

The Online Learning Experience

The sudden outbreak of Covid-19 shook the entire world, creating fear, anxiety, and several concerns among the people around the world. Thus, educational institutions were closed, affecting 94 percent of the world's student population, and switched to an online mode of teaching-based technology. As per the report of the United Nations Organization (2020, August), the COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all the continents.

It prevents the possible loss of academic sessions greatly hindered by numerous lockdowns in most parts of the world. There's a paradigm shift in the education section in most of the underdeveloped countries. Pape (2010) states that, particularly in higher education, online learning enhances and improves students' learning outcomes, while combating the reduction in resources. Online education can provide world knowledge to anyone and anywhere if they have access to internet facilities. However, the research on online education shows that most students expressed anxiety as it's entirely internet-based learning which requires technological knowledge and skills in both teachers and students. Also, online learning increases the independence in learning. The research conducted in Nepal about the benefits of online education in higher education—where questions with fifteen alternatives in which participants from fifteen different universities were allowed to choose more than one item—shows that 76.9% of the participants expressed that online courses increase independence in learning. Likewise, online education is helpful for the learners to work at their own pace and make them self-disciplined.

It's also a boon for non-traditional students. The non-traditional students living too far from a university campus find the high cost of traditional education. So, without it, online learning is cheaper, and they would be able to achieve their educational goals. Through the online classes, students feel comfortable and confident to work in a group with mates from a multi-cultural background. Students gain more confidence in sharing and talking in a group, online. However, an assistant professor called Lana Parker at the Faculty of Education at the University of Windsor, argues that online learning doesn't offer complex, relationship-oriented learning, and a social environment.

Additionally, it's convenient and flexible. Students can study any time from anywhere. They can choose to take classes in the given schedule. A research conducted by Melody W. Alexander & Jensen J. Zhao (Ball State University) and Allen D. Truell (Ball State University) with 420 college students, more than 80% of them reported that online learning is convenient in terms of dress, travel, and flexibility of time and pace. Approximately, seventy percent of them reported that they are comfortable at home, and they can view or review lectures as and when needed at lower costs, especially parking and food. At the same time, it demands students to develop the skill of time-management. Without time management, students get buried beneath an insurmountable mountain of assignments and other works. Students are accessible to learning material at their conveniences in online learning classes, such as university portals where announcements, notes, reviews, assignments, and due dates, quizzes, questions are recorded, archived, and shared for future reference. And chatting with fellow students is available anytime. Moreover, students can revisit and revise the lesson learned but, it requires students to make a schedule to complete the requirements of the assignments and other works. Through the direct link to the instructor via email, students can get their questions answered directly. The online class is a boon to promote lifelong learning. Moreover, online learning is far more affordable than physical learning, but a few students often forget the lesson at the end of classes. The other advantage of online learning is that students can attend classes on mobile phones and laptops.