

MANAGING DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS IN ONLINE EDUCATION ERA

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Abstract:

In recent years, the usage of technology on college campuses has expanded dramatically. Students bring a range of technology gadgets to the classroom, such as smart phones, tablets, or computers, and use them during academic activities. As a result, many scholars have been interested in the issues arising from digital distraction in higher education in recent years. In several situations, researchers performed studies and surveys in order to gain firsthand information from the protagonists, namely university professors and students. Many questions remain unsolved, despite the efforts. The authors are well aware of the enormous challenge that technology poses in university classrooms, and they want to delve into the causes and consequences of student digital distraction, as well as the strategies that instructors can use to reduce student digital distraction without jeopardizing student-instructor relationships in higher education.

Keywords: – Gadgets, Digital Distraction, Causes & Consequences.

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Objectives of Study:

1. To understand how Digital Distraction is proving out to be a hindrance in learning and is responsible for falling attention spans.
2. To understand in brief various forms and types of Digital Distractions.
3. To highlight on strategies that can be potentially adapted to cope up with Digital Distractions in these contemporary times.

University campuses have now transformed themselves and are no longer brick and mortar. In the New World order Universities have adopted hybrid models. **Houle et al. (2013)** and, this calls for increasing inclusion of digital devices across the campuses. For many students it is quite common not only to carry but also access laptops, tablets, cell phones on campus. Two primary motivations have been identified to carry digital devices;

1. To enhance class related activities, access internet and communicate.
2. Henceforth instructor's approval to access and use technology will have a considerable impact on the overall efficiency and knowledge proficiency.

Research Methodology Used:

1. Primary Research:

Charting out the differences based on general observation of student behavior during Online & offline Lectures, their attendance and attention levels. Direct interaction with students for understanding their learning preferences and the causes for distractions.

2. Secondary Research:

This analysis is also based on secondary data. The majority of secondary data is gathered from articles and relevant websites.

University campuses have been increasingly crowded with various technology devices in recent years. **Houle et al. (2013)** investigated why students prefer to bring laptop computers to lecture halls. Some students, according to these writers, may be inspired to use technology and, as a result, bring laptops to class, while others do not. The authors suggested two ideas to study the sources of motivations:

1. Students brought computers to class to enhance class-related activities rather than to engage in Internet or other communication behaviors.
2. Instructor's acceptance and use of technology will be a major impact in a student's decision to utilize a laptop in class.

This paper sheds light on the digital distractions that emanate from everywhere. One can get digitally distracted from phone, television, computing device. However cellphones are the major cause of distractions in terms of constant notifications. Students' attention spans are short, and sitting for long periods of time can be tedious. Managing digital distractions needs right approach, training, attitude and motivation. This involves understanding when not to access the technology.

Literature Review:

Accessing Digital technology in classrooms assists students to link and refer the content under discussion immediately and forge supplementary understanding of the topic (**Piraino & Wilson, 2015**). However, when deployed for non-class activities, devices can generate issues for students, classmates, and instructors, resulting in lower engagement and learning. Distraction-reduction tactics may need to be customized depending on what students are doing on their devices. Surfing the Internet, for example, may indicate boredom, although digital communication in the form of chats and messages may indicate a desire to stay in touch with others. There are numerous interruptions from the virtual world. The television one is watching, the phone one is holding, the computer one is using, or even the music one is listening to can all be used to distract one from a lesson or any work.

There are numerous interruptions from the virtual world. The television one is watching, the phone one is holding, the computer one is using, or even the music one is listening to can all be used to distract one from a lesson or any work. Students' attention spans are short, and sitting for long periods of time can be tedious. They'll have to come up with new ways to keep themselves entertained. COVID-19 forced classroom-based education to move to virtual environments? It's easy to get distracted and check your social media during online classes. Ringing, notifications, pings, SMS, and unrestricted access are all potential annoyances. Attempting to multitask is a common mistake made by many people. Attempting to multitask complex tasks well is a myth; in reality, attempting to multitask complex tasks slows us down and leads to more errors. According to **John Medina**, a molecular scientist and author of *Brain Rules*, multitasking difficult activities is like trying to do so after a few tough cocktails. You may think you're doing well, but you're not.

The culture of constant connectivity takes a toll both professionally and psychologically. We waste our time, attention, and concentration on unimportant information and interactions, occupying ourselves but generating nothing of value. As the late **Clifford Nass** and his colleagues at Stanford University shown, people who handle several streams of knowledge do not pay attention, memorize, or manage their work as well as those who focus on one subject at a time. As a result, productivity and involvement diminish during studies.

Larry Rosen, a psychologist, and **Alexandra Samuel**, a technologist. Rosen argues that we should gradually move our focus away from the information stream and toward activities that would help us feel more energised. The most effective strategy to counteract digital distraction, according to Samuel, is to use digital tools strategically. Their

solutions, taken as a whole, provide a good primer on how we may begin to solve this vast and rising problem. Our brains operate in 90-minute rest-activity cycles not only while we sleep but also when we are up, according to **Nathaniel Kleitman's** research. Take a recharging break every hour and a half, particularly if you're multitasking with technology, which encourages the brain to become overly busy. Even a 10-minute stroll through the woods can be relaxing.

NEP 2020 & Digital Education Challenges:

Digital education does not include watching videos of lecturers giving lessons on blackboards through the internet. It's about finding the right platforms, technology, tools, interactivity, curation, and content, among other things. We're fully unprepared for this. Government schools and colleges are unable to provide digital education due to a lack of resources. Private colleges and schools are no exception. They all want parents to pay the entire amount so that they can pay their personnel and maintain their facilities. During this pandemic, the educational financial model is disintegrating all across the world. Because of the lack of a solid policy on digital education, infrastructure, and many languages in India, the situation is even trickier.

There is enough content from worldwide experts on the internet if one is driven and prepared to put in the effort to study. Curation and mentoring are the difficulties. Unfortunately, teachers are educated to instruct rather than to mentor. Flipped classrooms, where you do the exact opposite of what you do now, are required for digital education. Instead of listening to professors' lectures in class, you listen to them at home. Similarly, rather of doing homework at home, you complete it in class with other students. All of this necessitates a shift in perspective and structure.

Causes, Effects & Solutions:

To effectively cope up with the Digital distractions even little phone use during a meal with friends was enough to distract diners and detract from their enjoyment of the meal. People who were allowed to use their phones during dinner had a harder time remaining present in the moment, according to the study. People who were allowed to use their phones during dinner had a harder time remaining present in the moment, according to the study. Decades of happiness study show that positively engaging with others is critical for our happiness. While modern technology is fantastic, it may easily distract us from the precious times we enjoy in person with friends and family."

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"The negative effects of phone use among university students, who are often referred to as digital natives," said **Elizabeth Dunn**, PhD, co-author of the study and a speaker at the University of British Columbia's symposium. "We expected this generation to be better at multitasking between using their phones and engaging with others, but we showed that even moderate phone use reduced the benefits of social engagement." According to another study presented at the event, those who are more self-centered and narcissistic spend less time on social media than those who are sensitive.

Although electronic devices are required for eLearning, they can easily divert attention for long periods of time. The majority of students will either hold their phones or leave them on their desks while studying. A push notification from a buddy could easily start a conversation that leads to utter disdain for an assignment at this time.

Strategies for Managing Digital Distractions from Tutor's View Point:

Using online assessment methods that have been proved to work in a digital classroom. For instance, the design of a course allows instructors to quickly survey the class, administer exams, and have Q&A sessions, all of which, when

done effectively, help to keep students focused. It's also crucial to think about how these tactics are put into practice in the classroom. Students in an online class should not be given multiple choice evaluations or open book assignments. In its place, it is much preferable to give either get adept at a concept or need research on a subject. Tutors should also ask open-ended questions that encourage students to talk and present in person, as well as randomize test questions to prevent duplication.

Teachers can strike a balance between these learning styles by offering a variety of assignments based on their preferences. This will keep students active and involved in the class as a whole. Educators can help students get more from internship opportunities by giving them a taste of a real-world setting that relates to what they're learning. Today's students are extremely tech-savvy and spend a significant amount of time using technology. Educators should use technology to provide kids greater flexibility so that they can deal with digital influences and stay on track.

Students can make their own digital folder. They organize notes, homework, tests/quizzes, and other class-related materials and digital data into tabs or subfolders. Educators and students should work together to build a standard file naming system.

Engage children in a variety of programmes that will challenge them while also allowing them to express themselves. To bring variety to the classroom and create opportunities for hands-on learning, teachers should welcome guest speakers. Rather than lecturing all day, teach students how to engage in discussion-based learning.

All teachers in a college or university must use similar methods to upload and collect projects or assignments in order to limit the number of different ways to manage their workflow. Teachers should work together to develop strategies for reducing student misunderstanding. Faculty members can collaborate with co-workers or student partners utilizing a mix of applications like Zoom and Google Docs.

Findings & Key Suggestions:

1. Strive for a good online-offline balance:

To properly control digital distractions, one must devote as much time as possible to the Online and Offline slots. Schedule time to concentrate solely on the academic task at hand.

2. Disable Notifications:

Managing technology distractions when you need to use your phone or computer to study or accomplish homework can be exceedingly tough. Disabling notifications or utilising an app that can block websites is an effective way to reduce distractions and stay focused on your work. More ways to handle distractions as an online student include becoming more organized, creating a schedule, planning out assignments and projects each term, and avoiding procrastination.

3. Capitalize on Positive Technological Aspects:

Apart from the necessity for virtual classroom tools like Zoom or video conferencing, there are other platforms that can help keep students engaged and focused on the right tasks. Breakout rooms are virtual areas where students can organize and join groups in a safe environment. This serves to break up a session's structure, engage students in debate, and prevent the monotony of a lecture-style course. Most video conferencing platforms incorporate interactive whiteboards, reactions, and polls, which encourage involvement and tap into the fun side of technology that digital native students are more familiar with.

Conclusion:

Students' minds are adaptable, and digital devices appeal to that flexibility. These are some of the strategies educators can use to boost their odds of success. Devoting 10 to 15 minutes each day to this work can considerably improve students' ability to manage digital distractions and stay on track. Students can use this time to digitally or physically file documents, plan assignments, develop to-do lists, and manage tasks. These few minutes can help you relieve

tension and boost student productivity. When these tactics are utilised in the digital classroom, both teachers and students have the accountability and flexibility to excel in their studies.

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