ODL: ADAPTING A NEW NORMAL IN LEARNING

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At a glance, the life of the whole community in the world is changed because of COVID-19. The situation that we are facing is unprecedented, so we would have to cope as best as we can while trying not to neglect our academic lessons. Online learning is no longer an option but a necessity. However, there is an exception for 5 categories of students to be allowed to attend face-to-face classes as announced by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) such as postgraduate students in research mode, final year students in Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor levels, final year students who are having limited internet access and unconducive environment, students in education, technical and vocational training (TVET) programs at polytechnic and community colleges and new intake students for 2020/2021 academic session.

In compliance with the Movement Control Order (MCO) and instructions from the Malaysian National Security Council (NSC), MOHE opts for an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) due to the increasing number of positive COVID-19. This initiative is to ensure the safety and health of lecturers and university students.

In this era, the use of technology is crucial to be utilized by lecturers and students in the implementation of online learning so that the skills and capabilities in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be improved. In addition, it is also to create a broad-minded generation in order to be a competent, creative and multitask student for future in this technology world.

For the implementation of online learning, lecturers with their own initiatives can ensure the learning and teaching process going smoothly. There are various platforms that can be used including Microsoft 365, Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, and many more. The syllabus can be completed and understood by every student even in a virtual meeting.

As a university student, at first, it was so hard to accept online learning process due to a limited internet access in my area. Apart from that, all this while (before MCO), most of the classes I attended were offline classes. This new normal has taught me to be more disciplined, focused, and responsible in seeking knowledge and change my mind that is too comfortable with the offline learning method without realizing the need for a student to adapt to the technological advances.

Despite the constraints faced by some students especially those who are living in rural areas due to limited internet access, the one-off payment RM200, provided by our government is worthy. Other than that, the Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) also provides internet data subscription payment for 3 months to B40 students as reducing the pressure and difficulties they are facing.

In conclusion, students and lecturers play an important role to ensure the efficiency of online learning. The positive impact of this pandemic is the importance to strengthen and improve our online learning that has not been achieved the maximum level of its use. By far, the post COVID-19 has proven that we are actually take a big step to make sure that our education system can be established either online or offline. We have made it possible.