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Remolding the pedagogy for virtual classroom

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Abstract

Creating and using suited pedagogy for e-learning during pandemic must be focusing on the subjects being taught. Integrating new teaching methods and classroom management that maximize students' participation must be identified and used. This paper discusses the challenges to choose or develop appropriate pedagogical tools to improvise teaching-learning environment. It also suggests the inevitable need for following the virtual classroom management techniques to lighten up the e-learning system. The aim of the paper is to discuss the challenges in redesigning the pedagogy suitable to the virtual learning in terms of subjects, mode of delivery and to suggest pedagogical tools to address the possible challenges. The objectives of the research paper is to identify the challenges in adapting a pedagogy suitable for the e-classes and methods can be used to address the challenges. Discourse Analysis in education is used as the research methodology. The paper was written by applying the pedagogical theory of Hebart and learning style theory by Neil D. Fleming and Coleen E. Mills. Teachers and students are struggling to cope-up with the new education system in the pandemic. This study identifies the major challenges teachers face to teach online and suggests a method which can be adopted to

each the total teaching-learning process.

Keywords: virtual learning, pedagogy, virtual classroom management, covid19, students' mental health,

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Introduction

Setting up the virtual learning concept in Indian higher educational context was not even a future plan though it becomes the only option during the pandemic. The educational institutions, faculty members and students are forced to blend into the total scenario without required/no preparations. The classroom management being the most integral part of pedagogy (Wright, 2005) demands a constant upgradation of pedagogy according to each and every changes occur in the teaching –learning environment.

The aim of the paper is to discuss the challenges in redesigning the pedagogy suitable to the virtual learning in terms of subjects, mode of delivery and to suggest a pedagogical tools to addressing the possible challenges. Even a minute difference in the delivery of the lessons affects the process of teaching and learning. The students' mental health at the face of complete change has to be one of the main factors to be taken care of. So that choosing the most effective and least bothering teaching methodology according to the subject taught is crucial.

Jaffee opines that "web-based instructional technologies are transforming post-secondary teaching and learning (Jaffee, 2003). He says the setup of a traditional class completely different when compared to virtual class in which the students are not ready to attend the class in same way being at their most convenient place. Becker and Ravitz clarifies the intensity of relation between e-learning and pedagogical techniques especially for social studies, science, and noncore subjects. There were some studies about the e-pedagogies based on the learning outcomes… "suggest a number of pedagogies that are worthy of including in the online teaching and learning processes due to their theoretical backing and the empirical evidence of their correlations with students' learning and outcomes" (Mehanna, 2004). This paper tries suggest the possible classroom management techniques to demand the maximum students 'participation, the challenges and the need for designing the pedagogy suitable different subjects.

Discourse Analysis in education is used as the research methodology in this qualitative research paper to discuss the conceivable pedagogy which suits to the e-learning in the Indian contexts. And the potential problems in the class room management may arise along with the mode of delivery and the assessment method of them are also discussed in this paper.

Research Methodology

The objectives of the research paper is to identify the challenges in adapting a pedagogy suitable for the e-classes and methods can be used to address the challenges. The ongoing online and offline debates and discussions on the mode of virtual classroom provided context and inspiration to this research paper. While being a part in the e-learning process, it is difficult to blend in with the conventional pedagogical methods. The definition of the concept 'pedagogy' and 'pedagogical theories' were studied thoroughly along with its application in the real classroom. The stemming learning theories from the pedagogical theories were examined as well. Then the possibility of adopting those pedagogical methods and classroom management techniques in the virtual classroom were considered. It assisted to identify the fundamental issues of bringing in such methods to e-classroom.

"Discourse analysis is a research method that provides systematic evidence about social processes through the detailed examination of speech, writing and other signs" (Wortham and Rayes, 2015). In order to make the classroom interaction maximum, a teacher uses every possible tools of communication to make the interaction. So the techniques of discourse analysis provided enough assistance to observe and evaluate the data; the available pedagogical tools are being used commonly in the virtual classrooms so far.

.... "First, insights gained from classroom discourse analysis over the last several decades have enhanced mutual understanding between teachers and students" (Rymes, 2016). The teachers always switches, adopts and mix up many teaching methods in the classroom to interact with the pupils effectively. They make use of different communication methods. The result of different mode of communication is also varying. These various methods help the teacher to reach to every type of learners. The teachers are expected to choose the best pedagogical methods and tools to interact effectively with the learners. Preparations, presentation, association, generalization and application are the five components of pedagogy according to John Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841) who is known as the father of pedagogy. But the teachers can not follow the classroom management techniques which they uses in the physical classroom in the same way when they deal with the e-classroom. Understanding the learner type and designing syllabus or delivery plan and preparing assessment method is significant to produce the expected learning outcomes. Neil D. Fleming and Coleen E. Mills in 1992 identified and described different learning styles such as visual, auditory, reading/writing and kinesthetic. They defined different types of learners according to the learning style; visual learners, auditory learners, reading/writing learners and kinesthetic learners. The VARK model of learning styles clearly states the need for bringing in and mixing up teaching methods according to the learner type, learning style and nature of the course. (Fleming and Mills, 1992)

Results

The result are presented as two sections; the potential issues of using the current pedagogy in e-classroom and the suggestions to overcome such issues.

The basic challenges in using the known pedagogy in the virtual classroom are:

- The context of e-classroom and physical classroom is entirely different.
- The teachers cannot effectively use the teaching methods which they performed in the physical classroom in the same way in the virtual classroom.
- Using possible communication modes in the e-classroom is impossible and it affects the reach of the course objectives to the different learners.
- The teachers could not include different teaching strategies to reach every learner type
- Adopting various pedagogical tools to teach different subjects are not being practical.
- Teachers are limited in identifying the students' immediate responses
- The possibility of including concept checking questions becomes less or no
- The incomplete application of pedagogical theories.

The pedagogical tools which teachers can use in the e-classroom:

- Using technological aids can minimize the degree of challenges.
- Incorporating different types assessment methods would help to check the level of understanding.

The researcher applied the available definition of pedagogy, pedagogical theory and learning theory to evaluate the contemporary pedagogy which is being used in the online classroom. The discourse analysis of the current interaction patterns in the online classroom showed the glimpses of limitation the interaction happens the online classroom. Face-to face communication, one to one explanations according to the need, concept checking etc. become unmanageable in the e-classroom which the teachers used to receive the immediate response from the student. And teachers used to count these immediate responses to switch their teaching methods within the classroom. The teachers deliver the lessons and somehow assumes that the delivered lessons are understood. Addressing and reaching the four learner

type such as visual, audio, reading/writing and kinesthetic, become vague in terms of lecture delivery. The teachers are forced to complete the lesson in the virtual classroom without confirming the expected or required result.

The technological aids for example, infographics, posters, online games, online puzzles help the teachers to reach all learner types. And these technological aids can be used for concept checking and assessment. Many websites provides free templates for making such virtual props to be used in the classroom. In order to avoid the conventional assessment methods in the e-classroom, teachers can include formative and constructive assignments, or project and research based activities. It would help the students to critically evaluate and analyze the lesson they have learned and apply and practice it.

Discussion

The concepts of VARK model of learning styles which explains the need for including the teaching strategy to teach every learner type; visual learners, auditory learners, reading/writing learners and kinesthetic learners and pedagogical theory by Hebart which identified and described the five major components of pedagogy; preparations, presentation, association, generalization and application are studied thoroughly and applied in evaluating the effectiveness of commonly practicing teaching methods and classroom management techniques. The definition of pedagogy by Smith is also considered to cognize effect of application of pedagogy in online classes. Smith defines "Pedagogy is defined as the science of teaching"; he continues "pedagogy as a way of being with people. It involves: joining with them to bring flourishing and relationship to life (animation) being concerned about their, and other's, needs and wellbeing, and taking practical steps to help (caring); and encouraging reflection, commitment and change (education)" (Smith, 2019).

Preparing a pedagogy for online teaching addressing all type learners is one of the major challenges teachers are facing during the current pandemic education scenario. And this practical difficulty eventually might trigger tension in students who already try hard to accept the reality of virtual learning. In India, only higher education institutions and CBSE, ICSC and other international schools offers virtual learning via LMS or other virtual platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom etc. While government schools in which most of students study make use of broadcast media to e-classes. Using both the medium of virtual platform and broadcast media, teachers struggle to meet the requirements.

Considering the all four learner type and including strategies to teach them via online classes becomes biggest challenge.

Smith's definition leaves an impression when we apply it with the pedagogy which is being used today to proceed the virtual classes is not pedagogy because it doesn't offer any opportunity to animate or care. Animation and caring are the essentials to achieve the change. This is the second challenge. And it leads to another potential problem of dealing with concept checking and other assessment methods in the online classes. Students do not find enough opportunities to confirm their responses before actually responding to the teacher. This situation affects the learning and assessment process.

Using technical aids such as; infographics, posters, podcasts and designing suitable games would help the teachers to reach every learner type. However, the selection of these aids must be based on the subjects being taught. Replacing exams with assignments, project based tasks and research based tasks helps the teachers to get rid of the issues with assessment to certain level.

Prior studies address the problems related with the online teaching-learning by considering online teaching as an upgradation of education system. Right now, the scenario is

totally different as we don't have an option to continue the education. So it is crucial to identify the basic problems and the possible ways to overcome those problems.

There are certain strengths and limitations of this research paper. This research paper tried to explain the basic issues in the current practice of online educational method during the covid-19 pandemic. It suggested a few methods to overcome the potential problems of to continue the e-classes. The suggestions include pedagogical tools which teachers can easily adopt and include in their teaching method, lecture delivery plan, classroom management and assessment methods. The study took place keeping the current Indian online education system in general. The major limitation of the study is that; the study approaches the pedagogy generally. It doesn't specify the objectives of the study for primary education and secondary education.

In order to conduct the future studies related to the topic, I would recommend to research on the techniques that teachers may follow to avoid the probable issue occur while using the technical aids in online classroom being in the Indian context. The effect of traditional assessment methods in the virtual classroom can also be an area of study.

Conclusion

Teachers and students are struggling to control and master the new education system in the pandemic. This study identifies the major challenges teachers face to teach online and suggests a method which can be adopted to each the total teaching-learning process. The suggestion put forward by the study would definitely help the teachers who are totally new to the virtual classroom.

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