

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



Online, 16 November 2021

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

codur

Creating an
Online
Dimension for
University
Rankings

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

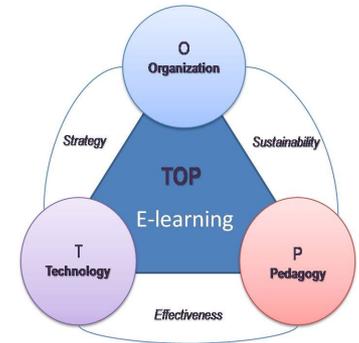
Strategic

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

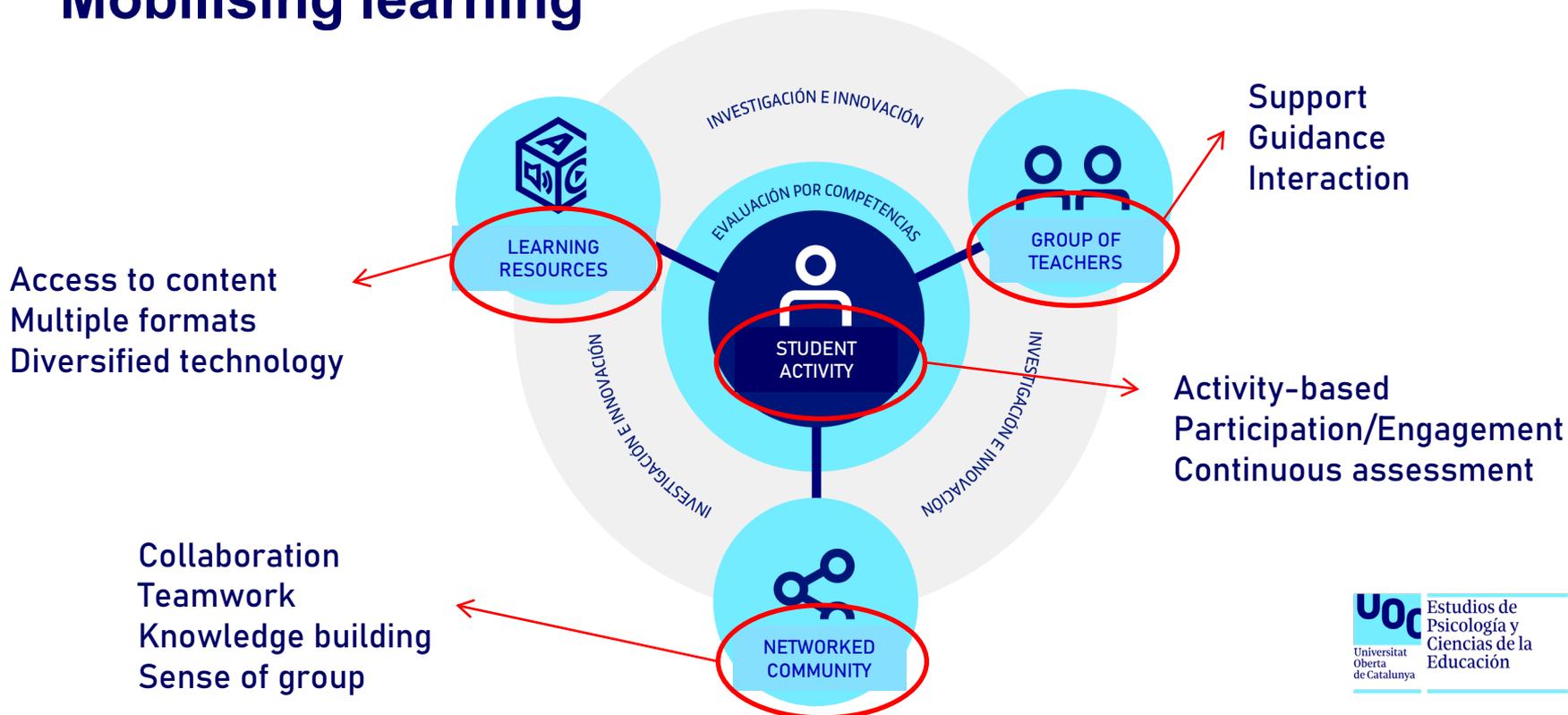


Source: Bates & Sangrà, 2011



Source: UOC. Educational model.

Mobilising learning

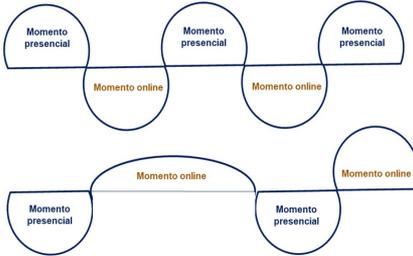
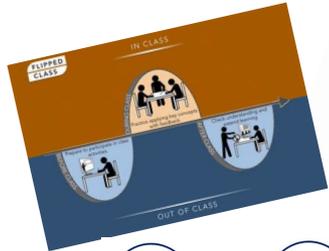


4. Moving to hybrid models



- 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)



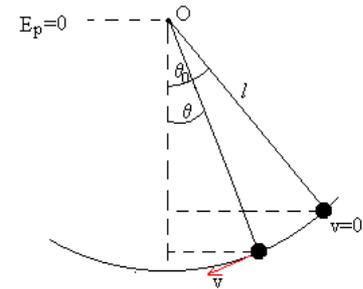
A formative, continuous and diversified assessment

(Gibbs, 2006; McCallum & Milner, 2021)

5. Closing remarks



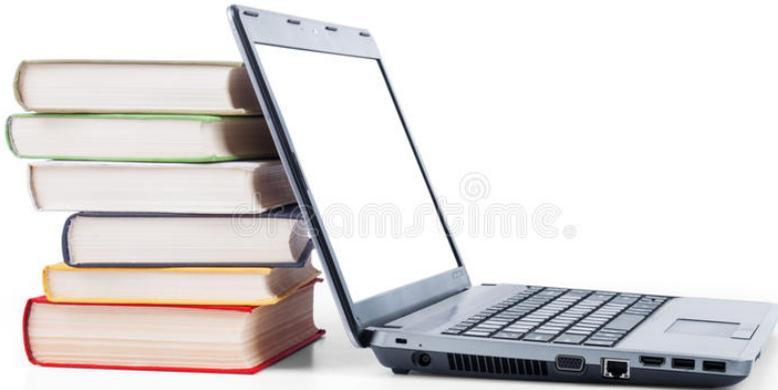
How much have we learnt
from the pandemic situation?



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





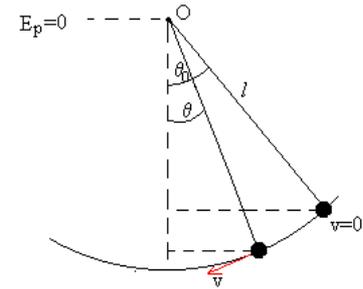
do not measure
in the same way

Warning: do not replicate in-presence classroom teaching

The copy is always worse than the original

Given different contexts, different combination of strategies

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





Docencia no presencial de emergencia Emergency remote teaching

September 2020 EDUCACIÓN

ALBERT SANGRÀ (COORD.)
A. BADIA, N. CABRERA, A. ESPASA, M. FERNÁNDEZ-FERRER, L. GUÀRDIA, T. GUASCH, M. GUITERT, M. MAINA, J. E. RAFFAGHELLI, M. ROMERO, T. ROMEU

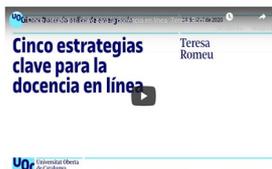
DECÁLOGO PARA LA MEJORA DE LA DOCENCIA ONLINE

PROPUESTAS PARA EDUCAR EN CONTEXTOS PRESENCIALES DISCONTINUOS

Prólogo de Teresa Guasch

Download for free:
<http://hdl.handle.net/10609/122307>
(English version coming soon)

March 2020



April-June 2020

- Armellini, A., & Padilla, B.C. (2021). Active Blended Learning: Definition, Literature Review, and a Framework for Implementation. In B.P. Padilla & A. Armellini (Eds.). *Cases on Active Blended Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 1-22). IGI Global.
- Barberà, E., Gros, B., & Kirchner, P.A. (2014). Paradox of time in research on educational technology. *Time & Society*, 24(1), 96-108. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X14522178>
- Bates, A.W. (Tony), & Sangrà, A. (2011). *Managing Technology in Higher Education*. Jossey-Bass.
- Beatty, B.J. (Ed.) (2019). *Hybrid-Flexible Course Design*. EdTech Books.
- Burge, E., Campbell Gibson, C., & Gibson, T. (2011). *Flexible Pedagogy, Flexible Practice: Notes from the Trenches of Distance Education*. AU Press.
- Buchem, I., Attwell, G., & Torres, R. (2011). Understanding Personal Learning Environments: Literature review and synthesis through the Activity Theory lens. Paper presented at the *The PLE Conference 2011*, Southampton, UK.
- Dillenbourg, P. (1999). Dillenbourg. What do you mean by collaborative learning? In P. Dillenbourg (Ed.) *Collaborative learning: Cognitive and Computational Approaches*. Elsevier, (pp.1-19).
- Garrison, D.R., & Anderson, T. (2011). *E-Learning in the 21st century: A framework for research and practice* (2nd Edition). Routledge/Falmer.
- Gibbs, G. (2006). How assessment frames student learning. In C. Brian & K. Clegg (Eds.). *Innovative assessment in higher education* (pp. 23-36). Routledge.
- González-Sanmamed, M., Sangrà, A., Souto-Seijo, A., & Estévez, I. (2020). Learning ecologies in the digital era: Challenges for higher education. *Publicaciones*, 50(1), 83-102. <https://doi.org/10.30827/publicaciones.v50i1.15671>
- Guitert, M., & Pérez-Mateo, M. (2013). La colaboración en la red: Hacia una definición de aprendizaje colaborativo en entornos virtuales. *Education in the Knowledge Society*, 14(1), 10-31. <https://doi.org/10.14201/eks.9440>
- Hrastinski, S. (2008). Asynchronous and Synchronous E-Learning. *Educause Quarterly*, 4, 51-55.
- Lage, M. J., Platt, G. J., & Treglia, M. (2000). Inverting the Classroom: A Gateway to Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment. *The Journal of Economic Education*, 31(1), 30-43. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1183338>
- McCallum, S., & Milner, M.M. (2021). The effectiveness of formative assessment: Students' views and staff reflections. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 46(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2020.1754761>
- Tynan, B., Ryan, Y., & Lamont-Mills, A. (2015). Examining workload models in online and blended teaching. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 46(1), 5-15. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12111>
- Vaughan, N., Cleveland-Innes, M., & Garrison, R. (2013). *Teaching in Blended Environments*. AU Press.
- Zimmerman, B.J. (2008). Theories of Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement. An Overview and Analysis. In Zimmerman, B.J. & Schunk, D.H. (Eds.). *Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement. 2nd Edition* (pp. 1-37). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya



Estudios de
Psicología y
Ciencias de la
Educación

edu
lab

www.edulab.uoc.edu

 @UOCuniversidad
@UOCpsicoedu

Thank you

Email: asangra@uoc.edu
Twitter: [@albert_sangra](https://twitter.com/albert_sangra)