

Paradigm Shift in Nursing Education: Traditional to Tech-Savvy

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In the present era of technology, where gadgets are used for every small task, transition phase has come from offline to online. Education is not immune to these changes. Still in education system we mostly focus on offline mode, direct contact. However, in changed scenario, it is becoming difficult to connect with each other and for students very difficult to cover up the curriculum in specified time.

This pandemic period of Covid-19 has restructured our thinking process of imparting education and showed us the direction to look towards the existing education system in a different perspective. The education sector across the globe has become the hot spot of the discussion. At times when colleges are shut there is great need to continue the education/ teaching. Becoming more virtual than physical, curriculum should be re-planned and re-constructed for successful attainment of the curriculum objectives and learning outcomes with measures where education can reach to each student without compromising the quality of education.

Background

As in community, health services are provided at door step so that no one is deprived of health care services; likewise now we need to think of imparting education at every student's home desk level. Change in educational venues is the need of hour. This period of restricted movement has taught academicians to expand their vision from traditional classroom teaching to online teaching learning activities. To ensure the future Nursing workforces are qualified, continuing education is vital and this can be achieved by none other than using online teaching platforms.

Objectives

The objectives of this article are to

- (1) sensitise nursing teachers/educators regarding the current paradigm shift of nursing education from offline to online, and
- (2) strengthen the nursing teachers with strategies to deliver education through virtual mode in an efficient and effective manner.

Digital platform of teaching has become a boon in

this current pandemic period for academicians to deliver the sessions. The academicians started to learn, adopt and adjust with digital technology. There is a well-known proverb "Need is the mother of all kinds of innovation". Online teaching has the potential to transcend geographical boundaries, is flexible, learner-centred and can help students develop self-directed learning skills. In online learning students interactively participate in the learning process. The student can focus totally on the learning process than on copying notes as in a traditional class. Studies supporting online learners have demonstrated increased retention rates and better utilisation of content, resulting in better achievement of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The experience gained in this pandemic period regarding online teaching pedagogy is quite satisfactory except the connectivity issues from teacher as well as students' side. This technology-based education is more transparent in nature and does not pose any difference among front or back benchers. The only thing is that we as academicians need to adjust and accustom with this digital platform and technology and make the students also comfortable. This will help the students to engage actively in discovering the course content and construction of knowledge where teachers act as a facilitator. This sounds very good but students need to be motivated to accept this pedagogy of learning and adhere to this as it also explores many issues like internet connectivity, availability of technology and other related facilities.

Online teaching will provide a platform for students to access the value-added course from any university or college based on the best of the teacher available and cost irrespective of the location of residence. If we talk about the student nurses, every nursing institute is not equipped with well qualified staff and adequate infrastructure. This online platform of teaching through planned webinars, virtual conference and online development programmes can be easily accessed by student nurses across the country. Through this, students are able to catch up the eminent personalities in Nursing education and practice. Gradually students will develop more interest and adhere to online method of learning. Looking at the current situation where students are not allowed to join school or colleges, Government of India and private bodies are introducing new initiatives like SWAYAM portal, MOOC's courses, WHO open courses, e-pathshala, National knowledge

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network and many other platforms to support the students. In the same direction, nursing institutions are also using varied online platforms like Google classroom, e-learning portal, Microsoft Team and online webinars, FDP and conferences to impart the course content to the student nurses.

The online teaching sessions of qualified and certified online teachers alone cannot make the entire Teaching & Learning activity effective, until we have successful online learners. What makes online learners successful is one with motivation, effective communication skills, possessing strong time management skills, having basic technical skills, self-directed, independent and persistent.

A perfect and tasty recipe is always a mixture of essential ingredients of quality measured in quantity. Similarly a quality online education is only possible when there will be a perfect blend of online teaching sessions, online teachers and online learners of quality on a proper digital platform. This would be only possible when the educational institution will have digital technology, which is accessible, affordable and user-friendly.

Online learners have demonstrated increased retention rates and better utilisation of content, resulting in better acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Blended learning, a fairly new term in education but a concept familiar to most educators, is an approach that combines online learning technology with traditional instructor-led training, where, for example, a lecture or demonstration is supplemented by an online tutorial. Updating electronic content is easier than updating printed material. Online technologies allow educators to revise their content simply and quickly. Learners have control over the content, learning sequence, pace of learning, time, and, often, media, which allows them to tailor their experience to meet personal learning objectives. Internet technologies permit the widespread distribution of digital content to many users simultaneously anytime, anywhere. Automated tracking and reporting of learners' activities lessen faculty administrative burden. Moreover, online learning can be designed to include outcomes assessment to determine whether learning has occurred.

Challenges and Barriers

- Currently students have many issues like lack of internet connection, not having smart phones, charging issues and cost wise affordability.
- Lack of acceptance among teachers and learners for virtual mode of education.
- Inadequate capacity building training programme for online mode of teaching among teachers.
- Lack of technological skill among teachers and

learners.

- Lack of availability of adequate technological equipments and IT support.

This challenge needs to be overcome to enhance the quality of teaching learning and to make the students more active learners. Going one step ahead this will start a new beginning of providing the experience of eminent academicians across the globe to the students. Using this platform, the quality of education will not be measured only with quality of teachers but also with the availability of suitable online platform for the students, and teachers, familiarity with digital teaching modalities.

What Makes Online Teaching Learning Effective

It's just a baby step we all have taken, still long way to go. To regularise this into reality, the entire mindset needs to be changed among educationists, policy makers, teaching faculty and students. Educational institutions need to evaluate on the basis of availability of latest technology and adequate infrastructure in place.

A well-designed online learning experience can motivate them to become more engaged with the content, online teaching, which shall encompass following features:

1. Content should be well planned, organised, easy to communicate and use and access for learners, navigation, interactivity, and user-friendly interface design.
2. Blended learning is an approach that combines online learning technology with traditional instructor-led training where a lecture or demonstration is supplemented by an online tutorial.
3. Enforce flexibility: Learning at own pace and timings flexibility.
4. Time zone-friendly: Identify the timings of online sessions where maximum students can join and attend the session.
5. Interactive and collaborative: Learning is a deeply personal experience, one learns because he/she wants to learn. It can be achieved by enabling learners to be more active participants through group projects, chat forums, discussion, case-based discussion, case studies, projects, real life problem solving, flipped classrooms, gamified lessons and animations.
6. Real classroom simulation: Collaborative learning on e platform will help the teachers to create real classroom simulation.
7. Synchronous delivery: Real-time, instructor-led online learning, where all learners receive information simultaneously and communicate directly with other learners.

8. **Asynchronous delivery:** The transmission and receipt of information do not occur simultaneously. Learners are responsible for pacing their own self-instruction and learning. The instructor and learners communicate using email or feedback technologies, but not in real time.

To deliver good online teaching sessions, the teachers who are involved in online teaching equally possess certain characteristics. These are:

1. **Inspiring:** Students need to be inspired irrespective of the location. This can be done by engaging with students individually or in group.
2. **Behaviour:** Immediacy behaviours, including prompt feedback, use of humour or emoticons, referring to the student by name in written communication, discussion prompts, and sharing of personal examples.
3. **Patience:** Students are new to this learning curve and face many differences in comparison with face to face learning. Helping students navigate technical issues, stay focused, or understand class material, online education teachers need a good deal of patience.
4. **Accessible:** Available to students via email, online chats or video conferencing.
5. **Certified:** Preferably teachers should have certification in conducting online teaching sessions.
6. **Technology ease:** In order to be an effective online teacher, one should explore, try, attend training on online teaching techniques, to make content and its delivery well organised that could achieve the objective of curriculum. Learning management system as per curriculum should be framed well to complete the curriculum by online mode.
7. **Appreciation of learner differences:** The faculty should acknowledge that not all students learn in the same way. Hence, faculty should strive to provide multiple means for students to engage with content and demonstrate learning.

Conclusion

The integration of online learning into undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education will promote a shift towards adult learning in education, wherein educators no longer serve solely as distributors of content, but become facilitators of learning and assessors of competency.

The Nurse educationists must use more of online platforms to impart education and request policy makers to make nursing curriculum techno-friendly and initiate choice-based credit system for the optimum use of online course contents. Online assessments, both formative and summative should also aim to ensure student involvement in the process.

Capacity building of faculty through faculty development programmes for the development of specific competencies such as social competency, pedagogical competency, managerial competency, and technical competency is now recognised as the need of the hour. Although online teaching and learning in education is new, it has the potential to become main stream in future.

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