

PARENTS AND STUDENTS EXPERIENCES ON DISTANCE TEACHING: CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Jelena Đermanov^{1}, Nataša Tančić^{1*}, Jelena Trivković^{1*}*

¹ University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Pedagogy, Novi Sad, Serbia, e-mail: jdjer@ff.uns.ac.rs, natasakovacevic@ff.uns.ac.rs, jelena877@gmail.com

Abstract: The corona virus pandemic has changed the life of modern society in many segments. In this sense, the entire education and teaching format have been changed. Online teaching and learning is recognized as a valuable tool in the emerging situation. In this regard, the paper emphasizes the explanation of the concept of online teaching and learning, and then the experiences of students and parents and their evaluations of the success of remote teaching during the corona virus pandemic, with reference to the challenges faced by teachers in their to the new role of “online teachers”. The research is based on the constructivist and socio-cultural paradigm of contemporary teaching, which is situated in a technologically mediated information and communication context. The goal was to examine the experiences, opinions and satisfaction of students and parents with the applied teaching concept. The sample consists of 196 elementary school students in the territory of Vojvodina and 135 parents. A questionnaire (parallel form) was used for data collection with questions about strengths, weaknesses, teaching articulation and teacher engagement in supporting student learning (choice of work methods, creation of learning materials, feedback, encouragement, empathy and teacher workload). The results of the research showed that although they are generally satisfied with the realization of classes, 41% of students and 46% of parents do not accept the claim that distance learning should be extended even after the pandemic. Among the main disadvantages, students singled out a short deadline for homework and redundant messages on the platform, while the main advantage is the feeling of freedom, due to the absence of constant teacher control. The support and engagement of the teachers was rated more favorably by the students than by the parents. The implications of the obtained findings are discussed from the aspect of the new role of the teacher (moderator and facilitator) in the e-environment

Keywords: *online teaching, students, parents, teacher's role.*

Field: Social sciences

1. INTRODUCCION

With the onset of the pandemic caused by the appearance of the corona virus, the need for changes in the implementation of teaching came to the fore at all levels of education. In order to ensure continuity in teaching activities while immediate educational work in schools is stopped, all states, including the Republic of Serbia, have started implementing different models of online teaching, synchronous and asynchronous distance learning approaches (Matijašević, Carić and Škorić, 2021). In other words, regular teaching in classrooms was replaced by distance learning, and participants in the educational process were forced to use digital tools. Historically speaking, distance learning and education in earlier times were mostly connected and implemented within the framework of informal education, but now it seems that e-learning is gradually replacing the formal education system, so in this light a consensus has been reached among the authors that learning through modern technologies over time becomes the dominant form in the world of education (Milojević et al., 2020; Pivac, Pavkov & Zorić, 2021). Although it is considered that no alternative pedagogical approach can replace the greatest advantage of traditional formal education, which is the direct interaction of teachers with students, online teaching has proven to be an important model of pedagogically shaped work that has proven to be widely applied and very well accepted in pandemic conditions. Current practice shows that online teaching has led to a significant pedagogical shift, from traditional methods to modern approaches to teaching and learning — from the classroom to Zoom, from personal to virtual, and from seminars to webinars. The reason for the good acceptance, even the popularity of online learning is attributed to the high degree of flexibility and innovation in work compared to traditional programs and methods of educational work (Spasenović, 2021). The impact of information and communication technologies (ICT) on the education system has been very large in recent years, which had the effect that educational methods and approaches were improved as the technological, social and economic development of society proceeded (Matijašević, Carić and Škorić, 2021). In addition to the technical aspects of teaching, the impact of ICT on educational systems is also reflected in the change in the way teachers teach and the acquisition of knowledge by students. During the last decade, numerous authors emphasized the importance of implementing information and

*Corresponding author: jdjer@ff.uns.ac.rs



communication technologies in teaching because traditional education does not meet the educational needs of modern man (Džamonja, 2021; Spasenović, 2021). Today, the role of the teacher is different and much more complex, i.e. it is more of an encouraging role than a teaching one. With the advent of digital media when learning becomes temporally and spatially unlimited, the teacher's role on the continuum from knowledge transmitter and lecturer to learning manager and mentor changes (Pokhrel, S., & Chhetri, R., 2021). This shows that the role of teachers in the 21st century is becoming not only more complex, but also more dynamic. Just as the world in which teachers teach is not static, neither is the role of the teacher, who is at the same time a model and role model for students, leader, partner, mediator between students and knowledge, which all together requires continuous learning, continuous personal and professional development. It is understandable that teacher education does not end with initial education. Today's teachers must possess e-competencies in order to "speak the same language with the students of the 21st century" and in that light adequately play all the roles of a modern teacher (Papić, 2011).

2. METHODS OF RESEARCH

Numerous systemic and innovative changes that have affected the educational system in recent years. Since the organization and implementation of the teaching process with the advent of the corona virus pandemic was and still is a great challenge for all participants of the educational process, it is necessary to examine its effects and various aspects, including the opinions, attitudes and experiences of the actors themselves about online teaching. Feedback, obtained through research, provides an opportunity to look at strengths, weaknesses, shortcomings as well as potential for improvement. In this paper, the research is focused on examining the opinions of students and parents about the difficulties they faced and the positive experiences they had in online classes, which is important for a more complete understanding of the success of this way of working in each specific school, as well as the entire educational system.

For the purpose of conducting this research, a questionnaire was created: Opinions of students and parents about the organization and implementation of online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire is based in some parts on the original version of the questionnaire created by the Step by Step Center for Educational Initiatives on student and parent evaluations of online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic, functionalized and adapted for the purposes of this research. For the purposes of this paper, some results of a wider research are presented.

The research sample consists of 331 respondents, of which 135 are parents and 196 students of the second cycle of primary education in schools from the territory of AP Vojvodina. As for the structure of respondents according to gender, 100 (74%) mothers and 35 (26%) fathers participated in the research, that is, 124 (63%) female students and 72 (37%) male students. According to the place of residence, more students from rural areas (121 students) participated in the research compared to the number of students from urban areas (75%), while in the sub-sample of parents there are also slightly more parents from rural areas (79%; 59%) than parents of students from urban areas (56%; 41%). Due to the specific epidemiological situation, the respondents filled out the questionnaire electronically. All respondents received the necessary instructions electronically and were familiar with the purpose of the research. The respondents' participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous. The data was collected in the second semester of the 2020/2021 school year. The obtained data were processed in the statistical program IBM SPSS for Windows version 23.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main goal of the research was to examine the opinion of students and parents about the realized concept of online teaching during the pandemic. By summarizing and analyzing the obtained data, we can conclude that the general hypothesis of the research has been confirmed, that is, that students and parents positively evaluate online teaching during the pandemic.

Table 1 The opinion of students and parents about online classes

Description of classes		1	2	3	4	5	X ²	df	p
Students work more than were working in regular classes	U	28 14%	35 18 %	30 15 %	78 40%	25 14%	9.393	4	< 0.01
	R	23 17%	33 24%	16 12%	37 28%	26 19%			
Pupils are making good progress in knowledge and skills	U	18 10%	24 12%	39 20%	73 37%	42 21%	17.32	4	< 0.01
	R	26 19%	29 22%	25 19%	41 30%	14 10%			
Student grades are the benchmark their knowledge	U	24 12%	19 10%	41 21 %	63 34%	49 25%	3.45	4	> 0.05
	R	17 13%	21 15%	28 21%	43 32%	26 19%			
Grades are important to students	U	6 3 %	12 6 %	21 11 %	65 33%	92 47%	5.73	4	> 0.05
	R	8 6 %	17 12%	15 11%	42 32%	53 39%			
Communication with friends from class is more intense through social networks	U	26 13%	16 8%	38 19%	74 38%	42 22%	10.66	4	> 0.05
	R	22 17%	23 17%	24 18%	33 24%	33 24%			
Students have more free time	U	37 19%	30 15 %	31 16 %	54 28%	44 22%	10.99	4	< 0.05
	R	30 22%	26 19%	21 16%	46 34%	12 9%			
Online teaching should continue even after the pandemic	U	81 41%	21 11 %	27 14 %	42 21%	25 13%	2.97	4	> 0.05
	R	62 46%	19 14%	19 15%	21 15%	14 10%			

(1)“I do not agree at all”; (2) “I generally disagree”; (3) “not sure”; (4) “mostly agree” to (5) “completely agree”

Source: Author’s research

In Table 1, where statements related to the description of online classes are given, it can be seen that most students (40%) and parents (28%) “mostly agree” with the first statement that students in online classes work more than they did in regular classes. The value of the χ^2 test ($\chi^2 = 9.393$; $df=4$; $p=0.005$) shows that the difference in the degree of agreement, that is, the distribution of the responses of students and parents to this statement is statistically significant. The agreement in the answers between parents and students is noticeable both on the second and third statement of the scale. Most students (37%) and parents (30%) “generally agree” with the statement that students are making good progress in knowledge and skills, despite the new way of learning. The differences in the distribution of student and parent responses are statistically significant for this statement ($\chi^2=17.318$; $df=4$; $p=0.002$). In the third statement, there is also a similarity in the answers of students and parents (34% of students and 32% of parents “mostly agree” with the statement that students’ grades in online classes are a measure of their current knowledge. The value of the χ^2 test ($\chi^2=3.447$; $df=4$; $p=0.485$) shows that the difference in the degree of agreement between parents’ and students’ answers to this statement is not statistically significant. As for the importance of grades, both groups of respondents emphasize the importance of grades that students receive at school, given that 47% of students and 39% of parents fully agree with the statement, that is, based on the value of the Chi-square test for the answers of students and parents ($\chi^2=5.783$; $df=4$; $p=0.216$), the statistical significance of these differences is not confirmed ($p>0.05$). communicate more intensively with other students in the class through social networks with the emergence of online classes. Parents’ responses show that (14%) parents “mostly agree” and the same number of those who “strongly agree” with this statement. The chi square test shows that the differences in the answers of students and parents are not statistically significant ($\chi^2=10.662$ $df=4$; $p=0.486$). With the statement that they have more free time during online classes, (28%) students “mostly agree” and (22%) “completely agree”. It is interesting to note that 16% of students are not sure whether they had more free time during online classes than during regular classes. In the sub-sample of parents (34%), they “mostly agree” that

students have more free time during online classes. On the contrary (22%) parents do not agree with the mentioned statement at all. Based on the analysis of the Chi-square test, we can conclude that the differences in the answers of parents and students are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 10.99$; $df=4$; $p=0.026$). Finally, it should be noted and the results of the last claim related to the extension of online classes after the pandemic. The interesting data is that (41%) of students and (46%) of parents do not agree at all with the above statement, that is, they believe that online teaching should not continue after the Covid-19 pandemic. Applying the Chi-square test between the responses of parents and students, we can conclude that the obtained data are not statistically significant, i.e. $\chi^2=2.97$; $df=4$; $p>0.05$ ($p=0.561$).

Based on the data given in Table 2, it can be concluded that the students most often followed online classes via Google Classroom (62%). 29 (15 %) respondents followed the class via Google Meet. The Zoom application was mentioned by 19 (10%) students, and 16 (8%) students mentioned Viber. Other applications were used much less frequently. Only 5 (3 %) students answered that during online classes they used Gmail as the most common application, 3 students mentioned Microsoft Teams (2 %) as the most common means of communication in distance learning. What As for the parents' answers, there is a noticeable similarity with the students' answers. Parents, they (55 %) also point out Google Classroom as the most common application for conducting online classes, followed by Google meet with (17 %) and Viber (14 %), Microsoft Teams is mentioned by (4 %) of parents and (2 %) of parents mention gmail. Only 1 parent stated that classes were most often organized through My Planet. The high similarity in the answers of students and parents indicates that the parents very carefully followed the way in which the teaching took place. The obtained research data on the frequency of use of certain applications in online classes are consistent with the results of research that dealt with the same topic (Baucal et al, 2022; Tichavsky et al, 2015). Regarding the attitude of students and teachers regarding the use of online classes after the Covid-19 pandemic, 41% of students and 46% of parents do not accept this possibility. Only 21% and 15% of parents consider that option acceptable. Online teaching offers many possibilities for its realization. The use of certain methods and techniques in online teaching represents the free choice of teachers and students, and their application mainly depends on the teaching content. Here it is necessary to point out that the different use of applications in online classes is primarily influenced by the competence, commitment and choice of the teacher, as well as the teaching content itself (Hammer, Scheiter & Stürmer (2021).

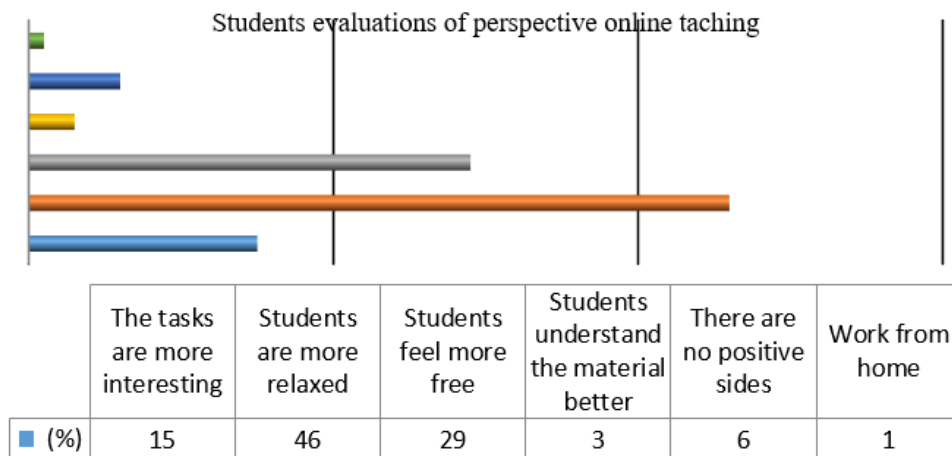
Table 2 The most common applications in online teaching

The most common applications in online teaching:	students	parents
Google classroom	123 (62%)	74 (55 %)
Google meet	29 (15%)	23 (17 %)
Zoom	19 (10 %)	10 (7%)
Viber	16 (8 %)	19 (14 %)
Gmail	5 (3 %)	2 (2 %)
Teams	3 (2 %)	6 (4 %)
My planet	0	1 (1 %)

Source: Author's research

When asked about the positive characteristics of online classes, students mention several characteristics. The most prominent positive side of online classes is, according to the students' answers (Figure 1), "the relaxation that students have when conducting online classes" with 124 (46%) answers.

Figure 1 Student evaluations of the positive aspects of online teaching

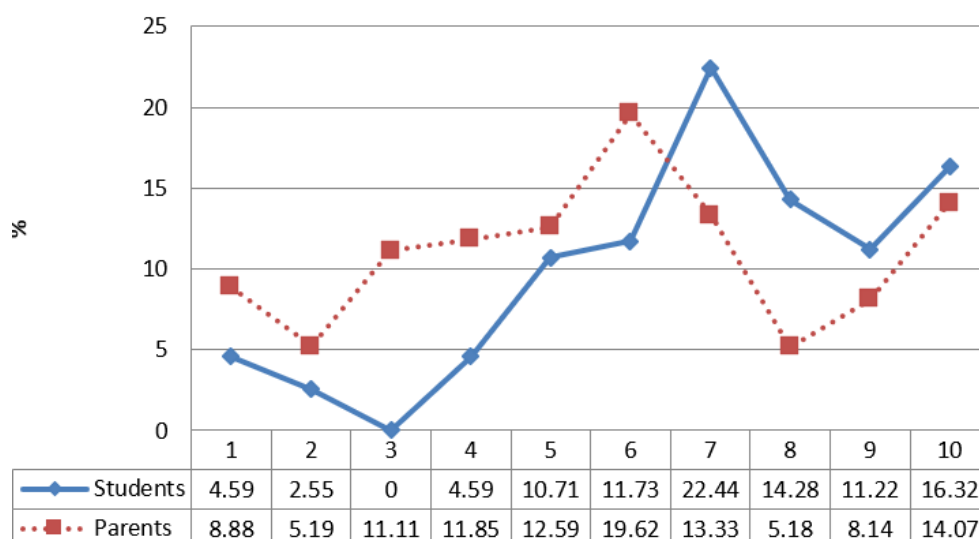


Source: Author's research

Also, 29% of students state that they “feel freer” during online classes, i.e. they do not have the feeling that they are under the constant supervision of the teacher. A number of students, 40 (15 %) students point out that “tasks are more interesting” in online classes, while 10 (3 %) students believe that “they understand the material better this way”. In addition to the offered answers, the students had the opportunity to write positive aspects of online classes that were not mentioned in the question. The most common answer of 17 students (6%) was that online teaching has no positive aspects. Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that for students, the most prominent positive effect of online classes is relaxation during classes. The obtained finding contradicts the research results of the group of authors (Rakočević et al, 2020), and the reason for this can be attributed to the sample consisting of high school students in which the program includes rather more complex teaching content.

The general rating that students and parents give to online classes on a scale of 1 to 10 indirectly indicates their degree of satisfaction with the implementation of classes, which is in line with previous research (Rakočević et al, 2020; Dobrić & Đurić, 2021). Figure 2 shows the respondents' answers.

Figure 2 Overall rating of online classes
Overall rating of online classes



Source: Author's research

The data show that both students and parents are generally satisfied with the implementation of online classes. However, the students are more satisfied and even 76% of the students and 60% of the parents evaluate the online education with grades from 6 to 10. The majority of students (22.44%) rated online teaching with a grade of 7, and as many as 16.32% opted for a grade of 10. The third rank in terms of frequency of student responses (14.28%) has a grade of 8. Parents were more critical in their

assessment of online teaching and less inclined to high grades than students. Considerable ambivalence can be observed in the answers of parents, as 5 to 10% of parents are not at all satisfied with online teaching and rate it with 1 and 2. On the other hand, the same number of parents rate online teaching with grades 8 and 9, and 14% with the highest score of 10. From the data in the graphic, it can be seen that the largest number of parents (19.62%) opted for grade 6. The average grade of online teaching among students is AS = 6.7. While in the case of parents it is AS=5.6. Differences in teaching satisfaction examined by the Chi-square test show that the differences in student and parent ratings are statistically significant ($\chi^2=34.29$; $p < 0.001$).

4. CONCLUSION

Social distancing, which occurred in all countries around the world as a result of the pandemic, made it impossible for students to attend classes regularly. Educational institutions have found an alternative, that is, online classes have been organized, providing many opportunities, but despite this, there are also certain shortcomings. In order to understand the concept of online classes more fully, the opinion of students and parents, that is, their acquired experience, is of great importance. The results of this empirical research showed that students and parents are generally satisfied with the implementation of online classes, but at the same time, as many as 41% of students and 46% of parents disagree with the statement that online classes should continue even after the Covid-19 pandemic. The reasons can be attributed to many limiting factors. One of the crucial factors for the successful application of new educational technologies is a digitally competent teacher (Dobrić & Đurić, 2021). Actuality in monitoring innovations in teaching, as well as the training of teachers in accordance with the changes, represent the imperative of the time in order to adequately respond to the various needs of today's students (Tančić, 2022). Drawing attention to the specifics of distance learning, upgrading knowledge about ICT as well as reflective practice seems necessary on the way to high-quality educational work of teachers and responsible assumption of new roles. The teacher is expected to take on different roles as a change agent, a consultant in the learning process who possesses a high degree of empathy, creativity and responsibility so that he can follow the dynamic educational environment in the digital era.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some results in this paper is a modified master paper entitled Online nastava-perspektiva roditelja i učenika osnovne škole (Online teaching - the perspective of parents and primary school students), defended on December, 16, 2021, at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Novi Sad (mentor prof. dr Jelena Đermanov, PhD)

REFERENCES

- Baucal, A., Altaras Dimitrijević, A., Petrović, D., Janković, D., Stepanović Ilić, I., Krstić, K., & Jolić Marjanović, Z. (2022). Obrazovanje tokom pandemije Kovid-19 u Srbiji: kvalitativna studija. Institut za psihologiju, Filozofski fakultet
- Dobrić, T. M., & Đurić, I. R. (2021). Uloga i značaj nastavnika u sistemu učenja na daljinu. Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Prištini, 51(4), 387-406. <https://doi.org/10.5937/ZRFFP51-31212>
- Đorđić, D., Šimonji-Černak, R., Beljanski, M. (2021). Izazovi za novu ulogu i nove kompetencije nastavnika: iskustva u nastavi na daljinu. DHS 3 (16). 481-504
- Džamonja Ignjatović, T. (Ur.). (2021). Odgovor psihologije kao nauke i struke na izazove krize izazvane pandemijom kovid-19, Zbornik radova. Univerzitet u Beogradu – Filozofski fakultet <https://nauka.f.bg.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Psihologija-uodgovoru-na-pandemiju-Kovid-19-NBS.pdf>
- Hammer, M., Scheiter, K., & Stürmer, K. (2021). New technology, new role of parents: How parents' beliefs and behavior affect students' digital media self-efficacy. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 116, 106642.
- Kolak, A., Markić, I., Horvat, Z., Klemenčić, A. (2021). When the parent becomes the teacher- Attitudes on distance learning in the time of Corona- teaching from parents perspective. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*. 20 (1). 85-94
- Matijašević, J., Carić, M., & Škorić, S. (2021). Online nastava u visokom obrazovanju–prednosti, nedostaci i izazovi. XXVII skup trendovi razvoja: On-line nastava na univerzitetima, Novi Sad, 165-168.
- Milivojević, V., Selaković, Z., Radosavljević, K., & Vukajlović, Z. (2020). Onlajn nastava u mlađim razredima osnovne škole. 8. Simpozijum Tehnika i informatika u obrazovanju: nastavnici za nastavnike/Fakultet tehničkih nauka u Čačku Univerziteta u Kragujevcu, Srbija, 18-20.09.
- Papić, A. (2011). Prema pismenosti 21. stoljeća: E-kompetencija nastavnika. *Zmo: časopis za obitelj, vrtić i školu*. 97-98; 29-30
- Pivac, T., Hrvojević, M. P., & Zorić, L. (2021). Prednosti i nedostaci online nastave iz ugla profesora i saradnika. Studija slučaja: Prirodno-matematički fakultet u Novom Sadu. Skup trendovi razvoja-'On-line nastava na univerzitetima', Novi Sad, 237-240.
- Pokhrel, S., & Chhetri, R. (2021). A literature review on impact of COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning. *Higher*

- education for the future, 8(1), 133-141.
- Rakočević, V., Arsović, G., Mrdak-Mitrović, M. (2020). Izveštaj o samoevaluaciji škole na daljinu. Podgorica. Available on: https://gimnazijapg.me/images/pdfdoc/izvjestaj-plan_Skole/IZVJESTAJ-O-SAMOEVALUACIJI-SKOLE-NA-DALJINU.pdf
- Spasenović, V. (Ur.). (2021). Obrazovanje u vreme kovid krize – Gde smo i kuda dalje, Zbornik radova. Univerzitet u Beogradu Filozofski fakultet.
- Step by step (2020). Procena online nastave tokom pandemije covid 19 od strane roditelja i učenika u BiH. Available on: <https://www.promente.org/onlineroditeljjučenici.pdf>
- Tančić, N. (2022). Prediktori profesionalnog razvoja nastavnika u inkluzivnoj školi. *Inovacije u nastavi-časopis za savremenu nastavu*, 35(1), 1-16
- Tichavsky, L. P., Hunt, A. N., Driscoll, A. and Jicha, K. (2015). "It's Just Nice Having a Real Teacher: Student Perceptions of Online versus Face-to-Face Instruction," *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.20429/ijstl.2015.090202>

