

Is Online Learning Effective to All?

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Technological advances in virtual learning have made the option of remote learning accessible to most student as an alternative, however, is it effective to all learners? Due to recent pandemic of COVID-19 the option for online learning was the only option for a close alternative to in-person learning for all grade levels. Nonetheless, some school districts were unable to provide proper tools to conduct virtual learning through the abrupt transition at the start of the outbreak. When schools were responding to the pandemic of COVID-19, the first consideration was to ensure the safety and health for all (The Education Trust, 2020). Students and teachers had to adjust immediately to this new way of learning. By utilizing many types of online tools and resources to maintain the continuity of education. The purpose of this paper is to examine online tools and resources used by teachers to provide virtual education and their effectiveness for replicating learning and face to face interaction.

As adolescents there are many advantages to getting face to face interaction in school because not only does it allow the student to gain knowledge from a different perspective, but it also allows the child to explore and expose themselves to the social scene that a school offers. Working on their communication skills so they can conquer any nerves associated with public speaking, so anxiety disorders don't begin to evolve. Children frequently communicate online to form or maintain relationships with friends and family. Creating relationships in the "real world" is vital for adolescents' psychosocial development but can also be extremely difficult for children that experience loneliness or social anxiety (Bonetti, Campbell, Gilmore, 2010). 4.4 million children in the ages of three to seventeen have been diagnosed with anxiety which is due to the fact when children get put in an uncomfortable situation their social anxiety tends to arise (Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 2020). The usage of the Internet as a form of

communication results suggest it allows for children to fulfill critical needs of social interactions, self-disclosure, and identity exploration, this frequent use of online communication compensates for adolescents' weak social skills in meeting new people (Bonetti, Campbell, Gilmore, 2010).

By having school online, children lose the ability to break through that wall amongst peer to peer communication as well as holding the student back from gaining that trust and vulnerability with the teacher. Using apps like Zoom or WebEx the child has the choice to go into their shell by not having their camera or audio off and stray from participating.

As our world grows and advances with technology so does education. Virtual learning has been an educational option due to advances in technology. Although the switch to online learning at the beginning of the pandemic was sudden, progress on virtual learning has improved educational outcomes allowing educational technology to be successful. However, without the primary tools for distant learning how will the child be able to succeed, some schools in better areas have the resources to provide each individual with a laptop or any electronic device, unfortunately, not every school can provide that to their students. 4.4 million households with children that do not have consistent access to computers for online learning during the pandemic (USA Facts, 2020). Virtual learning has the potential to be great and effective for each student but only if the child has the proper support from his or her parents and teachers as well as the discipline and self-encouragement for him or herself to succeed. Being a future educator prior to COVID-19 a teacher must be flexible and ready for change, however, this sudden change may or may not be permanent. Through teaching preparation, the goal is to educate and prepare yourself through the best way possible, through this research teachers and students can be benefited by this through the awareness of what is going to occur in the education system presently and in the future.

There is such an importance to the ability to be creative in a classroom, as the teacher to be able to use their creativity in a room filled with several different kinds of young learners, all with different minds and different ways of learning. The reinforcement of encouraging learning activities allows student to be creative and aim to foster skills and abilities that enable creativity and innovation. However, in today's society and in regards to what is happening in our world teachers and their students have moved from a classroom setting, allowing students to truly be focus on the task at hand and getting the ability to evolve on their education but also the ability to work on their own creativity and imagination. In order to best support students in a classroom whether it be in person or virtual is by creating and maintaining clear communication, providing guidance and resources, as well as engaging the students to still have fun while learning remotely (Ed Trust, 2020). With students learning form home through an electronic device outside of that screen the student is exposed to new distractions making it more challenging to focus unless being examined by another figure like a parent as well as restricting the child to minimal or no distraction. Through utilizing proper classroom etiquette by being fully present to virtual classes, keeping cameras on and participating will allow the student to understand the clear communication being directed from the teacher, how to use the provided guidance and resources, and allowing the student to be engaged with this new way of learning and new way of being creative. Adolescent minds are the most fragile parts about them, their brains are constantly shaping and reshaping themselves depending on how they are used. The ability for the child to be creative is vital for a child to develop through the stages of cognitive development and explore their own creativity (Salvin, 2018). With the access to technology it can allow for a child to explore their creative ideas even more in a positive and restricted way.

COVID-19 Effects on the Education System

Early childhood educators are moving to virtual learning in increasing numbers. From as early as Kindergarten to college level, adolescents and teachers have transitioned their school communities to a remote learning environment, dealing with long-range strategic planning, allocation of resources, focused sustainable professional development as well as equitable access to devices and connectivity (Belastock, 2020). From the beginning of the pandemic to where we have come now schools have grown and improved upon online learning, taking any concern and finding a solution. There is still a remaining impact due to the initial closure and lack of access to educating for all students, as well as the future for education still remaining unknown. Remote learning is not the same as in-person instruction however, it does have the ability to excel. “First being that research regarding online learning and teaching displays it can only be effective to students if they are provided in the home with consistent access to an electronic device and internet. As well as the teachers being provided the proper training and support for online instruction” (Garcia, Weiss, 2020). Donohue, Fox, and Torrence are three out of many that are not only qualified, however, but have also been leading research and early childhood teachers bettering the online learning world. In educating student’s, it is vital as the educator to learn from the student’s perspective and know what works best for them to learn and be engaged. Donohue states that he has learned six main key components about being effective and an engaged eLearner by his students (Donohue, Fox, Torrence, 2007). The first truth discusses how technology works with early childhood and how an online course should be taught with childcare administration. When this is executed the overall operation of the program especially virtually, planning and building services to their students in order to properly retain the knowledge. Building a community online, is also another component to benefit the environment of online

learning, building a sense of community for the students even from a distant can create the traditional classroom setting, to further commitment to professionalism as the teacher. Other truths that were provided by Donohue's students were to speak up, to contribute, and to reflect (Donohue, Fox, Torrence, 2007). One of the most beneficial components to learning whether it is in-person or online, participating is a way to gain reassurance that the student is gaining the knowledge being given. It is also important as the educator to recognize accomplishment and not to be on a non-stop train but to rather take a moment and appreciate what has been accomplished thus far from the standpoint of the teacher seeing how far the students have come.

The relationship between the student and the teacher are very important from both ends. It is important for the student to be able to trust the teacher and feel as though they always approach them. It is also important as the teacher to get to know each of their students well enough so that can be aware when the student isn't themselves and get them the proper attention when and if needed. Through virtual learning this is still very doable and that is if the teacher regardless of the grade level is taking precaution and setting aside time throughout the day to hold advisories, morning meetings, one-on-ones, as well as small group meetings (Farber, 2020). We are currently living through a pandemic and a slow-motion collective trauma, where many of us throughout the world are not only to adjusting to remote learning and working but have also dealt with and continue to deal with stress and possibly loss of loved ones. It is important as the teacher to communicate with the students and their families by frequently checking in showing affection and interest in their students' lives to see if there is help needed with coping through all these mixed emotions and isolation (Gonser, 2020). No matter what the future holds for schools this should be something continues on. For instance, in faculty meetings they now discuss the mental health of the teachers and students and help improve upon this by constantly

reconstructing and designing the environment and experiences that support the well-being of the faculty in the schools to then better the well-being for the students (Farber, 2020). This pandemic we are living through has not only changed our daily routine it has also may have taken loved ones away from families unexpectedly and suddenly. Marmo and Carl-Stannard discuss teaching grief and loss to students online and being fully present without literally being present (Marmo, Carl-Stannard, 2020). As a teacher being self-aware and present in their students' lives is extremely vital now more than ever due to the fact, we are not aware what goes on outside the classroom. Now with online education growing rapidly the teachers have to adapt rapidly to educating themselves on the best ways to teach sensitive topics such as grief and loss to online classrooms. Since children have grown up with social media and technology, they are used to blocking out things they don't like but simply not "liking" it, however, this is not a way to go through life. Yes, there should be a time and place for when an adolescent sees particular things and events, but it is important to engage students with uncomfortable material in a safe environment. By creating a safe place for every participant as well as display support and encourage all students to occupy the space, setting aside differences, respecting one another, and feeling comfortable speaking on various statuses knowing there is confidentiality will create the safe space in an online classroom (Marmo, Carl-Stannard, 2020).

As well as relationships amongst the student and the teacher, and the teacher being aware and present with his or her students creating a safe place for the classroom, the relationship with the family and the teacher is also important. The teacher and the families of the students need to work as valuable partners to in order to receive success for the children. Acting as a team, creating supportive plans, being engaged, bridging the home and school learning environments, and sharing strategies are all components that both parties need to provide to help the child

succeed (Terada, 2020). With students learning from their homes it is now important as the parent to be aware more than ever of what is going on in the child's school life making sure they are giving the proper attention needed. By making sure even through virtual learning that there are minimal distractions and etiquette is equivalent to in-person learning. By including the parent this gives the opportunity for concerns to be expressed and request advice for their child to do better (Gonser, 2020). First step is to ensure the child has proper online classroom etiquette, meaning camera is on, the child can be seen and sitting up, respect is given, and participating and engaging in the lesson (Real Indiana Educators, n.d.). Now that the student and teacher are communicating through electronic devices teachers no longer have eyes everywhere because it is now restricted to what is visible in the box around the student, nevertheless, the parent or authority figure can see what is going on around the student and if they are giving the proper attention. Building upon relationships and being a teacher that is engaged and present in the student's life in all areas that will benefit the atmosphere created in the online classroom. Ten years from now, students will barely remember the goals for the lessons, but they remember when you checked in and showed that you care (Gard, 2014). As the teacher, the kindness and empathy you provide to your students, making a difference in their lives is what will impact them throughout their lives. The students remember the teachers that made them feel motivated, encouraged, and important, most of the time the students do better in those courses versus the courses where they felt neglected or struggled to learn the information. Teaching and learning are rooted in relationship, with no relationship there is no connection. Adolescents can see past the truth of the matter, while the games and flashy stuff can distract them and entertain them for a little while, it is the consistency of empathy that continues to connect teacher and the student. "It is important to observe a classroom, study their past behaviors, issues, and concerns. Look past

the materials and dig deeper, than, as the teacher, you can see you have the ability to make an on your student's lives" (Gard, 2014).

Student's Feeling Vulnerable Versus Shy in Online Classrooms

Mental health in the United States is increasing more and more especially with what is occurring in our unknown world. Social anxiety disorders are becoming the most prevalent anxiety disorders in adolescence common ages (Weill Medical College of Cornell University, 2020). As of now the best-known frontline treatment is cognitive behavioral therapy with exposure, but it not always guaranteed to succeed. This can be seen as a challenge for reasons that include, "difficulty realistically mimicking anxiety-provoking social situations due to limited resources, clinician training, time, or motivation. Virtual reality environments could provide contextual exposures for social anxiety" (Weill Medical College of Cornell University). Cornell University's medical college performed a pilot study testing the feasibility of integrating virtual reality technology in exposure-based treatment in youth teen ages that have been diagnosed with social anxiety disorder with the goal to approximating equivalent efficacy with cognitive behavioral therapy as well as testing fear conditioning and seeing the efficacy of virtual learning exposure. As the teacher being engaged in the lives of the student and their interests giving them more confidence will give them the ability to talk in break out rooms and in the class as a whole breaking through that fear related to public speaking. This study is being done to hopefully assess the feasibility of virtual reality in treatments for adolescents with social anxiety disorders, it will also examine whether virtual learning invokes similar arousal to anxiety and evaluating whether exposure in online learning will have the same abilities to reduce symptoms of social anxiety as in person instruction. Children and adolescents are familiar more with electronic devices due to the fact they are growing up through a century that is highly dependent on the use

of technology. Children find it to be more common to communicate via the internet compared to older generations on maintaining and forming relationships. Through losing one of the last social scene to continue to work upon communication in schools amongst peers in person to stray away from feeling lonely or social anxiety in a situation will continue to allow adolescents to think it is socially acceptable to maintain and form relationships with others through the internet will continue to motivate the idea of weaker social skills when interacting with new people (Bonetti, Campbell, Gilmore, 2010). Although there have been many individuals working on perfecting the flaws associated with online learning and due to COVID-19 we have improved on much in a short amount of time, there is still many things that still need improvement, especially areas that affect the well-being of students and teachers.

Where the Education System has Flourished and Where there is Still Room for Improvement

The United States Department of Education embarked on an ambitious project about a decade ago, choosing to create what we know as online learning. Researchers pored through more than a thousand studies to determine whether students in online classrooms do worse, the same, or better than those receiving face-to-face instruction. They discovered that on average, “students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction” (Terada, 2020) Since March, students, teachers, and families are becoming more acclimated to remote learning. Schools are creating better tactics, strategies, and training each day, improving and constantly getting better. As long as kept well organized to students, virtual learning has the environment to be qualified as a real learning space (Farber, 2020). Teachers are planning lessons and grouping the materials into smaller, and less overwhelming large topics. Through feedback from the students work, helps the teacher understand where each

student individually is excelling and still needs improvement to guide them to get one on one help as well as the majority of the class to see as a whole where most of the students are doing well compared to where they all need improvement. For when the time comes to review the teacher knows where most of the time needs to be spent. This feedback can be created by, take home assignments, independent work within the lesson, small group work within the lesson, and check in quizzes (Salvin, 2018). All these examples can help the students excel and can be executed through a virtual classroom by setting up break out rooms for small group work, setting aside time in the lesson for independent work, and by giving quizzes with all cameras on to ensure they are working on their own. As mentioned, prior mental health awareness and the overall well-being of the students and the teachers have become a higher radar for the school environment. Teachers have felt more burdened with feeling more responsibilities for sustaining academic growth and the well-being of their students in this new normal. Due to the unknown, teachers have to have any in person lesson planned for it to also work virtually. This is due to if there are a rise in cases of COVID-19 to ensure everyone's safety schools implemented programs to smoothly transition temporality or permanently depending on the risk to the faculty and student bodies safety to virtual learning. Not only is there more work for the teacher to necessarily plan and organize they also have to be more present and sensitive to all their students making sure they all have the proper resources to maintain a healthy well-being. Another unfortunate issue that still needs improvement and might take a while to do so is all schools throughout the United States having equal access and resources to succeed at virtual learning. Depending on the state and district the following are still struggles being faced with online learning due to lack in resources, low-income students have a disadvantage, weak Wi-Fi and hotspot services, consistent technology access, proper teacher training, and the flexibility and

lack in standardize testing. Lacking the required needed materials for effectiveness, remote learning has shown results in students not gaining the proper experience. Not having the proper consistent tools such as internet connection and an electronic device prohibits the students as well as the teachers that don't have the proper resources to not being familiar and proficient in the uses of the proper devices for learning (Garcia and Weiss, 2020). Nearly 16% of eighth graders that participated in the National Center for Education Statistics' National Assessment of Educational Progress for 2017 said they do not have a desktop or laptop computer at home which would mean one in six eighth grade students would not be being able to part take in online class. According to the same sample, 4.2% of the eighth graders also lack home internet, the other essential instrument needs to access online classes (Garcia, Weiss, 2020). Online Education including learning and instruction has been studied for decades. As important as having the proper tool for online learning, the teachers also need the proper resources for being given sufficient instruction and training to translate to their classrooms. Two factors that a teacher needs to master regardless how they are teaching is to be effective and to be intentional. Being an effective eTeacher builds on content that we already are aware of, which is the way we interact with our students that will better their desire to want to learn, building off that foundation now utilizing technology skills to execute, stay well organized, and be intentional on the material being displayed. Being an intentional eTeacher requires the teacher to be purposeful in the decisions they choose related to technology usage, activities, ways of interaction, and community building. Within virtual learning, teachers must recognize and address the barriers and overcome them by having multiple backup plans and being prepared to deliver the information no matter the obstacle. It is up to the teacher to provide the time even when the school may or may not be

preparing their faculty as well enough, as the educator one must present, explore, and play with the opportunities to the online learning environment (Donohue, Fox, Torrence, 2007).

The Breakthrough in Virtual Learning

Teachers need to fight the isolation that remote learning creates by connecting with their students. Students should feel that they can be vulnerable and willing to express themselves comfortably to the teacher, in order to do so the teacher must be approachable and handle topics lightly. However, students need to push themselves more than usual out of their comfort zone. Development and frequent use of Break out rooms have been shown as a growing alternative. As well as being successful since it creates a casual way for the students to interact with one another without an authority figure watching. Through the use of the “three R’s,” relief, recovery, and rebuilding, this process has been created and put in place to better the education system due to the coronavirus outbreak to sustain and provide relief to schools. This three-pronged plan requires necessary investments to the following, “1) put school systems on a solid footing to provide effective remote instruction and supports at scale as the crisis continues to play out (the “relief” phase); 2) make new investments to help schools and students compensate for lost time and ground during the period of quarantine (during the “recovery” phase); and 3) lay the foundations for a shift toward an education system that understands the complexity of education production and its multiple components, untaps children’s talents, works equally for all students, and reflects the value we place on education as a society (in the “rebuilding” phase). This plan will require substantial amounts of resources and strong collaboration and effort” (Garcia, Weiss, 2020). Depending on the state this may not be affordable, however, in the times we are in currently, dealing with life in a pandemic as well as a elections, education should be prioritized as a country to find an equal compromise in order to give students and teachers equality and

equity throughout the country, since education and going to school is more than just learning the material, it about developing the social and emotional skills. School closures have prohibited developmental and personal growth through after-school activities and skill development, it has also ruptured the sense of routine and the normal life an adolescent is used to living. Through budgeting, financing, and revising the education system properly we can find the best opportunities to give students a successful education virtually (Garcia, Weiss, 2020).

Educational technology is a course taught to future teacher within their undergraduate to improve their overall performance with educational technology programs and services to better the teacher and prepare them with the resources before entering their own classroom. Teachers use technology, such as word processors, multimedia, and presentation software, for planning and presenting lessons. Using tools such as computers, interactive whiteboards, electronic response devices and other technology devices to enhance their lessons to the whole class. Technology is used for a wide variety of purposes to better students learning capabilities. By teachers utilizing the following technological tools they can better the communication between the families as well as the interaction in the classroom. Through the use of email, teachers can translate an issue that arises easily as well as address any further actions that need to be taken with the families. Utilizing online classroom such as google classroom, Blackboard, Canvas, etc. help keep the course organized as well as a way for teachers to easily post homework, links, calendars, and announcements for students and parents to view and ensure the child stays on track. The use of discussion boards also allows the student to interact with other classmates while discussing a reading, film, or material that was explained or asked to independently complete in the class. Constantly testing new approaches to making distant learning effective is a good way

for students to learn because it provides different perspective to benefit all different types of learners.

It is clear the switch to online learning due to the pandemic has utterly disrupted the education system. Still with room for improvement, Educational Technology and remote learning is not a new resource for school districts. Students and teachers have grown and adapted to the 21st century skills with the use of technological tools to better the student's ability to succeed rather quickly. As lifelong learners, teachers are constantly challenging themselves to provide their students with the best resources possible, leveraging technology tools in virtual learning environments can help ensure students stay on task and encourage them to dive into depth in the student's areas of interests. Resulting in online learning having the ability to be effective for all

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