

## 4. Future of Education Post Pandemic COVID -19: Online VS Classroom Learning – Redefining Education

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### **Abstract**

*Whether it is a school or a higher education institution or a world class university, the whole world is dealing with online education during the lock-down state of the pandemic COVID-19. This study focuses on Online Education which used to be on the better free of higher education and primary education for the longest time it has been building up, but this global lockdown has really seen a dearth education technology explode in a manner that no one could even imagine. Suddenly what was fashionable and desirable is now mainstream. How does this change in learning, what are the trends that are emerging out of this global lockdown? How does this impact our students, the executives who undergo these online programs? In this article, we will discuss also about the user side of this entire perspective experience.*

**Keywords:** *Online Education, Covid-19, Teachers, Students, lockdown*

### **Introduction**

It's a whole new world for students growing up during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Confined indoors most are turning to the virtual world and with schools and colleges shut that also means learning online. More city schools have turned online in cloud and schools usually teaming with students are now deserted. Even before the lockdown came into place this was the new way of school life in times of corona virus. Schools started organizing virtual classes for students effectively when students stopped visiting the school campus. To enable online classes schools began using a cloud based video calling application. Though it is a challenging experience for both teachers and the students it has become a must for this group. Several schools are now following this model to ensure



that the exact school experience is replicated. But, life is not the same anymore. Teachers miss the interaction with the students face-to-face and the energy which comes in managing big or small size classrooms. The uncertainty over when schools will reopen has forced the educational institutions to look for different avenues of instructions on the internet. Students on the other side, turned to popular educational learning applications to understand concepts that teachers in schools and colleges might have taught. Students are eager to make sure that they aspire to utilize the time by learning something new online. It is made possible through the internet by various learning platforms either free or paid at least one or two hours a day learning new concepts from different subjects. Young adults are spending their days in anxiety being schools and other higher educational institutions are shut indefinitely worldwide and are worried about their future. Various governments globally are organizing online educational campaigns to crowdsource ideas for improving the online education ecosystem in their countries. With the internet radically transforming the way education is being offered will all traditional classrooms move out of the educational institutions and into the cloud in future?

Covid-19 essentially sent all our school children and college going students and everybody home. In the past few months in the year 2020, life has completely and absolutely changed everybody. Before March 15, 2020 about 3% of the world was learning online and post March 15, 100% of the world went online. This is mass mobilization of a new technology in a way that is completely unprecedented. On edx.org, an online learning platform for example the traffic globally is up by a factor of 10 by 900% over the traffic in the first week of March 2020. Everybody is going online and trying to learn online and this is a new skill that not many people have. Online learning gives the student a lot more flexibility on learning, however it is very different from sitting in a classroom lecture for one hour and most students after five minutes go to their sleep mode. Online, you get new flexibilities: You can listen; you can pause; you can rewind and you can learn all kinds of things from over the best universities from the world, which is an incredible explosion in popularity.

For instance, Coursera another online learning tool has picked up new trends dealing with the global picture of this emerging situation. Coursera has seen a globally about 1100 percent increase compared to same time last year 2019. Online platforms are seeing incredible demand for learning and teaching tools worldwide.



Given the fact that Covid-19 is going to prevail for some more months but not years' educationalists feel that virtual learning is a good alternative which ensures and enables students allowing to continue learn from their homes and to be safe from the pandemics. But it is not something professionals and executives see virtual learning which replace classroom situation or an in-campus learning because the relationship between a student and a teacher which happens when you are physically present in the same space is phenomenal. That occurrences acts like a glue to making a learning environment what is to be, while we cannot do that this online teaching is a good alternative and an option available for the time being. This alternative has been applauded by all stakeholders in education: the parents, teachers, investors, students have risen to the challenge we have faced in learning and teaching. It is to be noted that most educationalists are extremely happy with the way we have learnt and made this huge quantum leap in our technological skills: the way we organize our classrooms, and deal with the medium which was rather unfamiliar for almost the entire learning community. May be a very minor percentage of the younger generation could have been familiar with these technologies but the teachers need to be appreciated as they have overcome their fears and faced these challenges in a very positive manner. They have learned, unlearned, made mistakes, asked each other and moved forward and currently we are in a good space and hope this situation goes away and we are allowed to go back to our classrooms soon.

However, in a nutshell distant learning or online education can never be as good as a real school or a college or university because we don't have the true sense of social interaction, we don't have a face-to-face presence and that just changes the whole experience. But, as online education is going forward we will have a certain space but can never make way for a face-to-face or human to human being in a classroom ambience. Generally, People don't have lot of experience with online learning today and many universities have conducted tests AB testing or an experience on-campus live with professors or an online experiment with residential students. These studies have shown that in many respects the on-campus live experience with the professor is better; but in many other respects the on-line experience is a lot better. The simple example is such a test at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a private research university in Cambridge, Massachusetts turned out that the exam results are pretty similar for the campus students taking live courses versus those taking online courses. The stress level for those taking online courses was one whole standard deviation lower, students were more engaged



in many respects and at the end of the day educationalists believe that blended learning were we do both some in person learning and some online learning will be the future.

To promote that, Online Course Providers such as: edX.org a massive open online course provider which hosts online university-level courses in a wide range of disciplines to a worldwide student body, including some courses at no charge. edX.org also conducts research into learning based on how people use its platform has opened a catalogue of courses to universities all over the world where universities can enroll their students all edX.org courses for free during the period of COVID-19 and their students could take all of the edX.org courses from a number of universities such as MIT and Harvard, IIT Bombay, IIM Bangalore or Berkeley universities completely for free during the COVID-19 pandemic period and further educational providers believe that this new model of learning where people will be learning online even if they are on campus as well as learning from professors will become the new normal, means Blended learning is the new normal.

However, Teachers, Principals, Parents and Students during COVID-19 feel this is just temporary and this arrangement is just a phase of using all online learning and teaching platforms. Do we still believe this disruption will lead to long-term changes in the way we perceive education or would we concede we simply cannot make up the joy of being active in engaged and involved in a face-to-face class?  
Jeff

Maggioncalda, CEO, COURSERA states, there are certain things we need to believe that there are things being together physically which matter a lot. A student studying in Duke University, a private research university in Durham, North Carolina, USA deeply missing her friends, activities together, the small close discussion groups and interactions and especially for younger kids the social peace is incredibly important and irreplaceable. But what has been happening for a long time as we have been integrating more and more online learning into the curriculum and now we have been forced to do this immediately and almost universally. We are going to end up with a new normal where the pandemic for some degree for some period of time will force everyone to be in blended classrooms. Some students will be able to go back to some campuses and some professors will not be able to mix very well with others on campus because they might be thinking health risks. Hence, all schools in almost all regions will be have to really thinking about a future where there has to be an online ability to



deliver education and people will want an in person and they don't have to be either or Online will be the backbone of On campus as well.

Online education may in time become the pivotal on education structure. Classes could be recorded and uploaded online and if you miss a part of what happened in class, one can go back home and check out what happened and pick up the parts one have not picked up during the class hours. Do you see that happen that what we are seeing essentially may be a change that's here forever and online education may become a part of blended education which has a big component of online education may be the future of education?

Rekha Krishnan, the Principal of Vasant Valley School, New Delhi, India has a slightly different opinion on this possible shift. Most of the educationalists of today, our experiences and our memories of school, college or universities are not what we learned but the interactions we had with our colleagues, classmates, professors, the outside classroom chat we had with our teachers those are the things which act like glue to our learning in a school or in a university and she thinks that critical component is missing and she didn't say that online learning is not good and has huge advantages. She further stresses that one of the biggest advantages is that of the attendance and punctuality is phenomenal in an online learning classroom. Ofcourse it is very creative and the way the teachers are innovative, learning new things, including new kinds of techniques and films and methods of engaging with their students are absolutely phenomenal but Rekha Krishnan still believe that the place for the old schools are going to be there and should be there and it is the social interaction, the emotional connect with your teachers and the classmates is something that no one can take away and those are the very integral and critical parts for growing up in our years of learning for education.

Have you been thinking about the social dimensions of online education, for example: we keep telling our children: Cut-down in screen time, don't get struck to that iPad or computer, it's enough now and read a book and suddenly here the child is sitting in a place, plugging in the computer and start attending the school, listening to his teacher and he is very happy that his laptop is On and throughout the time. How much do these things have an impact on the eyes, ears, and spine as the student sits for long time and what are you making out of a student's health and the social dimensions upon online education? Professor Anant Agarwal, CEO, edX.org responds with an example from his home. Professor's daughter is currently on an online learning platform and when her parents try to meet with



her in person in her room, parents get a nod of her head or a silence. Whereas, if the parents' texts her, they get an instant response. This is the new normal for our children for the past fifteen years and for the past fifteen years we have been telling our students to come to our classroom at nine o' clock in the morning and they don't want to do that. A mixing up of both online and classroom learning is a new venture for the students as well as the Teachers. Bring the students to some classrooms and take learning to them as well and one of Professor Agarwal's co-professor who is teaching in Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) a private university in Cambridge, Massachusetts for over thirty-two years says in a meeting that the Lecture he conducted Online was the most engaged lecture of his career at MIT. Frankly, we have lost the battle with our students in social interaction and our kids are already socially interacting in ways of texting, tweeting, snapshotting, and even across the globe every parent will agree that their children's social interaction is much more than ever been before. And also they need to be sure to keep up the personal interaction; we don't want to lose the personal connection and it is highly crucial that we balance it that we create a blended model of learning where on campuses people learn online and at the same time also work together on campus. For instance, Jain University a higher education institute in Bangalore, India is working in partnership with edX.org, a nonprofit organization, a massive open online course provider towards creating a blended learning platform for their students. Jain University is interested with the above mentioned for a micro bachelor program and micro master's program for their campus students. And then after completing a micro bachelors or micro master's program from this learning platform, the students will complete a full Master's degree or a Full Bachelor's degree with their residential program. It is creating this new innovative model with new credentials, new technologies for these blended learning at universities and at home.

To conclude, how do we wrestle with the challenges of limiting screen time for children ensuring their eyes don't get busted at a very young age because they are constantly looking at screens, all the things we have been saying as parents to our children in trying to cut down the amount of time they spend with their devices and with online education, then suddenly through the devices only the education is happening? How much of things need change and how do we respond to all the concerns about health and the social dimensions of online education?



Jeff, CEO Coursera, a world-wide online learning platform by Stanford professors Andrew NG and Daphne Koller that offers massive open online courses, specializations and degrees responds from his own experience as a parent, as a dad and as a professional that his three daughters went to high school and had a service called my-space in case of his first daughter, the second one had Facebook and the third daughter frankly had snap shot and she was the first one to go to school with an iPhone and he does worry that actually too much screen time is not healthy and also it depends on what exactly you are doing?

But there needs to be a physical pace of moving your body, in getting exercise, your cardio-vascular, your blood flowing to your brain and he does believe that activity is important and physical touch is important and maybe one of the important component in online education is we need to emphasize upon the promise of online teaching for allowing the students and teachers to be more flexible, pause things, break things up, do activities and so you are not listening to a continuous lecture session.

### **Conclusion**

It could be the new normal that will emerge from this disruption of COVID-19 lockdown is going to be a blended way of looking at learning but still could strongly believe that Online learning will have a very strong presence in new learning in the new normal that will emerge, but the importance of actual physical contact in the school or in a university classroom would not be taken away.

The current pandemic per health experts' opinion, will continue its reactions for the coming few months or years. Hence, to avoid risking the lives of the younger generation students, Online learning is a new modality and so why can't we take learning to the students rather than bringing them to a classroom, let's mix it up! Students will be more engaged if they mix it up with Online and in person and there are many ways of social interaction also in this innovative model.

Perhaps, we are going to get into a better place where there is a less of a distinction between Online and Classroom learning and everybody will have an access of an Online education and some will be on Campus Classrooms.

In Online learning and teaching mode, students and teachers don't meet in a real- time or physical face-to-face sense. As an alternative, both interact regularly through different online learning platforms like Moodle, Blackboard and via email. It is designed to stimulate dialogue between

instructor and students and emphasizes an interactive learning environment. The Teacher often act as active facilitator, who organizes activities which engage students directly rather than relying too heavily on lectures and memorization.

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