

Online Distance Learning and Teaching During COVID-19

By: Dr Kuan Woei Keong and Assoc. Prof. Dr Tey Li Sian

Implementation of online teaching has started in our faculty since the movement control order (MCO) was announced in Mar 2020. Before the COVID 19, there was already adoption of virtual education environments in our university. Our lecturers have attempted to conduct lecture through online lessons despite the routine lecture in the physical classroom during the campaign “Week without Wall” in every semester since 2018. This initiative has helped to prepare our lecturers to adapt to the development of teaching and learning technology in this 21st century.

Other than the ‘*uFuture*’, an official online learning portal developed by UiTM, our staff are also encouraged to utilise third party platform as tools for teaching and learning. The third-party platforms used to conduct the online distance learning in our faculty include *Google* and *Microsoft* platforms. Both platforms have provided useful tools in aiding the teaching and learning activities. The implementation of online learning and teaching can be easily achieved through the online platforms. Classes can be organised and managed using either the platform of *Microsoft Teams* or *Google Classroom*. Lecturers are allowed to upload their lecture notes/slides prior to the online virtual class. The platforms also provide the statistic of the students’ participation and attendance during the virtual class. In the circumstances when some students are having unstable internet access to participate in the virtual class, pre-recorded lectures or recorded class video can be shared and uploaded. Both platforms are also providing tools to assign tasks and conduct tests among the students.

The online learning has given students greater flexibility to access the learning materials. The students could have better time management to follow their pace in learning. The recorded online lectures can be archived and referred anytime for future revision. However, the internet connectivity has been identified as a major issue as the internet penetration is far lower in smaller towns and villages in Malaysia. Some of the students have faced inconsistent internet connection that could disrupt the learning activities. Therefore, close monitoring of lecturer is essential to identify the problems and provide a better solution in the delivery method. It is obvious that online learning has brought changes to education even when the traditional face-to-face teaching and learning methods are to be continued after the end of COVID-19 crisis.