

BMAF000-20

Academic Study Skills

S1. Individual Portfolio



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# Section-1 Report

# Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic forced people to stay home to avoid infection risk. The students and working people need to stay at home and most of their studies and work is performed through the online platform. Most universities and schools conduct exams online during the 1st and 2nd waves of Covid-19. The lectures are given via various online media such as google meet, zoom and others. The lecture notes are sent to students through multiple PDFs and PowerPoint presentations. The following report will explore the various advantages and disadvantages associated with online learning.

# Main Body

## Advantages of online learning

**Increment in efficiency**

Online learning helps to increase efficiency among students. The students become familiar with the use of various technologies and software that is required for their studies. They are flexible to enrol their names on online courses as well. The students have learnt to access various resources for their studies such as PDFs and podcasts and teachers are also flexible to arrange their lesson plans in a modern, accessible and flexible manner (Dumford and Miller, 2018, pp. 452). The teachers can suggest students’ various resources apart from their traditional textbooks. The efficient teachers become flexible with online lectures as well and provide students with online classes. The use of various platforms makes online learning more flexible such as *“blackboard”*, *“google meet”*, *“zoom”*, *“google classroom”* and others.

The teachers can take the classes from anywhere they want and they can take classes for a long time. The students and teachers both need a flexible network for the conduction of online classes. Online classes remove geographical boundaries as well. The students who suffered from Covid-19 can access the classes from online video recordings and can easily learn from the class (Dung, 2020, pp. 45). The students can re-run the online lectures whenever they want. Online classes provide them access to various resources other than traditional textbooks.

It provides versatility in learning styles as well. The students can learn with the method of their choices. The online classes give them flexibility and the opportunity to learn from various sources. Various learning styles help them to grasp the knowledge about their subject. The versatile learning styles that are applied to the online learning platform are visual, kinaesthetic, aural, social, verbal, logical and others (Salleh *et al.,* 2020, pp. 147). The learning styles help the students to grab sufficient knowledge and clear their concepts that boost their learning.

The students can attend their classes from anywhere due to the accessibility of online classes. If a student is ill or unable to attend classes they can listen to the recorded videos from anywhere and they don't need to miss their classes as well. The students can access the internet and other resources that fill the gap in their knowledge as well (Davis *et al.,* 2019, pp 256). The students don’t need to go to the class physically and they can attend it flexibly from the comfort of their homes. It increases the attendance of the classes as well.

Online classes provide flexibility in learning. The teachers and students can adjust the class timing as per their choice and the flexible class timing helps them to increase their attendance. The students can attend their classes with tabs, laptops and phones as well (Sadeghi, 2019, pp. 80). The flexible schedule helps them to plan other activities, they can do productive things and can take up vocational courses with the flexible schedule.

## Disadvantages of online learning

The students can face a lack of concentration due to the continuous isolation process. The online classes sometimes hamper their concentration and they sometimes sleep in between the class and can perform other activities in the background during the class by turning off the camera. The lack of concentration hampers their learning process. The monotony of online classes sometimes makes them feel bored and the process can be monotonous (Todd, 2020, pp. 4). The students continuously stay at home and it can cause depression for the students as well. The lack of the presence of hands-on training and practical classroom experience, renders the learning process of the students incomplete.

Students from medical and engineering backgrounds suffer a lot due to the practical pieces of training. The feeling of uncertainty in the career can cause depression, anxiety and stress in the student’s mind. They are feared that with the lack of practical classes, internships and hands-on training they can face issues in their professional lives. The fear of failure and uncertainty can cause depression in the mind of the students. Medical students cannot reside in hostels as well as their professors send them back home and take online classes (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2021, pp. 46). The fear of lack of expertise and skills can be the cause of the deficiency in concentration.

Technical glitches can be the biggest disadvantage of taking online classes. The students who reside in remote areas are not always accessible to the internet. The lack of internet facilities and connectivity issues can cause interruptions in the learning process. Technical glitches can be caused due to power cuts and damage to gadgets as well. The awareness about the proper use of the online platform slower the learning processes (Almahasees *et al.,*2021). Some students belong to remote areas and need to depend on mobile data and which is limited to 1GB or 2GB per day. The available data is not sufficient for the accessibility of their learning process.

These issues bothered the students learning process. Connection issues can bother the teachers as well. Therefore, it has become difficult for teachers to conduct classes for students. They are sometimes unaware of the use of the latest technologies as well. The elderly teachers and professors are unable to handle the electronic gadgets properly which can create issues technically and that can hamper the classes as well (Elsamanoudy *et al.,*pp. 213). Therefore, unavailability of data, connectivity issues and unawareness of using the advanced technologies create technical issues that hamper the studies of the students.

The online classes provide a feeling of isolation to the students. They are always living at home and the monotonous routine can make them claustrophobic as well. The students can feel isolated and it can cause depression among students. The fear of an uncertain future and lack of hands-on training and internships the university students get tensed about their professional success and the social distancing in the Covid-19 pandemic giving them a sense of loneliness. They cannot interact with their friends and teachers like they used to do (Elsamanoudy *et al.,* pp. 213). It has become difficult for students to exchange all information through online communication. The isolation can deteriorate their mental health as well. They lack focus and concentration due to the online learning process and lost in the middle of their coursework. They become lazy due to the easily available resources and online study materials and become lazy to study more.

Students with science backgrounds require practical classes, hands-on training, industrial experiences and internships. Students before the pandemic used to directly interact with their guide or mentor regarding their training and practical classes and it is useful for clearing their doubts and giving them practical knowledge as well. The face-to-face communication and the environment of the class boost the self-esteem of the students. The students in online classes due to the pandemic faces the unnecessary fear of an uncertain future and failure in their professional lives as well (Elsamanoudy *et al.,*pp. 213). The main concern of the students is not getting professional training which can hamper their future in the industry and academics.

Online classes cannot fill the gap in practical knowledge. That is harmful to the future of the students, especially medical students. For example, medical students need hands-on training to check the patients and the lives of the patients are dependent on the these students in the future however, they can only gather theoretical knowledge but practical knowledge is equally important for the students as well (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2021, pp. 57). The professors did not allow the young students to the hospital as it is not safe during the Covid-19 pandemic. The chances of infection are there. Therefore, they had to stay home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

One of the biggest challenges of online coursework is training teachers to take classes online. There are elderly and senior professors who are not that tech-savvy. Therefore, unawareness of the techniques of online teaching can create issues in the learning process of the students. The teachers become unable to deliver the lectures properly in starting. They took time to learn the process of online teaching and then they become capable of delivering the lectures as well (Ayu 2020, pp. 54). The elderly professors cannot handle electronic devices properly sometimes as they are most familiar with the offline method of teaching therefore it has become difficult for them to deliver lectures prosperity and the students face problems due to this situation. The knowledge and learning of the students remain incomplete due to issues in the teachers' training process.

The guardians of the students are afraid that the students can get eye problems and other health issues as they spent most of their time online and looking at the screen. The prolonged screen time can initiate migraine headaches and myopia-like issues among the students. The prolonged screen time can initiate any other issues related to the eyes as well. The students not only study but watch social media and other activities on an electronic gadget. The excessive use of electronic devices can make them unsocial which is a problem for guardians as well. The online learning process cannot replace offline interactive classes and examinations. The process of online classes is an alternative option that can be used in emergencies (Karkar-Esperat, 2018, pp. 1730). The students are not going to open textbooks as they all get all the resources online and they get easily what they want. The students do not work hard or find their answers in the textbooks as well. They can face eye troubles from prolonged screen time for online classes.

# 1.2 Conclusion

Online learning proves to be beneficial for students other than science background. It can be concluded from the above report that, the main advantage of online learning is accessibility, to various resources. Through online learning the students need not go outside and thus it is good for protecting themselves from the Covid-19 infection. They can be flexible and it is useful for the professors as well. They can learn in the comfort of their home and the excessive pressure of study is somehow reduced due to online learning. Online education just requires a flexible internet connection. Online learning is a cost-effective method and it can save time and money. Some students live far from their homes due to study purposes. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they need to return to their home and can study in the comfort of their homes.

Online learning has several difficulties as well. Online learning leads to prolonging screen time which can be harmful to the health of the students. The feeling of isolation is there in the case of online learning. Face-to-face interaction with their professors and friends is missing due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This thing sometimes saddened them. They sometimes lack the environment of their institution which can be the cause of sadness in a person. The professors sometimes are not familiar with the advanced technologies that can create problems. The science background students face problems due to missing practical classes. The medical and engineering students miss their practical classes and their learning remains incomplete due to proper hands-on training.

# Section-2 Essay

# Self-Evaluation

The purpose of developing this self-evaluated essay is to reflect on my learning from the above research report; “Advantages and Disadvantages of Covid-19”. ***Kolb’s Learning Cycle*** has been implemented to complete the self-evaluation part. The Kolb’s reflective cycle is divided into four specific stages and this includes “concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation” (Watson *et al.,* 2019). The application of this learning cycle allows the learner to progress with systematically and develop a detailed overview on the concept.

**Figure 1: Kolb’s Learning Cycle**

(Source: Learner)

From the above research, I learned that ***flexibility*** and ***consistency*** should be the goal of educational policy all over the world. The availability of ready-made educational materials in various regions is essential to maintain learning consistency among students. My basic knowledge at the starting point of the online classes is basic technological skills, average communication level, poor access to the internet in my residential zone, and average understanding of my subject. Writing the report has helped me gain advanced knowledge and expand my understanding on online learning. I was able to develop my research skills as well as learn regarding the various advantages and disadvantages associated with digital learning. While writing the report I had to analyse pandemic-related articles and journals, participating in debates, and sharing knowledge with each-other. I learned that in online education both rural and urban students get equal opportunities to develop their educational skills and knowledge to enrich their future careers. However, the online education detaches the students from universities and make them casual, and reduces their ability to understand the lesson and its application. I realised that nothing can substitute a direct interaction between the tutor and students. Through this research I developed good digital communication skills. I can now easily interact with my friends and solve my issues related to lesson practices by using technological tools such as ***Google meet, zoom meetings.*** The challenges I faced to complete the research are **time management, lack of proper data, and the gap between the previous and current situations.** I was distracted by social media which take a huge time to meet my daily goals and I cannot complete my tasks within the provided time. From this situation, I observed that a research plan is an essential thing before starting a research plan. A research plan not only helps to achieve the goal, but rather it helps to minimise my distractions. In the future, I will work on this issue and divide my research steps into small parts like problem identification, understanding the depth of the issue, matching it with the current situation, and determining its impact on my education. The references which I use to conduct this report are one or two years old, which may create a gap in some portions. From my personal experience I learned that instead of applying specific issues, a big picture of the issue and its solution will be more effective. I initially joined online courses to learn the technology and develop a smooth e-learning pattern. This learning will help me in my future projects.

I developed my ability to communicate with my peers with ease. I need to become more adaptable and develop my capability to handle scenarios based on the situational requirement. I plan to improve my direct communication skill, by joining an advanced communication skill learning program. These classes will help me to develop a strong bonding with my tutors. I can easily resolve lessons-related issues like understanding concepts, and links between theory and practical and their application. What I ***enjoyed*** during the research conduction process was the ***diversity of learning process*** that reflects different approaches of different students in my department. From my research experience, I realised that tough situation discovers many ways to solve issues that enhance our inner potential. Another interesting thing I learned throughout my journey one problem has different solutions but before choosing the right one, we need to consider our capability, acceptability and engagement. Collaboration with my classmate is another thing that I enjoy most. My classmate helps me to solve my assignment and support me by providing notes when I was unable to join any class. I have developed a concrete idea regarding the various approaches that can be considered to organise the information within the report in an effective way. Apart from that, I also realised that time management is very important while researching on a topic. I have decided on maintaining reminders from the next time to not get carried away with the entire research. One of my major personal applications is research scheduling which ensures the smooth running of my future projects. Apart from this, I also realised that I lack proper digital and technological skills. I often have to struggle to understand the basic ways such formatting a text or adding a heading in the report. I strongly feel that I need to improve my overall technical skill set and understand the basic features such as searching online or maintaining a well formatted document. I plan to seek help from my peers and attend few online technical skill development classes, available in the YouTube. My active participation in university activities and research participation, a strong collaboration had been developed among us, which help me to solve my issues. The areas where I need to improve are my advanced online ***communication skills*** to strengthen the interaction process with my friends and tutors. The diverse knowledge that I gain throughout the research process enriches my knowledge and skills and helps to identify my shortcomings. Based on this learning I will try to expand my potential zones and efficiency of my future research projects. From my previous experience, I think time management is another potential area where I need to get a better result in the future. I plan to remain active and maintain schedules to divide my workloads and not misuse my time.

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