
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Strategies for Effective Distance Learning in Foreign Language, Linguistics and Translation College Courses

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| ABSTRACT

Due to Covid-19, there was a sudden shift to distance learning (DL) without prior preparation. Students and faculty surveys showed that 51% of the students were dissatisfied with EL, online communication with their instructors, had difficulty understanding the online class lectures and material and had concerns about exams. Even when face to face instruction was resumed in Fall 2021, some courses were still delivered online. It seems that some departments, colleges, and universities will continue to offer some courses online. To make the best use of online teaching and learning, this article proposes a model consisting of strategies for making distance teaching and learning in foreign language, linguistics and translation college courses effective, interactive, engaging and fun. Those strategies are: Using some free platforms, supplying devices and good infrastructure to both students and instructors, practicing using the platform, supplementing the platform with one or more technologies, orientation, training and support, telling the students about online class logistics, selecting online course material and resources, integrating global topics and participation goals in the class material, practicing a variety of language skills with online videos, blogs, mobile apps and others, using effective teaching techniques, assignments, and activities, giving feedback, motivating and engaging the students, online communication and interaction, nurturing the online classroom community, preparing and following effective and reliable online testing procedures, the instructor's role in the distance learning environments, evaluating the students' and faculty DL experience, and providing teachers' professional development and support.

| KEYWORDS

Distance learning, online learning, teaching strategies, online teaching strategies, effective teaching strategies, distance teaching techniques, requirements of effective teaching.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The massive and abrupt transition from face-to-face instruction to distance learning (DL) in schools and universities around the world was overwhelming due to the lack of preparedness and practice by students and instructors. This abrupt transition posed new challenges for administrators, faculty and students. Numerous studies in the literature have reported the challenges that students and instructors in some countries faced in DL. In Canada, Ives & Walsh (2021) explored the transition to DL in seven universities between 2002 and 2017 and found that the challenges that faced those universities included resistance to change from traditional face-to-face learning and teaching to online learning, lack of effective, visionary leadership and lack of dedicated resources.

In Turkey, results of a survey about DL showed that attending live classes negatively affected students' motivation. The teachers also thought that instructional materials on the DL platform were insufficient for students to be successful. Most teachers received support from the school administration, but not from parents. The students did not own computers and/or internet and there were frequent system errors (Eminoglu, Atila, Yildiz & Bozkurt, 2021). In another study, female students were less satisfied with DL than male students (Turan, Kucuk & Cilligol Karabey, 2022).

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At the high school level in the Philippines, teachers in Bulacan emphasized several challenges that they encountered in DL such as lack of focus due to work-related and home-related activities at home; additional cost for internet; worrying about the distribution and retrieval of modules; unrealistic answers in modules for academic records; having to purchase additional gadgets and/or technological equipment; pushing students to become digital natives; lack of discipline on the part of the students and insufficient teacher authority in the online class; limited social development and interaction; and lack of privacy. Likewise, the students indicated that DL imposed additional expenses on their family especially internet subscription; limited learning opportunities; lack of social interaction; students were not available during online classes; misusing technology; dishonesty due to availability of an answer key page in the modules; being a hassle to parents during weekly revision because they had to consult the modules; lack of privacy; lack of subject-matter knowledge and competence on the part of working parents, and inability to provide sufficient guidance to the students (Hernandez, 2021). Núñez (2021) added the feeling of isolation in DL for students in the Philippines.

In the UAE, faculty members and students at Al Ain University reported some challenges as the digital divide, shifting the attention from the primary goal of the learning to developing ICT skills, lack of interaction between teacher and students, and challenges in DL implementation. Students and faculty also reported poor internet connection, poor images and audio, lack of practical applications in the labs, classroom management difficulties, and the communication gap between instructors and students. Female participants mentioned more challenges than male participants and students reported more challenges than instructors. Instructors and students from the College of Communication and Media reported the most challenges, followed by the College of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences and College of Law (El Refae, Kaba & Eletter, 2021).

In addition, pre-service English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) teachers believed distance teaching practicum was ineffective in enhancing their professional learning and preparing them for the first year of teaching. They thought that the teaching practicum conducted face-to-face cannot be replaced by distance teaching practicum (Kosar, Gülten, 2021).

Education instructors in the Kafkas and Trakya in Turkey revealed few more challenges such as increasing homework load, insufficient explanation of educational tasks, problems caused by the pandemic, internet problems, technological problems in the system, difficulties in acquiring and developing metacognition skills, and uniformity in teaching methods and techniques (Ortas & Demir, 2022).

A special issue of a brief from the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR Center) and the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) highlighted six primary barriers teachers often face with DL: (i) Struggling to keep students focused and engaged; (ii) Ensuring that students are connected and that their social and emotional needs are addressed; (iii) addressing students' wide range of skills and experiences using technology for learning; (iv) supporting students' learning in order to process and retain new contents; (v) helping students' manage their workload and avoid being overwhelmed; and (vi) Facilitating family engagement (Herburger, Holdheide & Sacco, 2020).

Regarding the support services provided to students at the University of Ghana, Amponsah, Ussher and Amoak Benjamin (2021) indicated that although technological support services were frequently provided to the students, residential and e-library resources were the least support services provided to the students. Similarly, interaction with tutors and fellow students was the main support services available to the students, yet counselling services were not provided to those students. The teachers, parents and students needed more and different resources to make a supportive and developmentally appropriate DL that is accessible to all the students and specifically meets vulnerable students' needs (Ali, Cherukumilli, & Herrera (2021).

Other important challenges of DL are finding ways for providing feedback to students in a timely and meaningful way to help them improve their performance, actively engaging them in the learning process, and keeping the link between the students and their teachers (Jurs & Špehte, 2021).

In Saudi Arabia, results of a questionnaire-survey, conducted in Spring 2020, revealed that 55% of the students and instructors, at a sample of universities, were dissatisfied with DL and found it ineffective because it was abrupt, and the instructors and students received no prior training and were not technically prepared for the abrupt transition from face to face to DL as some did not have devices and Internet access. It was difficult for the students to understand online lectures and found DL a lot of hard work. The instructors reported low student engagement and motivation, absence of goals, low self-efficacy and absence of students' agency. The students had a negative role. They did not do homework, refused to give oral presentations, did not ask questions and did not participate in discussions as it was the case in face-to-face instruction. There was an attendance problem. Students would appear online but in reality, they were away, because they could replay the lecture recordings any time they needed, i.e., they preferred asynchronous to synchronous learning. The students complained of lack of online communication with their instructors.

Many instructors and students complained of the inefficient and insufficient infrastructure, and slow internet connection (Al-Jarf, 2020a; Al-Jarf, 2021f).

No adjustments were made and no new courses and skills were offered in the languages, translation, linguistics and literature, curricula in the DL courses offered to students during the first 3 semesters of the Pandemic. The same face-to-face curriculum was used in DL. The only difference was in the delivery mode. Similarly, none of the universities and/or colleges in Saudi Arabia created a department, a program or offered courses in health crisis/disaster management during pandemic for undergraduate or graduate students. There were some alternatives for completing the Teaching Practicum and Graduation Projects offered to senior students as there was no face-to-face training/practice. Universities did not adapt their curricula nor offered senior college students any training courses or seminars in job search techniques and digital and interpersonal skills to prepare them for the Pandemic job market (Al-Jarf, 2022e; Al-Jarf, 2022r; Al-Jarf, 2022o; Al-Jarf, 2022i; Al-Jarf, 2022y).

In addition, analysis of the faculty surveys and students' comments on Twitter showed that the main concern of 91% of the students was final exams and passing courses with high grades. Students were worried about the negative effect of online exams on their GPA. They complained about exam questions, grading and marks. Instructors declared that online exams were ineffective. Some students overslept and started exams late. Since the students were not familiar with online exams taken via Blackboard, they were tense and were wondering whether they would do well. Some cheated on online exams as they turned their cameras off. Instructors had doubts as to whether the students took the tests and answered the questions themselves. Numerous adjustments were mandated by university administrations in Saudi Arabia to alleviate students' anxiety such as allocating 20% of the course mark to the final exam, allowing more exam time, giving projects, open-book exams, term papers, reports, assignments or giving a presentation instead of the written final. Some instructors gave easy questions, gave objective questions, no essay questions and were lenient in grading to avoid students' complaints. The students were given the option to drop the course, to choose a letter grade, pass/fail, i.e., no grade, or to have a course mark included in their GPA. As a result, grade inflation was evident in students' grades. Between 20% & 65% chose a pass/no-grade results. The rest of the students earned A & B grades in Spring 2020 when instruction and assessment were held online. In Fall 2020, all college courses were still held online but exams were held on campus, i.e., face to face. Starting Fall 2021, both instruction and exams were held on campus. Mark distribution and exam requirements went back to normal as before the Pandemic. Nevertheless, grade inflation was evident in many courses even in Spring 2022 (Al-Jarf, 2020a; Al-Jarf, 2022p; Al-Jarf, 2022j).

Similar challenges were revealed by secondary-school EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia who showed preference for traditional in-class instruction rather than DL due to their familiarity with it as they had no prior experience with DL. They reported technical problems, lack of internet connectivity and human interaction, increased workload, unreliable assessment of students' learning, and students' unwillingness to learn (Aldossari & Altalhab, 2022).

Although DL was mandatory at Saudi schools and universities in Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021, face-to-face instruction was resumed in most courses in Fall 2021, few courses were still delivered online. Since DL will presumably be part of the educational system at the university level in the post-Covid-19 era and to overcome the weaknesses, shortcomings of DL and the challenges that both college instructors and students faced, this study presents some strategies for effective DL in foreign language, linguistics and translation courses which focus on the different aspects of DL. The strategies included in the proposed model will serve as guidelines to help both instructors and students make the best use of DL.

2. Requirements of Effective Distance Learning

1) Availability of devices and good infrastructure and good internet speed at an affordable price for students and instructors. Students with no computers and internet access can use facilities at the school library or computer labs, may borrow a computer from school, can find a computer and internet within their relatives or neighbours, and may use resources in the community such as the public library. Large companies and/or businesses can donate devices to the students. The instructor can use project-based activities in which work in small groups consisting of students having a computer and internet access and those who do not. As an example, in Jordan, the Ministry of Education set up caravans (mobile homes) in remote areas with computers and internet access which unprivileged students in those areas could use at their own convenience. Lessons can be broadcast to students on TV. Lessons can be broadcast through sports channels (Al-Jarf, 2021f).

2) Selecting a platform

Instructors can select a free platform to use with their students. Examples of the top free learning management systems, best online learning platforms, and best webinar software are presented in Tables 1, 2, 3.

The adoption of a Learning Management System (LMS) by teachers requires that the school or college administrate organise hands-on training sessions to improve teachers' computer self-efficacy and explain the importance of the LMS and its features and

tools to offer an effective open and DL environment for delivering high-quality DL courses (Mohamed Riyath & Muhammed Rijah, 2022).

The utilization of a variety of online learning management systems such as Blackboard, Moodle, Nicenet, and RCampus in the teaching of reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, English for art education purposes to EFL college students proved to be effective in enhancing students' English language skills (Al-Jarf, 2019c; Al-Jarf, 2010a; Al-Jarf, 2009a; Al-Jarf, 2009b; Al-Jarf, 2007a; Al-Jarf, 2007b; Al-Jarf, 2007c; Al-Jarf, 2006e; Al-Jarf, 2005a; Al-Jarf, 2004b; Al-Jarf, 2002).

Table 1: Top Free Learning Management Systems

TalentLMS	GoSkills	Schoology	MyiCourse
TalentCards	Chamilo	ATutor	Eliademy
Moodle	Sakai	Claroline Connect	Chalkup
Coggnos	LatitudeLearning	CourseSites	Schoology

Table 2: Best Online Learning Platforms

LearnWorlds	Open-edX	Docebo	Shift
Udemy	WizIQ	Adobe Captivate	Lectora Inspire
Skillshare	Teachable	Elucidat	Blackboard Learn
Coursera	Kajabi	Articulate 360	Podia
Thinkific	Google Classroom		

Table 3: Best Webinar Software

ON24	BigMarker	Zoom	Skype Video Meetings
Cisco Webex	Livestorm	LiveWebinar	GoToMeeting
Zoho Meeting	GoToWebinar	Facebook Live	Vimeo Livestream
ClickMeeting	Adobe Connect	YouTube Live	WebinarJam
Microsoft Teams	Periscope	WebEx	Elluminate
Google Meet	Skype	WhatsApp	Telegram

3) Practice using the platform

Try the platform or LMS you have selected. Get to know the design; the different tools in the platform; how to adjust the audio and video; how to upload material such as Powerpoint presentation, a text, and how to share the screen, use the whiteboard; how to use the platform chat; how to solve issues with platform by seeking help from colleagues who are good at using the platform. Do not use many platforms at the same time. Try two or three platform to select the one that is the most convenient. But use one platform per semester. Provide help to the students.

4) Supplement the platform with one or more technologies

Supplement the platform with a wiki, podcasts, Hyperdocs (digital lesson plans), Kahoo, ConnectYard, Padlet (an app like paper for your screen where you can start with an empty page and then put whatever you like on it).

You can supplement the platform with video conferencing tools such as Elluminate, Periscope, Facebook Watch party and Youtube Live and others that have been proven effective in enhancing students' learning. Output quality was found to have a positive influence on students' perceived usefulness and acceptance of video conferencing tools in DL. The integration of synchronous distance lecturing solutions based on free audioconferencing and screen sharing networking technologies provided valuable means for effective implementation of DL. The students appeared to be highly satisfied with the possibilities and functionalities that the system offers (Nguyen, Pho, Luong, & Cao, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2021g; Kotevski & Milenkoski, 2018; Al-Jarf, 2013; Al-Jarf 2014b).

Haga (2002) Proposed a computer-mediated education system, developed at Doshisha University in Japan. It uses discussion-embedded digital lecture videos and bulletin board systems in DL. The students can read related discussions while watching a lecture video, facilitating further discussion and achieving a more effective DL environment. Moreover, online videos can be used for a variety of purposes and for developing listening, speaking, pronunciation, writing vocabulary and grammar skills (Al-Jarf, 2017a; Al-Jarf, 2012b; Al-Jarf, 2011b).

Personal and class blogs can be used for practicing reading, writing and vocabulary (Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2022c).

Mobile apps for developing students' listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar skills can be used. The students can use apps that match their proficiency level, needs and interests. They can use them at their own convenience (Al-Jarf, 2022m; Al-Jarf, 2022n; Al-Jarf, 2022v; Al-Jarf, 2021d; Al-Jarf, 2021h; Al-Jarf, , 2021i; Al-Jarf, 2020d; Al-Jarf, 2012a; Al-Jarf, 2012c). Mobile learning is an effective tool for improving communication and learning. It plays a key role in students' academic progress. It enables students to get the latest information about their courses and exams easily, but research has shown that some students are unaware of this fact. Therefore, guidance is needed for both teachers and students regarding various forms of mobile learning, with training sessions conducted to bring awareness to the students and to highlight the importance of mobile learning (Shams, Ajmal & Jumani, 2021).

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter can be used for practicing writing and translation (Al-Jarf, 2020c; Al-Jarf, 2018a; Al-Jarf, 2015c; Al-Jarf, 2015b; Al-Jarf, 2014c).

5) Orientation, Training and Support

Students and teachers should be introduced to DL and should be trained to use the platform. Provide technical support. Help with technical problems. Instructors may train instructors, i.e., peer training. In addition, instructors need instructional orientation, training and support. They need to practice how to select and design online materials; how to prepare and administer online tests; and how to communicate with students and respond to them. Peer training and team teaching can be used. Instructors teaching the same course can share resources.

6) Tell the Students about Online Class Logistics

Give the students the online class rules for online class attendance, logging in late, missing classes and exams, and assignment deadlines. Inform the students of the distribution of course marks, marks allocated to class participation, attendance, and homework-assignments, semester work, and final exam. Tell the students about exams such as types of assessment (formative or summative), how many quizzes and tests, assessment forms (quizzes, term papers, open-book exam, assignments, giving a presentation, submitting a group project and others).

7) Select Online Course Material and Resources

In an online learning environment, depending on paper textbooks and handouts used in the traditional face-to-face instruction is insufficient. A plethora of online materials and resources can be selected and integrated in the online course such as online videos from CNN, BBC, RT, and Aljazeera for listening, pronunciation and speaking practice; online newspaper articles; news reports; online magazines; internet websites; UNICEF videos and articles¹; World Health Organization², CNN, BBC, RT and Aljazeera articles, mobile Apps, and online specialized dictionaries. Upload and share PDFs, PowerPoints, audio, and video files. The students can search for videos, podcasts, statistics, daily news, articles, and pictures.

8) Integrate Global Issues and Participation Goals

Global themes and current issues can be integrated into EFL and translation courses such as tracking Covid-19 daily news, country statistics, the Covid-19 causes, treatment, prevention, work, study or daily life during Covid-19, and Covid-19's effect on the economy, politics, society, education, health, culture, tourism, and the environment. Other issues that can be integrated are global warming, gas and oil crisis, inflation, high prices, food and water shortage, air pollution. Ethnic cultural Facebook pages can be integrated in EFL Instruction as well (Al-Jarf, 2022g; Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2015c).

Participation goals refer to students' involvement in social, educational, health, political and/or technological problems. Here the students describe a social issue, problem or event, diagnose the problem, and propose solutions. Select issues, events or problems with which students are familiar and to which they can relate. Select topics of interest to the students. Give a context or a situation. Personalize the topic (as student views it). Make it specific and focused by asking for certain details, causes and solutions (Al-Jarf, 2021e).

The students may share an online course, blog, an online discussion forum, or social media page with students studying the same course in other countries. Thus, they can communicate and interact with them and learn about each other's culture (Al-Jarf, 2006a; Al-Jarf, 2004a).

¹ <https://www.unicef.org/stories>

² <https://www.who.int/>

9) Practice a variety of language and translation skills with online materials

Listening

For listening and pronunciation practice, the students may listen to the news, online videos, mobile audiobooks and/or podcasts. They summarize the content and answer comprehension questions. They can practice grapheme-phoneme correspondence, phonics, stress, assimilation, elision, and intonation (Al-Jarf, 2022w; Al-Jarf, 2022x; Al-Jarf, 2022; Al-Jarf, 2021; Al-Jarf, 2021K).

Use supplementary mobile audiobooks to develop students' listening comprehension and literary appreciation skills as: understanding the main idea and supporting details; identifying the plot, setting, characters, theme, point of view, imagery, symbolism, style and tone, and figurative language in a short story, novel, or play; deriving meaning of difficult words from contextual and structural clues in the spoken context; understanding anaphoric relationships in the spoken discourse; connecting information in the spoken discourse with the students' prior knowledge; making predictions from the main title (heading); understanding the organizational structure of the spoken discourse (chronology, enumeration, analogy, cause effect, classification, compare/contrast, whole/part, process, analogy), and identifying organizational clues, and transitional words; focusing on content words, figures, dates, statistics, and other details; making an outline of the main topics and sub-topics in the text or parts of it. The instructor may combine listening and reading activities; listening and writing activities; listening comprehension and vocabulary; listening comprehension, decoding skills and spelling (Al-Jarf, 2021h; Al-Jarf, 2005b).

Speaking

For speaking practice, EFL college instructors can use a variety of online speaking activities such as: (i) assigning a topic which the students research and prepare at home and then give an online oral presentation about it through the platform; (iii) answering problem-solving questions; (ii) using online debates about some issues; (iv) creating podcasts on topics of interest to the students and publishing them in a Speaking Center on Twitter; (v) combining listening and speaking activities; (vii) using the Kahoot app and Vicaroo, a free online audio recording creator to record conversations and presentations (Al-Jarf, 2021b).

For English pronunciation practice, use selected YouTube videos to practice English consonants, vowels, diphthongs, allophones, minimal pairs, words with silent letters, how to pronounce r in British English, flap t, vanishing t and glottal stop in American English, homophones and homographs, pronunciation of contractions, pronunciation of the past tense suffix -ed, pronunciation of the plural suffixes -s and -es, pronunciation of words ending in suffixes, phoneme-graphemes correspondences, pronouncing -tion and -sion, pronouncing --ure, -ture, -cher, and -sure, English stress, English intonation, gemination, assimilation, elision, intrusion and linking, pause and juncture, chunking in English, British and American accent training and/or accent reduction; pronunciation of proper nouns (Al-Jarf, 2022z; Al-Jarf, 2022t).

Reading

For reading practice, the students read texts/articles about any topic. They answer reading comprehension questions, make an outline, or summarize the passage in the form of a table or diagram (See the text in Table 4, and the outline in Table 5 and Image 1).

Table 4: A Sample Reading Text

The Secrets of a Very Long Life*

- [A] There are several places in the world that are famous for people who live a very long time. These places are usually mountainous areas, far away from modern cities. Even so, doctors, scientists and public health specialists often travel to these regions to solve the mystery of a long, healthy life; in this way, the experts hope to bring to the modern world the secrets of longevity.
- [B] Humza is at a very high altitude in the Himalayan Mountains of Asia. There, many people over one hundred years of age are still in good physical health. Additionally, men of ninety are new fathers, and women of fifty still have babies. What are the reasons for this good health? Scientists believe that the people of Hunza have these three main benefits or advantages: (1) a healthful unpolluted environment with clean air and water; (2) a simple diet high in vitamins, fiber, and nutrition but low in fat, cholesterol, sugar, and unnatural chemicals; and (3) physical work and other activities, usually in the field or with animals.
- [C] People in the Caucasus Mountains in Russia are also famous for their longevity. Official birth records were not available, but the community says a woman called Tsurba lived until age 160 years old. Similarly, a man called Shirali probably lived until 168; moreover, his widow was 120 years old. In general, the people not only live a long time, but they also live well. In other words, they are almost never sick. Furthermore, when they die, they not only have their

own teeth but also a full head of hair, and good eyesight too. // Vilcabamba, Ecuador, is another area famous for the longevity of its inhabitants.

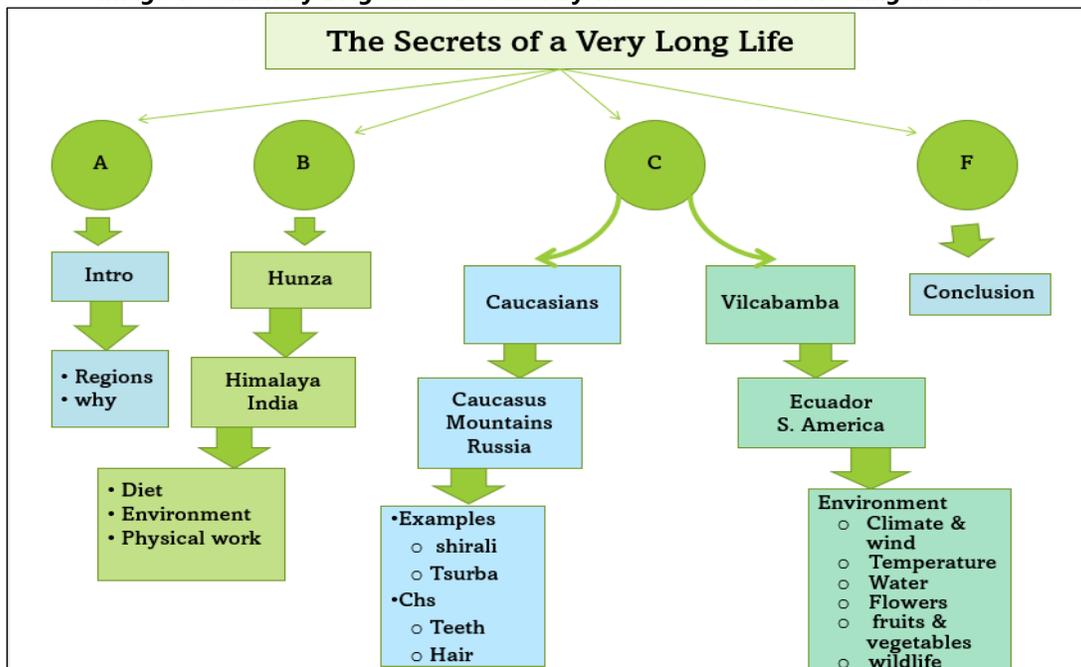
[D] The mountain regions - like Hunza and the Caucasus – is also at a very high altitude, far away from cities. In Vilcabamba too, there is very little serious disease. One reason for the good health of the people might be the clean, beautiful environment; another advantage is the moderate climate. The temperature is about 70° Fahrenheit all year long; furthermore, the wind always comes from the same direction. In addition, the water comes from mountain streams and is high in minerals: perhaps as a result of this valuable resource, the region is rich in flowers, fruit, vegetables, and wildlife.

Source: Kirn, E. & Hartmann, P. (2007). Interactions I. McGraw-Hill.

Table 5: Summary Table to Be Filled By The Students After Reading the Text

Regions	Where	Examples	Characterss	Why
Hunza	Himalayas India	-----	-----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Diet • Physical work
	Caucasus Russia	Tsurba shirali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hair • Teeth • eyesight • babies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Diet • Physical work
Vilcabamba	Ecuador	-----	-----	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water ○ Flowers ○ fruits & vegetables ○ wildlife • Climate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temperature ○ Wind

Image 1: Summary Diagram to Be Filled By The Students After Reading the Text



The students can read articles from websites about a variety of topics as in the website pages below, outline the main ideas and supporting details in a graph, chart or Venn diagram (See Table 5 and Image 1).

- <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/coping-with-covid-19>
- <https://www.bbc.com/reel/video/p08h49pb/the-top-five-most-nutritious-foods>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-53881885>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-england-leicestershire-53822323>
- <https://us.cnn.com/2020/06/08/cnn-underscored/how-to-clean-face-mask/index.html>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-53870798> (article)

Articles selected should match the students' reading ability in terms of text length, text difficulty level, topic familiarity and students' interests.

Collaborative mobile ebook reading can be used. The students can read ebooks of their choice answer questions, summarize or make an outline of the content (Al-Jarf, 2021d).

Writing

For online writing practice, the students prepare reports, summarize, keep a journal, write an academic essay, term paper, or work on group projects. Writing and speaking topics can be connected with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030. A variety of online writing tasks can be integrated into DL writing courses such as tasks that focus on specific writing skills; tasks that provide free writing activities; tasks that provide extension activities; tasks that require students' comments; error correction tasks; remedial tasks; self-improvement and study skills tasks; electronic searching tasks; tasks that require reflective thinking; write a daily journal; writing a story; and others (Al-Jarf, 2022; tasks Al-Jarf, 2014d; Al-Jarf, 2004b; Al-Jarf, 2002).

In online language courses, the instructor can encourage the students to write for communication and not to worry about spelling, grammatical, punctuation or capitalization mistakes. Students work on written assignments or part of them in class. While doing the written exercises and writing their paragraphs, the teacher monitors the students' work and provides individual help. She gives communicative feedback that focuses on meaning and ideas. Only errors related to rules or skills under study in a particular chapter are highlighted. Feedback is provided on the occurrence and location of errors, but no correct forms are given. Self-editing and peer-editing are encouraged. Extra credit is given for good paragraphs every time the students write a paragraph in the class (Al-Jarf, 2021).

Vocabulary

In vocabulary courses, make multiple associations and connections that include connecting the printed form of the lexical item with its pronunciation (the hidden sounds, double and silent letters, and homophones), with its part of speech, singular or plural form, component parts (prefixes, suffixes, roots), usage, synonym or antonym, English and Arabic meanings, previously-encountered lexical, and others should be followed while presenting the new technical terms in business, computer science and engineering to the students. Categorization, association, visualization skills and mnemonic approaches should be emphasized. Mind maps can be used to show those connections. Out of class, extensive listening and reading activities are also encouraged. Quizzes should require the students to make the multiple associations described in the article. Mobile-based applications viz Vocup, Quizlet, Quizizz, game-based mobile apps, Saving Alice, Duolingo, Kahoot, vocabulary flashcards, online dictionaries; concordance-based glosses; picture viewing and picture drawing on tablets; videos; e-portfolios; project-based learning and mind-maps; teaching idioms via graphic novels; social networks and multimedia annotations. Online vocabulary tasks can be performed individually, in pairs or in small groups; interactively or collaboratively; synchronously or asynchronously (Al-Jarf, 2022a; Al-Jarf, Al-Jarf, 2022h; Al-Jarf, 2022m; Al-Jarf, 2022q; Al-Jarf, 2022; Al-Jarf, 2022; Al-Jarf, 2019b; Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Jarf, 2007c; Al-Jarf, 2006ba).

Grammar

In online grammar courses, teach grammatical structures such as tenses, complex sentences, passive voice, articles, prepositions, and others in context. As in online vocabulary courses, a variety of online tasks can be integrated in grammar DL courses such as self-assessment tasks, production tasks, error correction tasks, remedial tasks, awareness-raising tasks, metcognitive tasks, tasks that require practice of grammatical structures in context, electronic searching, self-improvement, study skills, test anxiety tasks and others. The grammar websites and videos selected should include pre- and post-instruction self-assessment; should provide definitions, explanations, examples, supplementary exercises for extra practice; and should provide the students with instant feedback. The performance of the online grammar tasks is based on online grammar websites related to the grammatical structure covered in class and online exercises that focus on a single grammatical structure. Essential websites are selected such as verb conjugation lists, phrasal verbs, prefixes and suffixes, singular and plural word list, a daily grammar lesson, a Quiz Center, grammatical references and others (Al-Jarf, 2022; Al-Jarf, 2022h; Al-Jarf, 2019b; Al-Jarf, 2017b tasks; Al-Jarf, 2013; Al-Jarf, 2008; Al-Jarf, 2005a).

For better skill development, it is recommended that online grammar and writing courses be taught by the same instructor. Research findings have shown that performance of the students who received a combination of writing and grammar instruction by the same instructor was the highest. It was also found that grammatical knowledge affects writing skill development and writing instruction affects grammatical competence. Better achievements were made when grammar and writing were taught by the same instructor as she/he can make the right connections between what is taught in both courses, which specific structures and skills should be emphasized. Moreover, an instructor's qualifications, pedagogical system, educational and professional experience, the integration of online instruction, the type of error correction and instant feedback given to the students and the formative assessment technique proved to be more effective than grammar/writing instruction that depended on the textbook only. These variables were more important for enhancing the writing quality and grammatical knowledge of unskilled, low ability EFL students and resulted in a significant improvement in their writing and grammar post-test scores (Al-Jarf, 2022u).

Translation and Interpreting

The students can translate Wikipedia articles, collect and analyze translation errors, and participate in interpreting contests (Al-Jarf, 2022d; Al-Jarf, 2022k; Al-Jarf, 2022 l; Al-Jarf, 2022q). Use text-to-speech software, TED Talks, podcasts, and YouTube videos as resources for independent interpreting practice (Al-Jarf, 2022w; Al-Jarf, 2022x; Al-Jarf, 2021k). Use a blog, an online discussion forum and/or social media such as Twitter for collaborative and interactive translation practice synchronously or asynchronously (Al-Jarf, 2020c; Al-Jarf, 2017a).

Interpreting competence is affected by the student-interpreters' background knowledge and auditory comprehension skills. These can be enhanced through extensive reading, listening practice, and integrating current global events in interpreting practice (Al-Jarf, 2018b).

10) Use Effective Teaching Techniques

In DL courses, pedagogical practices should reduce the transactional distance between the students and their instructor, otherwise effective teaching and learning cannot occur (Sevnarayan, 2022). Transactional distance³ refers to a group of perceived cognitive, psychological, and affective distances between the students and their instructors in DL environments.

Unlike face-to-face instruction which, in many cases, depends on lecturing, a variety of teaching techniques can be used in DL such as PPT presentations, use of task-based and project-based assignments, role playing and experiential learning. The students can give oral presentations, search for linguistic and translation key terms and concepts, answer problem-solving questions, participate in online debates, attend a thesis defense, summarize a research paper, perform a linguistic analyses of family speech and videos, and create podcasts and digital stories. The instructor can invite a guest speaker to the online class session where students prepare questions to ask him/her and then write a summary or report about they learnt from the visit. The instructor can also integrate technology such as Slido and Padlet (Al-Jarf, 2022k; Al-Jarf, 2022k; Al-Jarf, 2022l; Al-Jarf, 2021d).

The flipped classroom is an effective approach for increasing the efficiency of DL courses and enhancing students' learning. Here the students are given an overview of the different forms of teacher video recordings to view before the class session. Then they actively participate with their ideas in the performance of the online lesson. Interactive assignments and games are used. Pre-class videos were found to be an important resource for students to come prepared for their lessons. (Cukurbaşı, 2022; Petrušić & Štemberger, 2021; Çil, 2021).

Use graphic organizers, flow charts, Ven diagrams, tree diagrams, and summary tables to connect to summarize information and show relationships among ideas (See example in Image 2).

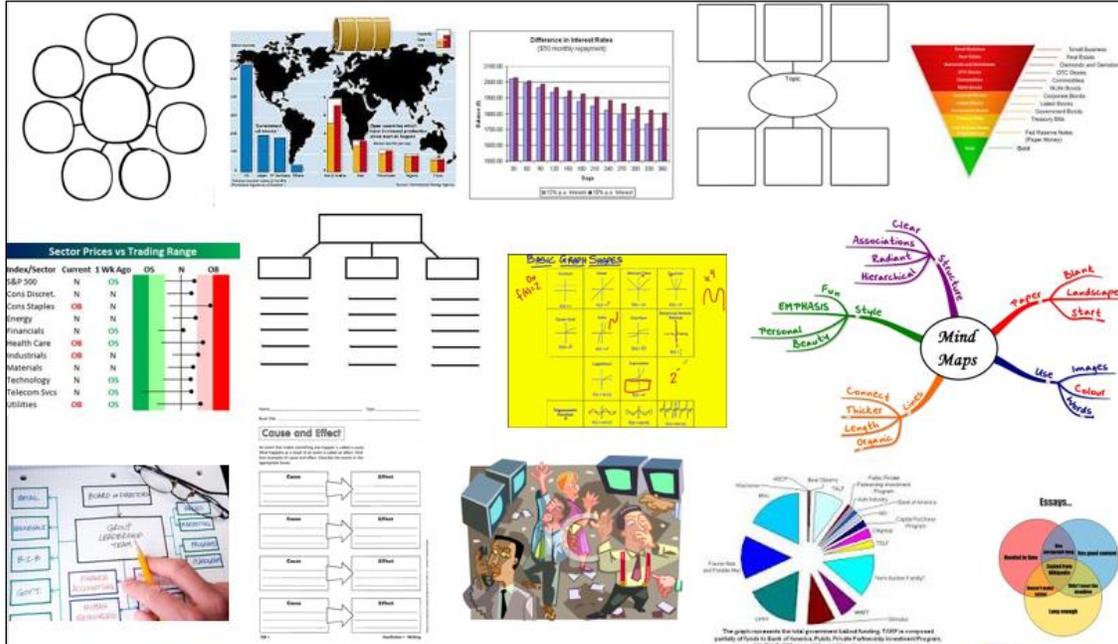
Use online peer instruction and team teaching. In a study by Vallarino, Iacono, Zolezzi and Vercelli (2022), online peer instruction engaged all the students attending online lectures on Moodle in an active learning process. It proved to be effective in improving students' understanding of the topics covered.

Use mind maps in vocabulary and specialized terminology, reading, writing, grammar and spelling instruction to help students connect, relate and retrieve information. A mind map is a graphic organizer in which the major categories radiate from a central image and lesser categories are portrayed as branches of larger branches. Mind maps can be used to generate ideas, take notes, develop concepts and ideas, and improve memory. Teachers can use mind maps to enhance learning, manage thought, direct learning, make connections, introduce an overall topic, increase student involvement, and get thoughts down quickly. Using the e-map (online concept or mind mapping) gives instructors the freedom to express ideas and show interrelationships between

³ <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/transactional-distance/30439#:~:text=Transactional%20distance%20is%20the%20collection,attainment%20of%20intended%20learning%20outcomes.>

concepts and content in a very visual and nonlinear structure that benefits the students (Al-Jarf, 2021j; Al-Jarf, 2015a; Al-Jarf, 2011c; Al-Jarf, 2010b).

Image 2: Examples of Graphic Organizers for connecting, Summarizing Information and Showing Relationships



Stages of Online Instruction

Online instruction proceeds in three stages. In the Pre-task phase, search for material and resources. Post tasks, articles, Apps, videos ...etc. Set goals and give an overview o how the task to be performed. Give pre-questions. Give clear instructions. Give students time to prepare. Set a deadline for completing the task. In the Task phase, the students work on task online or off-line. The can work individually, in pairs or small groups. Provide help, guidance and feedback and answer students' questions while working on a task. In the Post-task phase, students discuss answers and difficulties. Give feedback. Encourage students by giving extra credit. Students correct each other and comment on each other's performance.

Use online guided practice with feedback right after presenting the new material. Use independent practice at home. Give clear, direct, detailed instructions. When you give a project, a presentation, an assignment, do not leave the students work on their own. Guide them throughout the process. Give questions and ask students to find answers online and that require the students to analyze, compare, fill in a table. Give statistics and ask students to make a graph or flow chart. Students prepare questions and conduct an interview. They search a topic, read and give a class presentation. Classmates ask questions and make comments.

11) Assignments and activities

Effective online assignments and activities do not focus on memorization and recall; but focus on critical thinking, application and transfer of learning to new situations. They should not involve copy and paste. The student should have an active role in the activities. Examples of role-play activities are:

- *If you were the Minister of Health, give 5 actions that you would take to reduce corona cases.*
- *Give 5 ways for creating home activities for children and young students during the Covid-19 stay-home.*
- *How can you convince people to stay home, wear a mask, keep social distance?*
- *How can we save the environment?*
- *What can you do to help the refugees?*

A blog or an asynchronous online discussion forum can be created and used to post homework-assignments consisting of application questions and discussion threads covering the topics taught in class. The instructor gives communicative feedback on the location and types of errors. Errors are color-coded. No correct answers are provided. The students revise their responses and re-poste them for further feedback. Tips on how to answer questions and what an answer should cover are given. The students can have access to a variety of online dictionaries and resources (Al-Jarf, 2022b; Al-Jarf, 2022c; Al-Jarf, 2021a; Al-Jarf, 2019a; Al-Jarf, 2017a).

12) Give Feedback

Do not correct students' errors in public even if the students ask for feedback. Give communicative feedback on type and location of errors. The students work on one type of error at a time such as tenses. Students correct their own errors and correct each other's. The teacher corrects errors indirectly. Provide individualized feedback in private. Give positive reinforcement. Recognize the slightest improvement (Al-Jarf, 2021a).

The feedback provided must answer three major questions asked by a teacher and/or by a student: Where is the student going, i.e., what are his/her goals? What progress is the student making towards the goal? Where should the student go next? Therefore, use feed up, feedback and feed forward⁴ feedback. Feed up establishes a substantive line of inquiry that compels the student to engage in an investigation and inquire; feedback focuses on a student's current performance; whereas feed forward provides future-oriented options and/or solution, i.e., informs the teacher what needs to be taught, or what the students need to experience next. These types of feedback were reported to be highly effective for the students in synchronous and asynchronous online classes in higher education (Beltran, 2021).

In addition, feedback can be negative of positive⁵. Negative feedback consists of corrective comments about a past behaviour. It focuses on behaviour that was not successful and should not be repeated. In negative feed-forward, the instructor gives corrective comments about future performance and focuses on behaviour that should be avoided in the future. On the other hand, in positive feedback, the instructor gives affirming comments about past behaviour that was successful and should be continued. In positive feed-forward, the instructor gives affirming comments about future performance and focuses on aspects that will improve the students' performance in the future.

Other types of feedback⁶ that can be given to the students are peer and self-feedback, and evaluative and descriptive feedback. Evaluative feedback involves a value judgment providing guidance for improvement. It is given in the form of grades or general brief comments but does not convey the information and guidance that students can use to improve. On the contrary, descriptive feedback provides students with detailed, specific information about improving their learning.

Moreover, use blended feedback that consists of an audio and summary text. Audio feedback⁷ is a positive feedback situation which may occur when an acoustic path exists between an audio input as a microphone or guitar pickup and an audio output such as a loudspeaker. A signal received by the microphone is amplified and passed out of the loudspeaker. The sound from the loudspeaker can then be received by the microphone again, amplified further, and then passed out through the loudspeaker again. Audio feedback was found to provide affective and interpersonal qualities and develop the relationship between the student and the instructor in a distance design education setting. (Jones & Hilton, 2022).

13) Students' motivation and engagement

To significantly enhance students' intrinsic motivation in DL, instructors need to focus on the two basic students' psychological needs: competence and relatedness (Alkhudiry & Alahdal (2021). To enhance their self-efficacy, interest, interaction, and engagement in DL, to help the students become happy and relaxed learners and capable of overcoming their anxiety, instructors can integrate the principles of positive psychology in DL to develop positive attitudes, positive thinking, build students' resilience and teach them how to cope with and manage challenging learning situations in DL by setting clear teaching and learning goals, standards for passing courses, sending positive messages, writing success stories, providing moral support, reading self-help books, watching self-improvement videos and giving positive feedback. It also gives sample activities for increasing students' engagement, interaction, and communication (Al-Jarf, 2022r; Al-Jarf, 2022s).

14) Online communication and Interaction

Since DL is student-centered, For effective teaching and learning, 8 types of interaction should be taken into consideration in planning the DL learning environment: (i) Learner- content; (ii) Instructor -learner; (iii) Learner-learner; (iv) Content-content. Here the content updates automatically through different entrances of receiving data and learning sources constantly; (v) Learner-content; (vi) Instructor-instructor; (vii) Learner-technical support staff; and (viii) instructor-technical support staff (Farajollahi, Zare, Hormozi, Sarmadi & Zarifsanaee (2021).

⁴ [feedforward](#)

⁵ <https://federation.edu.au/staff/learning-and-teaching/teaching-practice/feedback/types-of-feedback>

⁶ <https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/professional-learning/teacher-quality-and-accreditation/strong-start-great-teachers/refining-practice/feedback-to-students/types-of-feedback#:~:text=Feedback%20can%20take%20many%20forms,peer%20and%20self%20Dassessed%20feedback.>

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audio_feedback#Pitched_feedback

To engage, motivate and encourage student-student and student-instructor interaction in the DL environment, instructors can use WhatsApp, ConnectYard, Facebook, or Telegram, create a community of inquiry, create learning partnership, collaborative writing exchange projects, student collaboration, social interaction, integrate text-chat and webcam, and utilize technology-mediated task-based language teaching (Al-Jarf, 2022r; Al-Jarf, 2006a).

15) Nurture the Online Classroom Community

To nurture the online learning community in DL, be respectful and friendly and have a sense of humor. The online learning environment should be fun, supportive, interactive, and secure for making mistakes. Ensure students' engagement and their active role in learning. Send motivational messages. Give extra credit. Contact the students through Whats App, Telegram, email, Facebook Messenger or any other social media.

In a community of inquiry, the online learning experience is optimized when instructors properly address three critical components throughout their teaching: (i) teaching presence, (ii) social presence, and (iii) cognitive presence. Teacher presence received the highest score among instructors and students, whereas social presence was the lowest among instructors and students. If enhancing the DL experience is a priority, online instructors should create effective social presence opportunities within their courses (Kim & Gurvitch, 2022).

To overcome the feelings of isolation in DL, a network of connection between the students and their university should be present to enable distance learners to succeed in DL (Núñez, 2021).

16) For Effective Online Testing

First of all, set standards for passing courses that should be taken into consideration no matter what the situation is. These standards should include the content and skills that the students should acquire in a Pandemic and non-Pandemic situation, and in online as well as face-to-face instruction.

To minimize cheating on online exams, the students should turn their cameras on while taking the test online. Give application and higher-level thinking questions, not memorization and recall questions. Create several parallel versions of the same test by randomizing the order of the questions and randomizing the order of the lexical items within each question. You do not have to give a written final exam for end-of-course assessment (summative assessment). Use different forms of assessment: Research paper, project-based, an e-portfolio, online presentations, or open book. Instructors can use formative assessment where a quiz is given once every 2 weeks to assess the students' mastery of the skills and content covered over the 2 weeks and to diagnose students' problems before moving on to new material or skills. Make online learning, course participation and assignments part of the course grade. (Al-Jarf, 2022p; Al-Jarf, 2022j; Al-Jarf, 2005a; Al-Jarf, 2004b).

It is important to design reliable and valid tests that measure higher-level thinking skills, that adequately cover the course content, and which discriminate between high and low-achieving students, and those who have mastered the objectives and skills of a course and those who have not.

Grading criteria should be carefully and thoughtfully selected, reviewed and categorized as "*inappropriate*," "*controversial*," or "*highly recommended*," and grading methods should accurately measure their students' achievement, and should accurately reflect a particular level of learning. Standards-based grading must be designed to communicate to the students their current level of mastery in line with well-articulated standards at the school and university levels

Use of scoring rubrics makes grade inflation less likely as they allow faculty to guide their students into producing higher quality work, assign grades that reflect levels of real accomplishment, enable students to begin to understand the nature of academic work, and make grading a shared communal vision for guiding students into the discipline. For reliable grading, use an iRubrics for evaluating and grading students' performance in language courses (Al-Jarf, 2020b; Al-Jarf, 2011a).

17) Instructor's Role

In DL, the instructors serves as a facilitator. Provide guidance and support. Give feedback and encourage the students. Select or design the online material. Set some time aside to respond to the students. Browse through the students' questions and problems and categorize them. Give one response to similar or repetitive questions or requests. Online teaching is tedious and time consuming but gets easier with practice. Sharing and collaborating with colleagues makes online teaching easier.

18) Evaluate The DL Experience

Keep a log of problems and difficulties the you or your students face in DL. At the end of the semester, the students can evaluate the course. Formative and summative and peer evaluation can be used. The university or college can make online teaching part

of teachers' annual evaluation. The university or college can have a contest among the teachers for best online course and online material. Colleagues can talk about, discuss, and share their effective experiences.

19) Teachers' Professional Development and Support

Instructors can create a group blog, an online discussion forum or a special page on social media such as Facebook or Twitter for free. Those groups are online learning communities that provide opportunities for in-depth peer-to-peer interaction, communication, self-directed learning, exchange of knowledge and expertise, and greater involvement in teaching-learning and student-teacher issues and support. Members can share resources such as tests, e-books, lesson plans, software and others. They can post questions and receive answers about teaching and learning issues in DL (Al-Jarf, 2021c; Al-Jarf, 2014a; Al-Jarf, 2006c; Al-Jarf, 2006d).

Moreover, schools can support teachers in five key ways as they head into the next academic year: (i) Engaging teachers in reopening decisions; (ii) supporting teachers' social and emotional wellness; (iii) providing professional development and resources to help teachers adjust to DL; (iv) anticipating teacher shortages and strengthening the educator pipeline; and (v) re-evaluating and developing more supportive sick leave policies (Ali, Cherukumilli, & Herrera, 2021)

3. Recommendations

The DL leaning environment requires more student-centered practices. It requires students' adaptation to the platform used in the teaching process, adaptation to existing teaching techniques, the way students' learning outcomes are measured and evaluated, and students' participation in the online class (Özen & Abdüsselam, 2021).

A number of characteristic features of DL declared should be take into account such as role repertoire of the teacher, flexibility, modularity, innovative quality control of education, and economic benefits. There are also specific principles that have to be met in DL: the principle of remoteness, free access, identification, interactivity, adequacy and expediency of using digital technologies in DL (Almazova, Kondakova, Mezinov, Nekhoroshikh & Chislova, 2021).

The students need to be ready for successful learning and the instructors need to be ready to design the teaching-learning activities when they initially enter the DL environment. Effective DL in higher education requires an understanding of the technological capabilities and learning theories especially the constructivist theory, independent learning theory, and communicative and interaction theory in DL. It requires group and individual active teaching-learning approaches, timely feedback, and formative and summative assessment. Evaluation should be part of the learning process and feedback should be given to the students based on their evaluation results (strengths and weaknesses) and should be used to improve learning (Farajollahi, Zare, Hormozi, Sarmadi & Zarifsanee, 2021).

In the DL teaching and learning environment, the instructors should always remember that technology does not teach by itself, and that technology does not make learning and skill development automatic. It depends on how we use it. The students should not use the technology passively; they should have a task to perform. The platform and its tools, mobile apps, Powerpoint presentations, videos, podcasts and websites should be tried out before using them with the students.

A committee or center for technical and instructional support can be established at each department or college level. A resource center or repository can be created for foreign language learning, linguistics and translation instructional videos, mobile apps, activities, short technical guides, instructional and online testing guides. Experiences and course materials can be shared with colleagues (Al-Jarf, 2020a; Al-Jarf, 2021f). For more effective DL, technological, and pedagogical training for teachers, technical support, and proper training for students in online learning should be provided (Aldossari & Altalhab, 2022). Support services that were inadequate, least used, and absent in DL during the Pandemic should be provided to enable the students to complete their programs of study successfully (Amponsah, Ussher & Amoak Benjamin, 2021).

New online learning management systems and platforms, new teaching techniques and activities for engaging and motivating students in the DL environment together with emerging challenges that face college students and instructors should always be the focus of research in the future.

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