



ONLINE TEACHING STRATEGIES : A CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS AND ACADEMICIANS

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C OVID pandemic which started in 2020 in India, has created a havoc among dental practitioners and dental institutions all over the country. Students and faculties were suddenly exposed to a new environment of online classroom. Initially many faculties and students faced difficulties due to this newer technique of teaching. The online teaching is totally different from the traditional method of teaching. There are a set of familiar tools such as a blackboard, LCD projector, podium and seating for the students in established classrooms. Also there is an inherited protocol of classroom experience of being the teacher and the student. The dynamics between teacher and student is challenged because in online classes all appear to be equal.

An important task for faculties is to establish the discipline, time management and understanding of topic by the students through online classroom. Advantages of online classroom are the freedom for place, regarding where and when to conduct the course.

Sharing the experience during online TL sessions here;

Scheduled lesson plan for all lectures: To avoid any kind of glitches, faculties prepared a planned structured and scheduled timetable for all the lectures throughout the

session. This will help students to get oriented for the syllabus and upcoming lectures. Also lesson plan for every topic was displayed on subject website or as online classroom announcement which includes brief summary of the topic and potential questions on it.

Virtual interaction simulating traditional classrooms: Online classes represent students and faculties as one unit and are equal on the said platform. Faculties had to make their lectures little bit more interesting to grab the attention of students and make it more meaningful. Preferably the video mode of the students should be ON during the session. This helps faculties with the correct graph of attention of the students and their physical presence in front of the screen.

Common instructions for the students displayed prior to the start of the session. Also teaching material and resources in the form of E-Books and website links were provided which will assist students in their learning process. Faculties addressed the queries at the end of lecture.

Scheduled online assessments and declaration of grades: Monitoring the student performance is a challenging task for online classes which can be reviewed by means of periodic online assessments, quiz and viva-voce. Assessments may be in the form of multiple choice questions,



hand-written long notes to be submitted in PDF format, mind-mapping through presentation of virtual cases and can be given grades.

This can help students to assess their performance periodically. Assessments were given a deadline for submission which maintained the discipline. Discussion session were held after every assessment for interacting with students to help them out in their lacunae.

Decisions and announcements for unexpected events during the course:

Established course pattern is required for smooth running of online course. But there may be unexpected issues like personal problems of faculties (health issues) and technical glitches like disrupted internet connection may lead to non-conduct of scheduled lectures.

At this time, faculties communicated with students through an email, course announcement page posting or phone message; that had helped students to reduce stress and frustration on the part of the learner.

Innovative online events to encourage student participation:

Various online

events in the form of celebration of particular days like “World Radiology Day”, “World No Tobacco Day”, “Organ Donation Day”, etc. were conducted by means of different online competitions like e-posters, e-painting, doodle-making, videomaking and slogan writing. National and International Webinars of their interest were also conducted to encourage their participation and educate them by such events.

Paid version of online teaching platform for security concerns:

By using the institutionally supported online teaching platform versions, the course related communication between faculties and students can remain safe and secured. Each student can login through their institutional email address. All the communications between students and faculties can be monitored through management operating system.

Although online classes have become immensely popular in COVID-19 era, there are some pitfalls too. In-spite of that, we, being teachers try to simulate virtual classroom with actual classroom teaching, with few unavoidable limitations.