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Room 1

Education, Liberal Arts, Tourism,
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**SUPPORTING TEACHERS: THE TRANSFORMATION FROM
CLASSROOM TEACHING TO ONLINE COACHING DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are one of the most powerful factors in students' academic performance, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the learning platform is online, it is necessary for teachers to transform their role from knowledge providers to coaches. This transformation is to ensure the nurturing learning environment, which is needed the most in the midst of this pandemic for students' academic success. Creating a supportive environment in the online classroom is certainly essential. Thus, this academic article will shed light on the importance of the language teacher role to students' successful academic performance and how they can be supported to become professional teachers in the digital age.

Keywords: Online Coaching, Neuroscience, Academic Performance, Students' Motivation

1. Introduction

Education during the Covid-19 pandemic heavily emphasizes teaching methodologies and instructional technology as can be seen in academic workshops, conferences, studies as part of professional development. However, very little evidence exists concerning the teacher as one of the crucial factors in the learning environments of the teaching and learning process. As stated by Usman (2016) that the teacher is the key factor

in creating a teaching and learning favorable environment which makes the teaching become fruitful. Prof Loh Sau Cheong, head of Educational Psychology and Counseling Department, Universiti Malaya (UM), said that “In some situations, students will even feel depressed and develop a feeling of helplessness. These will lead to a negative attitude towards learning and will affect the learners’ well-being in the long run.” He further states that it is important that teachers guide students to attain their own goals in their own way (Chonghui, 2020).

For teachers to be able to guide their students effectively, they need to be supported by giving them adequate training and skills needed, which will enable them to build rapport with their students, particularly, during the online learning method. In the Thai context, online learning has been challenging for many and even more stressful for both teachers and students across levels of education. In higher education, students struggle with online learning. As it seems, they lack learning resources, responsibility, self-regulation, motivation, and positive learning attitude. These qualities are prominent in the online learning contexts (Chiu & Hew, 2018).

Therefore, this article will shed light on the teacher factor, in particular, due to the fact that online learning will be fruitful only depending on teachers. Supporting teachers to transform themselves into coaches will facilitate students greatly as the coaching method of the teaching and learning process aims at inspiring students’ wisdom, stimulating their interest in learning, promoting learning autonomy and improving their learning ability and efficiency (Yu, Guo, & et.al., 2020). It will explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on education, explore Thai students’ academic performance during the pandemic, investigate how being teachers as coaches can facilitate students’ academic performance and explain how to create effective and professional teachers as coaches in the digital age. This article attempts to enlighten educators and teachers that coach-type teaching methods can be a new role for all teachers.

2. Objectives

- (1) To explore the impact of Covid-19 on education.
- (2) To explain Thai students’ academic performance during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (3) To investigate how being teachers as coaches can facilitate students’ academic performance during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (4) To explain how to create effective and professional teachers and coaches in the digital age.

3. Online Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The lockdown due to Covid-19 has created a massive disruption to our education system, resulting in a paradigm shift in the way educators deliver content. According to Subedi et al (2020) E-learning tools have played a crucial role during this pandemic, helping schools and universities facilitate student learning during their closure. Teachers and educational staff have also played a major role in response to this and have had to face a number of emerging demands during this crisis. Most educators have had to re-plan, design materials, adjust teaching and assessment methods, create pre-recorded videos, diversify media and online platforms, and become tech-savvy to adapt to digital teaching.

The effects of this shift from face-to-face to online learning are not only seen in educators and staff but also among students. With the strain of lockdown, combined with the pressure of completing schoolwork, students who are confined at home for long periods of time, feel more stressed and overwhelmed which undoubtedly affects how they approach learning. Petrie, (2020), states that several students at home/living space have undergone psychological and emotional distress and have been unable to engage productively. A similar report by Di Pietro et al (2020), illustrated the detrimental effects on students’ learning through these four main channels. The report states that student learning is expected, on average, to suffer a setback. Despite the widespread move to online teaching, student progress will not simply be the same as if schools were open.

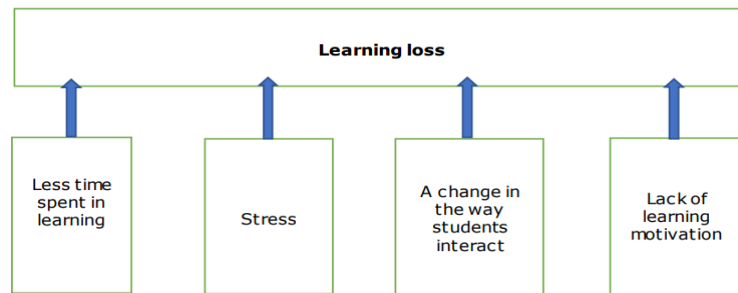


Illustration 1: The likely impact of COVID-19 on education: Reflections based on the existing literature 1 (Di Pietro et al, 2020)

With this in mind, it is worth noting that online education has also shown great potential due to its flexibility and convenience. However, something that is also crucial in online learning now, is not only the teacher's content knowledge of their subject but also the ability to create an engaging classroom environment online, to promote healthy and interactive teacher-student relations that could enhance learning. With our current situation, having good content knowledge may simply not be enough. Although there is no perfect one-size fits all approach to online learning, the phrase Maslow before Bloom is the common phrase used in educational circles (Pokhrel’ & Chhetri, 2021). According to Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs, a necessary condition for the development of higher needs is the fulfillment of the lower needs. In general, it can be defined as certainty, stability, support, care and freedom from fear, anxiety and chaos (Maslow, 1943). In order for online learning to be effective, this approach should be explored. For a student to strive educationally, they must first meet the lower needs such as a nutritious diet, stability, nurturing environment, and feel a sense of belonging.

4. Online Learning Experience of Thai Undergraduate Students

Evidently, online learning has been a major struggle and unpleasant experience for many Thai students. It is, in fact, a painful experience for a number of them to have to abruptly change the mode of learning and being out of their regular comfort zone without much support from both physical infrastructure and a nurturing environment. Ample reports both in the academic and social media settings have repeatedly revealed that Thai students in all levels of education have failed to implement effective online learning during the pandemic. Part of

the failure is that Thai education policy “does not fully address inequality among students, resulting in a lack of support to those who need help the most” (Wangkiat, BangkokPost, 2021). Teachers have been given too much workload and paper work of assessments that have to be filled out.

In Thai higher education, many studies of online learning have investigated students’ satisfaction, learning behaviors, and academic achievements. Most recent research results have revealed that the teacher is one of the crucial factors to have an impact on learners’ online learning behaviors, motivation, and performance (Hemkrasri, 2018; Lertsakornsiri, Narumitlert & Kitiya Samutpradit, 2021; Maneewongse, 2021). A research study conducted by Hemkrasri (2018) on the satisfaction of e-learning lessons of biology laboratory courses revealed that students were satisfied with learning performance and achievement at a high level. However, a study conducted by Lertsakornsiri and others (2021) on factors affecting learning behaviors with college students’ online learning from Covid-19 situations indicated that students’ learning behaviors were moderate while a study by Maneewongse (2021) revealed that students’ learning behaviors were positive and at a high level; however, students had difficulty understanding English subjects. These studies may yield different results; however, they suggest that an external factor, which is a teacher, is essential to teaching and learning. A good relationship, interaction and communication between teacher and students have been mentioned as important factors to students’ learning achievement and online learning behaviors. This can also be supported by a study conducted by Keawchan and Rattanapongpinyo (2021) which revealed that teacher factors, namely the quality and experience of the instructor, were most crucial in online learning.

According to the aforementioned studies, teachers are one of the most essential factors in the online learning of Thai students, especially for the ones that have poor learning performance. Switching from face-to-face to online learning requires a high degree of self-autonomy, self-discipline, self-regulation and motivation. A question arises here whether Thai students possess these qualities to be able to achieve their learning goals. Thai students need a nurturing learning environment. Hence, the role of teacher as a knowledge provider needs to be reconsidered. Perhaps, teachers as coaches can be an alternative role for online learning.

5. Teachers as Coaches: Alternative Role of Teachers for Online Learning

The role of the teacher-coach has become even more essential for online learning during the spread of the pandemic due to its essence of empathy, support, and motivation and nurturing. To better understand the term coaching, it is necessary to investigate its meaning. There are numerous definitions of the term as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Definitions of Coaching

Authors	Definition
Parsloe (1995) cited in Paling (2013)	“Coaching is directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction”
International Coach Federation (2005) cited in Paling (2013)	“A professional partnership between a qualified coach and an individual or team that support the achievement of extraordinary results, based on goals set by the individual or team”
Paling (2013)	“An ongoing conversation between the coach and the coachee (face to face or by telephone/online) which assists the coachee to explore an aspect or aspects of the coachee’s life to enhance, improve, assist the coachee to achieve short- or long-term goals which the coachee has set as realistic targets.”
Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2014, p. 1, cited in The Open University, 2016)	“ Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders.”
Whitmore (2017, cited in The Open University, 2016)	“Coaching is unlocking people’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.”
The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2021)	“The process of training somebody to play a sport, to do a job better or to improve a skill.”
Cambridge University Press (2021)	“The act of giving special classes in sports, a school subject, or a work-related activity, especially to one person or a small group”

Based on the definitions above, it can be summarized that coaching is a process of understanding, supporting and enabling others to achieve their goals. It’s a mutual process in which both the coach and coachee need to have trust and a growth mindset outlook in driving behaviors and actions to achieve a set goal or goals. Essential skills include asking questions, effective listening, and positive communication. For the coachee, coaching enhances their self- autonomy, self- determination, self- regulation, self- esteem and motivation. These qualities relate to the psychological perspective. According to Cherry (2021), self-determination and motivation can be fostered through positive feedback and adequate external rewards. Therefore, for online learning to be effective, teachers need to transform their role to coaches who truly understand learning psychology and have communication skills needed to enhance the aforementioned qualities.

To become a teacher-coach, one needs to understand the coaching process. Among many coaching models, there are prominent models found from various resources (Paling, 2013; Sutton, 2020; The Open University, 2020; Mindtools, 2021) which can be demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Coaching models

The GROW Model (Whitmore, 1980) cited in Mindtools (2021)	CLEAR Coaching Model (Hawkins, 1980s)	The 5 C Model (Pegg, 1999) cited in OpenLearn	The OSKAR Model (McKergow & Jackson, 2002) cited in Mindtools (2021)	The 5 C's of Language Coaching (Paling, 2013)
Goal -Find out what one wants to change and set it as a goal	Contracting -Set ground rules for the coach and coachee to work together.	Challenges -an issue or problem the mentee is currently facing.	Outcome -Objective one wants to achieve.	Concrete requirements - Diagnosing the coachee's language ability
Current Reality - Identify one's current situation	Listening -Actively listen to the coach with empathy.	Choices -the options available to them for dealing with that issue or problem.	Scale -Measurement of how close one is to achieving the desired outcome	Clear targets and commitment - Coachee sets mechanical goals and mastery goals
Options (or Obstacles) - Explore possible options to reach the goal.	Exploring -Help the coach to understand his/her own situation and challenge them to think of possible actions.	Consequences -the consequences of choosing one option over another.	Know -how-the skills, knowledge, qualifications, and attributes that help one to get to their outcome.	Coaching conversation -Work towards goals through brain-based coaching conversation.
Will (or Way Forward) -Commit to specific actions to achieve the goal.	Action -Support the coachee to follow the action and decision making.	Creative solutions - other solutions that the mentor and mentee might come up with during their discussion.	Affirm + Action - Affirm what has been working well and what actions need to take progress.	Connecting the brain and conquering barriers -Facilitate the coachee's connecting long term memory and hardwiring and build confidence.
	Review -Provide feedback to the coachee.	Conclusion -a decision about what to do next and a commitment to take action.		Completion -The coachee checks how they feels about the goal and or set new goals while coach reviews the coachee's feelings and provides general feedback.

According to these coaching models, the mutual essence of coaching is the active and effective collaboration between the coach and the coachee through an abundance of dialogues to achieve set goals. The common coaching process that emerges from these models, which can perhaps be applied to classroom teaching, to be shown as follows:

- (1) Identify problems, challenges, concerns of the learner through asking questions and listening to them with empathy;
- (2) Set possible goals and plan actions to overcome those challenges;
- (3) Act towards achieving the set goals with sufficient emotional and academic support by providing knowledge, practice with the students, checking in with them of how they are feeling during the process, and giving continuous feedback; and
- (4) Evaluate their outcomes and set a new set of goals.

By altering the role of teacher to that of, students' cognition and emotion are enhanced. This can be supported by Park (2013) who mentions that those cognitive and emotional factors integrated in instruction can greatly provide effective learning outcomes of young children. She further points out, based on a study of Hyson (2008), that a critical teaching tool for teachers is being aware of students' emotions in instruction. It is obvious that the traditional teacher role will not facilitate and support students as much in online learning. Emotional aspect has become one of the factors affecting students' learning development and achievement. Hence, a teacher-coach role is essential. The next section will explain how to develop into an effective professional teacher-coach in the digital age.

6. Creating Effective and Professional Teachers in the Digital (Pandemic) Age

The sudden shift from the classroom to online teaching has brought significantly changes to all the mechanisms of learning in higher education. An Online class, handled by a teacher/coach, has turned out to be very pertinent in higher educational foundations. Saminathan and et.al., (2021) added that many academics, particularly the senior ones, encountered technical difficulties in performing their roles as educators given the fact that they had to be tech savvy in order to conduct a single online class. Thus, they had to be flexible and professionally-capable in this "New Normal" set-up, which is indeed vital in the continuity and quality of education our future generations will receive.

Careful Planning and Online Class Management

Having an organized and well-planned lesson makes any class interesting and engaging, especially during pandemic times wherein you only see the students on a monitor screen. Rubio (2010) states that it assists with effective use of oral questioning, giving instructions, being flexible, and having an impact on the students' stimulation to encourage their interest and participation. Effective teachers should give meaning to the subject by facilitating relevant material to the students wherever possible, and by finding means to stimulate interest in it. Learning visual aids like PowerPoint, Canva, Google Slides, and YouTube should be optimized, readily available, and regularly updated.

Effective teachers manage the online class to focus on instructions which influences the students in terms of psychological behavior to learn. Synchronous classes done in ZOOM, for example, are managed according to the needs of the students and the teacher. Online classroom rules are set at the beginning of the course and implemented accordingly. For example, online assessments like listening tests and quizzes can achieve credible results by asking the students to turn-on their camera during the test duration.

Creating the Environment of Fun

It is not easy to ensure consistent engagement from students with this current norm in education. Several techniques and methods can be applied in order to make students involved in the synchronous class, and making the class engaging starts with the idea of it being FUN. To do so, Gurney (2007) points out that when the teachers show enthusiasm, and there is interaction in the classroom, the work of the learning process is turned into a pleasure. In addition, teachers who are enthusiastic about their subjects and learning, and motivate students, are therefore helping to increase their achievement (Stronge and et al., 2004). Below are some suggestions of Hardy (2020):

- Choose excitement about teaching
- Keep up the momentum. Reward quick reactions.
- Be accessible. Use chat. Use LINE chat or Messenger to have a casual discussion with students
- Be creative. Use Online Tools for teaching.
- Use the participation list if you are in Zoom.
- Reward participation in chat and follow up activities outside of class.

Continuous Learning Development

Teachers should have high expectations of themselves and their own learning development. They should constantly self-evaluate, critique and reflect on how they are implementing their methods of teachings, and regularly update themselves with the latest teaching tools and materials suitable for online teaching. Investing in training/seminars is very crucial in the teachers' digital knowledge. An institution is can perhaps take responsibility to support and train its staff in using all these tools. Teachers can also share tips as they learn these new technologies, applications and methods. Stronge et al (2004) states that teaching is a profession; while the most effective teachers are passionate about their chosen profession. However, he also adds that an effective teacher is always in a constant learning process due to changes in terms of the students' characteristics, the curriculum, the community, and finance among many others.

7. Conclusion

The pandemic has a vast impact on education around the world, namely less time spent in learning, stress, a change in the way students interact, and the lack of learning motivation (Di Pietro et al, 2020). In Thai education, online learning has been a major struggle and unpleasant experience for Thai students in all levels of education. In order to ease this unpleasant experience and enhance students' satisfaction, learning behaviors, and academic achievements during this difficult time, teachers are to reconsider their role and perhaps change it from

a knowledge provider to a coach or facilitator. Having a nurturing and supportive learning environment for students, therefore, is beneficial for their learning development, especially for those who are struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students need to feel safe and comfortable in order to learn successfully. Creating a positive affiliation towards learning by building a healthy teacher-student relationship, where students can freely express opinions and make mistakes without the fear of humiliation, and where they can receive an abundance of support and motivation through healthy and relaxing conversation with their teacher-coach. On the other hand, an institute needs to provide sufficient support and time to their staff to create effective and professional teacher-coach in the digital age. Hence, training or a workshop on a new role of teacher as a coach is strongly suggested as part of a professional development program.

8. Suggestion

Besides the focus on teaching methods and activities, a focal point of psychology education—understanding students' emotion as a primary ingredient in teaching during online learning or distance learning—is something to consider for online teaching and learning during the pandemic. Changing the role of teacher to coach is perhaps something to be added in a professional development program and something to be encouraged by an institute. This paper suggests that the role of teacher needs to change. By altering the role, a nurturing and supporting learning environment is built, which is most crucial for a virtual classroom. School or university administrators should promote coaching instruction and educate teachers to understand what coaching is and be able to transform themselves into coaches. In addition, research studies on coaching in education should be conducted to find best practices in teaching and learning.

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