My Experience with Online Classes: Pros and Cons

The COVID-19 pandemic raised the need for educational means that will not potentially endanger the students' health. As a result, the need for online classes sharply rose worldwide. However, it is difficult to conclude whether such practices have been successful so far, especially in regions that are considered least developed. According to my personal observations, online classes may represent a negative educational experience that will hinder its primary role as the means of passing on the knowledge.

There are various methods to analyze the benefits of online classes, one of which is to review the technology from an economic perspective. The research of Faulconer and Gruss demonstrated that online laboratory experimentations used in higher educational facilities address the majority of the needs as cost-effective and accessible for students, while not compromising on educational value (159). Nevertheless, the researchers address the need for large-scale cost comparison and effectiveness in the preparation of the students for more sophisticated experiments to conclude the practical value of the technology.

In contrast, among the developing countries, the negative effect of online classes may refer to the division of students following socio-economic status as the data suggests that most students may not have the means to acquire the tools that are required for the smooth educational experience such as stable internet connection and electric devices (Ramij and Sultana). According to my personal experience with online learning, two-thirds of students in my class received an access to the lectures using mobile data. Approximately the same number of students had a poor internet connection. Thus, for some students the online learning experience costs too much. Moreover, some of my teachers were not accustomed to the new teaching methodology and lacked the computer skills required, which also lessened the quality of online lessons.

Concerning developed countries, such problems with the lack of internet connection may be irrelevant. Instead, the disadvantages of online learning refer primarily to its social factors. Teaching presence and active interaction and communication within the classroom are lacking components in the distance learning environment that heavily contribute to the course comprehension (Samsonov 313-315). Furthermore, individual responsibility and flexibility which are often included in the discussion of online learning advantages may act as the disadvantage for the considerable number of students as they require self-discipline and effective time management from the students (Solomon and Verrilli 16-18). This also holds true in relation to my personal experience with distant learning. Some of the students in our class reported having trouble with discipline during online lessons in real time. However, such concerns are common among synchronous material delivery, while asynchronous studies demonstrate relatively high preference among students.

According to my experience, asynchronous learning is more attractive and advantageous feature of online classes. It allowed the students to be flexible and study at their own pace. In addition, the data shown in the study of Samsonov suggests that students prefer asynchronous online learning over face-to-face lessons (313-315). Asynchronous lessons require high engagement in the preparation of the tools and materials from the teacher's side. Thus, involuntary connecting it to the teacher's computer proficiency and course material adaptation methods which in return suggests that good quality of materials may lead to satisfaction among students and a better understanding of the material (Solomon and Verrilli 16-18). Nevertheless, the study also revealed that the overall majority of students in every age group (20-30 and 30-60 years old) preferred a hybrid form that encompasses the best qualities of both face-to-face and online learning (Samsonov 313-315). The same holds true for my own experience. Consequently, my observations show that online classes are yet to surpass the traditional teaching methods.

In conclusion, online learning is a relatively new concept that has demonstrated a varying degree of effectiveness within acceptable margins. However, with respect to the pros of the technology, its rushed practical implementation created significant disadvantages. While it is capable of delivering solid and effective education, the technology is still lacking in terms of adaptability, student satisfaction, and accessibility as it may vary depending on the development of the implementation region.

Works Cited

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