

Online Distance Teaching and Learning: A Blessing in Disguise

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People often use the popular idiom, a blessing in disguise, to describe any situation which at first seems to be bad but later turns out good. It is sometimes used as a self-assurance, to calm, comfort and convince one's own self that everything will turn out fine at the end of the day. However, is it really okay for all of us? Does this idiom really work each time, just like when Harry Potter twirl his wand and say his spell hoping something will happen and the magic is indeed real?

Back in March 2020, we hit the bottom rock and our lives turned 360°. We had to apply the concept of Industrial Revolution 4.0 to our lives, which we only read on the newspapers and heard through the seminar attended before. The pandemic forced us to rethink of the way we teach and learn, while most of us at that time, were not ready to adopt and adapt the new practice. Little that we know of how it can suit our conventional ecosystem.

On the contrary, it does not come to complement the existing system. It came to change and transform the existing. We can still remember our usual day when we physically go to class to chalk or to talk, to sleep or to turn the pages, happily building connections among us through the teaching and learning process despite the hat we wore; as a lecturer or a student. Having everyone in a four walls room allow us to witness the actual smile, laughter and the wrinkles which reflect on deep thinking and observation. They were all pure and sincere expressions.

Those bright smiles are now fading. We may think that this is the end of our time, yet we are so wrong. We are here in this world to be tested and to better ourselves each day. All the equipment that we purchased to help us stay connected, the time we invested to learn new various applications, the juggle we had between our devotion to work and family commitments, are undeniably mentally and physically devastating at times. No matter how hard, we wake up from our bed, motivating ourselves to put more effort each day.

Effort, the magic word to success. Be it is small or big, it is still a success for our very own personal Guinness book of record. To catch up with this new environment, we were demanded to lay extra effort to change ourselves. Being able to turn physical to virtual classes on various mediums offered, record lecture videos, make innovation projects videos, learn to podcast, live streaming on Facebook or YouTube, attend webinars across the world, organise virtual conferences, I don't know about you, but they all sounded like a huge success to me.

This unexpected event is indeed dreadful, but no matter how terrible it is, how severe the damage it may have caused, lives move on. The real challenge is not in the technology nor it is the environment. It is in our caged mind that should be set free. We can with our own bare hand to turn anything into as good as we want it to be, despite all the challenges and struggles that we must endure. The only pre-requisite to that is, our mind is set and ready to do it.

And now, something to ponder. Are we willing to change our own life series of unfortunate events to good ones? It is our call