

Enhancing online english language and literature classrooms: effective and practical teaching strategies

Azadeh Mehrpouyan¹

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Abstract

This paper examines key effective and practical online strategies for teaching and learning literature subjects in online education. The present study also explores the leading concepts and principles of e- teaching strategies and extends to address the way to adopt literary lesson plans to various types of college students, determine subject descriptions, class activities, assignments, assessments, and expectations with students, and build rapport and communication with the students. This article discusses how to enjoy appropriate online media, channels, platforms, and e-pedagogical tools to help the learners and support the college curriculum in literary subjects e.g. poetry, fiction, and drama. The results show that online pedagogues portray and guide interactive literary texts and skills to the students, educators, and course designers and can facilitate instructional methods in learning the English language and literature online.

Keywords Online education · e-Teaching strategies · e-Learning · Online language and literature classroom · Instructional practices

1 Introduction

Online education and e-classes have appeared as distinctly popular methods for college students to develop their education. Teaching an online direction requires special techniques, which differ from the face-to-face classroom hence the instructors must undertake or increase their competencies in the online learning environment, to make their materials effective and engage students practically. Special teaching strategies can enforce instructors in online education and make the online class a



Azadeh Mehrpouyan a.mehrpouyan@velayat.ac.ir

Department of English Literature, Velayat University, Iranshahr, Iran

successful experience for each professor and the learners. Online teaching also needs exclusive kinds of interactions with students. Effective online teaching depends on gaining knowledge of experiences, which are appropriately facilitated and designed by methods of knowledgeable instructors. Since inexperienced students of English literature in the online environment have inappropriate studying patterns and a mixture of learning methods, online instructors ought to plan for online activities (e.g. e-discussion forums, projects, video presentations, notes, and case studies) that consist of multiple styles of learning for various subjects in different literary genres. Even, educators should identify study skills for online education are different from the traditional ones and they ought to plan the assignments, class activities, and projects accordingly.

Teaching methods are required to be designed for the new learning environments. Language and literature learning and literary competencies are inextricably intertwined with globalization; in addition, online education and e-learning help them to cross their borders. Thus, online learning and teaching, and telecollaboration are of great benefit to literature students (Cerarols, 2013) who do not have face-to-face intercultural opportunities with members of diverse languages, literature, and cultures. Even, online teaching and learning make academia borderless and remove many boundaries. In this regard, teaching literature via telecollaborative devices and platforms promote language learning, literary studies, and intercultural communication and makes a new forum to study literature in universities. On the other hand, the emergence of Coronavirus pandemics acted as an accelerator and created these instructing methods faster globally and exceedingly every single day remodeling the standard university instruction into merely virtual ones.

However, the reality is, that education's shift towards distance learning had been step-by-step development before Coronavirus pandemics. Nothing is perfect, and distance learning is not a solution to all a university's problems. Effective e-teaching strategies are necessary for each barrier and discipline underneath the Learning Management System such as bigbluebotton, adobe Connect, Canvas, or Moodle. For English literature educators, online teaching is also new, it can be difficult to find out what online teaching principles, strategies, and practices work efficiently and practically.

This article explores the principles of e-teaching literature. The present study also investigates effective and practical teaching strategies in online literature classes and provides an easy-to-use guide and accessible resources for learning English literature. Each instructor's e-pedagogy may be different, but productive educators all follow equivalent appropriate practices within the online teaching of literary texts.

2 Literature review

Many articles, studies, and researches on teaching and learning exist and e-learning in general, and some studies were conducted on specific subjects such as mathematics, and statistics, only teaching languages, not teaching literary languages and literature; however, the current research examines effective and practical teaching strategies for online literature classes. Online teaching strategies refer to methods and techniques that guide institutions in learning activities, course content, and student engagement



in online courses (Bonk & Dennen, 2003). Posting a self-introduction video during the first session of an online course can help contributors to have a better introductory experience as they recognize their classmates as an example of an instructional strategy. Strategies frequently adopted in online tutorials include (1) promoting interactivity through asynchronous and synchronous communication or delivery (Ku et al., 2011; Lawton et al., 2012); (2) facilitating the use of tools (Steinberg, 2010; Strang, 2012); (3) abuse demonstration videos, such as screenshots to demonstrate tools, devices, and applications (Gemmell et al., 2011); and the transition from a strong social presence to a communal regime (Thomas et al., 2008; Zhang & Walls, 2006).

Mukhtar et al., (2020) noted the benefits of online education and e-learning comprise convenience and accessibility, while limitations are associated with inefficiencies and difficulty in maintaining academic integrity. The recommendations offered to train teachers to use online methods and develop lesson plans to reduce cognitive load and increase interactivity. The coronavirus pandemic has forced students and teachers at all levels to adapt to online learning instantly. The impact of this emergency online education -and the developments needed to make it work - could permanently change the path of education, which is delivered educational materials (Lockee, 2021). The pandemic has tested the education system globally, forcing educators to switch to online education, and e-teaching overnight (Dhawan, 2020).

Fearnley & Amora (2020) indicate that a learning management system that can enrich teaching and user acceptance of this learning technology is required, and its appropriate application in higher education, but a curriculum material strategy for each subject is necessary to explore. Lack of relevant and significant interaction can be a common challenge in online courses, as students and instructors are located in different geographical locations (Moore, 1991). This lack of interaction may lead to a mode of isolation and frustration in the online educational environment (Willging & Johnson, 2004).

Interactive education of online courses allows college students to move and have collaborative learners. Three types of interaction in online courses are available: student to instructor, student to content, and student to student (Moore, 1989). Student-faculty interaction refers to the dialogue and communication between students and faculty members, where student-faculty members' engagement is essential in learning and teaching techniques (York et al., 2007). Student content engagement refers to a notable degree of interaction between the learner(s) and the content (e.g., text, audio, and video). Student-to-student interaction specifies the dialogue and exchange between and/or between different participants in an online course.

There are two important aspects to consider in the interactions mentioned, first, how and second, how well students receive and grasp the instructional and learning materials in an online course (Bonk & Cunningham, 1998; Davis & Snyder, 2012; Lawton et al., 2012) suggest that motivating students to interact with each other and instructors guiding them to demonstrate critical thinking and online course tools can develop cognitive skills among students. Using collaborative learning can aid students to perceive knowledge and reflect on their perceptions and understandings of how the instructor is engaging them in this way, and using online teaching and e-learning strategies (Miller & Redman, 2010).



3 Methodology

Data were collected from practical instructional strategies and experiences from the actual online literature classes and students' reflections on a different range of strategies and course designs to help students to learn literature in an online setting in one state university (Velayat University) and a private university (the Azad University of Tehran, central branch) in 2019–2021. The study was conducted through literature review and mainly empirical and descriptive-analysis methods practically to cover the objectives of the study and respond to the following questions: what effective and practical teaching strategies are for online literature classrooms and how an instructor uses and develops these strategies and practices, and technology can be used and help online learning and teaching literature.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Concepts and principles of e-Teaching strategies

Two simple concepts can be considered for all of the top online learning strategies: Vary the types of lessons: teaching should be a blend of both synchronous (happening in real-time) and asynchronous (unscheduled and self-paced). Synchronous teaching through phone calls, video lessons, or live chats allows students to ask questions and build relationships with the professor and each other. Asynchronous activities, like online discussion boards or recorded lectures, allow the students to complete assignments at their own time and pace. Both styles have their benefits and are necessary for their ways; Select the right tools for the class: the university's Learning Management System (LMS) will most likely be the primary tool one uses for direct communication and posting assignments (Mehrpouyan & Razavi, 2014). The instructors attempt to familiarize themselves with these concepts and environment earlier, and do not hesitate to reach out to more tech-savvy co-workers with questions. The educators also need a separate tool such as Google Voice or Zoom for phone calls, live lessons, and video chatting if the universities' rules and regulations allowed the professors. Beyond these basic concepts, a various range of educational technology tools emerged to teach, learn and engage the students (Schindler et al., 2017). There are tips, strategies, and approaches provided in this article for discovering, experimenting, and implementing appropriate strategies and tools in the e-classroom with a special focus on literature subjects. Motivating and monitoring students for engagement whereas making certain they master their course content may be difficult in any setting. Virtual teaching should make the literary lessons more interactive and foster active learning. Most key e-strategies in distance education throughout these concepts are discussed in this study. However, the principles of e-teaching literature are explored as follows (Fig.1).

 Interest: The teacher's interest in online reading and teaching literature, or lack of it, makes/mars the quality of literature and language. An instructor who himself/





Fig. 1 Principles of e-teaching Literature

herself does not enjoy literature online can never effectively teach it online either. The principle of interest is necessary for all fields of literature.

- Availability: The online library/digital library of universities and research and educational institutions should have a myriad of literature. Literature is qualitative. It fulfills the purpose of the institution as a whole.
- Inclusion of literature in e-textbooks/ e-handouts/e-notes: The ideal instructor's
 notes and e-books should perfectly include all kinds of literature so that the students are brought face-to-face with them although all are electronic. Different
 e-materials dealing with a particular form of literature may be prescribed at a
 higher level. However, there are different kinds of relevant e-books, electronic
 scholarly papers, and critical analyses that can be included on different levels on
 the net from the basic to the advance.
- Participation: The students should be encouraged to take part in various literary activities organized in the virtual environments from the online classroom to e-Forum/ discussion. The students should be given sufficient opportunity to take part in debates and seminars online.
- Practice: Opportunities should be provided to the students to try their hands at literature in different forms as literature is the means of e-transmission and e-communication of their comments, ideas, feelings, needs, and emotions in perfect forms of audio, video, comment box, chat box in an online classroom, mini project, case study, video presentation, online assessments, and other e-forums. Beginning with simple essays students can go on to wide other forms of literature, such as stories, plays, critical and analytical essays, fiction, letters, etc. The students can read in the e-class or send them online and share selected literary works in the class on the screen. The instructor can ask the students to comment in a chat box and allow some to discuss and review; at the same time, keep an eye on a chatbox while students are expressing their ideas and comments orally. It would



- be better to ask them first to comment and then correct and lead the discussion in the right way in the e-classroom. Engaging, controlling, monitoring, and correcting are important factors in teaching online.
- Standard/level: Literature is included in the curriculum keeping in the mind the level of the students, particularly in online classrooms. It is primarily for memorization in the first years. It gradually rises to understand the level of junior and senior classes. The online class can be further raised the reflective level the good quality in undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Thus, the students learn how to express virtually themselves with creative, original, and independent thinking on a given subject in an online environment. Keeping with the level of students the teaching objectives to change.

4.2 Teaching strategies for online literature classrooms

The literature instructors should adapt the literary subjects to work online. Effective strategies for teaching literature online are crucial to recommend including the instructors/ professors should revamp the face-to-face classes to the online environment with engaging discussions, screen recordings, interactive Tech-tools, and other e-pedagogical devices. The professors also ought to set clear rules and obvious expectations with literature students and share the expectations and due dates early and often to prepare students for a successful performance each semester. In addition, these educators can build a strong online classroom community in internal and marginal ways. The virtual university community is simply as essential within the virtual setting and might be fostered with video chats and presentations, driven free time, mini-projects, discussion forums, bulletin boards, and virtual room message boards. It is required to find and utilize the right EdTech for literary subjects' purposes and needs. It is useful to collaborate with fellow educators and identify specific needs to find and implement the best tools for the classroom according to the subjects and genres for instance poetry, novel, drama, literary criticism, etc. Further, strategies for teaching online are demanded to explore how to adapt the literary lesson plans to different types of college students. The professors have already put endless hours into the lesson plans, content design, tweaking, and perfecting them.

There are a bunch of different online learning strategies to adapt the in-person lesson plans to fit the virtual environment. It just takes creativity and the right tools for different literary genres. It is recommended to add literary analysis and discussions to increase engagement and comprehension. An invincible tool for asynchronous discussions is Flipgrid. Flipgrid could be a helpful learning tool and a more timely study ought to be conducted with HyFlex courses changing into additional current because of COVID (Keiper, White, Carlson & Lupinek, 2021). Instead of typing, students record themselves answering the posted questions. The students can watch and answer each other's video clips, as well. This can be a good alternative for unenthusiastic writers, a strong way to boost engagement and promote active learning along with online classes. For online discussions, Google Classroom can be another appreciative pedagogical tool. The professors simply post the assignment instructions, allow the students to post their answers or upload their files, and then



they can read and respond to others and receive feedback on the due date, which is determined on the e-calendar of the Learning Management System. For synchronous discussions, chat boxes such as LMS-based, YO Teach enable students to message back and forth in actual time. A fair warning: these chatrooms require active monitoring from the educator's side. In addition, screen recordings to pre-record yourself for literary lessons can be utilized.

For the PowerPoint files, the educators have already created screen-recording software such as oCam, Loom, or Screencastify and allow the students to record the presentation on-screen as the educators speak and click through the slides because some topics and even literary words or terms are complicated. The literature students can watch the records as much as they require to understand the subject fully and it can be accessible to them on the web. It has another option to include a little window with the educators' faces on the screen, and then the students can still see the professor hence the students have educators' faces, PPT file, and relevant audio/video to that discussion; even if required, the professors can share his/her screen from his/her device or an internet search/link. These videos can be downloaded or shared via Weblink, etc. There is also some software to compass a variety of files such as PDF, video, audio, etc. to get the files in faster speed download.

Beyond just literature lessons, the educators can also record themselves explaining assignment and assessment directions. Making literary lessons interactive and engaging is also an important factor in e-teaching. The educators' body gestures, facial moves, hand movements, and pitch of voice are other considerable elements in e-teaching to maintain the interactions in an online class. Nearpod is another method to create online sessions with further interactive communication. A dynamic tool allows students to follow along and participate in the lessons on their own devices. First, the educators import their pre-existing lessons pdfs or PowerPoints. The educators then can add in places for students' interaction: written responses, drawings, quizzes, polls, collaborative boards, and more. The educators can differentiate the type and difficulty of literary assignments for different student needs.

In strategies for teaching English literature Online, the instructors should interpret their rules and clear expectations with students because a variety of types of assignments exist for English literature students for example critical analysis, short notes, essays, etc. Thus, it is recommended to close interpreting and reading before writing critical comments and essays. The educators' explanations about the tasks and tasks themselves are crucial to doing literary assignments and assessments. Close reading also culminates in the writing of an essay in which students provide textual evidence to describe literary discourse as complex and coherent (Kain, 1998). Close reading is, therefore, a mental process that leads from details to wider categories and that enables students to build up personal competencies and interpretation, hence it is an important activity in literary studies (Boyles, 2013) and assignments. Close reading techniques must be recognized as a vital first step in literary studies provided a phase of the contextualization of critical, historical, and literary perspectives follow them (Manzolillo, 2016) and it should be considered in online assignment and evaluation.

An efficient and appropriate Virtual Class Management is essential within the online setting as well as is crucial in the face-to-face one. Since the educators will not be physically seeing, it makes online teaching more difficult and particular adopted





Fig. 2 Effective Teaching Strategies for Literature Online Classrooms

strategies are required. Some other effective online teaching strategies are accounted for as follows (Fig.2).

4.2.1 Announce rules/expectations in bulletin board/live discussion

Make the subject descriptions, class activities, assignments, assessments, expectations, and rules clear from the outset, mainly on the bulletin board and during live discussions. The educators might discover the quieter students and encourage them to type in the chatbox which can be a pleasant experience to start online engagement in conversations, but not so great when it gets off-topic or inappropriate. In the first synchronous session, spend time discussing with the college students what the educator expects in typing mode and oral one both as his/her "Online Classroom Norms" to be. Create a list of 8–10min rounds, consisting of particular regulations for example "stay on topic," "always be punctuated and respectful," and "raise your hand and wait to be called on earlier than turning on your microphone." After the professor creates the rules/norms, the methods and schedule of evaluations, feedback and report should be shared before/during the next session. Providing and sharing the files and required materials can guide the students in particular literary subjects.

4.2.2 Apply consequences in live sessions

Since examining the literary texts intend to discuss, the instructor can think about how to develop e-discussion. Equally, in any classroom, it is simply as vital to implement the expectations, as it is to create and share them. If a student is negatively participating, the professor can without difficulty mute or put off him/her from the e-discussion or e-class. Then, follow up in a while with a phone call/email to talk about the situation.

4.2.3 Discover an effective augmentation

Some college students used to love cleaning the whiteboard, or hearing some special expression for instance "great", "bravo" or a clap from the professor's side. However, online classrooms can translate these rewards in other ways. As Dauer (2003)



confirms, it is vital to provide some reward in phrases of evaluation marks to online activities, using emoji, etc. otherwise, the students would not dedicate sufficient time to them. In an oral examination, the students acquired similarly grading for their reading, interpretation, and analysis. Manzolillo (2016) agrees that at some point in oral examinations, many college students who participated in the discussion board declared that their study with the webpage facilitated via instructors benefitted them because many of the integral problems arising from the software had already been dealt with online discussions. Such oral practice in discussion forums helps the student to be prepared for the final exam effectively.

However, it is necessary to reward students to reinforce their high-quality performance, behavior, and effort. Some comments include public calls: Recognize talented students in the emails to the class, through synchronous sessions, or post them on a public bulletin board. A board for instance Padlet can let college students publish calls and recognize every student; Private calls: Send college students messages when they have accomplished a high-quality job; Student choice: Allow the students to make reputedly small alternatives /opportunities to introduce it can be motivating. Let the interested students select which poem/song/play/performance to play before the lesson starts or pick an exciting picture for the virtual Zoom background.

4.2.4 Set crystal and inflexible due dates for e-Submissions

As there are many assignments for English literature students and many of them conflict with time management. Set due dates for everything, and send generic reminders. Where possible, chunk large assignments into smaller ones to help students keep on pace. For example, if assigning an analytical essay, set a due date for the outline, the rough draft, and the closing essay. This helps force the "wait until the last minute" students to move ahead at a steady pace. It takes to do assignments for literature subjects and the students must know online classroom does not mean flexible time to submit and they should manage submissions before the due day.

4.2.4.1 Use acknowledgment statements In the online environment, the instructor might discover him/herself inevitably wondering, "Does anybody even read my emails?" To ensure the college students study and understand any particularly vital communications, add a hyperlink to a quick Google Form the place a student will support in their names about studying and understanding the subject. Thus, using short messages for receiving, accepting, granting, allowing, confession, appreciation, etc. is recommended by literature faculty members in the e-communication for example: "Your critical analysis is well received".

Another strategy for online instruction, a professor should build rapport and community with students. Practices in online teaching can be shared to construct the virtual room community.

4.2.5 Use flipgrid platform for various literary discussions

With Flipgrid, the English literature professors and their students can respond to literary topics the educators have posted with a selfie video. Students can view everyone's responses and then submit a video reply. However, these are no longer synchronous



discussions, seeing and hearing the professor and their classmates help to shape a community bond.

4.2.6 Build managed free time

Allowing 10min earlier than a live lesson for college students to enter early and chatting with the professor and other fellow students is a remarkable way to foster important/ casual connections. In any potential, the host can take a 30-minute recess in a 100-minute class, wherever students might log into a live meeting space merely meet and discuss there. If dialog lags or needs direction, the professor can facilitate easy and fascinating literary subjects with fun icebreakers and prevent getting tired and bored in an online classroom.

4.2.7 Post online self-assessment

It is helpful to post the appropriate online self-assessment links for each subject for example classic drama, American literature, literary criticism, etc. It would be better to check the details of each subject syllabus to be matched with the recommended assessment link. It is more effective to give these links, which have answers to check e.g. https://teswesm.com/online-test/literary-theory-criticism-mcqs-set-3/378/40-20.

Heick (2021) emphasizes that English literature professors cannot instruct Shake-speare to college students accustomed to tiny displays with brief flashes of communication that instantly fade away in both which means endurance and visible textual content anymore Teaching literature is challenging and it is more difficult in online classrooms. Currently, the emergence of technology and the creation of e-teaching and e-learning add to promote new practical teaching strategies in virtual spaces. Academic educators actively demand practical strategies. The practical strategies for teaching literature online are endorsed in Table 1.

4.3 Practical strategies for e-teaching literature

- Allow college students to choose media when the instructor chooses any literary topics and/or academic and/or high-quality standards.
- Have college students flip essays into videos, podcasts, letters, simply-coded games, poem reading aloud by the writers, live performances of the plays, and literary apps.
- Ask college students to analyze numerous media varieties for their strengths and weaknesses and involve both basic and digital forms.
- Use mixtures of media classic and contemporary literature subjects together, leveraging one towards the other. Apply music, short videos, mobile video e.g. TikTok to record, watch and edit video clips, video games, video game maker, video calls, plays, poem maker, critical writing, film box advanced cinema video camera, posters design, essays writing, reading and editing, audiobooks in smartphone and watch, podcasts for ever-growing library and exclusive collection of literary sources to help students in their self-improvement journey, etc.



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- Use RAFT strategies as eduTOOLBOX for e-literary discussion: Role, Audience, Format, and Topic/Theme/Tone. Help to develop and promote media in response to new roles, audiences, formats, and topics, themes/tones. Students employ right here and experiment with media designs, which are precisely what authors do and enhance to understand elements of literary devices.
- 6 Select the media first, then the requirements in designing units (this presumably goes in opposition to what the professor taught but tries it).
- Insist all students work online according to the instructor's words e.g. 'Leave the classroom'.
- 8 Connect the old with the new in proper approaches to center the knowledge, which is current students' demands.
- 9 Encourage the students to create and produce an ongoing podcast and YouTube channel on relevant themes, authors, literary texts, etc.
- Use a thematic focal point to sketch lessons, assessments, project-based learning—whatever activities college students 'touch.' One of the hallmark traits of classic literature is that it endures. Lolossost, overcoming conflict and obstacles, civil rights, identity, and more are all at the core of the best modern and classic literary works both. They are central ideas in literature classes and these themes should be bolded in online literature classes to focus us on curriculums.
- Use tools for digital literary textual contents in pdfs, word, podcasts, audiobook readings of a literary novel/poem/drama, etc. and share them in an online discussion, and more help to college students for analyzing, questioning, comments, revising, rethinking, or collaborating with others at some point of the reading of classic and modern literature
- 12 Create social media-based study clubs. Establish a hashtag that follows dialogues and discussions of sure themes, authors, texts, or something in different categories/topics according to the subjects' curriculum.
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The findings report that educators in literature can help the students and support the college curriculum of literary subjects by using the mentioned e-pedagogical approaches and e-Ed tools. As was mentioned in strategy 9 in Table 1, the instructors and students can receive many contents for teaching and learning literature online on YouTube as well (Ho, 2012). Many scholars agree that the role of YouTube is effective for individuals and academia to enhance the e-learning and e-teaching process and behaviors (e.g. Keskin 2018; Nawal and Tabarek, 2020; Zhou et al., 2020; Moliner et al., 2021; Roth, 2015). YouTube can be used as a Social Media Platform for Literature Courses. Some literary subjects are difficult to understand and this platform might be helpful in instructional programs. The re-enactments of Shakespeare's drama exist in YouTube movies and some short videos contain them in the actual literature classes. Instead of college students merely analyzing a textual content version of Othello, they experience watching live performances of Othello to get more aspiration to study the play. These types of movies can be used to complement online literature classes. In some cases, the authors talk about their works and have been interviewed. Some writers read their literary works aloud with their feeling and tone. Hence, students' comments have been improved. Youtube experiences motivate the students to use these first-hand content performances. Listening to the author's talk on why they wrote their literary works etc. is interesting to the students and instructors. The students show more interest in literature by enjoying multimedia channels. Hence, the literature instructors might implement their creative and innovative techniques in teaching methods online by using multimedia platforms, communications, apps, browsers, websites, cyber play, games, bulletins, chatrooms, blogs, wikis, linguistic communication processes, podcasts, direction administration systems, annotated digital editions, text-analysis tools, ASCII text file applications, and YouTube channel (Lancashire, 2009).



5 Conclusions

This study provided and developed effective and practical strategies for distance and online education. This article guided the instructions on how to adopt literary lesson plans to different kinds and levels of students, set clear expectations/rules with students, and build rapport and community with students. The appropriate EdTech tools, which help the curricula, were recommended. The results exhibited that online pedagogy for literature subjects have active and dynamic approaches and strategies to facilitate the acts of teaching and learning such as remodeling a Web-based environment and platform into an intimate social community spanning institutions and individual student. According to the practical experiences and students' feedback, online discussion forums, small projects, video presentations, educator's handouts/ notes, and case studies could be effective among the mentioned online instructional strategies in literature classrooms.

Literature instructors should not be assumed that since these educators are under the branches of the human sciences, they cannot, like other disciplines, benefit from the facilities and tools of educational technology, particularly in online education, themselves and their students. These instructors should attempt to adapt to today's technology and learn the updated methods and strategies to apply in the online classroom environment. With the help of their creativity and experience and collaboration with other colleagues, they can improve their teaching abilities and skills in the online space and provide a more enjoyable and productive learning environment.

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Author' contributions The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Declarations

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