



ENGLISH SPEAKING CORNER 3 – Distance Learning

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Distance Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

After listening to the video, reorder the paragraphs. Listen and check!

_____ Said that, though, most students express strong desires to go back to the old-fashioned classroom. The interactions among students, teachers and the facilities in a traditional classroom setting cannot be replaced by online learning.

_____ So, what can we learn from this experience?

_____ To better understand the issue, we can address it on several levels. First of all, the quick turn to platforms like Zoom or Google Meet is impacting on individuals and families, communities and professionals, particularly for those less equipped to navigate the internet and to manage a classroom mediated by a screen and microphone. In addition, we should bear in mind that some subjects are much harder to transfer online; online classes require significantly more motivation and attention; and above all screens create an emotional remove that makes it difficult to have back-and-forth dialogue between multiple people, and it's almost impossible to provide thoughtful feedback without feeling like you're speaking into a void.

_____ This is going to be today's topic for us.

_____ Hi everyone and welcome back to our English corner, where to boost our language and challenge our skills.

_____ Secondly, online live streaming platforms that allow online interactions encourage students to participate, ask questions, engage and share their opinions more comfortably, as well as to self-access learning materials more effectively.

_____ Secondly, from a practical point of view, an essential requirement for shifting from physical classrooms to online learning is a good internet connection at home. Connectivity is central. Moreover, when online learning is required for several hours per day, users prefer a desktop computer or laptop instead of mobile phones or mini-pads due to limited screen sizes and difficulty in simultaneously displaying teachers, content, and classmates. This has led to a surge in online computer sales.

_____ The COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools, universities and training centers to close and send students home. Schools, universities and learning and development professionals have shifted rapidly from in-person to online learning, suddenly transforming learning and teaching around the world. As a result, the educational process is going to be recast quickly, impacting on curricula, qualifications and the like on a very long-term.

_____ In fact, online learning can't be a substitute for face-to-face schooling. Then... what about orienting towards Blended schooling that utilizes online and offline learning through partnerships between public and private sectors? Couldn't that become the new norm—even after the pandemic?

_____ Firstly, increasing numbers of people are using the time to build their skillset, with an upsurge in enrolments on online learning platforms, which offer “open online courses”, by enjoying a flexible schedule at lower costs. Devoting some of our quarantine time to self-education makes sense. Besides helping to bolster your career during this economic uncertainty, learning a new skill can give you a sense of control and personal development that will help cope in the near future.

_____ On top of that, there are some benefits to virtual classrooms which need to be mentioned. Two in particular.

_____ Thirdly, digital literacy skills have become critical to move online and manage virtual classes, especially through live streaming. And most students are more digitally prepared and comfortable with online learning than expected.

VIDEO LESSON COMPLETE TEXT – Distance Learning

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So, what can we learn from this experience?

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To better understand the issue, we can address it on several levels. First of all, the quick turn to platforms like Zoom or Google Meet is impacting on individuals and families, communities and professionals, particularly for those less equipped to navigate the internet and to manage a classroom mediated by a screen and microphone. In addition, we should bear in mind that some subjects are much harder to transfer online; online classes require significantly more motivation and attention; and above all screens create an emotional remove that makes it difficult to have back-and-forth dialogue between multiple people, and it's almost impossible to provide thoughtful feedback without feeling like you're speaking into a void.

Secondly, from a practical point of view, an essential requirement for shifting from physical classrooms to online learning is a good internet connection at home. Connectivity is central. Moreover, when online learning is required for several hours per day, users prefer a desktop computer or laptop instead of mobile phones or mini-pads due to limited screen sizes and difficulty in simultaneously displaying teachers, content, and classmates. This has led to a surge in online computer sales.

Thirdly, digital literacy skills have become critical to move online and manage virtual classes, especially through live streaming. And most students are more digitally prepared and comfortable with online learning than expected.

On top of that, there are some benefits to virtual classrooms which need to be mentioned. Two in particular.

Firstly, increasing numbers of people are using the time to build their skillset, with an upsurge in enrolments on online learning platforms, which offer "open online courses", by enjoying a flexible schedule at lower costs. Devoting some of our quarantine time to self-education makes sense.

Besides helping to bolster your career during this economic uncertainty, learning a new skill can give you a sense of control and personal development that will help cope in the near future.

Secondly, online live streaming platforms that allow online interactions encourage students to participate, ask questions, engage and share their opinions more comfortably, as well as to self-access learning materials more effectively.

Said that, though, most students express strong desires to go back to the old-fashioned classroom. The interactions among students, teachers and the facilities in a traditional classroom setting cannot be replaced by online learning.

In fact, online learning can't be a substitute for face-to-face schooling. Then... what about orienting towards Blended schooling that utilizes online and offline learning through partnerships between public and private sectors? Couldn't that become the new norm—even after the pandemic?

Online Sources

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<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/online-learning-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/covid-19-10-steps-online-learning/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/apr/19/online-learning-how-to-acquire-new-skills-during-lockdown>