

POST COVID OPENING UP - CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Thanks to the Pandemic Pre Schools, Schools, Colleges and all Educational institutions have experienced a sudden and unprecedented disruption. Most of the educators were taken by surprise by the abrupt closure of schools and colleges. Teachers had to switch gears from the conventional chalk and talk to the digital mode.

Our students of today are truly digital native generation with technology for them being an integral part of their daily lives. But most of the teachers especially the older generation have experienced a steep learning curve trying to understand the nitty gritty of the digital platforms like zoom, google meet, teams, juggling between conducting classes and editing videos and trying to make learning more interactive and fun for their students. Despite initial challenges, Teachers have emerged adept at this task. Educators have risen to the challenge of returning to their roots to find fresh ways to spark creativity and interest in learning and also re-evaluate and rethink their current teaching and learning practices.

Schools have also been conducting most of the co-curricular activities such as online competitions in recognition of the vital role that these activities play in character and skill development amongst students.

The global nature of this pandemic has also made the world a smaller place. Webinars across the globe, educators collaborating across the borders have become the new normal. Exchanging ideas and strategies have become much easier. At the same time, the emotional health of students and teachers needs to assume greater priority.

The blended approach to learning will help all types of students, since they will have the opportunity to engage with different types of content such as video, audio, presentations, thereby increasing the ability to personalize learning. With information being readily available just a click away, the role of a teacher moves from knowledge provider to facilitator and mentor in helping the kids become life-long learners.

Technology will be useful in effectively reducing the time spent by teachers on tasks such as paper-setting, evaluating and grading. This will help the teachers focus more effectively on teaching and course improvement. Online teaching will have to be very interactive to keep the students engaged.

Social Distancing Norms will have to be followed very strictly. Considering the population the vaccination process might take a couple of years to be implemented. As and when the educational institutions open up after Covid-19, the new social distancing rules will necessarily change the existing ways of imparting education. Schools might consider working in shifts, classrooms will follow strict sanitization processes and social distancing will become a norm for all activities.

Unable to hang out with their friends, peers and classmates like they used to, and not being able to expend their energy on sports, must not be easy on them. Focus should be given on physical education as well as mental health of students as well as teachers. It is important that as teachers we take the responsibility to equip them with suitable coping mechanisms and help them to build and strengthen their connections with supportive adults, including their teachers.

We are in this together and we will get through this together !!!!

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