

Online education became a challenge for families

Mothers give their opinion about the new online education modality

Internet failures, lack of tools to work and stress are some of the complaints that mothers have regarding the online education implemented in Mexico.

Online education is a challenge in every aspect, parents had to assume in a way the role of teachers. Moreover, they had to become more patient to stop scolding their children during the school activities, because children were used to the positive reinforcements that teachers provided.

Experts mention that this change may cause fear and anxiety in many children so, they recommend that children make video calls with their friends to socialize and prevent loneliness. Age is not an obstacle, and even if their conversations “make no sense” for adults, it is necessary that children develop and reinforce those processes.

DATA

At least 40% of students are in vulnerable conditions according to CONEVAL. This way, suspension of classes implies less opportunities to learn at home, more expenses for families as they must take care of children, and high probabilities to drop school when the pandemic is over as they might not feel prepared to continue. It even means malnutrition as they skip breakfast and other food they used to eat at school

In order to face this situation, Congregación Mariana Trinitaria (CMT) asked some mothers to know about the way they live this educational process with their children.

Claudia Ávila has two children, one of them is in 4th grade in elementary school, and the other one in 3rd grade of secondary school; currently they both have online classes. She expressed that she was given a schedule with codes to connect with each teacher, with the condition of following the schedule given at all times.

She said: “In secondary school classes, teachers get online and they teach their classes in the regular way; they explain the topic, set the time for students to participate and ask the questions they may have. In elementary school classes they are more flexible and sometimes teachers send previously the materials and the topic that they will teach. When they finish the class, they upload all the information to the ‘Classroom board’ in case children have questions and they need to check it again”.

Claudia mentions that she wants to support her two children during this new modality. Her older daughter only needs supervision to get online on time, and to participate in class; but the dynamic is different with her younger son. With the boy, she has to listen to the class and she tries to help him with topics that may be difficult for him, or when they have technical difficulties with the internet connection.

Moreover, she is convinced that there are several factors that need to be improved so that children have an ideal online education. For instance: “Firstly, teachers need to have more experience at using these new tools, they are learning just like children and parents do. Secondly, Children need to master this method to turn it into a habit, they need to be 100% aware that they are in class even if they are not physically at school. Thirdly, It is necessary to have devices with enough capacity to run the programs they need. Finally, Internet failures are a problem because when students lose the connection, they either miss part of the class or they cannot access again.”

Aurea Domínguez also has two children, in 3rd and 4th grade in elementary school. Her younger daughter is the one who has online classes. In this case, the teacher uses WhatsApp on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8:30 to 12:00, and she sends photos of the works that children have to do and voice messages with the instructions. Children have to send photographic evidence or voice messages in real time, and homework is assigned on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

She mentions “All this is new, dealing with schedules, instructions that get lost between the evidences, but if you have questions, the teacher responds immediately.

In Mexico, one out of three people study in any of the educational levels. It means that 42 million students need to study about 9.2 years, a period of time that is similar to the time it takes to study a technical or commercial career once secondary school studies are completed



I try to pay attention to the instructions given in case my daughter does not understand them so I can re explain. In addition, I encourage her to participate in the questions that the teacher asks.”

Rosa Jiménez has two children, one of them in 3rd grade in elementary school and the other one in the 3rd semester of high school in “Colegio de Bachilleres de Oaxaca (COBAO)”. Only the older daughter has online classes now, and Rosa mentions that this process is very difficult for all the family. They live in a rural area where it is difficult to have access to connectivity and technology, and she considers that the teaching is different this way. She says “Teachers do not have enough time to teach, and students need to figure it out and solve the problems on their own as parents do not know that information because we are not prepared. We give moral and economic support, but the last one became an issue due to the expenses caused by buying pre-paid internet cards or paying for internet services every day.”

However, she is aware that teachers are making a big effort so that students can perform all the activities given.

The last person to be interviewed was María Gómez. She mentioned that she has two children, one of them in 1st grade in elementary school, and the other one in 1st year of secondary school. They both have online classes through the Classroom suite. “As a mother, I can see that my children get stressed because they have to be in front of the computer all day long. I admire the teachers’ performance, but I cannot compare online teaching with in-person education, it is not the same. Additionally, the performance my children have is not the same either, I am looking forward to coming back to normal classes soon, because they are affected in academic areas, but also in the emotional ones”.

María believes that parents are not ready for this new system, but she gets involved after all, and now she is able to assess her children. She also expresses that a suitable equipment and good internet connection are basic so, it is essential to pay attention to those aspects.

She also commented: “We realized that this process is not simple, even for the ones who have all the tools and cultural background that may facilitate learning in a way. It is the moment to be supportive, to support each other, and to assist the ones who need it the most”.

Aware of that, in CMT we create programs that help families that have some deficiencies with the objective of causing a positive impact on educational and social gaps. An example of that is the program “Supportive Contribution to Technology”, to subsidize equipment with internet connection that will support families to assist their children, and to reduce the disadvantages to access to technology.

Solutions CMT



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