

Teaching during Covid-19 lockdown: The need for amore humanistic approach to education

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Abstract:

The paper aims to explore the teaching strategies adopted by teachers during Covid 19 and analyze its implications and learning outcomes. Through conducting a questionnaire and interview-based research the paper brings to light the most sought-after teaching pedagogies and tools such as child-centered, collaborative learning, flipped classrooms, whiteboards, word walls, etc. However, its scope is not limited to just that. It takes the research further and explores the need for a more human approach to education. The material gathered shows an extensive scope and need for a human approach to teaching and learning. Even if the paper addresses the lacuna between teachers and students, its emphasis is also on encouraging teachers to find teaching methods that mutually benefit the child and the teacher.

Keywords: Covid 19, teaching strategies, humanistic approach, education.

Introduction

Education has been described as an enlightening experience. Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of Knowledge, positive judgment, and well-developed wisdom.³ Hence, education occurs through two mediums: teaching and learning.

However, the Covid 19 pandemic has altered the understanding of these definitions on multiple grounds. It created the largest disruption of education in history, affecting around 1.6 billion learners in about 190 countries.⁴ It created a sense of isolation among students, and required a huge amount of discipline and understanding on the student's part including technological issues, inability to focus and managing screen time.

The transition from online to offline teaching back again has brought to my attention that the student is at least a year behind the expected grade work that he/she is supposed to do. However, it was a test question in a term paper that brought to my attention the need for a humanistic approach to education. Students were asked to write a short essay on if the online school was better or if the offline school was better. 98% of my students picked the option of offline school

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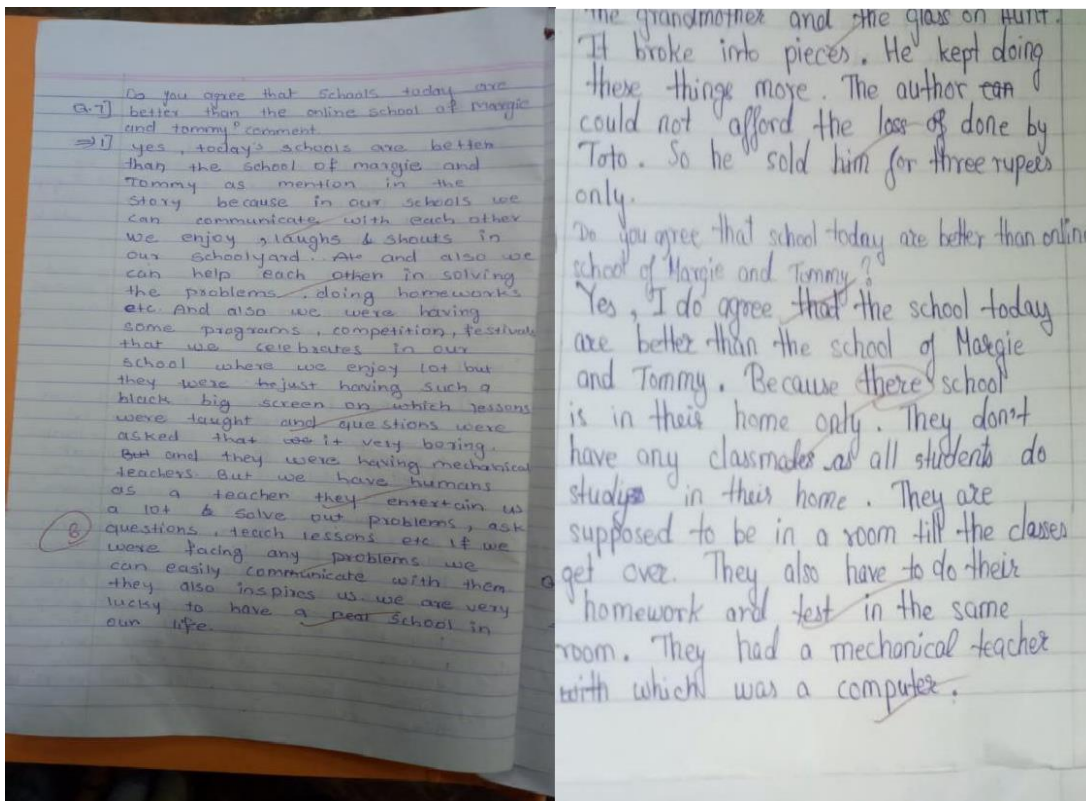
³ Taaffe, Eduard.

⁴ Policy Brief covid 19 and education, United Nations.

and expressed the need for classroom experience in greater detail to foster healthy learning habits.

It has been 6-7 months since schools have reopened and students have portrayed a remarkable ability to cope with the syllabus. Despite getting good grades and satisfactory performance from my students, grading essays made me question teaching pedagogies and look into the teaching experience of my other fellow teachers which were equally distressing and alerting, for both the teacher and the student. Even if the paper addresses the issue as a whole, research solely focuses on the teaching and learning habits of teachers and students at the School of Scholars, Yavatmal.

The point of the paper is to bring to the forefront a teaching strategy that addresses the most important fundamental key points of education, which are, the cultivation of the intellect, liberation of the mind, the welfare of total humanity, material abundance, happiness, and understanding education as an inclusive subject rather than mere schooling.



The picture above are the answers written by my students on the question: Is online school better than offline school? Why?

Teaching during lockdown

In a survey, teachers were asked to describe their teaching experience during lockdown extensively. The questions were in the capacity of an educator, a learner, and a facilitator. When

asked about teaching strategies they implemented in their classroom these were the most sought-after teaching tools,

1. Child-centered education places the child first, an approach with the message that all children have the right to an education that helps them grow to their fullest potential. It also focuses on the child's well-being in all areas. This has increasingly made it popular among parents. Child-centered learning is focused on the student's needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. This classroom teaching method acknowledges student voice as central to the learning experience for every learner. Teacher-centered learning has the teacher at its center in an active role and students in a passive, receptive role. Child-centered learning requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning.

2. Collaborative learning can occur peer-to-peer or in larger groups. Peer learning, or peer instruction, is a type of collaborative learning that involves students working in pairs or small groups to discuss concepts or find solutions to problems. Similar to the idea that two or three heads are better than one, educational researchers have found that through peer instruction, students teach each other by addressing misunderstandings and clarifying misconceptions. Research shows that educational experiences that are active, social, contextual, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning. The benefits of collaborative learning include:

- A. Development of higher-level thinking, oral communication, self-management, and leadership skills.
- B. Promotion of student-faculty interaction.
- C. Increase in student retention, self-esteem, and responsibility.
- D. Exposure to and an increase in understanding of diverse perspectives.

3. For some the flipped classroom has become synonymous with active learning. There are many ways to incorporate active learning into your courses, and the flipped classroom is but one of those methods. A flipped classroom is structured around the idea that lecture or direct instruction is not the best use of class time. Instead, students encounter information before class, freeing class time for activities that involve higher order thinking and asking students to read the lesson at home is an example of flipped classroom.

4. Whiteboard and Jam board are the tools like blackboard teachers and students can write on during an online class. Whiteboard has helped maths teachers because students could solve individually on their whiteboard and submit it to their class teacher during an online class.

5. Word wall is a free online tool for creating learning activities. With this tool, teachers can enter the topic that they would like to cover in class into the Wordwall and receive a variety of ready-made, fully customizable activities such as quizzes, word games, maze chases and much more.

Learning outcomes

Despite ensuring an overall approach to education and making learning a fun experience, it was observed that students dropped out of class, and showed less enthusiasm even in the tech-savvy environment. It proved to be disadvantageous. In an interview with a fellow language teacher she emphasized the need for human touch.

As it affects the growth of the child.

Some suggested that facilitating online tools in offline schools will be very effective and useful in keeping children engaged in learning. It was brought to our notice that parents who were aware of technology and were paying personal attention to their children during online school they are doing well offline now but those who did not their children haven't studied for two years and are making mistakes in writing, spelling mistakes, dirty handwriting shabby work, disinterested in studies, might be finding it difficult.

Grade 1 to Grade 7 students find writing on their own very difficult and take a lot of time to take dictation and writing work is very shabby. 80% of Grade 8 to Grade 10 students' work is shabby, and writing and reading comprehension is badly hampered.

What is the humanistic approach to education?

Humanist Theory considers learning from the perspective of human's unlimited potential for growth, human beings can control their own destiny; people are inherently good and will strive for a better world; people are free to act, and behavior is the consequence of human choice. (Rogers, 1983; Maslow, 1970).

The humanist theory according to Rogers has the following characteristics:

- 1) Personal involvement
- 2) Self-initiated
- 3) Pervasive
- 4) Evaluated by the learner
- 5) Essence is meaning

Humanistic theory has the potential for designing a true learning Society since there is a natural tendency for people to learn and that learning will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided. (Cross, 1981).

This brings us to the question of why we need to implement a humanistic approach to education to simply fulfill the aims of education, to create efficient, responsible, and happy humans for the welfare of humanity.

Conclusion

To conclude, it cannot be emphasized enough that Covid 19 has changed the way we perceive things to be and demands the need for a more inclusive society for the welfare of humanity. It falls upon the teachers to create the youth that the world requires. As observed and learned in the past two years, traditional teaching methods will not do, nor will the tech-savvy nature. Abstract and intangible things like human touch, encouraging environment, and addressing the fact that students have a natural tendency to learn, act on their free will, and thoughts, and validate their emotions are becoming equally important.

As a teacher today, it is to practice a simple mantra "I'll be the teacher I never had." Social, political, and environmental factors are always affecting the very mouldable mind of a young child. It becomes the

responsibility of the schooling institute to not only view the student as a young child but also primarily as a human. A human with human needs to feel at ease, safe, and in a warm environment where their only experience should be the repeating thought of 'The sky's the limit.'

However, it is only practical application of this concept at the base level that will validate its practicality. According to Anatole France, "Nine-tenths of education is encouragement". The aim of the paper is exactly that, to encourage experimenting with teaching strategies to meet the demands of the changing times.

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