

HOW ONLINE FACILITATION IMPROVED ME TO DIVERSIFY MY KNOWLEDGE AND PORTFOLIO

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"Chalk and Talk" - that was the way of teaching for me for almost nine years in academics. A class full of jovial young minds, dreaming and aspiring to be the future corporate leaders has always been a source of energy for me in my otherwise mundane 9 am to 5 pm life. I enjoyed my job but I always had this little question in mind - is this teaching model sustainable?

With globalisation and the opening of economies, the world has become smaller. There are ample opportunities for students to upskill themselves with degrees and certifications from renowned world institutions. Moreover, with a rapidly changing business environment, there is a segment of mature students who come back to teaching after years of work experience.

There is a lot of content online for those who seek knowledge and I realised that in future my style of "Chalk and talk" teaching might not be sufficient to cater to the demands of the upcoming generation of students. I wanted to upskill myself both for my betterment as an academician as well as adding value to my resume and positioning myself as a stronger candidate for teaching assignments. I got an opportunity to work as an online facilitator for postgraduate level courses.

As an online facilitator, I received training on certain tools of communication with students. I also understood that a high level of student engagement is necessary for successful online teaching. Student engagement mainly happens via calls and webinars. It is a challenge to excel at online facilitation as the student is mainly connected to a facilitator on call and email and I understood how important it is to have clear and concise communication. I also learnt the importance of being responsive and punctual.

Another important aspect of online teaching is the chance to

interact with students from various locations and backgrounds across the world. As a facilitator, I learnt to respect different cultures and ethnicities without being judgmental about them. Thus, I gained international experience as well as valuable communication and interpersonal skills. Online facilitation has helped me add value to my current skill set and broaden my knowledge and portfolio without the constraints of time or place.

During my assignments as an online facilitator, I learnt the finer aspects of coaching. I believe it is a transferable skill and it will help me in people management as well. This is because I got the chance to work primarily with mature-age learners. These students have ample work as well as life experience. However, some of them face challenges related to time management and technology. While interacting with and understanding them, I learnt other soft skills such as empathy.

Online facilitation has also helped me add value to my profile. Online teaching is not perceived to be easy even among the professional teachers, and hence mentioning this on my resume has enhanced my profile.

On the work front, online facilitation is a flexible, interesting and rewarding job that lets me make a positive impact both on my teaching as well as the learning sides. As a teacher, the one-on-one educational support that I provide to students empowers them to achieve their full potential. This, in turn, is the greatest reward of being a teacher. I am looking forward to more exciting milestones of this journey. I will keep you all posted! ■

