Teaching and Learning Using the Online Platform.
A New Experience

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Abstract— As a result of the contagion of the viral corona and the implementation of movement control orders, there were changes in various sectors, including the education sector. Students in schools and institutions of higher learning learn from home virtually. Among the online platforms commonly used are Google Meet, Google Classroom, Microsoft Team, Zoom, Webex, Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, WhatsApp, email, and so on. The teaching and learning landscape at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) is also changing. The online teaching and learning implementation method has taken the place of face-to-face teaching and learning implementation. In this challenging situation, online teaching and learning is considered the best option. Therefore, lecturers need to be prepared with the teaching methods that will be used. They need to be selective in choosing a platform that suits their students' internet access and capability. Meanwhile, students need to manage their learning wisely. Learning management by students includes planning what to learn as well as reviewing learning materials and references that lecturers have placed on the virtual learning platform.

Keywords— *viral corona, movement control order, education, online, platform, new norm*

I. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic (C0VID 19) has hit the world including Malaysia since last year. As a result of the outbreak, the government has ordered a movement control order to curb the disease chain. Accordingly, all systems have changed, including the education system. This is because, even though all educational institutions are closed, the teaching and learning process is still ongoing and the alternative is online virtual teaching and learning at home.

Both students and lecturers need to improve information technology skills. The emphasis on andragogy and pedagogy opens up new spaces for students in institutions of higher learning today to use advanced technological facilities for better knowledge and personal development. With good information technology skills, students and lecturers can meet the syllabus requirements and can also improve communication skills when working from home. Lecturers may appreciate and maximise the application of andragogy and pedagogy by working online from home and this is in line with the government's hopes of achieving the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0) (Rathakrishnan, 2020).

Online teaching and learning methods require commitment and cooperation from all parties in several aspects such as information technology knowledge and skills, provision of digital devices, quality internet access, and appropriate assessment methods to measure student achievement. Therefore, all parties should prepare themselves for teaching and learning methods to face these new norms (Nor Fauziana, n.d.).

In order to continue the teaching and learning activities, lecturers need to better understand students' socio-economic background and learning ability. Aspects of the student's background should be given priority. Previously, lecturers carried a laptop with presentation slides to deliver their lectures face to face. However, current online teaching has made teaching become virtual. The experience is not easy, especially when majority of the students are reluctant to turn on their respective cameras. Lecturers need to be more intimate with technology and start researching the types of platforms and tools that are suitable for realising the online teaching and learning agenda (Afandi, 2020).

There are various types of medium that lecturers can use to conduct teaching and learning activities online. Among the digital platforms used by the lecturers to implement their teaching and learning during the implementation of the movement control order are Google Classroom, Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Team Facebook, Telegram, YouTube, and WhatsApp.

In addition, to curb the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic, virtual or online teaching and learning must be fully implemented in the country because it provides many benefits to all parties, especially students. In addition to reduce the use of materials such as paper, students can be exposed to various applications and the latest technology that can hone their talents and skills to face the modern world today (Muzaffar Syah, 2020).

One of the main challenges of virtual teaching and learning is internet access. Online teaching and learning method may only be effective and beneficial to all if internet access can be enjoyed comprehensively in urban, rural, and rural areas. Thus, many new normative activities need to be done and will be regarded as new challenges to lecturers and students. Each of them needs to prepare themselves in various matters to ensure the smooth implementation of teaching and learning.

II. EARLY PREPARATION FOR ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Several things need to be considered to ensure that online teaching and learning is successfully implemented, specifically a space or location that is suitable for internet access. Dedicated spaces play a role in the success of teaching and learning activities. However, with the use of the internet and virtual teaching and learning methods, internet coverage plays more of a major role compared to comfortable room space (Mohd Faeiz, Siti Norazlina, Salman & Nurulhuda, 2020). Sometimes internet access in the living room is better than in the room. In this situation, the living room is more suitable to be used as a location for the implementation of teaching and learning, though it may sometimes be less comfortable because it is exposed to noise.

The next thing to look at is the maximum possible time management in conducting the class. Effective time management determines the success of teaching and learning sessions. Having a plan of what to teach before starting the teaching and learning session makes lecturers more focused and prepared (Mohd Faeiz et al., 2020). Moreover, sharing teaching materials before the class starts can save time and allow students to refer to them while the class is running. Discussions can also be carried out well and this may reduce boredom as two-way communication between lecturers and students occur.

To further improve knowledge and proficiency in the implementation of teaching and learning of this new norm, discussions with fellow educators should also be practised. The presence of friends may motivate students to be more focused as well as more interactive teaching and learning can be created. The sharing of ideas among friends may bring about the best ideas (Mohd Faeiz et al., 2020). Sharing knowledge and skills with friends should be done online. With this, one can continue to inquire about the usage and procedure of using the features in the online platform and thus can indirectly improve the skills of using the platform.

III. CHALLENGES OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Since online teaching and learning is a new norm, some challenges need to be faced by both lecturers and students. Lecturers face challenges in terms of lack online related knowledge (Siti Nurbaizura & Nurfaradilla, 2020). There are also lecturers who are not skilful or do not have the skills to operate and manipulate information and communication technology device or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) (Quah, n.d.). This makes it difficult for them to implement online teaching and learning activities smoothly and effectively. They will feel less comfortable and less confident in presenting during the lecture session. They will also be concerned about the possibility that the students do not understand what is being presented. This leads to emotional stress among the lecturers.

Also, lecturers face difficulties in establishing two-way communication with students. This situation becomes a constraint for lecturers to interact with students (Siti Nurbaizura & Nurfaradilla, 2020). Communication between lecturers and students is crucial because the relationship between lecturers and students in the classroom can help solve problems through effective communication (Muhammad Izzat, Zuriani Hanim, & Nur Hafizaliyana, 2020). In addition to the problem of interaction between lecturers and students, the difficulty of getting cooperation from parents has also caused students to not attend online learning sessions. This situation caused the students to not be able to follow the learning sessions during this pandemic period, as well as causing the learning objectives to not be achieved. In addition, some lecturers also face challenges in terms of ICT device facilities and stable internet access (Siti Nurbaizura, & Nurfaradilla, 2020).

Students also face the challenges of internet accessibility in conducting online classes. Efforts to identify the level of internet accessibility for each student in the classroom can help lecturers determine the appropriate method to enable online classes to run smoothly. However, some constraints exist, especially for students living in areas with less internet coverage (Ehwan, 2020).

The challenges that prevent the teaching and learning process from taking place successfully are also due to the inability of students to own ICT devices. Not all students can afford to own a cell phone, a computer, a laptop or a tablet, and so on (Goliong, Kasin, Johnny, & Yulip, 2020). Not all parents can afford a device for all school-going children. Therefore, their children have to take turns sharing devices to join online classes (Nurul Husna, n.d.).

In addition, some students do not get support or motivation from parents or guardians to learn from home, causing their children not to attend online learning sessions (Siti Nurbaizura & Nurfaradilla, 2020). A handful of parents do not seem to understand and give homework when a child needs to join an online class. If left to linger, these children will inevitably feel depressed and no longer interested in learning (Nor Fauziana, n.d.). Online teaching and learning

will be effective if students get support and motivation from family (Siti Nurbaizura & Nurfaradilla, 2020).

IV. IMPLICATIONS OF ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Several implications can be listed because of the implementation of online teaching and learning. The main implications involve the need for a new paradigm shift in lecturers' teaching methods. They should explore new teaching methods. Conventional teaching previously practised is no longer relevant. Lecturers need to be prepared to improve new competencies and skills that suit the needs of lecturers in the era of IR 4.0. and Education 5.0. The role of a lecturer needs to shift to exploring new innovations and producing learning applications that can be accessed by students virtually. Therefore, if the lecturer is not prepared for this change, it may be that his role as an educator is no longer relevant in the context of the education system in the future.

The next implication is the challenges faced in the education system. Conventional teaching and learning methods are challenged by a new system where the university has to change the teaching and learning approach to new digital-based methods. This drastic change left many lecturers stunned for a moment and took some time to adjust to this new norm. In the current situation, student-centred learning is fundamental given the emphasis where they manage self-directed learning at home. Therefore, lecturers need to be prepared to accept the new norms because it is likely that the concept of Home-Based Learning will become a new practice and culture in the learning system in our country.

The role and responsibility of the government to provide infrastructure for the convenience among the local community is also an implication of the implementation of virtual teaching and learning. The government is advised to activate a comprehensive implementation of the wireless village concept under the National Broadband program by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. Authorities must ensure that every village has access to an internet centre. Initiatives to provide smartphone facilities, especially to students who belong to the B40 category, to help the smooth running of their online learning are also expected (Goliong et al., 2020).

V. METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research methods and therefore, does not involve any method with measurement or statistical techniques. In a qualitative research method, aspects of observation, description, and interpretation of the background are in the real situation based on the results of previous studies without manipulating the situation studied.

To collect data and information for this study, the author employed library research methods. This includes all materials and information such as the challenges and implications of implementing online teaching and learning. This study is based on library research. The sources used are from primary sources in addition to secondary sources.

The data collected were carefully analysed. In this effort, the authors used an analytical process relevant to the research, through inductive, deductive, and comparative methods. The author used the inductive method which is the process of elaboration that leads to the achievement of legal conclusions from facts or information of a specific nature. In the writing of this article, data of a specific nature were presented, and from such data, general conclusions were drawn. In contrast, the deductive method was used for deducing conclusions for a specific case based on generally available information or facts. Next, the comparative method was a method of making conclusions based on the comparison of information or facts gathered.

This study also includes a survey method by questionnaire surveying students' internet access for their learning, conducted by the Academic Affairs, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Penang. According to Jas Laile Suzana (2008), the use of questionnaires is simple, inexpensive, fast, and timesaving (Jas Laile Suzana, 2008). The questionnaires distributed online using Google Form and 4139 responses were gathered involving diploma and bachelor's degree programs students. Briefly, the results of data collection showed that a total of 2471 students (59.7%) have good internet facilities, 1654 students (40%) have poor internet connection, and 14 students (0.3%) with no internet. The data obtained through these questionnaires were analysed to suggest and identify learning platforms that are better inaccessibility and equity for students during remote learning.

VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

On March 18, 2020, the Malaysian government declared Movement Control Order 1.0 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and work from home was implemented. This caused the Ministry of Higher Education to instruct universities and colleges not to hold face to face lectures and thus, the teaching and learning activities were done online. When these instructions were announced, everyone began to worry about these new norms of teaching and learning. Various questions arose: What platform should be used? Are we ready to handle online teaching and learning? Can we handle the class effectively? What about the student's internet access? It is noteworthy that the traditional teaching and learning process took place face to face in the lecture room with the help of audio visual aids. Never have lectures been conducted online via Google Meet, Webex, Microsoft Team and so on.

To ensure the objectives of learning are achieved in a standardized manner, the university has to set guidelines to explain about monitoring Open and Distance Learning (ODL) at UiTM. Various methods of ODL can be implemented to ensure that learning can continue. However, the method employed must take into account the constraints faced by students and lecturers. Among the methods that can be implemented for ODL are:

i. The method of learning by mail, which is the most minimal method. Learning materials must be sent in

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printed form (Hard Copy) or Digital (Softcopy) using a USB Drive or DVD. However, this method takes time for delivery.

ii.   Voice Message is a method of delivering messages through voice. This Voice Message can be sent with a single voice packet by the sender to the receiver as a passive communication method.

iii.   The Short Message Service or SMS is also one of the lowest-cost and most effective methods of using technology. Students do not need to have internet facilities to receive SMS from lecturers.

iv.   Telephone or landline is another best alternative delivery method if students do not have internet facilities. Students can be contacted via cell phone or using a landline phone.

v.   Email is a method of learning delivery that uses low internet bandwidth. Lecturers are advised to use this method if it suits their students' situation.

vi.   Students who have internet facilities but have data constraints can use social media such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, YouTube, which are deemed appropriate to the learning situation and context. Some social media applications can be implemented directly or indirectly. Most telco companies give students free access to use certain social media applications.

vii.   UiTM provides e-Learning platforms such as iLearn, UFuture and iClass for learning purposes. In addition, lecturers are also encouraged to use other alternative platforms such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Team and other platforms to launch the implementation of ODL at UiTM.

viii.   Video conferencing applications such as Google Meet, Cisco Webex and Microsoft Team require high-speed internet and data facilities. Most video conferencing applications have a Live Chat function as a communication alternative between sender and receiver.

ix.   Radio or Television Broadcast is a broadcast transmission method that uses frequency waves for radio and digital signals for television. Lecturers need to send learning materials in audio or video form to radio stations or television stations for broadcast (Academic Affairs UiTM, n.d.).

The university also provides guidelines for implementing lectures, teaching as well as facilitation and evaluation of learning for the reference of lecturers. Among them, lecturers work from home and need to upload the details of the tasks to the MyATP system. Lecturers need to review all course assessments and develop assessment items tailored to the learning outcomes. In addition, lecturers need to provide online learning assessments (Academic Affairs UiTM, n.d.).

To determine the appropriate platforms for students' internet access, lecturers are asked to do a survey first. As such, these students need to be reached by contacting them through more suitable platforms such as WhatApps, Telegram or Messenger applications. The selection of an appropriate platform is critical in the teaching and learning process. This is to avoid the occurrence of lag or screen freeze that can distract students if the online class is done face to face. Lecturers also need to know the level of internet stability, whether low, medium or high, before choosing an appropriate teaching platform (Ehwan, 2020).

Based on the status of internet online coverage as a result of the questionnaire conducted, lecturers need to plan and select the appropriate platform medium for the implementation of teaching and learning so that students in various locations can follow the teaching and learning process online effectively. Online teaching and learning methods can be implemented smoothly for students with satisfactory internet coverage. They can access the learning materials provided by the lecturers easily using a smartphone or laptop. In this situation, lecturers have the opportunity to use various mediums to implement teaching and learning, such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and Webex that require a higher internet speed.

For students with poor internet access, a quite limited platform as a medium to implement online teaching and learning were available. Among the usual platforms for two-way communications (such as lectures or discussions) that are often used are Google Classroom, Facebook or WhatsApp that are accessible with relatively lower internet speed. Meanwhile, learning materials can be sent to students via U Future, WhatsApp, email, or Telegram. Lastly, in the case of students who do not have internet access, of course they cannot participate in online learning and teaching sessions as they are not able to even receive learning materials or contact the lecturers online in the first place. To address this problem, the offline method (sending learning materials to students' locations and receiving them back by mail) are the alternatives used by lecturers.

Therefore, based on the findings of a questionnaire conducted by Academic Affairs, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Penang, the majority of lecturers decided to use the Microsoft Team and Google Meet platforms for learning sessions for satisfactory internet access as these platforms are mostly accessible by this student group and the majority of students and lecturers agreed to use them. Meanwhile, WhatsApp and Facebook platforms are used for cases of poor internet access for similar reasons. For students with internet access (regardless of high or low internet level), presentation of information, documents, discussions and tests are decided to be through Google Classroom, WhatsApp, email and U Future platforms.

In the early stages of the implementation of online teaching and learning, there are problems and challenges from the lecturer side that need to be addressed. Among them are the lack of technological knowledge and skills among lecturers, difficulty in establishing two-way communication with students online, lack of stable internet access, lack of telephone, laptop, tablet or any other device, unfamiliarity in using social media, email and high-level educational platforms online. The lack of technological skills and knowledge is one of the critical problems because many features provided in the online teaching platforms are not understood and not fully utilized. However, after routinely

dealing with this platform together with participation in seminars and hands-on workshops, lecturers were seemingly successful in improving their technical knowledge and skills. Importantly, guidance and assistance from information, communication, technology (ICT) experts are also very helpful.

Recently, the majority of lecturers start to feel more comfortable with online teaching and learning as opposed to face-to-face methods. The new norm has become normal after two years of its implementation. This method of teaching and learning brings people closer to modern technology and makes society IT literate. However, this method of teaching and learning online sometimes poses a problem to those who are less able to provide gadgets or computers and internet access.

In conclusion, online teaching and learning methods are not easy. Lecturers can diversify their teaching and learning platforms and assessment methods. However, maximum objectives will not be achieved without emotional and physical bonding with students. Online teaching and learning also caused students to have lack motivation and self-discipline. This is related to the limitations of internet access and learning materials. However, as a lecturer, it is necessary to be prepared to face all challenges and choose the appropriate approach and methodology to educate students and try their best to help them acquire knowledge.

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