

Is Another World Possible?: Fault Lines and New Vulnerabilities in the Pandemic Present

Dr Rina Ramdev

MOOCs Massive Open Online Courses

MOOCs are the massive open online courses that were supposed to upend everything in higher education. They were supposed to be free and open to everyone with online access, bringing the best possible content from the best schools and best professors to everyone. The hype was breathless. *The New York Times* declared 2012 “The Year of the MOOC.”

From the start, MOOCs had abysmal completion rates. While they attracted tens of thousands of “students,” very few stuck around long and evidence emerged that a heavy proportion of MOOC attendees already had college degrees or were actually already teaching the subject they were supposed to be studying. It has also become clear that MOOCs served the most motivated students, those who likely find a pathway to achievement with or without a MOOC.

In other words, MOOCs are education voyeurism, not education.

The “Depressing” And “Disheartening” News About MOOCs, Derek Newton

Teaching in 2020

**Semester
Begins**

**Told to Plan for Possible
Remote Teaching**

**Making
Remote
Teaching
Plan**



**Actual
Teaching**



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You're telling me my professor who can't stop the YouTube autoplayer from playing the next video is going to teach classes online? This should be good.



Black Swan Moment The black swan theory was developed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his best-selling 2007 book of that title. Black swan is used as a metaphor to describe an event that comes as a surprise, has a major effect, and is often inappropriately rationalized after the fact with the benefit of hindsight..

And so it's being said

“For online teaching, this pandemic was truly a Black Swan. It brought online teaching to the foreground, with an emphasis and at a scale that even its most outspoken advocates would never have dared to expect. When this pandemic will be over, education and teaching will not go back to the same state as before

<https://www.cecarn.org/workshop-details/986>

What is Maslow before Bloom?

American psychologists, Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Benjamin Bloom (1913-1999) were noted for their behavior theories that continue to impact the way teachers structure their courses.

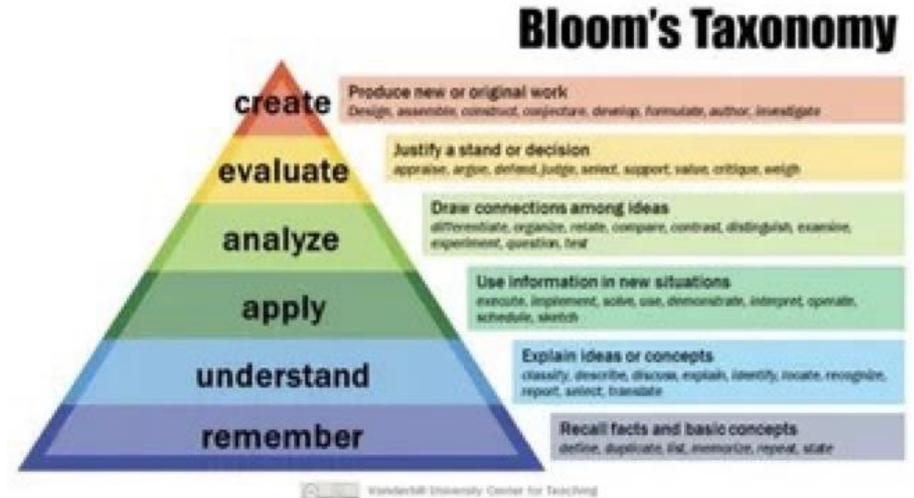
Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" is often depicted as a pyramid with five levels. Each level contains basic human needs. In order to reach a higher level, the needs listed in the lower tiers must first be fulfilled.

What Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' tells us is that students need food, water, shelter, safety, and the ability to rest easy before they can even begin to focus on academics. Put another way, a student experiencing trauma doesn't have the emotional bandwidth to focus on school because their energy is directed toward securing their basic needs. One's math grade is not nearly as important as knowing where one's next meal is coming from.

Bloom developed what is known as Bloom's Taxonomy: a system of classification of educational goals and objectives. There are, according to Bloom, six levels of academic tasks. These range in complexity and spell out the work of the academic classroom. Tasks from rote memorization to organizing information to creating and testing new ideas are represented.

The phrase “Maslow before Bloom” suggests that, before students are mentally equipped to do the heavy lifting that comes with learning new things (Bloom), their Maslow needs must first be attended to.

<https://www.boredteachers.com/classroom-management/maslow-before-bloom-for-students>



My mother suffers from epilepsy so her doctor has advised us to stay with her at all times. I remember I used to live with her at my grandfather's place and the Internet speed was despicable in all rooms so I had to leave her alone at times. I woke up at 8 every morning and would go to the balcony to catch some network and attend classes even when it was freezing cold. Even between lectures, if your network leaves you for 5 minutes, you're back to square one not knowing what the whole lecture was about.

-Khezran Agha

English Hons 1st yr

Mubarakpur, Uttar Pradesh

here I am, unwell, straining through classes that stand dwindling on a highly unreliable internet. Am I growing? No. Am I learning? No. Am I just in a race to get done with the syllabus? Yes.

-Parinita

English Hons, 1st yr

It is very difficult for me to cope up with online classes, as we have only one phone in our family from which my brother also attends his school classes so i have to give up half of my lectures to manage for both of us, on the top of it connectivity issues also prevails as being from a small town, electric cuts are huge which impacts the wifi connectivity and makes it hard to attend classes on time.

Harsh Khera

English Hons 2nd yr

1. Online education be like *kaam chlau* as it is just on the phone continuing our education which lax exposure.
2. Online education is not accessible to everyone. Many people don't have laptops and smartphones to 2 classes that they have proper internet connection.
3. Many PWD students are not able to access to such technologies from which they could attend online classes

It is therefore creating a digital divide between rich and poor

There are many serious health effects of online education like headache loss of vision etc.

-Ateeb Huda

English Hons, 1st year

Here are the problems that I had faced during online learning.

- 1) interrupted supply of electricity in my village (purnia, bihar) due to flood and the negligence of government authority over this.
- 2) lack of good internet connection in my village.
- 3) No access to laptop or computer because of financial problems.
- 4) single mobile phone in a family.
- 5) Quite noisy environment in village.
- 6) Difficulty in making assessment or giving online exam as there is no cafe near village and it was difficult to give exam through phones.
- 7) long hour of online study from phones cause irritation in eyes.

Abhishek kumar

English Hons 2nd yr

Prof Singh organised a doubt-clearing session for his students in the presence of the media as he said these students had been repeatedly calling him for doubt-clearing sessions of certain topics but he felt that the students were facing a setback academically by not attending regular classes. So, he decided to run classes for them in a bus for the next few days too. Meanwhile, students who had come on the call of the professor maintained that they felt that they were able to understand concepts better through offline teaching rather than using gadgets from home. Some of them also complained that their internet services were not working properly.

“Many students survive on 1GB or 2GB daily data plans on their phones — not everyone has WiFi at home — and they have to manage their entire course work on that.”

<https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/schools/chemistry-prof-in-jalandhar-takes-lecture-in-bus-booked-246381>

“In a McKinsey report titled, *Digital India* (2019), it is evident that out of approximately 525.3 million internet users in India, 390.9 million accessed the internet through mobile phones. We also have the recent assessments of telecom businesses and the World Economic Forum that by 2030 up to 80 percent of internet consumption in India will be through mobile devices. Clearly, the bulk of people who are expected to access e-learning are those who have nothing but smartphones to depend on. There is nothing positive about this, considering the poor quality of mobile internet in the country.”

“Without addressing the marked inequalities in our society and the pro-corporate policies of the state, digital India and its corollary, e-classrooms, will continue to reinforce the hierarchy and segmentation in the education sector, and by extension, reproduce inherited socio-economic inequalities among students. In other words, e-learning merely stands to replace certain crucial face-to-face interactions that actually create a public space in which understanding can grow through collective participation of diverse individuals and groups. These include not just the interface between students and their course material but also the interface of students with other students and students with teachers – all of which are absolutely necessary for those who have inherited educational inequality, are first generation learners, and come from less conducive learning environments at home. Devoid of these interfaces, e-learning will only perpetuate the ongoing educational apartheid.”

“Online Education: The Latest Stage of Educational Apartheid”, Maya John

<https://kafila.online/2020/06/05/online-education-the-latest-stage-of-educational-apartheid-maya-john/>

“A new National Education Policy draft came up and proposed a magical formula for ridding the system of its rot: a wholesale merger of physical institutional campuses to a quarter of its current size, while at the same time doubling student enrolments. Till the pandemic provided the fuel in which to douse the public university in its entirety, we hardly noticed that the ‘magic’ in the policy draft was simply the spark of an online sleight. A plan for a mass deportation of classroom populations on to digital platforms was afoot, and the global alarm around ‘physical distancing’ merely draped policy intention with the force of fatalism. To that extent, the pandemic has just been cleverly used to fore-shutter the gates of a sector that had long been scripted into such a destiny.”

Debaditya Bhattacharya, “Locked down, but Logged in! : ‘Connecting’ to the Futures of Indian Higher Education” *The JMC Review* Vol 4, 2020

“When transposed into an Indian context, the ‘social justice’ claims enunciated by a digital reinvention of the public university will only end up in a consummate perversion—by making collaterals out of minority, Dalit–adivasi and women enrolments. The policy prescription for such a scenario is to inordinately dilute content and relax testing mechanisms, which would only go on to compromise the credibility of such courses for potential employers and provide no ‘value-addition’ to the skill sets that an incumbent already comes with. Structures of discrimination are thus to be incrementally reified through a social credentialing of unfit/undeserved labour-power, and bad debts doubled by a plan that professes to democratise higher education.”

Debaditya Bhattacharya, “Locked down, but Logged in! : ‘Connecting’ to the Futures of Indian Higher Education” *The JMC Review* Vol 4, 2020