

Recorded teaching materials and their impact on students attendance, engagement and performance during Covid-19

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Introduction

Face-to-face (F2F) delivery of teaching across universities in the UK had to move to an online platform during the onset of Covid 19 in March 2020. The shift was so quick during the mid-semester delivery cycle that neither students nor academic staff was prepared for such change. Students did not have much idea on how technology could effectively deliver unit contents using a virtual platform and how it could impact their learning and knowledge in a subject area. Anxiety was much more visible on the final year students whose degree classification was at stake as they were about to complete their studies on a degree programme. To alleviate their stress and anxiety university brought no detrimental policy that guarantees a student that their final mark on a unit can't be lower than that of their average marks were before the pandemic. The academic year 2020-21 continued from the same policies as established in the 2019-20 academic year. However, the difference between graduating students of 2019-20 and 2020-21 is that the 2020-21 students who would be graduating in 2020-21 are much better prepared than last year's graduating students. These new cohorts of students have a very clear understanding of the role and implications of the online recorded lectures and seminars on their learning and knowledge. On F2F delivery, there is a significant correlation between attendance, engagement, and performance on the assessments (both assignment and exam) (Stanca 2006; Horn and Jansen 2009).

Research Gap and Research Question

Covid 19 posed significant challenges on effective delivery of teaching and engaging students on a virtual learning platform. Academics faced significant challenges on how to engage students in a virtual live classroom where students often do not switch on their cameras and microphones. However, during the pandemic the way technology has been used to deliver learning using recorded lectures and seminars on a virtual platform, attendance and engagement in higher education seem to lose their importance since students do not have to attend classes to get access to the course material (Büchele, 2021).

Recording lectures and seminars became the norm in higher education for synchronous and asynchronous teaching during Covid-19. This has impacted academics through increased workload by first learning disparate new technologies within a very short period and experiment with them to test their effectiveness in virtual platforms. Recorded lectures and seminars were either uploaded well in advance of actual delivery on an online platform or uploaded immediately after the live delivery of the sessions. However, the question emerged would all these activities improved students attendance and engagement in live lectures and seminars?

Findings

Our findings based on delivering live sessions suggest that on the contrary students' attendance and engagements have significantly dropped during live online delivery, specifically, across all the units (core and optional) within the level 5 undergraduate programme. The cohort sizes are at least over 50 students and attendance rates were 25% or lower in most of the sessions. It is unlikely that 75% of the non-attendance could be attributed to accessibility issues such as availability of a functional computer, broadband, location, quiet space in a house and others. Non-attendance and non-engagement on units significantly affected students' learning and knowledge development in a degree programme. The dichotomy between uploaded recorded lectures and seminars before or immediately after the live virtual sessions and their impact on students attendance, engagement and performance in assessments (both assignment and examination) must be further examined in future research.

Keywords: Recorded Lectures, Engagement, Performance

References

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