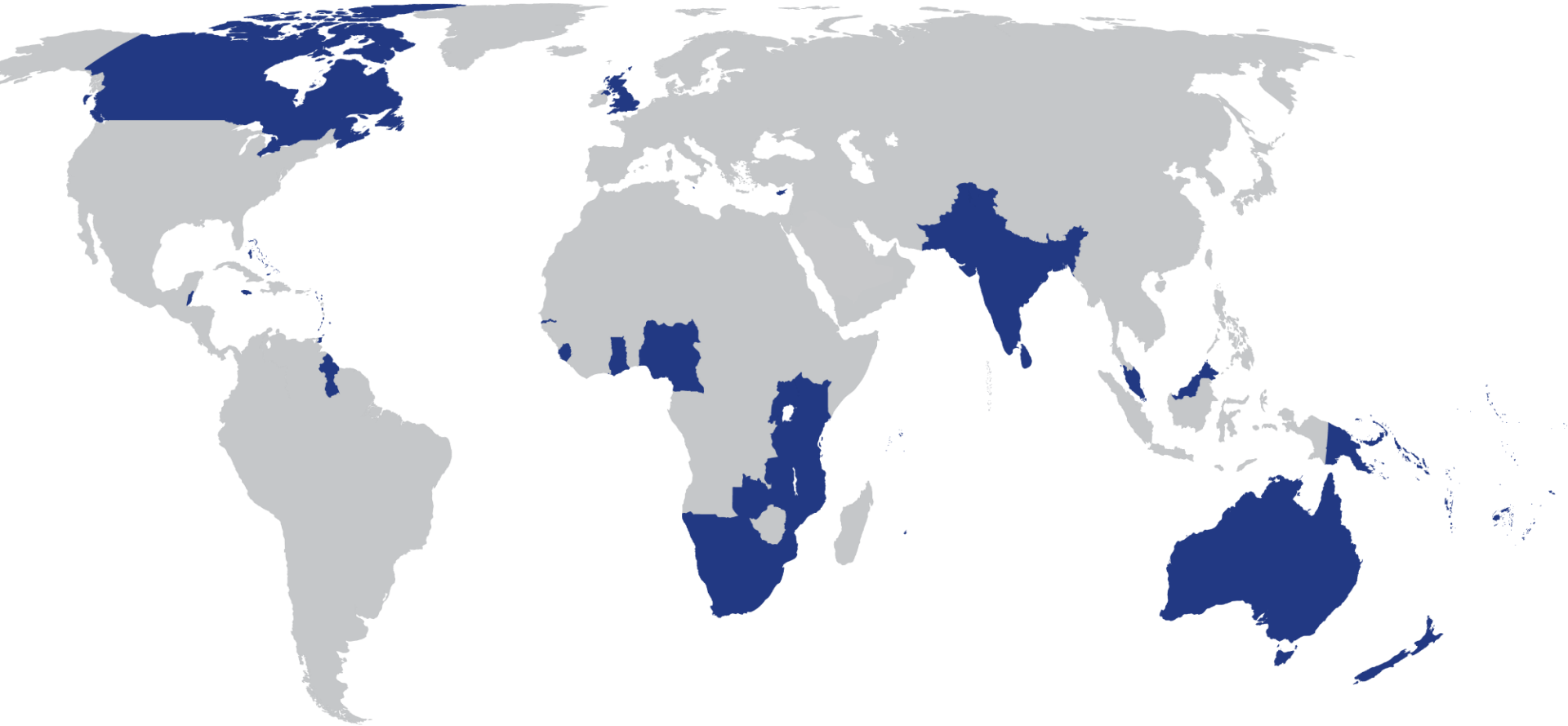
COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

Flexible Learning Association of New Zealand
Making *ako* accessible for all
Kia hora nga mahi ako ki te katoa

Flexible Futures for Education in a post-Covid world

April 14, 2021

Professor Asha Kanwar
President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning



The Commonwealth

54 developed and developing nations around the world

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

To help Commonwealth governments and institutions use technologies to improve and expand access to education and training

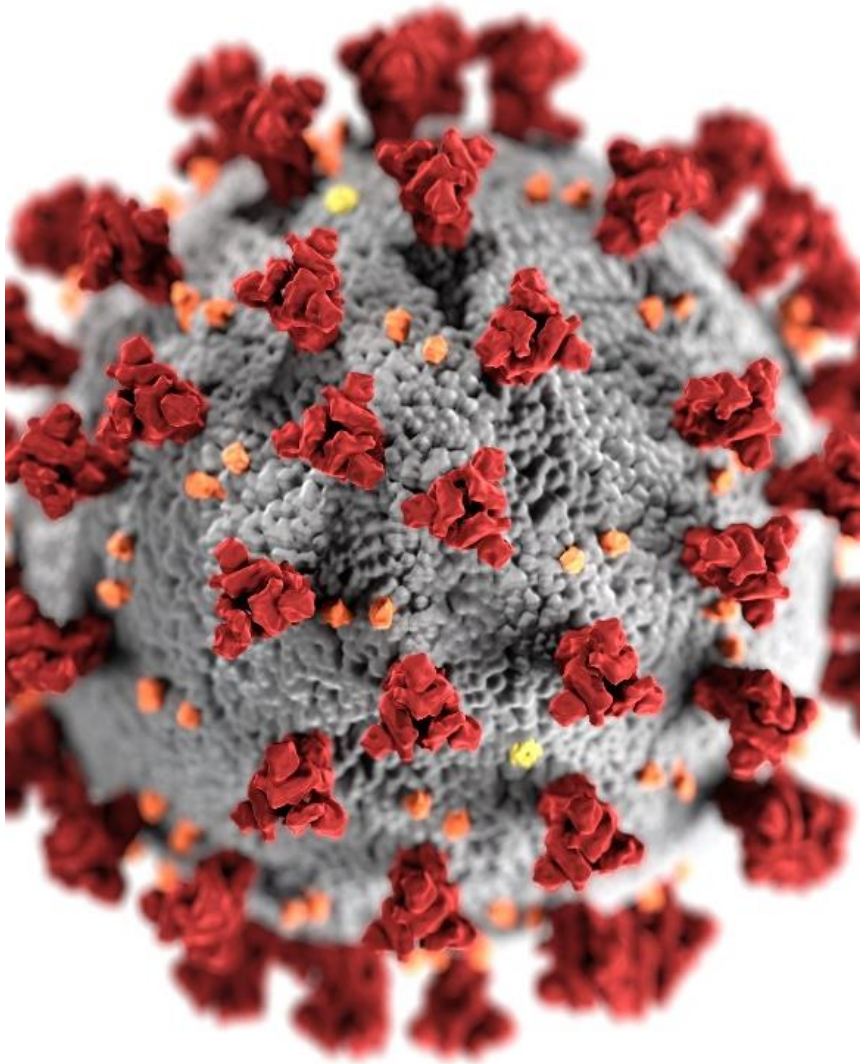
Plan

- Issues during Covid-19
- COL response
- Understanding flexible learning
- Futures of learning
- Way forward

Issues during Covid-19

COVID19 and Education

- Technology
- Teacher Capacities
- Inequalities



1 Technology issues: Stanford University

- 16% undergraduates did not have access to internet for half the time
- 60% of low-income students did not have a private place to study

Source: https://www.tonybates.ca/2020/08/30/lessons-from-stanford-universitys-move-to-remote-learning/

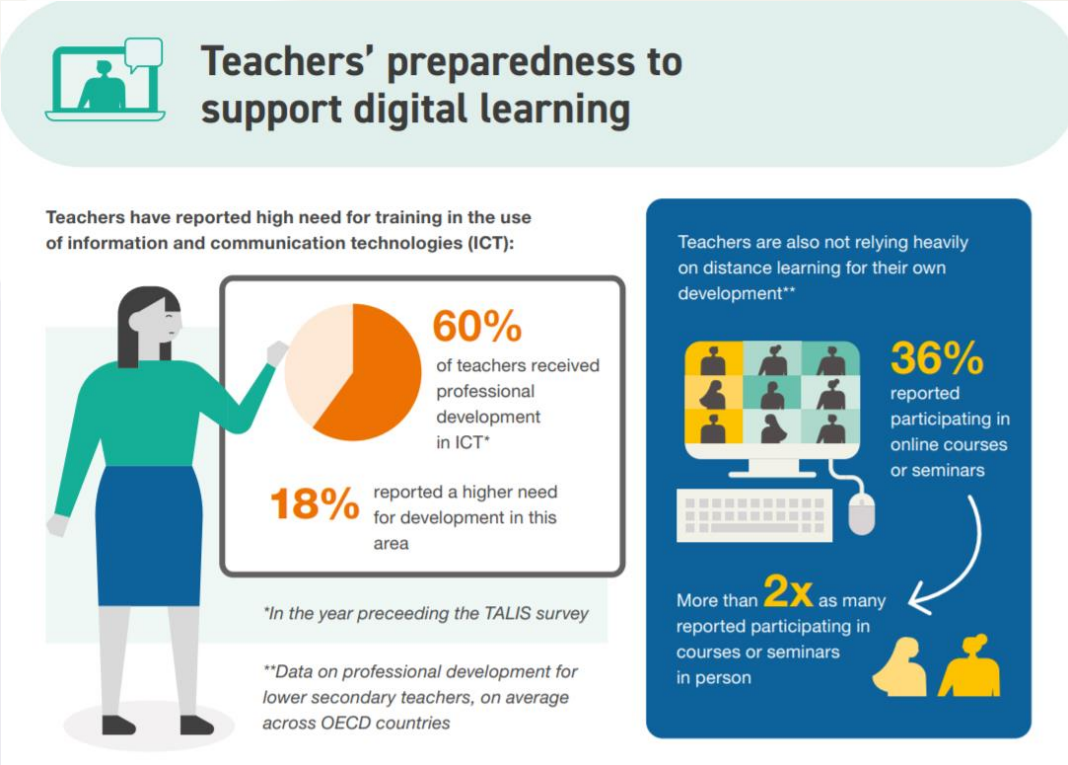
University of Hyderabad

- 40% students indicated “unreliable connectivity
- 30% worried about cost of data
- 18% can’t access online classes at all.

Source: https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2020/apr/20/covid-19-lockdown-digital-divide-among-students-forces-university-of-hyderabad-to-drop-e-classes-2132571.html

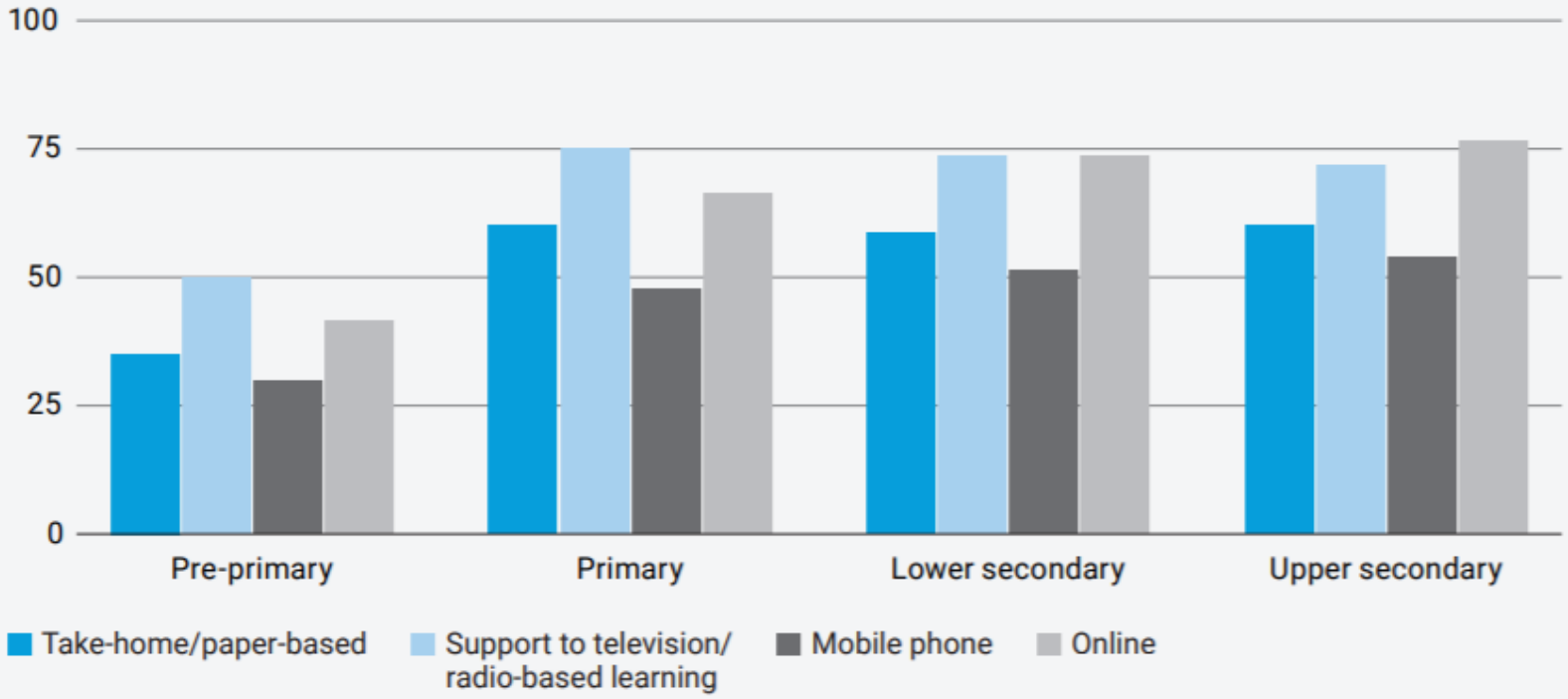
2. Teacher Capacities

- ICT for teaching and learning
- Assessment of learning outcomes
- Access to technology



Source: https://www.oecd.org/education/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-education-insights-education-at-a-glance-2020.pdf

Teachers engaged in alternative teaching



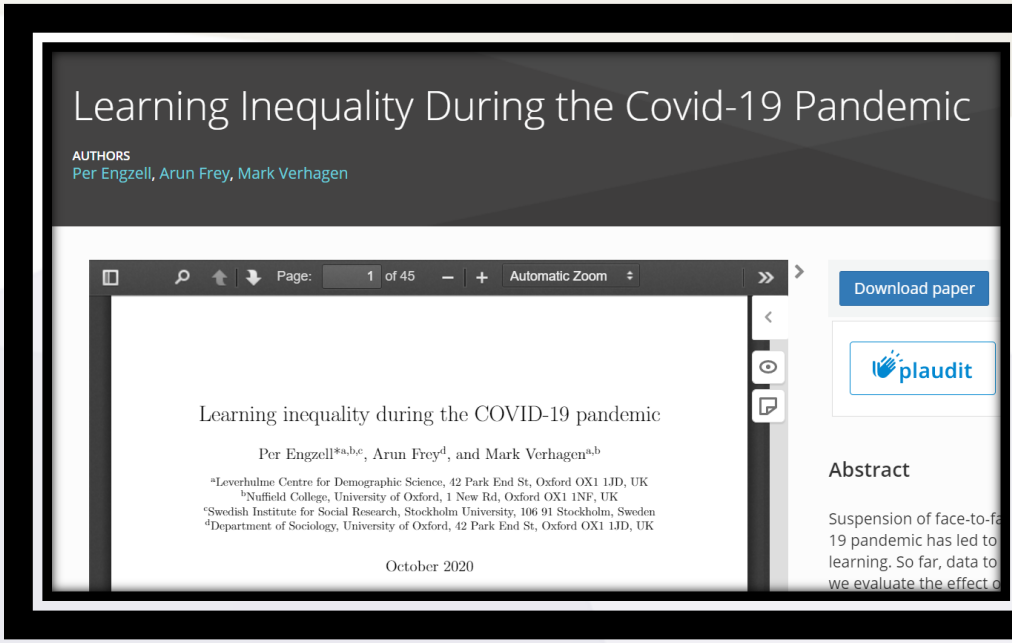
Source: UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank Joint Survey, May-June 2020, available at http://tcg.uis.unesco.org/survey-education-covid-school-closures.

3. Inequalities

Source: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/girlseducation

Learning Inequality during COVID19

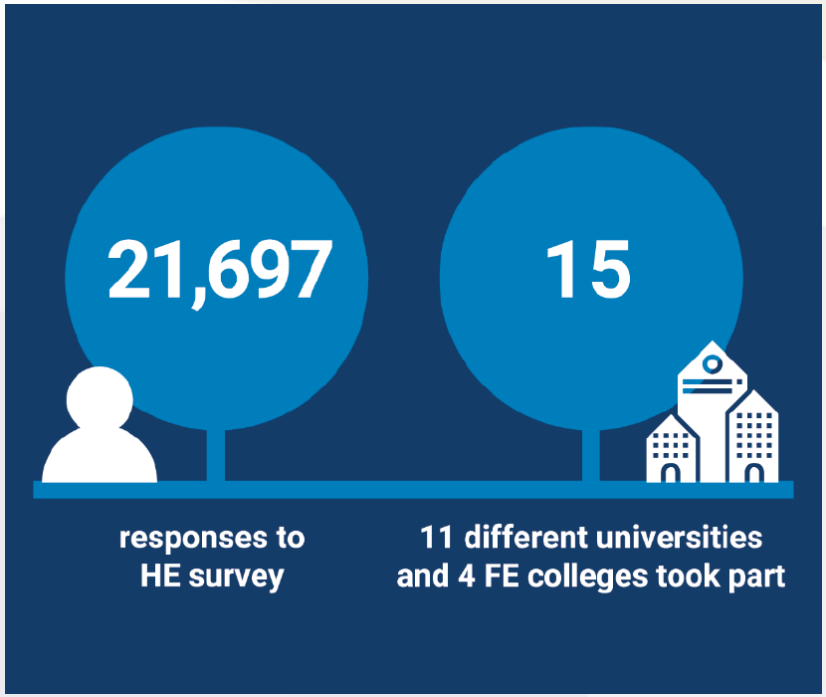
- Learning loss of about three percentile points
- Learners from less educated home 55% more prone to learning loss



Source: https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/ve4z7/

Positive quality rating

- 81% of students were learning online
- 68% of students rated the quality of online digital learning as ‘best imaginable’, ‘excellent’ or ‘good’
- 62% also rated the support they received for online learning equally highly.



Source: JISC (2021). Student digital experience insights survey 2020/21
https://repository.jisc.ac.uk/8338/1/DEI%20P1%202021%20student%20data%20for%20HE-FINAL.pdf

COL Response

Capacity Building of Teachers

http://www.telmooc.ca/

https://www.blpmooc.org/

- **Support network** for educators
- **Share online courses**
- **Provide open technology tools**
- **Build capacity**

Promoting OER-based Online Learning

https://oer4covid.oeru.org/

Content aligned to curriculum

- Video-on-demand: **Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Tonga**
- STEM courses

https://pacificregionalchannel.org/

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

ABOUT OBJECTIVES ACTIVITIES JOIN

International Partnership of Distance and Online Learning for COVID-19

The unprecedented developments due to COVID-19 have led to the closure of educational institutions around the world. UNESCO estimates that about 80% of the world's student population is unable to attend classes and is required to stay at home. Particularly vulnerable are those learners in developing countries who may not have access to electricity, devices or connectivity to follow online lessons which are being provided in many developed countries and urban contexts.

https://opendoor.col.org/

60+

- Intergovernmental organisations
- Universities and educational institutions
- Associations and networks

Skilling and re-skilling

COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

coursera

WORKFORCE

Recovery Programme

Understanding Flexible Learning

Philosophy of Open-ness

- *Open as to people,*
- *Open as to places,*
- *Open as to methods, and, finally,*
- *Open as to ideas*

Lord Crowther

The Open University

‘Open-ness’ in Practice

- Open admission (no entry qualifications)
- Multiple open channels (radio, TV, etc.)
- Open curriculum
- Open access (Anytime, anywhere)
- Open participation
- Open accreditation

(Wedemeyer, 1973)

Flexible Learning

FL expands choice on what, when, where and how people learn. It supports different styles of learning, including e-learning.

- Australian Flexible Learning Framework

Flexible Learning in Practice

- Synchronous learning not the only option (Anytime, anywhere)
- Duration of learning hours insignificant (outcomes-oriented curriculum)
- Options to mix work-place based learning (internships)
- Experiential learning opportunities (Recognition of Prior Learning)

Evolution of flexibility: J Taylor

Models of Distance Education	Flexibility		
	Time	Place	Pace
Gen 1: Correspondence model (print)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gen 2: Multimedia model (print, audio, video, computer-based)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gen 3: Tele-learning model (broadcast TV/Radio, interactive TV/ Videoconferencing)	No	No	No
Gen 4: Flexible learning model (Interactive multimedia online, Internet-based courses, computer mediated communications)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Gen 5: Intelligent flexible learning model (Gen 4 plus, automated response system, automated portal access)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Taylor, J. (1998). Flexible Delivery: The Globalisation of Lifelong Learning. *Indian Journal of Open Learning, 7*(1), 55-66.

Futures of Learning

1. Preferrable Future

- Universal primary completion will be achieved in 2042
- Universal lower secondary completion in 2059
- Universal upper secondary completion in 2084

Source: UNESCO (2016). Global Education Monitoring Report. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245752

Inclusion

- Canada: 10.7%
- India: .56%
- South Africa: 1% . For example, in South Africa 80% of disabled people aged 20-24 are not in tertiary education.

‘Learning Crisis & Learning Loss’

- In South Africa, majority of Grade 4 students displayed the capacity of Grade 1
  (World Bank, 2018)
- Kenya allowing pupils to re-take a year[1]

[1] Source: https://www.education.go.ke/images/Kenya_basic_Education_COVID-19_Emergency_Response_Plan-compressed.pdf#page=11

2. Probable Future

Face-to-Face Courses

Blended Courses

Distance/Online Courses

- MOOC
- Mobile learning

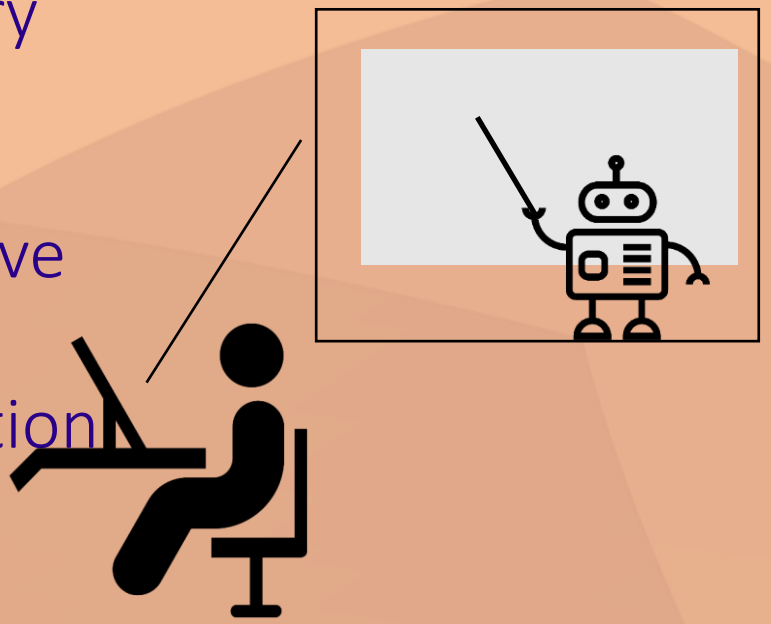
ICT integration in teaching and learning

Open and Distance Learning

Blended Learning

More Personalized Teaching: AI

- Can provide an intelligent, personal tutor for every learner
- Encourage intelligent support for collaborative learning
- Adaptive group formation
- Expert facilitation



Source: https://www.ibm.com/watson/advantage-reports/ai-social-good-education.html

Example of AI in Education

Use of Chatbots

Text, **Video** and **Animated Images** form the backbone of the chatbots. These chatbots too have QR-codes so that videos can be viewed directly from the smart-phone. While dialogues/conversation are important in learning programming but programming can't be learnt entirely through these type of communication. Thus, the chatbot also support immersive learning and visualizations, so that difficult Java programming concepts can be explained easily for easy understanding and to reduce the mental load of the students when learning programming. QR-codes, videos and animated images together provide the immersive learning environment in the chatbot.

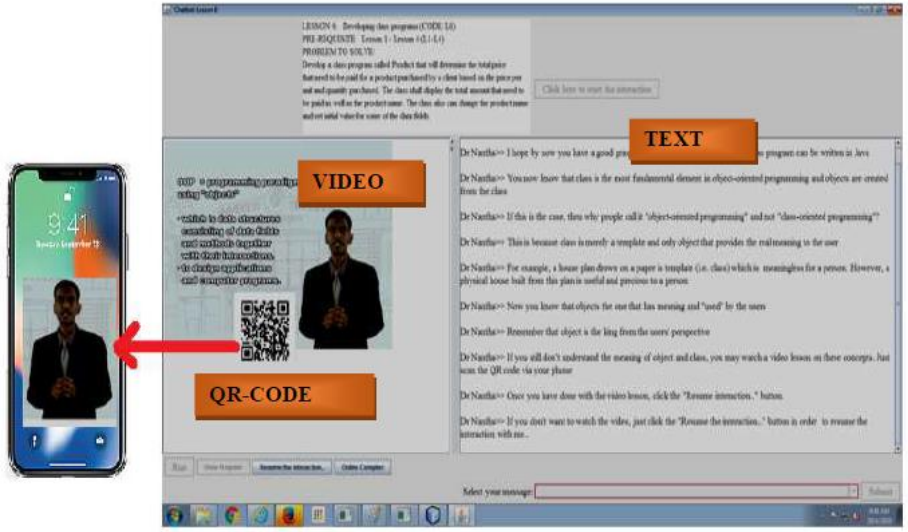
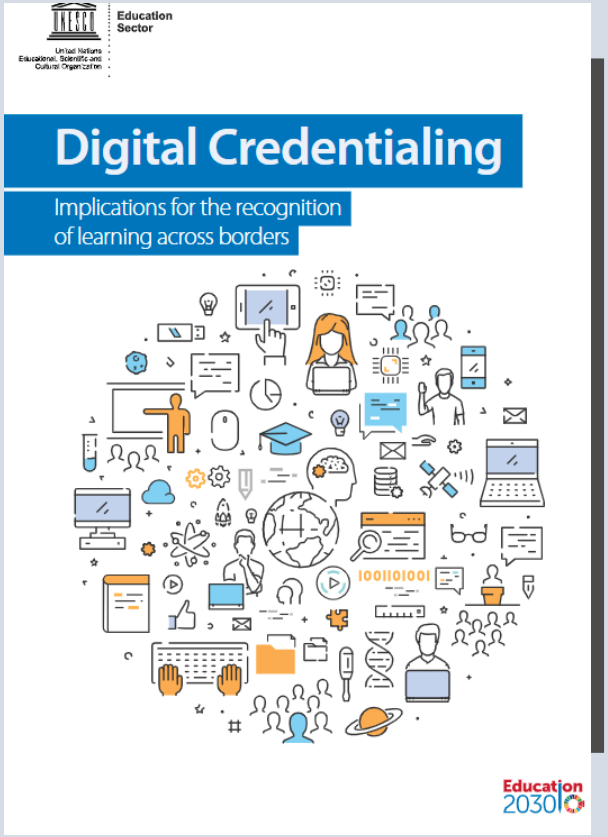


Figure 6 The media components used in the chatbot as viewed from the desktop



https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000264428?posInSet=4&queryId=N-e4559bf5-0bec-40c7-91a9-5cdea42e1ca4

Assessment

- Badges & micro-credentials
- Recognition of prior learning
- Transnational qualifications frameworks for mobility
- On-demand examination
- Authentic, project-based assessment

3. Possible Future

Trends

At the current rate there will be larger and more frequent climate related disasters

Source: The Commonwealth Secretariat. 'Climate Change'. https://thecommonwealth.org/climate-change

Globally, the number of climate disasters has tripled since 1980, while, hot weather in 2016 broke the historic record set in 2015

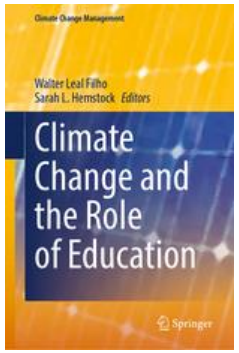
Education and emissions

Direct

- Emissions from construction of schools/infrastructure
- Emissions from energy use in schools
- Learner emissions

Indirect

- Emissions from ‘development’ and economic growth associated with higher levels of education in a country



Research on Emissions and ODL

Botswana Open University

3x less carbon emissions

Travel – greatest contributor

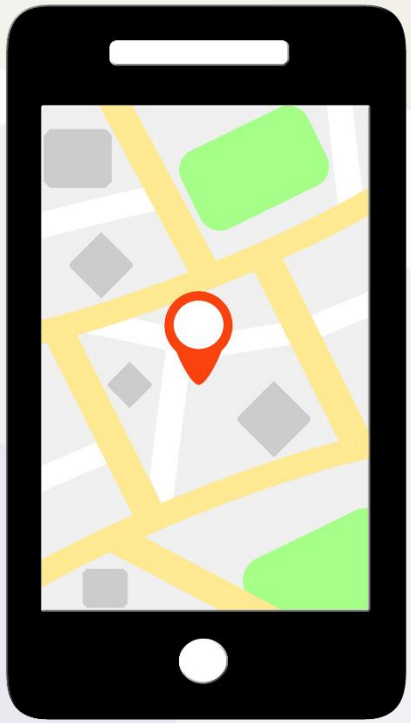
Mode of delivery - determinant

Source: Carr et.al. Delivery Mode and Learner Emissions: Comparative Study from Botswana. W. Leal Filho and S. L. Hemstock (eds.), Climate Change and the Role of Education, Springer Nature. In Production.

Way forward

1.Technology: the future is flexible

- Appropriate technologies to create **flexible learning** opportunities
- **Multiple pathways** to acquire qualifications
- Using technology to **personalise learning**



2.Content: mainstreaming OER

- Building capacities of policy-makers
- Developing capacity of teachers
- Preparing learners to find and use OER

3. Rise of self-directed learning: boost for Lifelong Learning

- Learning to learn online
- Creating an ecosystem for lifelong learning
- Providing just-in-time training for livelihoods

New Registered Users	2019	2020	Total
coursera	8M	**31M**	76M
edX	5M	**10M**	35M
Future Learn	1.3M	**5M**	15M
class central	350k	**800k**	2.3M

Source: https://www.classcentral.com/report/the-second-year-of-the-mooc/

4. Assessment: alternative approaches

- Beyond **proctorial tests**
- Adopt **authentic learning** assessments
- Recognition of **prior-learning**
- **Micro-credentials** and **credit stacking**

5. Parental inputs: new ecosystem of learner support

- Empowering parents/siblings
- Call Centres to support learning
- Address mental health issues and non-academic challenges

6. Inequalities: leave no one behind

- For persons with disabilities
- Women and disadvantaged groups
- People in remote areas

Flexibility for a transformed future

Typical Approach:	**Transformative Approach:**
• Skills /Competencies	• Empowerment for Change
• Employability and Entrepreneurship	• Environmental Conservation and Global Citizenship
• Achievement	• Accomplishment

Thank you

www.col.org