

WILL THE FUTURE IN ONLINE ACADEMIC EDUCATION CHOOSE ONLY A MINORITY OF TODAY'S IMPORTANT UNIVERSITIES?

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Abstract. *This paper describes the academic impact of online education, during the pandemic period and tries to anticipate or foresight the changes provoked by online education in today's important universities. First of all the article reveals in its introduction some specific features or some distinct aspects of the old distance learning and the new online education in the academic universe, continuing with identifying some of the certain advantages and disadvantages of online education in a brief but consistent section, and finally paper offers some possible image and trends in the future dimension and the anticipated design, specific to a selected minority of the most important universities more adapted to this pandemic period.*

Keywords: *online education, educational network, pandemic period, online academic universities. Internet, software.*

1. INTRODUCTION

All around the world and at a certain period of time, the national education systems as reunions of all the local levels are going through the real and profound need to reinvent themselves. Only a retrospective approach can explain this pandemic period the situation in which billions of pupils and students spend their days in their homes, as well as their teachers, and meet only online, but never face-to-face... During the last decades, and better revealed in pandemic time, the three key differences between face-to-face and online education remain the same major issues: i) the first is caused by the different impact of space and presence; ii) the second aspect is connected to self-presentation; iii) the third obstacle and perhaps the most difficult to pass over is interaction (in multiplied forms: teacher-student, student-student, teacher-teacher, old contents-new contents student-interfaces, student-education's contents, teacher-content interaction [1-3]. The focus is always on teachers, but one profound expert or analyst can mention three design- and teaching-related elements: student-centred design, social activity and peer collaboration [1]. Online learning provides adequate opportunities and solutions to devote attention to the correction of individual efforts and activities, transforming individualized feedback in the most efficient learning engine and promoting

peer collaborations over multiple weeks and even months.

The most important questions in the research of this paper underline the dimensions and changes of the online education process and the possible changes in a minority of tomorrow's important universities:

What the most important advantage of online academic education is?

What one can really imagine the up-to-date of the three classical actors in any modern online education system?

Will the continuous process of learning and understanding reality be changed dramatically inside the academic universe?

Can the classic educational act be perverted and become even unnatural in such an intensive manner to lose its major qualitative aim or level which remains the temptation to anticipate and adapt human beings to any possible changes?

How do students, and teachers communicate and adapt to online teaching/learning?

How can technology help all of them, where these intentions really exist, and how does online technology influence the learning/teaching process?

In a terrible situation, when society is facing pandemics, and a large part of any society is isolated in their own homes and a large part of the international economy depends on these habits of communication, only network communications, and connectivity can save the world transforming the entire Earth in a place more vital than ever.

Based on this real assumption, today's education survives only by using new software and derivated technologies, online dialogues and distance communications of the modern Internet world.

Dialogue online & distance communications are the seeds of the most adequate solutions to a pandemic period in human life needs to be robust and flexible enough to deal with the additional traffic for working, doing business, or e-learning and online education. In this case, the Internet becomes the major source of communication that people can rely on.

They need to ensure information shared is reliable and timely, and the disinformation and other dangerous activities do not disturb the education process. With such a dominant part of our lives now taking place online, the need for equilibrium between clarity and essence, synthesis and details,

safety and security becomes greater than ever. One needs to be able to trust that all networks are secure from attacks and reliable in their levels of connectivity; and one also needs to be more sure as individuals that one is as safe when operating online as offline, with trusted identity and security systems in place to support the new increasingly digital needs.

2. ONLINE EDUCATION'S ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

A set of new studies, conducted by the United States Department of Education speaks on the one hand of the fact that the results of online learning seemed to be the same as in traditional courses [5, 6], and on the fact that students in online learning conditions behaved in a better manner than those who receive instructions face-to-face [7].

The classical advantages of distance learning, a form of education that can be considered neither inferior to any traditional forms of education, nor less able to consolidate or improve the memorization and understanding of the topics learned, are multiplied as importance and as impact in the case of online education, exemplified with the following opportunities [8 - 10]:

i) all of the students can decide themselves when (the period and the periodicity), where (the place and access) and how much time to devote to the studying process (based on specific individual study schedule) and all of them have the right to postpone and return to their specific studies without having to repay tuition fees [8];

ii) all the students can go back to studying more complex concepts, ideas and questions, watch on laptop or phone lectures several times, read the messages from their teacher and especially can skip already all the well-known topics or notions [8];

iii) all the students do not interrupt the length of jobs or services, and all the studied topics, issues, methods or models can be immediately applied to working life [8];

iv) all the students implied in the use of the new Internet's technologies based on the adequate appliances of the software in the learning process makes the online education and evaluation phenomena more interesting and offer higher training results [9];

v) the dimensionality debate for dialogues, the bias' questions inside teaching process, and the learning design is more profound and accurate in online education for all the students [9];

vi) for both students and teachers consulting in an online manner or by email must be considered sometimes more effective and faster than scheduling a face-to-face meeting [9-10];

vii) using the modern technologies and the the adequate packages of software in online education can underline a more suitable method for all the

students in organizing a more efficient individual approach without being distress by too many nonverbal communications based on distance, touch, sincerity and comfort, posture and seating arrangement and many other nonverbal expression of interest [9-10];

viii) all the students can benefit from more attention and more time while online education and all the necessary literature remains available to all of them after registration on the university website or link (based on specific academic accounts);

ix) analogous with the sample's costs, compared to an exhaustive research, both full-time and partial or remotely, the online education will be cheaper (all the students does not have to pay for travel, accommodation, or to spend money on other similar necessities);

x) a lot of the distinct aspects of teacher behavior are not the same in the face-to-face and online education reflecting a different combination of cognitive and motivational gestures, shared or not shared by the students [11-13];

xi) the students quality of universities can be enhanced and the engagement and activity of the students can be improved in the virtual classroom, facilitating future discussions between teachers on creating the best practices or guidelines for synchronous online education [11-13];

xii) online education develops through real self - responsibility and requires adequate willpower, and self-control from all the students [11-13] etc.

One researcher can identify many disadvantages also not only in general distance education but especially in online type. The major cause is the specific non-suitability of distance and online education for the development of communication skills, confidence or teamwork attitudes for all the students [8]. The second negative aspect is the lack of "live" practice doubled by the characteristic approach not allowing an in-depth look at the learning process as a developed collaboratively phenomenon between all the participants [12]. In the evaluation process there is also a problem called the "user identification" problem meaning to find an effective way to see if the real student has passed exams or credits honestly and independently based on video surveillance (this permanent and vigilant attitude is not always and entirely possible) [8].

The transition to a dominant online teaching system means a long and difficult process not only for universities but also for their specific research environment, and so-called academic researchers or scientists underlined the new methods of communication that are now developing through online education and based on the results of the major online conferences. All of these results open up to a much larger research community and to a more diverse concept of the future university and offer new possible advantages of the online

academic education: i) the higher frequency of classes (online courses and seminars) of students compared to classical face-to-face education; ii) the several practical exercises, applications, tests, small projects in small teams in online education (Google Meet, Skype, Zoom, etc. sharing other software solutions and allowing the fulfillment of the targets of the educational process, accelerating the process based on multiple and reciprocal access and other new facilities); iii) the better statistics related to the actual presence/absence of students during the tests of attendance at courses and seminars (made automatically and detailed through online statistics for each student, which provide good feedback to the teacher about the real absorption of knowledge in the teaching act).

The recent evolutions reveal new disadvantages of online academic education. First of all, many students consider the new online education is more fixed, tiring and static (all participants must work online, practically all of them being connected to desks and chairs, the process being not a dynamic one, but especially a static one). Many times, even when online education includes the existence of a classic blackboard, the online education does not mean more visibility (implying higher costs with microphone and camera built into more powerful laptops).

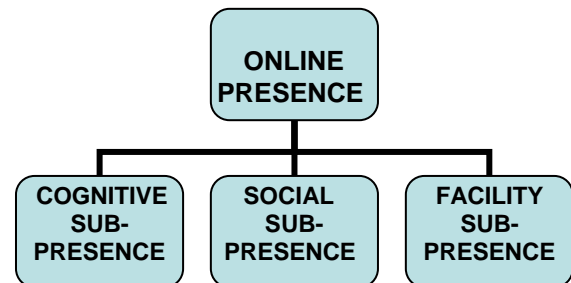
Any type of online education disaggregates teaching attitude by mutual agreement between teacher and students into many fragments during all the educational day, and because it usually changes the structure of the breaks (the break between the two hours of the course or seminar disappears and thus increases the break between courses and seminars). Absolutely necessary prior interaction in online education is sometimes lacking (online education requires more effort from the teacher to arouse students' curiosity and thus this type of education becomes more attractive or not so boring). Some specific online educations impose new teaching strategies mainly focused on creative play and actors. Any online education eliminates and does not replace classic forms of socialization (many times multiplying the existing networks and diluting the importance of messages and mutual interaction of all the students).

A simple sketch of the standard online educational process includes the major elements or the main components of the online learning activities and must include the following aspects:

- i) the context or the learner's goals;
- ii) the tools and resources used (communication channels between the students or learners and the teachers or among the students or learners);
- iii) the concrete tasks (e.g. encouraging peer collaboration between all the actors of educational play);
- iv) the relations between the three (e.g. how interactive the tools are, how self-paced/individual

the tasks or how necessary it is for the teacher to mediate the use of resources)". [1]

The evaluation in online educational process means a tripartite framework emerging from the latest interviews, with three main sub-presences of the students and teachers' presence (figure no. 1):



Source: Realized by the authors based on [2-3]

Fig. 1. The three sub-presences of online presence

In the online academic education, universities need a new language, an adequate theory to reality, and another kind of praxis, all of these aspects based on critical pedagogy. The new online critical pedagogy creates already a new concept and horizon of solidarity in learning and cooperation in academic universe. [14]

3. THE MODERN COMMUNICATION'S INFRASTRUCTURE OF ONLINE EDUCATION

The modern communication infrastructure for the university educational process includes not only the access to Internet but also specific data, adequate artificial intelligence (AI) and super computers with their digital and analytical power and networks or e-learning platforms, including an entire system of specialized software for online education, adapted to the specifics of the university.

Specific data, artificial intelligence (AI) and super computers, with their analytical power, are major assets in detecting patterns in the spread of the virus or potential treatments and devising strategies for reconstruction. AI also plays a part in powering the robots that have come into their own in times when human interaction is kept to a minimum. Newer and emerging digital technologies such as quantum computing or blockchain can also potentially bring unexpected solutions and approaches. Data will be crucial for devising recovery strategies. Digital networks are essential in terms of providing the infrastructure and platforms we are all increasingly reliant on. In these times of confinement due to coronavirus, they ensure a lifeline for our social lives. They offer a wealth of information, activities and learning opportunities, from skills sharing and collaborative working to creativity, culture and education.

All the educational institutions have promoted, in recent decades, several initiatives and programs

with a digital component, starting with the Computerized Education System (SEI) program, e-Twinning action, teacher training programs in the use of new technologies and ending with attempts to establish an open educational resource base or the approaches in the ROSE and CRED projects. E-Twinning is an educational program that provides all teachers in the European Union with a virtual environment and online tools for carrying out school projects.

The e-Twinning portal (www.etwinning.net) is available in 25 European languages and offers great opportunities for any teacher to find partners for projects, to participate in groups, workshops, events, teachers' rooms and training seminars, to progress, be up to date with the latest news, benefit from support and resources provided by other users of the platform.

Some of the most efficient ways of monitoring students' process of online learning during online courses and seminars define and offer dimensions to ICT. ICT can and really add value to the assessment process in online education and facilitates the entire continuous monitoring system including: i) the management of the qualitative feedback; ii) the automatic feedback for receiving immediate responses; iii) the use of diversified instruments and strategies of assessment; iv) the data produced by the system and informing about the online learning process (defining the analytics strategy, the support and the scaffold online education at any time) [1]. E-Portfolios describes one of the major strategies highly recommended for online education, allowing the students to have an adequate evidence of online education and reflecting the progress in the monitoring of the process.

The wirelessness offers already a further challenge for online education, not only concerning signals and detections, but also including the machine learners, adaptive platforms, new digital students' activities in order to "adequate" their learning process to reality...

4. SOME FINAL REMARKS

From North to South, from East to West, the pandemic impact of the COVID -19 has caused the disruption and the change of the classic solutions for the entire academic education system, including the online education. For all of the students, open, flexible, and distance or online education, however, this 2020 year provides the best period of all times. After so many years of presence somewhere on the peripheries of conventional educational process and practices, online education is suddenly thrust onto the center point of teaching all over the world.

A very important problem in education still is the morality of learning process. Educational reasoning

must also always come up again and again, for since humanity means only a species in which every young individual must learn the same moral lessons and ethic knowledge that older individuals did, it stands to reason that when a immoral idea sounds appealing in a new generation, this generation must strike it down once more before. A concept of false morality can, in fact, come about without having the ideal spread around.

Online education and online-supremacy, for examples, are things that come from being told if we are faster we are smarter, being shown if we are online educated, or online being observed in our intimate that we are better when we compare ourselves to other generations (sometimes simply asserting from nowhere that we are better). Online education and online-supremacy (online being nothing else but a variable of educational system) must be reasoned away, and even then it must be done so in a way that does not make it confrontational but as common as a project assembling. No one wants to hear he or she is not educated or that he or she made a lot of educational mistakes being considered foolish or have come close to the notion of illiterate, just because he or she has no money to buy a laptop, smart phone or PC. In fact, one would assert online compassion and online individual concern that together these attitudes are a better mode for education than face-to-face catch-all ideals that are phrased as their own separate entity when they still rely on real mentors as real people. "The online education system", "the departments of online educational corrections", "the minister of online education", these are not harmful, dehumanized, falsely impeccable generalizing phrases in the future, but all of these notions can become dehumanizing ideas because one cannot afford to simplify education into something more ethic, more moral, more direct and smore elective, or because the teachers as mentors cannot feel like they can be analyzed, picked apart, and changed by students in any free online educational process.

All the so-called famous universities and their specific academic management have decided that all the academic programs are going fully online in order to be able to remain viable during pandemic times. All the questions and the entire criticism underlying the disadvantages of the online education, and its effective and efficient activity compared to face-to-face educational experience, do not matter anymore [7]. The answer can be the same fragile answer as the ancient history of humanities: adapt or dye, be online educated or illiterate... But a minority of important universities can change everything in education [15], and these famous universities did it already. A university's reputation may be more important than its current quality, especially when it comes to the employment of graduates. The reputation score of

each university will be noted at the top of each entry in the top, but to compare these prestigious rankings with the main list, teaching and research results have been added. Online education means already the future education and all the universities adapt or dye...

In the adapting case, the famous universities shift away from the teacher-centered evolution and focus on what students learn rather than what they have been taught. Online education is now student-centered already and the university's vehicle is the online certificate program. In the so-called *dying case*, many researchers will demonstrate when things do not go so well for students and teachers, then must be blame the failure of online education methods, models and guides, both pedagogically and technologically [16]. How should this minority

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