

## UNIT - 3

### DIGITAL LEARNING

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#### SUMMARY

During the COVID-19, in order to bridge the gap between the physical classrooms and learners and to keep the education going the best alternative found by the instructors and educational institutions across the globe was the online mode of teaching through digitally enabled classrooms. And it was perfectly adopted by the traditional teachers who put their sincere efforts in switching from their traditional mode of teaching to online mode.

Using this new system, they could successfully upload their lecture notes, upload videos, creating breakout rooms and many other things which were unthinkable for them before the COVID 19. These efforts replaced the physical classrooms with digitally mediated classrooms by using the internet.

This connecting education through technology however will not address some of important needs of learners. Just mere uploading study materials will not substitute a collaborative and supportive learning platform.

This concept of online education is not a new one. At Athabaska University, where the authors of this lesson are professors, pioneered the world's first online MBA, M. Nursing and M.Ed. programmes over 28 years ago. Four significant features of online learning have been highlighted by these pioneers. They are: learning to learn online, designing online teaching with purpose, blending space and time online and continued disruption with AI.

#### **Learning to learn online:**

Online education system sometimes may not fulfill all the needs of the learners. The younger learners may be willing to have physical spaces to promote socialization with proper supervision and teacher led content delivery, whereas the other adult learners may prefer the convenience of connecting to their classmates and instructors online during times of their choice.

Some common lapses and shortfalls like, poor internet connectivity, insufficient financial resources, and proper digital competence suffer online learning. However, online education facilitates students facing geospatial barriers to traditional classrooms and other issues of inequality.

#### **Designing Online Teaching with Purpose**

Teaching materials whether designed for traditional or distance education must include active and engaging roles of students. Online courses and teaching design should be learner centered rather than content – centered encouraging the active participation of collaborative learning groups. It involves both the instructors and the skilled course developers in producing effective online course materials. Course materials are painstakingly detailed and delayed as they include everything that the teachers would expect to share in a physical classroom.

Technological tools together with online teaching methods should be brought back to the physical or hybrid classrooms to increase active and collaborative learning.



## **Blending Space and Time Online**

The terms 'synchronous' and 'asynchronous' have become popular during the pandemic. Synchronous replicates physical classrooms through real-time, digitally mediated teaching, while asynchronous is learning independently with materials designed for a physical classroom.

At Athabasca, learners come together in time and space with the help of a mixed and collaborative, synchronous and asynchronous online learning. Teachers teach learners at a student led pace. These methods help students to work independently while coming together regularly in active online discussions. This kind of flexibility allows students to receive teacher support exactly when they need it.

## **COVID – 19 began the disruption AI will continue it.**

The pandemic disclosed how education approaches can change after witnessing the efforts of instructors in finding the innovative ways to improve learning outcomes outside the physical classrooms.

At Athabasca, a virtual co-operated program allowed them to introduce a co-operative programme in the middle of pandemic. Students accessed a simulated work experience in a paced structure, irrespective of their physical locations. They were able to; practice working as a team, solve problems, enhance leadership qualities and ethical reasoning, and also could resolve conflicts, while working on their assigned projects. In this method, students received a detailed and immediate feedback from an AI coach which allowed them for further experimentations and master the concepts.

Research suggests that adopting online and AI tools mixed with supportive digital infrastructure and high student support is must. If planned carefully, these steps can make education more open, accessible and inclusive.

## **Answer the following questions in 50 to 100 words each.**

**Q1. With reference to this essay, mention two ways in which online learning can aid students and teachers.**

During the COVID – 19, online education has proved very helpful in bridging the physical distance between the students and instructors through internet technology. To a major extent, it could address the educational needs of the learners. The so far traditionally trained teachers who were teaching in physical classrooms put their sincere efforts in switching from physical classroom teaching to online mode of instruction. They were successful in sending the recorded lectures digitally, posting videos and creating breakout rooms for active discussions with the learners. Through online mode, learners got the advantage of connecting to their instructors during times of their choice and also could overcome the geospatial barriers to traditional classrooms.



**Q2. What do the authors mean by the phrase ‘learning to learn online’?**

The authors of this unit are working professors and scholars at Athabaska University in Canada. By the phrase, ‘learning to learn online’, they meant that the online approach which is highlighted after the pandemic does not always address all the needs of the students unless they are given a proper orientation on how to learn online. They have observed that different learners react in different ways to online mode of instruction. According to them, the younger learners who showed interest in socializing were willing to have physical classrooms, whereas the adult learners would react in a different way as they see a great advantage of connecting to their classmates and instructors online during times of their own choice.

**Q3. How is the design of an online course different from that of a traditional in-person course? (Or, what should be kept in mind to design a meaningful and effective online course?)**

The course material whether designed for online or traditional mode of education, should cater to the needs of all the learners. The design of the material should be able to keep the learners active and engaged individually as well as in collaborative groups during the course of teaching. The material design for online education should be content-centered rather than learner centered. Designing of successful online course material is not only a time taking process but also it involves the efforts of both the instructors and the skilled course developers. The course design should incorporate everything that is expected to be delivered in general in the physical classrooms. Latest technological tools should be combined with the online teaching techniques to enhance the learning capabilities of the students.

**Q4. What was the virtual co-operative programme started by Athabaska University?**

During the pandemic, a virtual co-operative programme has been initiated at Athabaska University to improve the student learning outcomes outside the traditional classrooms. Through this, the learners could access a simulated work experience at a gradual pace irrespective of their physical locations. Using this programme the learners could work in teams in order to solve problems and to address various other issues. This programme also helped in enhancing the leadership qualities among the students. Furthermore, while working on their projects, the learners were able to receive instant feedback from an AI coach which allowed them in doing more experiments and master their concepts. If planned carefully, the virtual co-operative programme can make the education more accessible.

**Answer the following questions in about 250 to 300 words each.**

**Q1. What are four takeaways related to online learning that should be retained post-pandemic?**

COVID - 19 revolutionized education by bringing it to the door step of the learners across the globe through online mode. In order to keep the education going, the educators across the world found this as the best alternative. And it was perfectly adopted by the traditional teachers who put their best efforts in switching from traditional mode of classroom instruction to online mode of teaching. Through this method, the instructors could successfully upload their lecture notes, upload videos, and create breakout rooms for active discussions through digital mediation.

In the experience of the professors at Athabaska University, the pioneers of online education, there are four takeaways regarding the online instruction which should retain post pandemic. They are; learning to learn online, designing online teaching with purpose, blending space and time online and the disruption of COVID – 19 and how AI continued it.

If we discuss each aspect separately; in learning to learn online, First of all the students need to be given a proper orientation on how to learn online and how to access the digital materials. Orientation also has to be given on how to overcome the common inequities during the instruction like; poor internet access, lack of financial resources and the required digital competence. With this, education becomes more accessible irrespective of geospatial barriers to traditional classrooms. And regarding the second take away that is designing the online teaching and learning materials, care must be taken to engage the learners individually and in organized groups through the material design. The online design of materials should cover everything that is expected to be delivered in a physical classroom. The material has to be planned and designed to cater to the needs of the individual learners.

Besides, if we discuss the other takeaways; the next one would be on how to blend the space and time in online teaching. The best way to solve is to choose between the synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning duplicates the traditional physical classrooms with the help of digitally mediated teaching. Whereas asynchronous learning allows learners to work independently making use of the teaching materials designed for a physical classroom. This kind of approach allows learners to access to teaching materials and support when they require it. And the fourth takeaway is how the support of AI feedback is helpful in encouraging the learners. The learners using a virtual co-operative programme, accessed a simulated version of work experience at a pace that is suited to them. This they could do irrespective of their physical locations. Using this platform, learners could experience working in teams with other learners, improve leadership traits and resolve conflicts. The learners could also get immediate feedback through AI tools which helped them in perfecting their learning concepts more easily. Thus all these four takeaways made education truly open and more accessible.

**Q2. There are a number of issues that need to be tackled to improve online learning, and this essay touches upon a few of them. Elaborate on any two issues mentioned in this essay by referring to your own experience.**

Online education has been geared up during the COVID – 19 pandemic to keep the education going across the globe. To a major extent the technology has filled the gap between the teaching community and the learners. The teachers and learners have been successfully switched to this new pattern of teaching and learning process after crossing a great many hurdles. However, there are a few issues related to online education. Like; the long hours of connecting to screen would strain eyes due to the continuous radiation. Listening disorders may also be expected as most often the content is heard with the help of headphones. Without headphones the lecture may be heard either unclearly or sometimes it may cause disturbance to the surrounding people.

Long hours of connecting to gadgets to listen to online lectures may lead to some kind of irritation, impatience and some other psychological disturbances.

When trying to do it in a synchronous way, the power issues are more troubling. In the rural side mainly power issues are encountered frequently. As this issue disconnects the internet connectivity, for that period the lecture is missed and learners cannot go along with the rest of



the class. At some other times, there will be a slow internet connection due to which the lecture will be heard unclearly. And at other times there will be voice distortions from the transmission end. These physical barriers often lead to poor comprehension of the content. Other issue is battery lasting time of the gadgets. Any gadget can support for a limited time. Hence, this is another limiting factor in accessing the online lectures for longer durations. Data package is another issue. It also relates to the financial resources and affordability. Sometimes the affordability is beyond the capacity of many middle class students. Many cannot afford the unlimited broadband type of connectivity. Even if they can afford, sometimes due to geospatial barriers they cannot access proper internet connectivity because there may not be enough mobile cell towers in that particular area, as the mobile network operators ignore some areas keeping the viability factor in mind. Another issue is that some learners cannot be attentive in learning when they miss the eye contact of the instructors. They feel that they are not properly connected to the lecture. Hence, however the online teaching materials have been designed with proper care; they may not be able to meet the needs of many learners.

## Vocabulary

### Exercises

#### A. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with words chosen from the options given in brackets. Use a dictionary, if required.

1. There has been a huge \_\_\_\_\_ in petrol price. (rise, raise)

**Ans: rise(n) – increase, hike, growth**

Raise(v): move to higher position, increase the amount or level or strength of

2. The suspect's nervousness \_\_\_\_ that she knows about the missing money. (implies, infers)

**Ans: implies- indicate the truth by suggestion (rather than facts), indicate**

Infer: conclude or deduce from evidence

3. Priya served for two years on the city \_\_\_\_\_. (council, counsel, consul)

**Ans: council – administration, senate, corporation, government**

Counsel: advice, guidance, suggestion, recommendation

Consul: ambassador, envoy, diplomat

4. The new rules \_\_\_\_\_ much anger from the workers. (evoked, invoked)

**Ans: evoked- give rise to, stir up, arouse**

Invoke: pray to a deity or spirit or a muse for inspiration

5. Sailaja waited for the results with \_\_\_\_\_ breath. (bated, baited).

**Ans: with bated breath- very anxiously or excitedly**

Bait: annoy, taunt, harass, provoke someone, or put a bait on a hook or in a trap

6. The number of impurities in the water \_\_\_\_\_ the acceptable limit. (accedes, exceeds) **Ans:**

**exceeds - be greater in number or size or quantity, more than**



Accedes: agree to a demand or request, accept

7. Please be \_\_\_\_ with this information. (discreet, discrete)

**Ans: discreet-be careful and prudent in one's speech to keep something confidential**

Discrete: separate, distinct

8. Her designs use a limited \_\_\_\_\_ of colours. (palate, palette, pallet)

**Ans: palette-the range of colours or a thin board on which artist mixes colours** Palate: roof of the mouth (hard or soft palate), taste, appetite,

Pallet: straw mattress, makeshift bed

9. Use the \_\_\_\_\_ to guide horse along the path. (reigns, rains, reins)

**Ans: reins-a long narrow strap**

Reigns: (period of) rule,

Rains: rain fall, sprinkle, drizzle

10. Have you ever watched someone \_\_\_\_\_ a sheep? (shear, sheer)

**Ans: Shear-cut the wool off (an animal like a sheep)**

Sheer: absolute, complete, mere, or very fine fabric

## GRAMMAR

### Exercises

- A. Rewrite each sentence, moving the misplaced modifier to its correct position.

1. The train was nearly late by five hours.

**Ans: The train was late nearly by five hours.**

2. Sindhu bought a pen from a shop that didn't cost much.

**Ans: Sindhu bought a pen that didn't cost much from a shop.**

3. I only need to do this once.

**Ans: I need to do this only once.**

4. The piece was missing from the puzzle that we needed to complete the set.

**Ans: The piece that we needed to complete the puzzle was missing from the set.**

5. We listened to the speech by the Prime Minister huddled around the radio.

We huddled around the radio to listen to the speech by the Prime Minister.

6. The wrestler was a large man with a flowing beard weighing 130 kgs.

**Ans: The wrestler was a large man weighing 130 kgs with a flowing beard.**

7. She gave the beggar her food who was sitting on the road.

**Ans: She gave her food to the beggar who was sitting on the road.**

8. The book was only published in Telugu.



**Ans: The book was published only in Telugu.**

9. Mani presented a paper at a seminar titled 'Management Challenges in a Digital Age.'  
**Mani presented a paper titled 'Management Challenges in a Digital Age' at a seminar.**

10. We saw lots of miniature paintings on a school trip to an art gallery.  
**Ans: We saw lots of miniature paintings at an art gallery on a school trip.**

### Exercises

#### A. Rewrite the following sentences correctly.

1. It is raining for four hours.  
It has been raining for four hours.
2. I used to write stories as a child  
I used to write stories when I was a child.
3. She is driving for hours now.  
She has been driving for hours now.
4. I did not met Akram yesterday. I have met Amir instead.  
I did not meet Akram yesterday. I met Amir instead.
5. My sister has returned home last week.  
My sister returned home last week.
6. He did not came to class yesterday.  
He did not come to class yesterday.

#### A. Complete the sentences by choosing the correct option.

1. I \_\_\_\_\_ that it is true. **Ans: a) know** a) know b) am knowing
2. I \_\_\_\_\_ myself. **Ans: a) have hurt** a) have hurt b) hurt
3. She \_\_\_\_\_ three sisters. **Ans: b) has** a) is having b) has
4. Do you know where \_\_\_\_\_ from? **Ans: a) she comes** a) she comes b) does she come
5. I \_\_\_\_\_ mangoes. **Ans: b) like** a) am liking b) like
6. That museum \_\_\_\_\_ shut a long ago. **Ans: a) was** a) was b) has been

#### A. Fill in the blanks using appropriate tense forms of the verbs in brackets. The first one is done for you.

Mohanty Mr Khiangte, what do you do?  
Khiangte I am (be) a teacher.  
Mohanty How many years have you \_\_\_\_\_ (teach)?

**Ans: taught**





Khiangte I \_\_\_\_ (teach) for the last twelve years.

**Ans: have been teaching**

Mohanty What subject do you \_\_\_\_ (teach)?

**Ans: teach**

Khiangte I usually \_\_\_\_ (teach) chemistry, but I \_\_\_\_ (teach) biology this year.

**Ans: teach, am teaching**

Mohanty Why?

Khiangte Our biology teacher, Ms. Rehthlei, \_\_\_\_ (be) away. She \_\_\_\_ (invite) to participate in an exchange programme abroad, and \_\_\_\_ (be) on leave since February. The principal \_\_\_\_ (ask) me to take her classes while she \_\_\_\_ (be) on leave. What about you, Mr Mohanty? What do you \_\_\_\_ (do)?

**Ans: is, has been invited, has been, has asked, is, do**

Mohanty Oh, I run an employment agency for people \_\_\_\_ (look) for opportunities Abroad. Have you ever \_\_\_\_ (think) about \_\_\_\_ (work) in a foreign country?

**Ans: looking, thought, working**

Khiangte I \_\_\_\_ (work) in Kuwait for a while. I \_\_\_\_ (be) there from 2002 to 2007.

**Ans: worked, was**

Mohanty Would you like to go back there?

Khiangte Not at all. As a matter of fact, I \_\_\_\_ (get) offers from employment agencies in Kuwait, but I \_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_ (accept) anything so far.

**Ans: am getting, have not accepted**

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