

Editorial

Role of Parents in Online Learning

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COVID 19 has pulled the strings of time in transformation of whole educational system. The reliance on physical presence as mainstream instructional strategy shifted to online system. This process has been so abrupt that many imperative steps of preparation for the transition could not be put in place. Online learning On the basis of a scoping review conducted for a Josiah Maticy Jr. In Foundation consensus conference on improving environments for learning in the health professions in April 2018 following definition was proposed: “Learning environment refers to the social interactions, organizational culture and structures, and physical and virtual spaces that surround and shape the learners’ experiences, perceptions, and learning”. Regarding these factors the culture and context of learning is different in developing countries if we compare with developed. The learning environment should be comfortable in all aspects such as the physical, trust, respect, helpfulness and freedom.¹

In a survey conducted by Baticulon et al in 2021 online learning barriers faced in developing countries were categorized as technological, individual, domestic, institutional and community related. Home related issues include Lack of devices or limited access due to gadget sharing unreliable, slow, or no internet access, limited space conducive for studying, need to fulfill responsibilities at home, conflicts within the family, financial distress within the household and lack of basic needs². In another study done during Covid 19 in Mexico the effect of three environmental factors, including lighting temperature and noise on academic performance of University students was studied and it was found that these factors have statistically significant effect on academic performance.³

Pakistan shares unique challenges, in online learning, with other resource constrained countries and parents have a major role in provision of most facilities of learning environment due to scarce availability of other support systems in the society. Additionally, owing to the fact that most of the population come from rural background, parents are not tech savvy enough to arrange for adequate and efficient communication tools for their offspring.

Drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu 2000 it is appropriate and relevant to insert his quote for better understanding of the situation “When powers are unequally distributed, the economic and social world presents itself not as a universe of possible-equally accessible to every possible subject- posts to be occupied, courses to be taken . . . but rather as a signposted universe, full of injunctions and prohibitions, signs of appropriation and exclusion, obligatory routes or impassable barriers, and, in a word, profoundly differentiated”.⁴.

Education researchers consider parents role in children’s learning as a complex process. The tendency of labeling the attitude of less involved parents as not caring or lacking interest is not correct. A number of studies highlight that social class differences, in particular, inform how parents engage and are able to bring different resources for facilitating children’s educational trajectories.⁵

There is no literature available in Pakistan focusing on the particular issue of class difference regarding home learning. Due to population growth, many people are bound to live in small places and it is hard to find a suitable dedicated space for studying at home. Besides, parents or guardians assume that only younger children require their support and involvement in learning process while adolescents and adults have to find their own way. Similarly, institutional practices regarding involvement of parents in the studies of medical students vary from one to other and this divide further deepens when we compare public with private. All these factors collectively determine parents’ contribution in academic achievements of the students.

These gaps should be bridged by strong liaison of medical institutions with the parents of their students. Frequent meetings, mutual consultations and training of the parents have the potential to create suitable learning environments for the students and this endeavor can achieve maximum productivity with existing resources.

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