts to recreate, as far as possible, more traditional face-to-face learning environments, whilst simultaneously trying to leverage the obvious differences between the bricks and mortar classroom and the virtual one. Online tutoring, by extension, is similar to face-to-face tutoring, with the most obvious difference being those online tutors will rarely meet course participants and will therefore need to work harder to emulate the social atmosphere and group dynamic characteristic of the face-to-face course. Online teaching is part pastoral, part technical, part pedagogical. [4] It must be taken into account that online teaching is different to face-to-face teaching.

One of the most obvious differences will be the perceived lack of real people on the course - a perception that can lead to feelings of alienation and isolation on the part of the participants unless it is addressed creatively from the very beginning of the course. Much more time is needed in online courses in what is often called the socialisation. [2] It is often necessary to spend up to a week online to achieve the same feelings of group identity and collegiality. This phase of an online course will not only create a safe and comfortable group dynamic, but should also be used to negotiate the 'rules of engagement' which will be observed by the group - this stage is also important as there is a great deal of potential for misunderstanding online, given the lack of paralinguistic features. It will also allow participants to get a feel for each other before moving on to the course content itself. The socialisation phase is also an ideal time to address technical problems and access difficulties, as well as to discuss and clear

up unrealistic expectations on the part of the participants. For many teachers as well as students, their first time is confusing, frustrating and disappointing unless these issues are overtly dealt with early on.

Results and discussion. There are two general approaches to online learning: self-paced and facilitated/teacher-led. Self-paced learners are alone and completely independent, while facilitated and instructor-led online learning courses provide different levels of support from tutors and instructors and collaboration among learners. Sometimes, online learning courses combine both approaches, but for simplicity it is easy to consider the two separately. Teacher-led and facilitated online learning is scheduled and led by a teacher and/or facilitator through an online learning platform. E-learning content for individual study can be integrated with the instructor's lectures, individual assignments and collaborative activities among students. At the end, a final step typically includes an exercise or assessment to measure learning.

Self-paced online learning. Students are offered e-learning courseware, which can be complemented by supplemental resources and assessments. The course material is usually housed on a platform, and students can access it from an online learning platform or on a CD-ROM. Students are free to learn at their own pace and to define personal learning paths based on their individual needs and interests. As we have seen, online learning approaches can combine different types of e-learning components, including: online learning content; online teaching/tutoring; collaborative learning; and virtual classroom.

It should be mentioned that the teaching online can be synchronous (live) or asynchronous.[2] Depending on the learning objective, learners can benefit from both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Each offers its bright sides, and of course, its drawbacks. Synchronous learning is any type of learning that takes place in real-time, where a group of people are engaging in learning simultaneously. Although learning occurs at the same time, learners don't have to be there in-person or even in the same location. Synchronous learning enables learners to ask questions and receive answers on-the-spot, while also

collaborating freely with their class-mate learners. Asynchronous learning is more learner-centered. It enables your learners to complete courses without the constraints of having to be in a certain place at a certain time. In essence, asynchronous learning doesn't hinder learners by place or time. As long as they have access to the internet, asynchronous learners have the freedom to complete course materials whenever they choose, and from any location.[2]

The flexibility of Internet technology creates gray areas around the concepts of synchronous and asynchronous.[2] For example, video and audio sessions can be recorded and made available for learners who cannot attend a live event. The teachers' first reaction might be to host live sessions with learners on web conferencing software, but instead they could head towards asynchronous, which can be more inclusive. Look to prerecord, share resources via the institution's platform as Moodle, Learning Management System (LMS). Learning management system. Otherwise known as an LMS. Online classes typically take place via institution's chosen learning-management system - a platform that include communication, content delivery, and assessment tools to facilitate the teaching-and-learning process Or a shared online folder GoogleClass, GoogleDoc, GoogleForms, or messaging platforms such as email, blogs, pre-recorded video lessons, webinars or WhatsApp, Telegram instead.

The following step is to choose the right tools for teaching. Firstly, teachers can teach remotely with video calls using Zoom, Google Meet where teachers can create video calls and invite their entire class. Record their lessons for immediate playback. Record their lessons so their students and colleagues can watch later.

To manage a virtual classroom, teachers create their first assignment in Google Classroom. Google Classroom helps teachers create and organize assignments, provide feedback, and communicate with their classes. Also, it is possible to structure their lessons with Google Slides. Google Slides makes their lessons come to life with a variety of presentation themes, embedded video, animations, and more. Or create, share and edit Google Docs. Collaborate in real

time with Google Docs, where they can create, edit, share and print documents all in one place. With Google Sites they can easily create a private class website to host lesson information, worksheets, videos and more.

What are the challenges and opportunities? For the teachers, the advantages are many: online tutors can work from any location equipped with an Internet connection, and at any time of the day or night. Online tutoring means adding another string to your bow as a teacher - as the Internet becomes increasingly ubiquitous, and the demand for online study grows, so will the demand for trained and experienced online tutors.[4] And, of course, for any teacher, learning new skills and developing oneself professionally is usually a hugely rewarding experience. For the students, the minimum requirement for students to participate in an online course is access to a computer, the Internet, and the motivation to succeed in a non-traditional classroom.

As for disadvantages, there are two main negatives: one is the amount of time that online tutoring takes up, not only in providing constant learner support and feedback but also in designing new materials for online delivery if you do not already have these ready. Of course, there is no point in re-inventing the wheel, and there is already plenty of good material out there on the Internet. [1] Another negative is that institutions who implement e-learning often see it as the 'cheap' alternative to face-to-face teaching, and underestimate the number of hours that an online tutor will need to put in to run a successful online course. [3] Luckily, this rather blinkered view is becoming less prevalent as online course providers realise those offering quality online courses are the only way forward - and that this implies some investment in effective materials design, and in tutor training and tutor time. It's important to remember that if we use online resources with our students, we should consider how to appropriately acknowledge where those resources came from. Preparing for teaching online should follow a process: support students pastorally, keep students interested and engaged, check the quality of materials, find resources on how best to run an online session. Provide accessibility and access for everyone, follow timing and scheduling. Given the

current situation we are adapting the usual approaches. When we support a new teacher going online we would follow a process that typically aligns to these stages : get some qualifications: there are a few organisations offering online tutor training courses, and experiencing an online course yourself can really help us become a good online tutor. Get more IT training: we will need to be able to answer technical questions and general Internet questions, as well as course-related queries. The teachers should be prepared for this. Re-write, don't adapt: few face-to-face courses will lend themselves naturally to online conversion. A lot of re-writing will be needed for successful online implementation. Never assume anything: first-time online participants will need plenty of support, encouragement and motivational input. Drop out rates for online courses tend to be quite high. Create the right environment: spend time on socialisation and group dynamic. An online course will wither and die without it. Deal with problems overtly: encourage open discussion of ongoing problems and issues in your online group - be proactive. Set a few simple rules, establish terms/ times of your availability during the course. Develop participant skills: work with your learners to explore how knowledge is constructed, assimilated and dealt with online. Help them to gain the skills they need to get the most out of the course. Encourage reflection: provide opportunities for participants to reflect - not only on what they have studied, but on the process of online study itself. Weekly journals are an ideal space for this kind of reflection. Allow for closure: a period of 'mourning' is customary at the end of any course. [3] Allow participants to deal with this positively by planning for closure, and allowing them to continue working together if they wish. Reflect and revise: each course you run will flag up problems, issues and potential for improvement. Listen to your participant feedback and be open to incorporating the best of it into future versions of your courses.

Then the online course lifecycle can be briefly described as a plan around context: how you teach and your students' needs. Design a student-centric approach to storyboard a course. Build content and media: rich resources and

activities for teaching and learning. Run a course with active teaching and learning. Review and evaluation: ensuring we reflect and iterate based on feedback.

Conclusion. With some effort, creative thinking, curiosity and courage, teachers can discover the fizz of teaching within an online classroom. This article will give some brief insights into the issues and challenges surrounding online teaching. The person leading a successful online class must be a proponent of facilitative learning and have confidence in the system in order to make it work. The online facilitator should be open, concerned, flexible, and sincere. An online teacher must be able to compensate for the lack of physical presence in the virtual classroom by creating a supportive environment where all students feel comfortable participating and especially where students know that their instructor is accessible. Failure to do this can alienate the class both from each other and from the instructor and would make for a very weak learning environment. Online students are as busy or busier than anyone else in today's hurried world. An online teacher should be willing to give individual attention to students who may need extra help. Being sensitive, open and flexible is mandatory for success in the online realm. We hope that in future articles we will be able to look in more detail into some of the issues we've raised in this article.

Keywords: teaching online, online course, e-learning, asynchronous and synchronous learning.

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