ID 38 – IUPS 2022- Post Conference Teaching Workshop Symposium

Tile of the symposium : **Ensuring student engagement in online learning: role of technology and teachers**

Title of the talk:

Student engagement in online learning: is visibility essential?

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Abstract:

With the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, the field of education suffered a drastic transformation with the shifting of teaching learning activities from onsite to online. This resulted in definite challenges to be faced by both students and teachers. When the main mode of teaching was face to face in the classroom,, teachers had a control in ensuring student engagement. This has been immensely compromised in the new setting with both staff and students struggling all over the world. One of the challenges in this is the visibility of students while the classes are being synchronously conducted via a virtual medium. There have been varied opinions regarding the same.

Some teachers opine that the students must have their camera on throughout to have the connectivity established between the teacher and students more realistically just as a classroom environment. On the other hand there are lecturers who trust and opine that it is not necessary to force students to have their camera on since there may be diverse home environments and many students may feel uncomfortable in divulging their home conditions to their peer. Therefore it remains on the teacher to feel the pulse of the class and feel the presence of students attending the session. In this condition teachers need to devise mechanisms to ensure engagement and attentiveness of students in a virtual synchronous session. The pandemic crisis has allowed improvisation of teaching methods that ensure learning, taking the help of technology. Teachers can introduce class activities via engaging tools like padlet, slido or kahoot so that students are always attentive and interested in listening to what iss being told by the teacher. Use of back channel that is chat room is another such method to keep track of student attentiveness.

If the class isn't one with mandatory student performances or presentations, teachers may not mandate students to show their faces continuously throughout their lectures or teaching sessions. However, students can be encouraged to keep their camera on and in this case the teacher should create a safe environment telling students to switch on their camera in the beginning and then switch off, however regulations of taking attendance etc will demand showing of faces as some point of the session.

This is an extremely debatable point which can have several perspectives both from student and teacher point of view.   *(word count 388)*