

Online Teaching Principles

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Distance learning is planned teaching-learning that presupposes physical distance (and eventually temporal distance). There are several names to designate distance learning through the internet: the electronic model (e-learning), the blended or mixed face-to-face and distance model (b-learning), the version with mobile devices (m-learning) and several others (x-learning?). The advantages are clear: students can learn at their own pace and wherever they want without having to go to school. This allows a Portuguese person to attend a course in the United States, or a Greek student to attend a separate course in China.

For distance learning to be efficient, it is necessary to use strategies that are quite different from transforming the content that is used by the teacher in face-to-face classes and placing them on the internet in the static version - usually pdf. Feedback is very important. It is necessary to develop strategies that achieve collaboration / cooperation between students - using techniques such as pair programming; it is necessary to think about an active teaching environment (such as Problem-based learning or project-based learning). It allows the use of flipped classes in which the student has access to different materials before lectures (or synchronous classes), using the time with the teacher to ask questions and to do more complicated tasks. See MOOCs drop out numbers.

Distance learning platforms (LMS-learning management systems, like MOODLE) allow activities, files, and interactions to be in the same place - grouped in an organized way - and solving a large part of security problems.

Each person learns in a different way: some like to read text, others like to watch videos, others like to see images, others like a mixture of images and text, others with serious games. The strategies that the teacher uses must think about who the recipients are: for example, what is shown and made possible to children is very different from what is shown to university students, as well as, for example, the “security” that one should have with the unpredictable comments of adolescents is quite different from PhD students. The age group is an illustrative example. The crossword module "hot potatoes" can be interesting and motivating for a student in the 9th grade, however, cannot be a proper activity for a PHD student. A Wiki can have disastrous and embarrassing consequences if used by teenagers uncivilized.

COVID19 forced teaching to “go home” - it was emergency teaching since people had to be confined: the actors had no alternative, they were surprised and had to reinvent themselves. This semester - a few months after the beginning of the pandemic - teachers had the opportunity to rethink their strategies and develop others, knowing that at any time they may have to return home or finally be free of this problem (in which a new normal returns to the normal before 2020).

In distance learning, the student is the center, but the teacher must be the driver of an efficient teaching-learning, always keeping in mind the students' motivation and the development of diversified strategies.

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