Sharing Professional Viewpoint:
Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Teaching and Face-to-face Teaching

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1. Introduction

In 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out worldwide, and since then the Thai government has advised schools and universities to change their teaching methods to online teaching. One question has come up: whether or not networked methods can completely replace the traditional face-to-face teaching methods in the long term. In this regard, the author has put his current teaching practice in the online mode for Course ICE 1105 Accounting for Decision Making in the BBA program by analyzing and comparing advantages and disadvantages between network and face-to-face teaching. Here are some viewpoints to be shared with readers.

2. Positive Aspects of Online Teaching

First of all, there is a large amount of information on the Internet. The emergence of convenience and speed has built an "information highway" for learners to obtain various information easily and quickly.

Secondly, online learning breaks through the barriers of time and space. Although Chinese students cannot come to Thailand to study at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, they can still learn online in China without delaying their studies. Students can also search for materials through the Internet, watch learning-related videos, use the courseware to learn, and discuss with other students on the Internet, and communicate with teachers using online media to ask questions.

Thirdly, the online teaching method is more conducive to promoting students' autonomous learning because "teacher-student separation" and "teaching separation" promote the network teaching method in place of the traditional teacher-led to student-led learning, which in turn encourages students' participation in knowledge construction activities. All these make the teaching process more scientific and reasonable.

3. Problems in Online Teaching in Course Teaching

First of all, online learning requires students to have a clear learning purpose, good learning habits, and a proactive learning attitude. Course instructors need to recognize individual differences in students' learning styles and attitudes. For those who are not well motivated, the separation between teachers and students could pose a real problem in that learners may not be attentive to their study, and may not do their homework on their own or at worst even copy from their peers or information resources on the Internet. The Internet is vibrant with vast information for students to choose for their studies. If students are not strong in self-management and control, they can easily get lost in the network. If things go on like this, they will not be able to achieve their learning goals. Moreover, such students may be able to mislead other students in the virtual learning context.

Secondly, as for the ICE 1105 Accounting for Decision Making course taught by the author, there are a lot of valuable contents, such as auditing and filling in original vouchers, making accounting vouchers, registering account books, and the like in practical operation and

training. With the current network teaching method, the author is very concerned over spatial difficulties which may delay students' opportunity to conduct practical training.

Thirdly, it is difficult to get spontaneous feedback from students via online teaching because the teacher cannot always observe their facial expressions and reactions in the online teaching session; the teacher only sees students on the screen and has to ask or guess the extent to which they have grasped the content in the lesson. It is also difficult to conduct group work or get quick reaction from individual students. From the author's experience, students tend to delay their responses or if at worst, turn off their video contact.

Fourthly, since ICE 1105 Accounting for Decision Making has a mid-term exam and a final exam, it is difficult to administer a genuinely rigorous closed-book exam via the online teaching method. Therefore, it is not easy for the author to know the actual learning situation on the students' side.

4. Advantages and Problems of Face-to-Face Teaching

As known, teachers are familiar with the face-to-face teaching method to obtain immediate feedback from students in the teaching process and can adjust their teaching strategies and learning activities as seen fit in a particular learning context. Teachers are sensitive to the learning atmosphere and pressure of teaching pace on students, and naturally willing to adjust   the interactive process in support of students' learning. Whether specific points need to be explained or consolidated, could be done with ease in face-to-face situation. Both verbal and non-verbal cues from students can prompt the teacher's appropriate actions to facilitate students' learning. More importantly, face-to-face interactions enable the teacher to better supervise students who are rather passive in learning and encourage their participation in learning activities. However, the author is well aware that even with limitations of online teaching, the teacher should make best efforts to deliver online teaching to achieve the target learning outcomes at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Recommendations

In the online teaching mode, teachers and students are physically separated but virtually united. To the author, it is very important to pay attention to the emotion factor in building social skills when communicating with students online. Interactions before opening and closing the lesson are vital in keeping a good interactive relationship with students. All files on the course plan, objectives, specific learning points and learning activities per lesson, learning outcomes, assignments, references, and evaluation criteria need to be sent to students one week before the first class for their self-preparation. The use of social media in support of communication throughout the course is advisable; students can then write questions, make suggestions, or even request clarification or consultation after class. The use of email or social media can boost communication between the teacher and students, and ensure that the former has provided well for the latter's learning conditions, the teaching process, and effective course monitoring for overall quality teaching.

6. The Author

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