



REVISITING GILLY SALMON'S FIVE STAGE MODEL FOR ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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ABSTRACT The Five-Stage Model by Gilly Salmon should be studied and practised as additional support for online learning. It encourages planning and execution in learning niche considering the learner, the content and the environment. If administered with creativity and passion, this model can eliminate the monotony of using technology for the sake of using technology in education. Models of online learning are an emerging area in pedagogy. A thoughtful practice will ensure efficiency and quality in online learning. As the world is acclimatising to a new normal the selection and the practicability of the selected strategies will define and decide the excellence of the education for the present and future generations. For internet figuring out how to be fruitful and glad, members should be upheld through an organized formative cycle. The five-stage-model gives a system or platform to an organized and paced program of e-tivities. The five-stage-model offers basic help and advancement to members at each stage as they develop skill in learning on the web.

KEYWORDS : Five Stage Model, Online Teaching, e-tivities

Introduction

Since March 2020, educational institutions across the world had to necessitate faculty and students to shift to remote teaching and learning in response to the public health risks of Covid-19 pandemic. The change was inevitable. We rose to the situation and offered the 'best'. Some things we did were ingenious, and some bungled miserably, as with any extensive try-out. Moreover, all of us who were trying to settle in with full tilt struggled with being swamped and fatigued. Teachers tried to reach students who were all of the sudden learning from a diversified environment, with differing access to technology and other support systems. Educators were providing content to the learners with utmost care in the quality. However, before long, we found out that somewhere we failed to consider the basic needs of the learners who were facing numerous pressures and differences in health care, internet access, and home environment. Students tried to stay motivated in situations even with problems like inequities, inaccessibility and working with educators who were struggling to deliver content through unfamiliar technologies for a digital immigrant. Sooner or later, we got the problem right and understood that what we were doing is not the best practices for online learning; instead, we were trying our best to implement the 'offline' pedagogy to 'online' learning environments.

There were things we did right, but as we plan to move forward in the same framework, unless and otherwise all the students and educators can come to the classrooms in person, it is always good to think about how and where we can do better. It is commendable that we educators as individuals, and state through government orders made sure that the learners are at their best-taken care of considering their emotional and physical well-being. Nevertheless, how far we have taken measures to ensure quality in the content and the strategies adopted in delivering it effectively? Can we overlook the fact that we resorted online learning as a pandemic relief measure to compensate the lockdown days? Are we ready to face a new normal post COVID scenario in which education may largely rely on online modes as it creates greater opportunity for cost-effective, inclusive education which India needs by and large? Why not give ourselves a chance to be creative in our strategies rather than replicating our synchronous class to an asynchronous platform? Preparing for a Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) teaching-learning demands for a fully online and offline (in-person) version of classes. It is highly demanding and not sustainable when we consider the feasibility of the inputs into the system. From pole to pole, educators and people who are interested in Education are thinking of a more sustainable model of teaching and learning these days. Discussions and reading on different platforms point to a more resilient design. Resilient design is a well-known architectural approach that got adapted into the educational system.

How Resilient is our Pedagogy?

According to architectural experts, 'resilient design means designing structures that are responsive to their environments, equally attentive

to withstanding obvious/immediate obstacles and to helping mitigate longer-term concerns'. Fundamentally, resilient design is meant to be workable, to foresee disruptions, and to uphold social equity. It achieves these things by predicting problems, reducing the complexity of any given solution and structuring upon a footing of local resources and strengths. Considering the above characteristics of a resilient design, we may understand resilient pedagogy as a course design strategy that makes classes, assignments, and assessments as resistant to disruption as possible. Regardless of where classes are taught online, in-person, or blended, the idea of resilient pedagogy is that instructors should be designing their course only one time and accommodates all the possible modalities. In simple terms, it is an approach to teaching that takes into account the resiliency of course design, faculty, and students during uncertain times and changing circumstances (Tange, 2020).

At this juncture, it is worthwhile revisiting one of the prominent strategies in the pedagogy of e-learning, Gilly Salmon's Five Stage Model. Gilly Salmon, Professor of E-Learning and Learning Technologies at the University of Leicester, U.K., has identified five stages of online interaction. The model which is originally published in Salmon's 2001 book *E- Moderating* highlights the possibilities of meaningful interaction that e-learning can support when tied with Social Learning Theory. As salmon's model says, an individual's online learning goes beyond the bounds of technical skills. Learning is possible only when those who surround the learner play an important role in their learning through their relationships with them (Bandura, 1977).

Salmon's model moves away from the notion that effective e-learning can be achieved through static learning objects (Downes, 2005), and takes a social learning perspective with particular emphasis on communities of practice, providing a framework to support the assertion that "learning cannot be designed: it can only be designed for - that is, facilitated or frustrated" (Wenger, 1998). Salmon's model is also reliant upon scaffolding, extending Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) implying that the moderator acts as an initial scaffold that gradually shifts responsibility to the learning community under their guidance, learners develop themselves based on the relationships within the community and eventually moving beyond. The current situation made us realise that traditional forms of learning cannot be reproduced to meet the needs of changing normal. Instead, we have to look at the new opportunities for learning afforded by emerging technologies (Attwell, 2006).

E-learning and Isolation

The formal learning environment is being re-imagined online. Even though the current pandemic accelerated the process, the shift was visible from the past decade. At the beginning of the 21st century there has been an obvious switch from traditional views of teaching and learning towards constructivist views of knowledge sharing (Dickey,

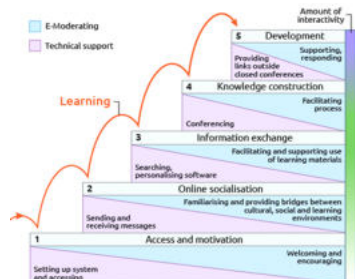
2003) because many learning technologies would seem to offer new and wider opportunities (Jones, 2004). Online learning provides a new range of experiences for students as well as teachers, and very often, the experience of isolation top the rest. Isolation has two dimensions. One is the physical distance, and the other is psychological (distance in thoughts, feeling alone). The five-stage model can be an aid for teachers to create learning experiences which can reduce the feelings of isolation.

Online Learning through Activities

The model proposed by Gilly Salmon strongly advocates concrete activities for each learning experience. The activities are renamed as *e-tivities* in the model. The term *E-tivity* was coined by Gilly Salmon. It means "task online"; it is a framework to learn something in a dynamic and interactive way. This activity is based on intense interaction and reflective dialogue between a number of participants, such as learners / students and teachers, who work in a computer-mediated environment. *E-tivities* are text-based and led by an e-moderator (usually a teacher). *E-tivities* will be organised according to the need of the topic and the learner. The ideas of *e-tivities* should make sense to the learner and can be interacted online with peers and e-moderators. This is why Salmon always suggests *e-tivities*, at all stages of the model, should include a response to the communication of others to start to build participation. It is often found that groups do not find it easy to work virtually. Because of the *e-tivities*, the students actively participate, and from the later stages of activities, they begin to work more coordinated and interactively, which means they begin to exchange information with each other. From this stage onwards, the teacher will not be the person who always has to answer all questions, and the teacher does not have to log in frequently. Structured, paced, and carefully constructed *e-tivities* conserve time and effort of e-moderator. This ensures satisfactory learning outcomes, adding value to the input. Crafting *e-tivity* is a creative task and might demand more time than it seems. The advantage is that it is customisable and can be reused for other courses – not only in e-learning but also in conventional teaching. Is not the recyclability of the learning material being a good practice to bring the element of sustainability in learning strategies?

E-tivities and the Future of Learning

Gilly Salmon writes in her book "E-tivities – the key to active online-learning" (2002) that the key to active and interactive online teaching and learning lies in bringing up greater interaction and group participation. She believed that from a small start, a new structure of practice will get shaped around *e-tivities* that will get adapted to new technologies as they become available. She confirms that skilful e-moderation will not fade out even in the fast pacing technological advancement. E-moderators add the real value to learning technologies by designing and running *e-tivities*. According to the model, the participants learn to use the system through five stages. Each stage requires participants to master certain technical skills. Each stage calls for different e-moderating skills. At Stage I, the participants interact only with one or two others. After stage II, the number of others with whom they interact, and the frequency, gradually increases, although stage V often results in a returning to more individual pursuits. Salmon strongly advocates structured developmental activities for successful and happy learning. The five-stage-model scaffolds and promotes organised successful stride through *e-tivities*. This ensures the development of participants at every stage as they build up expertise in learning online.



Source: Adapted from Salmon (2011). https://leocontent.acu.edu.au/file/ccbe60fc-4a3c-4a2c-a80e-286a4946a9f3/1/html/ote_1_30.html

Description of the Model

- **Stage I - Access and motivation:** Individual access and the induction of participants are essential prerequisites for online

conference participation. *E-tivities* need to be innovative and effective enough to provide motivation and to set the right environment with apt pace and rhythm. It should enable the learners to find their way around the online learning platform by taking part in relevant and genuine tasks. Learners may feel pressure at the beginning, as they are not sure about what they are expected in an online learning platform. Unfamiliarity can also create confusion in learners. The session should start with *e-tivities* that address these anxieties and help them to be more comfortable. Avoiding rigid instructions like "Post your first message here and say who you are" can ease the situation.

- **Stage II - Socialisation:** Involves individual participants establishing their online identities and then finding others to whom they interact. *E-tivities* at this stage should provide learners with the opportunity to know the co-learners and the moderator and also about the platform which creates the learning environment. This stage instils the confidence needed by the participants to acquire knowledge and familiarise how it can be used to guide or facilitate learning in the shared space. Practice should be provided to the learners not in technology, but in working together. *E-tivities* customised for each discipline considering the specific learning needs of the subject and the learner will determine the cultural context of the learning and facilitate further construction of knowledge.
- **Stage III - Information Exchange:** Participants engage in mutual exchange of information. Up to and including stage III, a form of co-operation occurs whereby each person supports the other participants' goals. *E-tivities* at stage III should have a strong task and action focus. Use this stage *e-tivities* for focusing the content. The learners should be encouraged to provide feedback to fellow students. They are encouraged to explain the content with clarity. Best practices in providing feedback should be shared by the moderator to ensure a deep understanding of the subject and the co-learners. This will prepare them to proceed to the next stage of *e-tivities*. *E-tivities* at stage IV may focus on exploring co-ordination and communication between the participants. *E-tivities* at late stage III can look towards more co-operation and support for each person's needs and objectives. At this stage, e-moderators can be more flexible in grouping and try out different structures in groups.
- **Stage IV - Knowledge construction:** Course-related group discussions develop, and the interaction becomes more collaborative. Learning happens more as a group goal in this stage. Learners are encouraged to share information and intellectual resources in the group actively. Here the strategy follows collaborative learning techniques. The learning outcome is attained through group activities for the development of the content to be transacted. The group members take responsibility for one another's learning as well as their own. Arrived at stage IV the students should now be able to become skilful at working online, time management and at working with each other. Activities provided should widen understanding, providing venues to accept varied perspectives and instances. Streamlining thoughts should be avoided, specifying what has to be learnt. However, *e-tivities* should be grounded in real-world contexts.
- **Stage V - Development:** Participants look for more benefits from the system to help them achieve personal goals and reflect on the learning processes. *E-tivities* at this stage will facilitate insight, reflection and making judgments on the experience and the knowledge constructed. Enable evaluation and critique of all kinds, ask learners to demonstrate their ability to work with content and defend their own judgments. Encouraging students to explore their metacognitive awareness of positions they adopt – for example: How did you arrive at that position? Or which is better and why? Do not forget to explore feelings and emotions about learning, as an experience of the topics. Experienced participants often become most helpful guides or technical stewards to less experienced peers.

Each stage of the model requires participants to master certain technical skills, as shown at the bottom left of each step in the figure showing the Five Stage Model and calls for different e-moderating skills, as shown on the right top of each step. The 'interactivity bar' running along the right of the flight of steps suggests the intensity of interactivity that can be expected between the participants at each

stage. At first, they may interact with one or two others. After stage II, the interaction increases in frequency and later in stage V, they return to more individual pursuits.

Conclusion

In online schooling, time is utilized in an unexpected way. While a grounds address makes some characterized memories and spot to occur, in online instruction outstanding task at hand is spread over the long run to give the important adaptability. The climate and learning strategy will be new for some understudies, something that we need to consider when planning an online course. In this way it's essential to plan a platform experience that will make your understudies stride by step, causing them fabricate the important aptitudes to be fruitful online understudies. A significant reference to consider when planning a course is Gilly Salmon's 5 Stage Model, assisting you with framework the learning venture for your understudies. Online help models give key rules to online instructors to framework learning exercises, energize dynamic and communitarian learning, and communication among students and arbitrators. For internet figuring out how to be fruitful and upbeat, members should be upheld through an organized formative cycle.

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