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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed not only teaching and learning but also methods of assessment. *Viva voce* is an oral examination typically held face to face between examiner and candidate in physical proximity. Therefore, shifting the *viva voce* examination online came with a unique set of challenges.

OBJECTIVE

This report describes the process of conducting the *viva voce* online, from planning to implementation, for twenty-six students who recently sat for their Supplementary First Professional Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (M.B.B.S.) Exam.

THE MAIN CHALLENGE

All 26 students are required to go through 6 examiners from each Basic Medical Sciences (BMS) disciplines. Each examiner was allocated 5 minutes for each student, this would take 780 minutes (13 hours) of viva exam! Any technical issue mainly internet connection would prolong the time.

HOW DID WE SOLVE THE CHALLENGE?

The 26 students were divided into THREE Zoom links (Table 1)

Admin in the Main Room coordinated the movement of the students.



For each Zoom meeting, THREE Breakout Rooms were created

Students were rotated to join each Breakout Room as in Table 2

Two examiners in each Breakout Room and a timekeeper.

| LINK ZOOM 1 : GROUP 1 ADMIN MAIN ROOM & TIMEKEEPER (9 students) | | |
|---|------------|--------------------------|
| ROOM A | ROOM B | ROOM C |
| Biochemistry | Pathology | Microbiology /Immunology |
| Anatomy | Physiology | Pharmacology |
| LINK ZOOM 2 : GROUP 2 ADMIN MAIN ROOM & TIMEKEEPER (9 students) | | |
| ROOM A | ROOM B | ROOM C |
| Biochemistry | Pathology | Microbiology /Immunology |
| Anatomy | Physiology | Pharmacology |
| LINK ZOOM 3 : GROUP 3 ADMIN MAIN ROOM & TIMEKEEPER (8 students) | | |
| ROOM A | ROOM B | ROOM C |
| Anatomy | Pathology | Microbiology /Immunology |
| Biochemistry | Physiology | Pharmacology |

Table 1
The three groups of examiners from respective BMS units.

| PRE VIVA QUARANTINE | VIVA TIME | ROOM A | ROOM B | ROOM C | TIME TO BE RELEASED |
|---------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| 9.00 am | 9.15 – 9.30 | Student 1 | Student 2 | Student 3 | 11.00 am |
| | 9.30 – 9.45 | Student 3 | Student 1 | Student 2 | |
| | 9.45 – 10.00 | Student 2 | Student 3 | Student 1 | |
| 10.00 am | 10.15 – 10.30 | Student 4 | Student 5 | Student 6 | No quarantine |
| | 10.30 – 10.45 | Student 6 | Student 4 | Student 5 | |
| | 10.45 – 11.00 | Student 5 | Student 6 | Student 4 | |
| 11.00 am | 11.15 – 11.30 | Student 7 | Student 8 | Student 9 | No quarantine |
| | 11.30 – 11.45 | Student 9 | Student 7 | Student 8 | |
| | 11.45 – 12.00 | Student 8 | Student 9 | Student 7 | |

Table 2
Timetable for the first group consisting 9 students.

ADDED VALUES

A few strategies were implemented to overcome other challenges



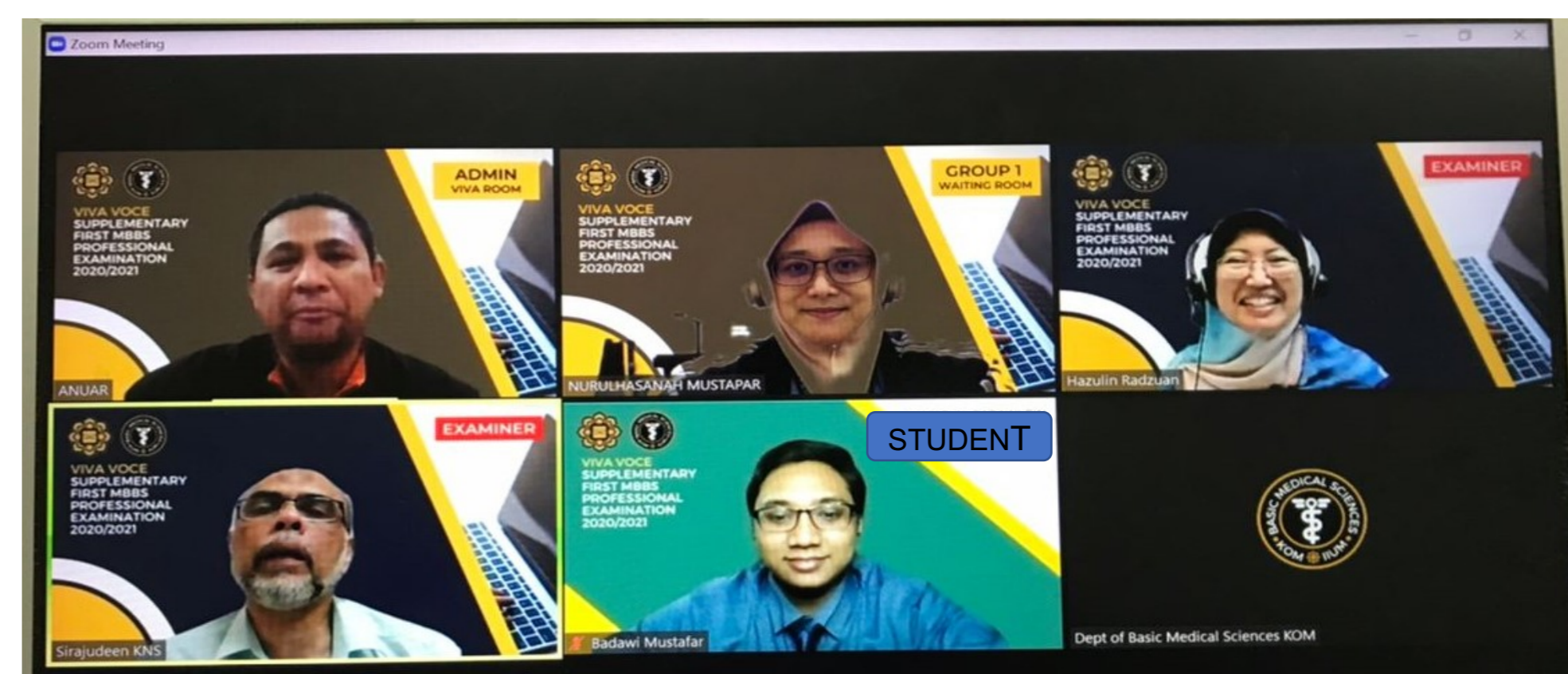
Internet Connection Stability – A survey was conducted prior to the viva exam, students with poor internet connection was placed in the last group to prevent flow disturbance.



Standardization of examiners questions between the three groups – The viva questions were vetted in the Unit level, all students were randomly asked the same questions with clear answer scheme and rubric



Students integrity – Students who have sat for the viva exam were quarantined in the Zoom Main Room and supervised.



USEFULNESS

This online *viva voce* procedure can be used as a guideline for future online oral examination by the department or university should the need arise in the future.

RECOGNITION

The Head of Basic Medical Sciences Department and Deputy Dean (Academic), Kulliyah of Medicine, IIUM.

CONCLUSION

Online *viva voce* provides alternative for this important method of assessment during remote teaching and learning. Proper planning, anticipating and addressing each unique challenge will ensure smooth conduct of the exam.