
Letter to the Editor

Teaching and learning post-COVID 19 – what now?

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As the hallmark of the post-epidemic era in higher education is the transition from physical to e-learning, substantial adjustments and strategies are needed to adapt to the new situation in African universities.

Despite the convenience and numerous advantages reported, the application of e-learning also comes with several challenges. These include, but are not limited to, the need for infrastructures, technologies, and staff training [1, 2]. The challenges related to difficulty in producing good quality learning and maintaining equity in the quality of learning and grading between students coming from variable socio-economic backgrounds has been highlighted during the pandemic [1].

Implementing teaching strategies, such as asynchronous e-learning, is perceived as a potential solution to some of the challenges experienced with e-learning in Africa's higher education. This approach provides a space for students to decide on when to access learning materials based on the availability of a stable internet connection. Although asynchronous learning might be considered inferior to synchronous learning in terms of instant interaction between instructor and students, several studies have reported on the efficiency of this approach [3, 4].

Based on experience, using a blended learning approach is probably the most feasible option going forward, implementing the best from didactic as well as e-learning. Several strategies can help enhance students' engagement including incorporating interactive activities like discussions and seminars, collaborative projects, and utilizing social media platforms [5].

Assessment using e-learning has remained a challenge. Applying the same evaluation parameters of physical learning for e-learning has demonstrated a limited effectiveness. Evaluation methods, like formative assessment, which demonstrates efficiency not only in the objective assessment of student's performance but also in improving students' engagement and providing timely feedback to the instructor about students' learning progress, should be implemented. In addition, it is important to ensure all e-course learning activities and evaluation methods are aligned with learning objectives [5].

Finally, it is necessary to apply effective tools and methods to collect students' feedback throughout and at the end of the course [5]. Also, we recommend that the colleges/universities develop policies and/or standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guarantee the application of these practices in the standard quality.

In all, implementing continuous e-learning after the pandemic calls for adopting different teaching and evaluation modalities. Based on our experience with e-learning in African universities, we recommend amending the teaching approach to ensure the best of e-learning is maintained, while incorporating more traditional aspects. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the world permanently and we should move forward implementing the lessons learned in this time.

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