

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR THE RETURN TO CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

In this study discussed the various electronic resources and strategies which can be used to sustain academics during this pandemic. The article highlights some of the best practices and challenges of academics during COVID-19 pandemic. These strategies play fundamental role in enhancing student learning. These methods will help in designing successful online study sessions. These instructional strategies will serve as an excellent tool in running online classes.

Keywords: epidemiology, distance education, teaching, strategies, pandemics.

Introduction

As the end to pandemic remote learning comes into sight, teachers should begin imagining which new teaching strategies and practices they will continue to develop long after face masks are obsolete.

Distance education can be synchronous that happens in real-time, involving online studies, with the aid of chat rooms as well as asynchronous occurring through online channels without real-time interaction. A real classroom has now been replaced by the virtual classroom. Hybrid learning using both can be much more effective and are easier to use.



Research results

The flipped classroom is a simple strategy which refers to providing learning resources like articles, pre-recorded videos, and YouTube links before the class. The online classroom time is then used to deepen understanding through discussion with faculty and peers. This is a very effective way of encouraging skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and self-directed learning.

E-seminars, case-based discussion, journal clubs, discussion on surgical techniques; clinico-epidemiological presentations can be very effectively conducted using these virtual classrooms. Discussions on counselling, patient safety, ethical dilemmas in our Ophthalmic practice which are usually caught by students while seeing the faculty on the job can now be taught in these virtual classrooms. Many effective online teaching strategies are available for free [1; 2; 3].

The virtual classrooms can be conducted using platforms such as video conferencing (Google Hangouts Meet, Zoom, Slack, CiscoWebEx) and customizable cloud-based learning management platforms (Elias, Moodle).

Unified communication and collaboration platforms like Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas, Blackboard allow the teachers to create educational courses, training and skill development programs. They include options of workplace chat, video meeting and file storage that keeps classes organised and easy to work. They usually support the sharing of a variety of content like Word, PDF, Excel file, audio, videos etc. These also allow the tracking of student learning and assessment by using quizzes and also the rubric-based assessment of submitted assignments [1; 2; 3].

Webinars are virtual classes with a much larger audience. The biggest advantage being that learning can happen from experts all over the globe. The learning from webinars can be augmented by a prior or a follow up with department discussion in virtual classrooms. The webinars are being hosted by All India Ophthalmic society as well as many premier eye institutions using options such as YouTube Live, Gotowebinar, Zoom etc.

Open Online Course - This is a good time to encourage teachers and students to get a new skill or upgrade an existing one. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are online courses which allow flexible learning. These include platforms like Coursera, FutureLearn, Swyam, NPTEL etc. The courses may be free or may have charges for certification. These can be on a variety of topics related to ophthalmology or diverse but essential like research and publication, communication skills, personality development etc.

You shouldn't expect perfection from yourself or your students during the first few months of online learning. What you should be doing is practicing like there's no tomorrow.

- Practice making videos for your classes.
- Practice different lighting and sound setups so your students can get the most out of your videos.
- Practice making answering student e-mails a regular part of your day.
- Practice having online hours to speak with your students.
- Practice making a new curriculum that will teach your students what they need to know amidst the crisis the world is facing.
- Practice using apps and teaching your students how to use the technology they will need to continue getting an education amidst the pandemic.

Communicate with Your Students. When it comes to teaching and communicating with students online, it's okay to address the elephant in the room.

Coronavirus is an anxiety-inducing topic for most people and it's probably weighing on the minds of your students. Talk about it. Get it out in the open and use it as an opportunity to comfort and refocus your students. Remind your students that it's good to be informed about world events, but that fixating on news articles about COVID-19 can do more harm than good. Suggest only reading articles about the virus once a day and only from credible sources like the World Health Organization. This will help prevent the spread of misinformation and reduce stress [1; 2; 3].

Show Availability Even after going through months of the pandemic, students still have a lot of questions about how online classes stack up to their in-person counterparts.

Communication is key when it comes to teaching students online.

Sending out a weekly e-mail detailing new videos, readings, and assignments for the coming weeks can also be incredibly helpful for keeping students organized. Having online office hours will also be a game-changer for both teachers and students during the coronavirus pandemic.

Conclusion

This article established various instructional strategies for online learning. These instructional strategies can be practiced by higher educational institutes. These approaches will facilitate in delivering online education effectively. Moreover, this article is a tool to help higher educational institutes to run online classes smoothly.

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