



# Ethical Issues of Online Teaching-Learning

**Dr. Nitin Bajpai**

Assistant Professor. B.ED.

Maharana Pratap. Government P.G. College, Hardoi, U.P., India

nitin.bajpaiknp@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *Online teaching is a trend that has been increasing after the covid pandemic, Now it has been a part of learning in which educators and students feeling more convenient. At higher level many distance and open universities launched online courses for busy students who have not time even for scheduled contact programmes, these online courses are quite beneficial for them. Online courses/ classes can often be more cost-effective than traditional classes and can be done at a pace the student is comfortable with. Although there are so many advantages of online teaching but at a distance the online teaching raises ethical issues also particularly to the distance context. The situation is more complex when teacher and student are unknown to each other, usually it happens in distance teaching-learning programs and u-tube classes where never happens any face to face interactions. Online teaching supports complex discourses and multiple relationships, they cross physical, cultural and linguistic boundaries. This paper will discuss on the major ethical issues related to teaching and learning. Ethical issues i.e. incompetency in digital teaching, Plagiarism in preparing digital content, Maintaining discipline in virtual learning, lack of motivation/ reinforcement, Unstructured and inappropriate content, teachers dress code all these issues are related to educator .On other side students also face problems related to ethics as equity and diversity, surveillance and consent, assessment of learning outcomes etc..*

**Keywords:** Ethics, Digital competency, Ethical issues of teaching, Ethical issues of learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought massive change in education system. Today the teaching and learning process is not limited only within the classroom. The internet has brought the digital paradigm shift in the traditional way of teaching and learning process.

In education, there are numerous examples of the usage of different machines and tools throughout history. E-learning is relatively new concept in modern learning. However the traces of online learning has began since 1950s with the use of television based classes and slide projectors but the instance of first online learning in the world can be traced to 1960s in USA, but it is used widely after the invention of internet. Internet has brought a drastic change in paradigm shift of teaching- learning process online learning is the boon for the modern learners and educators in every aspect. It has evolved for beyond its capabilities. Now teaching is no longer a one way monologue which was limited to didactic method. Recent advancement of online learning enable the student to participate as active learner in teaching process with regular feedback and assessments. This has improved the effectiveness of teaching programme, which is different from classroom learning.

In India online teaching has a long history of broadcasting by All India Radio and Doordarshan for telecasting educational programmes organized by UGC, IGNOU and NCERT but at starting these programmes was in recorded form. After 1994, the teleconferencing and video conferencing was started in education field. But, all programmes were one way, there still need of two way communication.

In lockdown period as a result of COVID-19, education has affected adversely to learners. Fortunately, the technology has become boon for learners. The technology advancement of 2020 provided the scope for creating the virtual classroom by making bridge between teachers and learners. Smartphones played very crucial role in making online



teaching visible. Now the most challenging thing is the ethical issues which has been raising in teaching-learning process particularly to the distance content of online learning.

## **II. ETHICS**

Ethics are those conducts and behavior which defines the individuality of any person with respect to their profession and duties, which he/she has to perform. In other words, it can be said ethics examines the rational justification of one's moral judgements, right or wrong, just or unjust. Ethics denotes to integrity, values, morality, principles, fairness, honesty, conscience etc Ethics in teaching profession is related to the relationship between teacher and student. It consists dignity, fairness, competency, responsibility and freedom. In same way, acting as a guidelines or rules and conducting to right action, maintaining discipline, cooperation etc are the ethics of learner which makes their learning effective.

## **III. DIGITAL COMPETENCE**

In 21<sup>st</sup> century digital competence is one of the important key competencies which refers to communicating information to large range. In todays world educator has to be more advanced competent as the learning hobbies of the learners have changed, their needs and circumstances are no longer the same as ten years before. Now the teaching process is in continuous transformations, it also required advance level of digital competence.

In teaching learning process digital competence is a set of skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes that the teacher must own, in order to make a learning critical, dynamic and creative by using ICT in their teaching process.

The competencies off teacher is based on two core concepts of educational theories that is cognitivism and constructivism, the first one cognitive is concerned the way in which the teacher communicate information to learner, it is related to the knowledge of skills of teacher and the second one construction is concerned with the active role of the learner through which knowledge is acquired.

In this digital era teacher requires digital competency to promote the continuous improvement of teaching process. It will develop innovation capacity creativity skill of problem solving in digital word and ability to incorporate with resources in the teaching process. The required competencies are as follows:

### **3.1 Computerization Skill**

The teacher should know how to organize, store, analyze and communicate information as digital content and how to evaluate its purpose.

### **3.2 Communication**

It means that teacher has two more skilled and collaboration at digital platform. It means that teacher has two more skill in communication and collaboration at digital platform. The teacher has to master in sharing resources tools interaction and should participate in networks.

### **3.3 Creation of Digital Content**

Teacher should know how to create new content digitally. The teacher should have knowledge of artistic productions of content in computer programming.

### **3.4 Security**

Teachers should also know about the use of security to protect his/ her digital content in the digital era.

### **3.5 Problem solving**

It focuses on the competency of identifying the digital resources in making decisions.



#### **IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of online learning is to increase knowledge, skills and productive abilities of learner. It is the substitute of traditional classroom setting. Teaching- learning process is social interaction in its nature, there is a social contract about norms and expectations for all interactions. Online teaching-learning derived from both communication ethics and instructional ethics which will make the learning more effective and reliable, this paper reveals the ethical issues of both teacher and student, which gives opportunity to be respectful, polite, responsible and to organize proper classes.

#### **V. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Olaniyi, Adeolu, Oghomena, Ademola and Olatunde (2022), studied “ Causes and Implications of Ethical Challenges increased in online teaching learning”. The study employed mixed design approach, 100 students are samples using homogeneous purposive sampling, The results were established that online participants should always respect and strictly adhere to codes and conducts that will give room for convenient teaching and learning.

Canbrera, Rhode, Ritcher, Smothers (2021), studied “The Ethics of Online Teaching” and discussed the modalities of teaching ,issues of equity, surveillance and identity in an online environment.

Etambakonga, Clement.L, (2021), Studied on the topic ”The rise of virtual reality in online courses: Ethical Issues and Policy Recommendations” the study suggests that even though online courses using virtual reality technology offers several benefits, they pose several social and technical issues. Some of the issues that have been discussed here range from privacy and security of the users to the social/ ethical issues, and recommendations have been made as a starting point to stimulate future discussion.

Engel, Tand Ostlund,S (2015), studied on the topic “A study on ethical aspects and legal issues in e-learning” this research identifies the main barriers on the way to a broad usage and acceptance. of distance learning technologies.

Reamer, Frederic G. (2013), study on the topic “ Distance and online social work education novel ethical challenges” this research finds the complex ethical issues associated with the proliferation of digital and online social work education. Key ethical issues concern student access: course and degree program quality and integrity; academic honesty and gate keeping and privacy and surveillance.

#### **VI. DISSCUSSION**

Online teaching can magnify the ethical concerns we experience as faculty and students. Here are the issues which is related to the ethics of teachers and learners.

##### **6.1 Ethical Issues of Online Teaching**

The most important concern of today in online teaching as the ethical issues of teaching. Particularly in higher education this topic has never been more relevant then today. The use of ICT has grown at a unpredictable rate and provided a revolutionary change in teaching and learning in the world of education. Today everyone is using internet for gaining. E-learning is approaching every field of learning it provides more possibilities of academic fraud, so it is important for a teacher to know the current threat of online teaching and also should maintain the ethics of teaching profession.

##### **6.2 Incompetency in Digital Teaching**

What can be expected from a teacher, of course the answer is his or her competencies regarding to instructional delivery, class management and assessment. The transformational power of an effective teacher in today’s digital world is his or her competency in digital teaching. Only a digital competent teacher can fulfill the requirements of learner, when multiple number of e-learning platforms are available a teacher lacking digital competency, no doubt certain mistakes in relating to students and pedagogical relationships become an ethical issue which impacts the educator and learner psychologically.

**6.3 Plagiarism in Preparing Digital Content**

However e-learning has made teaching learning accessible to everyone an Internet made it possible but, as a result when data is flowing in every website, as a result when data is flowing in every website blogs etc. there became the possibility of plagiarism. Which is an legal offence. Many teachers are using web content and make digital fraud which is an legal offence if they used copyright content of legal author.

**6.4 Maintaining Discipline**

In online teaching there is lack of rapport between educator a student, in some cases when teacher don't take any accountability towards students then he fails to make trust building among students, it leads to indiscipline in class.

**6.5 Lack of Motivation**

In online mode teachers are not motivated for their teaching, then the class became one way as they don't take any accountability towards learning and don't bother about their students feedback or active participation they only do their business without taking concern about the effectiveness of their instructional process.

**6.6 Unstructured and Inappropriate Content**

Most of the time teachers content which they deliver are very unstructured and inappropriate. The whole content flows in scattered manner, sometimes they are not connected to teaching points. How a student can grasp these type of content it mayBR information but not a criteria of a good teaching. it is a big ethical issue of teaching.

**6.7 Dressing**

In online mode when students and teachers are not facing to each other, both teachers and students meet in online mode. Their dressing also become informal. It is an important ethical issue, Think about your favorite or teacher ideal teacher, no doubt his or her dress sense comes first in your mind dressing of a teacher is most attractive part of their personality. In teaching training programmes "dress code" of a teacher is highlighted.

**6.8 Ethical Issues of Online Learning**

There are plenty of ethical issues in today's online education which is associated with learners. some issues are associated directly and others may be the consequence of the education system, which is laid out the mood of virtual learning at various level of education has connected the donors and educators globally.

Online learning environments require balancing different expectations of participants learners and how they perceive ethics during online learning. As in traditional classes learners must show respect and tolerance to educators and among each other and conduct healthy relations and interactions based on predetermined rules. In traditional classes learners cooperate each other they develop social skills emotional attachments with their educators and also with themselves, But virtual online learning has developed competitive learners, it developed ethical issues also which is main concern of this paper the ethical issues of online learning among learners are as follows:

**6.9 Equity and Diversity**

The main purpose of online education is to make learning accessible to all. But our learner are from different economic, societal and geographical conditions. although teaching is accessible to all through online mode, where the conditions of learning are different so the ethics which may inculcate in traditional classroom been challenging, learners lack cooperation respect and most often there is no emotional attachment with teachers there is moral issues of cultures in online classes miscommunication among participants in online discussion arises from different cultures.

**6.10 Surveillance and Consent**

The ethical issue of consent and surveillance raises questions that how to control. The exchange between students and teachers in online conditions, it is difficult to ensure that the learner is learning what is delivered. Online learning also



lack active participation, sometimes it occurs like one way communication which is a challenging ethical issue of learners.

### **6.11 Lack of Participation**

In online learning sometime educator and learner are unknown to each other, in that condition the interaction between learners and educator hardly happen. It raises the big ethical issue of learner as they become only listener or viewer and don't participate in instructional programs. how can teacher and learner be successful without active participation in teaching learning process,

### **6.12 Lack of Motivation**

All above ethical issues consequences in lack of motivation and learners are from different backgrounds so they can't cooperate each other, sometimes, they even miscommunicate with others learners and educators. their ideas are not acceptable for others. Even if a learner is not participating or not active in the teaching learning program he also lacks motivation in learning.

### **6.13 Assessment of Learning**

Assessment is also being in challenging issues in online mode. Online assessments give freedom and space for cheating and fraud. Most of the common behavior is that taking credits of others works. Online learning gives opportunity of dishonest behavior for learners they copy others assignments test etc.

### **6.14 Freedom of Speech**

The issue of freedom of speech raises question among what are the limits and what can be accepted. Who decides on what is acceptable? Even though in India freedom of speech is inserted in the constitution, but there is limitations, sometimes it is seen that learners speech are obscene with other learners. It is also a very big ethical issue of online learning.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The most often term is used after COVID-19 'new normal' ,it means increased used of online tools in teaching-learning process. The COVID pandemic has shifted the traditional learning to online mode. After the pandemic all around the world, educational institutions are searching for the online learning platforms to make learning possible at distance mode. Today , digital learning has become an important resource for educators and learners all over the world.The concept of digital learning has become the core transformation, digital learning has number of tools which made the learning more effective .Online learning offers teachers an efficient way of delivering lessons to learners. As some educators says that there is not any substitute of traditional classroom, it is also true online teaching has as much advantages that traditional teaching can't fulfill it. Online learning is accessible, affordable , it increases the presence of learner and suits to almost every learning style.

Having all above advantage online teaching learning process raises some ethical issues which is associated to educators and learners which is discussed in this paper. When we talk about the need and importance to teacher in this digital era, the ethics of teacher makes the importance of educators in this world where learner is frequently using the artificial intelligence for effective learning. In this digital and mechanized world, only an ethical educator can inculcate values. social and emotional skills in learners, which is the need of today's education.

To overcome ethical issues the educators should be digitally competent, take care of technology equipment, explore appropriate and safe learning sites, follow copyright law and last but not least make his/her self image important.

In case of learners, they also should be honest, maintain discipline in online learning by following all rules and regulations, participate actively and also respect their educators and even other learners who participate with them.

Teachers can create tech smart lessons plans and encourage students, this will fulfill the purpose of teaching learning process through digital interactions in this techno world.

**REFERENCES**

- [1]. Simpson, M & Anderson, B(2007), Ethical issues in online education, research gate.
- [2]. Pallo, R & Pratt, k(2009), Assessing the online learner, San Francisco, CA: John Publication
- [3]. Northwest, (2018), Ethics for technology use in the classroom published educational article.
- [4]. Aldosemani, T(2020), Towards ethically responsive online education: Variables and strategies: Retrived from eric.ed.gov.
- [5]. Bhattacharya, S & Murth, S(2022), The social and ethical issues of online learning during the pandemic and beyond, Asian Journal of Business Ethics.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Dr. Nitin Bajpai, Ph.D (Education), M.Phil, M.Ed., MA( History, Economics, Philosophy) is an Assistant Professor, B.ED from 2016 at Maharana Pratap Govt. P.G. College, Hardoi, U.P. (India). Of his 15 years of teaching career, He started his career as Assistant Professor at D.B.S. P.G. College Kanpur, U.P (India) for 2007 to 2015. In 2015, then he joined as Principal at Preston College, Gwalior, M.P. (India), till 2016.

Dr. Bajpai has presented more than 35 papers nationally and internationally. He has 10 peer reviewed research papers and has authored (2) books on ‘Technological Perspectives of Education’ and ‘Development and Challenges in Indian Education System’. He has been honored as “Teacher Award” by U.P. Higher education department, (India). He is Research Guide in Education discipline at Lucknow University (India) and doing his best in the field of education.