

# **Evaluation and Testing in a New Era**

**35<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL RISE CONFERENCE**

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States and districts started closing schools since last spring 2020 for COVID-19. Today, it is one of the most compelling causes of change in teaching, where social distancing becomes crucial to save lives, and to reduce the pandemic in every professional & learning places.

The quick move to activate pandemic emergency remote teaching has left all educators scrambling to figure out how to use digital tools, online resources, and apps to continue their teaching at a distance.

Suddenly face-to-face instruction became not feasible and replaced by online learning for students and for teachers. It took off and became one of the fastest zooming trends in educational uses of technology.

**The main questions** teachers, parents, & policymakers ask:

1. How does the effectiveness of online learning compare with face-to-face instruction?
2. Does supplementing face-to-face instruction with online instruction enhance learning?
3. What practices are associated with more effective online learning?

Policymakers reasoned that if online instruction is no worse than traditional instruction in terms of student outcomes, then online education initiatives could be justified in the new circumstances.

Although teachers don't like this new method,  
most students are excited!

The issue is that teacher preparation programs do not equip them with skills to run an online course and communicate effectively with students, using various distant learning technology (computer – internet – iPad - Google meeting - Google classroom – Google Hangout – Zoom – Skype – Facetime – etc....)

In a virtual classroom the learning experience is entirely challenging for students who are required to be active learners. While passive listening and notes taking are expected in a traditional classroom, online discussions or creating a web log homework, is required daily between the teacher and peer.

**Problems & frustrations facing students** in internet-based learning are:

1. Some students do not have high bandwidth that online courses require.
- 2.** Others have weak monitors which make it hard to follow up with their classes.

- 3.** Most students are generally tech savvy but lack computer literacy. Many of them cannot operate basic programs such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, or unable to handle their files, nor make presentation online without help from a professional friend.
- 4.** Many students find fixing basic computer problems in setting camera or microphone difficult.

- 5.** Most of elementary and middle school students face problems as well as high school students who live with parents. They all find it difficult to keep in tune with the technical requirements of their course.
- 6.** Some do not even own computers, which will be a financial burden on families.

**Students self-motivation** is an essential requirement to succeed in distant teaching/learning; but many online learners lack self-motivation. Surprisingly, many learners fall behind and nurture **the idea of giving up**, as difficulties in handling a technological medium also seem insurmountable.

## **Risks associated with online teaching:**

1. Zoom or Google collect personally identifiable information, information about a student's school including its location, information about a student's device, network, IP address, and internet connection.

**2.** Students might experience cyberbullying through the chat feature, by logging into the Zoom room before the teacher arrives and being harassed by classmates, or by having classmates take photos or screenshots of their face during a Zoom meeting and use it in a harmful way.

## **Problems in evaluating online teaching:**

- 1.** Plagiarism and Google searching for answers
- 2.** Parent's assisting students during sessions
- 3.** Monitoring student's behavior
- 4.** Subjectivity in grading – Oral tests
- 5.** Doing homework & follow-up
- 6.** Submitting & discussing research assignments

## **Recommendations until exiting this pandemic:**

- 1.** Using oral/verbal test for immediate feedback of results of teaching.
- 2.** Using the Zoom white board to do math problems.
- 3.** Using cumulative formative assessment tools.
- 4.** Using a summative evaluation test.
- 5.** Using multiple choice tests vs. written tests in SS, and Science.
- 6.** Emphasizing Q/A and short answers in ELA.

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