Teaching during a pandemic-- a personal experience

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(Thanks to the creators of the images used.)
Once in a century event

❖ Probably, last time India saw a disease at this scale was in 1918 (Spanish Flu).
❖ Systems not trained for this kind of event.
❖ How do you suddenly adapt at this scale?
The administration

- IIT Kanpur began regulating the movement of visitors in March 2020.
- Before the national lockdown all hostels had been evacuated.
- That semester, teaching got disrupted suddenly.
- At short-notice the teaching shifted online.
- There is no change expected anytime soon....
The teacher

❖ Instructors not used to teaching online.
  ➢ Much less professional, from home
  ➢ Demotivating to talk to a computer
❖ At least twice more work needed.
  ➢ Creating videos in advance
  ➢ Separate discussion hours
  ➢ Evaluating assignments, exams is far more intricate
❖ Laboratory courses go for a toss.
  ➢ All studies become theoretical
The student

❖ Pandemic environment makes them more insecure.
  ➢ Living at home; always looking at a screen
  ➢ Slower internet, fewer computing facilities
❖ Peer learning gone.
  ➢ Hostel friends and interactions are missing
  ➢ Extra-curricular activities missing
❖ Plagiarism on the rise.
  ➢ Cheating from the Internet, Chat, SMS, Phone calls...
  ➢ When few do it, everyone has to?
Online education

- Organize lectures far better than before.
  - Write on screen to simulate class-blackboard.
  - Share lightweight videos and slides.
- Long discussion hours, once students cover lectures.
  - Use online Forums.
- Give assignments, assuming they will collaborate.
- Give very short Quizzes and Exams.
  - Randomize the questions.
  - Check: Does Google know the answer?
  - Reduce the benefits of cheating.
Online research

❖ Keep the MTech/MS/PhD students involved.
❖ Have regular online meetings.
❖ Ask them to give online talks.
   ➢ Survey research areas
   ➢ Review papers
❖ Encourage them to discuss with each other online.
❖ Research in theoretical areas goes on unhindered!
In addition...

❖ NPTEL courses are important now, more than ever. Flipped mode courses?
❖ I will be offering “Teach the Teachers” courses in collaboration with Prof. Jalote (IIIT Delhi).

❖ Find ways to relax and keep innovating!