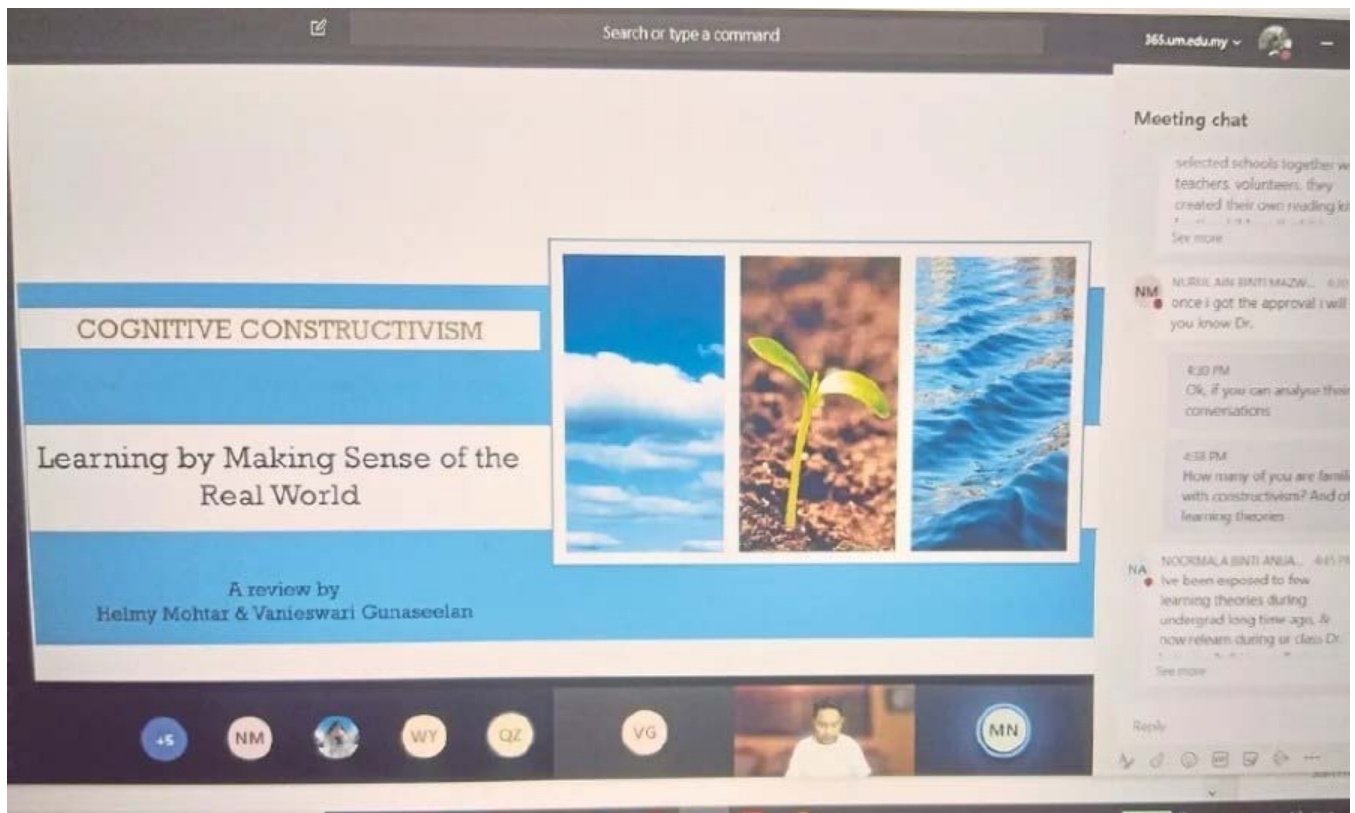


EDUCATION

Coping with online lectures

By Zulita Mustafa - May 20, 2020 @ 1:08pm



An online Masters of Instructional Technology class by the Education Faculty of Universiti Malaya conducted using Microsoft Teams.

Many are finding video conferencing exhausting as they have to pay more attention to and process non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, education institutions do not have much choice but to conduct more teaching and learning activities via video conferencing.

Universiti Malaya Faculty of Education Associate Professor Dr Dorothy Dewitt who lectures at Universiti Malaya Faculty of Education said her online lectures via the Zoom app took up more of her energy than normal lectures.



Associate Professor Dr Dorothy Dewitt.

She said she had to be more alert during her lectures as she needed to figure out whether a student was asking a question during the teleconferencing session or through the chat box.

"Can they understand me? Sometimes, I need to see the chat box and revert my attention to the presentation slides because I need to ensure my students understand the lecture.

"I am sure they are also tired as they are straining their eyes not to miss anything," she added.

Dewitt said when she was presenting the slides, it was difficult to see her students' expression.

"As everyone is included on the monitor screen, their images become small up to the point where I am unable to see their expressions."

Dewitt is not alone in experiencing these problems.



Professor Dr Aida Suraya Md Yunus.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Faculty of Educational Studies dean Professor Dr Aida Suraya Md Yunus said some lecturers were mentally stressed by the technology as it drained them of their energy, especially those who are not tech-savvy.

Aida said setting up an online lecture session required time as she needed to identify the right time to disburse teaching materials, as well as make sure that the video and audio qualities were adequate.

She said her lectures were usually based on the same teaching materials that she used for ordinary classroom sessions.

"Whatever the teaching platform is, the delivery of lectures will still be the same. In a normal class, you may ask questions or discuss issues. The same goes for online lecture sessions.

"However, you may need to get more creative and take the initiative to come up with quizzes via Kahoot (a free game-based learning platform that makes learning fun)," Aida said.

To avoid fatigue during a live stream of a lecture, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Faculty of Industrial Management programme head (entrepreneurship) Dr Diyana Kamaruddin would mix her lessons with different teaching methods.



Dr Diyana Kamaruddin.

To ensure that her students keep paying attention, Diyana said: "I usually conduct an online lecture for 15 to 20 minutes, and then have them go into their 'discussion rooms'.

"This way, they can understand the teaching materials and conduct more discussions between themselves. I will then resume the class session with them presenting their ideas."

Three days before the implementation of the Movement Control Order, Universiti Teknologi Mara Faculty of Communication and Media Studies public relations lecturer Mohd Nur Najmi Nuji and his students had started their online distance learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic and stay-at-home (or on-campus) policy.



Mohd Nur Najmi Nuji.

He said implementing video conferencing was a non-issue as he had been teaching part-time online students via the IClass system.

However, he said, it would be harder to implement among full-time students.

Najmi said conducting video conferencing drained him of his energy as he needed to ensure his students could understand his lecturers and that he had to check on chat boxes for questions by students, which took time. Najmi said there were several factors contributed towards an effective and efficient online lecture session.

"We need to make sure the state of readiness of infrastructures, such as the Internet, the evolving mindset of educators and students, as well as the skill of educators in using online features," he added.