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Stumbling blocks encountered in teaching English online: highlighting barriers encountered by Indian institutions in Covid -19 pandemic

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Abstract
The Covid-19 pandemic has raised significant challenges for the education community worldwide. It came up as sudden challenge which called for an urgent and unexpected request to shift from previously taught face-to-face courses to be online. Online teaching and learning imply a certain pedagogical content knowledge, mainly related to designing and organizing for better learning experiences and creating distinctive learning environments, with the help of digital technologies. With this article, we provide some expert insights into this online-learning-As according to the data gathered, Online English Teachers experience different categorical challenges at work. These include challenges with learners, class handling and technical aspect. With the goal of assisting non-expert teachers i.e. those who are less experienced with this new normal of online learning to navigate in these challenging times. Our findings tend to point at the design learning activities focusing some distinct characteristics, majorly the combination of three types of presence i.e social, cognitive and moralistic. It also focuses the need for adapting tech savvy assessment according to the new learning requirements. We end with a reflection on how to counter to this crisis and how to enhance teaching and learning practices in the postcovid era.

Keywords: Challenges, teaching –learning practices, online teaching, practice and development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In online education, many empirical studies have been conducted to examine issues in delivering online courses; however, few have synthesized prior studies and provided an overview of issues in the online teaching field. The three major issues: issues related to online learners, instructors, and content development are - Learners' issues include learners' expectations, readiness, identity, and participation in online courses. Instructors' issues include changing faculty roles, transitioning from face-to-face to online, time management, and teaching styles. Content issues include the role of instructors in content development, integration of multimedia in content, role of instructional strategies in content development, and considerations for content development. (Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, &Santiague, 2017)On top of that, a significant challenge for university teachers has been their lack of the pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Shulman 1987) needed for teaching online.

A common criticism from educators of online courses is a lack of connection with students. "The instructor's ability to communicate, form a community, and deliver the appropriate lesson effectively makes all the difference in student learning outcomes" (Kebritchi et al., 2017, p. 19)Which fcuses n the need of pedagogical content knowledge which includes technical and administrative aspects of teaching online (e.g. respectively, using platforms and tools and organizing workflows). More significantly, it includes the pedagogical foundations and knowledge of principles needed to design and facilitate, meaningful online learning experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW
The term 'online learning' is widely used but with a variety of meanings. For the purposes of this article, online learning refers to learning that is mediated by the Internet. It is wider than 'networked learning'; while networked learning focuses on human-human connections (Banks et al. 2003; De Laat et al. 2007), online learning lacks such specificity. It is narrower than 'eLearning' and 'digital education' which include the full range of digital tools and resources, not just the Internet and a focus on digital competences development. In addition, online learning does not have the in-built claim to improvement that makes 'technology-enhanced learning' (TEL) (Laurillard and Masterman 2010; Kirkwood and Price 2014) a problematic phrase (Bayne 2015).

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For our purposes, online learning refers to a type of teaching and learning situation in which (1) the learner is at a distance from the tutor/instructor, (2) the learner uses some form of technology to access the learning materials, (3) the learner uses technology to interact with the tutor/instructor and with other learners and (4) some kind of support is provided to learners (Anderson 2011a). Much of teaching and learning in an online environment is similar to teaching and learning in any other formal educational context (Anderson 2011b). Online learning and teaching involve a diverse array of tools, resources, pedagogical approaches, roles, organizational arrangements and forms of interaction, monitoring and support—with many possible combinations of substitution and integration (Bates and Poole, 2003; Bullen and Janes 2007; Bach, Haynes and Smith 2007). Within this cornucopia of options, 'the capacity for shifting the time and place of the educational interaction' (Anderson 2011b: 344) stands out as a valued source of flexibility. From a postdigital point of view, online education has blurred boundaries between material, digital and human experience (Fawns 2019). In making the most of the opportunities afforded by online learning environments, instructional design and organization play an essential role (Anderson et al. 2001).

Instructional design (ID) and learning design (LD) can be characterized as 'a process, or series of suggested steps, that teachers can use to plan, implement, and evaluate their instruction' (Carr-Chellman 2016: xiv).This also involves choice of strategies for creating particular products, e.g. lesson plans or instructional materials, as well as the implementation and management of the overall design process (Richey, Klein and Tracey 2011). Teachers as designers have to address both product-oriented and process-oriented aspects of strategic planning (Goodyear 2015). According to Bates (2019: 167), a good quality design is associated with 'clear learning objectives, carefully structured content, controlled workloads for faculty and students, integrated media, relevant student activities, and assessment strongly tied to desired learning outcomes'. Regardless of the approach what is more important, in the end, is that instructors work towards 'designing conditions under which learners have a better chance to learn' (Parchoma et al. 2019: 13).

Under this teaching as 'design for learning' perspective (Goodyear and Dimitriadis 2013), teachers act as both constructors and actors. On the one hand, they need to design the tasks, environments and resources that help students learn. On the other hand, they must enact the designed lesson plan, shifting nimbly between roles as appropriate: e.g. as an orchestrator, a facilitator, etc. Anderson et al. (2001) refer to this complex mix of instructional roles as 'teaching presence', which includes learning design and organization, facilitating discourse and direct instruction. Of these three components of teaching presence, the one related to learning design and organization is probably the most problematic as design-related teacher presence must be mediated and manifest throughout the course design and not only during its 'delivery' (Guàrdia, Maina and Sangrà 2013). It is also understudied as a PCK related to the teachers themselves because many online courses have in the past been designed by learning design specialists and delivered/enacted by tutors-teachers.

In the Covid-19 emergency situation, teachers have, almost overnight, been asked to become both designers and tutors, using tools which few have fluently mastered. This paper sheds some light on pedagogical knowledge that new online teachers need, in order to design worthwhile learning activities and flourish in this unfamiliar space. Our goal is to make explicit some main aspects of the online teaching expertise, akin to be transferred in the pedagogical practice of any educators, with or without experience in teaching remotely.

This exploratory study aims to showcase the challenges of Teaching English online in India. It sought to answer the following research questions:

1.What are the dominating challenges that negatively affect teachers' English online teaching performance?
Challenges in teaching students– As for content, online learning is based more on materials (readings, videos, exercises, etc.) than on direct personal interactions (discussions, presentations, etc.). On the one hand, this offers the opportunity to integrate more media (video, images, audio, etc.), but teachers should produce or find good materials and be able to leverage on them; on the other hand, it requires students to be more autonomous in reading (meaning 'reading' all media). As for guidance, online learning relies on mediated communications, either synchronous or asynchronous. In both cases, indications from teachers should be spelled out very clearly and carefully, as progressive refinements through interactions are hardly possible. Again, students should be more

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autonomous in both understanding guidance indications and working with no micro-scaffolding. In light of the need for good communication and attempts to encourage more student autonomy, online teaching requires more careful design. This has made teaching learning process more complex yet intrigue!

Yes as most common criticism from educators of online courses is of lack of connection with students. "The instructor's ability to communicate, form a community, and deliver the appropriate lesson effectively makes all the difference in student learning outcomes" (Kebritchi et al., 2017, p. 19)Which rises the demand to look towards different interaction patterns. As per Moore (1991), the main forms of interaction in distance learning include teacher-student, student-student, and student-content. Other researchers later added student-interface, content-content, teacher-teacher and teacher-content interaction (e.g. Anderson 2003). Online teaching and learning require careful consideration for how technology can facilitate the types of interaction we seek.

The data showed that most Online English teachers have difficulty in handling students with unclear pronunciations. This poses the most difficult among the challenges teachers face in handling students which leads to unsatisfactory and unsuccessful class. The second dominating challenge for teachers is handling students with unpredictable behavior. Teachers have difficulties handling students who show unpredictable behavior in the class such as sounding uninterested, unclearly stating class style preference. Some students are also not showing their true feelings in the class. In which after the class the teacher receives complaints or very low TSR (Teacher Satisfaction Rating). The third dominating challenge for teachers is the students who have difficulty to comprehend the lesson and less responsive students. The class atmosphere becomes so uncomfortable when these challenges take place. Consequently, class quality is adversely affected. Wherefore, the teaching and learning process become counterproductive. Other challenges in teaching include handling students who are sensitive to correction, overly shy and students with diverse cultures. The said challenges highlighted are the top three dominating challenges that teachers experience in handling their students.

The graph below shows the teachers' top three challenges in teaching their students.

According to the data, the top three challenges in teaching students include students with unclear pronunciations (65.6%), unpredictable behavior (56.3%), and (53.1%) less responsive and difficult to comprehend the lesson (53.1%). These followed by condescending, rude (31.3%), sensitive to correction (31.3%), overly shy (21.9%) and cultural differences (9.4%).

Challenges in handling classes-In the virtual classroom there are multiple challenges as students concentration , maintaining discipline , time management etc

Most English Online Teachers have difficulty in managing their time. 'Time management' is the top challenge that teachers have when having classes online. There are 10 minute and 20-minute classes. Teachers must be able to teach the students in a manner that is a complete package. The student should enjoy while having the class, learn the necessities of the lesson and have the complete not less than or more than the allotted time for them to study. If there are many students, this could be more difficult for the teachers. Failing to comply with the time protocol, the teachers' performance is adversely affected as well as the quality of the teaching and learning process. The second top difficulty in handling classes is 'Giving appropriate grammar corrections'. There are instances that teachers who have many classes tend to compromise the quality of corrections given to students. For the advanced students, they minimally commit grammar mistakes; in that case, teachers give similar expressions to the students in place of grammar corrections.

But the most difficult and important is to grasp the attention of the students as a long that line, you also don't know what is simultaneously on your students' screens. You can bet that at least one Facebook tab is open and hope that the head-nodding isn't to a muted music video. Discipline is tough even in person, when you can tower threateningly above desks and take toys out of hands, but ranks even higher on the hierarchy of teaching English online challenges. With so many things coming at us constantly and vying for attention, it's difficult to not become just another background video.

Challenges in the motivational aspect-The graph below shows the top two factors that negatively affect the teachers' motivation in teaching English Online.There are a variety of ways in which instructors can help make the online learning experience more satisfying and effective: (1) effective planning, (2) learner preparation, and (3)

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enhanced interaction. To start, effective planning includes chunking and pacing content, designing a schedule of assignment due dates and setting a regular schedule for activities. It is advisable to acquire some knowledge of the learners' needs, aptitudes and abilities. Hosting a welcome forum or activity can help instructors get to know the learners and help the class establish rapport.It is important to monitor learner progress. Simple learning analytics data/traces (log ins, number and frequency of online contributions, etc.) can be very helpful in alerting you to students who are in danger of dropping out, getting lost, etc. An instructor can also ask learners to comment on course and task designs, resources available, quality of infrastructure and tools; this helps the instructor to fine-tune what is being offering, and it helps the learners get better at judging what they need.

This will also ensure a better advanced teaching learning system i.e Next Generation Pedagogy: Idea for Online and Blended Higher Education consideration the ICT advantages and the growing interest for blended and online models. More than a hundred successful cases, focus groups and interviews with online education and educational technologist experts were addressed. It's a roadmap of innovative approaches to teaching, which point to next-generation pedagogy for blended and online educational models.

CONCLUSION

We will conclude with a quotation by Kirschner:
"if one looks at teaching as a profession based upon a 'combination of complex cognitive and higher-order skills, highly integrated knowledge structures, interpersonal and social skills, and attitudes and values' (Van Merriënboer & Kirschner), the TEL distinction need not be made. Teachers need to receive training in how to apply what they have learnt 'in a variety of situations (transfer) and over an unlimited time span (lifelong learning)". TEL is simply the newest tool on the horizon. (Kirschner 2015: 312).

By claiming that we should not be talking about 'new' learning, 'what we should be talking about is effective, efficient and enjoyable learning that is facilitated and/or enhanced by the technologies available to the teacher, the learner and the school' (Kirschner 2015: 313).

On the one hand, the design of effective learning environments and embedding online technologies can serve as catalysts for teachers to experiment new things, explore creative alternatives and reflect on their own practices (Goodyear and Markauskaite 2009; McKenney et al. 2015). On the other hand, online teaching is an essential part of professional development of their faculty, for them to be updated on effective pedagogical methods with or without the use of online technologies.

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