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(ПСИХОЛОГИЈА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ)

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ИСТОК - ЗАПАД
ПСИХОЛОГИЈА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ

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MOTIVATION IN CORONATEACHING

ABSTRACT: The abrupt switchover from in-person teaching to online teaching in educational institutions due to the pandemic has taken both teachers and students by surprise. Dealing with many challenges that take time to be overcome, such as the feeling of frustration and powerlessness, lack of computer resources and competent digital skills, and, above all, lack of motivation, makes, what is now called coronateaching virtually impossible to handle. The paper shall present the reasons for lack of motivation in the virtual classroom, the reasons why motivation in coronateaching is essential, and possible ways of increasing and strengthening motivation for online teaching and learning.

KEYWORDS: online teaching, pandemic, motivation, coronateaching, classroom community building, participation, engagement, learner-learner interaction

INTRODUCTION

There has been an abrupt switchover from face-to-face teaching to online teaching in Macedonian educational institutions due to the current pandemic. Ramos Torres coined the term coronateaching to define this “abrupt move from in-person to online education” considering it “a syndrome that gives rise to feelings of frustration and powerlessness due to barriers in connectivity or lack of computer resources” (Di Gesu and Gonzalez, ed. 2020). Moreover, coronateaching faces many more difficulties and challenges, such as the lack of pedagogical and methodological skills and knowledge of dealing with digital technologies in the classroom, to name but a few. However, online coronateaching has been the fastest and the urgent necessity educational institutions have resorted to as a response to the contemporary pandemic. Thus, with the digital resources available to the lecturers and the students, both parties should work on embracing the challenges of motivating themselves to perform at their best despite the sudden and not-so-much friendly studying conditions. To achieve this goal both the lecturers and the students should work on their, in most cases, diminished motivation and encouragement to achieve great results in their online teaching and learning respectively.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Coronateaching is not but mere online teaching. Coronateaching takes place in specific circumstances, unnatural to humankind; it takes place in the so-called new common, which implies lockdown and restriction of movement, reduced social interaction, and even living out many of the daily routines online. Consequently, as Maria Gabriela Di Gesu and Maria Fernanda Gonzalez state, “the external world has intruded the privacy of the home” (Di Gesu and Gonzalez, ed. 2020). Nowadays all our lives happen in the physical space of the home, including teaching and learning. Therefore, we have all been pressured to get used to teaching, learning, or working in the most unpleasant or unrepresentable corners of our rooms – e.g. lack of sunlight or dimmed artificial light; in the absence of proper desk using the laptop on the sofa or the kitchen

table; having your make-up or medicine cabinet, or your wardrobe as a background; fighting over and taking turns on the only computer in the household; getting used to being on camera with the microphone on while other members of the family watching TV, cooking, or doing their daily routines; etc. Surely, many of us have been witnesses to funny and awkward situations on camera, even as such as spotting the teacher's or the colleague's partner indecently underdressed passing by or even overhearing conversations unintended for the public. We as a global culture have been displaced from the so-called culture of presence (Di Gesu and Gonzalez, ed. 2020) into, what I would call the culture of deceptive presence. The deceptive presence is the virtual presence that evokes the false feeling of the actual physical presence.

Naturally, these changes have affected the way learners and students connect, which, further influences the peer-to-peer interactions during the lessons. Connecting with others is not something that happens automatically and certainly requires person-to-person interaction. Kay Lehmann and Lisa Chamberlin point out that students of the virtual classroom, have expressed their need of having "the feeling that the communication is real" and the feeling of "talking with a real person in real time" (Lehmann and Chamberlin, 2009). It is obvious that the human contact of the traditional face-to-face classrooms, now lost in the virtual classroom, influences the quality of the learning process and class atmosphere. Namely, it stirs up the feeling of isolation and distances the peer-to-peer and instructor-to-peer responses. Finally, adding to all these factors the fact that not almost all aspects of our lives happen online, which increases our time spend online to literary more than 12 hours per day, one can easily trace the great lack of motivation for being present, participating, and learning in the virtual classroom.

FEAR FACTORS AS DRAWBACK TO ONLINE LEARNING

It is believed that fear is oftentimes the biggest factor in the lack of motivation in the process of online learning. It might be stated, though, the fear stems from the technical barriers related to the technical problems and the access to the Internet (L. Y. Muilenburg and Z. L. Berge) as much as from the insufficient computer literacy in the participants of the virtual classroom (Patricia Sendall, Raymond J. Shaw, Kim Round and Jane T. Larkin from Merrimack College, USA) – both teachers and learners. Indeed, there are subjects involved in the online teaching–learning process who belong the generations of the book, rather than the generations of the computers. "For generations of adults who grew up in a world of books, traveling through cyberspace seems as treacherous and intimidating as speaking a new language" (Kidd, 2010). Although one might think this is the generation of the lecturers and teachers, one must have in mind that not all younger students possess the advanced "digital competencies to effectively navigate the multidimensional and fast-paced digital environment" (Kidd, 2010). Furthermore, K. Farnsworth and T. B. Bevis "warned that not every classroom instructor will become an effective online facilitator; teaching online is different from teaching in a classroom" and C. Zirkle "stated that the teaching experience of many instructors is presentation-centric – a method not appropriate for an online course" (Kidd, 2010).

FEAR OVERCOME AND MOTIVATION

Paris and Turner (1994) describe motivation as the 'engine' of learning (p. 217). Motivation can influence what we learn, how we learn, and when we choose to learn (Schunk and Usher 2012). Research shows that motivated learners are more likely to undertake challenging activities, be actively engaged, enjoy and adopt a deep approach to learning and exhibit enhanced performance, persistence, and creativity (Ryan and Deci 2000b). (Hartnett, 2016)

It takes time for the parties involved in coronateaching to become accustomed to the technology they use; it is a trial and error process. It is but a huge fear overcome once the most suitable and the most user-friendly learning platform has been chosen. What follows is getting accustomed to using it. The process might be slow and might not be walked through with the same pace of all involved, so patience and tutorials provided by the teacher are needed beforehand. "Motivation is a process rather than an end result" (Hartnett, 2016), and as the students' and the teachers' confidence in their digital skills raises, motivation increases, too.

Willingness is also important for motivation. As the saying goes, where there's a will, there's a way. Strong will-power, dedication, and hard work do help in overcoming the fear of the virtual classroom.

Training is crucial. As information technology advances daily, so advance the applications and platforms for online learning and teaching. Training courses and programs about the use of technology in education are more than welcome for both teachers and students. They increase individual's digital competencies, as well as their self-esteem in their familiarity with technology, which, further on, increases their motivation for online learning and teaching.

Passionate teachers play an important role in the process of coronateaching. They not only love their subject but also are willing to work on the new methodology of teaching it online. They embrace different approaches suitable for online teaching and are brave enough to experiment with online resources. Passionate teachers are not only experts in their field, but also have good digital skills and work on improving them even more. Also, as "there are five major ways of making meaning: through number, word, image, gesture and sound" (Altmann, ed. 2019), online teaching is best to concentrate on teaching methods that are based on images, videos, and sound.

Interest in students is always a work in progress. Variation of the content of the exercises and the learning material; the opportunities for students to interact with the teacher, each other, and the content; the provocation of debates by introducing contradictory opinions; the encouragement of different learning styles; as well as the challenge of students to compete among themselves can be essential to provoking much greater interest in learning (McVay Lynch, 2002).

The sense of belonging in the classroom makes students learn better and engage more. Thus, **building a strong learning community** is a key way to engage students. The more the students are engaged, the more they are motivated to participate in the class. E. Wenger suggests, among others, sharing complex and diverse assignments, share responsibility and share a repertoire of stories, events, concepts, and discourses (Altmann, ed. 2019).

Participation and engagement in the virtual classroom do not mean merely being online as being present; yet it means making a comment of some sort, making a contribution to the lesson of any kind. According to Rena M. Palloff and Keith Pratt, "instructors often establish guidelines for minimal participation, making it more likely

that students will engage with their colleagues and to facilitate the community-building process" (Palloff and Pratt, 2007). After all, the learning process itself is an active one, so it does not differ in the online classroom either. Instructors' should accommodate their online lectures to encourage maximum participation and engagement. Indeed, the online classroom can be student-centered instead of teacher-centered. Students can write their comments in the chatbox, share their screens to present their homework, share links, images, audios, and videos with their classmates, etc. Lecturers should ensure that everyone is involved and, what is more, students' participation and engagement in the online classroom can help increase their sense of belonging to the learning community as an organic whole.

Learner-learner interactions and collaboration is another aspect of participation and engagement that adds up to the sense of belonging to the learning community. Creating a collaborative environment by posting messages between learners and promoting good dialogue can encourage students to express their own opinion, as well as support their classmates. Giving and receiving peer feedback and support boosts willingness and motivation to learn and achieve a better result. The element of competition is important, too. It should be favored as an amicable act, yet not otherwise.

Feeling good is the predisposition for the willingness and the motivation of being present and active in the class. According to Kay Lehmann and Lisa Chamberlin, teachers need to set a positive tone for connecting with students from the very start in their online classroom (Lehmann and Chamberlin, 2009). Students should feel positive and be satisfied. One way of achieving this warm and inviting atmosphere is by using humor while teaching. Of course, the lesson should not turn into a comedy show, but the usage of humor now and then is more than welcomed in the positive and strong learning community. Surely when both students and teachers feel relaxed and cheerful, they learn better and have a bigger motivation to join the upcoming classes and actively participate in them.

CONCLUSION

Coronateaching has made a significant impact on education. The covid-19 pandemic situation has made us all adapt to the new common to continue with our daily routines and lives. Facing lockdowns and movement restrictions, the outer world "has intruded the privacy of the home" (Di Gesu and Gonzalez, ed. 2020) and, so, our homes have become our schooling institutions. Teaching and learning in such monotonous and stressful conditions are but very challenging and the most common problem that emerges from it is lack of motivation.

Motivation directly influences the quality of learning and, thus, much effort should be done to be regained, increased, and strengthened. Factors that have a great impact on motivations are the willingness of both students and teachers, interest shown by both students and teachers, training in digital literacy of both students and teachers, sense of belonging in the classroom and building a strong learning community, participation and engagement of students, as well as positive and amicable competition, learner-learner interaction and collaboration and, of course feeling positive and good and the usage of dosed humor in the classroom.

By working on these factors, both students and teachers can become motivated to learn and teach in the virtual classroom besides the missing advantages of the physical face-to-face classroom.

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