

Distance learning is to stay after the pandemic: will it impact rankings?

Prof. Albert Sangrà

Full professor in Education
Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
UNESCO Chair Holder in Education
& Technology for Social Change



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1. Learning is changing: online was on the spotlight

Online Education in the framework of Higher Ed (2018)

- Online education is continuously growing
- Skepticism from some academics persists
- Emergence of low cost providers is questioning its quality for further purposes
- International rankings do not consider online education
- Despite of all the QA tools, quality of online education remains under suspicion



https://in3.uoc.edu/opencms_in3/opencms/webs/projectes/codur/en/index.html

- Lack of rankings for online education
- General rankings criteria harm online education institutions
- Some rankings are becoming to sensitive to the online education dimension

**2. ... And a pandemic
arrived: and online
become to be in the
spotlight even more**



Fuente: CC-BY <https://geografia.laguia2000.com/>

“When we thought we had all the answers, suddenly, all the questions were changed.”

Mario Benedetti

Some (provisory) lessons from the pandemic

- Maybe in different forms, this could happen again and we have to avoid the interruption of education
- We did our best, but some things can be done much better
- Digital growth has resulted in the only feasible solution
- The digital divide is still a great barrier
- Remote teaching was not online education*
- Hybridization of learning is already there



(*) Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T. & Bond, A. (2020). The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning. *EDUCAUSE Review*, March 27, 2020.

<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning>

3. Online education: the emperor's new clothes

Online education is a fuzzy concept

Its definition depends of everyone's use

- Traditional distance education using new technologies
- E-learning, with a strong technology-based approach
- It implies synchronous and asynchronous solutions, ... or maybe not
- It can be understood as a simple replica of classroom lectures, usually based on video-lectures; as a PDF delivery model; or as an accessible repository of documents
- **All this leads to considerable confusion for those people who are really interested in it for the first time.**

"Online education (and its variants such as online instruction, online teaching, distance education and distance learning) is a big umbrella that covers a wide array of different practices, which vary a great deal in terms of quality." (Zhao, 2020)

Sangrà, A., Vlachopoulos, D., & Cabrera, N. (2012). Building an inclusive definition of e-learning: An approach to the conceptual framework. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 13(2), 145-159. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v13i2.1161>



What is quality online education

It is:

- Planned
- Organized
- Demanding
- Responsible

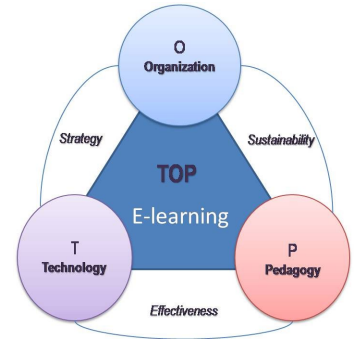
Strategic

It allows:

- **Flexibility** (Burge, Campbell Gibson & Gibson, 2011)
- **Personalization** (Buchem, Attwell & Torres-Kompen, 2011)
- **Interaction** (Garrison & Anderson, 2011)
- **Collaboration** (Dillenbourg, 1999; Guitert, 2013)

It becomes:

- Sustainable
- Assessable
- Innovative

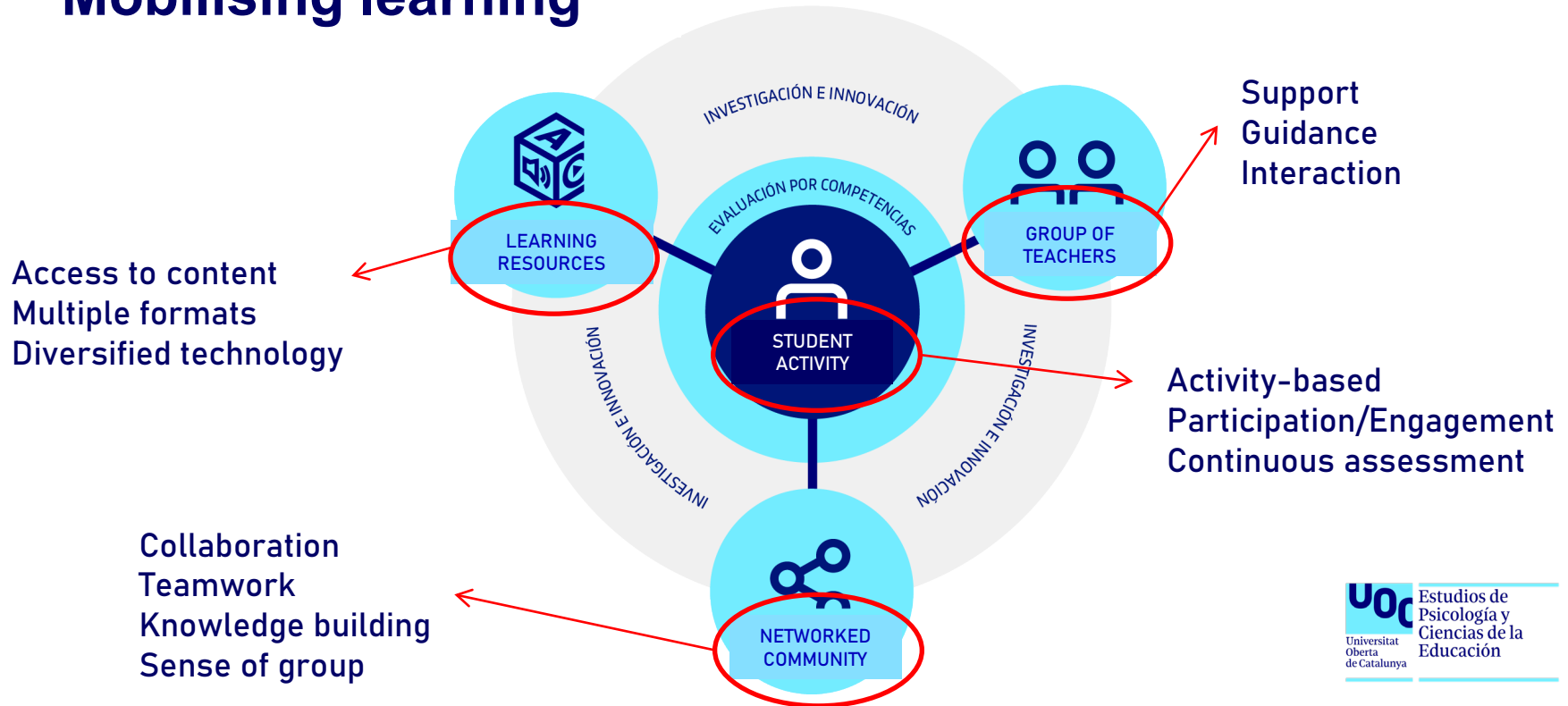


Source: Bates & Sangrà, 2011



Source: UOC. Educational model.

Mobilising learning



4. Moving to hybrid models



- University has to keep being **in-presence**.
- But some universities have experienced **new approaches for teaching and learning**, and some have succeed.

Conditions for a strong hybrid model



A hybrid model designed from a different look

(Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000; Bates & Sangrà, 2011)



Dissociating time

(Barberà, Gros, & Kirchner, 2014; Hrastinski, 2008; Tynan, Ryan, & Lamont-Mills, 2015)



Autonomy and self-regulation growth: the job of learning

(Zimmerman, 2008)



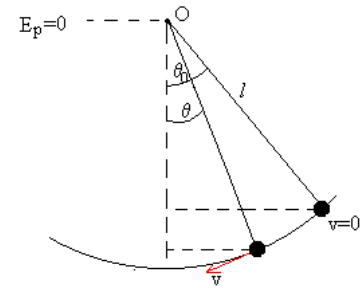
A formative, continuous and diversified assessment

(Gibbs, 2006; McCallum & Milner, 2021)

5. Closing remarks



How much have we **learnt**
from the pandemic situation?



Warning: do not replicate in-presence classroom teaching

The copy is always worse than the original

Given different contexts, different combination of strategies



- I'm afraid things will come back as they were even if the context is quite different
- Rankings should take into consideration what “quality online or hybrid education” mean

Quality of student support



- Mentoring, tutoring activities to support student learning
- Technology support
- Orientation services to help learners taking decisions about their learning path
- FAQ systems, Helpdesk, or sim. for learners
- Regularity of information update

Quality of teacher support



- Technology support
- Opportunities for teaching staff to be trained in online education
- Support to teachers and lecturers
- FAQ systems, Helpdesk or sim. for teachers

Quality of technology infrastructure



- Consistency/ robustness of the platform
- Capability to support evaluation
- Capacity and concurrence of the platform
- Adequacy of the technical support
- Flexibility and scalability of the platform in view of future changes /new emerging needs
- Adequacy of data security mechanisms
- Compliance of interfaces with usability and accessibility standards
- Capability to support interaction and teamwork

Quality of the learning experience



- Quality of pedagogy /methodology
- Quality of course / learning design
- Quality of assessment
- Quality of learning materials

Quality of research



- Use of research for improvement and innovation (research-based projects...)
- Research outputs
- Research in online teaching & learning
- Teaching staff engaged in research in online education
- Internal centers devoted to research in online education

Quality of teaching



- Profile of the teaching staff
- Teacher assessment and quality control
- Standards for regulating teacher-student interactions
- Involvement of academics in teaching

Quality of organization



- Credit transfer system aligned with national (and /or European) systems and operates bidirectionally
- Examination policies able to cater with for the needs of e-learning courses
- Existence of a complaints and appeals system for learners
- Non instructional support services
- Structures such as libraries, labs, etc.

Sustainability of the institution



- Institutional strategic plan for online education
- Overall coherence of program design and provision
- Resources (including financial ones) specifically devoted to the online program
- Sustainability of the portfolio of programmes
- Existence of standardized workflows for program /course /material design and development
- Clear policy regarding OERs and MOOCs

"Reputation" or impact of the institution



- Job opportunities for graduates
- Internship and mobility opportunities
- Social impact
- Institutional image
- Communication strategies

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Creating an
Online
Dimension for
University
Rankings



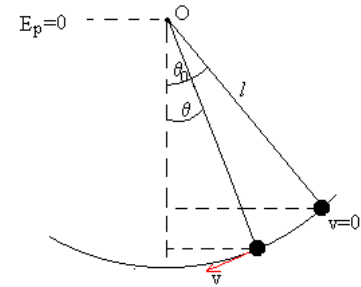
do not measure
in the same way

Warning: do not ~~complicate~~ in-presence classroom teaching

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**How much have we learnt
from the pandemic situation?**

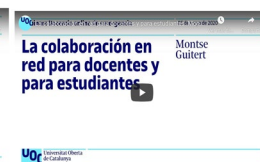
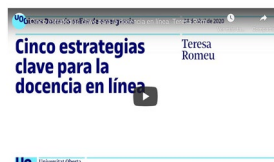
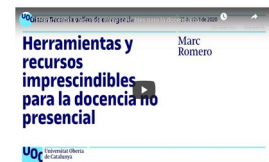
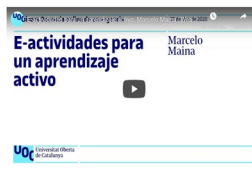
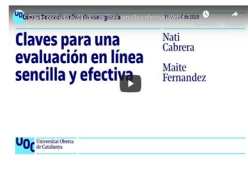
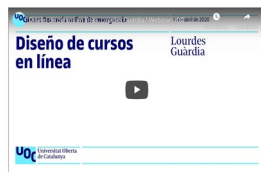
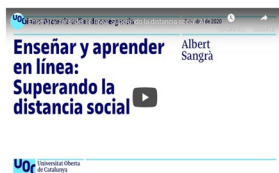




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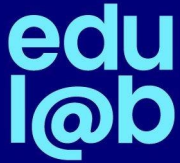
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Email: asangra@uoc.edu

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