

New Normal's Bearing on Early Teachers: A Brief Look at the Mode of Teaching and Education for the Future

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented disaster that affects all walks of life. In an incredibly populated country like India, the pandemic caused its citizens to isolate themselves into the safety of their house for the protection. Thus, curbing every possible interaction life normally used to have. The new normal lifestyle meant adapting to function and producing quality work at the times of disaster. This requires a lot of change in the mode of education and teaching. Considering the traditional education system never faced a need to change in past decades. It is now a challenge the country is facing; with a population of billion to be educated, and they cannot be left alone at home unattended for a year waiting for the pandemic to subside. Thus, the entire traditional education mode of teaching is obsolete in the current circumstance. In this paper, the young teacher with the mind and skill to adapt to the new normal settings, are surveyed through questionnaires to uncover the methods they indulge to tackle the unprecedented problems they face while teaching online. This paper aims at providing a set of clear ideas about the challenges of digital teaching and the role of digital teacher in the educating the future.

KEYWORDS: Digital teacher, covid-19, pandemic, digital teaching, questionnaire survey method, traditional education

Introduction

This paper focuses on the challenges faced by the teachers who have recently started their career. During the pandemic the government all around the world have strategically announced lockdown in order to control the spread of the virus. This maneuver was a necessary act with its own consequences. One among the main consequences that have a long-term effect is the abrupt transition from classrooms to online platforms. Though the pandemic was an unprecedented incident and the logical solution was to move onto the online platforms, it did not account for the country's ability to accustom itself for the new change. With most of the country having less or no access to all the modern technology that makes online learning feasible, thus this abrupt decision was only a beginning of a much more complicated economical phenomenon called digital divide where the economically challenged set of people will not be able to afford the rightful education they deserve. Hence forcing them to forge their future with another ways.

The teachers who have psychologically conditioned for a classroom environment were abruptly forced to switch to another arena without proper training. Without proper training and guidance, a teacher might not be able to function efficiently.

ELT REVIEW

In an article, “Needs and Challenges for Online Language Teachers”, it is noted that the effort and the cost involved in creating online language material for teaching English is wasted without giving adequate training to the teachers who use it.

In an article, “A Needs Analysis for Technology Integration Plan: Challenges and Needs of Teachers” it is noted that the challenges are based on the resources, institution, subject culture, attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills, and assessment. It should also be mentioned that the lack of information flow, financial support and managerial flow is also considered a barrier.

In an article, “English Teachers’ Perspectives on Challenges, Suggestions, and Materials of Online Teaching amidst the Global Pandemic” by Novrika Nartiningrum and Arif Nugroho, it is argued that the teachers need both physical and mental efforts in the implementation of Online English Learning. The teaching time was less because of the lack of punctuality by the students. The stable and supporting environment such as peaceful atmosphere and stable internet connectivity were one of the factors for the challenges faced by teachers and students. The teachers believe that more activities should be done in the classroom and sticking to worksheets alone do not help in the learning of the language in an effective manner.

In an article, “Learners’ Perceptions of Online English Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic” by Hafizah Rifiyanti, it is noticed that teaching Listening in an online platform is found to be a difficult one.

In the article, “EFL Teachers’ Challenges and Insights of Online Teaching amidst Global Pandemic” argues that e-learning proved to be time-consuming factor. The students were also found to be lacking motivation. The students also fail to understand the instructions given in an online platform. Many teachers find it difficult to repeatedly tell the instructions to the students.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was carried out in India. Teachers from various schools and college who teach English were asked to fill a survey to find the results. There were 31 teachers who participated in this survey. Their mother tongue is not English. But they have trained themselves through school and college education to teach English to the Indian Students. The pandemic has created a shift resulting in making the teachers to attend to the needs of the Students through the Online Platform.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Nearly 31 teachers volunteered to become participants for this research. They were asked to fill out a survey which would highlight the challenges and the reasons for those challenges in teaching English online. The google forms were sent to their respective WhatsApp number to help them fill the data within the stipulated time. The data was

analyzed by means of a pie chart and bar graph to determine the percentage that is involved in a particular process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

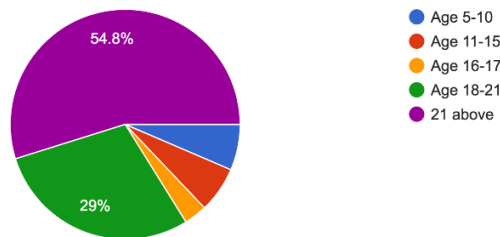
Nearly 20 questions were asked on various topics to the participants to deliver their views on it. The following were the observation that was taken:

TEACHING LEVEL

The Teaching level of the teachers were asked to have an overall idea about the challenges faced by a teacher handling a particular age group. Nearly 54.8% of teachers handle students above 21 years. 29% of students handle students between the age group of 18-21. 3.2% of teachers handle students between the age group of 16-17. Teachers who handle students within the age group of 5 to 10 and 11 to 15 are in a percentage of 6.5% each.

1. Specify your teaching level

31 responses

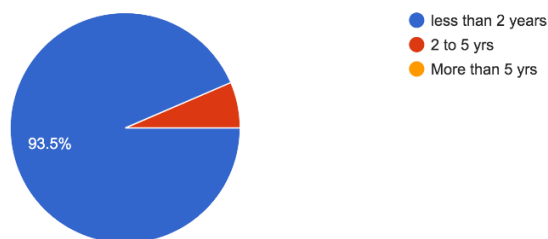


TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Nearly 93.5% of teachers are freshers who came into the teaching profession during the pandemic. They are found to face high challenges due to the online teaching of English language. Only 6.5% of teachers were found to have more than 2 years of teaching experience.

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

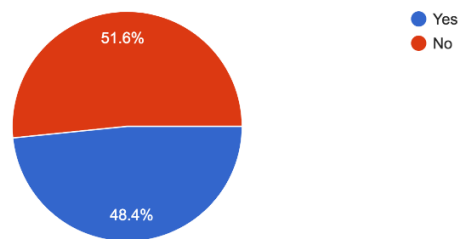
31 responses



SATISFACTORY LEVEL

Nearly 56.1% of the teachers are not satisfied with the content that they teach online. This is due to the lack of connection that they face while speaking in a monotonous way in an online classroom. Young teachers who stay at home and teach cannot be observed and thus any mistakes that could have been rectified would not be rectified. Only 48.4% of teachers are satisfied with the content that they teach.

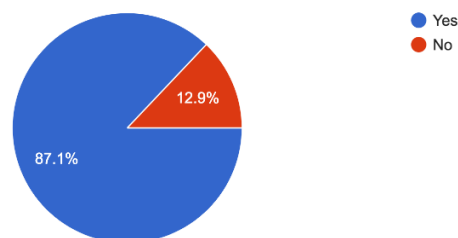
3. Are you satisfied with the content that you teach online?
31 responses



EMOTIONAL HELP

It is interesting that the teachers allot time separately to give emotional help to the students who do not attend Online classes or who arrives late even to the online class. Nearly 87.1 % teachers agree that they encounter students on an emotional level while the rest 12.9% of teachers do not address to the emotional help that is needed by the students.

4. Do you encounter students who need emotional help?
31 responses

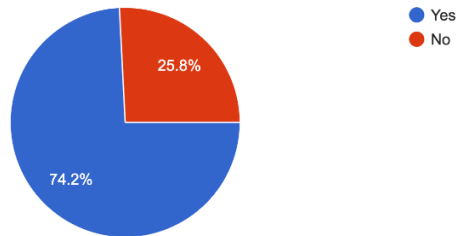


INTERACTION WITHIN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

When the teachers raise a question, students voluntarily unmute themselves to answer the question. But it is observed that some students are being unmuted by the teacher itself. Nearly 74.2 % of students unmute themselves to interact in the online class. The remaining 25.8% of students do not unmute themselves in the online class.

6. Do your students unmute themselves to interact in the online class?

31 responses

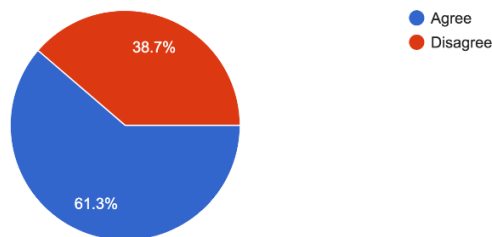


REVISION

Nearly 61.3% of teachers agree that the students take revision through the quiz and online exam. The questions that were asked are mostly multiple-choice questions. So, the student finds it interesting to attend the quiz and online exam on a regular basis for revisions. While 38.7% of teacher found the students indifferent to online exams and found it difficult to motivate the students towards attending online exams.

7. Are students able to take revision through the quiz and online exam?

31 responses

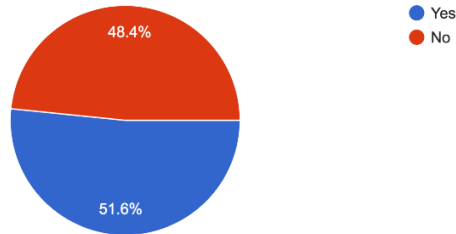


WORKLOAD FOR THE TEACHERS

The teachers had to take online classes, prepare for the class, make notes, learn the methods to use the digital technology and various apps and do the other departmental work of the school or college. Nearly 48.4% of teachers says that the workload is too much for them and it is unbearable. Nearly 51.8% of teachers do not find the workload to be unbearable. With no proper training and no compensation for the equipment necessary for a smooth online class, teacher find it difficult to cope with their workload.

8. Are you able to bear the workload that is posed on you through the online class?

31 responses

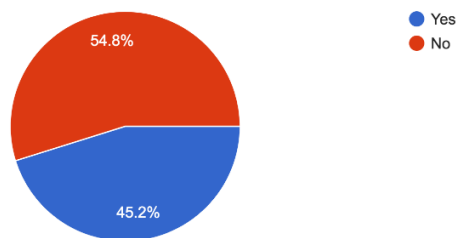


DATA CHARGES

Though many private schools and colleges provide only half the salary for their teachers, they do not seem to pay the data charges for the teachers. Nearly 54.8% of teachers are not given any amount to meet their data expenses. Only 45.2% of teachers are given the pay to meet their data charges.

9. Are you given the amount for data charges by the Institution?

31 responses

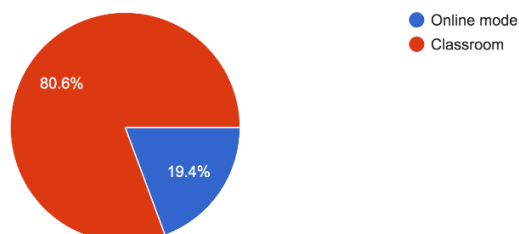


FACE-TO-FACE TEACHING

Online mode is not recommended by most of the teachers. Nearly 80.6% teachers opt for classroom teaching where they can encourage student to student interaction as well as teacher to student interaction. Most of the teacher find the interaction to be much more productive when it is done face to face than on an online platform. The students would also understand better in a face-to-face setting. Teachers feel that the environment of a classroom could not be recreated in an online forum where most students fail to follow the classroom etiquette thus disrupting the setting.

10. Which mode of teaching do you prefer for teaching English?

31 responses



DIFFICULTIES FACED DUE TO DIGITAL DIVIDE

The participants were asked to give their opinion on Digital Divide. Some of the responses that were listed were that the students who had no access to Internet and Smartphone would find it difficult to survive in a digital space. It is also noticed that the digital divide has contributed to differences in development levels among states. The access to information in the developed world is much better as compared to the case in the underdeveloped world. This partiality has created an economic divide globally since information is critical in facilitating productivity. The responses were that the partiality can be closed by giving some time. And some others were not familiar with what is known as digital divide.

METHODS FOR INTERACTION

Many qualities define a positive relationship and pave ways on how to create powerful student teacher relationships. These can be seen to include good communication, a safe learning environment and mutual respect, a positive and patient attitude, student equality and timely praise. The various methods that were used by the teachers to develop Student-to-Student Interaction and Teacher to Students Interaction were conducting quiz in which students join in groups to deliver their answers, allowing the students make short speeches on a topic and to raise counter arguments, with timely interjections from the teacher. Asking students to video call each other in groups and discuss topics after class, asking questions and making the class student centric, engaging in various activities online and also allowing them to organize such activities themselves. The interaction can also be done by giving anecdotes and giving students interesting topics to discuss and making them involve in a group discussion.

STRATEGIES USED IN AN ONLINE CLASSROOM

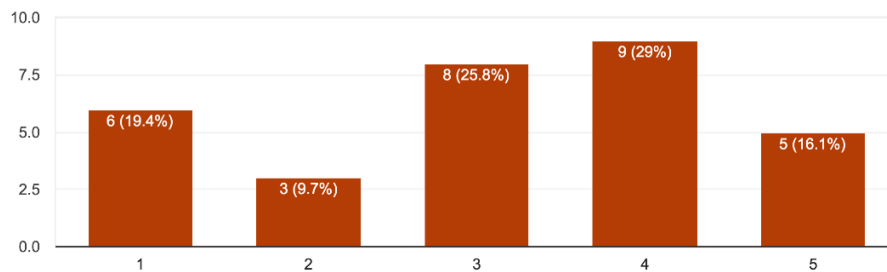
The various strategies that were employed to create a classroom atmosphere in an online classroom were conducting seminar and quiz, checking with the students for any doubts frequently. Allowing ten-minute student feedback and discussion at the end of each session. Telling short stories in the middle of the class, Using the raise hand option in the Google meet platform to be put up so that it's easy to let students ask questions, constant interaction about the topics of discussion about the study material and about the way they feel about it being online. By giving them a set of ground rules, which contains the same classroom discipline.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

On a scale of 1 to 5, 5 being very helpful and 1 being not helpful, the teachers were asked to rate the training they were provided to teach online. Nearly 45% percent of the teacher found the training helpful and insightful, that the training provided them with necessary knowledge to face the upcoming challenge. While 29% of the teachers were not satisfied with the training that was provided to them, and about 25.8% teacher took a neutral stand where they had no comments about the training that was provided to them.

14. Was there any professional training provided to teach online? If yes, how helpful was it to face the online challenges?

31 responses



PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL FACED BY TEACHERS

In classroom teaching, the teachers had to prepare classes mentally but in online class, they have to prepare power point presentation and it takes a lot of time. Eye contact is not possible, so little to no intimacy between the students and teachers. It would feel tiring for both the teacher and the students, if they are not conscious and receptive enough in such an environment. The syllabus needed to be watered down so as to make it work in a Pandemic because the teachers cannot take the full syllabus online by creating PPTs.

WORK AND LIFE BALANCE

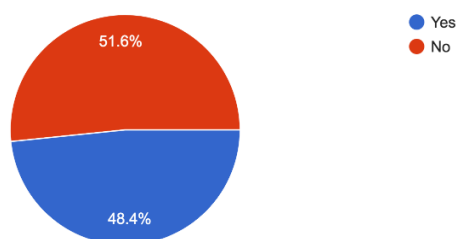
Some teachers put timetable to handle the balance between work and life. Some have their passion to be fulfilled that they keep moving forward without worrying about the balance. While few teachers do not have the time to think about work and life balance.

EQUIPMENTS

The teachers were asked if any equipment was provided to them to offer hassle free online class to the students. Around 51.6% of teachers stated that they were not provided with any equipment by the management. Nearly 48.4% of teachers were given few equipment's by the institutions.

17. Is there any help provided from the institution in term of equipments to conduct hassle free online class?

31 responses



UNPRECEDENTED PROBLEM

When the teachers were faced with some unprecedented problem, some stated that they would face the problem and resolve it. While some other teachers said that ensuring the working condition of the devices and being in a silent and peaceful environment gives them a peaceful mind to face an issue that might raise later. While others also stated that a stable internet connection, takes away almost sixty percent of the problems that might occur during an online class. Most teachers pointed out that if a student tends to misbehave in an online classroom, one can always mute the student and carry on with their class.

CHALLENGES FACED WHILE TEACHING ONLINE

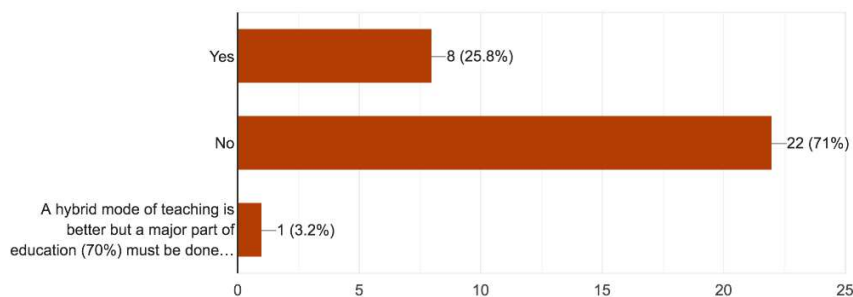
Students were found to be not attentive to the class with people around the house. Being at the digital space for too long can be tiring for both teachers and the students. Other than the technological issues various other hurdles faced during online classes were figuring out online class etiquette, parents hovering during online classes, maintaining discipline online. Other common challenges are lack of IT support, continuous technological changes, unequal access for all students, unoptimized software for mobile devices and security issues.

PREFERENCE FOR TEACHING

When asked about the mode of teaching which the teachers prefer to take after the pandemic, nearly 71% of teachers do not prefer the online mode of teaching. Only 25% of teachers prefer the online mode of teaching. While the remaining 1% prefer to take a hybrid mode of teaching which combines both online and offline education.

20. Would you continue to use online mode of teaching even after the pandemic?

31 responses



CONCLUSION

The current system of education is chaotic, and this is the chance for all the education reformist to make the necessary changes that is needed to suit the needs of the country rather than follow an old outcast model of our colonizers. The system also needs to take the problems of the teachers into account and work out a solution for all the challenges they face. With current situation producing mass number of underqualified teachers, with no proper guidance and training could fatally wound the country's future generation. So, it is necessary to provide proper help for the teachers, who are direly trying their best to make the online classes a success. Furthermore the entire human knowledge is spent on trying to survive the pandemic, one should also take into consideration the diverse sets of students with unequal economic backgrounds. These students without any proper education might end up getting further marginalized. Thus acknowledging the changes, in the education system, that were brought down by the pandemic is the first step towards progress. As the future education system mightnotsee online classrooms as a new forum or an alternative to classroom teaching, instead it would be a part of an overall mode of education. But in order to make that possible, decisions need to be made today.

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