



THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN DISTANCE LEARNING: NEW APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examines how teachers and students interact in online learning, especially after the shift to distance education during COVID-19. A survey of 15 people – 2 teachers and 13 students – focused on feedback, engagement, and emotional support. The results show that while personalized feedback and emotional support are crucial for keeping students engaged, they're often inconsistent. Common challenges include technical issues and the lack of in-person interaction. To improve online learning, the study suggests more frequent feedback, creative teaching methods, and fostering a stronger sense of community.

Keywords: Teacher-student interaction, online learning, feedback, emotional support, engagement strategies, distance education, virtual classrooms, online teaching, educational technology.

Introduction

Distance learning became a vital part of education after COVID-19, forcing teachers to quickly adapt to new technologies, virtual classroom dynamics, and teaching methods. Once focused on in-person instruction, teachers now take on multiple roles as facilitators, mentors, and tech guides in online environments. Teacher-student interaction is key to maintaining engagement and motivation in online learning. Without non-verbal cues like body language, teachers must adopt



new strategies to foster connection. Garrison emphasizes the importance of teaching presence—guiding, motivating, and providing feedback—in creating supportive online environments [2]. Similarly, Hattie underscores the role of strong teacher-student relationships, highlighting consistent feedback and emotional support as critical to learning [3]. Effective online teaching blends technological skills with emotional support. Teachers must use digital tools to personalize learning while offering empathy and flexibility to help students navigate challenges. This shift calls for rethinking traditional methods to make online education engaging and effective [4].

Methodology

This study explored the role of teacher-student interaction in online learning through a survey that included both closed and open-ended questions to gather a mix of quantitative and qualitative data. The participants consisted of 2 teachers with experience in distance education and 13 students actively involved in online courses, selected from a variety of online learning settings. The survey focused on key areas like feedback frequency and effectiveness, engagement strategies, challenges in online learning, and the emotional support provided by teachers. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to spot trends and patterns, while open-ended responses were examined through thematic analysis.

Results

The survey results revealed several insights into the experiences of both teachers and students in online learning. In terms of feedback, a majority of students (66.7%) reported receiving feedback **occasionally**, with **13.3%** of students receiving feedback **frequently**, indicating that feedback frequency could be improved. Personalized feedback was found to be highly effective, with 73.3% of students rating it **4 or 5** on a scale of 1 to 5. Engagement strategies were also explored, with **multimedia content** (66.7%) being the most popular choice among students, followed by **interactive quizzes** (40%) and **group projects** (33.3%). Regarding challenges, **lack of face-to-face interaction** was the most frequently reported issue (73.3%), followed by **technical issues** (53.3%) and **difficulty maintaining motivation** (46.7%). When asked about emotional support, only 13.3% of students reported receiving frequent check-ins from



teachers, while 73.3% felt some sense of community in their online classes, with group projects and discussions contributing most to this sense of belonging.

Survey Results Summary:

Aspect	Category	Percentage
Frequency of teacher feedback	Occasionally	66.7%
	Frequently	13.3%
	Never	20.0%
Preferred engagement strategies	Multimedia content	66.7%
	Interactive quizzes	40.0%
	Group projects	33.3%
Challenges in online learning	Lack of interaction	73.3%
	Technical issues	53.3%
	Motivation issues	46.7%
Emotional support	Frequent check-ins from teachers	13.3%
	Sense of community	73.3%

Discussion

The results suggest that teacher-student interaction, particularly in terms of feedback and emotional support, plays a crucial role in the success of online learning. While personalized feedback was appreciated by most students, it was not consistently provided, which could affect motivation and engagement. The findings highlight a need for teachers to increase the frequency of feedback, as it is a key factor in student satisfaction and learning outcomes. Additionally, Bawa states that the preference for **multimedia content** and **interactive quizzes** underscores the importance of dynamic, engaging teaching methods in online education [1]. However, the challenges of **technical issues** and **lack of face-to-face interaction** remain significant barriers to effective learning, reinforcing the need for reliable technological tools and strategies to maintain student engagement. Emotional support was also found to be limited, with teachers rarely checking in on students' well-being. Overall, the research highlights the need for teachers to not only be skilled in technology but also to prioritize consistent feedback, emotional support, and the use of interactive, engaging teaching methods to create a more inclusive and effective online learning environment. In conclusion, teacher-student interaction is crucial for the success of online learning. Feedback and emotional support play a key role in student engagement,



yet these elements are often inconsistently provided in virtual classrooms. Increasing the frequency of feedback and using dynamic teaching methods, such as multimedia content and interactive activities, can enhance student involvement and learning outcomes. Despite the benefits of online learning, challenges like technical issues and the absence of face-to-face interaction continue to be significant barriers. These obstacles emphasize the need for reliable technological tools and effective strategies to maintain student engagement. Additionally, fostering a sense of community and providing emotional support are essential for boosting student motivation and well-being. For online education to be truly effective, teachers must combine technological competence with consistent feedback, emotional support, and interactive teaching methods. This holistic approach is vital for creating an engaging and supportive online learning environment.

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