

## Teaching with Technology: Educator's Experience

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The inevitable lockdown owing to the COVID-19 pandemic has created a situation of all-around chaos across all sectors of the economy. A threat resulting in an unprecedented standstill is being experienced by educational institutions. The traditional education system necessitating physical teacher-student interaction for teaching-learning transactions is completely disrupted. A positive outlook on this current crisis is that, it has opened new avenues to digital technology platforms for teaching, training, and research. Looking at the current situation, online platforms are the only means to assure continuity of the teaching-learning-mentoring process to minimize the damage. Besides online teaching, these platforms extend an opportunity to educators working from home to continue teaching for routine classes and guiding students' research, business-plan projects. The educators are also taking exposure to the advanced features of these tools and are upgrading themselves by attending workshops and webinars to enhance their skills and adapting to newer learning methods.

This article discusses our reflection and experience of various digital learning platforms which we have used for teaching, evaluations, and mentoring our students. We also share our learning exposure while getting hands-

on-experience on these tools.

### Transforming classroom learning through digital platforms

We have conducted our classes/presentations/exams using various platforms such as Zoom, Cisco WebEx, and Google products (viz. Classrooms-Meetups-Hangouts-Duo). These video-conferencing platforms provide the convenience of having a large gathering of listeners, features like screen share facility to share various websites, PowerPoint slides, documents, exercises on excel sheets, and using artificial intelligence for data analysis and evaluation of quizzes and assignments. With the chat options, students were able to raise their queries during sessions which made it easier for us to understand their pace of grasping and learning using these platforms. WhatsApp (with its eight-member video-call facility and easy information sharing) was mainly used for announcements or personalized discussions with students collaboratively working in group projects.

These platforms have made the learning experience more enriching and interesting, the mentoring activities required regular interactions with students here Zoom served the purpose with its free version turned out to be a boon enabling us to interact and share

our feedback instantly. The constraints that could be felt in zoom were related to a time limit of 40 minutes for a free plan and that of the multi-call feature of WhatsApp was the maximum 8 number of concurrent participants at one go. Also, as a learner, while attending a workshop the breakout-room feature that enabled secluded discussions between groups formed out of participants, was a valuable addition to our skills.

### **Students' feedback**

A quick feedback of students revealed that initially when this sudden switch took place, they felt the new system was a bit difficult to adapt, and at times there were internet connectivity issues that resulted in the loss of continuity at times. "Being aware of the limitations, we allowed the session to continue without disturbing you when we lost a few seconds of connectivity or loss of voice, however, it was not too significant" said one student. While another student said that "I was too naïve in using such a system and initially, I was too scared that I avoided interactions, but was comfortable as the sessions progressed with days." In general, the students initially required a bit of time to adapt to the technology-enabled learning process, but with passing days they enjoyed this new approach.

### **Conclusions**

Digital learning has taken a huge leap from what it was perceived earlier as a complementary approach to now the only source of our survival for teaching. These platforms have emerged as must-have tools in times of lockdown

for a seamless education process. After some initial hiccups students and teachers have become adept in the use of these tools. These tools have given opportunities for business continuity in times of crisis for the education sector. Thanks to Online tools that served as saviours.