NEW EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF EDUCATORS IN NEW NORMAL POST COVID-19 ERA

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ABSTRACT

Education is the powerful catalyst that helped us in combating changes in society due to COVID-19. Pandemic COVID-19 has dramatically influenced the education system and the life of teachers and students by throwing set of unique challenges on their way. This pandemic is clearly a sign of changing times and is also an event that has given push to digitalization in the education sector. The present scenario in the education system needs to be revamped so that it will slowly flag the way for a system which ensures holistic development of the learners and impart them practical skills. In post covid-19 period, the world will be a totally different place where visible changes are observed in the educational process ranging from teaching-learning process to learners' assessment. Educators role will be reformed. They need to understand the needs of students and offer them a powerful learning experience which will help them to continue their studies without any obstacles. Thus, the need of an hour is to plant seeds for drastic transformation in the teaching learning process to provide quality education to the learners and acquired desirable learning outcomes. In the present study survey method is used. Sample of 50 graduate students, 50 teachers of higher education and 50 parents of graduate students of Jabalpur were selected using random sampling method. A Self-made questionnaire containing 10 statements was used to know students' perspectives on online classes; 5 statements to know about teachers' preparation for online classes and 6 questions to know about parents' perspective on online classes during COVID-19 pandemic were used for the analysis. On the basis of responses received by students, teachers and parents, the new educational responsibilities of educators in new normal post COVID-19 era have been recognized after carrying discussion among teachers of higher education. The purpose of this is to provide satisfaction to the higher education students and remove stress and anxiety in them due to uncertainty in education during COVID-19. At the same time to bring quality in education so that desirable learning outcomes of the higher education can be achieved.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Digitalization, Holistic Development, Educators, New Normal.*

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Introduction

Education is the powerful catalyst that helped us in combating changes in society due to COVID-19. Pandemic COVID-19 has dramatically influenced the education system and the life of teachers and students by throwing set of unique challenges on their way. This pandemic is clearly a sign of changing times and is also an event that has given push to digitalization in the education sector. The present scenario in the education system needs to be revamped so that it will slowly flag the way for a system which ensures holistic development of the learners and impart them practical skills. In post covid-19 period, the world will be a totally different place where visible changes are observed in the educational process ranging from teaching-learning process to learners' assessment. Teachers role will be reformed. They need to understand the needs of students and offer them a powerful learning experience which will help them to continue their studies without any obstacles. Thus, the need of an hour is to plant seeds for drastic transformation in the teaching learning process to provide quality education to the learners and acquired desirable learning outcomes.

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The Kothari Commission, 1966 said that, 'Of all the different factors which influence the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most significant. 'The only factor is responsible for creating flexible, multidisciplinary, ICT and skill-based education system to produce competent, creative and skilled learners is the teachers. The NEP 2020 also stated that, 'Teachers truly shape the future of our children – and, therefore, the future of our nation' this shows that teachers play the most important role of knowledge and character building in their classrooms.

Role of ICT in Education during Covid-19

One of the most powerful force changing teachers' and students' roles in post COVID-19 period is ICT. Technology helped in bridging the gap between education in pre and post COVID-19 period. During pandemic, the only way to access education was the online mode, which was found to be helpful not only for teachers but also for the students to carry on teaching-learning during this adverse condition. ICT provides the opportunity to the learners to attend the classes from home at their convenience and continue their learning. The time when entire world is moving rapidly into the digital era, this pandemic has triggered this movement. Technology also helped teachers to play multidimensional role ranging from simple role of 'classroom supervisor' to a complex role of a 'role model' for the learners.

During covid-19 pandemic, use of ICT helped teachers to manage to reach to their students. Beyond the provision of internet connection and ICT equipment in education, teachers and students both requires training in ICT, to continue teaching and learning during crisis due to pandemic. Before this pandemic although teachers and students must have attended many ICT training programme but they must have not learnt the use of ICT in education for developing appropriate teaching-learning strategies. To create an effective learning experience for the learners the digital technologies needed to get associated with learning. All educational institutions need to make necessary planning to accommodate teaching learning needs for future crises in education.

Covid-19 Pandemic and Online Learning

E-learning or online learning that has become popular during covid-19 era ensured that learners may access to curriculum material anywhere i.e., inside or outside the classroom or at any time. This pandemic has forced physical closure of school and leads to sudden shift in the educational process from traditional classroom to online classroom. Initially many challenges have come across the way to the implementation of online learning due to lack of training, preparation and connectivity issues but gradually all have adapted this mode of learning. Even in new normal condition when the educational institutions are opening with new norms in education, the integration of technology in education will be further accelerated and online education will become an essential part of higher education. The studies have shown that e-learning is more effective than a traditional learning as it requires approx. 50% less time to understand the concept and thus learners can learn at their own pace. The best way to extract complete benefit out of online learning is to merge it with face-to-face learning so that students who cannot attend classes due to lack of digital device or internet connectivity can also learn. With time efforts have been taken to improve the quality of higher education so that maximum benefits can be drawn from it.

Teachers Responsibilities during Covid-19

Teacher is an important part of educational process who has helped to overcome the challenges in education during covid-19. Teachers have played a crucial role in engaging students during lockdown and motivated them for learning by providing them with necessary guidance. Teachers have not only supported the students but also their parent by resolving their queries with respect to uncertainty in education due to covid-19 pandemic. They have made great effort in making learning interesting by making use of various synchronous and asynchronous online mode of learning. With the passage of time the role and responsibilities of teachers have been changed a lot, the teacher who used to hold the center position in education system as a dictator is now playing multiple roles i.e., of a facilitator, co-learner, guide, motivator etc. as per the needs of students, to make them more independent with respect to learning.

Review of Literature

Cahapay, Michael, B. (2020), *Rethinking Education in the New Normal Post-COVID-19 Era: A Curriculum Studies Perspective*, Aquademia, 2020 - Volume 4 Issue 2, Article No:ep20018;DOI: 10.29333/aquademia/8315

This article attempts to rethink education in the new normal post-COVID-19 era through the perspectives of curriculum studies. The implications of the continuing crisis to the four elements of curriculum - goal, content, approach, and evaluation - are discussed. Some emerging options may be cogently viewed within the perspectives of these elements. Aside from the lens curriculum studies, this paper suggests that other aspects of education should be explored further to better reconsider education in this new era in human history.

Rapanta, C., Botturi, L., Goodyear, P. et al. *Online University Teaching During and After the Covid-19 Crisis: Refocusing Teacher Presence and Learning Activity*. *Postdigit Sci Educ* 2, 923–945 (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-020-00155-y.

This article provides some expert insights into this online-learning-related Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), with the goal of helping non-expert university teachers (i.e. those who have little experience with online learning) to navigate in these challenging times. Our findings point at the design of learning activities with certain characteristics, the combination of three types of presence (social, cognitive and facilitatory) and the need for adapting assessment to the new learning requirements. We end with a reflection on how responding to a crisis (as best we can) may precipitate enhanced teaching and learning practices in the post-digital era.

Mahmood, Samreen, (2020), Instructional Strategies for Online Teaching in COVID 19 Pandemic, Wiley Online Library, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/hbe2.218.

This article established various instructional strategies for online learning which can be practiced by higher educational institutes. The case study was developed through analysis of Pakistani universities online education. The study formulated different notions for online education in developing countries. It includes maintaining slow voice and practicing vocal functions by teachers. Furthermore, sharing resources before the class will help in creating interactive online classes. These strategies play fundamental role in enhancing student learning. The study suggested that Higher Education Commission should make collaborations with telecommunication industries. This will help in overcoming Internet related issues. The study suggested many instructional strategies which will serve as an excellent tool in running online classes.

Many studies have been conducted on Rethinking Education in the New Normal Post-COVID-19 Era with respect to curriculum reform, teaching-learning process, instructional strategies but no studies have been done on identifying role of teachers in the education during post-COVID-19 era to satisfy the needs of learners. In the present study researcher tried to identify responsibilities of teachers in post pandemic era after analyzing experience of teachers, learners and parents with reference to online education.

Objectives

- To study the Students' perspectives on online learning.

- To study the Parents' perspectives on online education.

- To study the teachers' preparation for online classes during covid-19.

- To identify new educational responsibilities of teachers in post-COVID-19 era

Research Design

Survey method was employed to conduct the study. Primary data was collected to know the students' perspectives on online learning, parents' perspectives on online education and teachers' preparation for online classes and then new educational responsibilities of educators have been recognized after carrying discussion among teachers of higher education.

- **Population & Sample**

The sample was selected by random sampling technique. The sample consists of 50students (both boys and girls) from colleges of Jabalpur district, 50 teachers of higher education and 50 parents of graduate students of Jabalpur.

- **Data & Sources of Data**

Primary data is used in the present study for analyzing students' perspectives on online learning, parents' perspectives on online education and teachers' preparation for online classes during COVID-19.

- **Theoretical Framework**

  Self-made tool is used to perceive the students' perspectives on online learning, parents' perspectives on online education and teachers' preparation for online classes. The questionnaire used by the researcher is the independent variable whereas the response given by the students are dependent variables which are also affected by the intervening variables which includes environment, learning experience, knowledge about ICT etc.

- **Tools Used in the Study**

  Self-made questionnaires were used as a tool, having 10 statements to understand students' perspectives on online learning, 6statement to understand parents' perspectives on online education and 5 statement to understand teachers' preparation for online classes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

  The respondents are 25 students from different colleges, 25 parents of college going students, 25 teachers of colleges in Jabalpur. The response was recorded and reported in the form of graphs 1 showing students' perspectives on online learning, graph 2 showing parents' perspectives on online education, graph 3 showing teachers' preparation for online classes. On the basis of responses received, new educational responsibilities of the educators were identified for the new normal post COVID-19 era.

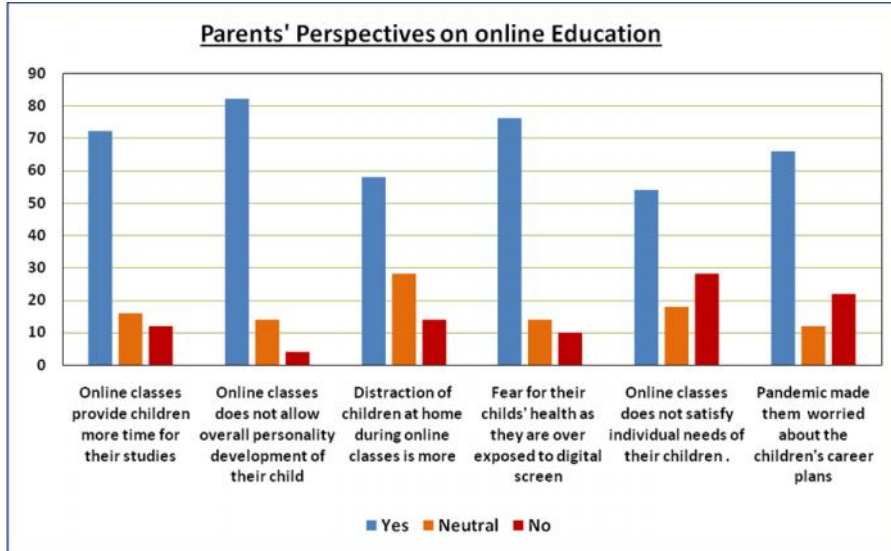**Students' Perspectives on Online Learning**
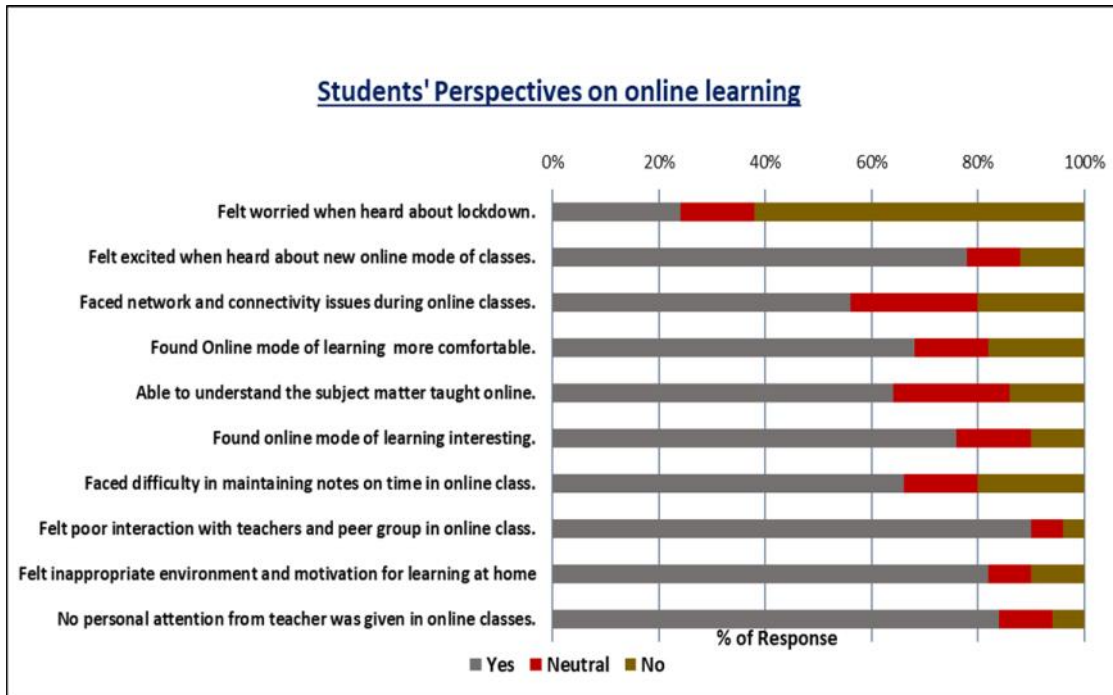
Graph 1:Students' Perspectives on Online Learning

  When students were asked about their experience with respect to online learning following responses were recorded. It has been observed from the graph that few students (24%) were worried when they heard about the lockdown whereas 78% of students at the same time felt excited when they heard about new online mode of classes. It was also recorded that almost 56% of the students were not able to attend classes regularly due to poor network and connectivity issues during online classes. It was also noted that students (68%) found this online mode of learning comfortable and 64% were able to understand the subject matter taught online. Students (76%) also felt this online mode very interesting as they were bored of traditional mode of teaching in classroom although 66% students were faced difficulty in maintaining notes as they were more involved in viewing video as compare to writing notes. Students (90%) responses have shown that they found lack of interaction with their peer group and teachers during online classes as they used to have in offline classes. Students (82%) sometimes used to think that they didin't concentrate on studies so well in the online classes as their approach was casual due to

inappropriate environment and motivation for learning at home and even due to uncertainty in conducting assessment. 84% students also felt that teachers were not able to give personal attention to every students and so back benchers of offline classes as well as slow learners along with good students felt lack of that personal attention from their teachers.

Parents' Perspectives on Online Education

Graph 2: Parents' perspectives on online education

Parents' perspectives play a vital role in identifying educators' responsibilities as they are an important stakeholder in education. It was observed from the responses that72% parents think during online classes their children used to get more time for their studies as their travelling time was saved. It was also recorded that 82% parents believed that from online classes the overall development of their children was hindered. It also found from the graph that 58% parents have observed that their children's focus on learning through online mode get effected due to distraction caused at home. 76% parents were worried about their child's health as their exposure to digital screen have been increased during lockdown due to COVID-19. 54% parents have also felt that online classes are not able to satisfy individual needs of their children as they vary in the ability to understand the concept taught through online classes. They have also experienced that pandemic have made them and their children worried w.r.t their future career plans.

Teachers Preparation for Online Classes
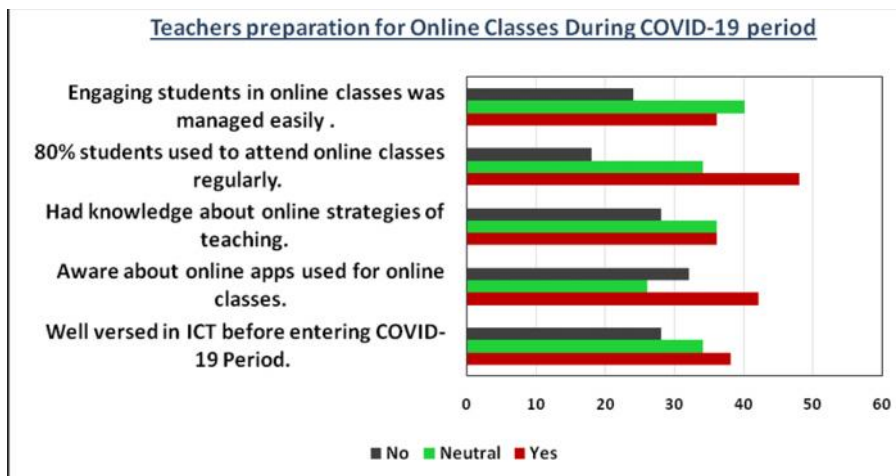
Graph 3: Teachers' preparation for online Class

When educators were asked about their preparation for online classes during COVID-19, it was found that they were around 60% educators were not prepared for that due to lack of complete knowledge about ICT and so they found difficulty initially with respect to engaging all students online and motivating them to attend classes regularly. It was also found that only about 40% educators were having knowledge about online strategies of teaching and only 42% of teachers were aware about online apps used to conduct online classes.

New Educational Responsibilities of Educators in Post COVID-19 Era

On the basis of the discussion carried on the responses of the students, teachers and parents, educators of higher education have identified following educational responsibilities they need to hold in new normal post COVID-19 era –

- **To plan for flexible teaching and learning policy**

Due to lack of digital devices and Internet connectivity in some areas of Jabalpur, students are unable to match with the pace of online instructions. Few students are unable to perform assignment projects and even access recording of lecture. Such issues can be easily dealt with if educators show flexibility and allow students to work at their own pace. This will help in motivating and encouraging students towards online learning. Thus, teachers should be taught to be patient and flexible in dealing with students specially during situation like pandemic. Teachers should also give full physical and mental support to the students.

- **To formulate online instructional strategies enhancing students' engagement**

For enhancing online class success rate, it is important to stress on students' engagement in class. It is observed from the recorded students' perspectives on online learning that students' felt poor interaction with their teachers and peer group and so educators need to work hard on increasing students' engagement in class by throwing topic for discussion or by asking questions based on application of the topic taught. Teachers should prepare their lectures beforehand and share topic for discussion and questions to the students as per their abilities so that equal participation of all students can be achieved.

- **To develop student learning abilities in both online and offline classes**

Online classes are totally different from the traditional classes. In traditional classes, teacher have more control over student behavior wherever it is missing in online classes. To deal with this, study shows that teacher should train students with the digital ethics and should plan activities which can enhance student online learning skills. Moreover, teachers should ask challenging questions from students during online classes as they used to do in offline classes. These practices will help students to develop learning abilities for online as well as offline classes and ensure more focused students' participation in classes.

- **To prepare students to think critically, practically and creatively**

Educators should help in devising such learning material and experience, which can prepare students to think critically, practically and creatively. In other words, student should be offered with learning experience which is more innovative and practical so that students' interest towards learning can be created and they can be provided with utility-based education. Although developing 'thinking out of the box' abilities is difficult to acquire in traditional classroom settings. However, it is the responsibility of educators to prepare students in a way so that they can face real-life problems easily and can share their ideas and opinion in solving others problems also.

- **To prepare backup plans for adverse situations**

During COVID-19, all classes have transformed into online mode. This transformation leads to various problems w.r.t. technical issues as the institutions were not prepared for it due to lack of appropriate resources and equipment required for conducting online classes. Problems in running online classes, for example, overloading of server, lack of digital devices (computer, laptop, tab, mobile) and lack of knowledge about ICT created problems in continuing learning online. To cope up with these issues, educators should always be ready with a back-up plan and not only prepare themselves but also institutions and students in facing unwelcomed challenges and avoid learning delays for students.

- **To make instruction and assessment interesting by adding gamification**

Associating instructions with games plays a great impact on developing students' interest towards learning. Gamifications is a way of applying game-related ideologies to educational contexts in

order to improve user experience and engagement. It incorporates elements of video games into the teaching environment. Thus, the use of game features like goals, targets, mission, achievements, points, levels and so on keeps the students engaged, motivated and addicted to the learning process.

Research has proven that when man participate in activities that stimulate his bodies or mind, our body releases a hormone known as endorphin. In the same way, playing games that challenges students or helps them to earn points releases endorphins in the brain of the student and make learning fun and exciting for them. This helps students to retain more information and consequently making the learning experience more powerful and memorable and so it's the responsibility of educators to make instruction and assessment Interesting by adding gamification.

- **To make learning specific**

As 'no one size fits all' make instructions specific as per the needs of learners. Recent survey has demonstrated that children learn in unique ways and that our current "one-size-fits-all" educational system caters to a handful of students in each classroom, but not to all. Thus it's the responsibilities of the educators that they must realize that every learners has their own way of learning and so they must be guided accordingly.

- **To make students' learning more cooperative**

The classroom often offers a student's first experiences practicing life skills. It is the responsibility of educators to deliberately create opportunities for students to cooperate with each other, share responsibilities, solve problems, and control conflict. Cooperative learning not only teaches a number of social and emotional skills, but it also gives students the opportunity to learn from each other. Studies show that peer learning in which students explain concepts and ideas to each other has the potential to improve comprehension considerably. Thus, its educator's responsibility to make use of cooperative learning strategy which produces critical experiences that other learning structures cannot.

- **To take care of both physical and mental health of the learners**

Students not only study but also undergo lot of emotions and life-changing events in their school life. They make friends or enemies; they succeed or fail and this is how they come across various emotional situation in life. Thus, it is the prime duty of educators to understand the emotions of their students and always be there to help them in their hard time. It is also required to prepare learners in a way so that they can find themselves the ways to overcome their stress or anxiety they may experience in adverse conditions.

- **To create a sense of community while teaching**

It is the responsibility of educators to help students get to know one another. For this purpose, teachers need to split a large class into smaller units and within the smaller breakout groups, plan for icebreaker activities for the students. The breakout sessions provide opportunities for students to share their opinions, knowledge, and experience. Be available for the students before and after synchronous online and even offline class sessions. Students are more likely to reach you if you are easily approachable. Stay connected after a teaching session end during online and offline classes. Solicit questions and comments and other forms of feedback to make it more comfortable for the students to practice sense of community.

- **To make notes available online and offline**

It is the responsibilities of educators to provide notes online and offline as not all students have equal access to technology or to reliable, high speed Internet connections or to a distraction-free study space. Be mindful of the challenge's students face, recognizing that students vary markedly in their comfort level with online and offline learning, be flexible about how students can participate in the class i.e. whether asynchronous and synchronous learning or offline learning opportunities. So, allow students to access notes in multiple ways - allowing them to download power point presentations or view videos at a time of their convenience or take notes in their offline classes.

- **To provide practical experience along with theoretical to the students**

Students should be provided with the practical knowledge of their subject along with theoretical knowledge in the form of assignments, projects or internship so that they can apply the knowledge gained in real life situation and prepared themselves as per the need of the society. So, it's the responsibility of the educators to trained the students in the practical aspects of their subject so that they can easily get absorbed in the vocation of their choice.

- **To suggest for Institutional Investment on Infrastructure**

Educators responsibilities will be to help their institutions in planning for spending their annual budgets on infrastructure so that they can support a digital infrastructure that can effectively facilitate virtual learning and online classrooms along with offline. Another significant aspect that requires investment is Learning Management System (LMS), with sufficient bandwidth, which represents a comprehensive software application that allows teachers to deliver syllabus content, track student progress and post assignment and examination grades. It is also important to make necessary arrangement for offline classes for the learners keeping in views guidelines for post COVID-19 era so that students' safety will be given priority.

- **To plan for flexible assessment**

Educators should provide chances for students to appear for assessment as per their comfortability. Students need to be assessed on the basis of their abilities instead of disabilities, so method of assessment of students need to be flexible and thus students should not be assessed on the basis of their memory or theoretical knowledge but should be assessed on the basis of their understanding and applying gained knowledge in real life situation and so for this purpose, teachers should judge students ability based on various individual or group activities organized in class instead of appearing for theoretical exam at the end of the sessions.

Conclusion

Online learning has become an incredibly popular way for students to advance their education or professional development. Teaching in an online mode requires different methods of instruction from the traditional classroom, so it's important that teachers adapt or develop their skills in creating effective online learning environment and modify their offline mode of teaching, to make their instructions more impressive and engaging for learners. The only need is to plan strategies and make necessary changes in the responsibilities of educators so that it can contribute for improvement in online teaching and make e-Learning as well as offline learning an interesting and a successful experience for both teachers and learners.

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