**The Coronavirus Pandemic Has Unleashed A Revolution In Education: From Now On, Blended Learning Will Be The Benchmark**

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We’ve seen a varied response from educational institutions to the lockdown. In general, only those with a solid educational practice, with students who have access to connectivity and devices, and with staff already trained in the use of online teaching have been able to maintain their activity with minimum disruption, while others — the vast majority — have simply done the best they can under emergency conditions, hoping to weather the storm.

Classes that will continue as best they can, voluntarism, [online teaching seen simply as a side dish](https://www.wsj.com/articles/schools-closed-for-coronavirus-online-work-wont-count-11584643049), students without [access to computers or an internet connection](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/technology/china-schools-coronavirus.html), teachers who simply assign essays based on reading material, or measures such as [a universal pass](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/28/us/coronavirus-college-pass-fail.html) have become sadly common.

The problem we face from now on is clear: what initially looked like emergency measures no longer are. From now on, [we must prepare for life in a world where a vaccine for COVID-19 is going to take a long time to arrive](https://www.technologyreview.com/2020/04/12/999117/blueprint-what-it-will-take-to-live-in-a-world-with-covid-19/), which means a great many restrictions on how we used to do things. For a long time, classes will be at half capacity, many students or teachers will be forced to self-confine, attendance will be irregular, and many methodologies we used before will no longer apply.

**The change will be permanent**: educational activity will no longer be face-to-face or online but a blend**,**able to move from one to another immediately fluidly, continually, [through a student’s life, way beyond the school, college or university years](https://www.economist.com/special-report/2017/01/12/lifelong-learning-is-becoming-an-economic-imperative). In today’s world, we are all required to continually learn and unlearn, and we will demand conceptual frameworks and tools for it. Institutions, academic directors, teachers or students who are unable to adapt will simply have no place in this new scenario.

This new scenario involves many, many changes. Firstly, we need to resolve the so-called **digital divide**: we must understand that every person who intends to access education, considered a universal right in many countries, must necessarily have access to a computer and an internet connection with reasonable bandwidth. This requirement will temporarily raise barriers to entry to education, and will be something that both institutions and governments will have to take into account through scholarships, grants, loans, donations, etc.

Secondly, this will mean that teachers must reconsider all their methodologies and prepare them for this new, blended learning environment. This **will not be an option:**no matter how successful teachers might have been in the previous environment, they will need to understand that those days are gone, and that they must now adapt to new standards. This requires openness toward being trained in the use of new tools, modifying their syllabuses , their evaluation methodologies, and understanding the role of each element in this new environment with new learning processes.

Thirdly, institutions, both educational and normative, must understand that, in this new context, some ways of teaching no longer make sense. In an online environment with access to unlimited information, the focus on memorizing things loses its meaning, and is replaced by the need to know how to select and use the information appropriate to each context. We will need to transition from exam-based systems that encourage knowledge retention to others based on developing projects or tasks. This means the end of textbooks as a sole source of knowledge, along with sessions where a teacher “recites” a lesson and students take notes. Instead, flipped classroommethodologies, where the student takes centre stage in preparing material and the teacher devotes interaction time — online or or face-to-face — to providing structure, explanations in greater depth, or answering questions.

In addition, group work and participation will become fundamental elements of education, as they represent the way students will transfer the knowledge they have acquired when they go out into the world. We will need to evaluate not only what a student knows or does not know, but how they use it to convince others, to argue their point within the group, to help the class progress or to lead the discussion. Peer-to-peerevaluations will become the norm. Instead of relying on exams to grade students, we will now see complex systems made up of participation, course work, projects, individual and group work, grades assigned by colleagues, and possibly several other criteria.

What tools will we use to do this? They will be many and varied and constantly evolving. We will have to unlearn everything we thought we knew about education and, above all, online education. MOOCs and systems in which knowledge is stored in a repository for the student to access at their own pace have only proven one thing: that [between 90% and 95%](https://coursera.community/study-tips-6/could-mooc-completion-rate-really-represent-mooc-success-177) of people [do not complete them](https://www.ft.com/content/60e90be2-1a77-11e9-b191-175523b59d1d). If that’s not [a failure](https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/01/16/study-offers-data-show-moocs-didnt-achieve-their-goals), I don’t know what it will be.

Online teaching will not consist of turning a handle while students learn on their own. On the contrary: it will require teachers to engage more than ever, who will spend many hours in forums moderating conversations and opening new threads. These forums will have the kind of advanced social capabilities we’ve already become familiar with (likes, favorites, etc.), along with multiple analytical capabilities and other tools capable of making conversations better and deeper than those in a face-to-face environment, and with more opportunities for customization and adaptation to the characteristics of the student.

But obviously, it won’t all be forums. In addition, we will see, of course video conferencing tools that enable enriching two-way interactions, shared whiteboards, instant messaging, content managers that we will use as repositories, virtual reality that offers immersive experiences, simulation, proctoring, games of various types… a panoply of functions that will constantly be [evolving throughout the lifetime of students](https://www.fastcompany.com/90473678/to-thrive-in-the-future-you-need-embrace-the-concept-of-lifelong-learning).

In other words, online teaching will no longer simply be an option. Next year, institutions that are unable to offer a blended methodology that seamlessly integrates face-to-face and online teaching will increasingly find themselves left behind, until they are simply out of the race. By next year, the emergency measures implemented by educational institutions over recent weeks will have to be fully integrated: solutions capable of providing efficient, complete and fulfilling learning experiences. A challenge for institutions, teachers and students, but one that could add a whole new dimension to teaching, adapting it to a new context, more flexible and, above all, more logical. In every way.

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