

Transforming learning through digital collaboration in the Maldives: Overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education Maldives (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education Maldives (MoHE) are committed to upholding Equal opportunity for free and compulsory education from Pre-school to grade 10 and free, quality education to all, from K to 12, as well as, for the first-degree level, irrespective of sex or locality, while considering education to be a basic right for all children and youth, including those with special education needs (SEN) (EDUCATION, 2019).

Since the government started enforcing a COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, more than 91,000 Maldivian students from pre-kindergarten to higher secondary have not been able to go to school (SHOBHANA SOSALE, 2020). The Ministry is partnering with three national television stations to develop educational programming. The public service broadcasting channel YesTV Maldives has launched classes for students from grades 10 and 11 and Internet service providers have also agreed to provide 5GB of free data to every student (SHOBHANA SOSALE, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed the landscape of higher education beyond national boundaries and a wide range of learning models are emerging, in particular in online learning at higher education institutions.

This article presents the relevant idea and concepts of Overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities on Transforming learning through digital collaboration and its impact of COVID-19 on higher education in the Maldives.

Key word: Transforming learning through digital collaboration in the Maldives

I. INTRODUCTION

Maldives, officially the Republic of Maldives, is an archipelagic state in the Indian subcontinent of Asia, situated in the Indian Ocean. It lies southwest of Sri Lanka and India, about 750 kilometres from the Asian continent's mainland.

The Maldives is a nation of islands in the Indian Ocean, that spans across the equator. The country is comprised of 1192 islands that stretch

along a length of 871 kilometers. While the country covers an area of approximately 90,000 square kilometers, only 298 square kilometers of that is dry land. The islands are grouped into a double chain of 26 atolls.

The Education Sector Plan (ESP) is developed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) at the onset, and with close collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), later in the revision stage. This work is funded by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), a global fund and a partnership, focused entirely on education in developing countries. The UNICEF Male' Office played the dual role of the Coordinating Agency (CA), as well as the Grant Agent (GA). (maldives, 29019)

The implementation of the Education Strategic Action Plan (ESAP) for 2014-18, was going to end in 2018. In response to this as well as the invitation to join the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Maldivian government expressed interest in joining GPE and requested GPE Secretariat's support in formalizing its application for funding to develop the country's Education Sector Plan. The request was accepted, and Maldives received funding support from GPE in late 2017 to (i) undertake a comprehensive Education Sector Analysis (ESA) and to (ii) develop a new Education Sector Plan (ESP) for the period 2019-23. (maldives M. o., 2019)

The Maldives has a functional literacy rate of 98%, which is the highest in the South Asia and Indian Ocean region. Educational standards are also among the highest in the region and schools follow the British system of education. English language is used as the medium of instruction in most schools; however, there are schools that provide Arabic and Islamic education specifically.

The Ministry of education aims to further enhance existing educational facilities and services so that every Maldivian will have access to quality primary and secondary education and hence increased scope for higher education and training. The education system of the country is designed such that it will foster religious and cultural values

though the curricula are based on external examinations that would enable Maldivian students to avail themselves to educational, training and employment opportunities both nationally and internationally. (maldives m. , 2020)

Maldives can leverage digital technologies to build back better for a more green, resilient, and inclusive development following the COVID-19 pandemic,

Digital collaboration in Maldives

In simple terms, digital collaboration is just collaborating and getting things done using digital devices and technology. It can include anything from tools, apps, software, procedures, processes, or a completely new methodology.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed the landscape of higher education beyond national boundaries and a wide range of learning models are emerging, in particular in online learning at higher education institutions.

During the pandemic, Ministry of Education Maldives (MoE) has navigated the challenge of preparing students for the future of learning as well as facilitating online education and virtual exchanges. As the pandemic has grabbed hold, foundations of advanced education have been needed to get ready for manageable drives which can improve understudies' groundbreaking learning experience through virtual internationalization and regarding understudies as dynamic students.

Digital collaboration has never been more significant or pertinent to organization. Notwithstanding the current pandemic, it has become evident that a computerized way to deal with joint effort is the main way for organizations to remain above water, oversee groups, and smooth out usefulness.

It is a fundamental factor in making employees feel happy and valued in their jobs. Introducing effective digital collaboration tools increases employee satisfaction and employee engagement.

In Maldives digital collaboration is not just about introducing new collaboration tools it's about a way of working that makes collaboration easier for employees even when they are working from different physical locations. That is why there is a need to better understand what digital collaboration really is and how it can change the way we work in the future.

Challenges in learning through digital collaboration in Maldives

In Maldives education is changing rapidly. More and more schools are shifting away from the traditional lecture style of instruction and toward a more active model of learning, in which students are collaborating on projects in small groups and then sharing their work with the class.

Collaborative learning doesn't simply help understudies. Instructors advantage too. For example, collective learning makes homeroom the board simpler.

Through transcending national boundaries, faculty members can build a virtual multicultural learning environment to facilitate collaborative and problem-based learning in addition to introducing innovation to enhance students' analytic skills. As the higher education sector transforms and embraces a digitally integrated future, partnership building is vital to provide effective online learning(Yuan, 2021).

innovative online learning could lay the foundations for the future sustainability of higher education and chart a course for greater virtualisation within the campus and beyond.

As further seminars reservoir digital collaboration for scholars, this opens up significant new possibilities for scholar collaboration. Scholars can probe a portion of a theme separately using their own propensity, either present what they learned to the group as a whole by participating their walls. Scholars can look at the same screen together as it's projected onto a large display, and canco-create or edit a document or present. But unclogging this kind of technologyenabled collaboration is n't easy.

The quality of education is a concern throughout the Maldives, and many adolescents lack access to higher secondary education. Though only 1.6 percent of children at the lower secondary level are not studying, only 45 percent of those children end up transitioning to the higher secondary level, according to the Ministry of Education. Higher secondary courses only exist in 59 out of 212 schools in the Maldives, making it impossible for some adolescents to continue their education unless they migrate to another island(Education, 2018).

Here are the some challenges in learning through digital collaboration in Maldives.

Accommodating multiple devices and platforms

For schools that have bought a solitary, uniform gadget for all understudies, supporting

different gadget types and stages probably won't be an issue. Yet, that is not the situation in a larger part of schools. A few schools have added new gadgets while proceeding to use their interests in more seasoned advancements, causing a circumstance where understudies in a similar homeroom may be utilizing various gadgets. Different schools have deliberately bought a blend of tablets, workstations, and Chromebooks on the grounds that they perceive that every gadget has one of a kind qualities that make it more fitting for specific assignments than others and instructors and understudies in these schools can pick the most ideally equipped apparatus for the work as they work on different exercises. All things considered, others support "bring your own gadget" programs in which understudies bring their very own gadgets from home to use at school. Interfacing different gadgets all the while to a common showcase requires a coordinated effort arrangement that can oblige any kind of gadget or stage, regardless of whether it's a Mac, a PC, an iPad, an Android tablet, or a Chromebook.

Switching seamlessly from one device to another

When you have multiple students presenting to a group or the class as a whole, switching from one device to another and getting their images up on the screen takes time, Thiele says. "We often find ourselves doing the 'cable Olympics' as each student comes up to the front of the classroom to present, or as students switch between devices during a small-group presentation." That loss of time can make a big difference during a 40-minute class period. It also disrupts the flow of a lesson, making it more likely that students will tune out even when the presentation finally continues.

Managing network resources

There are various items available that expect to address these difficulties however all the while, they have made new ones. For instance, a few organizations have had a go at making it simple to associate various gadgets to a solitary, shared screen through a piece of equipment that sits on a school's organization and goes about as a portable problem area. Understudies download an application to their gadgets that allows them to associate with this problem area, and afterward programming on the problem area permits them to stream what is on their gadget remotely to a common showcase. In any case, there are a couple of issues with this methodology. For a certain something, it requires a ton of data transmission.

"Many school pioneers haven't as expected the measure of Wi-Fi traffic those arrangements produce, or the logjam that makes on their organizations," Holmwood says.

Keeping costs low

The common authorizing expenses for a cloud-based arrangement can add up rapidly. Different arrangements permit understudies to interface their gadgets to a piece of equipment, called a "puck," that empowers them to change the substance on a common showcase starting with one gadget then onto the next with the press of a button however these arrangements by and large are costly and can just oblige four understudy gadgets all at once.

Assessing the quality of student collaboration

One more issue with most existing arrangements is that they don't give a simple method to instructors to evaluate the nature of the little gathering communication that is happening. "At the point when children are working in little gatherings, it tends to be truly challenging for the instructor to find time for the gatherings as a whole and pay attention to enough of the discussion to perceive how understudies are cooperating and give input," Thiel says. Additionally, when the educator is remaining behind someone and paying attention to the discussion, it changes the collective vibes and the idea of the cooperation among understudies.

Need for Self-Discipline

Numerous understudies battle with self-restraint in an advanced education homeroom setting. It's whenever they first don't have guardians and instructors effectively checking in. They don't get grounded in the event that they skip schoolwork to go mingle. As far as some might be concerned, it sets aside effort to track down the inborn inspiration to lock in and accomplish the work. In a web-based course, it's considerably simpler to "play hooky" or put off a task.

Missing Social Interaction

College is an inherently social time for many of us it's where we meet lifelong friends, even our future spouse. The social energy of a physical classroom can help with learning: There's lively discussion, people bouncing ideas off each other, forming groups, lifting each other up. The in-person dynamic is hard to capture in an online course, but you can capture the feeling of group learning, collaboration and socialization.

Encourage students to introduce themselves and interact with each other outside of the course material. If you have a forum set up for the course, make a space for non-course-related chatting.

Lack of Teacher Contact

It's not difficult to belittle how much instructor connection understudies get on an actual grounds. There's simply the guidance time, with constant Q & A. Then, at that point, there's potential for discussion just prior and then afterward class, available time, chance gatherings in the corridor... all chances that aren't accessible for internet learning.

Instructors need to require some additional work to be accessible for online courses. You don't need to dispose of individual limits, obviously; you don't need to give understudies your cell number or companion them via online media. Yet, it merits making a class-explicit visit represent understudies and setting hours during which they can anticipate a brief reaction. Answer email rapidly too.

Poor Time Management

This challenge is related to the self-discipline piece, but it deserves its own entry. One of the significant benefits of web based learning is that understudies can learn at their own speed. However, that benefit can likewise be a risk. There's a point where "their own speed" transforms into "dawdling and a distraught surge toward the finish of the semester." It's critical to assist understudies with dealing with their speed a long time before the cutoff times hit.

Technological Difficulties

We will in general assume that everybody approaches a new model laptop or desktop computer. Be that as it may, in any event, for an age of advanced locals, few out of every odd understudy has had a similar admittance to innovation. Many depend on their cell phone or a tablet for the entirety of their web-based action. Some will have limited access to broadband or Wi-Fi, even all of their data comes through their phone plan.

Overcoming for the Challenges learning through digital collaboration in Maldives

To improve the quality of education in schools, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to launch the Maldives Education Management Information System (MEMIS). MEMIS a real-time, student-based information system for tracking educational achievement. This

system, which was launched in 2017, is helping ensure every student obtains a high quality of education. The innovation is the first of its kind in South Asia.

With the dispatch of MEMIS, educators can more readily deal with their understudies' exhibition and study hall exercises. They can likewise effectively convey understudies' advancement to the two understudies and their families, giving continuous reports on a youngster's instructive status. By putting away school records, giving report cards, and following participation of the two educators and school staff, the framework is boosting responsibility in schools the nation over. The framework additionally incorporates an approach to follow weak youth who are in danger of exiting school, setting off activity to help these understudies when their grades and participation miss the mark.

Compared to the traditional classroom model, digital learning has plenty of advantages for teachers and students. Teaching and learning can take place whenever and wherever is most convenient for everyone.

Of course, digital learning has a unique set of challenges to go with the advantages. Many students who excel in a classroom will struggle with an online course. Even those who have no trouble mastering the material can fall behind on assignments and fail assessments.

It's important for teachers to be aware of these potential obstacles. With a little foresight and planning, you can help your students get the most out of every course.

Basically make it as clear as possible what students should be doing now, how much progress they've made, and what's coming up soon. Calendars, reminders and organizational tools can provide structure without seeming overbearing.

Then, at that point, make coordinated effort a key piece of the course. Urge understudies to frame gatherings and work along with shared records (like Google Docs). Permit (however don't need) bunch projects for appraisal. Energize significant remarking on both course materials and understudy work. It will probably take some inciting to kick these discussions off, however it shouldn't take long for joint effort and communication to gather speed.

Instructors need to require some additional work to be accessible for online projects.

Understudy or instructor don't need to dispose of individual limits, obviously; educators don't need to give understudies your cell number or companion them via online media. Be that as it may, it merits making a class-explicit talk represent understudies and setting hours during which they can anticipate a brief reaction. Answer email rapidly too.

Above all, be available in the discussions understudies are having about the course material. Answer to remarks, answer questions, ask follow-up inquiries. That way, you can be available for understudies, yet in addition brief them to gain from one another also.

Downloading records, printing pages, in any event, utilizing Word archives might be out of date for the versatile original. Pick course materials that are not difficult to explore on cell phones and tablets, just as PC and work area.

Seizing opportunities

Online learning can make education more accessible and convenient for teachers and students, but it's not without its challenges. It's important to anticipate the potential obstacles and give students the tools to overcome them. The right structure, technology, and course materials can better equip students to succeed, in the class and beyond.

Improve digital collaboration in the organization

Take a strategic approach

An excessive number of organization expect computerized cooperation devices to mystically tackle all of their joint effort challenges immediately. Truly can't simply purchase a membership of a joint effort instrument and anticipate that it should smooth out all of the cooperation issues consequently. You need to execute these devices deliberately with the end goal for them to work.

Make a computerized joint effort procedure by characterizing behavior for correspondence and ensuring each worker in the association knows about it. You ought to likewise report subtleties of the various apparatuses utilized inside the organization for coordinated effort alongside their fundamental use purposes.

Use collaboration tools that don't become a distraction

If you use separate tools for different aspects of digital collaboration like project

management, communication, instant messaging, and video calls, it is easy for employees to feel overwhelmed and get distracted. Your employees may end up spending the majority of their time toggling between different collaboration tools instead of actually working.

To improve digital collaboration, you should use collaboration tools that help employees manage their work more effectively without hampering their productivity in any way. It's also preferable to go for tools with centralized notifications to make sure employees are not bogged down with incessant notifications and messages from everywhere.

Create a central repository for storing and sharing documents

A big part of digital collaboration is sharing and accessing documents in real-time. Without a single place to store all of your work-related data, you will find yourself spending hours just tracking down the right versions of important work files. Moreover, when team members don't have access to the same file versions, it can create confusion and affect the work greatly.

By creating a central repository for storing all documents and files, you can make sure everyone in the team has access to the right data and file versions they need to manage their work seamlessly.

Take note of all the time zone differences

Teaming up carefully in a worldwide association implies working with colleagues across different areas and times zones. To smooth out computerized joint effort, you need to observe constantly zone contrasts and figure out normal spaces of time during the day when all the colleagues can meet up for conversations.

Start by drilling down constantly zones and working hours of the colleagues and afterward search for covering timings where everybody is accessible to plan gatherings.

How to measure the impact of digital collaboration

Understand the problems

You can only see a clear impact of your digital collaboration strategy if it can solve some of your work problems and smoothen out work processes. When you introduce a new collaboration tool or technology, you need to understand what problems it is trying to solve and whether it can even solve any issues your employees face.

Look for technology fatigue

Make it a propensity to routinely get some information about the instruments that they use for coordinated effort. In case there are such a large number of devices that the workers need to utilize, it might cause an innovation weakness, making it hard for them to get up to speed and monitor everything. You would basically be putting huge load of cash into new and progressed apparatuses just to see computerized coordinated effort decline in the group.

The thought is to keep the quantity of cooperation instruments that your group utilizes, as less as possible spotlight inclining further toward their real work and invest less energy shuffling the various devices.

Define your Key performance indicators (KPIs)

In the event that you don't have the foggiest idea what ideal joint effort resembles for your association, you can't gauge the accomplishment of advanced cooperation precisely. That is the reason you ought to settle on the really Key performance indicators(KPIs) for advanced cooperation and set benchmarks for commitment levels for each quarter. You would then be able to utilize these measurements to quantify the coordinated effort of various groups inside the association.

Additionally, when estimating computerized joint effort, you shouldn't zero in on how long workers spend utilizing cooperation instruments or the number of messages they ship off their partners. That is not where you'll see their actual worth.

All things being equal, you should zero in on how well colleagues team up with one another, how routinely they impart to rapidly resolve an issue, and how long they spend in profound work. The expansion in usefulness and proficiency, and reduction in bottlenecks just as miscommunication is the place where you will see the genuine worth of advanced cooperation.

Accomplishing advanced joint effort through relevant organization

Setting focused joint exertion brings all the diverse web based collaboration devices together to one single interface and simplifies it for gatherings to collaborate cautiously. Consistent composed exertion stages like an automated work space let people access all of the records, conversations, endeavors, exercises, plans, and diverse data through a bound together dashboard.

With an unavoidably distant workforce and focus on cutting edge collaboration, pertinent joint exertion has become more critical than some other time.

II. RECOMMENDATION

Build STRATEGIES and ROUTINES

In order to guide students towards effective and efficient collaboration in the classroom, teachers must devote time to building the strategies and routines students will need to be successful. (Harris, 2019)

Determine your COLLABORATION TYPE

Students must learn how to collaborate using digital tools-- to work through challenges, give constructive feedback and create products. As you plan your lessons, consider whether shared or individual devices are the best choice to facilitate learning, and practice collaboration/communication skills.

Choose Best DIGITAL TOOL

While advanced apparatuses ought not be the focal point of the learning action, they can uphold cooperation endeavors by making the interaction really captivating and proficient. Look at our number one devices beneath:

Google Hangouts or Skype

These web visit stages make it simple for understudies to work together outside of the homeroom. Simply send welcomes straightforwardly from the site to associate in a flash. Both permit screen sharing so dealing with communitarian slides, docs or bookkeeping pages progressively is a simple task. This is an extraordinary device for conceptualizing thoughts, cementing project designs, and meeting specialists. For subtleties on the best way to start, visit the Hangouts Help page or Skype Educators Guide.

Google Apps (Docs, Slides, Drawings, Keep)

The Google set-up of applications was worked for simple, smoothed out cooperation and correspondence. With simply a solitary sign on, understudies can get to instruments to compose, draw, conceptualize, diagram and coordinate(Yuan, 2021).

GooseChase EDU

Create computerized scrounger chases to get your understudies cooperating. Educators can

assemble a bunch of missions requesting that understudies submit photograph, video, text or area proof. Understudies work in groups or as people to gather focuses for every mission finished. An incredible device for auditing recently showed material as understudies look for changed idea models around the school or record short clarifications of a point(McDonald, 2006).

Seesaw

Teachers can catch understudy learning in diaries and even offer with guardians. With Seesaw's remarking component, understudies (and guardians) can give genuine criticism that supports and drives learning further.

Clarify Everything

This intuitive whiteboard and show application is a vigorous decision for cooperation. Understudies can import content, compose, attract and record sound to exhibit learning. This device works similar as an improved slideshow show device with extraordinary elements that take your work to a higher level(Yuan, 2021).

Plan for your ASSESSMENT

One way we can emphasize the value of interpersonal skills is to provide information to our students on their progress through assessment.

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