

WEBINARS AS AN ACQUIREMENT TOOL FOR EFFICIENT TEACHING

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Abstract

Purpose of this paper is to describe the use of online seminars (webinars) to improve the learning experience for parents fostering critical thinking through indicators for efficient teaching. Eight online seminars (webinars) for parents were developed from March to June 2020 during the time of COVID-19 in Croatia. It was an open call through social networks, so the sample was mixed with parents, people who work with children at all educational levels, social workers, students - all who were interested in offered pedagogical themes. Participants attended the lectures in the same web room (platform) as the presenter but from distant locations. Participants interacted with the presenter using their personal computers, tablets, or smartphones. They were able to ask questions and get the answers in place for a chat. The lecture dynamics consisted of interactive presentations complemented with downloadable materials for further use. The evaluation was performed at the end of each topic via a questionnaire. This method allowed for the exploration of the teaching and learning of scientific knowledge and the acquisition of other pedagogical competencies (specific topic-oriented). The interactive activities and immediate feedback gave attendees the chance to participate actively and reflect on the topic, correct conceptual errors, and exercise critical thinking. All these factors are necessary for learning. The study recommends a research-based determination of teachers in online setting quality indicators that best correlate with efficient teaching and their infusion into online teaching practice assessment instruments.

Keywords: *Efficient Teaching; Online teaching; Parents; Teaching Practice; Webinars*

Introduction

Educational technology is a systematic and organized process of applying modern technology to improve the quality of education. This is a systematic way to conceptualize the implementation and evaluation of the educational process. Educational technology empowers the learning process through the application of modern educational teaching techniques that include teaching materials, methods, and instructional organizations as well as the interaction in the educational process (Stošić, 2015, str. 111). Adult learning principles highlight the importance of relevant content to predispose learning: Adults will be motivated to study a subject when they are able to see their usefulness in their daily work. Likewise, formative feedback and reflection are currently considered key in learning and acquiring new abilities. Feedback and reflection are also necessary for developing critical thinking. It is generally agreed, whether intuitively or empirically, that the teacher is the single most important school-based learner achievement factor

(Pretorius 2012; Santiago and Benavides 2009; Varlas 2009). Educational recommendations were followed in webinar preparation such as: setting clear rules, assessing and providing frequent feedback, defining clear objectives and their importance, helping them develop their sense of responsibility and basic values in their own practice, being consistent in matters of professionalism, and incorporating peer evaluations. This aims to strive efficient teaching recognizable by participants. Lack of a definitive definition of efficient teaching compromises the identification of effective teaching indicators. Layne's (2012) observation, from a review of several studies, that lecturers and students generally hold diverse views on what constitutes effective teaching necessitates the isolation and capture, within the assessment instruments, of indicators to be used for assessing student teachers' teaching. The indicators once identified, would ensure uniformity of assessment expectations between the lecturers and students. Pretorius (2012, str. 312), similarly argued that "Effectiveness is identifiable, teachable and implementable."

Materials and methods

Eight online seminars (webinars) for parents were developed from March to June 2020 during the time of COVID-19 in Croatia. Participants attended the lectures in the same room as the presenter but from distant locations. Most common age of participants in webinar was between 30 and 40 (66% of them), in age range from 20 – 30 were 38% of participants, as well as from 40 – 50 years, and only 2% of participants were in range 60-70 years. The sample was mixed with parents, people who work with children at all educational levels, social workers, students - all who were interested in offered pedagogical themes. The lecture dynamics consisted of interactive presentations complemented with downloadable materials for further use. The evaluation was performed at the end of each topic via a questionnaire. It consisted 16 variables (annex – table 1.) with the Likert scale of 5 points.

Results

This method allowed for exploration of indicators that best describes efficient teaching. Table 2. (annex) shows frequency of single of five possible answers given in questionnaire and percentage of that frequency in 16 given questions. The most common answer „completely agree“ has highest frequency in 11 of 16 questions (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16). Highest frequency of „I agree“ answer is for questions (3, 7, 14) whereas frequency of answer „don't have opinion“ is for two questions (8,10). However, „Do not agree“ and “completely disagree” to any question posed did not have the most frequent incidence.

Discussion

Single most important factor in teaching process is, as generally agreed, teacher. His importance is at any degree of education, especially in primary education undeniable. It's been said that possible mistakes made in teaching during that period are very hard or even impossible to correct (Kyriakides, Tsangaridou and Charalambous, 2017). Accordingly, teacher is the person who has to be of extremely wide basic knowledge acquired during his education, but oneself also has to involve in lifelong learning process that will allow him to develop as a person, as a teacher and as a result, make positive effects on development of his teaching skills and accomplish teaching goals. Since teaching is based on complex combination of scientific, theoretical and empirical processes with subjective and

objective conditions, for it to be well executed, its problems, contents and processes need to be well adjusted and synchronized. That is possible only with combining knowledge and practical experience. (Barr and Tagg, 1995)

What connects almost everything included in teaching-learning process are competences. Despite obvious need of defining that term, there is no clear definition of competence nor it is explained or defined which competencies are required for one to have, in order to teach properly/efficiently. Although teachers greatly influence their student's lives and development as a person, not all of them possess quality competences. As Jurčić, (2012) claims, the most important of all is pedagogical competence along with abilities to make curriculum according to methodology, ability to organize and lead educational process, to form pleasant classroom atmosphere, to be able to define student achievements and evaluate them and finally making partnership relation with parents. Teachers being the key of education their lifelong education has to be interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. Nevertheless, from constructivist point of view given by Babić (2007) it is most accurate to say that competence depends of all participants of process and that participation need and positive attitude towards involvement in process of learning, it is shown in results of questionnaire made.

Modernization in general, variety of available and affordable gadgets to a great number of population, has made positive impact on teaching and opened and developed new approaches and methods in transfer of knowledge, general - everyday or specific - profession related. Despite its lack of social interaction, online learning emerges as a very efficient method of teaching based on subjective impression of participants being involved as well as according to achieved goals. Webinars as one of online teaching methods allows its participants to learn not depending of place, considering they have connection to internet and possibility of participating in webinar real-time – they alone regulate conditions of the learning/teaching process based on their preferences according to their possibilities. Webinar as any other teaching method requires great amount of different capabilities of leader such as organizational skills, wide range of knowledge, social skills, ability to make pleasant atmosphere, developed communication skills etc.

Conclusion

Results of questionnaire and analysis after webinars that were held are showing positive effects of webinar as teaching method and tool for achieving good pedagogical competencies. As table shows, the most importance is given to claims that implicate a positive orientation towards involvement in teaching-learning process and interaction with leader. Webinars as modality, which facilitates interaction, active participation, and immediate feedback, could allow learners to acquire knowledge more effectively. The design should consider the principles applicable to adult learning (with clear objectives and content relevant to practice) to make acquisition of knowledge easier.

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Annexes

Table 1. Variables

1. YOU MAKE FREQUENT MINOR ADJUSTMENTS.	9. YOU SEE EACH STUDENT INDIVIDUALLY.
2. YOU HAVE ACCESS TO 'GOOD' DATA.	10. YOUR STUDENTS ARE CHANGING—ALL OF THEM.
3. YOU THINK LIKE A DESIGNER.	11. YOUR LESSONS AND ACTIVITIES (USUALLY) BEGIN AND END WITHIN DESIRED TIME CONSTRAINTS.
4. YOU PLAN BACKWARD.	12. YOUR STUDENTS ARE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT THEY'RE LEARNING AND WHY.
5. YOU DON'T DO WHAT YOU'RE TOLD.	13. YOUR LESSONS AND UNITS AND ASSESSMENTS ARE BEING REFINED OVER TIME—OFTEN IN SMALL WAYS (WHICH INDICATES STRONG PLANNING FROM THE BEGINNING THAT DOESN'T NECESSITATE MASSIVE CHANGES).
6. YOU'RE A LEARNING FEEDBACK MACHINE.	14. YOU ASSESS FREQUENTLY THROUGH DISARMING FORMS OF ASSESSMENT (THAT DON'T FEEL LIKE A CONSTANT BARRAGE OF QUIZZES AND TESTS). AND FURTHER, YOU HAVE A PLAN FOR THE DATA FROM THAT ASSESSMENT BEFORE YOU GIVE IT.
7. YOU PRIORITIZE ENDLESSLY.	15. YOUR TEACHING IS IMPROVING YEAR-OVER-YEAR IN AN OBVIOUS (AND IDEALLY MEASURABLE) WAY.
8. YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.	16. YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS EXHAUSTED AND YOUR STUDENTS AREN'T ALWAYS STRESSED.

Table 2. Frequency table.

Mode	Var1		Var2		Var3		Var4		Var5		Var6		Var7		Var8	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	70	46,67	90	60,00	44	29,33	90	60,00	64	42,67	92	61,33	54	36,00	12	8,00
2	58	38,67	46	30,36	50	33,33	50	33,33	60	40,00	42	28,00	64	42,67	26	17,33
3	8	5,33	4	2,67	42	28,00	0	0,00	12	8,00	2	1,33	20	13,33	56	37,33
4	4	2,67	0	0,00	4	2,67	0	0,00	4	2,67	0	0,00	2	1,33	24	16,00
5	10	6,67	10	6,67	10	6,67	10	6,67	10	6,67	14	9,33	10	6,67	32	21,33

Mode	Var9		Var10		Var11		Var12		Var13		Var14		Var15		Var16	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	60	40,00	32	21,33	94	62,27	94	62,67	70	64,67	44	29,33	66	44,00	94	62,67
2	52	34,67	48	32,00	44	29,33	44	29,33	54	36,00	70	46,67	42	28,00	34	22,67
3	26	17,33	58	38,67	2	1,33	2	1,33	16	10,67	24	16,00	32	21,33	6	4,00
4	2	1,33	2	1,33	0	0,00	0	0,00	4	2,67	4	2,67	0	0,00	0	0,00
5	10	6,67	10	6,67	10	6,67	10	6,67	6	4,00	8	5,33	10	6,67	16	10,67

* legend - 1. I completely agree; 2. I agree; 3. I have no opinion; 4. I disagree; 5. I completely disagree

WEBINARI KAO ALAT ZA POSTIZANJE UČINKOVITOG POUČAVANJA

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Sažetak

Svrha rada je opisati uporabu mrežnih seminara (webinara) za poboljšanje iskustva učenja kod roditelja potičući kritičko razmišljanje kroz pokazatelje učinkovitog poučavanja. Osam online seminara (webinara) namijenjenih roditeljima razvijeno je od ožujka do lipnja 2020. u vrijeme COVID-19 u Hrvatskoj. Bio je to otvoreni poziv putem društvenih mreža, pa je uzorak osim roditelja sačinjen od, profesionalaca koji rade s djecom na svim odgojno-obrazovnim razinama, socijalnim radnicima, studentima - svima koji su bili zainteresirani za ponuđene pedagoške teme. Sudionici su predavanja pohađali u istoj web sobi (platformi) kao i predavač, ali s udaljenih mjesta. Sudionici su s izlagačem komunicirali pomoću svojih osobnih računala, tableta ili pametnih telefona. Imali su mogućnost postavljanja pitanja i dobivali su odgovore na mjesto predviđeno za razgovor. Dinamika predavanja sastojala se od interaktivnih prezentacija nadopunjenih materijalima za preuzimanje za daljnju upotrebu. Vrednovanje se vršilo po završetku svake teme putem upitnika. Ova metoda omogućila je istraživanje učenja i poučavanja znanstvenih spoznaja i stjecanje drugih pedagoških kompetencija (specifičnih orijentiranih na ponuđene teme). Interaktivne aktivnosti i neposredne povratne informacije pružile su polaznicima priliku da aktivno sudjeluju i razmišljaju o temi, ispravljaju konceptualne pogreške i vježbaju kritičko razmišljanje. Svi su ovi faktori potrebni za učenje i učinkovito poučavanje. Istraživanje preporučuje daljnje utvrđivanje znanstvenih odrednica učitelja u online mrežnim postavkama pokazatelja kvalitete koji se najbolje povezuju s učinkovitim poučavanjem i njihovom infuzijom u instrumente za vrednovanje nastavne prakse na mreži (online).

Ključne riječi: mrežna nastava; nastavna praksa; roditelji; učinkovita nastava; webinar