

Flipping the Script: Opportunities, Challenges, and Threats of a Digital Revolution in Higher Education

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Abstract : In a world that is experiencing sharp digital transformations guided by digital technologies, the potential of technology to drive transformation and evolution in the higher is apparent. Higher education is facing a paradigm shift that exposes susceptibilities and threats to fully online programs in the face of post-Covid-19 trends of commodification. This historical moment is likely to be remembered as a critical turning point from analog to digital degree-focused learning modalities, where the default became the pivot point of competition between higher education institutions. Fall 2020 marks a significant inflection point in higher education as students, educators, and government leaders scrutinize higher education's price and value propositions through the new lens of traditional lecture halls versus multiple digitized delivery modes. Online education has since tiled the way for a pedagogical shift in how teachers teach and students learn. The incremental growth of online education in the west can now be attributed to the increasing patronage among students, faculty, and institution administrators. More often than not, college instructors assume paraclete roles in this learning mode, while students become active collaborators and no longer passive learners. This paper offers valuable discernments into the threats, challenges, and opportunities of a massive digital revolution in servicing degree programs. To view digital instruction and learning demands for instructional practices that revolve around collaborative work, engaging students in learning activities, and an engagement that promotes active efforts to solicit strong connections between course activities and expected learning pace for all students. Appropriate digital technologies demand instructors and students need prior solid skills. Need for the use of digital technology to support instruction and learning, intelligent tutoring offers great promise, and failures at implementing digital learning may not improve outcomes for specific student populations. Digital learning benefits students differently depending on their circumstances and background and those of the institution and/or program. Students have alternative options, access to the convenience of learning anytime and anywhere, and the possibility of acquiring and developing new skills leading to lifelong learning.

Keywords : digitized learning, digital education, collaborative work, high education, online education, digitize delivery

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