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## **SOME CHALLENGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

Last year all educational establishments worldwide were faced with the same dilemma due to Covid-19: how to switch to distance learning without causing a major harm to the quality of education and without disrupting the whole teaching process.

This transition to distance learning can be a challenge in many ways—mentally, physically, and emotionally. Science and experience show us that learning is negatively affected by stress and even simple disruption of routine. These challenges affect students, adults, educators and family members. Everyone is having a very different experience. Despite technology, we are isolated and don't know the experience of others. In an effort to reduce social contact and the spread of Covid-19, education facilities around the world are moving their instruction online. Attempting to “flatten the curve” poses new challenges for academia and teaching at large. Not least among these is the sheer urgency with which the new format is required, with many teachers having been told to transition away from in-person classes from one week to the next [1].

Advances in learning technology means that, during the current Covid-19 pandemic, teachers and students are well prepared to continue their learning journeys at home. However, being able to use technology to connect with students and set work for them is one thing; motivating them to do this work is another matter altogether. University lecturers are finding that the uncertainty over the exams is adding to the general anxiety being felt by students during this unsettling time for everyone. This is leading to students finding it hard to concentrate and becoming demotivated.

Teachers raised the issue of the poor level of broadband in some areas of the country which could affect students accessing the learning technology tools, which could lead to demotivation. However, as work is set by teachers, it's important for students to not get overwhelmed or demotivated.

The pandemic has posed many challenges for students and teachers, and unsurprisingly, student performance has suffered in response. But the factors that help eliminate the pandemic's negative effects are well within reach of many courses. Instructor experience is one such factor, and many instructors have already acquired some online-teaching experience during the spring 2020 switch to remote teaching. Increasing peer interaction in the virtual classroom will take more effort, but many instructors have already shown it can be done [2].

Summing up and comparing the feedback from students about advantages and disadvantages of distance learning, one can draw the following: 1) Distance learning does not require commuting, which saves money and time. 2) Live anywhere, study

from anywhere while pursuing the education of your choice. You don't have to live in the same city to attend the learning institution of your choice. You can study wherever you have access to a computer and Internet connection. 3) Self-paced learning is particularly useful for slow and quick learners. This reduces stress and increases satisfaction. 4) Accessibility. Online classes provide easy access to a classroom using your comfortable furniture at home while enjoying free movement and a chance to further your education.

But for every plus there is a minus, and for online learning there seem to be even more: 1) Costly and complex technology. Despite the many opportunities of distance education, there are inevitable accompanying costs. Live video communication for example, requires careful planning of the equipment and facilities. For online learning, you must own a computer (with access to the Internet). This required technology is not always available. Some learners may also be afraid (technophobic) of technology. 2) Advance planning. Both the instructors and students involved in distance learning may need to make sacrifices at times to get things done in time. 3) Distance learning does not offer immediate feedback. In a traditional classroom setting, a student's performance can be immediately assessed through questions and informal testing. With distance learning, a student has to wait for feedback until the instructor has reviewed their work and responded to it. 4) Distance learning does not always offer all the necessary courses online. Students pursuing a specific certificate or degree program may not have all the necessary courses available through distance learning so it is not suited for all subjects. While you can study a history lesson completely online, you cannot perform nursing clinicals online. Thus physical classroom attendance will be necessary to complete the course. 5) Distance learning does not give students the opportunity to work on oral communication skills. Students in distance learning courses do not get the practice of verbal interaction with professors and other students [3].

And the last, but not the least is social isolation. Most often students will be studying alone. Distance learners may feel isolated or miss that social physical interaction that comes with attending a traditional classroom. However this impersonality has been lessening with advances and use of communication technologies such as bulletin boards, social networking, chats, email and video conferencing.

### **References:**

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