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The efficacy of learning Chemistry online for college students in Malaysia

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Abstract

The COVID-19 situation has accelerated the speed of technology integration in all sectors of society. The education landscape has significantly been altered with the assimilation of online learning platforms to replace face to face learning. This study demonstrates data collected from a mixture of closed and open-ended questions via content analysis methodology. One of the challenges with online learning is that it is harder for students to be participative in class. This study showed that approximately 37.5% of college students from the Monash University Foundation Year (n=104) agreed that it is harder for them to be participative in class. Nevertheless, more than half of the students (51.9%) gave feedback that they enjoyed learning Chemistry online. Although there were obstacles in learning certain subjects online, 43.3% students like the convenience of online learning and 39.4% were happy that they did not need to travel. However, some students (35.6%) missed college life, especially socializing with friends (30.8%) and consultations with lecturers (20.2%). On improvements to online learning, 35% of students wanted more time in-class for exercises, while another 35% preferred the inclusion of more online games. Students also gave feedback that lecturers could ask more questions in class and incorporate post-quizzes to gauge student learning. Overall, online learning is filled with challenges but they are not insurmountable. By improving skillsets required for online teaching and engaging students better, this would make online learning for both the lecturer and student an enjoyable process.

Keywords: Education; online learning; technology; participation; students.