EDUCATION OF TOMORROW
LEARNING IN POST PANDEMIC WORLD

UCSI Press

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FOREWORD

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR

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"The purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows" – Sydney J. Harris

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed our education landscape and left many fundamental questions for us as a higher education provider to answer and deal with.

It also opens windows of opportunities as there are accelerations in globalization and a faster rate of technological development. This book shares thoughts in many areas of education, from comparing E-learning pre and post-pandemic to the technological advancement that is in progress and preparing education for knowledge creation.

The content of the book will answer some of the questions of what knowledge skills, attitudes, and values that today's students need in preparing them for the future and also how we move to prepare the right instructional system in guiding

them to navigate through the complex and uncertain world with the right-thinking skills, for them to be creative and innovative.

We know that education will equip learners with a sense of purpose to shape their own lives and contribute to the lives of others and it is hoped that this book will be the platform for sharing ideas in preparing students for the future.

FOREWORD

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR
LEARNING & TEACHING
DIRECTOR**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Keoy Kay Hooi
PhD
BSc. (Hons) in Computer Science
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Welcome to the Centre of Excellence Learning and Teaching (CELT), UCSI University.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the closure of educational facilities in the majority of the world's nations and interrupted at least 1.5 billion pupils from attending school in 2020 and 2021. Although the pandemic has demonstrated how very susceptible nations' current educational infrastructures are to outside shocks, many education systems have been able to adapt in some fashion. While we need to be better prepared for such problems, schools and educators have shown incredible resilience in their attempts to recover from the crisis.

Higher education has also been severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak as universities locked their locations and nations closed their borders in reaction to lockdown measures. Even though universities moved quickly to substitute in-person lectures with online instruction, these closures had an impact on students' ability to learn and succeed in exams as well as their safety and legal standing in their host nation. The crisis

raises concerns about the value of a university education, which involves networking and social possibilities in addition to academic content, which is perhaps the most significant issue. Universities will need to redesign their learning environments in order to stay current so that relationships between students, teachers, and others are expanded and complemented by digitalization.

The difficulties do not, however, end with the current crisis. In the upcoming years, challenges in education would be getting more intense, and it required more effort and collaboration from different parties to overcome the issues. As such, the issue of the CELT Booklet entitled "Education of Tomorrow: Learning in Post–Pandemic World" aims to highlight the challenges and issues which worth increasing the awareness of the public. This is the first effort from CELT, and we are committed to continuing publishing to serve the education community.

SPECIAL MESSAGE

DIRECTOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Assoc. Prof. Dr Wan Zuhainis Bt Saad

"…..never let a good crisis go to waste". – Winston Churchill

To educate students for the working world, we should go beyond transmission instruction and toward transformative learning. This book is timely and tackles important challenges that Malaysia's higher education industry is currently dealing with. Each chapter's authors have utilized its strategic perspective in learning in the post–pandemic world. My sincere gratitude to the Center of Excellence for Learning and Teaching (CETL), UCSI University for the successful publication of this book.

The pandemic also presents an opportunity to establish a new course due to the severe issues the educational system is experiencing. The four chapters of this book share how recent technological developments offer the chance for brand–new learning experiences that are accessible from anywhere in the world, meaningful to students, and engaging. Possibly, more importantly, we have the opportunity to create learning experiences that are designed for students to think critically

and analyze situations rather than focusing solely on learning facts and information – and through e-learning, compared to traditional learning, we can reach a larger scale of audience. This is a time of change in higher education, particularly involving the ways we can use technology to improve learning and make universities an important national agenda. This is also aligned with the 21st Century skills and makes learning more attractive and interesting. The creation of an innovative, efficient, diversified, and strong ecosystem would aid in the achievement of the goals of the Malaysian higher education sector in the most productive and effective manner. Well done CELT and all authors.

SPECIAL MESSAGE

CHAIRMAN ASEAN RESEARCH ORGANIZATION PHILLIPINES

Dr. Genaro V. Japos

The inspiring and meaningful content of this book is a refreshing source of learning for educators and citizens in this post-pandemic time. We learn about the features of great universities and how universities can build our nation. The discussion on teaching in virtual campuses and classrooms gives us a pathway to design learning spaces for the future. E-learning and e-teaching sound easy in the way the authors tell their compelling stories.

I endorse this monumental book to educators in Asia and the rest of the world!

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education in over 150 countries and affected 1.6 billion students. In response, many countries have adopted some form of distance education to ensure the sustainability of education without disruption by the pandemic. In the initial phase of COVID -19, the education response focused on the introduction of a distance learning mechanism as an emergency measure to ensure the continuity of the study. These were intended to reach all students from all walks of life but were not always successfully implemented. As the pandemic has evolved, so have education interventions needed to be involved as well.

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As a result of the spread of the virus and the closure of physical classes, online or hybrid learning mode has emerged as an effective alternative teaching method using a variety of Internet-connected devices such as computers, laptops, tablets, and cell phones in both synchronous and asynchronous environments. Students can learn at their own pace and connect with peers, academic staff, and academic advisors no matter where they are because of the availability of these instructional strategies and environments. Online learning can occur in two different ways: synchronously or asynchronously, depending on the timing of interactions, and it promotes learning effectiveness. Through tools such as video conferencing and chat rooms, synchronous online learning allows face-to-face interactions between instructors and students during class. While asynchronous online learning gives lecturers and students the chance to communicate via emails and thread discussions prior to or after the online lesson. Online education benefits autonomous learning and the acquisition of new skills that promote lifelong learning.

However, for students who are disadvantaged, disabled, or marginalized within the lower social economic status, and have few resources or access to online learning, it can be extremely difficult to attend the classes effectively. The discrepancy and dropout among them are brought on by their incapacity to access and participate in online learning could be extremely

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shameful, and discriminating the students from lower socioeconomic status, as they were deprived of the opportunity of equal learning. Online learning also takes discipline and dedication from the students, especially from vulnerable pupils who require engagement to develop their social skills. The consequences of the epidemic pose a great threat to this generation's aspirations and possibilities well into adulthood, which eventually affects their career pursuance in the future. The knock-on consequences can make it more difficult for them to deal with the challenges in the study, interpersonal skills as well as communication skills if the intervention did not deliver on time for this generation. The full extent of this crisis's short-, medium-, and long-term effects is still being formed.

Universities and students can benefit from online learning. Students in industrialized nations may easily have flexible study schedules and assess since due to the advancement of the network infrastructure. Additionally, universities reap advantages from using this teaching strategy, which is more affordable, has a large audience, and doesn't require any physical infrastructure. However, there are certain drawbacks to online learning because contemporary educators found it challenging. It takes a lot of time to prepare the materials for the online method.

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Additionally, supporting students in obtaining tough tasks associated with online learning Less monitoring is needed while using online learning materials. Online education has become a popular new way for developing nations to study. Online learning required a high level of self-discipline and self-regulation in their study. Also, online learning may direct different types of disruptions for the students during the study, where and how we study can also be a source of distraction. Some students wear comfortable pajamas and lie on their beds with their laptops to watch lectures. This can be a problem for concentration because one mentally associates the bed with rest. Even when studying at a desk, just looking at the bed interferes with students' attention and breaks their concentration. Every student faces a different challenge at home. Nevertheless, students can overcome these challenges through time management if they create and follow an organized daily schedule. In addition, motivation is an important key to success. Thinking about the grades they will earn, the prospect of graduating, and starting a new career after graduation can spur students to stick with it. Students can also reward themselves when they spend a certain amount of time studying or achieve good grades.

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For both students and educators nowadays, online learning is a useful alternative learning approach, and it is an unavoidable trend in education; however, some difficulties need to be taken into account, such as the internet's patchy availability. What follows is the question of what will happen if the requirement is repealed. Will the demand for our education system return to pre-crisis levels, somewhat increase, or skyrocket? Time will prevail, but the empirical findings suggest that educators' ability to "rise to the occasion" with quality teaching will have to contribute a significant impact on demand as students become more accustomed to online learning. If many students suffer inadequate fundamental functional competency, poor instructional design, lack of social presence and interaction, and poorly implemented cognitive and social features as a result of the rush to bring classes online, they may be willing to return to the traditional classroom. Students will be pruned to accepted online and hybrid teaching if educators are able to blend high-quality interactive teaching pedagogy with technological support. This would be a trend and we ought to prepare well before the next unprecedented occasion to strike our education system again.

GREAT UNIVERSITIES, WHAT ARE THEY MADE OF?

Prof. Dato' Dr. Ahmad
Bin Ibrahim FASc

That knowledge is power is no longer disputable. Just look at the world economy now. It is increasingly knowledge-driven. Businesses which possess powerful knowledge assets are more prosperous. Knowledge about the market, technology, customer, competition, and also business trends makes such companies stand out in the competition. This explains why businesses worldwide invest significantly in strengthening their knowledge assets. In developed economies, the budget provision for the acquisition of knowledge assets is substantial. Such knowledge assets include among others robust facilities for R&D, the recruitment and retention of knowledge-rich talent, and a vibrant ecosystem for knowledge management. Innovation is naturally the ultimate destiny for such knowledge-intensive companies.

Knowledge is also the defacto business of universities. In fact, knowledge is the currency of truly great universities. It is how universities are assessed in terms of the equivalent business ROI. Some refer to that as the return of value to the nation. The values include the production of knowledge talents, the generation of knowledge that leads to the development of technology and know–how that the nation and society can benefit from, including innovative ideas that businesses can tap on profitably. Not to mention ideas that can help shape robust development policies for the nation. At the end of the day, policies are what drive the nation forward. Not just the formulation of the right policies, but even more critical is the execution and implementation of such policies.

If knowledge is so central to the functioning of universities, how do they create the right ecosystem to make knowledge flourish? How do universities build a vibrant culture of pursuing knowledge? Since new knowledge develops mostly from research, great universities work hard to perfect their R&D ecosystem. It is the output from research that builds the repository of knowledge of universities. But great universities do not just do research and limit their sharing among peers. They venture beyond the academic journals where the findings of the research are suitably curated for credibility. Great universities invest more in communicating the curated research outputs to other stakeholders including businesses, lawmakers, and society at large.

Building the right R&D ecosystem is a major challenge. Universities that can claim to have achieved greatness have done so in a number of ways. Intellectual discourses and debates on knowledge are common in such universities. In order to attract participation from industry, society, and government, such an exchange of ideas would address current issues of the nation and the world. Deliberations on social media

can be a good reference for choosing topics. In Malaysia, the issues which now commonly populate social media include issues on political stability, social harmony, rising costs of living, dealing with natural calamities, and affordable housing, just to name a few. Universities that are seen to give attention to such national issues in their research will be viewed as delivering a high return of value to the nation. And effectively disseminating such research would add more value to the work of the university.

There is no doubt that all universities strive to achieve greatness. Many create roadmaps and blueprints to serve as guidance. Executing the promises made in such plans has been the biggest challenge. This is where a system of governance would come in useful. A robust regime of monitoring and evaluation of the deliverables is definitely a big help. Roadmaps should not be seen as rigid. Instead, they should be flexible and lend well to adjustments and changes based on the feedback gained from the monitoring process. A roadmap also performs the important function of continuously improving the system of governance. Universities that take the execution process of their roadmaps seriously will eventually become great universities.

Making universities great should be seen as a critical national agenda. The strengthening of knowledge is an important national agenda. It, therefore, follows that the government must create the right ecosystem and support the development of great universities. These can include some forms of incentives and other motivation tools. In fact, great universities do not have to submit to be ranked. They are the benchmark for university ranking. Time to revisit our policy of making universities great!

READY PLAYER ONE AND JUMPING INTO THE FUTURE OF TEACHING IN VIRTUAL CAMPUSES AND CLASSROOM

Prof. Dr. Mohd. Tajuddin
Bin Mohd. Rasdi

In this essay, I would like to take a journey into my favorite movie, Ready Player One, and my experience in teaching in a virtual classroom during the two-year pandemic. This journey will have serious implications on the nature of teaching, campus design, and the accreditation process.

I discovered two important things about teaching during the pandemic time of two years. I liked it! I have never been much of a techy person and always have a delayed reaction of about a year after everyone has used the mobile phone, the smartphone, or PowerPoint and I still don't use Instagram or Twitter. But when the pandemic hit, I had to learn how to use the zoom platform of teaching and began to enjoy it as well as find two meaningful things that would change the way education should be taught in the future.

The first thing that I discovered is that I could get up close and personal with anyone of my students. Before the pandemic, I had to lecture in a large class with students sitting in various rows from the front to the back. If I were to call on a student from my lecture position up front, I would not be able to see the student's face and expression. But gleefully, I could call on any student on display on my screen and get a personal one-on-one conversation with him or her. This is important for me because I treat all my students with individual importance and attention. As a Muslim, Islam teaches the importance of students carrying out good deeds from the lessons that you have imparted to them. And so, in a way, the students are my 'investment in the afterlife' which is part of the concept and institution known as 'waqf' or endowment. Teaching is an important spiritual action because it also imparts lifelong values on how to use the information given to the students. Thus, with the internet, I could have private discussions with individual students or individual groups while all the other students are muted. This cannot happen in Face to Face classes as there is too much background chatter. Thus, in a zoom classroom, everyone is in front. No one is in the back row. I make every effort to call on each and every one of the students for any response to my lecture questions, musings, and opinions.

In a Face to Face classroom, eye contact is extremely difficult with all of the students but not so in a zoom class. Every student can have a personal up-close view of my face and expressions when I lecture. My lectures not only contain information but also my perspective, attitude, and standpoints on the issues raised. I have always repeated that in any

the philosophical issue, there is no correct answer but a response that is framed within a certain perspective of choice. The students can see my body language, my facial expressions, and my tone of voice within the constructed frameworks of the discourse that I was building up. And of course, there is also an added advantage in that the lecture can be downloaded after the recording has been filed away.

A second major point about post-pandemic education is the ability to interact with many different personalities around the world without any expenses if need be. The cross-cultural and international discussion is most meaningful and valuable as each comes from a vastly different academic background and political as well as cultural differences. The one thing I learned as a scholar is that knowledge has no borders and limits. What one learns in a Ph.D. is limited to a very small scope of consideration and is a far cry from the truth that is to be established many many years to come. The free flow of attitudes, perspectives, concerns, and definitions of issues are the bread and butter of real education as Lao Tse says in the Tao Te Ching 'the wise stay confused'. The Zoom lecture, forum, and seminar platforms are invaluable in this regard.

With the freedom afforded by Zoom or the zoom–like platforms, teaching and education have entered a new era. The first question is do we need a physical campus or not. The next question is do we really need a geographically contained accreditation exercise or not. Let's deal with the architecture issue first. Whether there is to be a physical campus or not depends entirely on the question of whether there is benefit in physical meetings. As human beings we are a social entity and the need to interact in person is built in. But the future of zoom classrooms with holographic projections as well as a Star Trek type of Holodeck reality may replace what we have been accustomed to as human beings. In architecture, the question of space and form as well as technology is an artistic process of dialogue within oneself as well as with others. I do not see that there is any need for campus architecture at all if we were to realize the dreams of the filmmakers Ready Player One. In that movie, one can go to a virtual campus by sending a virtual avatar into the virtual school to interact intimately with virtual friends, and be closer than friends friend. In the Star Trek Holodeck creation, the holographic images are more than just images but matter and solid. Perhaps that is just an unrealizable fantasy but so was flying just a century ago. Perhaps the future campus is either a small two–acre site with a few buildings spread out in several places on the planet that would make it easy for students to fly into the various different parts of the world. Thus the future students would truly be global and politically this might signal an opportunity that has been lost through isolated bigotry and extremism of religion and race bogeymen.

What then of accreditation? Are we to be subjected to the archaic and primitive MQA kind of accreditation that is limited in geographical scope? Or is the new education policing is a global appraisal and not so much an evaluation. The MQA has become a policemen and an imprisonment of knowledge and creativity. It is the box of chains of standardisation and regimentation. The MQA should be revamped or totally eliminated in the future post pandemic education. In place would be an appraisal of many global commentaries that can be recorded and downloaded by parents or agencies of governments or private institutions to choose which kind of education and university would they be willing to send their children or officers to.

Finally, I would like to say that I enjoyed the virtual classes and would definitely enjoy a Ready Player One type of virtual university. As an aging academic, when my thoughts are sharper and more wisdom frames my thinking with long-term musings and experience, the virtual platform saves my body from the aches and pains of travel unnecessarily. The virtual world also prevents me from getting infected but provides a more personal and accessible touch to the teaching of all my students one by one and all in one. Why did it take a dangerous virus to show humans the potential of such education that can revolutionize society as a whole, I cannot for the life of me fathom. But human nature likes standardization, likes tradition, and likes identity and so a revolution in endowing a new generation in a borderless world with a common agenda seems to be too much for the common homo sapien. Now that we all have had a taste of the future, why are our roads to campuses clogged up by traffic again? With so many big campuses around and with blind obedience to an outdated accreditation philosophical construct, I suppose it is too difficult to embrace, much less imagine the future.

E-LEARNING IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD: THREE CONTRASTS WITH TRADITIONAL LEARNING

Asst. Prof. Dr.
Alwyn Lau Wing Wang

E-learning remains an enigma. On one hand, during the previous Movement Control Orders in Malaysia (approximately between March 2020 and November 2021), we didn't have any choice but to go online. The virus forced us all into an experiment in which there was no choice but to jettison physical classrooms. Many schools and universities immediately jumped (awkwardly) on board the Zoom train.

On the other hand, can't help but wonder if that crisis opportunity could've made us push the envelope a little more education-wise.

Did the pandemic give us a glimpse of how education could be delivered better?

Between 2020 and 2021, I chatted with parents and students (both primary and secondary), all of whom have been engaging in full-time e-learning. Without trying to sound 'privileged' (especially given how many families are unable to learn from home), there clearly remain some areas in e-education we could rethink and improve on. Like many educators, I reckon one of the biggest mistakes of e-learning is to view it primarily as the digitalization of what happens in the classroom; instead, it can and ought to enable a transformation of traditional schooling.

Below are three 'contrasts' between traditional learning and e-learning plus some baby thoughts on how to move forward:

1 – In traditional schools, post-classroom assignments (more commonly known as 'homework') are seen as an 'add-on'; with e-learning, the out-of-class study takes precedence and teachers teaching in 'real-time' is the exception

One popular phrase in education today is 'flipped learning. This belongs to a family of phrases—like 'active learning', 'personalized learning, etc.—in which, long and short, the student begins to take charge of his or her own education.

Institutions that heavily implement this philosophy will, inevitably, end up looking 'different' from traditional schools. It will look as if the students are the ones 'leading' the learning, doing most of the talking, working collaboratively with each other (instead of 'taking orders' from the teacher), and so on. The teacher, in such cases, usually performs simple facilitation and even behaves like a co-learner.

How does e-learning change this? It should, in a sense, take this trajectory even further.

If flipped learning in traditional classrooms made students look like mini-teachers and teachers look like quasi-students, then e-learning should make both the teachers and students look less like teachers and students and more like a project team.

In a real-world project, 80% of the really important work is done independently and only 10-20% of the time is used for 'checking in', calibrating, and so on. Anything beyond 20% for the latter and the temptation towards micro-management looms large.

Granted this won't be so easy or practical with lower primary students (and the last thing anybody wants is chaos), but the principle can be cultivated early.

Overall, we should push for less 'centralized' meeting time, and more independent group and individual working time.

2 – For physical classrooms, being present and face-to-face with the teacher is the given; with e-learning, not being "present" is the baseline.

How do you 'know' if students have learned? This is a perennial which, I guess, will never be answered to anyone's full satisfaction.

However, in traditional schools, "being present in the classroom" has always been some major indicator of, well, learning(?). In fact, being present (or not being absent, yes there's a difference but it doesn't matter in schools) serves as a criterion for allowing students to sit for exams (eg, if you're absent more than a certain percentage of the time, you could be barred). E-learning problematizes this. It asks the hard question of why institutions associate physical presence with educational development.

Needless to say, e-learning done well makes attendance-taking rather superfluous. Again, is there some super urgent reason why parents simply MUST have 'present in the classroom' as an indicator of learning, not least during a crisis period like a lockdown?

One irony here is how, during the lockdowns, almost no employee was required to 'clock in' to work anymore (despite working from home) but teachers still needed to take attendance. The plot thickens (or worsens) because in some cases children have problems "signing in" to the particular edu-website yet are able to submit their assignments on time (via, say, email) yet(!) get reprimanded because they "did not attend" the scheduled online class.

Now, in a physical classroom, one could argue (tenuously) that being physically present was necessary because the teacher said or showed some things which can't be recorded. But for an online classroom, is 'real-time' presence all that important anymore?

3 – In the traditional classroom, learning is delimited by time and space; with e-learning, these limitations are removed and optionality becomes key

Do you know what's the only thing worse than having to sit inside a classroom for five hours? It's having to stare into a Zoom screen grid for the same duration of time. Yet isn't this precisely what many of our school kids are being made to do?

At least in school, kids can nudge their friends, stand up, sharpen their pencils, stare out the window at the other kids playing sports, pass naughty notes, run to the science lab, and go to the toilet (four times during class) and, best of all, look forward to recess or the final school bell.

During online classes? It's like going from one passive zombified state to another, isn't it? Especially when kids are 'forced' to listen to teachers talk via a screen for hours.

[Isn't this why the entire "educational CD-ROM" industry didn't take off? Because, look, it's already bad enough listening to an educator drone on and on when he's right in front of you, imagine watching him doing it through a screen. I reckon the inmates at Abu Ghraib had more fun?]

E-learning is a chance to make education seem less like involuntary confinement and more like a bounded choice i.e. this is an opportunity to give students the chance to take (more) charge of their own learning.

Instead of one or two textbooks, what if kids were given a 'recommended' reading (or, better yet, viewing) list? What if kids were asked to submit their own findings of the most helpful vids or articles on, say, climate change, and what points they disagreed with?

Instead of everybody listening to one teacher, what if students were given the chance to discuss answers with whomever they wanted (and at their own time)?

Instead of one set of exam questions, what about considering the flexibility in choosing the kinds and levels of assessments which is best tailored to their strengths, and so on? I mean, e-learning already renders the concept of 'closed-book exams' null, doesn't it? May as well rethink the assessment strategy as a whole!

Again, I don't deny that for some children (especially lower primary) their maturity may be as yet insufficiently developed to deal with such independence and options. But I'd insist these are the minority; the majority of school children, I suspect, would love to at least try.

DIGITAL STORY TELLING FOR REFLECTION IN THE POST-PANDEMIC LITERATURE CLASSES

Dr. Latha Ravindran

Why do we tell stories? We have often heard the saying, "Everyone has a story to tell". The art of storytelling has been in existence and throughout history, humans have used storytelling to influence social behaviors, promote understanding, and pass down valuable lessons. Stories make us human and bring diverse people together through the shared sense of emotions and feelings. Considering this, the pandemic has redefined the concept of teaching and learning for all education. In retrospect, what used to be lively class discussions and fun interactions were soon transitioned to online classes and now to hybrid classes. To address these challenges, I have been more receptive to providing useful platforms for interactions and collaborations in my lessons. To recreate the magic and fun of a lively literature class digital story telling proved to be a viable option for me to encourage interactions and collaborative work in the literature

classrooms. In addition, technology has now played a larger role in society than it ever has before. Technology and education are now inextricably related. It has opened new doors. In my ESL classroom with various options like book trailers, podcasts, and documentaries students have the option to read and interactively discuss the contents of the book. Apart from being able to interactively participate in the lessons, students were allowed to voice out their challenges and express their thoughts in the classroom. With mental health being the buzzword currently, the students were given an opportunity to voice their thoughts in the form of poetry and podcasts. This allowed them to deconstruct their own personal feeling and experiences together with the text being analyzed in the classrooms. Working together in groups allowed them to share their experiences and overcome their fears and students can vocalize their inner thought processes. There has been much inhibition with students coming out to work as a group after being isolated for long periods during the pandemic. The online classes have only exacerbated the social isolation and hence such group projects enabled them to not only interpret the text but also gave them a chance to collaborate creatively and be able to emphasize the character being read or the story being explored. The use of digital storytelling also implied that students worked collaboratively to achieve the goal of the project. The versatility of this approach enabled me to identify a diverse group of students with different digital abilities to form a group to construct their storyboard. The objective of the lesson was to help them comprehend the text and to allow discussion and creativity. Furthermore, it also enabled them to share their own stories relating to the pandemic and that helped them to identify the struggles of the characters in the

text. This process enabled the constructivist mode of learning to take place and students were allowed to use elements of digital narratives which included images, music, and sounds. Allowing them to incorporate these attributes in the storyboard gave them ample opportunities to use their creativity to integrate these elements into the storyboard and podcasts.

Why use digital technology?

The benefit of using digital technology is aligned with 21st-century skills and students are aware of the skills and enjoy classes that integrate technology. A majority of the students have not pursued a literature component in their schools. It thus allowed them to express their thoughts and feelings creatively. Students were asked to draw the main characters using their own understanding and interpretation and this enabled them to listen to the multiple responses from the various groups. The students were allowed to write narratives and together with the images they drew, together with the

color and the music chosen helped them to overcome their own feelings of isolation and insecurity. As the students come from varied backgrounds and with different linguistic abilities such an exercise allowed them to learn in a cooperative manner.

Though there are several benefits of using digital technology for literature classes these were not without challenges. The challenges that were posed could also be viewed positively as they provided a pathway to address these challenges with constructive solutions. One such problem was the initial hesitancy on the part of students to participate in the activities as they perceived that their language was not good enough. Hence, I addressed the issue with some pictures of book covers and put them in the folders. Students could open any folder that had various pictures and predict the contents of the book. Some of them have never read stories or any literature classics and hence their imagination of the contents was far-fetched from that of the actual one. Nevertheless, such an exercise helped to get them thinking and they could write some creative pieces it was useful to ignite the students' thinking skills and there was an avenue for them to exhibit their creative writing

There are some key lessons learned from using digital technology in the classroom. The most important is related to the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Differentiation of activities is important for classes with diverse groups of learners. The second valuable lesson is to provide them with reading material that is culturally appropriate, and the content could be an avenue for productivity. Students enjoyed blogging, and live journals and the moment of insight for the lecturer was the feedback on the activities given through blogs and anonymously. The advantage of using digital platforms is that they can be extended beyond the classroom, using a variety of materials and media sources. It also allows the flexibility to set milestones for each student, with a lot of reflections that are grounded in real-world situations and not the fantasy world that literature often portrays. Students on their part have learned to be observant and reflective and mentor the group members while focusing on performance. Finally using digital media in the classroom nurtured a culture of thinking to promote inquiry and explore their ideas. The media sources acted as a scaffolding tool for students' conversations. It also made their thought process visible through the pictures and storyboards. Hence, it is possible to set a clear expectation, and the most valuable lesson for the students and the educators would be to set their priority on the cultivation of their thinking skills.

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