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# Technological and Pedagogical Aspects of a Communication Tool: An Immersive Learning Experience

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**Abstract:** The lockdown restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic have resulted in educational institutions moving to remote teaching. Teachers needed to adapt their traditional face-to-face instruction to an online mode. The four week, hands-on workshop titled 'Transition to Online Facilitation' was launched under the aegis of National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning in May 2020 to up-skill teachers with knowledge of technical tools and learner-centric pedagogical strategies. This paper highlights the manner in which design drivers like learner-centricity, immersivity, pertinency and transfer of ownership are embedded into the pedagogy design of the sessions on the Slack Platform. It documents and compares the orchestration of the instructor facilitated session and group-facilitated sessions where participants first experience the features of a tool as a student before using the features as a teacher. The level of adoption of design drivers is analysed. This study identifies three kinds of learner profiles namely, Innovators, Adaptors and Emulators. The research reports the Near Transfer of Learning as there was a high degree of similarity between the instructor facilitated session and the group facilitated sessions.

**Keywords:** Teacher training, ICT integration, Learner-Centric MOOC Model, Active learning, Immersivity, Pertinency, Transfer of Ownership, Collaboration

## 1. Introduction

To ensure that learning continues despite the lockdown imposed due to the pandemic, teachers who delivered instruction in face-to-face mode in brick-and-mortar institutions have had to engage in emergency remote teaching. The Pan-India lockdown began towards the end of March 2020 which was midway through the academic year. Apart from having constraints of bandwidth and access to gadgets, teachers who prior to the pandemic had limited use of multiple technologies, needed to adapt quickly to online teaching by learning features and pedagogical affordances of various technology tools.

In order to cater to this need and increase technology integration in teaching practice, a pilot workshop on 'Transition to Online Facilitation (TOF)' was launched under the aegis of National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) in May 2020 and spanned across four weeks. The workshop was conducted for educators from different geographical regions across India who were shortlisted from a pool of applicants. The workshop was structured around hands-on activities and encouraged learners to reflect on practices and tools they learnt and applied. During the workshop, learning was channelized through Slack, a channel-based communication platform developed by Slack Technologies.

This paper documents the process, design elements and the outcomes of the teacher training conducted through the Slack platform. We begin with a brief review of related work on design drivers used in developing professional development programs. Next, we present an outline of the Pedagogy Design based on the design principles of learner-centricity, immersivity, pertinency and transfer of