

# COLLABORATION OF ONLINE COURSES IN UNIVERSITIES: IMPACT ON TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

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**Abstract-** The idea of collaborative learning was meant to benefit both the learners and teachers. But with the advancements in technology, there have been changes in the system of education, and collaborative learning seems to bear a different definition. The pretence of win-win situation is evident from concealed commercialization of education under the name of collaboration of online courses. It is painful because some universities have accepted and have become easy targets without conducting sufficient research on the functioning of collaboration and its impact on the teachers and learners. The interest of the learners in the absence of a teacher or teacher-less classes may result in weakening the society to a state of disorder and distortion and the 'falconer cannot hold the falcon'.

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## Introduction

The Gurukul system of education had learners going to the teachers. Later, both the teachers and learners had to go to a neutral place like a school or an institute either to teach or learn. Now, the learners sit in their own seats and have the facility to get educated as it is the teachers' video lectures which are accessible for the learners in the form of online courses. One teacher's video lecture is enough to teach the entire world and the teacher-profession may barely bare any value nor be existent.

The collaboration of online courses in universities has brought in a change where the teachers are now afraid of losing their jobs and the aspirants willing to become teachers may have hardly any posts vacant. The plans to make online courses mandatory in universities being unaware of the impact it can have on both the teachers and learners need to be examined and reconsidered.

Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), a state university which was the first one in India to have an online mode of education introduced to the learners at a higher scale having audio-video lectures, had teachers assisting the learners. But the online system was retracted to control factors that were affecting the university in various degrees. Now, with the introduction of National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) courses, the control seems to be differently focused. The purpose being a shift in the system of education for the development in teachers and learners, but the impact factor has been realized only by the affected few. What stands to be of value seems to bear a hole that needs to be plugged.

## Literature

Collaborative learning in the classroom requires the guidance of a teacher, who with the understanding of the dynamics of a group coupled with the methods of collaboration can help the learners in scaffolding them to the next level according to Reed, Z.A (2014).

Garrison, D. R (2011) though states very positively about e-learning or online courses, he says that the instructor needs to intervene to a limited extent for the learners to gain metacognitive awareness. However, when there is absence of this limited intervention too, it might become problematic for the learners as there would be none to teach or help the learners become autonomous.

The online courses seem to be teacher-centric than learner-centric. Tan, C (2015) opines that rote learning does not provide opportunities to take ownership of own learning, to engage in higher order thinking, and to reflectively apply lessons learnt in daily lives. But rote learning which is less desired seems to be predominant with the online courses being introduced without any assistance of the teacher.

## Hypothesis

Collaboration of online courses in universities have a constructive impact on the teachers and learners.

## Methodology

Interviews of the teachers, and the learners who have taken up NPTEL courses have been taken for this qualitative study.

## Findings

The idea of having readily available online courses in the university seemed to be a good idea which raised questions on several issues which have been ignored. The responsibility with which the courses have been accepted were unaccounted for with hardly any board to go through the content for its validity.

The teachers promoting the courses have hardly any idea of the content present in them, but have been suggesting the learners to take them up, this being a choice as against a course that the university itself already had. The concerned teachers of the course the university had already been offering were not involved before any decision that was taken, which affected the

teachers. Planning to make the online courses mandatory, and that they being included in the grade card provided by the university seems to be in haste and this was again found to be without the consent of any of the board that needs to be involved. Inexperience and time required to think and take decisions seemed to be missing which the teachers dearly grieve of. The only reason that the teachers were happy about was to register for these online courses for being certified and to have an understanding of the course that was taught online.

The learners opted for online courses expecting that they could learn the course whenever they wanted, but failed to submit the assignments on time as it backfired because of their interest being lost when it mattered. Also, technology played its part by making the interested learner not learn because it was down. And when technology or the internet was up, the learners found to be in a different mood. The doubts of the learners remained as they had no teacher to ask. Even when the question were posed online, the learners had to be quiet when they could not understand further explanation. Practical approach seemed to be missing and questions that cropped in the mind of the learners continued to linger. It was easy for the learners who had taken up the online course which was taught by somebody, but had a teacher in his university as well as he could depend on the teacher to get his doubts clarified, but for the others who took a course that had no teacher in the university had problems in understanding, which seems to be learnt in a rote learning manner. The learners were limited to a certain extent and it turns out to be more of a teacher centered class where the learners is passive and has no interaction with the teacher of his peers while the course is going on as it just a recorded video lecture to which the learner had to listen to. There were also complains that the lectures induced sleep and there was monotony which proved to be difficult for the learners to concentrate on.

Though some teachers and learners are happy with the course content, the teachers who were teaching a course had to be left with hardly any learners as the learners opted to do the same course online, lacking knowledge on the availability of the teachers in their university who taught that course earlier.

### Conclusion

Opting to have online courses is fine to a limited extent, but they should not become the relying forces, especially in the universities. Collaborative learning that is expected to benefit every individual in the group seem to stand in contradiction to the collaboration of online courses which seem to have been promoted for individual gains. The hypothetical statement would stand constructive only if sufficient research is done on the collaboration of online courses, else its impact on the teachers and learners of the university would remain negative, and it might be limited on the learner if there is a teacher present in the university.

### References

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