

Online Tertiary Teaching and Learning: New Models for Leadership and Organization in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Globally, both online distance and offline face-to-face (f2f) tertiary teaching and learning (T&L) transform the societies and economies of different countries. Tertiary T & L refers to education beyond secondary school and includes colleges, universities, and vocational institutions that offer online instruction. Tertiary T&L has been contributing to the economic advancement of various countries. This study aims to explore the standards and impact of online tertiary-level T&L on the economic growth of Bangladesh, an emerging economy, and further evaluate the effect of online tertiary education on its overall development. The paradox of campus-based T&L, in contrast to the distance-based online T&L modality, has broken down. Thus, tertiary-level academic institutions have now begun using tactics to connect budding online tertiary T & L with program development efforts. The debate about online teaching and learning now appears—or ought to appear—at the executive level and across other levels of tertiary T&L systems, and it deserves thorough examination.

Keywords: Institutional Transformation, Teaching and Learning (T&L), Leadership, Strategic Planning, Community, Scalability.

Educational Leadership and the Online Teaching-Learning Challenges

The demand for online teaching and learning has been rising globally, and educational leaders can no longer afford to ignore it even in emerging countries like Bangladesh. Since its inception in the late 1990s, the continued development of information and communication technologies has improved the delivery of online teaching and learning and established its place in tertiary education, even at the secondary level. Increasingly, learners are opting for online classes as an alternative to face-to-face classes to meet their need for flexibility and personalized learning.¹

Working adults have found their way back to school as online teaching and learning have enabled them to up-skill and reskill without leaving their employment.² Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to the world that online teaching & learning is indeed inevitable for the continuity of education in unusual times.³ For a tertiary academic institution to serve its purpose and survive in times of pandemic, economic and socio-political crises, it should engage in online T & L. Engaging in online T & L is no longer an option; rather, it has become a reality due to the availability of and access to low-cost T & L communication technology.

Eventually, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to the world that online T & L is indeed inevitable for the continuity of education in unusual times. Working adults have returned to school as online education has now enabled them to up-skill and reskill without leaving their jobs.

Reskilling is the process of acquiring distinctive skills to transition into a specific career or profession, or preparing someone to do so. It is a replacement for an earlier function that has become obsolete due to mechanization, AI, or industry transformations, and a worker must develop a new set of skills to remain useful. Reskilling is often used in the workplace and teaching to define a primary job or career position transformation.

Reskilling is equipping oneself for an entirely new job, and it is totally different from up-skilling. Up-skilling refers to improving or adding to your existing skills to advance or to perform your current job better, whereas reskilling involves a transition to a totally different role.

Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to the world that online T&L is indeed inevitable for the continuity of education in unusual times. For a university or tertiary academic institution to serve its purpose and survive in times of pandemic, economic, and socio-cultural crises, it should be involved in online education. Even in normal times, participating in online T&L is no longer an option; it has become an established reality.

Leading the online T & L machinery may require new skills and a different focus than those needed in conventional brick-and-mortar college and university campuses. The distance between academic institutions and learners, as well as the enormous role technology plays in online teaching and learning, is enough to challenge every college/ university leader, notwithstanding the novelty of the modality. Even in the 21st century, it is still uncommon to find a tertiary academic administrator with a strong foundation in online teaching and learning. This exposure of academic leaders was put to the test when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the whole world. It is, therefore, important for college and university leaders to be purposeful in understanding how online education works so they can plan, build, execute, evaluate, and continue to support learners' success in online teaching and learning. They should know these things and engage them directly, because leadership is experiential at its best, a clue on the lead. This paper focuses on the essential skills that will ultimately prepare every tertiary academic administrator to manage online teaching and learning, particularly at the college and university education level.

As stated earlier, tertiary-level teaching and learning became a choice during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the rapid growth of transmission technologies, media, and the internet, which are now evolving naturally within existing tertiary education institutions.⁴

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching and learning became standard practices among educators and students. Here, 'online teaching and learning' refers to educational practices conducted remotely using digital devices. The exigencies of the pandemic compelled academic institutions globally to transition swiftly to remote modalities. Online education, defined as the use of web-based technologies to facilitate collaborative learning and deliver course content through digital platforms, became central to academic continuity.

The enactment of technology-driven T & L innovations promotes dialogue on the leadership associated with institutional change through the 3S (strategy, structure, and support) framework. The 3S framework emphasizes the need for aligned strategy, organizational structure, and institutional support to manage change. It highlights the importance of oversight in technology-based teaching and learning. However, attention to leadership in online education has been scarce. The literature review section is organized around two distinct research questions. Firstly, how do academic leadership and online teaching-learning, as separate concepts, interact in existing research? Secondly, who are the stakeholders, leaders, and decision-makers in the adoption and implementation of online education in tertiary education organizations, and how do they influence the process? The literature review section is organized around two distinct research questions. The article encourages learners to develop a deeper understanding of the current state of the literature by consolidating opinions from both research areas. This comment raises a few queries pertinent to the topic domain. Who plans for online teaching and learning in response to contingencies within the institution? Who are the expert leaders responsible for its successful implementation?

Continuing this exploration, this review offers insights into leadership in online education. It does so through a critical analysis and synthesis of research conducted over the past two decades. The article also recognizes knowledge gaps to steer forthcoming research. The concept of e-leadership has sparked discourse on virtual oversight. However, it requires further inquiry in the context of online teaching and learning. No prior endeavor has reviewed leadership in online teaching and learning. Studies that focus solely on administration, e-learning, and distance learning cover many topics, yet do not holistically address our goal of exploring the affinity between these two concepts. This study explores how leadership in online teaching and learning draws on ideas, theories, norms, and frameworks from oversight, teaching and learning, and online communication technologies. This research makes a critical contribution by recognizing how to interact with online education administration. It

defines coding parameters, familiarizes oneself with the literature, and suggests areas for further interdisciplinary study.

Responding to the Challenges of Online Tertiary Teaching-learning

Many tertiary-level colleges and universities are offering online courses—whether as a supplement to or in combination with their on-campus programs and off-campus online programs—after experiencing the advantages during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵ While online T & L specialists were motivated by the idea of remote teaching and learning during the pandemic, this is similar to online T & L in a normal situation. We can't deny that online T and L were thoughtful and less rigid in structure given the crisis nature of the period. In fact, such incidents stress the skills and resources every academic institution must have to thrive in times of crisis, as seen in online T & L. Reports have shown that universities have been committed to online T & L long before the COVID-19 pandemic and were prepared to face the challenges it posed.⁶ Online T & L have established their place in tertiary education. Increasingly, learners are opting for online classes as an alternative to f-2-f instruction to meet their need for flexibility and personalized learning.¹ Working adults have found their way back to school as online T & L enabled them to up-skill and reskill without leaving their employment.² Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to the world that online T & L is indeed inevitable for the continuity of education.⁷

For the university to serve its purpose and survive in times of pandemic, economic, and socio-political crises, it has been engaged in online T & L. Online education is no longer an option. It is now imperative for educational leaders to address the challenges posed by online T & L.

Leading the online education machinery may require new skills and a different focus than those needed in conventional brick-and-mortar schools. The distance between the school and the learners, as well as the enormous role of the technology administrator with a strong foundation in online education, is significant. This vulnerability of academic leaders was put to the test when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the whole world. It is, therefore, important to plan, then build, execute, evaluate, and continuously improve for learners' success in online T & L. They should not just know these things but be engaged firsthand because leadership is experiential in online T & L. It is enough to challenge every academy leader, notwithstanding the novelty of the modality. Even in the 21st century, it is still uncommon to find a best school.⁵ This research focuses on the essential skills that will ultimately prepare every school administrator to manage online education, particularly at the higher important for school leaders to be intentional in understanding how online education works so they can support learner learning.

Tertiary-level T and L became a choice during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the rapid growth of transmission technologies, media, and the internet, which are evolving naturally within existing higher education institutions⁸ we observe that online teaching and learning have become familiar to learners and teachers. It is an ever-evolving demand for academic institutions around the world, as was clear during the pandemic period, for an emergency shift to remote teaching and learning. Online education is the use of web technologies for cooperative learning and the delivery of course curricula through online teaching and learning platforms.

Many universities and colleges found themselves offering online education—whether as a supplement to, or in hybrid with, their on-campus programs, and fully off-campus online offerings—after experiencing its benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. While online education specialists were motivated by the idea of remote teaching and learning during the pandemic, this was similar to online teaching and learning in a normal situation. We can't deny that online teaching and learning were thoughtful, though less rigid in structure, provided in the emergency nature of the time. In fact, such incidents underscore the skills and resources every academic institution must have to thrive in times of crisis. Reports have shown that universities have been committed to online T and L long before the COVID-19 pandemic and were prepared to face the challenges it posed. Online T and L have established their place in tertiary and higher education. Increasingly, learners are opting for online classes as an alternative to face-to-face instruction to meet their need for flexibility and personalized learning.¹ Working adults have found their way back to school as online learning enabled them to up skill and reskill without leaving their employment.² Ultimately, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven to the world that online T and L are indeed inevitable for the continuity of learning.

To serve its purpose and survive in times of pandemic, economic, and socio-political crises, tertiary teaching and learning should be conducted online instead of offline, face-to-face. Engaging in online education is no longer an option; it has now become imperative for academic leaders to address the challenges it poses to offline education. Conducting online teaching and learning pedagogy may require new skills and often demands a different focus than in traditional brick-and-mortar campus settings, among colleagues and universities. The distance between academic institutions and learners, as well as the role of technology in the modern age, has become a challenge for academic leaders. The novelty of the modality adds to this challenge. Even in the 21st century, college and university administrators lack a strong foundation in online teaching and learning. This weakness became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders need to learn how online education works purposefully. They should plan, build, execute, evaluate, and keep themselves involved in ensuring learners' success in online learning. Leaders need to be engaged and experienced, not just knowledgeable, because leadership is best when experience is added to knowledge.⁵

Online teaching and learning became widely used during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the rapid growth of digital transmission technologies, media, and the internet within higher education institutions. In the post-pandemic era, both learners and teachers have become accustomed to online education, leading to sustained demand for these modes. Academic institutions responded by shifting to remote teaching and learning. Online education uses web technologies for collaborative learning and for delivering course curricula through digital platforms.

The enactment of technology-driven teaching-learning innovations highlights the importance of oversight in promoting institutional change, as demonstrated by the 3S framework (strategy, structure, and support) for adopting integrated teaching and learning. This highlights the relevance of leadership. Martin, Sun, and Westine⁹ found that leadership receives limited attention in research on online teaching and learning. Reviewing the literature on oversight in online teaching and learning serves two goals: first, to explore how research examines the interaction between leadership and online teaching and learning modality; and second, to identify the academic stakeholders, including leaders, and decision-makers involved in the adoption and implementation of online education in higher education organizations. Ligon, Hunter, and Mumford¹⁰ distinguish management from simple individuals who go beyond current plans to envision system improvements. It prompts key questions: Who plans for online teaching and learning in response to institutional contingencies? Who are the expert leaders responsible for successful implementation? It must be clear that in academic and organizational contexts, "institutional contingencies" refers to how the external norms and environmental conditions shape an organization's behavior.

This review critically analyzes two decades of research on leadership in online education; identify knowledge gaps to guide future inquiry into this most important issue in online tertiary teaching and learning. While e-leadership has stimulated discussion on virtual oversight, its application to online teaching and learning warrants further study. Previous reviews focusing on administration, e-learning, or distance learning do not fully address the relationship between leadership and online teaching and learning. This study examines how leadership in this context draws on concepts from oversight, pedagogy, and communication technologies. The research contributes by clarifying interactions with online education administration, establishing coding parameters, synthesizing literature, and proposing directions for interdisciplinary research on leadership in online education.

Many universities found themselves inevitably offering online education—whether as a supplement to or in combination with their on-campus programs and off-campus fully online program offerings—after experiencing its advantages during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹ While online education specialists were motivated by the idea of remote teaching and learning during the pandemic, this is similar to online teaching and learning in a normal situation. We can't deny that online teaching and learning were thoughtful, though less rigid in structure due to the emergency. In fact, such experiences highlight the skills and resources every academic institution must have to thrive in times of crisis, as seen in online teaching and learning. Reports have shown that universities have been engaged in online teaching and learning long before the COVID-19 pandemic and were prepared to face the challenges it posed.¹²

Leadership and Ways to Overcome the Challenges of Online Teaching-Learning

It is urgent to directly confront the challenges of online tertiary teaching and learning. Overcoming these challenges in Bangladesh, an emerging economy, requires targeted and strategic action.

A. Advocacy and Integration

Faculty members must develop advocacy knowledge to drive effective online education. Advocacy empowers educators to address key barriers, promote student rights, and connect learners to essential support. By guiding students, managing conflicts, and facilitating services, faculty play a central role in ensuring the quality of online courses. Targeted courses and ongoing stakeholder engagement are crucial to identifying obstacles and measuring advocacy progress.

Changing colleagues' views is vital to sustaining the quality of online education. Success depends on strategic advocacy, strong institutional partnerships, and a long-term commitment to excellence. Positioning online education as a core instructional mode advances faculty growth and institutional progress.

B. Academic and Curricular Leadership:

Oversight in online teaching and learning is driven by the need for strong academic and curricular leadership. Pedagogical advances are frequently centered on online instruction, and these innovations can be widely disseminated. Collaboration and new practices in online education grow as these methods become more visible and accessible. Sharing these approaches can help ensure that faculty members not yet involved do not feel threatened. However, managing faculty by simply equating online instruction to conventional formats is insufficient. Online teaching is not just a different medium; it transforms the learning skills.¹³

Nonetheless, it remains essential that online programs uphold the same standards and meet the same goals as traditional courses. Balancing the unique aspects of online learning with the requirement for equivalence to established courses presents a significant and complex challenge for leadership in this field.

C. Program Building and Change Management

Many classic academic enterprises predictably support the status quo, ensure ongoing instructional delivery, and maintain quality. Online teaching and learning continue to grow and need ongoing support. These areas must also develop constantly. Educators and institutions respond to market demand by advancing online teaching and learning. In tertiary education, online teaching and learning mark a technical shift. This area continues to evolve and never stays the same.

Technical transformation is more than an evolution; it is an advancement that lasts. It makes integrating resources with strategies possible and essential. These strategies include managing learners, faculty databases, and teaching resources. Even a start-up needs to plan for long-term growth. A set program cannot rest on its achievements but must keep growing and extending its reach.

D. Mediate with Information Technology

Teaching with technology demands close coordination between educators and technologists, but their goals often clash. In universities, technologists focus on executive functions; academics are driven by teaching and learning priorities. This creates a persistent divide—two sides of one house—that hinders true collaboration. Technical support for education must be agile, intuitive, and responsive. Yet, leadership in online teaching can erect barriers, isolating learners from decision-makers and undermining education's core mission.

Building on this divide, the boundary between Information Technology and Instructional Technology is increasingly blurred. Course management systems integrate teaching, learning, and administrative data, complicating boundaries and responsibilities. Efforts to design systems that serve both on-campus and off-

campus users can cause confusion and operational challenges. Moreover, as integrated systems support institutional expansion, concerns about data security for teachers and staff become critical.

E. Faculty Development

On-the-job / off-the-job training of teaching faculty members is the most crucial issue in any academic program and the single most significant leadership challenge. Essential support from faculty members is a strong backup; yet, faculty members sit exactly where workload problems concentrate and where the perceived threat posed by online teaching appears to be the most significant issue. Training of faculty in technical know-how cannot address all those issues through mere technical know-how. Any change in teaching and learning is, essentially, a matter of instruction, and that is never well governed by a recipe-like how-to manage.

The challenges are more in tertiary teaching-learning institutions. Thus, unlike primary and secondary academic institutions, tertiary-level colleges and universities lack a culture of skills growth. Its existence is a local and transient issue that rarely persists, partly because the budgets that make it viable can't last for long. Faculty development programs (FDPs) pose a significant leadership challenge because they should not be limited to faculty members but also to academic leaders. Faculty members must take ownership of the strategies and efforts, as well as an oversight role. The challenges associated with Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) are numerous. Successfully increasing FDPs offers substantial benefits; most notably, it provides a significant opportunity for achieving both institutional and cultural transformation.

It is so critical to online teaching-learning, and it sometimes manifests in other areas of academic culture. Faculty development for online teaching and learning may have naturally evolved to focus on digital shifts within institutions. Often, academic institutions with technology become centers of teaching and learning, and the change is not just a matter of jargon. Effective faculty development for online teaching and learning is another transformative element that needs to become core to academic institutions. Faculty and faculty development are also transforming as new generations of faculty members appear.

G. F. Institution Itself as a Determinant of Direction

As convergence occurs, the nature of an institution becomes the primary factor in shaping online teaching and learning. Public higher education institutions normally lead the online teaching and learning. Institutions focused on attracting rich students through small classes and close relationships. The core issue is adapting online institutions' missions and leveraging institutional branding for the future. It is also essential to address cross-institutional enrollment as learners shift between on-campus and off-campus options.

Off-campus teaching and learning uses information and communication technology (ICT) as the medium of instruction. As stated earlier, E-teaching-learning applies ICT to institutional operations, including management, resource development & sharing, tuition, and learner services such as advising, prior learning assessment, and program planning. E-learning can be either blended, enhancing face-to-face teaching with technology, or fully online, using ICT exclusively for course delivery.

Online instruction is nearly universal in online tertiary education, and the rapid growth of integrated learning has expanded access for local and remote students. Therefore, online learning is now an essential and desired part of tertiary education.

H. Flexible scheduling

Flexible scheduling is the main benefit of anytime/anywhere instruction in higher education, shaping new teaching and learning models beyond mere expansion of students' access to learning resources.

This requires institution-wide planning, not just enrollment expansion. Reviewing traditional instructional time frames is necessary as the rationale for the 14-week term becomes less relevant. Projecting growth suggests allocating resources and staff accordingly, treating changes as expected outcomes. Organizational change models evolve environments and foresee ongoing shifts. Multi-campus systems may reduce similar programs, benefiting

students who value flexible opportunities. Fixing these issues requires collaboration from administrators to department heads, underscoring the need for visionary leadership in online instruction.

Anytime/anyplace instruction mainly benefits from scheduling flexibility, not just increased access. Flexibility in timing is likely to have the most significant impact on teaching and learning models. Models of change must plan for the growth of students who previously had only a part-time presence or lacked access due to various responsibilities. This requires growing across in the institution, not just in enrollments but also in support services, and a rethinking of instructional time frames. The rationale for the 14-week term, based on limited weekly hours, becomes less relevant. Such changes will necessitate a strategic redistribution of resources, teaching staff & organizational focus, which should be managed as expected outcomes of projected growth rather than unexpected shocks.

Academic Uses of Technology

As previously discussed, the technology support role is a significant and growing issue, as tech-mediated instruction has become more widespread than online instruction alone. With various academic groups vying for different technological resources—such as “smart” classrooms versus “virtual” ones, and high-tech science labs versus online simulations—prioritizing them requires a clear approach. The main argument is that effectively managing these competing technology demands is best accomplished by re-examining assumptions about the purposes of different instructional modes and flipping the traditional perspective.

Instead of asking, as we used to, what online education is for, it may be time to ask what special needs and goals of in-person education will last.

The Bridging Function of Online Education

Higher education of a country's inhabitants is possibly the most real expression of civilization. The modes of teaching and learning aren't just about learning wisdom in isolation from books. It extends far above that, and when all have such a right, the globe becomes a lovelier place. But the fact is that the blessing of learning remains a privilege, not a right. Even though the freedom to learning is a basic human right, many Bangladeshi nationals are still denied access to quality education, either online or f2f both. It, in turn, leads to the same number of dwellers persistently struggling for a job. And if this cruel cycle persists, can they ever hope to attain a more acceptable quality of life?

As painful as queries may be, they should have answers. The basis of these answers should come from individuals who have the privilege to teach, and more so, from those in positions of power and leverage. However, we are looking for what exactly the government has done to eliminate the disparity in higher education, as well as in employ-ability.

The positive side to the challenges we have been outlining is that they all speak to the way online teaching is increasingly supporting the future of an institution. The omnipresence of tech-mediated teaching—its move to saturate and so to get all parts of an institution of higher teaching-learning, to run through the curriculum, to create demands for every aspect of resource oversight makes it the rational place to mix the new and the old, the academic and the executive, the technical and the traditional. Like the technology it employs, online instruction serves a unifying function to the isolated or distinct sections of the university that comprise it. In a multi-campus institution, for instance, its capacity to foster cross-campus enrollments can help knit disparate units together. At the same time, its focus on faculty development can give attention to the development of pedagogy as well as teaching and learning. The presence of tech-mediated education— institutions' propensity to change the curriculum and make notes on every aspect of resource control drives. In a multi-campus institution, for instance, its capacity to foster cross-campus enrollments can help unite disparate units together. At the same time, its focus on faculty development can also give attention to pedagogy and instruction.

With online education, not only does schooling become more accessible, but other forms of education, such as learning a soft skill, become far easier. Nonetheless, online education itself cannot be the only solution. According to Data Reportal, as of late 2025 and early 2026, the internet user rate in Bangladesh has reached

about 48.9% of the inhabitants, up from 44.5% in 2023. Household-level internet access has grown enormously, surpassing 50% as of late 2025, driven by a 98.9% mobile phone ownership among families, with 72.4% owning smartphones.

To ensure a powerful impact of online teaching and learning, a country must ensure more access to the internet.

Sakib Bin Rashid, Content Consultant at 10 Minute School, spoke on the hurdle his team continues to face in the realm of online education. "10 Minute School has access to a lot of students who reside outside Dhaka. Almost half of our users are from outside the capital. We often come across a lot of individuals from lower-income classes and receive appeals to lower the prices," he said. People's lives aren't easy. Even when purchasing educational material, they need to make sure that they are cutting costs."

Despite the challenges that remain, online education has had a positive impact. It, of course, increases accessibility and, in the process, eliminates significant barriers.

Learners do not necessarily need to be residents of Dhaka and can access specific courses and classes. With everything clearly blocking the capital city, online teaching and learning become one step forward towards decentralizing education. More importantly, they become free from the need to spend large sums of money on rent, utility bills, groceries, and commuting. Reducing a wall of this scale is not only fitting for learners but also boosts flexibility. It allows them to work on personal projects related to what they're learning and improve their skills.

Bring all Stakeholders Together

There is a proverb that 'Easy to say, hard to do'. The key thing may be that, in an institutional setting, due consultation rarely takes the form of a general plebiscite. The obligation to engage in due consultation is more a matter of communication than a referendum. The one imperative is always forward mobility: inertia cannot triumph in the face of a need for a change management decision, but a decision cannot be so dogmatic as to harden resistance or invite stonewalling (the one thing that is, from a change management perspective, even worse than inertia).

The Critical Need to Engage in Strategic Planning

Improve the online instructional skills of faculty members, the managerial skills of management, and the performance of helping hands through periodic training and reviews. Online teaching and learning in the virtual classroom present pedagogical and technical challenges for faculty members in addressing learners' learning styles. Studies have shown that online education modules provide an extremely low common move for learners. Faculty members must transform their on-campus teaching style to fit the new technologically enhanced world of e-learning. It is a form of communication media that allows educators to personalize their tasks and feedback. Rightly planned modules support the education of learners at a pace essential to complete tasks on time and meet their expectations by providing written guidance. Online lesson instructors should possess a unique set of competencies to engage in fit instructional approaches. Instructors should be trained properly to enhance their technological competency to teach online courses.¹⁴ Motivation and incentives are additional factors that enhance the online instructional skills of faculty.¹⁵ The act of a faculty member while teaching an online version of a campus-based course should receive an incentive as motivation to produce useful content. Effective faculties have strong beliefs that they can bring about a change in student learning and attitude.

New Education Models for Faculty

For the sake of efficiency and access to education, there should be uniformity in the delivery of online instruction. It is either conducted via course management programs or teaching-learning innovation. However, complex code choices will be operative. Leading among these is probably the applicable use of technology in teaching and learning. Detailed planning and review are essential for such moves. In the most comprehensive view, what is needed here is a balance that could act between centralization and decentralization, uniformity and diversity, resilience and innovation.

At the forefront is the integration of technology into teaching and learning, which confirms that faculty members stay closely linked to the complexities of knowledge delivery that profoundly impact pedagogical choices. However, a uniform approach to education may raise concerns, where educators perform various roles ranging from master trainers to dialogue leaders, examiners, and pedagogy designers. It is a cost-effective strategy that improves the productivity of faculty members. But this practice is not without its pitfalls.

To pilot these complexities successfully, meticulous planning and intelligent examination are critical. Ultimately, the drive for excellence in online instruction calls for striking a pleasant balance between centralization and decentralization, uniformity and diversity, as well as resilience and innovation. This equilibrium is vital for crafting engaging and effective learning experiences that resonate with students. To achieve greater efficiency and enhance learners' experiences with access and navigation, establishing a degree of uniformity in online instruction is essential. While the pathways to this goal may differ—whether through innovative course management systems or dedicated instructional design teams—a set of guiding principles remains paramount.

At the forefront is the effective integration of technology into teaching, which ensures that faculty members remain closely connected to the intricacies of delivery that profoundly influence pedagogical choices. While a formulaic, overly uniform approach to instruction may raise valid concerns, the trend toward “disintegration of the teaching function” — where educators take on various roles ranging from master teacher to discussion leader, examiner, and instructional designer — is often hailed as a cost-effective strategy to enhance “faculty productivity.” However, this practice is not without its pitfalls.

To navigate these complexities successfully, meticulous planning and thoughtful assessment are essential. Ultimately, the pursuit of excellence in online instruction calls for striking a harmonious balance between centralization and decentralization, uniformity and diversity, as well as stability and innovation. This equilibrium is vital for crafting engaging and effective learning experiences that resonate with students. To achieve greater efficiency and enhance learners' experiences with access and navigation, establishing a degree of uniformity in online instruction is essential. While the pathways to this goal may differ—whether through innovative course management systems or dedicated instructional design teams—a set of guiding principles remains paramount.

At the forefront is the effective integration of technology into teaching, which ensures that faculty members remain closely connected to the intricacies of delivery that profoundly influence pedagogical choices. While a formulaic, overly uniform approach to instruction may raise valid concerns, the trend toward disintegration of the teaching function — where educators take on various roles ranging from master teacher to discussion leader, examiner, and instructional designer — is often hailed as a cost-effective strategy to enhance the productivity of faculty members. However, this practice is not without its pitfalls.

To navigate these complexities successfully, careful planning and intelligent appraisal are critical. Yet, the purpose of superiority in online education calls for maintaining a pleasant equilibrium between centralization and decentralization, uniformity and diversity, as well as stability and innovation. This equilibrium is imperative for attractive and effective learning experiences that resonate with students.

Online education in Bangladesh is increasingly adopting a mixed system, comprising top-down directives for structural change with bottom-up efforts for innovation. The top-down authority-driven model (state and institutions) established frameworks, while bottom-up approaches, such as user-driven goedu online platform and specialized vocational skills, are gaining appeal to meet immediate market demands, resulting in a flexible, mixed education setting.

Centralization Vs. Decentralization

The questions of centralization vs. decentralization can be re-framed as partnership vs. difference. The partnership maximizes persuasion and control, whereas difference boosts creativity and a sense of regional rights. The perfect occasions are those in which centralized resource management is in use. In contrast, the norms and forms of teaching are largely controlled by those involved in teaching.

But such situations are flexible, and even a perfect position must adapt to negotiation and transformation. In such a situation, a common and flexible course management system remains. And even if faculties have some control over the delivery of instruction, there must also be a way of standardizing its delivery so that deviating forces don't take over.

Particularly in some of the more extensive provincial or state systems, major elements of programs, such as course platforms, servers, and help desk support, are either outsourced to a commercial provider or centralized within a unit. This consolidation does maximize some efficiency and allows for shared investment in improvements. It does, at times, lead to challenges when faculties have high stakes in the look and feel of a course management system once they become comfortable with it. High-end technology faculties are also interested in innovative uses of technology, when the more consolidated systems sometimes lack agility and responsiveness. We need to acknowledge that it is not just that technology is changing teaching; teaching keeps pushing and evolving the technology.

Mapping Patterns and Directions

Given the dynamic forces at play, what an institution really needs is not a model but a mapping of where and how things are moving. This assessment must begin with the initial areas of focus—whether growth and outreach or “capturing the core”—to understand how current positions relate to original intentions.

Even if we agree that there is an ideal balance between online and offline teaching -learning that would be challenging when, where and how things begin. The main challenge for change management, then, is to guide the current state toward that ideal, bridging the gap between origin and goal.

Programs that begin as independent operations need to move from satellite television status to increasingly essential roles, drawn-out faculty experiments especially for the sake of disseminating instruction and knowledge. A program that began as an administrative mandate has to secure faculty buy-in, which refers to the acceptance, support, and active engagement of professors and instructors in a new institutional initiative, curriculum change, or policy. It means the teaching faculties genuinely understand the value of a planned transformation, trusts the leadership driving it, and eagerly accepts it into their daily workflows; one that started as a faculty-led initiative requires administrative backing and support. In each case, the movement toward a balance of consolidation and differentiation must not lose its benefits as it seeks to extend them.

Bottom-up, Top-down, or Both

Neither the bottom-up nor the top-down approach should be trusted exclusively. Both carry unique benefits and drawbacks: bottom-up fosters creativity and broader input, while top-down brings cohesion but can be generic. Leaders should carefully balance these approaches to maximize strengths and minimize weaknesses.

To maximize benefits, it is critical to manage both the timing and direction of the shift. A grassroots approach to online education quickly adopts the essence of “random acts of innovation” when such work is brought into prominence and purpose, and this needs to happen so that it feels like facilitation rather than a reining in. Similarly, an administrative initiative cannot begin too soon to cultivate faculty support and to solicit faculty consultation.

Ideal Distribution

Although more options exist for goal-directed management, a goal does not have to be the final destination, though it can be a milestone. In an institution with top-down or bottom-up impulses, the path ahead is clear. The dynamic should focus on local ownership and public support. The goal is to diffuse innovation while maintaining the advantages of centralized support.

Nothing discourages participation more than feeling that online instruction is forced upon faculty members and threatens their preferences. However, the program is most likely to fail when there are gaps in resource

management and use. Faculty engagement is best when pedagogical ownership rests with the teacher and discipline/ department, while institutional support remains steady and unified.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

The COVID-19 pandemic lasted longer and was more severe than past epidemics, leaving us unprepared. Advances in technology pushed education online, requiring a unified, well-trained team with digital tools. The virtual environment was difficult, but policy planners and stakeholders became committed to uninterrupted online education instead of offline education during the pandemic. Now, tertiary institutions should review the links between online, blended, on-campus, and off-campus distance education, as well as the roles of part-time and full-time faculty members. Management needs to enforce transformation while promoting online pedagogy and share resources with other academic institutions. Program leaders must select the best approaches during crises and situations like the COVID-19 pandemic.

More revealing is that many officials and faculty lacked experience in online teaching pedagogy. This highlights the role of administration to support the transition to interactive online formats during crises and even in normal situations. Academic leaders should assess local innovation and anticipate changes for timely action. But to drive change, higher education institutions should focus on the following key propositions: first, consolidate resources and IT oversight to increase efficiency and tailor instruction between learners and faculty members as well as among learners; second, set an ongoing faculty development program (FDP) to support online teaching-learning adaptation; third, revise pay structure and tenure systems of faculty members and supporting staff to align with evolving institutional needs and economic situation; fourth, strengthen governance structures to encourage innovation and taking challenges; and fifth, always monitor academic transformation in the developed world and job-market trends to remain responsive. In addition, the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the University Grants Commission (UGC) should support institutional innovation and promote more interactive teaching and learning approaches both online and offline with technological, ecological, environmental, and job market considerations. For effective online teaching and learning, use a clear, top-down structure that includes interactive features to ensure robust learning content, engagement, and understanding.

Future researchers should focus on developing new models of academic leadership in tertiary education, revisiting instructional norms such as term length, contact hours, technology support, and residential requirements, and studying how learner preferences influence online and offline teaching-learning, with attention to pedagogical impacts and the effectiveness of dialogue- and problem-solving-based seminars. Researchers should investigate how learner preferences shape online teaching and learning in response to communication technology and the job market. Priorities include analyzing pedagogical impacts and assessing the effectiveness of dialogue- or problem-solving-based seminars.

As stated earlier, important issues are term length, contact hours, classroom use, and technology supports. Future researchers should also examine how learners' needs, preferences, and comfort levels affect both online and offline teaching and learning. They should also assess the effectiveness of online and offline dialogue- or problem-solving-based seminars. Thus, we can expect that in the near future, with the advancement of technical know-how, learners' and the job market's preferences will shape our teaching and learning pedagogy.

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