Hello, I am Joanna and I would like to share my reflections on online teaching and learning with you. During the pandemic we all somehow experienced the process of remote acting that is working, studying or teaching online. During this time it was a must if we wanted to still fulfill our educational or professional duties. Nowadays when teaching and learning online seems to be a choice rather than compulsion, let’s consider the strengths of remote education.

First of all, distance teaching can help implementing the student-centered model of knowledge **acquisition**.

In the onsite teaching, in a classroom it is easier to preserve the hierarchical relationship between teacher and student.

Fixed number of classes, overloaded curricula and final exams as a focus of attention at educational institutions often lead to a more powerful position of teachers who, according to majority, are supposed to funnel their knowledge to the students!

Such a teacher-student relationship assumes an active role for the teacher but a passive role for the student. It may be convenient for both sides of teaching process: for teachers who deliver knowledge, wanting to follow the curriculum at a good pace and for students who place the entire responsibility for the learning process on the teacher. However, convenience doesn’t mean effectiveness.

In nowadays teaching and learning the process of gaining knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself. Remote education gives us a lot of tools to make a student the central person and a teacher the supportive one during teaching-learning process. For example, peer collaborative work, not limited to a lesson unit, easier access to studied materials, more frequent and reliable feedback on lesson content or lesson structure thanks to online tools that anonymise the authors of the answers sent to the teacher **allow** both students and teachers to reflect on the methods of acquiring knowledge.

More balanced relationship between the student and the teacher, in the terms of power, creates better conditions for more open students’ behaviour, when they are eager to ask questions, debate with colleagues or teachers. The virtual classroom and its diversity of digital communication tools makes it easier for students, especially shy students, to speak up: sometimes lack of vision, namely switched off camera, helps,// sometimes online chat invites them to share their thoughts.

A second, huge plus of remote teaching is, from my perspective, the necessity of remodelling so far onsite taught classes into an online class. It doesn’t mean simply transferring what we did during in-person lesson into a virtual class. Such a remodelling basically requires the creation of a new lesson, because what has produced good results in the classroom may not be possible to work well in the online sphere. Conversely, what we always wanted to do as teachers in the classrooms but we didn’t, because it wasn’t possible there, now in the remote teaching can be successfully implemented. Of course, this requires a lot of work from the teacher’s part, at least in the beginning. However, in the long run it allows teachers to look critically at their own teaching methods, the used materials or the means of verifying learning outcomes. For me, it was an extremely surprising and inspiring process, which I really enjoyed. It was also inspiring to learn from other teachers, who shared their own ideas on how to develop a given lesson topic.

I find student-centered process of teaching and re-evaluating my own teaching practice to be the most valuable aspects of distance learning. I will certainly continue to use them in my classes, no matter if they are online or blended or onsite. Online teaching has not only enriched me, showing a new area in which I can teach, but in general it has changed my teaching and learning for the better.

So, is there any drawback of online teaching and learning? I should say no, but to be honest there are some, but the most crucial problems are the technical and technological ones. Technical issues connected with the unstable Internet connection, poor quality of hardware or various software versions can lead to a real disaster. Also technology is not always reliable. For instance, an application in which we have created a puzzle game for students may, over time, change the conditions of use by limiting the number of students who can play the puzzle game. So what to do with the rest of students in our class? It is for sure annoying!

And finally, I wanted to call for finer technical and technological support for teachers and students. If online learning works, and now we know it does, let's do everything we can to support the remote work of teachers and facilitate the distance learning for students.

Thank you very much and I hope you are already enjoying the Elephant project toolbox 😊