

My Experiments with Technology

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The COVID-19 pandemic left the gamut of teachers and students in a state of crisis. The pandemic which struck mid-session left courses and assessment incomplete. With no access to schools and colleges it became difficult to reach out to students. Technology has played a major role in bringing teachers and students together. It has provided a common platform that could serve as a binding element and helping all in this moment of instability. During this crucial point technology has served as a boon not only to the people who are adept in its use but also to people who have been limited users of it. Such is the nature of technology, that it makes tasks easier and absolutely friendly.

I have used a number of applications in my virtual classrooms that I created for the teaching learning process to go on smoothly and effectively. Here is a list of the assistive technology that I have been making use of -

1. Google Classroom - A Learning Management System (LMS) is the first pre-requisite for the smooth functioning of any virtual platform. The Google Classroom provides a perfect environment for this purpose. Forming classrooms and adding students and teachers as fellow collaborators is a very easy task. Further it also provides a comfortable environment to send study material, assignments, videos and quizzes to the students for their perusal. Forming Rubrics for the purpose of assessment makes the process a cakewalk. Finding everything in one place i.e. in the Google Drive makes everything very systematic and convenient. One element found missing in the Classroom is that it does not allow parents to participate as key stake holders, which I consider is a very integral part of the whole process of learning.
2. Bandicam- Bandicam is a light weight screen capturing application for windows. The process of making videos through the screen capturing function is rather effective and easy. Making PPTs and converting them into videos with an audio video screen capture turns out to be efficient and is interactive too. Bandicam comes with a very bold watermark in the free version of the application. To avoid this one will have to purchase the paid version of it.
3. Virtual Meetings- Meetings with individual classes were scheduled on a regular basis. Most of these meetings were done initially through Zoom and later on through Cisco WebEx. These meetings provided a platform where the teacher could personally interact with the students. Though nothing can be compared to the face to face

interaction but it was still worth the effort. These meetings helped the students to clear doubts and also to have interaction and collaboration with their peers. On the other hand, it was also noted that it was difficult for the teachers to manage students who were disinterested. Moreover, it provided less opportunity to those set of students who were reticent and chose to remain silent.

4. Google apps- All Google apps such as Google docs, Google slides, Google Forms came in handy along with the Google Classroom. All these applications are beautifully integrated with the Google Classroom. There are certain limitations, wherein there are a number of services that can be used as add-ons which have to be installed. Gaining expertise in using these add-ons is another daunt task for a new user of technology
5. Padlet- Padlet provides a unique platform to the students to express their views and share opinions with not only the teacher but also their fellow classmates. It is in the form of a common whiteboard where each child has the liberty to express his/her thoughts. The students found padlet a creative resource in the classroom where they could collaborate with each other but there were many instances, wherein students had to be discouraged to use language that was incorrect and inappropriate.
6. Socrative- As a formative assessment tool Socrative proved its worth in the class. The best part is that Socrative

can be accessed on any kind of device and gives the teacher the ability to give immediate feedback to the students. It is interactive and engaging and provides a number of question types which can be used for the purpose of assessment. The only lacuna is that it becomes very difficult for the teacher to analyse student data on an individual basis, since it requires lot of time and effort on the part of the teacher.

7. Pixton- Making comic strips with the Pixton app is a fun task. Students love to read educational content in the form of comic strips and the end results are very effective. It helps in enhancing the process of learning. Teachers can also encourage students to hone their creative skills and come up with comic strips of their own. The characters and background scenes are too limited in the free version and for every other thing it asks the user to upgrade.

Every aspect has its pros and cons. On the one hand, technology has proven to be a blessing for the fraternity of teachers in this state of flux and crisis. It has not only showed the path to many teachers but has also fostered the feelings of oneness and standing in unison in these times. On the other hand, if we see, there are certain limitations to it too. Internet services are still in the preliminary stages in the Indian context and it becomes difficult to reach out to students located in remote areas where these facilities are meagre. Moreover, there is a certain group which still has to acquire pace and learn the use of technology. Though the challenges are

many, but these challenges should not undermine the spirit of a passionate and innovative teacher.