The Future of Online Learning[*]

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Because the online learning system has both advantages and disadvantages, Kleiman (2020) points out that society should assist teachers in developing skills to focus on the system's potential and prepare students to become lifelong online learners. "Only then, schools will go beyond addressing the equity of a high-quality online learning experience" (Kleiman, 2020, para. 8). The new global situation has taken the whole society by surprise, and although it is true that our technological advances have been of great help and allow us to live a comfortable life, with this event it has become clear that virtual education has not had so much prominence in a world that is rapidly changing to digital. Online education has evolved over time to result in a stable and promising design for the future of society, but for this, new changes must be made for online education to obtain future benefits and new knowledge. Indeed, face-to-face education has had a long path throughout history, which has allowed its methods to work and be maintained today, although this does not mean that they are 100 % efficient.

On the other hand, with the new situation the world is facing with the spread of the COVID-19, and even before, the idea of online education generating benefits that are absent in traditional education has been raised. But exactly what does the idea of online education refer to? Online education is a system in which the student is not limited by time, distance or traditional methods to access quality education. Additionally, it allows teachers to teach via the internet with different strategies and goals. For this reason, new learning methods, new teaching technologies, and the traditional school culture are three aspects where online education has changed and needs to continue to develop to provide what is necessary for the future of education.

First, online education has developed new learning methods that not only makes this a beneficial process for students, but also allows them to choose their own schedules according to their own availability (Koksal, 2020). One of the main characteristics of online education is its ease and convenient access for certain students, for example, time or location. While a face-to-face student must be available at least five hours a day to go to the place where the class takes place and spend time there, online students can spend their time in the way that is easiest for them. In addition to this point, a major drawback in face-to-face education is the location and accessibility to transportation, since this problem prevents the possibility of education in different places. For

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example, in Colombia if you live in a remote town that does not have a university, you are supposed to move to the city where it is possible to take classes, but for this, you must have money and means of transportation, something that is limited in the poor towns of Colombia. On the other hand, online education could be more accessible in remote places and allows access to education in a more convenient and faster way. However, in order for online education to fulfill the objective of facilitating access and bringing greater benefits, it is necessary to allow access to the internet in every part of the world and to provide electronic equipment so that people can have equal access to education and technology.

In the same way, online education has allowed the development of different technologies for greater benefit. These allow the customization of applications or web pages, sometimes with the use of artificial intelligence, and a change of algorithm to help the student in their learning process. For example, if at some point in class, the student does not understand a topic or cannot complete an exercise, the algorithm can provide more information to help the student (Koksal, 2020). Usually, the algorithm provides similar questions or exercises to understand what the student's weaknesses are and can compare them with their strengths in order to obtain greater benefit when teaching it.

Furthermore, applications like YouTube, Khan Academy, or even Google, allow personalized access to people making the learning time more beneficial, as well as providing coherent modules, online videos, multimedia presentations and readings (Kleiman, 2020). These types of platforms, among others that are dedicated to online courses or classes, have a specific system for the easy development of learning and a more direct and friendly search system, allowing the student to navigate the web page without complications, using keywords to find the required activities or modules. However, these systems must be kept in continuous development to give a positive result in new generations that use online education daily. Since they are quite accurate and help people, the teacher's explanation is still necessary to understand certain topics. For this reason, these types of applications are only a complement when it comes to improving the performance and understanding of the student and the teacher.

Online education is a relatively new system that requires new teaching methods that can be adapted to a changing future and generate benefits similar or better to the previous methods. Although the face-to-face education process follows teaching methods and strategies that have worked for decades up to the present, such as the use of physical books, direct explanations and socialization, its methods are not compatible with the development of online education. Therefore, with the implementation of online education, new strategies must be developed that can solve the lack of face-to-face benefits. For example, new technologies allow easy teaching in a visual way: slides, videos and learning games allow the brain to learn in a different way than the traditional one, which was focused on linear readings and sometimes incomprehensible texts.

Consequently, the daily use of these new technologies empowers teachers with new skills and immerses them in the virtual world, thus facilitating teaching and the students' understanding. For example, the use of different elements to attract and hold the attention of students. In this way, the recommendations to keep the attention of the students is to implement interactive classes, a quick and easy organization system, and to support original thinking (Craig, 2020). In addition, these methods allow the independence of the student, since in the old methods the students had a teacher at their side insisting that the students do what they had to (Kleiman, 2020). In this way, with classes that are a little less extensive, that support the participation and independence of the student and that use more dynamic methods, the teaching method can improve and take technology as an aid to make new ones. Although this new process must continue to improve, online education provides the development with better and more effective teaching methods.

Finally, an important part of education and learning is school culture, which must be modified for a beneficial process in online education. School culture refers to the perceptions, attitudes and relationships in class, which in turn enable students to learn. According to Kleiman (2020), the success of online education is also based on "changing the culture of the school, with new types of responsibilities for teachers, students and families, and new forms of interactions among them" (p ara. 6). This refers to the importance of relationships and the way of socializing that schools adopt and their impact on face-to-face education. Therefore, for success in online education, a new form of interaction is necessary to meet the needs of the student so that they feel comfortable in the learning environment. A possible change in the culture of online classes is the new form of interaction between students and even teachers, aiming at a pleasant and calm environment that allows correct learning and teaching, suggesting that online education thrives and generates better results for a new future.

In the case of face-to-face classes, it is easier to establish a connection between two or more people, which leads to productive teamwork, a more fluid communication and a more viable explanation process, resulting in better projects and a more enjoyable coexistence. On the other hand, in online classes sometimes a tense environment is felt, and it can be difficult to interact with others when the person is shy; for this reason, efforts should be increased in order to benefit the student's social skills and the teacher's peace of mind. Since it is easy to be quiet in the comfort of our home, avoiding conversations and participation if we wish. Correct coexistence and socialization are important skills in the real world that must be supported and developed in every moment.

By not generating a pleasant environment for coexistence in virtual education, passive education is promoted and the creation of an own criteria in the student is avoided. A good implementation of promoti on of social skills can be to carry out activities such as games or conversations that calm students and reduce the

pressure that teachers feel when being in a new environment, rather than focusing mainly on reading long texts that prevent social interaction and that can be boring for the students. In these new changes, it must also be considered that the interactions and traditions that previously took place in the traditional school culture will not be the same as in online classes. However, the goal of this change is to achieve benefits similar to those provided by traditional education.

Clearly, online education has a large field to fill and change to make it a more viable option for society in the future. Although in recent years it has generated changes throughout the world that have allowed access to many people who previously could not access quality education, it is true that the economic gap is still very marked, and in very poor places it is impossible to implement virtual education equitably. But the change is becoming more noticeable and the new technologies that allow access to the network in these remote places, plus the financial support for all those families, could result in the correct and beneficial use of online education.

To conclude, the change that has been and must be generated for the success of online education is focused on three points: first, the new teaching processes that are based on the development of technologies and applications that allow teachers to keep the students' attention and facilitate their understanding with dynamic and eye-catching modules; second, the new way of learning is another important factor, which allows students to access education in a simple, practical and personalized way with the aim of benefiting learning in the future and focusing specifically on the needs of students; and finally, the new school environment must be modified by performing new coexistence strategies in order to allow learning and socialization in a comfortable way for all those involved.

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