

## ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF DISTANCE LEARNING

Sanja Gacov, page 105-116

### ABSTRACT

How Digital Learning is going to Change Schools and Education Digital studying is a new technological advancement in the field of schooling that has since presented each positive and negative outcomes. While there have been various benefits including a various way of delivering content and multiplied research capacity, it has been particularly perturbing that there are related addiction and a shift from the traditional to on line learning settings. The outcome has resulted in a discount in the quality of education and college students tend to abscond classes opting to interact with their digital learning gadgets. It is thus crucial to formulate alternative and solution to the developing challenge that is threatening the quality of education in the long-term as the shift from the traditional learning setting become imminent. The recommended policy of change that is relevant in this case involves all stakeholders including parents and teachers engaging in the monitoring of use to avoid overindulgence while ensuring that the learners use the digital learning media for productive reasons. The area of interest will be on the adverse effects that digital education brings to schools and learning in the traditional setting with reports identifying that the whole system is a waste of resources

**Keywords:** education, teaching, online teaching, well being

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## **Introduction**

In the new era, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought a new reality to the world level. In an attempt to deal with the so-called "invisible enemy", the approach of the states is different, but in the sudden, general blow to the economy, education is one of the most affected sectors. To prevent the spread of the pandemic, most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions at all levels. The consequences of the forced interruption of teaching are far-reaching, and this measure directly affected 60% of the world's population, that is, the one covered by the educational process. The transition from classroom teaching to electronic teaching is not at all a simple undertaking, (Miloshevska, 2021), due to the fact that apart from adequate technical infrastructure and a certain level of knowledge of digital skills, the implementation of the learning process also requires enormous support from the family. The benefits of e-learning are far-reaching, students receive information online, no matter where they are. Online teaching is not only distance teaching, it can also be applied to classes for the purpose of research through a specific educational application, through an educational game, quiz, survey, etc. In that sense, Miraschieva points out that, with the application of information technology and technology, some curricula can be redesigned in the part of those contents that do not have great cognitive, practical and educational value, which will overcome the contradictions between the large amount of information that the students they receive in the teaching and the real opportunities to adopt that information in a limited period of time. In this way, conditions are not only created to accelerate the learning process, but the degree of burden on students with factual knowledge is reduced, and at the same time, the efficiency and effectiveness of the learning process increases, which increases the productivity of the teaching process as well as the quality of education in general; She also points out that information technology and technology in teaching facilitates access to various sources of knowledge and simulation of many situations and processes that the student cannot experience in the conditions of classical teaching. In this way, conditions are created for equal opportunities for education for all students in approximately the same conditions, teaching with the help of information technology and technology enables extracurricular teaching at a time determined by the student's free choice, (Education, 2019-2020). On the

other hand, this situation created exceptional stress not only for the teachers, who were thrust into a new unexpected task, but also for the students because they had to replace their daily school activities and the way of socializing with educational tasks received electronically. Of course, many of the parents also found themselves under extreme pressure in trying to help their children adapt to the rapid changes as quickly and painlessly as possible (Miloshevska, 2021).

Not at all easy, electronic teaching requires enormous organizational energy and creativity that must be at a high level to attract the attention of students (in many cases even more digitally literate than their teachers). As expected, the aspects of electronic teaching are different for students of different educational levels because, first of all, their level of independence in following the electronic lesson is different. In addition, the general social blockade made technology in the educational process should be considered a condition without which it is impossible, that is, it is no longer perceived as a luxury in itself. Often, especially in poorer countries, the unfounded assumption is made that all students and teachers have individual access to broadband internet and a properly updated computer, while the reality is that there are families that rely on just one smartphone (National Research Council, 2009). In fact, access to the Internet is one of the main problems, and from there, in this crisis, the students from poorer families are the most affected, who lose incomparably more from teaching during the weeks outside of school, compared to their peers who have a better social position. The "digital divide" exists and it must be answered accordingly, so more countries in the world put educational programs on television for free in order to reach those who are not connected to the Internet. The current situation shows that there is no unified state approach to dealing with the global challenge. Organizationally, many things depend on previously established infrastructure for conducting electronic teaching, that is, IT structure, skills and digitization of the educational process. National policies also depend on the applied educational models, that is, the response to the crisis is different between those countries that have a centralized education system, compared to those where schools enjoy greater autonomy in creating and implementing teaching (Miloshevska, 2021),.

### **Digital literacy**

During the educational process, students must acquire appropriate ICT skills. The state does not have enough measures that will strengthen the digital literacy of the population, which is necessary for all professional activities in the 21st century, not only for participation in distance learning. The current moment of crisis should be used to actively build digital skills among pupils and students, who will be digitally prepared citizens in a modern society tomorrow. We propose to intensify the classes and teaching of ICT, working with computers and programming, either as completely new ones or instead of the subjects that were previously offered as electives. Teachers must be trained to use new technologies in the educational process and urgently. This does not require a lot of time, and is one of the main prerequisites for conducting distance learning, but also for modernizing the way of work in general. The digital literacy of teachers can be strengthened through inclusion in the curriculum of the Faculty of Education, but also regular training for teachers, and even be included as a prerequisite for employment or advancement. Technical support is also needed for parents, as a way of raising the digital literacy of parents as well. This could be achieved by open free programs for using digital tools that would be available to all citizens on the internet and television. For the teaching staff and for the students, respectively for the different age groups, appropriate recommendations for conducting distance education should be drawn up. In particular, parents of children covered by primary education should be familiar with the overall process and be actively involved in it. This is important because children up to (approximately) nine years of age are powerless without their parents and must have support. The recorded classes and the classes that will take place with physical presence or at a distance should follow the same curricula and materials, that is, there should be no problems if students individually or in groups switch from one to another learning method. To give priority to teaching at a distance, where teachers would work from schools. For children with disabilities, special regulations/manuals for teaching are necessary distance. Recommendations are needed to establish efficient assessment methods.

## Coordination

Given that the educational process in the Republic of North Macedonia is extremely centralized (Jovkovska, 2023), in a crisis situation it is necessary to strengthen the coordinating role of the Ministry of Education, and the Bureau of Education, as well as the local self-government units, must be directly involved in the process (Thomas, 2015). Direct guidance and support of teachers is needed for distance learning. Guidelines should be formulated as guidelines and standards, and adequate assistance is needed for their implementation. A timely, serious and effective approach is needed from all concerned institutions. It is necessary to establish a digital infrastructure, devices for each of the parties involved in the process who are not able to provide them themselves. This can be addressed with public procurement, but also with a call for donations from all companies and public institutions for usable equipment, whereby priority should be given to students who are part of the vulnerable categories. Internet vouchers are a great step, but it is desirable that the state subsidizes the complete Internet intended for sharing educational content (an example found in some countries). It is necessary to create a database of both lessons and electronic materials that teachers can exchange and use. It is important to provide access to the many electronic libraries (although during the pandemic many of them have provided free access to their documents). In the future, it is necessary to establish a centralized model, a unified learning platform. But considering that the procurement of such a platform is complicated and expensive, it takes time to create and operationalize it (as also proposed in the Concept for developing a distance education system in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia). We suggest that as a first step each school chooses own learning platform from those already available. Unlike platform selection, materials and resources should be centrally prepared and systematized, and support should also be provided centrally. A coordinated effort is needed to train teaching staff in the use of information technology and to provide them with technical assistance at all times. Teaching staff need the most support as this group bears the brunt of the changes. Urgent solutions and mobilization under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Culture are needed, so that every child can realize his inviolable right to education. Therefore, above all, we appeal to adopt short-term measures that will enable the improvement of the quality of teaching from the beginning of the new

school year. Strategic formal documents are not so much needed, but concrete standards for distance learning and practical guidelines for teachers are necessary (Miftah, M. Z, 2016). More communication is needed by the professional team of the schools with all the actors in the educational process, especially with the parents, considering that not everyone is able to provide the necessary help to the children. It is necessary to develop specific guidelines for parents so that they can provide the necessary educational and psychological support. Your approach must undoubtedly also include guidelines for students to embrace distance learning, which will be communicated to them by teachers and parents. We hope that from the attached recommendations and presented experiences we will draw positive examples that can be applied in the future organization of distance education in our country. The goal is to improve public policies and public services for the benefit of citizens. Hence, it is important to mobilize all available capacities for serious preparation of teaching and its successful organization in the future.

### **The unsatisfactory quality of our educational model**

However, the old problems with the unsatisfactory quality of our educational model, the outdated way of teaching and lecturing, as well as the learning of hundreds of unnecessary things, instead of preparing young people for life, through an approach that tries to solve problems and not endlessly repeating the facts. Like in the old movies from 100 years ago, when the Latin language classes repeated the conjugations of the verbs in chorus. The debate at an event of the Youth Education Forum, held on November 20, in which the main speakers were students from secondary schools, gives us a clear picture of what is happening in schools, as well as in the "online" communication between professors and students, which in this moment is realized: - "My peers from rural areas do not have stable Internet, they have problems with access and constant electricity, which further complicates access to teaching, unlike students from urban areas," said a high school student from "Ismet Jashari" school in Lipkovo. According to him, the available platform for online teaching is unsuccessful, with tools that bring great challenges for students and teachers. – "The way of teaching is not good. Some of the teachers base their lectures on traditional methods that are not appropriate for today's youth. This does not mean that they are not experts in their own field, but

they need more professional upgrading", said a high school student from "Nikola Karev" from Skopje. He added that more support is needed for teachers from the institutions. - "No matter how much we think that the educational system is modernized, the relationship between teachers and students remains the same as it was in the time of our parents. They want good grades for what they teach, and we want A's, but with rote learning and even some intervention," said a high school student from the private "Yahya Kemal" high school, according to whom the students are busy with learning facts by heart, rather than developing freedom of opinion and expression. High school students locate the problems primarily in the involvement or availability of teaching, in the case of online communication, but also in the way where the teaching takes place and the traditional methods present and the quality or effect that should be achieved during the educational process. High school students are looking for well-trained teachers, who probably wouldn't have a problem functioning even in such a crisis situation, but they also have critical words about their own attitude towards teaching. These are, of course, qualitative and selective data, but they reflect aspects of a wider situation and not only related to the current situation.

The influence of technology on pedagogy (the manner or structure of teaching) is complex. There is relatively little direct research on the ways that technological possibilities and the pedagogical response to these operate to benefit the lifelong learner. In this article we are bringing together the evidence from strands of research based on work in online and distance learning in formal settings, and also on open and free online education, which is often less formal. This research sheds light on several factors relevant to the outcomes of instruction: the often unpredictable motivations of learners, the trajectories they take through courses, and the indicators for success in formal and informal learning, in terms of both pedagogy and technology. We present the outcomes of practical endeavours to widen access to education using technology which indicate that open education is offering alternative ways of supporting learners. These suggest a focus on design decisions that can help integrate the process of learning more closely with ways in which online systems currently support learning and the data that can be used to interpret how well those designs are working. These digital technologies have made a paradigm shift in the entire education system. It is not only a knowledge provider but also a co-creator of information, a mentor, and an assessor.

Technological improvements in education have made life easier for students. Instead of using pen and paper, students nowadays use various software and tools to create presentations and projects. When compared to a stack of notebooks, an iPad is relatively light. When opposed to a weighty book, surfing an E-book is easier. These methods aid in increasing interest in research. This paper is brief about the need for digital technologies in education and discusses major applications and challenges in education.

Sustainable development includes social well-being, which depends on education. Information technology has emerged to spread shared knowledge and is a primary driving force behind education reforms. The introduction of new technology-assisted learning tools such as mobile devices, smartboards, tablets, laptops, simulations, dynamic visualisations, and virtual laboratories have altered education in schools and institutions. The Internet of Things (IoT) is proven to be one of the most cost-effective methods of educating young brains. It is also a robust mechanism for integrating a world-class learning experience for everybody.

### **Transition from the old to the new time**

Digital classrooms are defined by using electronic devices or platforms such as social media, multimedia, and mobile phones to teach students. With digital technology in education, today's educational landscape has altered for the better or improvements. Digital learning is a learning strategy that employs technology to fulfil the entire curriculum and allows students to learn quickly and rapidly. The digital classroom entirely focuses on teaching via the use of technology. Students use technological or internet-connected gadgets like laptops, tablets, Chromebooks, etc. Instead of taking notes on what the teacher has taught, most of the curriculum is delivered to students online through an engaging and interactive platform. Despite its many facets, education is fundamentally a kind of communication. The internet has resulted in the rise of new communication channels, which have extended the options for the transmission and access to educational information. These media and virtual venues serve as learning facilitators.

Educational applications and websites are used in digital classrooms to assist students in improving their learning experience. Feedback loops and



technology are two critical components of a digital classroom. Feedback loops are essential for students to obtain real-time feedback from their teachers. Teachers can use feedback loops to provide feedback depending on many factors such as student, lesson, group, etc. PPTs, video presentations, e-learning methods, online training, and other digital approaches are increasingly used in the teaching-learning process

## Conclusion

Small, medium and large-scale education technology companies have started proliferating in the future and are offering various new digital solutions to academic institutions. This will improve the quality of digital infrastructure across the country, making innovative educational technology more accessible to larger masses. We foresee the removal of all linguistic boundaries and better Online availability of learning resources in regional languages. E-learning and m-learning programmes provide students and teachers access to a vast pool of information content. While technology will play an essential role in shaping the future of education, ensuring that new teaching tools are used effectively will require a new generation of educators who understand the importance of human connection in the classroom. These can lead to a satisfying and engaging career in education. Students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to employ new educational technology to maximise their advantages for today and in the future. In upcoming years, education trends will ride the tide of growing internet capabilities and network capacity, making it easier to incorporate innovative technology into classrooms. However, there is no complete substitute for offline (classroom) teaching & learning. Thus we have reached the era of hybrid teaching and learning, where both online and offline systems are integrated to enhance the outcomes and are envisaged as an outcome of the implementation of Education 4.0

Digital technology in the classroom refers to various software and gadgets meant to help students with particular accessibility needs. The most effective way to reduce the number of repetitive, time-consuming duties a teacher undertake is to use technology in the classroom. Educational technology applications may save a lot of time and energy by automating or partially automating day-to-day operations like attendance tracking and

performance monitoring. Students are taught how to use technology responsibly and strategically, which can help them make decisions and develop self-discipline. Technology in education can help students to prepare for lifelong learning. These technologies provide students with a virtual world and the freedom to access digital knowledge according to their learning styles. Thanks to digital content production tools that customise teaching and learning, students can study at their own pace. The digital classroom uses electronic devices and software to instruct students and incorporates technology into education. A traditional classroom is transformed into a digital classroom through computers and the Internet. Students can learn more efficiently and track their progress with the help of technology and sophisticated equipment. In the upcoming days, these technologies will successfully be implemented in education to enhance the students' digital learning environment and performance. Modern technologies have been instrumental in complicated data analysis and management to make long-term decisions in areas such as climate change, air and water security, biodiversity protection, catastrophe resilience, etc. These technologies refer to innovation that considers natural resources while also promoting economic and social growth. These aim to dramatically decrease environmental and ecological concerns while producing a long-term product. These technologies reduce degradation, pollution, and other negative environmental effects. Traditional classroom instructions fall short of providing an immediate learning environment, faster evaluations, and more engagement. In contrast, digital learning tools and technology fill this void. Some of the efficiencies such technologies provide are simply unrivalled by traditional learning methodologies. With smartphones and other wireless technology devices becoming popular among the general public, it only makes sense that schools and educational institutions make efficient use of them by putting technology in the classroom. Indeed, today's technology's adaptability and non-intrusive character make learning more appealing to the next generation. However, it may be a formidable technique to manage initially since traditional instructors are hesitant to include contemporary technology and gadgets in school, viewing them as a distraction rather than an intelligent learning aid

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