Cultural Psychology of Education 13

María Gabriela Di Gesú
María Fernanda González *Editors*

Cultural Views on Online Learning in Higher Education

A Seemingly Borderless Class

Springer

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Volume 13

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To my parents, Elsa and Orlando, who have always pushed me to expand my boundaries. Now, they are in that anywhere place close to my heart.

—María Gabriela Di Gesú

To Amaury and Rita, for their love.

—María Fernanda González

Preface of the Series Editor

The Culture of Online Learning and Teaching

This editorial preface is the last touch to this volume titled *Cultural Views on Online Learning in Higher Education: A Seemingly Borderless Class* edited by M. Gabriela Di Gesú and María Fernanda González and it has been added at the turning point of the 2020 and entering of 2021. Despite the risk of being a bit late and to make troubles to my fabulous Springer team, I wanted to mark the end of the pandemic year in which the Online Learning and Teaching acquired an unexpected prominent role in our academic life.

Students and professors almost all over the world have been asked to rapidly adjust teaching/learning processes to the new conditions of social distancing. We did. Yet, this has been a challenging task for many or, at least, for those who have taken up the opportunity to overcome the comfort zone of the lecture-based way of teaching.

Over 2020, higher education system has been affected by a process of radical rethinking of its assets that will not die out with the end of the pandemic since it implies to re-signify the social ecology of the educational setting (Xu & Marsico, 2020) and to re-conceptualize "learning to learn" approach (Engeness, 2021).

Di Gesú and González's book goes, indeed, far beyond the education technologies related issue. It brings the focus on the intersubjectivity and interobjectivity in the virtual learning setting in higher education, which has been overlooked in the last decades.

As Di Gesú and González claim: "*We wanted to discuss the different relationships that subjects need to engage in when they move in and out of the virtual and physical spheres to learn*" (p. 203). But they ended up doing something more and contributing to inaugurate a specific sub area of investigation that we might call Digital Cultural Psychology of Education, where the notion of border is very much in focus (Kullasepp & Marsico, 2020; Marsico, Dazzani, Ristum & Bastos, 2015). The analysis of the online learning from Cultural Psychology of Education perspective adds value and a new point of view of innovative analysis. I am very much in agreement with Di Gesú and González when they say: "*Online learning acts can be transformed in an*

ongoing research practice for teachers/ instructors and a reflective act for students. New lines of research are needed within the Cultural Psychology of Education".

What should be investigated then? Several contributions in the volume show as the Online Teaching and Learning can be consider a liminal space where symbolic and material borders of the higher education system are blurred. Yet, in my theoretical elaboration of the border notion (Marsico, 2016; Marsico & Tateo, 2017) I argue that the border-making process is one of the most fundamental process of the psychological functioning.

One of the property of the Border construction is that of trying to lessen the ambiguity of a specific phenomenon. Now, let us think for a moment of one of the main feature of the on line leaning which is *being close while being distant*. This is an ambiguous condition *per se*. Following my line of argumentation (Marsico, 2016), borders should operates there in order to cope with this uncertain situation. How and where new borders are built in the on line teaching setting? How do they work? How can we recognize them?

The subtitle of this volume "*A Seemingly Borderless Class*" refers already to this somehow disquieting research questions and represents a terrific intuition of Di Gesú and González. The border condition is, indeed, a powerful symbolic tool to investigate the complexity of settings and phenomena where borders in space and time seem not to be at work.

The migration to the virtual digital environment that globally occurred over the last months is the perfect field to analyse the role of borders in higher education. We have here a new powerful path that can largely contribute to illuminate the main cultural dimensions of the on line teaching and learning.

This book *Cultural Views on Online Learning in Higher Education: A Seemingly Borderless Class* is, then, a promising seed to germinate further theoretical and methodological advances.

Salerno, Italy Giuseppina Marsico
1st January, 2021

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Acknowledgments

María Gabriela Di Gesú

Delivering this book took longer than expected. Our endeavor to start a conversation on online learning with academics from the cultural psychology world was not easy. On the one hand, Spanish is the language for many Spanish speaking academics in Latin America in which to publish their work. On the other hand, few researchers on online learning have reflected on this phenomenon from a cultural psychology perspective. We felt we were starting something new that needed further reflection. This book would like to be just the beginning of a "thread" that will hopefully develop with more contributions.

On a personal note, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Area of Research in Foreign Languages, in particular, Marcela, Cecilia, Lina, Erika, Antonella, Soledad, and Francisco, members of the research project on Learning Foreign Languages Online funded by the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento. Our decade long and pioneer work in online environments has given us ample experience on the complexity entailed when implementing this pedagogical tool in Higher Education.

I would also like to mention three dear people that guided this work. Ph.D. Jaan Valsiner who has always encouraged me to expand my knowledge boundaries, even when I felt I could not. Dr. Marsico who has accepted our book proposal and has kindly showed us the way. And last but not the least, I'd like to thank Patricio, my husband, who has always supported my academic adventures and my long nights and weekends in front of the computer.

María Fernanda González

In December 2019, the New York Times echoed the current trend in the academic environment in most part of our world: the need to work during vacations. Although the article[1] talked about the Christmas festivities as Winter holidays, in the Southern Cone, the present volume was finalized during the hot Christmas holidays in Latin America. That is why I would like to thank my family's and friends' ongoing support and patience as I also needed to work on my computer during the holidays.

[1] https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/science/scientists-holiday-work.html.

Secondly, I would like to thank the support of the Área de Educación a Distancia de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud de la Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos, Argentina.

Introduction—Space, Time, and Identity Online Learning as a Seemingly Borderless Cultural Object

María Fernanda González and María Gabriela Di Gesú

(Elrich, L. El aula. Malba Museum, 2019. Buenos Aires)

Illusion of Being Nowhere but Everywhere

Paintings are said to transmit ideas better than words. As cultural objects, the power of paintings resides in the individual semiotic processes. The images evoke different feelings and memories in the viewers. It is the case of "El aula", (The classroom), a piece of art by Leandro Elrich, an Argentinian artist. It shows a traditional classroom with a board, a window, and the typical seating arrangements with chairs aligned one behind the other in front of a teacher's desk. However, this empty room changes dramatically when the museum visitors sit in desks placed in front of this seemingly fixed painting. The image changes dramatically when visitors become part of the

picture by virtually "entering" the painting. The outer space is juxtaposed and the visual experience enables them to be part of the installation for an irremediable instant in time. They dangle in a liminal space. They are about to cross, to enter a place, or a state of specific existence, without ever being fully there ("*a punto de cruzar hacia o entrar a un lugar o estado de existencia específicos, pero sin llegar nunca del todo*")—(Malba Museum, 2019). This illusion plays with the idea of being inside-outside at the same time. It affords the possibility of being in a place while being physically in another, subverting the notion of fixed spaces. The classroom is ever transformed when people virtually enter and occupy the seats by the reflection of their images.

This installation as a metaphor can help us muse on the meaning of a classroom as a cultural object that may catalyze or inhibit learning. The layout, the furniture, the decorations can be signs that mediate in the students' meaning-making process. A classroom can catalyze or inhibit not only academic knowledge construction but also the bonds forged among students, and between the teachers and the group.

Elrich's installation also helps us articulate some of the tensions perceived around online learning that constitute some axis this book attempts to address. On the one hand, online learning has been considered as an environment enabling ubiquitous learning (Burbules, 2009) due to the affordances of current digital technologies. Online students enter a symbolic classroom when they type a keyword. The physical place they are in, being their homes, a bus, or workplaces, is suddenly transformed into an academic setting in their minds when the teaching learning process takes place. They join a virtual sphere and get in contact with people who are not seen or heard for learning. The traditional boundaries between formal and informal context for studying seem to blur, as González describes in this volume (González, in this volume), implying the emergence of novel features that sometimes literature simplistically sees them as positive. As in El Aula, online learning lets subjects be in an in-between zone, between materiality and virtuality, and, at the same time, it transcends these two conditions. In online learning, liminality pervades the notion of space and time and they acquire new meanings. Ubiquitous technology mediated learning has paved the way to the emergence of new modes of being teachers and students, but only some subjects thinks of this as a positive feature.

Spaces Apart, Spaces Juxtaposed, I Positions Juxtaposed

Historically, human experience has traditionally experienced spaces apart. Home is where we live, and school is where we learn. Some people can homework or homeschool, but most individuals perform different practices in different settings. We adhere to the concept that learning may takeplace anywhere as knowledge can be constructed from direct contact with geographical sites, museums, monuments and statues (Dazzani, et al 2015; Valsiner, 2014). However, some findings in this book reveal that some subjects still perceive that educational institutions play a crucial role in their learning process, as Di Gesú suggests in this book (Di Gesú, 2019). From a

historical perspective, school is an enclosed cultural institution use to educate large masses of human beings while it molds their bodies and minds (Foucault, 2002). The school as a site affords specific activities. There is a room for learning, another for playing music, a playground to have fun.

However, in online learning environments, institutional boundaries seem to disappear. Any place can be transformed into a classroom. One student at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (Argentina) told Di Gesú that she followed the online course during her daily commute. She was happy she could transform her commuting time into a sort of academic learning bubble. She followed a ritual, i.e., getting on a bus, choosing a seat, putting her headphones on, and joining the virtual room. Juxtaposing spaces allowed her to pursue a degree against the many odds she had (living far from the University, work and family commitments). However, not all subjects can see ubiquity as conducive to learning. Ramos and Borges, in this book, put forward that the ruptures between being in class or in a virtual environment insinuate the emergence of a new instructors'–students' identity that is not perceived as appropriate in a teaching-learning process. Both teachers and students can do social media as Larrieu and Di Gesú show in their chapter, but the same teachers and students failed to see themselves as online teachers and learners.

The environment enables the emergence of a *polyphonic self* (Hermans, 2012). Home, school, offices, stores, or shop floors, etc. play a performative role. The same subject can be a university student, an administrative employee, or a parent. These social positions emerge and evolve differently related to the environment. Subjects play those expected roles according to the settings. For some subjects, going from a place to another allows them to leave one position to enact another. Thus, while they commute to the university, the different I positions-*I as a parent/as a spouse/ as a worker/ as a manager* become *I as a student* in irremediable time. Individuals play the role on the stage that the cultural institutions provide.

However, in online learning, spatial ubiquity juxtaposes environments, implying that two or more social positions can be acted in the same environment. When studying online, *I as a parent* or *I as an employee* can also be performing *I as student*. A student can be in the position of a parent taking care of a child or of an employee taking advantage of their lunch break and attending a class. At the same time and in the same setting, when these subjects join the virtual room, they enact their student self. Not only are the environments juxtaposed but also the *I positions.* Some subjects can cope with this demand, but some others cannot.

Fixed Schedules as Scaffolding Devices

Ubiquity also implies a displaced time (Burbules, 2009). In traditional online learning environments, there are no fixed schedules. In an in person class, the teacher times the activities, but such timing is inexistent in a virtual classroom. Although instructors/ lecturers design the the learning pathways, and set deadlines, the lack of a fixed period of time for a lesson or a fixed schedule in the case of traditional elearning programs

leads to the emergence of a feeling of uncertainty as students are faced with the need to decide on the moment and the length of their online study time. Instructors also perceive that the lack of the classroom schedule leaves them at the mercy of working 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the absence of the institutionally regulated classroom schedule, in online learning environments, instructors/lecturers and students need to adjust their work-study time.

Also, past-present-future as separate entities are somehow merged when the students type the keyword and join the class. Traditional online teaching-learning lacks the instantaneity of oral communication. The interaction consists of reading what their classmates or teacher wrote in the past. As they both are readers and writers, their post are read in the Other's future. New learning demands arise. Students are not only learning disciplinary content but to wait for an answer, to engage in a written dialogue with their classmates and teachers. The adoption of synchronous meetings using software based conference rooms might overcome the scarcity of instantaneous responses. These synchronous sessions also pose challenges, such as network connection problems, or student's or instructors' devices,

In an in-person lesson, students and instructors/ lecturers engage in oral exchanges to build knowledge. But online teaching-learning mostly relies on written text. This manufactured artifact scaffolds students' learning. Other cultural objects such as videos, podcasts, visual aids are also carefully produced with the twofold aim of contributing to knowledge construction and keeping students' engagement. Students also need to produce written discourses. Carefully manufactured pieces of writing replace the oral exchange that takes place in an in-person classroom. Even when platforms allow for posting oral monologues, these are not extemporaneous. For some students and instructors, this form of learning is unnatural.

This description aims to unearth the complexities of online learning. Literature everywhere usually shows a positive view of the phenomenon. We propose a fresh reflection, posing new questions, and hopefully engaging in a new fruitful conversation from a cultural psychology perspective. Educational processes are intrinsically related to human development, being individual, institutional, cultural or historical (Dazzani, Marsico, Ristum and Souza Bastos, 2015; Marsico, 2015). We consider that empirically grounded cultural analysis can contribute to understanding the resistance and tension perceived when implementing online learning in Higher Education. Therefore, looking into this relatively new educational practice will expand the boundaries of our knowledge of a virtual sphere as a nowhere space that is enacted as a classroom when subjects engage in an online learning-teaching process. This perspective guides the contributions in this book. As editors, we wanted to answer these complex questions. How do we learn and bond with others in these learning spaces? How do subjects cope with the blurred time and space boundaries? How do we experience spatial and temporal ubiquity?

We only attempt to describe the phenomenon from the subjects' perspective. Our approach does not delve into the efficacy and usefulness of online learning. We do not look into technological innovations. The subjects in this book are *Homo academicus* (Bourdieu, 2008). They are instructors/lecturers/students who construct academic knowledge through online classes in an online university campus. They attempt to

overcome the gap between academic and professional life. In our endeavor, we also listen to the others, the ones who do not want to study online.

This book is organized around four topics of conversation. Collaborations between researchers from diverse disciplines working in Latin America and Europe have proved to be enriching. The authors present empirical works grounded in theory. The analysis of case studies shows how subjects go through a meaning making process that helps them internalize online learning as an educational tool conducive to learning.

Part I sees authors engaging in a fruitful exchange of ideas around works that describe the catalyzers and inhibitors on online teaching-learning in Higher Education. In this section of the book, different views on this human phenomenon converge to shed light on the many aspects that go beyond delivering academic content.

Constantino and Raffaghelli open the dialogue describing the paradigmatic changes that have taken place in virtual and online education, focusing on universities in Latin America. The authors present the challenges that these changes pose in initial teacher education programs and in students' learning expectations. Looking at both actors in the learning process allows them to appreciate the growing industrialization of online education and to contrast it with a handcrafted education with digital means and scenarios. Finally, they propose the need to create institutional conditions to foster a full development of digital education

González follows, providing the readers with tools to understand students' identity construction processes. In her case study, students are professionals in health sciences who engage in continuous learning through an online course. The author used a mixed methodology, which combines the production of images and narratives. The results show that online studying is an activity at the intersection of different spaces such as the student's home, their workplaces, and means of transportation. The different social supports provided by family, work, and study colleagues are also central to this work. In the students' narratives, a series of emotional assessments seem to be related to their inner selves and the others, which actively enrich the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

Di Gesú closes this first talk questioning the simplistic view that sees online education as a homogeneous and universalizing solution. In her work, the author analyzes two hundred eighty students' written narratives on the reasons for choosing face to face classes. She suggests that online learning is still perceived by many as a new cultural object that poses challenges to students who need to go through a meaning-making process of the tenants of online learning such as ubiquity, flexibility, and teachers' roles. Her findings revealed that affect regulated not only students' present decisions but also molded their perception of their learner self. She could identify four themes that framed the students' option for in person classes. As future-oriented meaning-makers, these students preferred to stick to their past learning habitus.

Part II sees authors discussing how academic and professional identities are bridged through online learning environments. the empirical works presented show how students construct their identities in online learning experiences.

Ligorio, Amenduini, Sansone, and Mc Lay start the debate. They show the crossroads between academic training and the professional spheres in a blended university course following a Triological Learning Approach model based on the results of a study on students' trajectories who navigate between the academic and working worlds, the authors understand that the hybrid class provides not only experience with epistemic value but also enables an identity transformation process.

Barbato & Beraldo follows studying the role of hybrid spaces in an initial teacher education program and analyze the interaction in debates in online forums. The authors claim that the learning experiences in blended learning prompt new forms of in-betweens in which the interlocutors learn in asynchronous and synchronous borderless settings generated by new possibilities of interdisciplinary and interhistorical development of professional identification.

Ramos, Rossato and Boll show the subjective and identity aspects of the transition from high school to the university in a case study. They take on the perspective of learner identity and learned experience as a structuring concept for their work. The authors develop the subjective senses and the difficulties encountered in a student's journey in a hybrid teaching context. The authors claim the need to support university students in their construction of a strong learner identity.

Borges, Mesquita and Versuti close this section of the book by bringing to the fore other protagonists of the educational scene—the instructors/tutors. The authors define a series of themes that give coherence to the teachers' narratives and place them in a certain specific chronotopes for online teaching.

Part III finds the contributors to this book discussing how the future self is educated through online learning environments. This interdisciplinary talk gathers four researchers from different disciplines who depict the tension arising when subjects need to expand their boundaries.

Taboada develops the main details of a university course that hybridizes the use of social networks and classroom training for teachers. Intersecting linguistics and didactics, on the one hand, and teaching and research on the other, the author gathers the different linguistic landscapes that are shaped around violence in discourse and forms of resistance. She exemplifies and reflects on the use of images and social networks to generate more reflexive forms of learning.

Alvarez & Di Fabio present an online writing course for doctoral students. They interweave teachers' and students' perceptions of the course and the difficulties that both actors experience when they engage in a co-constructive process. They suggest different modes to overcome difficulties using the affordances of technology-mediated learning, thus expanding the students' boundaries.

Larrieu and Di Gesú end close this last conversation showing the resistance and tensions emerging during the implementation of a hybrid course in an initial teacher education program for Portuguese teachers. The analysis of students' interviews reveals that students saw online learning environments as a tool to introduce fun in a foreign language class but not as a learning artifact. The authors suggest that students' resistance may be grounded in the students' construction of a sign hierarchy that hinders a sense making process of the online world as a learning environment.

Part IV was intended to close the book and offer the editors' analysis of the phenomenon. However, the spread and effect of COVID-19 in all aspects of life motivated a closer look of the experience triggered by the imposed switchover to online learning and teaching. A short work before the conclusions attempts to see how students and instructor/ lecturers have engaged in a trajectory of experience process to ensure pedagogical continuity. The Closing chapter voices the editors' ideas on online learning aimed at building a common ground and engendering further conversations from the perspective of Cultural Psychology of Education.

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Contents

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María Fernanda González is a Full Professor of Pschology and Virtual Project Coordinator in the Health Faculty of the National University of Entre Rios, Argentina. She has been a professor at the National University of Distance Education, Spain. For 15 years he has been conducting research in learning processes, identity construction and citizenship, within the framework of cultural psychology. She is associate editor and reviewer of scientific journals such as Interface—Comunicação, Saúde, Educação and Estudios de Psicologia. She participates in international academic networks with Latin American and European universities.

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Catalyzers and Inhibitors in Online Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. Converging Views on a Human Phenomenon

Online Teaching and Learning: *Going Beyond the Information Given*

Gustavo D. Constantino and Juliana E. Raffaghelli

1 Introduction

In one of his last interviews, Jerome Bruner highlights that the aim of education, and mainly teaching, is that learners may reflect on the future possibilities offered to them by the past and the present, and that are summarized by the phrase "going beyond the information given"; recalling the expression he coined a while ago in one of his papers.[1] Undoubtedly, this is one of the (numerous) contributions that Bruner makes in his extensive and extremely valuable work (Olson 2014). Because the famous phrase, powerful per se, should be included in a scenario of the linked issues within which the following should be understood rightfully: psychoeducational development, language, community and culture. Because what characterizes and defines Bruner and his work, and that of colleagues and scholars that he exceptionally influenced throughout the world, is the main and ultimate reference to human beings considered socially and individually.

In a culture of hyperconnectivity (van Dijck 2013) in which the pervasiveness of digitality is revealed both because of its ubiquity as by the hybridization of personal and social environments, the exploration, implementation and improvement of instructional-communicational interaction within online spaces is critical, both for the design and multimodal construction of meaning (Kress 2010) as well as facilitating opportunities to investigate, reflect, think, construct and project new meanings and knowledge. The need of such a task and its intrinsic positivity is agreed

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aljvAuXqhds.

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by many; but often, avoiding and overlooking fundamental issues: What is the range of strategies and what combination of them should be put into play in the different instructional-discursive scenarios to achieve a shared construction of knowledge in online education? How do I notice or acknowledge that online dialogue is producing this result? What indicators give me a hint that conceptual change, a reconstruction of meaning is about to occur; i.e. when am I in a Conceptual Change Zone[2]? And so, what discursive tactics or procedures should I put into play for this to happen?

The enormous variety of e- and blended learning instructional designs and practices developed in recent years, points to the recent expansion of online higher education. The phenomenon can be put down to: (a) technological innovation; (b) the overcoming of digital dichotomies, for example, social online/offline life (Jensen 2011) and the insider/outsider digital world; (c) the multiplication of alternative digital tools enabling methodological adjustments to teachers' and students' needs. On the other hand, we must not underestimate the difficulties encountered. These concern students' acceptance, engagement and effective learning as well as the challenges posed by the differences between online and face-to-face education to teachers that migrate between them or try to combine both. The situation is apparently paradoxical, as *digitality* (Goodfellow 2014) itself is supposed to be an "amplifier of the mind", in Bruner's words (Bruner 2006), empowering teachers and students. However, it might also give rise to misgivings or create barriers to its acceptance, leading to the underuse or misuse of available tools (Constantino 2014). This phenomenon takes place, for example, when the choice of digital tools and their instructional deployment is not dictated by the specific teaching criteria but by their particular adoption and use by students, as is sometimes the case with social networks.

In this context, we might assume that there are three basic features of online teaching and learning representing, in our view, a paradigmatic change in the field, that are to be explored regardless the tensions/resistance generated on academics: (1) the (shared) construction of knowledge through digital instructional interaction (Wegerif 2007, 2013, 2015); (2) the growing curriculum flexibility facilitated by an open and boundless Internet, and (3) the progress of multimodal digital formats, which demand adequate communication skills from teachers and students. Going beyond the mere transmission and exchange of information, the first aspect entails

[2]The proposal of an "education area and conceptual change in dialogic learning" refers us to a variable state of uncertainty in which the learner may resignify, relate and appropriate concepts manifest by teaching and studying. In the formation of new concepts/constructs (v.g. scientific ones), it is the state/situation in which the learner is close to identifying the meaning and scope (intention and extension) of the new concept; in change and restructuring, it is the state/situation in which the learner faces discordances between some concept(s) of their belief system and the information he/she is facing in the environment/scenario, and becomes aware of the limitations/inadequacy of his/her previous knowledge. If these uncertainty states may be perceived in dialogic-teaching scenarios, it would be necessary to identify both discourse patterns that make these states manifest, and the discursive moves promoting the performance and consolidation of concept appropriation. With these dialogic tools, the teacher would manage individually and in the group, to configure strategically the teaching situations with the necessary incitations for concept formation, implying metacognition, critical and creative thinking; i.e. the superior mental functions that are included in all conception of the mind and in the educational aims.

the possibility of collaborative knowledge creation through online communication, which requires dialogic scaffolding grounded on discourse comprehension and production strategies. The second characteristic reflects the expansion and openness of the knowledge available on the Web, thereby turning closed curricula based on limited resources that are both obsolete and reductive. Multimodality involves an expressive leap, a change in meaning design, as linguistic components are no longer the primary vehicle of meaning, which rather arises from a synergic mix of elements such as image, sound, and motion. The communicative spectrum must therefore be widened and adjusted to the new criteria and discursive dynamics.

These issues are approached and exemplified in relation to the complex Latin American context, where the changes in the academic profession brought about by digitality have had a varying impact (Constantino and Raffaghelli 2016). Deep and definitive instructional transformations are taking place, such as the curriculum co-designed by teachers and students in technologically enhanced environments (Luckin 2010). The need for specific multimodal comprehension and production skills has been highlighted, requiring both the implementation of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis 2015; The New London Group 1996) and openness to the kind of undetermined, boundless knowledge Web development enables. The conclusions can be summed up by stating that this paradigmatic triad allows us to go "beyond the information given", resignifying Bruner's powerful expression (Bruner 2006). In this way, we attempt to transcend the unilateral and conventional transmission of knowledge as well as prescribed curricula and the omnipotence of the written word in Western Civilization.

2 Strengths: Technological Development, Digital Literacy, Transliteracy

2.1 Technological Development

To what extent does technological development strengthen online education? The question seems *naïve*, and the answer is evident. Online education is strengthened by technology that synergically participates, for instance, to enable a much more efficient synchronous communication (e.g., broadband), that is also enhanced (e.g. a greater number of possible simultaneous connections); besides other elements (apps, mobile devices, etc.) whose instructional use enriches the spectrum of teaching strategies and learning activities. Having said this, we immediately have to state, along with Cope and Kalantzis (2017), that technology is educationally neutral (p. 1). That is to say, technology does not determine the educational effectiveness of an instructional design. A counterexample may clarify this statement: the more advanced digital technology may not yield a differential gain in regard to less powerful technologies if its specific potential is wasted or the activity for which is used turns it irrelevant.

2.2 Digital Literacy and Transliteracy

Another, no less important issue, is *Digital literacy/ies*, with literature about it in recent years being very extensive (Banzato 2011, 2013; Coiro et al. 2014; Gee 2014b; Lankshear and Knobel 2008; Lankshear and Knobel 2011). In regard to this, we are interested in differentiating two levels of digital competence: one that we may call *primary* or *base*, and that is related to the common type of logic inherent to the systems, their operative (structural) modes, and their functionalities (products). One second level of competence has specific aspects proper of each system (software, device). The first level competence entails a profound command that allows access and basic operation of any system or device. The second level competence implies a thorough or expert command of some computer programs and devices (simulators, robots), whose educational implementation could be appropriate to a specific disciplinary field, or a particular curricular set of problems. A competent e-teacher should have both levels of competence, taking into account that the primary level is essential, and the secondary level is based on the former, and has a more limited scope. Sometimes, the primary level is associated to digital natives, to millennials, and particularly to centennials. As in most cases learning is implicit (Pozo 2014), associative and of the trial-and-error type, it is conducive to attribute such competence to the mentioned age ranges. However, this cannot be taken for granted, least of all when discussing digital competences relative to software used in an academic context. But we could consider two almost connatural traits of the new generations. One is the character of *vital hybridization* of existence, where our online life has as much space and time, and maybe even more, as our face-to-face time with other people and the world around us. For a while now, the dichotomic experience between offline and online life has ceased to exist, mainly thanks to smartphones and social network apps. The other trait is related to the so-called *Transliteracy:* "*a fluidity of movement across a range of technologies, media and contexts*"[3] (Thomas et al. 2007). This competence[4] represents a movement between devices and apps at hand, according to the tasks to be made and problems to solve, with functional criteria for the optimization of processes and resources, but according to personal/community goals that should be achieved. It is not, then, about what we can do with the technology available at a given space and time; but to do whatever you want with it, fulfilling the proposed educationally and humanly valuable goals.

Transliteracy and digital multiliteracies are the two concepts we consider essential for competence profiles of e-teachers and online students that we will list below.

[3] https://journals.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2060/1908.

[4] We use the term competence in a wide sense, equivalent to skill or an organized set of skills.

3 Weaknesses, Obstacles, and Dilemmas

Often, virtual education promises much more than what it delivers. Obviously, we do not mean diplomas and degrees; but the chance of obtaining them in students with personal/professional contexts with a scarce time and technological availability. At any time and any place, for working students, usually means the weekend before the deadline of the product of an activity or a test. However, this is not exclusive to virtual education, or anything new (De la Orden 1982, 2000). Also, learning materials may not have the required quality or width; particularly in curricular models focused on (and closed to) contents written by experts and available at the institutional platform determined by the university.

On other occasions, it delivers more than it seems. The possibilities of personal and group orientation by online teachers and/or tutors are generally, an advantage on face-to-face university education, with the latter being predominant in many countries in Latin America. Even the best expressions of face-to-face education could be selected and added in a multimedia format to the online learning spaces. Also, the criteria of programmed and individualized learning that are applied are seized by students with low levels of self-regulation in learning and study.

About this aspect, we are interested in showing that not everything is perfect in online education, as we have barely pointed out, and not precisely in terms of digital technology. Although there are criteria crystallized in standards, and these materialize in guidelines to guarantee quality—constituting parameters with which governmental entities authorize and supervise virtual syllabi in universities-, quite often such criteria, both by shortage and excess, do not guarantee a satisfactory online education, neither for the student, nor the teacher (Constantino and Llull 2010).

3.1 Weaknesses

There is a first type of issues that could be encompassed due to their deprivation or scarcity in the student, which propaedeutic activities or tutors do not always get to solve. We mention those that, according to our experience, severely affect and compromise the permanence and success in online training programs:

1. **A weak engagement with the syllabus and its dynamic**. In other words, a motivation that cannot grow and consolidate because the syllabus is initially represented in a way that generates expectations in students that are later not met; or the promises of active and challenging didactic methodologies that later evolve into standard academic assignments and evaluations with traditional criteria;
2. **A limited digital competence**. This limitation is understood as those below the required one to use the available resources and to carry out efficiently the appointed learning activities. It is true that often, online education courses receive students with different ages that are having their first experience with online courses, and the novelty is twofold; not just the syllabus, but also the modality

of performance. And this is not just for millennials or adult students of previous generations, but also for centennials; although a digital competence enough for online education does not have a certain generational correspondence, as continuously cases of "digital resilience" are verified. When an online training course does not include studying the digital competences required, besides the hardware, software and connectivity requirements, it may turn into a real problem that discourages many students;

3. **A poor self-regulated learning competence**. For a couple of decades now, attention has been given to (and investigations conducted on) self-regulation in learning, as a complex competence necessary to plan, guide and monitor the learning by the student. Planning what to learn (goal), how to learn it (selection of sources, contents, etc.), how much time (subjective) is required to learn, controlling if necessary, a change in *macrostrategies* (e.g., with a fellow student or with a group), or in *microstrategies* (e.g., not just reading, but extracting concepts and organizing a glossary), etc., are components of a self-regulated learning that the student should activate to perform efficiently and effectively his/her process of learning. If students do not have this competence developed (linked to the "learning style" construct, although self-regulation is a metacognitive competence that can alert us, when our style is preventing us from learning in the most appropriate manner, the particular aspects of the learning object), it will be extremely difficult for them to carry out the learning process in virtual environments, unless both instructional design and/or the customized tutorial action may solve this scarcity.

Undoubtedly, the three problems could be solved by teaching strategies focused on solving them; but that are not always formulated and implemented properly, and the result is a high degree of dropping out in such courses. No less significant is what we can call (4) *Poor construction of shared knowledge*, both because of an inappropriate instructional design and the lack of expertise of the e-teacher or online tutor. Students cannot appropriate knowledge; and thus the proposed activities or implementation tasks are inaccessible for said reason, with the results of the interaction through the established channels being frustrating.

3.2 Obstacles

There is another type of issues that constitute true obstacles for online learning, different from the previous ones, although in some cases they overlap or could be mixed up with those mentioned above.

1. **Poor or obsolete technology**: This occurs when hardware, software and Internet connection, or a combination of them do not grant a stable and full access to the course. Connection latencies and errors, incompatibility of formats, the impossibility of downloading and opening documents or multimodal files, the difficulty of synchronous interactions due to low bandwidth connections, are frequent

problems to which Latin American students are exposed in rural and semi-rural regions, and city suburbs.

2. **Small amount of time or useless time**: online learning usually appeals to students that, whether because they are distant from universities or because of their jobs, or both, cannot cope with face-to-face courses. "*You can study at your home and in your spare time*"; or just "*where and whenever you want*", are the arguments used to promote online education courses. Any online Latin American educator with some experience knows that, in practice, this usually means that most students will study and perform learning activities and scheduled academic tasks on non-working days, generally on weekends. Being absent for some reason one weekend, may mean for a student, "pausing" a course for almost two weeks, with the subsequent loss in usually intensive courses, and falling behind of the curricular sequence. Now, we use the term "useless time" (for learning/study) for the time during which students are not in a psychophysical condition for learning, even though them may think they can save and apply such time to study. After long workdays, even exhausting days, a couple of hours at night may yield very little unless prepared or trained for it. Here, also self-regulated learning competence plays a role: students should know when and how to focus on learning in situations of great time restriction and psychophysical fatigue.

3.3 Dilemmas

At this point, we put forward simple questions with no single answer, or that are controversial.

3.3.1 How Much Tech Is Necessary for an Online Education Course?

A reply related to efficacy, such as "the most advanced and strong available" is uncertain in several regions of Latin American countries, and for several reasons. In fact, this question cannot be answered accurately, unless contemplating (1) the pedagogic model or the instructional design of the course considered; (2) the institutional context and activity of the teacher, and (3) the socio-economic-digital context of students. Can a student do an online education course just with a smartphone, and maybe not a last-generation one? It seems an extreme condition, but not an impossible one. Can do with an old desktop computer with no MS-Office? Experience shows us that frequently, when the course has already started, students realize their devices are not appropriate for the activities proposed in the syllabus. Much more could be said in relation to technical problems and digital literacy/competence problems that may alter the optimal configuration between resources and their use. But what we consider fundamental, and that is not usually made, is an analysis of the technological requirements of the course and the conditions and profile of admission of students in regards to access and use of technological devices in their environment.

3.3.2 How Much Teacher's Time Would Be Necessary?

This is a matter also with multiple nuances, and for the same reasons stated above. Since the beginning of online education (last years of the '90s), it was estimated that the online teacher-tutor's time devoted to the student is threefold the time of a face-to-face teacher, simply because of the asynchronous interaction mediated by electronic discourse (Constantino 2003), with the necessary education individualization (although the degree of individualization is dependent on the online education model). The multiplicity of online teacher's work models is very wide to provide a few valid replies to all possible cases. Even the division of roles and functions are part of the equation. In some models, individualization—as attention given to the needs of each student, linked to aspects not related to learning the curricular contents-, is made by tutors or mentors, whose function is to monitor the application of students to tasks and to solve possible problems (technical difficulties, advice on organizing their studying, etc.), and in some cases, to mediate with teachers in regard to deadlines for academic tasks or particular situations to be considered. In other models, the teacher is the one in charge of all functions, although the authorship of the contents could be not his/her own (contents prepared by experts), or his/her own (teachers are also experts on the contents, and therefore, responsible for them) (Constantino 2010a).

On the other hand, the work of tutorship/teaching could be a modality of teleworking; particularly due to night times or weekends; or in university campuses in business hours, on weekdays. The latter is very useful if a teamwork model is proposed. Of course, mixed forms are possible and implemented, and also taking into account open communication channels: if besides asynchronous and synchronous communication, also phone and face-to-face tutorships are agreed. To conclude, online learning requires a lot of time to design and perform, even though the criterion of reusability may maintain most resources to use them for new courses. However, it would be quite naïve to state unequivocally that it entails much more time than face-to-face education; it would be reducing the latter to classroom meetings, to master classes. And we do know that a good face-to-face university education is not just that.

3.3.3 Is Hybrid Face-to-Face/Digital Education a Better Solution?

Both online education and face-to-face education have evolved in a parallel way in recent times. Face-to-face university learning has been hybridizing, *mixing* with digital technology, whether as an enriching supplement or as an indispensable and integral part of courses. The more complex and accomplished forms entail a jump, an evolution, going beyond the so-called ICT learning, which often is just a superficial make-up for traditional teaching, as it is just using a projector connected to a computer to make slides presentations with text and some Internet search tasks. The mentioned complex forms imply a special attention given to the characteristics of centennials; particularly the competences of transliteracy and the manners in which they inhabit

the Web. About this particular aspect, we took the studies by J.P. Gee on social semiotic spaces of learning as basis (Gee 2017, 2018), as well as other of our own studies we have been conducting in regard to the changes that digitality is exerting on the academic professions (Constantino and Raffaghelli 2016). Maybe a hybrid class is the best alternative; and the near future of face-to-face university teaching could then be hyperconnected and ubiquitous classrooms with face-to-face and online students, and blended learning. No doubt, the limits between some modalities and the others will increasingly become more blurred and porous.

4 Shared Knowledge Construction

Shared Knowledge Construction[5] (SKC) is neither new nor exclusive to online learning. Dialogic, face-to-face learning has it as substrate. Historically, it goes back to Ancient Greece, as we already found some of it in Socrates' maieutics; and in the Middle Ages, in the *disputatio* in the first universities (Titone 1981). But what it is indeed new is modern constructivism,—named connectivism in digital spaces (Downes 2008)—, where collaborative and networked learning (Dirckinck Homfeld et al. 2012) and the conceptions of situated cognition and distributed intelligence (Robbins and Aydede 2009) provide a completely different signification to it, which perfectly fits the role of teachers in technologically enriched face-to-face environments and online learning. Maybe the question to be answered is why it is posed as a key issue, as a necessary dimension in a proposition of hybrid or online education. Even why is not easy to achieve it too, in spite of its proclaimed presence in many eddidactic proposals.

SKC reveals as essential in a socio-technological context in which knowledge is available on the Web, and teachers do not need to reproduce it in their classes, at least not in a traditional manner. Students need (they have always needed) to understand and learn in an authentic fashion the concepts, their relationships and the ideas that shape and constitute the contents of disciplines and other forms of human knowledge. The figures of facilitators, mediators, tutors; and scaffolding (Bruner), mediation and tutoring processes reflect in moderation this learning goal, but do not reach the co-construction of knowledge—unless we reinterpret the signification of the above-mentioned constructs. That is to say, the co-construction or shared knowledge entails two or more people applying to a dialogic-discursive (even multimodal) interplay of signification, resignification, confrontation, synthesis, summarizing, generation and creation. We can trace the configuration of this approach mainly to scholars like Neil Mercer (1997, 2000), Littleton and Mercer (2013) and Rupert Wegerif (2007, 2013); but the list gets longer with studies by those who somehow investigate and promote dialogic teaching both in face-to-face modalities (Burbules 1999, 2006; Burbules and Bruce 2001; Cazden 2001, 2017; Cazden and Beck 2003; Marton et al. 2004;

[5]Some investigators use the term "Construction of Shared Knowledge". We prefer including the construction process in the sharing; i.e., it is a co-construction process.

Resnick et al. 2015) and in virtual modalities (Bender 2012; Hew and Cheung 2012; Mercer 2000; Sieloff Magnan 2008; Wegerif 2015).

Studies by Neil Mercer have shed light on the intimate relationship between dialogic learning and the development of thought jointly, not just in classrooms, but also in ordinary life (Littleton and Mercer 2013; Mercer 2000). In the same line, Rupert Wegerif has focused his investigation on the shared construction of knowledge on the Internet (2007, 2013, 2015), and more recently on how this approach influences the teaching of thinking in school (Phillipson and Wegerif 2017). In Latin America, Constantino (2005b, 2006a, 2010b) has worked along this line, identifying the discursive moves that could explain SKC both in forums and chats in e-learning platforms. The evidence gathered for these studies shows that shared knowledge construction processes clearly reveal in dialogic activities of conceptualization, exemplification, summarizing, justification (arguments and counterarguments), through discourse forms and markers that explain conceptual conflicts and deep insights. To show this, we mainly use discourse analysis from a broad functional perspective (Constantino 2002, 2006a; Constantino et al. 2012; Gee and Handford 2013). As digitality has advanced favoring discourse multimodality, we turned to multimodal discourse analysis (Gee 2014a; Jewitt 2009; O'Halloran, 2011; O'Halloran and Smith 2012; Royce and Bowcher 2013).

5 Multimodal Formats and Communication

Multimodality consists of the coordination of signs of different nature to construct and share significations, in a design where the verbal element is not necessarily the most significant one or the exclusive carrier of relevant information. If by multimedia command the integration of several means or formats is defined (visual, verbal, sound, gestures, etc.) in dynamic objects (audiovisual or hypertextual presentations, videos, dramatizations, etc.) with digital technology as support, multimodal denomination refers to the resulting discourse from the construction of signification with these diverse objects and formats, that are defined as semiotic modes and resources (Jewitt 2009; Kress 2010).

This multimodal turn (from focusing only in the verbal aspect, to openness to multimodality) that started with the new millennium, and was strengthened by the evolution ICTs, is neither simple nor primary, and least of all complete. On one hand, both nonverbal languages (e.g., signaling system, music, painting, photography, miming) and multimodal discourses (e.g., movies, advertising, drama, opera) preexisted, with a long evolutionary history approached in its manifestations by semiotics or by artistic disciplines. These languages and discourses have studies that have developed tools for analysis according to the diverse nature of each one and specific bodies of knowledge that cannot be left aside when analyzing new multimodal discourses. Further, at the level of social investigation and innovation

in education, this turn is reflected by the development of the so-called New Literacies or Multiliteracies (Coiro et al. 2014; Lankshear and Knobel 2011; The New London Group 1996), supported on the fertile field of education based on Multiple Intelligences (Armstrong 2009; Gardner 2012) and learning with ICT.

We should not assume that e-teachers should be experts on multimodal analysis. But it would be fruitful indeed, for them to take into account the diversity of semiotic resources and modes that could be used in teaching, and simultaneously, to be able to interpret those used by students—critically evaluating while attempting to integrate those other modes different from verbal language in the communicative strategy at play (Gee 2010, 2012; Gee and Hayes 2011). If we take a very frequent case in teaching practices at the primary, middle and superior levels, such as multimedia presentations in classroom—that goes from the more static ones like PowerPoint or Prezi, to dynamic presentations (videos, documentaries)—, we can clearly see what change in perspective is entailed by multimodal approach.

Not wanting to get involved in the controversy about the usefulness or not of multimedia presentations as a proper tool to communicate efficiently the relevant information to be learned effectively (Pöehm 2011), we can verify that many of our presentations mainly suffer from containing an excess of written verbal information, and an amount of images that do not hybridize with the discourse message, in spite of its multimodal appearance. Taking into account that in face-to-face learning, almost any multimedia presentation is embedded in a class or lesson, so the modes are the oral mode of the speech by the teacher, the written mode of the text in slides, and the visual mode of images and videos included in the slides, the latter mode is generally relegated to supplementary functions of exemplification or demonstration of what is said verbally. In terms of giving hierarchy to the information, it does not provide new information in a willing manner; at most it is just a *rhematization* of the main rheme contained in the oral text of the teacher or the written text of the slide. For instance, let us think about an image (e.g., a photograph) as the only mode present in a slide to be "read" by the students without an "explanation" by the teacher; indeed, it is the oral discourse of the latter that should supplement the signification of the image, with no need to translate it or explain it. Further, the written verbal information contained in the slides is predominantly thematic or given (in a linguistic sense) and not rhematic or new.[6]

Everything that has been discussed leads to, when we rethink these matters for online education, what in principle seems the communicative modality proper of the Web, and by transitivity of online education, actually presenting more complex aspects to take into account. For instance, without the direct and simultaneous help of other means carriers of meaning, multimodal static or dynamic presentations are under a risk of not being decoded in the foreseen manner (by differences in encoding criteria, primarily between teachers and students). Animations, videos and

[6]From the perspective of Discourse Analysis (Martin and Rose 2003; Pardo 1986, 2011), textual rheme is the utterance or sentence with the greatest semantic load and the highest degree of communicative dynamics, and therefore, the biggest novelty in terms of the context (Constantino 2002, 2006). In other words, it is the predication made on the theme.

other visual forms (such as apps of augmented reality) that Web design allows and facilitates, constitute attractive formats but that generally do not exceed the minimum threshold of simple understanding, with a manifest self-explanatory power and available for everyone. Communication is still very verbal, in spite of the power of digitality to construct signification constituting a multimodal discourse. Maybe we should take a step beyond the information given in a textual-verbal format, to multimodal designs rich in signification. Thus, deep and definitive instructional transformations are taking place, such as the curriculum co-designed by teachers and students in technologically enhanced environments (Luckin 2010). The need for specific multimodal comprehension and production skills has been highlighted, requiring both the implementation of a pedagogy of multiliteracies (Cope and Kalantzis 2015; The New London Group 1996) and openness to the kind of undetermined, boundless knowledge Web development enables.

6 E-Learning Models, E-Curriculum and Multiple Source Use

All phenomena we have been discussing develop in a space of epiphenomena that have not been previously planned, but have emerged by the synergy of digital technologies, both from a quantitative point of view, in relation to an expansion of the digital universe, as qualitative in relation to the amplifying evolution of digitality. With the first aspect, we do not mean so much the *hyperconnectivity* (in the variety of devices, in uninterrupted availability and ubiquity) that undoubtedly characterizes our current relation to digitality; but rather the almost infinite information to which we have access (thanks to digitization and digital production) in a selective and organized manner (thanks to Web searchers). In the second aspect, when we talk of amplification, we mean not just the techno-digital spectrum, but also essentially the people that work, interact, suffer, enjoy, and create with digitality. If you wish, it could be the "human face" of digital technology. But both intertwine in different and dynamic ways and one of these is that corresponding to curricular content, the knowledge to be learned, and the skills and activities necessary for the appropriation of it. In this sense, two points of view should be taken into account to analyze the curricular issue. One is related to the e-learning models, and the other to curricular models in the brief history of online learning.

As to the e-learning models, we think it is important to recover the proposal made more than one decades ago by Banzato and Midoro (2006), who proposed a pyramidal stratified model of e-learning systems—determined by organizational, formative, practical and technological realities of the different contexts of education—that the way we see it, and with some modifications and updates, properly reflects the ways to conceive online distance education in its historical evolution, but also in its current organization, in their particular emphasis. The pyramid represents

a taxonomy in which the base-to-top trajectory entails turning to educational systems that are increasingly complex, including all the components of the previous systems.

1. **Model of education in self-learning**: This is a first level, inferior or base of the pyramid, using digitality in a sense of documents exchange; the technology provides support predominantly to access materials, providing files of structured and organized materials for self-learning, proposing static educational trajectories and instruments for self-evaluation of the educational process. In this case, the user interacts in an almost exclusive way with the content management system;
2. **Model of assisted learning**: A second level, of models of assisted learning, in which figures such as assistants, tutors and technological staff come into play, who interact with the participants, assisting them to take advantage of the materials (Constantino 2006b).
3. **Model of collaborative learning**: It is the third level; the highest one, constituting the top of the pyramid, in which the interaction mediated by digitality has a superior effect; true learning communities are generated with an effective collaboration that produces a shared construction of knowledge. The inferior levels have been proposed, but reconfigured and resignified. As Banzato and Midoro state (2006): "*Collaborative activities entail sharing tasks and the explicit intention of 'adding value'—to create something new or different through a deliberate and structured collaborative process, in contrast to a simple exchange of information or execution of instructions. A definition of collaborative learning could be the acquisition by individuals of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are the result of an interaction within a group that operates in a collaborative fashion to make a product, a service or a solution for a given group task. A successful collaboration plans some agreement about common goals and values, sharing individual competences to favor the group as a whole, the autonomy of those who are learning in the choice of who to work with and flexibility in the organization of the group. For an efficient collaboration or cooperation, there should be a real interdependence between the members of a group in the performance of a task, a determination for mutual help, a sense of responsibility for the group and its goals, and care should be given to the social and interpersonal skills in the development of group processes*" (p. 86).

In terms of curricular models, Jay Lemke (1994, 2005) was the first to foresee the openness and democratization of knowledge enabled by the Internet. Already in a 1994 paper, translated into Spanish and published in 2005, he warned about what he titled "*The Paradigm Wars in Education: Curriculum vs. Information Access*". It is surprising how Lemke could anticipate this problem in such a distinct way, at a time when the Web 1.0 was only just being constructed.

"*Individuals freely explore extensive multimedia databases, adapting their perceived needs and interests to the information available; transforming and summarizing this information to achieve particular social goals. Later, they or others evaluate the results of their work according to different functional criteria.*" (p. 20). This freedom of choice that Internet offers led him to maintain: "*From the perspective of*

the alternative learning paradigm of access to information, the obligatory curricular learning is as unnecessary as immoral" (p. 23).

Already in times of the Web 2.0, Constantino (2010a) he gave yet another twist to the ideas of J. Lemke and proposed the notion of an e-Curriculum, that clearly differentiates the notion (and practice) of the Curriculum in the Web; i.e. uploading and having the documents of a learning syllabus on a Web site. The new notion considers the Web proper as the source of the curriculum: "*The great change is summarized in the e-curriculum not being a curriculum on the Web, but the Web proper being the curriculum*" (p. 96). Research becomes the hub of the learning task, and curricular contents are not the only ones and mandatory for all students. There is an epistemological breakup at the basis of this proposal, which implies deeply reconsidering the role of teachers and their tutorial action. The Brunerian metaphor of cognitive "scaffolding" acquires a new sense, but it is not about helping students in a construction with fixed and already drawn blueprints, but to guide them in a design of significations that is made step by step, with just some main guidelines and not having the definitive blueprint drawn.

Along this line and more recently, Braasch et al. (2018) propose the Multiple Source Use (MSU) construct, in terms of the different sources of resources for learning and design that students (though not just them) investigate and use. In a wide sense they are defined as "[…] *an individual's ability to construct signification from multiple bodies of information through engagement in a broad range of processes.*" (p. 2). In a strict sense "[…] *MSU refers to an individual's propensity to attend to, represent, evaluate, and apply available or accessible metadata features embedded within or provide outside bodies of information* […]" (p. 2). The latter, a restricted idea, takes into account a notion that emerges precisely from the need of establishing the credibility of the information found in the Web: the notion of critical (multi)literacy (Constantino 2020). Digital literacy is not enough to cope with one of the most relevant problems: the issue of credibility of information, the validity of accessible knowledge. That is to say, what traits could be considered indicators; and what values, or configuration of values, show that the information provided by a given multimodal text is believable, reliable and/or valid. This problem is present and permeates all levels of education, from the middle years of primary level to university, both in traditional modalities and in new and flexible formats (MOOC, eCurriculum).

And here again, we can bring back the Brunerian expression of "going beyond the information given", as it acquires a renewed meaning: discovering the hallmarks or inferring the reasons by which the information provided by the Web is reliable, legitimate, creditable.

7 New Online Teaching and Learning Profiles

Considering what was discussed above, it is almost evident that the classical profiles of first-generation online education are inadequate today; although delivery models

of prefabricated content, with activities included, are still implemented, with teacher just only having to clarify ones or another, but generally without permission to decide about them.

However, the problem is which would be the best learning that could be achieved and what is necessary to achieve it. That is to say, what e-teacher profiles and online student profiles are necessary? In other words, here we do not tackle the consideration of minimum competences, or necessary and enough competences for different models of e-learning; but what is the best version of online education according to criteria of openness, autonomy and co-construction of knowledge (Constantino and Teijeiro 2016).

With regard to e-teachers, beyond the thorough repertoires of proposed competences by different scholars, they are teachers with expertise on their discipline, on the learning and teaching strategies of their discipline and the interdisciplinary activities that the former may generate or organize. This approach is based theoretically, on the paradigm of complexity (Morin and Pakman 1994), and practically on the availability of contents on the Web, that makes e-teachers deal with contributions by the students that are not necessarily disciplinarily focused (Banzato and Constantino 2008; Constantino 2005a). A multimodal communicative and discourse expertise, supplementary to the former, is fundamental to understand the ways of communication and generation of significations by university students, and to communicate in an effective manner, helping to construct knowledge in a shared way. At the foundation of both, a digital competence is found, not only in terms of function and seizing Learning Management Systems (LMS), but other virtual spaces and digital tools that can be used in an integrated teaching strategy for an open and ubiquitous learning.

It may be clear that this are non-conformist, innovative, flexible and curious teachers, with a "hunger for knowledge", and who ensure both the acquisition/appropriation of basic knowledge by students, as the possibilities of amplification and generation of unforeseen knowledge, whether incidental or that may respond to the interests of students. And evidently, these are experienced teachers. This could be controversial due to the scarcity of teachers with these characteristics and the relative abundance of novel teachers or those still learning. It is not an unsolvable problem, since it could be solved by configurations of teams of teachers and programs for the education of teachers, not mentioning reforms on the education based on the teachers.

In regard to students, we have to consider that already and from now on, we are dealing with centennials, and thus, we should take into account their generational characteristics (Benson and Jenny 2017; Crearie 2018). Particularly, digitality has been adopted as something natural in their lives, although it may not be of the academic type required by the world of scholars. In this sense, teachers should be digital scholars, according to the competences of the digital academic profession (Raffaghelli and Constantino 2017), and as we present later.

This essential and widely accepted digitality implies a natural disposition to a fluid movement between spaces, devices and digital tools, in agreement with the concept of transliteracy we have mentioned. This characteristic should be exploited by the e-teacher—in such a way as not to invade personal and group spaces with goals

other than education, and in a natural and not artificial fashion- by providing different spaces, formats, etc., interconnected in an appropriate manner for education aims, contents, learning activities; and none of these components of instructional design should be enclosed by rigid curricular criteria.

In a way, the profiles of teachers and students are similar, and with exchangeable roles. Even so with students that are just starting their education, considering that their lack of both basic and global disciplinary knowledge could be functionally replaced by questions and misconceptions that help their fellow students to reflect, to the professor to provide clarifications and examples, etc. This ideal does not respond to mass tendencies of university learning, nor universitisation of professional education in Latin America. For this, another model is necessary. We will discuss this in the conclusions. But, if university aims to keep its essence and identity, even in the online modality, it needs to adopt this model of profiles.

8 Digital, Open and Networked Scholarship: Competences and Professional Development for Teaching and Learning in an Open Context

This changing landscape described hitherto requires specific forms of academics' digital literacy; that is, a new set of professional skills to understand and manage information; to participate, engage, talk; and to create knowledge in digital, open and networked contexts (Goodfellow and Lea 2013). In fact, the barriers to technological uptake have been frequently put down to the academics' resistance to innovation, due both to intrinsic or extrinsic factors (Bacow et al. 2012; Ertmer et al. 2012; Mapuva 2009). However, there is also a growing debate on the evolution of scholarship towards what has been called "digital scholarship" (Pearce et al. 2010). More recently this debate has been enriched with the perspectives of open and networked scholarship, aligning with the changing social engagement with a web of abundance (Stewart 2015; Veletsianos 2015).

The need for reconsidering the academic profession has been an issue for research since Boyer's "new priorities for the professoriate" in the '90s (Boyer et al. 2015). Boyer pointed out that a new scholarship should be based on four functions: Discovering (creating new knowledge through research), Integration (interaction across disciplinary lines to construct new research approaches to social problems), Application (transacting with society to use academic knowledge), Teaching (using academic knowledge to educate future generations of practitioners and scholars). The Digital Scholarship's perspective (Weller 2011) shows that Boyer's 4 dimensions are being accelerated and transformed by: (a) openness in both science and research activities, as well as on teaching; (b) networking, as the new professional ways of collaboration across geographical and institutional frontiers based on the affordances provided by social networks and the Web 2.0. To this regard, good teaching is more and more integrated to research since the ways of communicating science through the Web

are changing to more pedagogical/usable approaches. We can take as example Open Data as Open Educational resources (Atenas et al. 2015), Living Labs and Science Co-creation (Dabaieh et al. 2018; Evans et al. 2015). However, in spite of the interconnectedness between digitality with openness and networking, digital practices rather follow traditional schemes (Goodfellow 2014). It seems that academics are ill-prepared for working in digital, open and networked contexts, and particularly to apply this knowledge to teaching (Bacow et al. 2012; Kirkup and Kirkwood 2005; Reed 2012).

Most training syllabi to boost academics' digital literacy do not reach the expected outcomes (Entwistle 2009; Meyer 2014). Poor design, lack of active professional learning with guided experimentations in authentic settings, lack of alignment with the institutional context, lack of recognition of achieved skills, are some of the causes (Stes et al. 2010). Therefore, the adoption of technologies by scholars should be approached integrating the several dimensions of scholarship; namely, discovery, integration, teaching and application. Specifically, digital scholarship should to be contextualized within the process of modernization of higher education, considering the real training needs of academic staff at the several stages of advancement of their careers. As an ultimate impact, this reflection could establish the foundation to analyze how professional development syllabi for academics could be designed and implemented.

The overwhelming information about faculty development on the area of teaching seems to be in contradiction with the fact, also criticized by Boyer, that doing research is the primary endeavor for scholars and the main element for careers' advancement. However, this over-representation of research or *discovery* in Boyer's terms also encompass a rather pragmatic approach where scholars learn through highly informal models where it is the expertise proper on the matter that guides the self-recognition of gaps in skills and the associated learning activities and resources required to fulfil the professional learning needs.

8.1 Understanding Faculty Development as the Key to Drive Innovative Practices in the Open Digital Scholarship

The topics covered in studies on faculty development regard mainly the effectiveness of professional development programs (Amundsen and Wilson 2012; Centra 1978; Simon and Pleschová 2013), analyzing not only the academics' perceptions and effective changes on their professional practices but also on students' learning (Guskey and Yoon 2009). Within this context, the problem of scholars' skills and *literacies* needing to work within digital spaces has become a specific area of interest (Keengwe et al. 2009). An impressive amount of literature has mainly analyzed faculty development for online teaching (Meyer 2014), exploring how to overcome the barriers and enablers of e-learning (Singh and Hardaker 2014). Recently, frameworks for

professional development relating to open education have been proposed (Nascimbeni and Burgos 2016). However, the majority of studies on faculty development in general and on the area of online teaching have been criticized by the lack of theoretical or conceptual frameworks on professional learning underpinning practice (Webster-Wright 2009), with few exceptions citing adult learning theories like those of transformative learning by Mezirow, andragogy by Knowles, or reflective practice by Argyris and Schon (Amundsen and Wilson 2012; Meyer 2014) Moreover, the *outcome* vs. *process* approach in the reviewed literature has been uneven, with some studies focusing on skills' acquisition or students' achievements as proof of effectiveness (Bahar-Ozvaris et al. 2004; Cole et al. 2004), and others focusing on the process of active professional learning as part of changing practices proper; but also modifying the professional and organizational context, considering academics as social and situated learners (Boud 1999; Cox 2004).

Moreover, for Amundsen and Wilson (2012) the right questions to address faculty development are, "*How are educational development practices designed?*" and, "*What is the thinking underpinning the design of educational development practice?*" (Amundsen and Wilson 2012, p. 91). We should consider at this point that the lack of a vision able of answering these two questions is the main problem, not only to design a program for professional learning, but also to the achievements that this program envisages as part of a broader process of change relating the sociocultural context where professional learning takes place. As Evans explained, *based on the examination of many interpretations, it may be argued that professionalism is constituted largely of professional culture; but evidently, it is also something more. The consensus of interpretation suggests that professionalism goes beyond professional culture by delineating the content of the work carried out by the profession, as reflected in accepted roles and responsibilities, key functions and remits, range of requisite skills and knowledge, and the general nature of work-related tasks. Whilst professional culture may be interpreted as shared ideologies, values and general ways of and attitudes to working […] professionalism seems generally to be seen as the identification and expression of what is required and expected of members of a profession* (Evans 2008, p. 7).

Professional development requires hence, the acknowledgement of a professional culture within an institutional culture of development, as a dynamic and lifelong learning process of the individual towards a community. This way of conceiving professional learning has as practical consequence that we cannot consider only isolated, formal training activities. Instead, professional development is based on complex systems considering the following dimensions:

1. **Frameworks of competences and scenarios of expertise** with middle stages of development (from novice to expert), that are closely connected not only with the developmental processes within the organization but also the society;
2. **Institutional strategies and policies** connected to developmental processes within the organization, that acknowledge the existence of embedded professional communities with their values, identity and practices (Vescio et al. 2008; Wenger 1999);

3. **Environments, resources and activities** that taking into consideration this organizational background enable professional learners to self-direct their own learning interests, opening to opportunities to reflect and have these efforts recognized by a system (Dirckinck Homfeld et al. 2005; Pataraia et al. 2013);
4. **Showcase areas**, namely, the possibility of showing the concrete results of professional learning: if it is connected to concrete processes to innovate practices, it should lead to new products, reflections, ideas. In the case of teaching, this is clearly connected to the models of action research, where design-based experiments are conducted in order to support experiential learning on specific teaching techniques.

The complex setting required to supporting scholars in their endeavor to understand the new learning scenarios, environments and tools; also, the new phenomena brought to class by the students could be addressed by the concept of professional *learning ecologies.*

A learning ecology is a set of environments, resources, instruments and opportunities for interaction found in physical or virtual spaces that provide opportunities for learning (Barron 2006). It is along the interaction with these resources and activities, while making sense of this activity, that learners acquire new skills and knowledge; furthermore, they may also have insights on their own learning process and the way they interact with the learning ecology (van den Beemt and Diepstraten 2016). Bronfenbrenner (1979) adopted the concept to explain processes of human development. While explaining the concept, this author explicitly referred to the development of competences to make use of resources and environments generating the learning ecology. While the idea of availability of resources for professional learning is not new, the way in which this is implemented for faculty development in the context of open learning could be innovative. Esposito et al. (2013) adopted the approach to analyze "PhD activities" to self-regulate their learning as future scholars. In the case of teaching in the *Open Digital*, scholars should be put in the condition of reflecting and becoming more aware of their own motivational, emotional, ethical and deontological issues that often block full engagement with digitality and openness. As a matter of fact, projects emphasizing group work in institutionally coached solutions where the students participate actively to show their new learning needs or the ecological spaces they use to navigate/engage with, could enrich the professional learning ecologies of academics.

9 Going Beyond the Information Given: Conclusion and "Given Future"

By recapitulating the questions, contexts and tendencies approached in this chapter, it is evident that they deserve to be more deeply investigated to advance and improve hybrid and online higher education, contributing to the education of university professors and of course, improving the quality of the processes of teaching and learning of

higher education. In this way, we propose to transcend the unilateral and conventional transmission of knowledge, as well as prescribed curricula and the omnipotence of the written word, and explore dialogic forms of teaching with curricula open to the multimodal discursivity of the Web. E-teachers, but also students need to be trained for the multimodal dialogic learning in hybrid and online environments, open to the knowledge on the Web, to the cooperative work in networks and the transformations entailed by the conversion into a digital academic profession.

Maybe one of the biggest challenges that higher education presents nowadays is related to the sociopolitical demands for the universalization of higher education. Mass education, in terms of educating thousands of students with pre-designed and automatized/robotic software, does not match the instructional models of online education that we have included in this chapter, on which the didactic relation with teachers and peers is essential. The political goal of higher education for everyone, which is revealed as a trend in many Latin American countries, uses technology with automated systems as a more affordable way to achieve it. It would be a flexible automation, or adjusted to each student, an adjustment possible with artificial intelligence and the learning-machine jointly with cybernetic instructional designs. The possibilities of techno-digital development do not guarantee per se, a *didactic* adjustment (teaching) and a *mathetic* one (learning), so its indiscriminate implementation may not achieve the planned educational goals, and could even have undesirable effects. This statement does not imply being against these technological advancements, but to clarify their limitations and the need to determine the proper conditions for their use in online education. The apparent paradox is that postulating a digital education does not necessarily lead to think of it as an "industrial" education, but rather a "handcrafted" education, with digital means and scenarios. Obviously, the globalized sociopolitical changes that have robotization as their banner, and the replacement of human workers by humanoid robots will harshly condition the learning of next generations, and particularly academic learning. Maybe, in this case and with this overwhelming prognosis, now it is the occasion to go beyond this "given future" and to rethink and recreate higher education in a human key.

The other great challenge is precisely related to the transformation of Latin American e-teachers according to the parameters of digital scholarship. For this, it is necessary to create the institutional conditions enabling a full development of all the functions inherent to (digital) scholarship, and not just some of them, as in the evident case of teaching. An academic acknowledgement and empowerment is required for the faculty in general, and not just an elite of professors in an elite of universities.

Finally, the Brunerian expression "to go beyond the information given" in the different connotations we have considered in this chapter, is a driving idea that impregnates all the dimensions of online education, coloring with humanity all the rather colorless aspects of inappropriate or limited uses of digital technology. Because to go beyond what is given, is the driving force to want to know more deeply and thoroughly the world around us, our history and our cultures. A desire with roots in human freedom, as it is the goal of education, both face-to-face and online.

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When Online Education Helps to Cross (Symbolic) Borders: An Empirical Study in an Argentinian University

María Fernanda González

1 Introduction

The ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) are introducing and causing changes in the way of teaching and learning, of shaping knowledge and providing access to higher education to groups which were traditionally excluded from these educative opportunities (Lupion Torres and Rama 2010).

The advantages of incorporating ICTs into education proposals have been sufficiently analysed (Coll and Monereo 2008; Moore 2012). Currently, many education policies are based on the use of online platforms in order to expand the classroom zone and, in this way, be able to provide higher education to different professional and social groups (Cook 2016).

In a political and institutional dimension, the education proposals mediated by ICT are creating education opportunities for populations which have traditionally had restricted access to higher education. In this sense, the proposals of *blended learning*, for example, are modalities to which non-traditional students usually resource (Merrill 2012; Padilla-Carmona 2012; Padilla-Carmona et al. 2016) as working adults who want to continue their university education, people who live far from big urban areas, technicians who want to enlarge and improve their university knowledge, etc. Also, the blended learning proposals usually make ongoing training processes in health and education possible (Al-Shorbaji et al. 2015; González et al. 2014) since they combine some traditional in-person classes with instances of virtual campus learning.

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However, not much has been written about the subjective and identitary aspects which may arise while adult students are getting involved in university education experiences mediated by ICT.

In this chapter, we will claim that education environments mediated by ICT provide learning opportunities throughout the lifetime and, at the same time, offer support to processes of self-construction and reconstruction. From this point of view, the virtual education or blended learning proposals would be not only learning and teaching spaces in educational contexts but also spaces for subjectivity construction (González et al. 2014; Ligorio et al. 2017, 2020).

2 The Participation in Blended Learning Activities as Spaces of Self-Construction and Learning

From the perspective of the cultural psychology it is understood that during their development, people are included in different contexts, either formal or informal educational contexts, working, leisure and family contexts, etc. which hybridize and which draw particular trajectories (Mele and Marsico 2019; Tateo 2019; Rosa and González 2013; Rubio-Jiménez and González 2018) The experiences provided by these practice contexts produce changes both in an epistemological sense—about what people learn about the world—and in an ontological dimension—what people may be or become (González 2017; González and Miotto, in press; Ligorio 2010; Wortham 2006).

Educational contexts are, at the same time, areas of learning and self-construction as asserted by Bruner (1997, p. 5) when stating that the culture shapes the mind thanks to the mediation of the cultural tools, which intervene in the understanding of and knowing about the world and about ourselves. From this point of view, the tools provided by cultures mediate the way we think, solve problems, find creative solutions, etc. (Gabucio 2008; Ligorio et al. 2015; Marsico 2018; Salomon 1992).

In the same stance, Ligorio (2010) and Ligorio et al. (2017) understands that identity and learning have a dialogic relationship. Identity is represented by different I-positions, which would be like different voices (coming from different settings) that articulate among each other and form a more or less integrated conglomerate. Ligorio (2010) claims that education can provide scope for dynamic innovations of the *I-positions* and, therefore, of the identity of the self. The author points out that these changes might be due to experiencing meaningful events during educational life, a reorganization of the I-position hierarchies through the assessment of the 'others', or to the combination of separated I-positions within a new integrated positioning. All these identitary innovations would have a dynamic trace in the self own identity and would be translated in the way how these I-positions are strategically appearing in different situations and actions during the educational life of each person.

Conversely, Iannaconne et al. (2013) understand that students' involvement in social interactions which occur in the educational life shapes an educational self. The educational self is a self-regulatory instance of the self which is used to manage the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions anytime a person is involved in educational contexts (Iannaconne et al. 2013, p. 222). By their involvement in educational activities, the learners are internalising a way of seeing themselves, in the double game of appropriation and resistance to (and with) the cultural meanings arising from the other cultural socials (parents, teachers, etc.). The authors understand that the educational self provides sense to the multiplicity of identities which are involved in the participation in educational experiences. In this way, the educational self gathers different voices or identities which are at stake when taking part in educational scenes in the role of teacher, parent, student, etc. Thus, it is a dynamic and dialogic self which can gather different voices that account for internal positioning (Hermans 2001) with respect to oneself ("me as student", "me as parent") or with respect to others ("in relation to my friends"; "in relation to my partner", etc.).

The authors understand that the educational self (Marsico and Tateo 2018) is constructed mainly during childhood and adolescence, a moment in life marked by compulsory education (at least in most Western countries) and by the appropriation of symbolic resources necessary for shared life. However, the educational self remains as a legacy of those years and is reactivated with each new instance of participation in activities in educational contexts.

In Iannaconne et al. research (2013) this reactivation takes place, for example, when parents go to the school in order to get their children's assessment reports, in contexts of school-family meetings. In that setting, parents recall their school experiences and a number of valorisations and emotions linked to the school as an institution emerge. In the voices of the parents, the school may appear as highly valued because it provides tools for a better future and it can trigger emotions such as nostalgia, regret for having quitted the studies, etc. Returning to school life in the position of parents seems to recall more those affective and appraising aspects than the disciplinary knowledge acquired at school. This happens because school trajectories also mark the construction of a moral and emotional universe which is included in the regulatory frameworks of each group or society.

In this context, learning environments mediated by ICT can be understood also as learning spaces and spaces for identity construction (Amenduni and Ligorio 2017; Arvaja 2015; Kaptelinin and Nardi 2006; Talamo and Ligorio 2001). The ICTs are a type of technology which offers conditions for the internalization of new ways of knowing and relating to the world (Gonzalez-Patiño and Guitart 2014) This is what Wertsch (2002) means when he claims that the ICTs change and transform the human behaviour both in their quantitative aspects (for example, effectiveness and speed of the actions) and in their qualitative aspects, since they allow new processes and objectives to appear throughout human behaviour. This author points out the changes and consequences triggered by the usage of ICTs in the social, cultural and also cognitive processes. Among these we may mention the promotion of meta-reflexive processes in virtual settings of distributed problem-based learning, or dPBL. According to Wertsch (2002), the virtual settings encourage collaborative and group

work, compel specificity and foster the expression of a personal viewpoint, while creating opportunities for dialogical interaction and asynchronous interchange. In this way, the new mediation ways which characterize collaborative virtual settings, the asynchronous written communication, etc., build the conditions for key properties for social communication and for mental processes.

Also, Kaptelinin and Nardi (2012) point out that there is a specific way of human behaviour with computers (Human-Computer Activity) which is not characterized only by interaction. In this case, the authors consider that the activity mediated by devices (such as computers) denotes establishing contact between people and the devices and between a person and the others (by using these devices). In this sense, it is necessary to identify the purposes of using the computer in each case and how they are related to the purposes of other groups or people. The authors understand that the computer-mediated activity can be seen as a way of distributed cognition since knowledge is presented and represented distributed in people and artefacts and as a way of action situated in everyday activities contexts.

Pérez Gómez (2012) reinforces this concept when he stands for a multidimensional conception of the ICTs which upholds the instrumental aspect:

> *Intelligent technologies like the Internet cannot be considered as mere vehicles which transport the information, since by widening and making the access process more complex, processing and expressing the information and the knowledge, they substantially modify the way how the individual constructs him/herself, understands the context and understands him/herself. Human beings design the software, the platform and the nets that they finally programme and configure their own lives.* (Pérez Gómez 2012, p. 55. Our translation)

Nowadays, these processes are reinforced by the use of mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, laptop computers, etc.) which are creating an ecosystem characterized by hyper-connectivity, the immediate communication and the possibility of producing and sharing information instantly. As stated by Gonzalez-Patiño and Guitart (2014), a mobile-centric society is being consolidated. In it, 'television, computers and mobile phones are media that regulate human behaviour, social relationships, routines and lifestyles, teaching and learning situations, and help to make up the psychological architecture of people' (Gonzalez-Patiño and Guitart 2014, p. 68).

The way of conceptualizing the ICTs allows us to consider them as powerful cultural tools which mediate and transform human behaviours, in the double dimension of learning and self-construction.

Which would be the distinctive features of self-construction in the case of adult students who start their university studies in blended learning environments? Participation in new learning environments will produce changes in other current positioning, such as the fact of being parents, workers, professionals, etc.? How are changes recorded in relation to the new activities, scenes and relationships with others which may appear when going back to study, and by doing so in blended learning settings?

3 An Exploratory Study with Adult University Students Within the Health Sciences

During the last years, the number of university offers mediated by ICTs has increased in Argentina. Universities have enlarged their training offers and have expanded their classrooms reaching to populations which require more and better tools for their performance as professionals and as citizens. In this way, a new university education reality characterized by a space-time breakdown of the in-person class, and the possibility of training those who have access difficulties to higher education emerges: adult workers, women with professional and familiar responsibilities, etc.

This research has been performed with a group of students who were starting their university studies for Surgical Technologist within a bimodal or semi-distance programme. This method combines classroom attendance (bimonthly) with on-going training through the virtual campus (Moodle 3.0) and as such, it can be characterized as *blended learning.*

Students lacked important previous learning experience in virtual settings. For this reason, a subject was created in order to teach them how to use the virtual campus (forum usage, sending of tasks, answering questionnaires, etc.). Besides, in this subject students reflected on students' motivations to take a university course of studies in virtual settings; time self-organization and self-study strategies were taught and everyday changes implied in taking up the studies were identified; it was analysed how to juggle studies, duties and every day activities (family, work, leisure, etc.).

Most of the students work in health institutions performing specific tasks in the operating room, health services administration, etc. Besides, most of them live in small towns or villages in the south of Argentina—an area known as "Patagonia", characterized by low-density population (3.1 inhabitants per km^2), vast land extensions and hard winters, with heavy snow which, more than often, results in cities being isolated by the snowed roads.

All these result in difficulties presented by these students to attend regular classes in a traditional university centre and thus, they choose virtual and semi-distance courses in order to be able to go on with their studies.

The purpose of the study has been to explore the ways how students interpret and are represented in the new activity of studying in virtual settings within their everyday activities: work, leisure, family life, etc. The aim of this research is to produce material which could help analyse self-defining changes which take place—or may take place—when an adult becomes a student again, in this case, in a virtual setting. Following the theoretical frameworks presented, we presume there will be changes and hybridizations between different I-positions, (me-as-student, me-as-worker, me-as-parent/child, etc.) which will produce, at the same time, identitary changes and changes on how they see themselves.

Fifty-five Argentine students were enrolled in the study. They belonged to both sexes and their ages ranged from 25 to 55. All of them have technical training and work as surgical technologists in different health institutions. The course lasts for

two years and results in the granting of a bachelor's university degree as Surgical Technologist. Most of them live in small towns or villages far from big urban areas.[1]

The research was framed within the subject known as "*Introducción al Estudio en Entornos Virtuales*" (Introduction to Studying in Virtual Environments). This is the first subject students take as part of their course of studies. During the one-month course, different tools from the virtual campus (forums, tasks, questionnaires, etc.) were introduced to the students and it was suggested to reflect on what it means to go back to study, the cognitive skills and the motivation needed to successfully do a course of studies in virtual settings. The subject started with one face-to-face class with the students and the professor in charge of the subject and the research presented herein. The rest of it included tasks in a virtual classroom (in Moodle 3.0) performed during four weeks.

In the first week, students had to introduce themselves in a virtual forum, mentioning their names, place of origin, current occupation and the reasons why they chose bimodal method for their course of studies. During the second week, students were suggested to organize their study time by analysing a timetable where they should include their working time, leisure time, commuting time, family time, etc. During the third week, they had to perform a task based on self-learning and self-study. Lastly, during the fourth week, they were asked to do the final task which is included as part of the material used in the empirical study of this chapter.

The methodological approach of this study draws on the multimethod approach used by Bagnoli (2004) and Mieto et al. (2016) who combine techniques for the elaboration of visual and narrative material within qualitative research. In this way, we have made use of a combination of elaboration of images and texts, from which the students will represent their current everyday life and how they combine or juggle the new activity of studying and the activities related to their work, leisure, family, etc. The images could include pictures taken by themselves or by another person, as well as drawings or illustrations. There was no limit as to the number of images to be used. Also, they had to write a short text to accompany the images justifying their production. Both the text and the image(s) were sent in one file (Word or pdf format) as "homework" by using the virtual classroom of the subject.

These productions were organized following the alphabetical order of the students' names and were later gathered in only one general file in order to ease their technical treatment. Later, several researchers analysed and examined the images, read and analysed the short texts with the aim of building and discussing a number of descriptive categories following a proceeding similar to the grounded theory.

In this way, a number of categories were defined considering the production way of the images, the contents of the images and the texts.

In the first case, sole images were distinguished from collages of images (Table 1). In the second case, there were four analytical categories: three of them aimed at analysing the activities, scenes and the others who appear in the texts and images;

[1]The city of Cipolletti—where the face-to-face encounters of this course of studies took place—is about 1300 km from the capital city of Argentina, Buenos Aires.

Table 1 Category of analysis of the production manner of the images

Category	
Sole image	It is a sole image in which several elements are combined (activities, people, scenes, symbols, etc.)
Collages	They are several images assembled, linked or somehow connected with the aim of showing the variety of activities, scenes, people, etc.

Table 2 Category of analysis of images and texts

Categories	Image	Text
Activity	What is the student doing in the images? Or what activities are being performed in the images?	Activity explanations
Scenes and objects	Places, spaces, objects which appear in the images	Description and explanation of these places, spaces and objects.
The others	Who appear in the image?	How are the people in the images named/introduced?
Moral/emotional assessment		Expressions which denote a moral/emotional assessment of the activities, people, or the authors themselves, etc.

Table 3 Frequency of image production manner

Sole image	58%
Collage	42%

the fourth category included only the texts and was linked to a dimension of moral and emotional assessment (Table 2).

In relation to how the images were produced, there were two clearly differentiated modes, but which are usually rather similar (Table 3).

The students have produced sole images—which represent in only one production a wide variety of meanings—and have also made collages which include more than one image to represent different activities, situations, etc.

The first group includes productions which summarize in one image different activities, scenes, etc. They are photographs taken in such a way as to gather different elements within a common-sense framework (Fig. 1). As can be seen in Table 3, 58% of the photographs form this group. In these images, their authors aimed at showing the variety of activities they perform through a visual synthesis which is strengthened in the texts. In other cases, the image has not been intentionally composed but has been chosen because—according to the students—it depicts a situation which summarizes the integration between study life and everyday life. In these cases, the images play the role of portraying a representative moment in everyday life (Fig. 2).

"In this pictures I wanted to show my current reality. The hand of my 92-year-old father, with whom I live… I am his only child and he is always by my side. My hand in a surgical glove refers to my work in the hospital and is linked to the beginning of this distance—learning course of studies, thus the computer showing the start-up screen. The clock represents the time, which goes by really fast and is not enough to complete everyday activities. And the theatre leaflet shows a play we have performed with a group I used to belong to. I'm currently voluntarily working as theatre coordinator in a group of users, family and friends of the Mental Health Service in the El Bolsón Hospital where I work as Surgical Technician"

Fig. 1 First example of sole image

This picture represents part of my reality. I want to represent in it (as much as possible) how my life is since I started this course of studies. The computer [is] on the table where it has never been before. I have, as always, the unconditional support of my mother who is with her "mate". I also have the support of my daughters who provide the technological information. Every personal undertaking includes family support. We would surely be able to move forward alone but it would not be the same because the family love is a powerful fuel.

Fig. 2 Second example of sole image

In Fig. 1 there is a clock, a computer, a theatre programme, two hands but one is wearing a surgical glove. The text which comes with the image strengthen the idea of integration between different elements within only one frame.

In this case, the student points out the incorporation of the new activity of studying in *blended learning context* to her other professional activities (represented by the surgical glove), personal activities (her love for the theatre, represented by the theatre programme) and family life (the company of her elder father). As can be observed, there is an intentional and creative composition of the image from which we can make out different positionings that appear simultaneously. These positionings derived from the involvement of the student in different activities and scenes seem to be harmoniously intertwined, only tensed due to the time required to perform them which seem to be "not enough".

The following image is also a sole image which shows an everyday scene where several elements are also represented.

In this case, the picture shows a typical scene in the student's life. She is studying in front of the computer and has a notebook next to her, while her mother gives her *mate*[2] and her daughter helps her with the technology. This sole image gathers several elements. On the one hand, the family dining table has been transformed into a study place. It usually is a place where family shares lunch time but, in this case, the family life has been transformed into a scene for other activities, in this case, studying, checking the campus on the computer, etc. This reorganization also affects the shared activities. Here, leisure time represented by the *mate* mingles with the activity related to studying as a way of representing the mother's support and company towards her daughter. In the same way, the student's daughter provides the support needed for those tasks related to technology. We may suppose that this double reorganization also includes the emotional and affective support provided by the "others"; this support is mentioned by the student in the last paragraph of the text. For her, family love is the fuel needed to support the personal undertaking of restarting the studies. Finally, it is interesting to highlight the idea of coexistence of three different women belonging to three different generations in the same image, sharing the same activity. In this way, the activity of studying also becomes an intergenerational bridge.

The second group of productions includes collages, i.e. a series of photographs put together or assembled. It gathers 42% of the productions presented by the students.

In these cases, the students have chosen to select between 2 and 6 images each of which shows different activities, scenes or people. In Fig. 3 for example, there are two images showing working activities (a surgery taking place in a surgical room and a surgical table) and a third image where the student is with her young son in her house in front of a computer checking the virtual campus tasks.

As can be observed, there is a certain sequence expressed in the images showing different settings, activities and people, which are not visually integrated. The student in announcing in the texts the different consecutive positionings in her everyday life:

[2]Popular infusion in Argentina.

These pictures represent my weekly working activities, assisting in the surgery room and performing tasks required by the surgery service where I spend an important part of the day (…)

And this picture represents my position as a mother and as a student, both activities complementing each other. This is a representation of my everyday life after work (…)

When I took this picture I was searching for cartoons so as to entertain my little boy in order to be able to watch the videos uploaded to the virtual classroom.

Fig. 3 First example of collage

as a professional in the surgical room and her complementary activities as a mother, student and housewife.

In Fig. 4, the sequence is repeated and there is a combination of activities, work-related settings, studies and leisure activities.

In general, the sole images seem to show certain elaboration way as a synthesis: in one image different scenes, activities and the mentioning of other people appear simultaneously. In these cases, one image gathers—here and now—different positions which seem to coexist and to have combined in a more or less harmonic fashion. On the other hand, the collage images could be seen as sequenced positionings, linked more to their own practices and situations.

However, in all the productions there is a hybridization between the activities and so, between different *I-position*s: there are mothers who study and, at the same time, take care of their children; there are students who also work and workers who also study. Besides, some sceneries change according to the activity being performed: the family table becomes a space to study, the work breaks are used to visit the campus, check some materials, etc.

Hello! In this collage I want to show how a day in my life is (…). I have time to do my job, to help as delegate in the roller skate school [of my daughter], to travel to the competitions (…) Then, there is no problem if I check the campus during my free time at work [because] I work rotating shifts and because the scheduled surgeries are done only during the morning shift"

Fig. 4 Second example of collage

On the other hand, the analysis of the content of the images and the texts shows results which enrich this first appraisal. In most of the images the activities represented are varied, going from studying, working, doing sports, travelling, to attending family meetings, etc.

As regards the scenes and objects, it could be observed that they also show a wide variety of correspondence with the activities. Thus, the images show pictures of the surgery room next to others where there are Patagonian landscapes, house interiors (living-rooms, kitchens), and also leisure spaces such as restaurants, parties, sport clubs, ballrooms, etc. Only 8 images exclusively show spaces linked to working activities (clinics, hospital or surgery room) and only ten exclusively show the family house. There are 23 images where there explicitly is some object linked to the studying activity, mostly computers but also written notes or printed didactic materials.

As regards the people who appear in the images, the wide range of representations begins to be reduced. In 76% of the images the family is represented either by the

partner, the children, the parents, grandparents, etc. In some of these images there are also workmates and friends.

As for the moral assessments and emotions, they appear spontaneously and very clearly in the texts provided by the students. In the instructions given for this activity, an assessment of the studying activity or of the kind of support received was not explicitly required. It could be supposed that the sole activity of performing the task (choosing pictures, designing the images) was the basis for these appraisals to emerge and be revealed in the texts. In 65% of the texts, moral assessment and emotions were observed. Within this group, most of the students present the restarting of their studies as an exemplary activity for themselves and for the others, mainly for younger members of the family (their own children, nephews and nieces, etc.). At the same time, they acknowledge their gratitude for the support, care and energy provided by their families.

In this sense, the activity of taking up a university course of studies in a bimodal programme appears to be considered as an effort, a challenge, that far from being solved exclusively in the individual sphere, it takes a bigger dimension which includes the family group involving agreements with and support from the whole family. The family, in many cases, is the engine which helps sustain the effort, and at the same time, its destiny, since doing a university course of studies implies a financial improvement besides the symbolic recognition within the professional community itself.

The students' own voice clearly shows this emotional and appraising dimension:

> *Analysing the image I realise that I'm teaching my daughter a very important lesson that is to study and go on training. What an important task! Such a great value!* (student 6).

> *This image* [it is a picture of the student with a child] *represents the most important engine I have in my life, the driving force that inspires me to go on making the effort each and every day, in order to achieve my dreams, grow and progress both at the personal level and at the professional level. Today, I'm excited about studying again (…) because things are not easy but they are more bearable when you have the support of your love ones, and when you do them with love, dedication, passion, care and the hope of building a better future. For this reason, I am thankful for the opportunity of being able to take this distance learning course. I believe it is an effort that is worthy.* (student 12)

> *These learning processes cannot take place without the personal commitment to study (…). My family and friends' support boosted my desire for progressing at the personal level and for growing day after day.* (student 13)

> *This picture depicts my everyday reality* [it is a photograph of a family walk]. *My family is the frame, they are who support me in every project I undertake, both at the working and personal level. When I told them that I wanted to do this course of studies they were the first to be excited about it and to tell me "Yes! You have to do it". This year the four of us* [he refers to his wife and two children] *are very happy. There is a saying which goes "strength comes in numbers" that is why we plan everything together and decisions are taken together. This makes me feel enthusiastic about growing personally in order to be able to give them a better future. It makes me really happy to be able to go on growing and have this opportunity of studying and improving in this nice profession I've chosen for my life.* (student 27)

The extracts chosen show the value students grant to the family support as a key factor for their continuity and success in their studies. At the same time, their own

studying activity makes them place themselves in the position of "role model" for their children and other members of the family. Moreover, the fact that they are taking a university course of studies introduces a new temporal horizon. Being able to finish the course of studies becomes a target which the student and all the family aim for and thus, it becomes a desired future. The current actions, represented in terms of efforts and eagerness of personal development, take a greater meaning when connected to the desired aim: to get the wanted degree.

4 Conclusions

In the students' productions, the new activity of studying in virtual settings appears included within the frame of their everyday activities: work, leisure, family life, etc. Participation in a new activity implies a reorganization of the activities being performed before that. However, as has been observed in the students' productions, this reorganization affects not only them but also their family life (the incorporation of the help provided by the family, the reusing of home spaces, etc.), working life (intertwined spaces, working and studying activities) and leisure environment (with the possibility of checking the campus during their free time, etc.).

All these shows a kind of dislocation of the act of studying: you can study and learn in a wide variety of scenes and time spaces, surrounded by people who exert their influence and offer their help. In this way, it can be observed that there is a hybridization of spaces for the different practices: between working and university spaces (represented by studying situations shared with the surgical services, etc.), between studying spaces and the activity of caring for others (the simultaneousness between studying and being at home surrounded by the family, or taking care of a child), etc.

The university studies appear integrated in scenes of the everyday life next to the family, work, leisure, etc. Far from the typical image of the student sitting in the university classroom, our research shows students who are portrayed in their homes, studying while supervising school tasks of their children or taking care of a family member while revising their tasks in a mobile device, or they appear combining the activity of studying with the activity of commuting to work and other everyday activities.

In this way, different displacements are taking place and there is even a deletion of the borderline between traditionally well-limited spaces: educational, working, familiar spaces, etc. These displacements of borderlines between these spaces are encouraged by the use of technology—the so-called mobile-centric society—and they are going to have an impact in the way people study, learn and link to the reality and they build an image of themselves.

As regards the changes and hybridizations among different I-positions and the way how they see themselves, this research shows a wide variety of positionings among which the ones that take a moral direction are highlighted. In these cases, self-positionings appear loaded with social values, the students make efforts, fight

for their objectives, study hard in order to become better professionals and better persons.

In this way, the positionings are varied and are part of the self-identification processes which combine the occupation, family and university studies.

Emotions and moral appraisals transmitted in the texts appear linked to the activity of studying, assessed as a role model for their children and younger members of the family and the support that the family provides in order to continue the course of studies.

In this way, it can be asserted that studying with ICTs is not only to have access to new educational activities but also to expand the ways for identitary constructions by means of the way how each person sees him/herself and of the image the others have of the new student.

Moreover, the act of studying introduces a new temporal horizon towards which the present action is oriented and the past actions are re-signified. The future also appears linked to the appraisals, what they want to show to the others in terms of their wishes for future performance: to be a better professional, someone who is capable of studying and working at the same time, etc.

In this sense, this research has allowed us to get to know the concrete ways how these students travel through this educative experience which also transforms them, creating new spaces for learning and for personal development.

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Affect as a Catalyzer of Students' Choice of Learning Environments

Voicing the Students Who Opt for in-Person University Courses

María Gabriela Di Gesú

1 Introduction

The emergence and development of information technology have led to a symbolic mutation (Dussel and Quevedo 2010) in the way individuals perform their daily activities. The internet has become a symbolic place where subjects can date people, make friends, share their experience, attend meetings with people who are living hours or days behind or ahead of their times. The internet has brought about a process of deterritorialization that has not only implied the expansion of geographical borders (Castells 2000) but also the symbolic boundaries of the educational institutions. Today, around the dinner table, members of a household can simultaneously consume different cultural products that were impossible to juxtapose just a decade ago. In this new family picture, while a member of the family attends a university class, some other is watching a rock concert taking place at the same moment, or another is at work. Although they share a physical setting, they are virtually in different spheres. The pervading use of smartphones has enabled being symbolically far apart while physically together. Social media can profile individuals' habits and so commuting and waiting time have become leisure time bubbles (Igarza 2010) filled with online activities, readings, or music suggested by newsfeed.

From a historical point of view, universities have been considered as sacred institutions that construct academic knowledge within their walls. Traditional university classes have followed the same school grammar since ancient times, with students and scholars gathering in rooms to lecture and study at a fixed schedule during a fixed term.

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One of the aims of higher education is to help individuals acquire disciplinary knowledge and build capacities (UNESCO 1994, 1998). Universities are expected to foster attitudes, interests, and values that can subsidize the development of students' learning autonomy towards ongoing learning. Literature anywhere has proposed that online learning could be seen as a catalyzer that could bridge students with autonomous lifelong learning by fostering a self- regulated learning behavior.

The spread of the internet in the mid-1990s has contributed to the development of asynchronous learning networks (ALN) as a follow up step or subset of distance learning. In higher education, ALN encompasses fully online classes in which students and instructors co-construct knowledge mostly asynchronously, although some synchronous tools may be used. The wealth of digital resources has challenged university systems with new demands. Not only is there a call for new innovative curricula or alternative learning pathways, but also different content delivery models such as online, blended or distance learning, or even open education. Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and Open Education Resources (OERs) have been seen as flexible alternatives to help expand the educational offer with life-long learning experiences while decreasing educational costs. We do not analyze them in this chapter.

The development of online learning can be traced to mid- 1980 (Hiltz 1986). Since then, a myriad of applications, online tools, and devices has contributed to expanding access to information and the way users can construct knowledge. This phenomenon has created the illusion that individuals would prefer learning online instead of attending in-person classes.

However, teaching-learning online seems to have not delivered its promises. In our study, we describe an online academic program at the University of General Sarmiento (UNGS). This institution is in a suburban area in the northwest of Buenos Aires. In 2008, the Foreign Language Area (FLA) started a research project to implement the online modality for the pathway Reading Comprehension in English (RCE). RCE consists of three courses (RCE 1, RCE 2, and RCE 3) and is delivered across the Social and Humanities curriculum at UNGS. Since the project started, students' registration in online classes has grown significantly. However, after 11 years, the number of students signing up for the in-person classes still outnumbers the online enrollment. The following dialogue usually takes place in the FLA office.

Student (ST):	*No hay vacantes en Inglés Lecto 2*. (There are no vacancies left in the RCE 2 class).[1]
Instructor (I):	*¿Por qué no te sumas al curso virtual?* (Why don't you join an online class?)
ST:	*No quiero estudiar virtual*. (I don't want to study online).
I:	*¿Por qué?* (Why?).
ST:	*No sé. Tengo miedo* (I don't know. I'm afraid).
I:	*¿De qué tenés miedo?* (What are you afraid of?).
ST:	*No sé. No sé. Tengo miedo* (I don't know. I don't know. I'm afraid).

[1]The verbatim comments are written in Spanish. The author has translated them into English for this work.

The recurrence of this exchange has triggered this qualitative study. We aimed to collect and analyze students' narratives explaining their reasons for deciding on in-person classes when a parallel online course is delivered. After a thorough description of the case study, we introduce the methodology implemented to collect the narratives. The analysis of their narratives enables the emergence of five themes that were present in the students' recounts. In our attempt to understand the phenomenon, we could see that literature on this topic grounded on a cultural psychology perspective was scarce. Therefore, we built a theoretical framework to help analyze the case. Verbatim comments are written in the subjects' language, i.e., Spanish, and translated for this work.

2 Describing the Case

In Argentina, public universities are free-tuition, state-funded institutions. Admission is unrestricted, and they are mostly populated with part-time students who usually combine study with work and family commitments. The increasing number of returning students who are over 25 years old has prompted the need for designing university pathways that can help them obtain the desired credentials.

Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS) is a 27-year-old university located in Greater Buenos Aires, Argentina. Like any other public university in this country, it is a free-tuition, state-funded institution. There is no admission exam, and students should pass three introductory courses that smooth the transition between high school and higher education. In 2019, UNGS carried out the First Student Census (Censo a estudiantes 2019) that surveyed 7208 students. The results showed that 8 (eight) out of 10 (ten) were first-generation university students in their households, while 5 (five) in 10 (ten) were the first member of the family to finish high school. 51% combine full-time work with their studies. Concerning the cultural tools they use to get information, 50% of the students use social media platforms to access information, 21% use web pages, and only 14% watch TV to get information. Regarding the electronic devices, 96% have a smartphone, 92% have home internet access, and 89% have a notebook or desktop at home.

Reading Comprehension in English (RCE) is a three-level learning pathway aimed at developing reading comprehension of non- fictional and academic texts written in English. It is a prerequisite across the social and humanities under-graduate programs, and so enrollment can reach over one thousand students per semester. A regular face to face class can accommodate 50 students. Students can opt to sign up for in-person, online, or blended courses.

In 2008, the research project Teaching Foreign Languages in Higher Education encompassed the study of the implementation of blended courses to widen the academic offer. This author was invited to take the lead. At that time, Internet access was still uneven in the surroundings of the University. In 2008, a limited number of students had home access to the internet, and many still needed to dial-up to get connected. However, the blended offer was a success among students. More

disadvantaged students appreciated the possibility to develop new skills that were perceived to be only for the ones who could afford internet costs. In 2012, the project included fully online classes. In 2017, after an in-depth analysis of the project results, UNGS decided to institutionalize the online pathway for RCE. After eleven years, the project had become a catalyzer that helped expand the symbolic UNGS borders, giving room to ubiquitous learning.

In 2017, the author designed a new model of teaching partnership called Online Pedagogical Peers (OPP) to deliver online classes based on the pedagogical partners model (Cotrina García et al. 2017). In the online RCE courses, the pedagogical peers are an instructor or professor of English and a tutor who is an expert in communication or asynchronous learning networks (ALN). While instructors work with students in the forums and micro scaffold learning through educational material designed for the online courses, the tutors turn the worksheets into interactive activities, keep track of students' participation, guide them in the use of the platform, and the intricacies of online learning. In this way, the OPP create a sense of immediacy and provide the emotional support needed throughout the course (Burghi Cambon and Cardozo 2019). Students' participation and pass rate in the online courses has increased steadily while withdrawal rates have decreased since the implementation of the OPPs. While in 2008, only one blended class was offered, eleven years later, the online program encompasses six fully online courses and two blended ones. Online students advocate the modality, recommending it to other students. The success of the program could lead to considering that online learning is broadly accepted and that students are willing to study virtually. However, enrollment for in-person classes has always outnumbered the registration in the online academic offer. In 2019, while seven hundred students signed up for the face to face classes, three hundred opted for the online ones. This issue has raised our research question—Why do students still prefer face- to- face courses when an online option is available?

3 The Role of Affect

For cultural psychology, human beings are future-oriented meaning-makers who semiotically interact with an ever-changing environment (Valsiner 2001). Planning future activities emerge from the semiotic mediation with the environment (Valsiner 2014; Russell 2012). The individual's past experiences become constructed knowledge that influences their decision-making process in their life course.

Valsiner suggests that human psychological life in its sign-mediated form is affective in its nature (Valsiner 2007, p. 301). As human beings encounter or live through different situations, their feelings become pivotal in building their own culture, enabling the emergence of semiotic tools that help individuals steer in ever-changing unpredictable environments. This ongoing process starts at a microgenetic level when the individual encounters new experiences in irreversible time. The information emerging from this first happenstance with the outer world, i.e., with that sequence

of moments organized through meaning fields or signs created by the subject, leads to subjectivity stability (Valsiner 2007, p. 302).

At the mesogenetic level (Valsiner 2007, 2014), cultural institutions contribute to organizing human behavior by providing the subjects with information about the plausible ways to experience the activities the institution houses. There, subjects perform ordinary activities in repetitive formats, thus giving rise to stable meaning structures. In this vein, the school experience implies following a sequence of the day -to -day activities that shape not only the subjects' mind but also their bodies (Foucault 2002). It entails an intricate weave of relationships that take place from the infants' early years through adulthood. In the ontogenesis, the preserved experience coming directly from the microgenetic level or through the mesogenetic level helps individuals deal with the unexpected, thus guiding their choices later in life. However, the experience itself cannot predict the individual behavior, as there is no direct relationship between what is perceived at the microgenetic or mesogenetic level, and how subjects would react at novelty. Affective phenomena subsume both feelings and emotions (Branco and Valsiner 2010). Two human beings who lived through similar experiences can react differently before new similar situations.

Russell (2012) proposes that affect is limited to subjective conscious feelings. He distinguishes three different types of affect, Core Affect, Affective Quality, and Emotional Meta experience (Russell 2012). As a subjective experience, affect mobilizes individuals differently. Russell considers the concept of Core Affect as a most elementary simple primitive affective feeling (Russell 2012, p. 89). Individuals access Core affect as a simple feeling that blends opposite feelings such as pleasure/displeasure with the feelings of sleepy or activated. Core affect can be caused by bottom-up and top-down processes and can influence not only impulses but also complex decision making.

Russel and Valsiner coincide that affect is constructed in ontogeny. It is dynamically complex and culturally mediated. For Valsiner, human beings feel forward (Valsiner 2007, p. 307). For Russel, subjects' feelings result from previous experiences while interacting with the environment. While Russell considers Core Affect as modular, Valsiner argues that human experience is framed in a field of self-generated affect (Valsiner 2007, p. 309). As a field, it can grow and become a hyper generalized field (I'm depressed) or narrow down and become a specific emotion (I'm sad). In their ongoing contact with the culture, subjects affect and are affected by the environment in an affectivating process (Fossa 2018). The concept of affectivating refers to the emotions and actions that are part of the individuals' contact with the environment. Through this process, novelty emerges as the individual and the environment are both affected (Cornejo et al. 2018). Thus, individuals' and environment boundaries may be expanded or constrained.

4 Students' Voicing Their Preferences on Learning Modalities

Valsiner suggests the possibility of generalizing from a single case. While being led by the uniqueness of each moment in life, we operate through the general principles transcending the uniqueness of any of these moments (Valsiner 2015). For Valsiner, relying on singularity is possible as we are studying meaning-making subjects who live in a specific place in irreversible time. Through the description of the phenomenon in its context, new cultural meanings may emerge. In a loop, as the novel sense develops, the environment is affected.

Following Bamberg, narrative inquiry as a qualitative research procedure seeks to analyze how subjects make sense of experiences about concrete life situations. Through narratives, subjects construct highly subjective evaluations of their immediate or retrospective experience that can be analyzed through qualitative or quantitative procedures (Bamberg 2012).

This study was conducted between 2015 and 2019. We collected two hundred eighty six narratives written by undergraduate students who were attending in-person classes in any of the three levels of the pathway Reading Comprehension in English at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento. We wanted to understand why they opted for traditional classes. The students in this research were active users of different social media platforms and had never attended online courses in educational institutions. In this study, we do not consider age and gender.

This researcher contacted instructors delivering traditional classes and visited their classrooms. She asked students to voluntarily write a short narrative about their decision on in-person courses in no more than 10 minutes. The aim of allotting such a short time was to favor the possibility of obtaining spontaneous answers that reflect their first thoughts on online learning.

286 handwritten texts were collected. These short pieces of writing were no longer than 10 lines each. The sample was treated as a small corpus and manually analyzed. The size of the data enabled the author to consider the sociocultural context and the coarticulated meanings (Bednarek 2009) that emerged from these written productions.

A first analysis revealed that the word *need* was used in 235 pieces to introduce their arguments. A second analysis enabled grouping the texts around the most salient themes: "Need to go to school". "Need for a fixed place". "Need for a fixed schedule". "Need for classmates". "Need for a lecturer/instructor". As students included more than one need in their narratives, the number of occurrences of the same need was counted. Twenty students said they did not have information about the online courses. Fifteen students said they would take an online course in the following semester. These two groups of narratives were not taken into account.

It was interesting to see that they construed evaluations of a learning modality they had never experienced through stating what they need to build knowledge. Their texts showed a complex interweave of ideas that captured the dynamic process of making meaning of the unknown.

Table 1 Needs and number of occurrences

Theme	Number of occurrences
The need to go to school	100
The need for a fixed place	120
The need for a fixed time	130
The need for classmates	180
The need for a lecturer	240

The students' comments were later discussed in two focus groups led by this researcher, and their answers were recorded. Focus group members agreed to take part in the research.

In the following section, we address the themes following the criteria from the less to the most mentioned, as shown in Table 1. For each theme, a theoretical framework was developed, and students' verbatim comments are given. Narratives were written in conversational Spanish, and the debate in the focus groups was also held in conversational Spanish. We decided to provide the original comments, followed by the author's translation for this work.

5 The Emergence of New Themes in Online Learning

One of the most common tenants in this field is that students do not engage in online learning due to the existence of internal, external and/or program-related factors (Park 2007; Kara et al. 2019; Borges 2005, 2007). Withdrawal can stem from a myriad of reasons. Students lack the necessary capabilities to study online, or they do not have the devices, equipment, or internet connection. Teachers and instructors cannot didactically design or delivered an online course, or they are not techno literate. Regional or local structural issues function as inhibitors of online learning. The existence of these issues cannot be neglected. This *deficit view* somehow hides other factors that make a university student decide on a regular traditional class. We expected to find these ideas in the students' narratives. It was quite surprising the emergence of new themes prompting the choice for in-person courses.

6 Theme 1: The Need to Go to School—Movements and Heterotopias

Heterotopias

In Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias, Foucault (1967) argued that there is a fatal intersection of time and space that cannot be disregarded in Western society. Although Foucault later discarded this concept (Saldanha 2008). The

notion of heterotopias has become a powerful tool in online environment research (Krikonis and Valsiner 2010). In the analysis of the sacred spaces, Foucault explained heterotopia through the metaphor of the mirror:

"The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal since in order to be perceived, it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there." (Foucault 1967)

Following Foucault, online learning can be seen as a heterotopia. Students symbolically move from brick and mortar to virtual worlds in unique forms. An online environment symbolically gathers seemingly disparate places. A student can take a lesson in bed in their bedroom, while their classmates are at work or commuting. A space of illusion (Foucault 1967) is created as lecturers, and students engage in a distinctive conversation in the cyberspace as a jointly—constructed place (Krikonis & Valsiner 2010). There, participants interplay in a language that blurs the boundaries of the written and spoken language. A new symbolic place emerges reuniting distant places and desacralizing the institutions—this new no- where place creates a seemingly ubiquitous university that can be accessed everywhere.

Ubiquity has long been considered one of the perks of online learning. However, for some students in this research, the idea of juxtaposing places is not attractive, and they even considered that it is not conducive to learning. This verbatim comment (VC) 1 reveals:

Si sigo el curso online, en casa, le daría prioridad a los quehaceres, limpieza, etc. (If I attend the classes online, I'll prioritize house chores, cleaning, and so on).

Some students can juxtapose work and family life but not studying. VC 2:

No hago el curso virtual porque no lo terminaría, trabajo en mi casa, y haría otras cosas no referidas a la materia (I don't take the virtual course because I homework and I would do other stuff not related to the course).

The need to go from one place to another for learning emerged as crucial. These students decided that it is necessary to go to the University to learn. Going to the University and attending classes are experienced as a need that can guarantee their learning.

VC 3: *Necesito asistir a clases para aprender* (I need to attend classes to learn).
VC 4: *Prefiero venir a clase* (I prefer coming to class).
VC 5: *Aprendo mejor asistiendo a clases* (I learn better if I attend classes).

This necessity seems to be deeply rooted in the subjects in this study. For Foucault (2002) the school has a disciplining role. Citing the words of La Salle, Foucault (2002) brought to the forefront the importance of caring for those details in modeling bodies and minds. The closure is needed to encourage discipline and build knowledge. Students understand the university class as a safe place that is conducive to learning. This student's explanation reveals their need for a specific space and their belief in the place where actual learning occurs. VC 6:

No lo haría (curso virtual) porque no tendría el ámbito, lugar, para realizar las consultas que surjan. El tiempo que le dedicaría no sería el mismo, ni con la misma

rigurosidad que en un ámbito real. Hay mayor interactividad, por ende se aprende más en un aula real (I wouldn't take it [the virtual course] because I wouldn't have the setting, the place to make questions that may come up. I wouldn't devote the same time; I wouldn't do [study] it as rigorously as in a real setting. There is greater interactivity, and so one learns better in a real classroom).

Their past learning trajectories have contributed to organizing their learning behavior. These subjects had built their academic knowledge but had also experienced that academic learning mainly takes place in a closed institution. This role of the educational institutions is still present in this student' narrative. VC 7:

Honestamente no sabría definir con sinceridad por qué no hago un curso virtual. Supongo que porque siempre tuve presencialidad en todas las materias que además es algo que vengo haciendo ya desde el colegio primario (Being honest, I wouldn't know how to candidly define why I don't take a virtual course. I guess it is because I have always had face to face classes in all the other courses I've been taking, besides I've been doing this since elementary school).

Foucault's notion that the school operates as a disciplinary device seems to be underlying students' perceptions (Foucault 2002). The students in this study associated home with comfort and entertainment; they believe that the brick and mortar lesson helps them avoid distractions or even "their" laziness. VC 8, VC 9 and VC 10:

VC 8: *Si estoy en casa, me distraigo y lo dejaría* (If I am at home, I get distracted, I would dropout).

VC 9: *¿Por qué no haría un curso virtual si está el mismo curso en la universidad a la que voy? Bueno, yo lo siento como una forma de fomentar la o mi vagancia…* (Why wouldn't I take a virtual course if the same class is available at the University I attend? Well, I feel it fosters laziness or my laziness…).

VC 10: *No lo haría por las distracciones que tenemos en la comodidad de nuestro hogar, lo que llevaría a no seguir correctamente la materia* (I wouldn't take it because of the distractions we can have in the comfort of our own homes. It would lead to not following the course well).

Pleasure is other element that emerged in some subjects' narrative. Students find pleasure in coming to University. VC 11

Me encanta venir a clase (I love attending/coming to classes).

This topic was raised among a group of students who were working full time and attending evening courses. A student said: VC 12

Sí se verdad, cansa venir a la universidad después de trabajar. Pero a mi me gusta venir. Es lindo (Yes, it is true. It's tiring to come to University after work. But I like coming. It feels nice).

Going to University arose a pleasant feeling among these students. *I love it/It's nice* are the words they used to describe their emotions. As the pleasant experience repeats, these emotions become a generalized feeling that can counteract the negative experience of feeling tired after work.

The need for going from one place (work/home) to the University is perceived as positive for these students. While some of them mentioned the role the school had in subjectively construing the cultural meaning of an educational institution as "the" place conducive to learning, others referred to a habitus created in the repetitive activities done before starting higher education. It was surprising to find that students working full time found pleasure coming to University. Their subjective creation of a positive affective field helped them cope with other negative emotional experiences.

7 Theme 2: The Need for a Fixed Place

Going to school also means being in an organized environment that defines the boundaries between the lecturer/instructor, and the group of students. In their school trajectory, the classroom layout had set the hierarchical boundaries as students and teachers occupy different spaces in the same room (Marsico 2012). At UNGS, there is a desk and a chair for the lecturer/instructor while students sit on school chairs with table arms. Lecturers usually sit or stand in front of the class. Being in a classroom also means occupying a seat. For some students, it becomes "their place" in that room, an issue that also arose in the focus groups. Students in the group elaborated on their choice of a sitting place during the semester. The following exchange took place in one of the focus groups:

VC 12: *Cuando comienza el semestre uno elige dónde sentarse y por lo general se sienta en el mismo lugar durante la cursada. Necesitamos ese lugar* (At the beginning of the semester, you choose where to sit [in the classroom], and you usually sit at that place until the end of the semester. We need that place).
¿Cómo te sentis cuando no te podés sentar ahí? (How do you feel when you cannot sit there?)
Raro, Incómodo (Weird, Uncomfortable).

This need for a place in the classroom might be in line with what Hermans (2012) calls the extended self, *I as a student* becomes *I as student who sits there*. The students feel the need to appropriate a seat in the class and occupy it for a lapse of time. In doing so, that part of the room becomes "theirs" temporarily. A student can be recognized not only by their names, but also by their place in the room, i.e., "the buddy who sits there" is a common expression when an instructor call a name of someone who is not in class. They are not only students but also the symbolic owners of that small piece of the University.

Place is also important in online learning. The literature on the issue suggests that students' success in online learning heavily relies on their finding a place to study at home (Borges 2005, 2007). For the students in this research, the cultural meaning of the traditional classroom as a learning environment is pervading. They could not imagine online learning as a learning place VC 13:

Las clases en línea no generan un ámbito de trabajo propicio como la clase presencial (Online lessons don't create a working environment as conducive as the face to face lesson).

In both examples, students consider the university and the brick and mortar classroom as the places where they act their student self and feel members and symbolic owners of a place temporarily. Their "*I as a student*" also implies their extended self "*this is my seat*". Students are members of the University, but they feel they also become symbolic owners of different spaces in the diverse classrooms when choosing their place in a room. Deciding their seat appears to define them as members of that particular group. This idea of "I belong to a place / this place belongs to me" might be operating as a promoter sign that sees the classroom as the place where they act their student self, and so they can learn.

8 Theme 3: The Need for a Fixed Time

When students engage in online courses, physical spaces are juxtaposed. Students can be at home and the online university campus. Time is also juxtaposed and resignified (Foucault 1967). In an asynchronous online lesson, students can get virtually together without sharing the same moment in time. Participants can engage in debates, and their postings can be read by their mates' in their future, thus blurring the time boundaries.

One of the cultural tenets of cultural psychology is that individuals live in an irremediable time (Valsiner 2007, 2014). This notion gets a novel meaning in online environments. It could be said that time becomes a symbolically joint constructed irremediable time. Shared instants are not defined by the moment each subject is living, but by the moment in time, the subject read and participate in the Forums or any other activity on the learning platform. For some subjects, the asynchronicity of online environments creates displeasure, an uncomfortable feeling. They also feel that waiting for an answer would trigger their anxiety. VC 14, VC 15

No hago el curso virtual porque me resulta incómodo tener que esperar la respuesta del docente. Cuando me llegue, tal vez me olvide de lo que había preguntado (I do not take the virtual course, because I find it uncomfortable to wait for the lecturer's answer. When I receive it, I may have forgotten what I asked).

VC 15: *No me gustaría estar pendiente de la máquina esperando una respuesta. Me pondría nerviosa* (I wouldn't like to be keeping an eye on the machine [computer] waiting for an answer. It would make me nervous).

The literature on online learning places a high emphasis on flexibility, temporal ubiquity, as a new temporality that computer-mediated communication allows (Burbules 2014), thus freeing students from time constraints. However, this perk seems not to be attractive to the subjects in our study. They favored the synchronous encounters and the scheduled classes as scaffolding devices that help them organize their study time. VC 15, VC 16, VC 17

Necesito venir a clase. Si yo manejo mis tiempos, lo dejo para más adelante y no lo haría (I need to come to class. If I manage my time, I'll procrastinate, I wouldn't do it).

VC 16: *¿Un curso virtual sin horario fijo? Me olvidaría de cursarlo* (An online class without a fixed schedule? I would forget to follow it).

VC 17: *No me siento cómodo si no tengo un horario* (I feel uncomfortable if I don't have a schedule).

When this researcher prompted this topic with the focus groups, the students explained that a fixed schedule scaffolded their learning by helping them organize their time. They did not find appealing the possibility of temporal ubiquity. Despite the author's insistence, a student replied abruptly VC 18:

¿Sabes? Necesitamos el horario. Tal vez en el futuro pueda estudiar virtualmente, pero ahora necesitamos el horario (You know what? We need the schedule. Perhaps, in the future I can study online but today I need the schedule).

This student sees the schedule as a scaffolding device that could help them achieve their goals. Their reassurance is guided by the meaning ascribed to the schedule as a catalyzer of their learning. However, they could foresee a future *I position* (Hermans, 2012) as "*I as online student*" freed from the rigid timetable.

Asynchronicity and flexibility are two salient features of online learning environments. Students mentioned the word "uncomfortable" as a negative feeling triggered by the lack of schedule and the asynchronous interactions. They also considered the schedule as a scaffolding cultural device that helped organize their study time. It was interesting to see that the difficulty in self-regulating their studies was not seen only in the younger respondents. Students over 30 years old also mentioned the need for a timetable. Being free of time constraints was not appealing.

9 Theme 4: The Need for Classmates

The need for classmates together with the need for a lecturer were the two most commented motives for choosing in-person courses. The class as a meeting place can be seen as an open system in which unique relationships are built. RCE is a pathway across the University curricula, and so students pursuing different majors get together during a semester to develop reading comprehension in English. We consider that the trajectory equifinality model can help analyze how these students with different trajectories meet in the same class, work together for a semester, and then start new trajectories. Equifinality has been developed by Valsiner, Sato and Yasuda and adopted into psychology. Equifinality can also be seen as a liminal place, a point in between (Valsiner and Sato 2006). The university class can be seen as an open macro system in which qualitative changes occur in the human beings that converge in it in a moment in their lives. During the shared time, bonds are created among students that go beyond class time. These bonds are highly appreciated in the students in our research. They perceived that interacting with peers in a friendly

environment, pursuing the same objective, let them build knowledge better than in an online environment considered as a solitary activity. VC 18, VC 19, VC 20

Al hacerlo en forma individual y virtual se pierde el contacto con los docentes y los compañeros, perdiendo situaciones únicas del aula (Taking it [the course] online and alone, one loses contact with instructors/lecturers and classmates, missing the unique situations of a class).

VC 19: *No haría un curso virtual porque tengo la necesidad de ver a la profesora o profesor y compañeros. En mi caso se aprende mejor estando en un aula que virtualmente teniendo compañía física se pueden consultar dudas* (I wouldn't take a virtual course because I need to see the teacher [lecturer/instructor] and classmates. In my case, one learns better in a classroom than virtually, if you are around people, you can resolve questions).

VC 20: *Por lo vivencial* (For the experiential…).

VC 21: *Porque* prefiero el contacto físico y la interacción con las personas (Because I prefer the physical contact and interacting with people).

VC 22: *No haría el curso virtual porque perdería la oportunidad de sacarme las dudas respecto del tema que puedan surgir en el momento y además no tendría contacto con la gente que esté a la par haciendo lo mismo, lo que me permite adquirir nuevas relaciones* (I wouldn't take a virtual course because I would miss the opportunity to solve questions on the spot, besides I wouldn't have contact with people who are on a par, doing the same thing. It lets me build new relationships).

VC 23: *Porque no me gustaría perder la esencia y el intercambio natural que se mantiene en una clase común* (Because I wouldn't like missing the essence and the natural interchange present in a regular class).

When this author raised this issue in the focus groups, a student elaborated on the need for classmates: V24

Venir a clase, estar con los compañeros también es compartir el mate con los otros y conversar (Coming to class, be around with buddies also means sharing a mate[2] with others and chat).

This set of verbatim comments reveals the extent students appraised being in contact with others in a traditional class. It is worth noting that physical contact is a cultural behavior, highly appreciated in the Argentinian culture. Affective displays between teachers and students and among students in the form of kissing or hugging when entering a classroom are part of the non-verbal communication that takes place in a university room. The students in this research seem to be reluctant to miss the essence of togetherness that is created in a traditional class. The classroom is perceived as a safe place where they meet new people, build knowledge, and help each other. The group as a community of practice (Lave 1991) allows for a bidirectional flow of information in which the teacher-student interaction is complemented with

[2]Mate is a herbal tea usually shared among groups of people in Argentina. Students are allowed to drink it in class.

the student-student collaboration that can take place in teamwork or through the mere participation in the class discussion. Lave's interpretive view of learning suggests that the use of language and social interaction between subjects with different trajectories provides a fertile ground to negotiate meaning (Lave 1991). The verbal and nonverbal dialogicity seems to weave a safety net (VC 19). The physical contact appears to create an affective semiotic field (Valsiner 2007) that enables questioning the lecturer, learning while forging new relationships.

10 Theme 4: The Need for a Lecturer/an Instructor

This theme was the most cited in the students' narratives. At UNGS, fifty students can attend face- to- face classes in Reading Comprehension in English. Due to the physical space available, the chances for the instructor to go around and interact with students are scarce, and so is planning a seating arrangement different from the traditional one, i.e., table chairs arranged in rows, or one next to the other. However, students emphasized the need to look at the lecturers/the instructors in their learning process. Lawrence (2002) studied the role of lecturers as promoters of a smooth transition between high school and University. The students in our study are not first-year students, and many can take any RCE level course even when they are close to graduating. These verbatim comments illustrate how students perceived the lecturers' influence on their learning outcome. VC 25, VC 26, VC 27, VC 28, VC 29, VC 30

Necesito un docente delante mío (I need a lecturer in front of me).

VC 26: *No me inscribí al curso virtual porque prefiero estar en clase y aprovechar al máximo la presencia del docente* (I didn't sign up in the virtual class because I prefer to be in class and "squeeze" lecturers' presence).

VC 27: *Elegí las clases presenciales porque me parece más aprovechable y mucho más enriquecedor recibir el conocimiento y acompañamiento de los docentes. Al ser una materia un poco difícil, aun para mí que siempre me fue bien en inglés, es mejor recibir el apoyo y sacarse todas las dudas* (I chose in person classes because it is more profitable and more productive receiving lecturers' knowledge and support. Since this class is a bit difficult, even for me that I have always been good at English, it is better to get support and solve my questions).

VC 28: Necesito un profesor que me explique lo que no entiendo en el momento (I need a lecturer who explains to me what I don't understand on the spot).

VC 29: Sin el profesor no me siento capacitado (Without the lecturer, I don't feel I am able).

VC 30: Yo vengo a la Universidad para que me explique un docente lo que no sé (I come to the University to have a lecturer explaining to me what I don't know).

University teaching implies an expert in the discipline lecturing to a group of students. This situation replicates the traditional school setting in which the teacher stands or sits in a specific place in a class where the pupils can see them. In their personal history, the students have internalized the role of teachers as knowledge recipients who transmit their knowledge. As students, they had seen themselves as receivers of that knowledge. It looks like they have also internalized an apparent unidirectional flow of learning, i.e., the lecturer teaches—the student learns. In this relationship, the lecturer appears to play the agent role while the student plays a passive role. However, in VC 26, 27, and 28, students' excerpts show that they are also agents as they ask questions, "squeeze" the professors, demand explanations. In their subjective meaning-making process, becoming aware of this need resignifies their passive role of knowledge receivers into the agent role of overseeing their own learning process.

Following Foucault (2002), one of the most powerful devices in the construction of the discipline is gaze. Standing in front of a classroom, teachers look at multiple participants. Eye gaze can make something visible/invisible. Students are seen/unseen depending on teachers' gaze, thus creating a symbolic boundary that defines who is in the group. At school, the role of gaze is twofold. Gaze is performative as it clearly defines roles and expected behaviors, and it also articulates the group to control it. Like an orchestra conductor, teachers can make all their students work at the same time, giving the word, allowing questions, defining expected behaviors. Teachers' gaze appears to catalyze the emergence of an *I position* (Hermans 2012): *I as a student* emerges when the teacher is in front of them. In their school trajectory, the students in this work had made sense of this performative role of teachers' gaze. For them, it creates an affective experience that is subjectively considered as conducive to learning. They also acknowledged the dual role of teachers as the ones who make the other visible/invisible, and as knowledge recipients. Gaze helps set an intimate connection between a teacher and a student, even when both are surrounded by the class group. That visual contact is perceived as conducive to learning. VC 31, VC 32

Necesito la conexión cara a cara con el docente (I need the face- to- face connection with the lecturer).

VC 32: *Necesito contacto visual con el docente para aprender* (I need to make eye contact with the lecturer to learn).

The discussions in the focus groups reinforced the idea of the professors' role in the university classroom. These students referred to the meaning ascribed to the gaze interplay (de C Hamilton 2016). In this VC, both actors are recognized as the Other. Gaze inclusively separates them both (Valsiner 1999) in a dialectic relationship where they become subject-object and vice versa. VC 33

Sabes? Necesito que el docente me mire y yo verlo a él/ella (You know? I need that the lecturer looks at me and I look at them).

11 Conclusion

The analysis of the students' reasons for their choice of traditional learning classes showed the pervading role that the artifacts created to educate large masses of people at the same time still plays in the internet age. Educational institutions, classroom layouts, school schedules have been molding students' minds in their historicity. For the subjects in this study, the claim that online learning environments free them from temporal or space constraints is not considered as positive. On the contrary, some experience these perks as intruding, intimidating, or even uncomfortable that could trigger anxiety.

Interacting with peers and being together in a traditional class were also perceived as catalyzing knowledge construction. They believed that the asynchronous interaction could inhibit their learning process. The affective experience of being physically together, see each other, share a drink can be interpreted as a building block of the personal culture, the lens through which individuals see their present and future encounters with the ever-changing world. The sense of togetherness emerges as a pleasant feeling of being close to others who are sharing the same and thus becomes a promoter sign in their university learning experience.

For the students in his study, the lecturer's presence in a classroom is still pivotal as a catalyzer of their learning. Students saw their lecturers/instructors as knowledge recipients. In this dialectic relationship, students enact their agency and place lecturers in their roles. Lecturers have to be in front of them, look at them, be knowledgeable, and ready to answer their questions. The value of gaze was pivotal in their learning. They wanted to look at their professors and be seen by them. Gaze interplay was also seen as a catalyzer. There seems to be a deep need for a visual engagement. It might be said that a paradoxical construction takes place "I construct you, You should govern me" (Valsiner 1999).

Although all these students describe themselves as social media users, it was surprising to see that they could not imagine an online learning situation. They could not see that teachers and students are also present in a virtual room but in a different way. Their socially constructed imagination (Zittoun 2016) constrained the possibilities of seeing various modalities of learning.

The aim of this chapter was to reveal the complexities of learning virtually. In a small number of students' narratives, words like fear, uncertainty, mistrust were used to describe online learning environments. However, we consider that this finding needs further research and analysis.

In our study, we could see how different affective fields are constructed and merged. The lecturer/instructor, the classmates, their seat in the room, the schedule can be seen as socially constructed signs that regulated not only their present but also molded their perception as future learners. As future-oriented meaning-makers, these students prefer to stick to their past experiences of learning instead of adventuring into an unknown one.

The generalized discourse presents the so-called failure of online courses as the result of a series of deficits such as students lacking self-regulating skills or teachers

lacking knowledge on technopedagogy. However, we see that the students in this study could effectively regulate their learning by choosing the modality that suits them better. They were aware of their learning needs and styles and could enact their student self, in a moment in their life when they still want to be guided during their learning process.

Although each student uniquely experiences learning, their comments show the emotional nature of their choices. The students in this study emphasized the role that affect had in their learning outcomes. We think that further studies can contribute to understanding how subjects make sense of online learning. As a new cultural object, novel notions of socially construed phenomena emerge. Spatial and temporal ubiquity, the affective bonds and imagination, the symbolic cultural meanings of a virtual classroom as a learning place, and as a place to be with others, to be part of a community of practice constitute new threads, so to speak, to develop. We guess that cultural psychology could contribute to a better understanding of online learning processes.

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Bridging Academic and Professional Identities Through Online Learning Environments

Designing Blended University Courses for Transaction from Academic Learning to Professional Competences

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1 Introduction

University is often seen as the final stage of formal instruction before entering the labor market; however, students are frequently required to attend post-university training. Private and public employers alike increasingly see university preparation as insufficient, with students not equipped with the professional competencies necessary in an ever-changing labor market. For their part, many contemporary students feel anxiety about the transition from being a student to being a professional. These anxieties not only relate to taking up their public or professional roles, but also to the more private or personal experience of identity transformation (Akkerman and Bakker 2011; Dahlgren et al. 2014; Nyström 2009).

There is no simple fix to these complex challenges; improved syllabus or curricula design is insufficient. We suggest that, rather than being viewed as the final stage of instruction, universities can be more helpfully conceived as sites for transitioning students from educational to professional contexts. This is not simply an epistemological process of acquiring knowledge and skills, but is also an ontological process of identify transformation as students transition from being learners to professionals. As such, tertiary education should cultivate competencies that improve students' self-directed and self-monitored learning (for example, the capacity to self-assess

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one's own learning in terms of both strengths and areas of improvement), and provide opportunities for students to critically reflect on their future trajectory as a professional.

In this chapter, we describe a university course explicitly designed to support boundary crossing between university and workplaces. The course focuses on supporting the identity transformation of students from learners to professionals who understand and can participate successfully in the labor market. The course was implemented in a public university attended by future human resource managers. In Italy, such courses are considered part of the human sciences; there is a heavy focus on theory, and a tendency to use largely transmissive educational strategies. Students tend to have few opportunities to practise their professional skills during their academic life. In contrast, our course is designed to offer students multiple opportunities to participate in practical activities, as well as to reflect on their learning capabilities. In this way, students can develop a professional identity alongside their learner identity.

2 The BCCP Model

The course under scrutiny in this chapter deploys a model called Blended Collaborative and Constructive Participation (BCCP) (Ligorio and Annese 2010; Ligorio and Sansone 2009; Ligorio et al., 2010). This model has been developed at a university where technology-based courses are not commonly used. As such, students do not necessarily associate technology with learning. The first iteration of this model was introduced in 2005 and since then it has aimed to: offer students the opportunity to develop digital competences; support students who could not attend the course in person to be active participants; and innovate teaching and learning experiences by introducing professional-like activities.

To avoid a limited conception of technology as a delivery tool, a variety of online activities were incorporated, ranging from individual to dyads and small groups and collective. Online environments open up spaces for students to participate actively and constructively, and to develop and test professional skills. This approach enables online students to practice professional ways of acting and interacting in a safe environment. In this way, the transition from *being* a learner to *becoming* a professional is encouraged.

To empower the blended dimension, the course is not conceived as merely alternating between online and offline learning. Instead, there is cross-fertilization between online and face-to-face interactions. Further, combining several complementary educational practices offers a mix of teaching and learning experiences. In so doing, the course weaves together individual and collaborative activities to build various objects. Whether an individual review or a collaboratively-developed concept map, task artefacts comprise professional objects typical of professional e-learning contexts. Moreover, given that e-learning is the focus of course in which

the BCCP model has been deployed, students can experiment with e-learning—not only conceptually, but also in practice.

The 13-week course is divided into two modules that are six weeks and seven weeks long respectively. The first module covers the curricular content, while the second module focuses on activities designed and performed in concert with companies operating in the e-learning market. At the outset of the course, students were divided into groups with six to ten participants in each. Module 1 opened with a face-to-face lecture. During the introductory lecture, the teacher allocated resources and study materials (e.g., chapters, articles, PowerPoint presentations, websites, etc.) corresponding to the number of students forming the groups. Within each group, every student had a different resource, with the same material assigned to one student from each group. This means each resource was studied by as many students as the number the groups formed within the course—four in our case.

Inspired by the Jigsaw method (Aronson et al. 1978), the groups of students with the same materials were called *expert groups*, while the groups of students with different materials were called *learning groups*. The initial lecture ended by negotiating a challenging and motivating research question, which would guide subsequent activities in the course. The main purpose of developing a research question is to avoid rote or transmissive learning and help students conceive of learning as progressive inquiry, collaborative problem solving, and professional knowledge-building (Hakkarainen 1998; Scardamalia and Bereiter 2006) from the outset. Further, proposing a research question is not meant to push students to 'find the answer', but rather to engage them in collaborative reasoning about possible answers through discussions and the construction of both individual and group products.

During Module 1, students studied the material assigned to them by discussing it within the expert groups via online forums or chat, complemented by scheduled face-to-face discussion. Following these discussions, which lasted from four to six days, students were individually required to write a brief review using a template provided by the teacher. In these reviews, students highlighted content that was useful to answer to the research question, and critically reflected on the process. Study materials and student reviews were uploaded to dedicated folders on Google Drive.

Students were invited to comment on one another's reviews and to post their comments online. They could also compare their own comments and self-assessment to the teacher's. This practice is designed to: improve self-reflection; help students to see evaluation as a learning tool; encourage a focus on the product rather than on the students; and support the development of shared goals through a common activity. After the reviews were posted, students gathered in their learning groups to compare and combine their individual answers to the research question, gleaned through the reviews. Their purpose was to collaboratively create a product (e.g., a concept map, a poster, a report). This activity was organized through online discussions interspersed with scheduled face-to-face encounters.

Within both expert groups and learning groups, students were required to perform specific roles. Based on Role Taking theory (Fischer et al. 2013; Topping 1998), these roles were specifically designed to support students to assume responsibility and

actively participate. These roles included: (a) leader of web-forum group discussions—responsible for monitoring assignments and deadlines and checking that all participants were active; (b) collaborative product manager—responsible for preparing a first draft of the collaborative object and soliciting feedback from each participant of the group; and (c) researcher—responsible for locating information useful for the activities.

These roles are also relevant in the second module, which was designed to assign a role to students who had not taken one on in the first module. At the end of the designated time, students were invited to reflect on their experience in a role on a dedicated web-forum. These reflections included suggestions about how best to perform the role—for the benefit of those students stepping into the roles in the subsequent module.

Parallel to these activities, students organized their personal e-portfolio, filling in different sections depending on the stage of the course. Initially, students were required to post their expectations about the course. At the end of each module, students were invited to identify what they felt reflected their best performance (e.g., a contribution to a collaborative product, a note in a web-forum, their individual review) and to fill out a self-assessment sheet. At the end of Module 1, students outlined their personal goals for Module 2, while at the end of Module 2 students summarized the competencies acquired during the course. Finally, at the end of the course students examined their initial expectations and commented on them. Within the e-portfolio, all students were required to take on a special role: 'friend of zone of proximal development'. Clearly inspired by Vygotsky (1978), this role was crucial to the intended learning outcomes of the e-portfolio. Given the importance of this role and the related activities, a more detailed discussion follows later in this chapter.

Module 2 was quite practical. The overall goal was for students to put into practice what they had learned in Module 1. To achieve this, students were connected with companies and entrepreneurs relevant to the field. For example, companies active in the sector of e-learning were invited to introduce themselves in person, via Skype or in webinars, and suggest objects that students could build during the module. Students then chose the company they wanted to work with and the teacher ensured that each company was selected by an equal number of students.

In Module 2, new expert and learning groups were formed. The expert groups were those working with a company, while the learning groups comprised students working with different companies. In the learning groups, students compared their work and offered reciprocal feedback based on the assessment criteria proposed by the companies. As stated previously, in Module 2, students took on particular roles and updated their e-portfolio by following the same process as in Module 1.

In both modules, learning activities were inspired by the Trialogical Learning Approach (TLA) (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2005). The main intent of this approach is to integrate three perspectives on learning: (a) 'Monological', where emphasis is on individual knowledge and conceptual processes; (b) 'Dialogical', inspired by Bakhtin (1981) and based on distributed cognition (Salomon 1993) and the role of social interactions (Mäkitalo 2012; Rogoff 1990; Sørensen 2009); and (c) 'Trialogical', which includes the intentional processes involved in collaboratively producing

knowledge artifacts that are shared with and useful for the community. This latter element is the most original in this approach, going beyond the traditional dichotomy between acquisition and participation metaphors of learning (Sfard 1998) by embedding both within the knowledge creation metaphor. As Paavola and Hakkarainen (2005) contend, this new metaphor conveys a focus on both individual and social processes and at the same time, on the conceptual knowledge and social practices needed to foster collaborative creativity.

TLA thus favors the use of a variety of environments and tools—especially digital—through which individuals can create, share, transform and organize learning objects. Because of the shift from individual to collective activities and from planning to creating objects, reflective transformation of knowledge practices is sustained. TLA is thus strongly rooted in Vygotsky's (1986) theory and subsequent elaborations (Engeström 2001); that is, tool mediation and a conception of knowledge as collaboratively constructed and grounded in practical activities (Cole 1996). From these foundations, TLA emphasizes the cross-fertilization between education and society; there is a need to involve stakeholders from beyond traditional learning contexts so that authentic challenges and experiences can contribute to the development of innovative knowledge practices.

TLA supports boundary crossing between educational contexts and society more broadly by providing students with meaningful learning activities and promoting the acquisition of professional skills that are valued in a contemporary knowledge society (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2014). The objects built function as a sort of transactional medium, accompanying students as they cross the borders between educational and professional contexts. The trialogical approach is applied through six design principles (Paavola and Hakkarainen 2009). These principles (described in Table 1) enrich in particular the design of Module 2.

Examples of 'trialogical' objects built during the course are (a) an application ('app') for job placement useful for university students; (b) a serious game called 'Who wants to be president', addressed to students aged between 10 and 13 to learn

Table 1 The six design principles

Design principle	Definition	In this course
1. Organizing activities around shared "objects"	Formative action must construct shared objects that are recognized as important and intended for actual use, beyond the individual as well as the social dimensions of learning	The objects are defined collaboratively with e-learning companies active in the market
2. Supporting interaction between personal and social levels	It is necessary to combine individual work with that of the team, considering different needs and exploiting inclinations and interests	Learning activities are designed around groups within which each student is encouraged to contribute individually (e.g., reviews) toward the construction of a common object. The role-taking strategy is a way to deploy individual responsibility and empower collaborative work

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Design principle	Definition	In this course
3. Fostering long-term processes of knowledge advancement	This principle emphasizes the importance of providing enough time for iterative inquiry cycles and of supporting long-term processes	Both modules encourage groups and individuals to comment on each other's preliminary work to improve the products built and to instill the idea that objects are always improvable. In Module 2 in particular, students are invited to figure out how their objects could be placed into the market and how they could be improved once the course is over
4. Emphasizing development through transformation and reflection between various forms of knowledge and practices	New ideas and practices could emerge more easily when learning involves various forms of knowledge and practices: declarative, procedural as well as tacit	The shift from Module 1 to Module 2 encourages reflection on the connection between theoretical knowledge and knowledge in practice. Knowledge transformation also is sustained within the modules. For instance, in Module 1 the learning material is first individually transformed into reviews and later into group products. Similarly, in Module 2 the theoretical concepts from Module 1 are transformed into practical and professional objects. Moreover, reflective forums are spaces where students can reflect on the completed work
5. Cross-fertilization of various knowledge practices across communities and institutions	Creating connections with other contexts intentionally promotes the acquisition of modes of interaction, ways of thinking and languages typical of contexts other than those of formal educational contexts	Working directly with the companies implies a strong cross-fertilization. Students are invited to participate in corporate digital environments and to participate to activities proposed by the companies
6. Providing flexible tool mediation	Adequate and diversified technologies should be provided, selecting those most suited to mediating collaborative activities and enhance aspects highlighted in the other design principles	During the course, many tools are used: • a free platform (ForumCommunity—www.forumcommunity.net) to host web-forums • WhatsApp and Skype for group communication about organizational matters and decision making • Padlet for brainstorming • Google Drive for sharing documents • Webinars for company presentations The goal is to reflect on what tool is most suited to each aim

about the Italian Constitution; (c) a MOOC course about critical thinking for middle school teachers; and (d) a storyboard for a learning object about leadership.

To assess the learning outcomes, students submitted final individual reports, guided by a template. In this report, students describe the object they have built outline their own contribution to its construction and highlight how the theoretical knowledge acquired in the first module has been used in Module 2. Additionally, students explain how they applied TLA principles in constructing the object and offer reflections, comments and suggestions for the course.

3 Boundary Crossing and the E-portfolio as a Transaction Space

Boundary crossing requires students to enter unfamiliar territories and face the challenge of negotiating and combining different experiences and hybrid situations to achieve novel goals (Akkerman and Bakker 2011). But how can boundary crossing be captured in analytically useful ways? We suggest that to cross boundaries between university and workplaces, students need to renegotiate their identity positions (Hermans 2013) by combining practical activities and self-reflectiveness.

Several theories based on cultural psychology framework highlight the inseparability of identity development and learning (Lave and Wenger 1991; Ligorio 2010; Stetsensko 2008). Learning is a process during which identity is re-negotiated (Eteläpelto et al. 2014) in a dialogical way (Bakhtin 1981). To investigate identity in e-portfolio narrations, the way the self is conceived by Dialogical Self Theory - DST (Hermans 2001) is very useful. According to this theory, the Self is composed of various *I-positions* emerging from ongoing internal and external dialogue. Identity is a kind of "polyphonic novel"—a combination of various I-positions, each equipped with its own voice but all embodied in one identity. The dialectic relationship between various I-positions engages the self in an activity of synthesis to preserve its coherence and unity. Hermans conceptualizes different types of positions. He distinguishes between "internal" (e.g., *I-as-student*) and "external" positions, belonging to the extended domain of the self (e.g., *my fellow students*).

E-portfolios are digital spaces where the dialogical relationship between different I-positions is made visible through students' self-narration. Taking this analytical stance towards e-portfolios makes it possible to identify the development of students' skills, their trajectories towards new positions, and the negotiation process at the borders between being a student (I-as-student) and becoming a professional (I-as-professional).

The structure of the e-portfolio in this course is explicitly designed to support reflexive processes. In general, an e-portfolio is defined as a purposeful aggregation of digital items—ideas, evidence, reflections, feedback and so on—which 'presents' to a selected audience with evidence of a person's learning and/or ability (Brown 2015). This tool allows students to create a representation of themselves by gathering specific

evidence of the development of their qualities, and demonstrating the achievement of specific competencies. In so doing, the emergence of and interaction between various I-positions becomes visible.

Ajello and Belardi (2011) propose that e-portfolios can be used as an artefact to support transition toward professional contexts. These authors interpret e-portfolios as a "boundary object" that supports connection and communication between various aspects of educational interactions, such as learning and professionalization (Impedovo et al. 2018). In the present study, the e-portfolio is considered a "boundary object" in two senses. First, when students update their e-portfolio they become aware of past, present and future trajectories, crossing the boundaries from old to new identity positions through self-reflection and narration. Second, when students use their e-portfolio, they deploy a digital tool to position themselves within both the community of students and the professional community of the company they work with in Module 2.

Students are initially introduced to e-portfolios within the online course platform (ForumCommunity). Here, students create a folder with their name and an icon they select as symbolically representative of their e-portfolio. Later, to foreground the social and professional nature of the e-portfolio, students are invited to use their LinkedIn[1] profile as an e-portfolio. In ForumCommunity, the e-portfolio has three sections:

- A section where students represent themselves by drawing on self-selected information in any type of format (text, photos, videos, music and so on).
- A quantitative self-assessment section, where students post the self-evaluation form provided by the teacher and which the students update at the end of each module.
- A qualitative self-assessment section, in which students post reflections about their own zone of actual development (ZAD) and their zone of proximal development (ZPD). In the ZAD, students focus on skills and knowledge acquired during the module that has just ended. In the ZPD, students describe goals, aims, skills and knowledge they would like to acquire during the subsequent module and beyond the course. These two sections are clearly inspired by Vygotsky (1986).

The 'friend of the zone of proximal development' (friend of ZPD) is a special role in the e-portfolio. Each student nominates another participant in the course, with whom they have a relationship of trust, to be the friend of ZPD. Who covers this role monitors the performance of the nominating student. This takes the form of personal opinions about the participant, and comments tips and advice to support progress.

In LinkedIn, the e-portfolio is comprised of: (a) a summary, which is a condensed version (a few lines) of posts in the ForumCommunity e-portfolio; (b) an overview of professional experiences acquired during the course; and (c) skills endorsement, drawing on key words that describe the student's recognized expertise.

[1]LinkedIn is a professional Social Network (www.linkedin.com).

The structure of and activities undertaken in the e-portfolio thus allow students to accomplish different goals, each one crucial for crossing boundaries between university and the workplace. These goals include identity development, upholding the sense of community, taking responsibility, and promoting critical thinking. Additionally, this approach helps create of a sense of agency (Bruner 1996), which becomes evident when redefining previous learning strategies according to changing goals (Vygotsky 1978).

The overall structure we developed cultivates skills that are crucial in the workplace. Object-based activities, collaboration, self-reflection, giving and receiving critical feedback, experiencing real working practices, using the digital tools of the knowledge society—all are effective modalities with which to acquire ways of thinking (e.g., problem solving and metacognition), working (e.g., communication and collaboration, ICT literacy), and living (e.g., personal and social responsibility) in a contemporary knowledge society (Binkley et al. 2012).

Throughout the two modules, students are supported by tutors. These tutors are past students of the same course, who take on this role as part of their internship. Tutors received specific training about tutoring strategies, the BCCP model, and the TLA. The current version of the BCCP model has evolved from more than ten years of ongoing trials. Following the Research-Based approach (The Design-Based Research Collective 2003), we collected and analyzed student, teacher, and tutor' feedback along with data from each iteration of the course, looking for strengths and weaknesses and adjusting the subsequent course design in response.

4 Boundary Crossing Between University and the Professional World: An Empirical Research

In the following section, we describe the research participants, the aims of the research, our data corpus and our methods of analysis.

4.1 Participants

34 students were enrolled in the course, comprising 22 females and 12 males with an average age of 22.3 years. Half of the students came from a psychology background, while the others came from educational and pedagogic domains. Participation in the online activities was voluntary. Students not interested in or not motivated to undertake the blended course could attend only the face-to-face lectures and carried out the examination in the traditional way—an oral interview. Conversely, students who could not attend the lectures could take the course by following the online activities only. These students kept up with the face-to-face lectures through the online posts.

4.2 Research Aims

The main research question guiding our analysis was, *how can boundary crossing between university and the professional world be supported by intentional course design?* To answer this question, we focused our analytical gaze on the identity positions made visible in students' e-portfolios, which we consider an ideal space for students to manifest various I-positions and therefore to make visible the process of boundary crossing.

4.3 Corpus of Data

Some scholars have argued that computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) research should define units of analysis more clearly and be more explicit about the rationale for adopting a particular approach (Strijbos et al. 2006). With this in mind, we offer the following outline of our corpus of data.

Only complete e-portfolios were included in our corpus of data. Incomplete e-portfolios and those without feedback from the friend of ZPD were not included. Seventeen e-portfolios had all sections complete in both Module 1 and Module 2, in the ForumCommunity (FC) and LinkedIn. The data we interrogated comprised the notes posted by students in any e-portfolio section. This included both the e-portfolio author's notes and notes from any other students who commented, including the friend of ZPD. Each note was segmented into smaller parts that we call 'utterances'—Bakhtin's basic linguistic unit (Cunha and Goncalves 2009). By 'utterance' we mean any sentence or a group of sentences having a complete and self-sustained meaning; each note could thus have more than one utterance.

This analytical approach is synergistic with our theoretical and philosophical stance. We argue that university students' trajectory beyond formal education and into the professional world is not simply an epistemological experience of acquiring knowledge and skills, but an ontological process of becoming. The utterances captured in the e-portfolios depict concrete relational acts of communication with others (Davies and Renshaw 2013) and make visible the various I-positions that students take up in relation to their own and one another's future, professional self.

The following table displays the total notes and utterances analyzed, reporting the frequency in each module and in each environment considered (Table 2).

Table 2 Synopsis of the corpus of data

	FC M1	FC M2	LinkedIn M1	LinkedIn M2	Total
Notes	59	28	14	31	132
Utterances	188	121	68	131	508

Note FC = ForumCommunity; M = Module

From this table, we can see that the quantity of notes posted in ForumCommunity decreases from Module 1 to Module 2, but that the density of utterances improves. In Module 1, each note produced 3.1 utterances on average, whereas in Module 2, each note produced 4.3 utterances on average. The trend on LinkedIn is the reverse: the total number of notes increases from Module 1 to Module 2 (from 14 to 31), but the density of utterances remains almost the same (from 4.8 utterances for notes in Module 1 to 4.2 in Module 2). We suggest this demonstrates already that students transitioned from the student community (ForumCommunity) to become part of the larger professional community of LinkedIn.

4.4 Method of Analysis

The utterances recorded in the e-portfolio were analyzed using content qualitative analysis (Holsti 1968; Riff et al. 2014). We first built a grid of positions that describes the boundary-crossing process. In accordance with the Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin 1998), this grid was built over several cycles of data reading, rooted in both the guiding theories and the research question. Three researchers were involved in this phase. Two read the row data separately and checked the convergences and dissimilarities; to resolve the latter, the third researcher was consulted. When full agreement was reached about the final list of positions, all the posts were coded. The positions found were clustered into three categories: monologic, dialogic and trialogic. Monologic positions are kinds of internal positions (e.g. I think, I am a student, I want to…); dialogic positions define the relationship between two or more positions (e.g. my fellow told me, the tutor said us, our group); and trialogic positions represent the relationship among internal or external positions and a shared object. The final grid of positioning is reported in Table 3.

5 Results

Once the grid was finalized, data was coded in two steps. First, we extrapolated the occurrence and second, we defined the co-occurrences. Tables 4 and 5 synthetize the results of the occurrence analysis.

As displayed in Tables 4 and 5, monologic positioning remains dominant in the e-portfolios built in ForumCommunity, and in LinkedIn in both Module 1 and Module 2. Dialogic positions have a similar distribution across the two modules, but when comparing e-portfolios in ForumCommunity to those in LinkedIn, e-portfolios in ForumCommunity are much more dialogical (53% versus 11%). Trialogical positions are more frequent in the second module than in the first (2% versus 21%), and more are trialogical in LinkedIn than in ForumCommunity (19% versus 7%). We therefore suggest that, while in one case the mediation tool chosen for the activity supported a subsequent positioning (the webforum led to more dialogical positions compared to

Table 3 Grid of positioning categories

Monologic positions	Personal position	Personal emotions, ideas, attitude
	Student position	I as student
	Formal role	I as tutor *[one of the roles assigned during the course]*
	Professional position	I as skillful, oriented to professional role
	Meta-Positioning	Reflections about the current position
	Past position	Positions in the past
	Present position	Positions in the present
	Future position	Positions in the future
	Promoter position	Giving support and suggestions to another student
Dialogic positions	Peer otherness	Explicit or implicit reference to other students
	Teacher/tutors otherness	Explicit or implicit reference to tutors and teacher
	Professional otherness	Explicit or implicit reference to professional tutors
	Shared object—personal	Interaction between a student and the object
Trialogical positions	Shared object—intra-student groups	Interaction between students of the same group and the object
	Shared object among student and future target	Reference to people that can reuse the shared object

Table 4 Occurrence analyses—position in Module 1 and Module 2

Module	Monologic position (%)	Dialogic position (%)	Trialogical position (%)
Module 1	97	41	2
Module 2	82	31	21

Table 5 Occurrence analyses—position in ForumCommunity and LinkedIn

Kind of e-portfolio	Monologic position (%)	Dialogic position (%)	Trialogical position (%)
ForumCommunity	95	53	7
LinkedIn	81	11	19

the LinkedIn profile), in the other case the long-term processes sustained by the course led to trialogical positions in which students became able to integrate individual and social aspects of their learning, rooting them in the shared object and collaborative practices.

With the co-occurrence analysis, we studied the relationship among different I-positions and the strength of their relationships. In Table 6, we report the most interesting co-occurrences identified in Module 1.

The most interesting deduction we make from this table is that in Module 1, trialogical positions do not co-occur with any other positions. We suggest that this is probably because these positions are perceived in isolation and are not highly relevant to Module 1. Instead, the most relevant co-occurrences are between positions of the same nature. In particular, the promoter dialogical position is connected to the external position that considers peers (49%). An interesting co-occurrence is also identifiable between the monological position as a student and the reference to the past, which is still a monological position (34%). In contrast, the professional position is mainly located in the present (31%).

Nevertheless, we also found interesting co-occurrences between monological and dialogical positions. In particular, the professional position (monological) records interesting co-occurrences with peer otherness (15%) and the promoter position (24%). The promoter position (dialogical) has a significant percentage of co-occurrence with two monological positions: Future (14%) and Professional (24%). Instead, the monological position of student does not show any significant co-occurrence with any of the dialogical positions considered.

We found that the temporal dimension of the positioning (past, present and future) is a relevant expression of the identity trajectories: in Module 1, students position themselves mainly in the past (34%), while professional positioning is related to the present (31%) and the future (27%). The following extract from one student e-portfolio demonstrates the relationship between professional and future positions.

Table 6 Co-occurrence analyses—I-Positions in Module 1

	M—Professional position (%)	D—Promoter position	M—Student position
M—Future position	27	14	5
M—Past position	12	6	34
D—Peer otherness	15	49	7
M—Personal position	14	9	8
M—Present position	31	11	22
M—Professional position	0	24	17
D—Promoter positioning	24	0	3
M—Student position	17	3	0

Note M = Monological; D = Dialogical

At the end of the course I would like to overcome my "social boundaries" and create new personal and professional relationships. (Anna,[2] Module 1, ForumCommunity)

Promoter positioning is more strongly related (49%) to peer otherness and professional than student positioning (24% versus 3%). In some data, we found that this relationship is triggered by the role of friend of ZPD, who provides scaffolding for professional positioning. Consider the following posts:

Her LinkedIn profile is continuously developed and I have confirmed many of her skills.

Suggestion: It would be good to write a summary to help people finding important info. (Carla's friend of ZDP, ForumCommunity Module 1).

Carla uploaded her LinkedIn e-portfolio in Module 2, following her friend of ZDP's suggestions. This illustrates the relationship between professional and future positioning.

The following post explains Carla's view on this relationship:

I have been developing a particular interest in e-learning field, thanks to this e-learning course that allowed me to know virtual environments and the latest generation of software. I would like to find a job in this field. (Carla, LinkedIn, Module 2)

In the following table, we report the co-occurrences retrieved in Module 2 (Table 7).

In Module 2, the trialogical (T) positions also appears in co-occurrence with both monological and dialogical positions:

I have lived this demanding phase of the course in a very intense way, because I was very enthusiastic to see our idea developing and this allowed me to "increase" my skills and my wealth of experiences. (Sara, Module 2, ForumCommunity)

Here we see Sara explaining that she improved her professional position through the collaborative (*our*) development of their idea (the object built in collaboration with the company). This means that the trialogical position referred to the object is strictly connected to the dialogical position, grounded in the collaborative work.

This distribution in Module 2 suggests that the trialogical positions are interconnected with monological and dialogical positions. This can be interpreted as a path marking students' boundary crossing from university to professional life. The following excerpt illustrates this boundary-crossing process:

The creation of this product allowed me to acquire specific skills: Good knowledge of software I did not know before, useful to create an App (AppyPie) and self-confidence in work and time management. While we were designing the app, I realized I knew e-learning theories and concepts and I used them. (Valerio, Module 2, ForumCommunity)

We suggest that collaboratively working on meaningful objects—modifying and improving them, getting to know professional practices, and using modern digital tools and various forms of knowledge—likely supported the development of knowledge work skills such as team-work, information management, critical thinking, ITC literacy, and self-reflectiveness.

[2]Fictional names are used to protect students privacy.

Table 7 Co-occurrence analyses—positions in the Module 2

	D—Professional otherness (%)	M—Professional position (%)	T—Shared object - among students (%)	M—Professional position (%)
M—Professional Position	2	15	2	3
M—Professional Position	11	28	4	33
M—Professional Position	3	22	3	13
M—Professional Position	6	43	2	15
D—Professional otherness	0	8	30	8
M—Professional Position	8	0	4	13
T—Shared object - among students	30	4	0	1
D—Shared object - personal	23	11	0	6
T—Shared object among student and future target	5	1	12	0

Note M = Monological; D = Dialogical; T = Trialogical

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented a course explicitly designed to support students' boundary crossing between university and professional contexts. The two-module structure of the course scaffolds this transition, resulting in both similarities and differences between the two modules. Specifically, both share the formation of expert and learning groups, the construction of objects, and role-taking, while they differ in the types of objects that students build. In the first module, the objects are meant for the course participants; in the second module, the objects are designed and built together with companies working in the e-learning market. Both the first and the second kind of objects are constantly improved by peer feedback—an intentional strategy that acknowledges the validity of what has been done up to that point, and also develops the metacognitive skills needed to reorganize the commonly-constructed knowledge.

Another common element is the e-portfolio that accompanies students throughout the course. In their e-portfolios, students express expectations of the course, construct and represent themselves in particular ways, and undertake two types of self-assessment: quantitative (by filling in an assessment form) and qualitative (selecting what they think best represents their contribution to the course). Students maintain

their e-portfolios in two digital environments: ForumCommunity (a space intended for the course participants) and the professional online community, LinkedIn.

We suggest that the e-portfolio is a site where students' boundary crossing between university and the professional world becomes visible. This visibility work relates not only to students' developing knowledge and skills, but also to identity transformations. Engaging with e-portfolios in the ways we have described is synergistic with the shift from summative to formative evaluation, in which both the processes and the products of learning are considered (Sambell et al. 1997). Our approach also promotes self-regulation (Brown and Harris 2013) and taking responsibility for one's own learning (Zimmerman 2001). These skills are crucial for success in an ever-changing knowledge economy.

We also introduced the role of friend of proximal development as a scaffold for improving participation in the course. Active participation, we believe, should ultimately support identity change. To understand this process, we draw on Hermans' (2002) concept of the self as comprised of a range of I-positions. This approach makes students' various selves visible in their utterances throughout the e-portfolio, opening up analytical possibilities in relation to how students describe their own shifting identity during the course. These identity shifts relate both to their internal conception of their self and to the ways their self transforms in relation to the other human actors (students, tutors and professionals) in the process of creating and transforming shared boundary objects. A list of different positions (monological, dialogical and trialogical) provides a tool for analyzing the identity shifts across the two modules and the two environments used for this activity. Frequencies and co-occurrence were analyzed. One of the most interesting results we found is that students describe their professional positions in relation to both the present and the future. This could be understood as students striving to build professional identity. Analysis also indicates that students were eager to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this course—we suggest that engaging with companies and creating authentic objects play key roles in triggering changes in the positions our students take up.

Monological and dialogical positions remain relevant throughout both course modules and there is evidence to suggest a substantial growth in the trialogical positions. This indicates that our students do not simply cross the boundaries between university and workplace. Rather, they seem to expand and blur the boundaries between learning and professional experiences. Indeed, our students do not dismiss monological and dialogical positions, but these positions co-occur with the trialogical positions triggered by this course. Trialogical positions represent a way to encompass the monological and dialogical positions, as TLA suggests in relation to learning.

In fact, the highly collaborative and concrete (in terms of built objects) dimension of our model enables the emergence not only of individual agency, but also of interpersonal agency. That is, students learn to seek consensus for their ideas and offer validation to others' ideas. We also see the emergence of collective agency as students act for and on behalf of the group.

Thus, collaborative work around shared objects, supported by dialogue with other students and professionals, seems to affect the identity building process. Therefore,

TLA can be used to support identity creation by building 'boundary objects'. Such objects can create connections—not only between different communities (in our case, that of the course and that of the companies active in Module 2), but also between past, present and future I-positions. Indeed, we suggest that the temporal dimension is relevant in tracing the boundary crossing process, although we do not refer to the time of the course (in other words, to the comparison between Module 1 and Module 2) but rather to the perceived timing; the temporal axis students evoke in their e-portfolio. In other words, this course seems to encourage students to project themselves into the future and consider not only what they know, but who they are becoming (Dall'Alba and Barnacle 2007) and to recognize that the quality of their professional future may depend also on the current activity. We see a sense of positivity in our students' statements, which stand in contrast with the anxieties many students report when talking about their professional future.

Of course, the case we examine here has limits. More research is needed to refine and affirm the value of our analytic method, and a larger sample size would provide more broadly applicable data. Nevertheless, we believe our study can contribute more nuanced understandings of the role higher education can play in supporting students not only in the acquisition of skills and competencies for the labor market, but also in building professional identities. Courses should be explicitly designed with these aims in mind, providing learning opportunities for students to practise their conceptual and theoretical knowledge. Additionally, students need to acquire strategies beyond rote learning. To this end, we suggest that learning should be conceived as progressive inquiry, collaborative problem solving, and shared knowledge building. Most of all, it is crucial for students to encounter practices and problems of contemporary professional contexts so they are challenged to acquire new ways of working and thinking. In this sense, we believe that the BCCP together with the TLA and its design principles can be valuable tools, and that the structure we described in this chapter has potential to be extended to other contexts.

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Polemic Forums in Blended Learning as New Strategies for a Borderless Higher Education

Silviane Barbato and Rossana Beraldo

1 Introduction

Blended learning supports collaborative activities, enhancing authorial and innovative discussions in pre-teaching education. This chapter aims at discussing the use of polemic forums in initial teachers' education in a dialogic perspective. Distance and hybrid learning are potent tools for the democratization of knowledge and skills for individual and collaborative problem-solving, creating grounds for inter-histories between different groups. Innovation engenders transition in different levels of actuations and offers different experiences in the production of knowledge in borderless environments, attending the diverse needs of people, including those that are on the move in distinct parts of the world. The extensive use of multimodal tools prompts changes in everyday pedagogic practices and turns possible new modes of communication as well as new forms of interaction contributing to change and transformation in human development.

New challenges generate novelty in learning as everyday teaching practices appropriate new technologies and new ways to deal with such devices. Their use for educational purposes depends upon different epistemic instruments in learning and instruction, i.e., instrumental genesis (Ritella and Hakkarainen 2012) and the ways interlocutors shift from face-to-face to hybrid and distance teaching and learning activities. Focus on enhancing polyphonic practices anchored in multimodal intertextuality triggers the play between the known and the new information and favours connections between theoretical and abstract knowledge and quotidian life, promoting dialogic democratic practices in different educational settings. Understanding human production of knowledge turns democratic practices possible and the generation of new

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approaches to open spaces for reflective thought and actuations that reverberate in future teachers' professional practices.

Collaborative activities are oriented to share responsibility as well as generate new knowledge and solutions to problems favouring meaningful experiences during teacher education programs. This chapter presents one of the central activities in a Psychology course to teachers' education that is tensioned by the design of an intertextual multimodal dialogic pedagogy. This activity of collaborative learning in the web-forum focuses on the production of tensions in the *inbetween* (Buber 1958) in order to promote a context for debate and development or argumentation strategies for collective-authorial and innovative solutions to problems mediated by technologies.

Intertextuality, as one of the features of polyphony, prompts relations between different subjects, and areas of knowledge and their application. Guided activities by observation, mutual listening and argumentation transform misunderstandings that break discursive flows into meaning negotiation, building bridges between abstract concepts and different levels of knowledge, and their use as principles that guide adaptations and applications in everyday pedagogy. Multimodal dialogues promote new possibilities of blended and flipped learning. Intertextual multimodal teaching-learning actuations are produced together, alone or alone-together in blended learning, generating possibilities of different borderless experiences of knowledge-producing. Digital tools trigger shifts in (a) teacher-student interactions, and between peers that establish different relational patterns among knowledge, its uses, and functions in informal and formal contexts; (b) the building of contextualization that opens new chronotopes; and (c) in positions in the concurrence of synchronicity and asynchronicity that generate creativity.

The formulation of arguments and narratives orienting problem-solving is based on the possibility of creating impact activities that relate theory and practice, mobilizing the known and the new in the analysis of the situation and new solution. The development of argumentation and narratives in I-Positions in the reciprocal attunement of each other's meanings depend on the play between openness-opposition and awareness-unawareness of each other's responsivity in promoting dialogue among peers of different areas of knowledge. Personal and collective answerability involves the interplay of centripetal and centrifugal forces that interact in the production of meanings within a complex activity that can generate modifications in the self and the processes of individual and social identity. It triggers the recursive functions of the mind (De Castro Daza 2017), and recursiveness permits transitions between the different levels that compose multiple plans in activities. The dynamics create polyphonies acting on the play among exotopic position (Bakhtin 1983), when the interlocutor analyses the problem occupying the third position, as an observer, the surplus of seeing and the closure produce positions that illuminate different sets of meanings (Volosinov 1986).

Reflexive experiences in collaborative impact activities are related to decision making involving peers, schools, families, and public policies being debated in the

local or international press. The interplay between those spheres of experience triggers creative processes in different plans of the collective. Opened impact activities based on moral issues being debated in society may reverberate in decision making in future professional actuations. These activities contribute to the students' ethical development as it builds bridges between theory and practice through reflexivity about the self, the other, and the world. Collaborative knowledge production mobilizes previous knowledge and current, relating them to possible solutions to the problem whilst producing professional identity. The impact of collective experiences may prompt reflexive thinking about alternatives to the shifting of positions from the production of knowledge based on the centrality of the lecturer to the centrality of the learner.

New tools prompt new strategies in order to focus on the main interests and objectives set in the production of knowledge in intertextuality. Intersubjective experiences generate new procedures, innovation in polemic web-forums as well as multiple levels of reasoning and conscious awareness, and metacognitive processes. Emergent ideas built through negotiation and construction of meanings can shift when interlocutors stand semiotic resources. Multiple levels of information are achieved, and the intersubjective ground becomes more permeable, creating new possibilities for innovation in the course of the activity (Beraldo et al. 2017).

Languages in multimodality are the tools that interlocutors use to express their thoughts, feelings, expectation and values (Linell 2009; Markovà 2013; Wegerif 2008). Discursive practices such as conversation, writing, problem-solving learning in small groups, lead students to interthinking and to achieve a higher level of reflexivity and comprehension, that boost agency, innovation, and authorial production. Accordingly, the discursive space is understood as formed by the relationships between people and the world.

The design of polemic forums aims to engage students ontologically in the activity moving them from discussions focused in general and theoretically detached issues towards praxis through innovative and discovery processes (Matusov 2015). Sociocognitive dimensions as interconnected communicative processes contribute to the understanding of collaboration and the role that it plays in human relationships and development. Issues that relate to moral judgments and decision making in public policies engender appraisal in sense-making. Polemic web-forums may create fields of negotiation that involve moral context, values, and intentionality giving participants more time to reflect and elaborate their comments and actualize positions and meanings.

Studies based on the progressive investigation in computer-mediated activities (CSILE) include various resources used during collaborative work (Hakkarainen 2002; Hakkarainen and Sintonen 2002). The Interrogative Survey Model of Inquiry (I-Model) used in CSILE is based on the close relationship between learning and discovery processes. The starting point is a general question that students may consider using their knowledge, and this opens up to the unpredictable and the possibilities of extending the space for intersubjective exchanges. Collaborative practices supported by CSILE have a new function in communication and interaction (Scardamalia and Bereiter 2006). Students are, at the same time, creating and storing their

co-productions. The activity forms the knowledge community-oriented by intentional learning with a focus on knowledge construction in which students work together using different in-depth sources of information to solve the task and advance in knowledge. This proposal seeks to replace the formality of structured activities and controlled patterns of discourse in education and promote experiences in dynamic communication systems. Any product created in the here-and-now experience can be retrieved and archived as extensions of work developed at different times by the group during three weeks as well as along the semester. In this environment, tools become objects-to-think-with, which create new ways of interacting mediated by machines (Evans et al. 2011). New forms of perceiving and reflexivity may be generated when new polyphonic textures are produced with the mediation of multimodal tools such as gifts, emoticons, images, videos, podcast changing the *inbetween* in teaching-learning processes.

In these interactions, collaboration generates and is generated by distributed cognition in which participants learn and change as information is actualized in the *inbetween.* Thus, previous actuations contribute to converging collaborative writing also towards the production of meta-discourses and meta-analysis of the situation being discussed, the structure of the activity and its possible adaptations and applications in future teaching. Students may use the many resources available at the web as new information, videos, images, assembled in multiple planes of communication intertwining different planes of learning and discourse-action. Technology, in this case, is understood as a means of instituting intersubjective processes and also a vehicle that promotes an increasingly complex intersubjective dimension (Beraldo et al. 2017; Beraldo 2018; Ligorio et al. 2008).

Virtual environments as online platforms offer more time and possibility for planning, negotiation, elaboration, implementation, discussion, and reorganization of the information (Cesareni et al. 2001; Barbato and Caixeta 2014; Carlucci et al. 2014; Ligorio and Ritella 2013). Although, in collaborative chats, for instance, discursive inter-animation patterns tend to produce linear discussions and productions, considering the short time of the solution and the brevity of the messages. Chats, as oral-written language hybrid practices, promote interactions that are similar to face-to-face communication influencing how learning spaces are built oriented by genres close to oral communication. Even if in chats, people may use symbols, emoticons, figures, abbreviations, images, gifts, podcast, links and so on, to adapt their codes (Trausan-Matu et al. 2008; Stahl 2016).

2 Collaborative Learning in Polemic Forums

To create new possibilities of polyphony that changed traditional discursive activities in classrooms, we began planning flipped activities in which students are responsible for the introduction and discussion of readings in problem-solving based lectures. These strategies strengthen participation during lecturers focused on the further development of knowledge and lectures in which groups work on envisaging contexts

of application and related activities. In blended learning, different activities are developed on *Moodle.* One of these is the polemic web-forum. These forums privilege the discussion of different matters related to what is learned in different subjects and educational daily polemic issues that trigger an interdisciplinary conversation between colleagues in collaborative activities with interdisciplinary planning. In collaborative activities, students are not directly prepared to solve the situation and depend on each other to create new interpretations of the polemic educational event and new forms of solving it. The forums online are opened for student participation for three weeks. The lecturer participates just once introducing the forum, and students are expected to comment individually about the problem and at least twice on their peer posts.

The polemic educational theme is introduced by presenting a series of news reports published in various newspapers and media. Interlocutors are then invited to comment and position him/herself individually. As an additional obstacle, students are oriented to position themselves as the teacher and as another professional in the event (specialist, student, parents). The obstacles in developmental psychology studies aim to set up an event of transition and changes in learning activities oriented to the mobilization of acquired knowledge, personal experiences, and argumentation in which different points of interest and change can be analyzed. Polemic cases encourage interlocutors to take personal positions outlining interpretations of the situation from multiple perspectives, while students strive to discuss and create new possible solutions to the event. Such individual-collective activities imply the engagement of the whole self and appraise actuations in identification processes.

Collaboration is formed in lineal and nested sequences in diverse conversation paths or threadings that transform shared-objects, as means to expand activity and advance understanding among the interlocutors in new forms of shared temporality. The community of learning can access each other's ideas, perspectives, and positions while they are producing writing in which students appropriate each other voices and deliberate in transforming the perspective on the problem.

At the end of three weeks, discursive information is then submitted to a dialogic thematic analysis. The material is read repeated times for the analysis of the themes and meanings. This procedure implies the identification of redundancies, emphases and strength of signifiers and meanings produced in the discursive sequence. Intensive and extensive readings allow a differentiated thematic analysis that expands the possibility of establishing contrapuntal relations focusing on the interplay produced at different discursive levels. All the material produced by interlocutors is analyzed in the discursive flow, with two focuses: (a) on the same signifier that is repeated with meanings that are clustered, and (b) on the same clustered meanings actualized in different expressions. In both cases, we could identify positions and meanings regulating participants' posts along the web-forum. Taking into consideration the focus on polyphonic dynamics that imply using different markers and the production of meanings, the nonlinear temporal dynamic in which the participant produced meanings posting next to the post she/he wants to comment, for instance.

The second step advances the analysis of intersubjective dynamics. Dialogue is a valuable tool to uncover and enhance intersubjectivity. Through dialogue,

speakers switch between previous and present experience and may draw from others' individual and collective beliefs or cultural values (likelihoods, position-changing, imaginative-scenarios). Dialectic opposition produces tension between interlocutors and many elements contribute in the quality of the socio-communicative situation such as the interlocutors' exchanges, the activity they are producing, the genres used, the strategies put into play to collaborate and negotiate meaning to tackle misunderstandings and conversation breakdowns, produced in situ. This analysis further develops theorization on the movements in the dialogue. Considering the sequencing of the dialogue, instances of intersubjectivity are focused according to (1) levels of interaction—voicing and positioning—according to the following subcategories: (a) discursive position, (b) attunement of voices, (c) reciprocal attunement of position, (d) Choir, and (e) exotopic position.

The topic of the forum is designed to produce a ground for collaborative learning that is generated by discovery and exploratory knowledge. It involves the production of new levels of assessment and reflection that may lead to innovation, generating an intrinsic relation between discourse and mobilize elements that of the context. The web-forum was initiated by the reading of news that discussed the use of technologies in classrooms and schools, published in newspapers and blogs sites. The first questions were: (a) are you in favour or not with the use of technologies in schools?; and (b) how would you use different gadgets in schools? Although lecturers and Teacher Assistants did not take part in the discussion, rules for participation were opened and oriented to a dialogue based on argumentation and critical thinking. Forty-seven students enrolled in a Developmental and Educational Psychology course for pre-teachers' education took part in the forum, producing 126 posts.

Dialogic thematic analysis (Barbato et al. 2016; Mieto et al. 2017) indicated that knowledge production dynamics in the forum were initiated with the focus on the lecturer introduction of the task following the traditional Initiative-Respond-Evaluate (IRE) strategy, but adding elaborations that advanced in individual and collective argumentations, with commentaries embedded in the arguments, examples and possible applications to professional actuations indicating the opening of a reflexive orientation to the use of a facilitate-listening-engage (FLE) strategy (Barbato and Caixeta 2014; Mehan 1979). Analysis of argumentations and narrations in the sequence of posts indicated that relations between I-positions and peers' positions were built using: (a) experiential knowledge both from the previous educational trajectory in primary education and from their trajectories in Higher education; and (b) as people in their daily lives, mentioning differences in practice and usages of the internet, and related to the content of the lectures in different areas of knowledge.

Initial arguments focused on questions set in the introduction of the activity, in arguments in favour and against the reports. Polyphony was formed favouring the actualization of positions and clusters of meanings: (a) prevent ↔ the use of gadgets in classrooms; (b) gadgets produce problems of attention, such as distraction generated from lack of support and motivation in traditional classrooms ↔ technologies motivate and promote students' autonomy; (c) teachers are anachronistic ↔ teachers must choose using or not the technology in the classroom; (d) public policies do offer conditions for the use of technologies ↔ public policies do not offer conditions for

the use of technologies; (e) teacher-centred pedagogies, in which teachers rule and punish students ↔ student-centred teaching as students do not go to school only to learn how to obey ↔ dialogue-based teaching in which there is mutual respect to the rules, that aims to produce solutions to school and community.

Shifts of positions increase possibilities of production of new knowledge by accumulation and generation of novelty. The actualization of reflexivity, meaning and practices was possible with the introduction of narratives which exemplified their experiences as students in primary education, in which teachers invert the once forbidden use of cell phones in their classrooms—thus motivating students to engage in learning activities, with the use of different apps, virtual classes, videos, use of closed *youtube* channels and other social networks so to plan critical interactive practices.

Only one student denied the use of technologies with which other participants agreed and disagreed, developing their arguments. Positioning occurred as (a) I-positions as students; (a1) I as a student through primary and secondary education in positive and negative experiences with the use of gadgets in school; (a3) I, as a student of higher education solving this problem with my peers and producing possible outcomes with the use of my field of knowledge and learning in this interdisciplinary subject; (b) my peers' posts with which I agree and disagree; (c1) I as an experienced teacher; (c2) I as a future teacher that imagine possible futures, even if I have so many doubts as how the teaching-learning process occurs; (d1) the lecturer's positions when she introduced this activity and the questions to be discussed; (d2) her commentaries in the classroom, and (d3) the readings she organized for this subject.

Polyphonies related to arguments on pedagogical practices mediated by digital technologies were developed in open chronotopes encompassing meanings of responsibility, indicating concerns in avoiding laziness to think as the internet offers ready information and in promoting educational experiences that generate independence, conscious, creative and intelligent uses of media and gadgets that develop critical reasoning skills. The expansion of the traditional discursive strategies began with positions for and against the main arguments in each text and were developed by (a) critics to the lack of regulation and autoregulation in the use of gadgets by students and their families that make calls during school time as schools appreciate traditions and focus on criticizing distractions offered by gadgets on hand; (b) solutions-oriented by the necessity of developing rules to the use of gadgets through dialogue and meaning negotiation between teachers and students.

Temporality, as personal and historical experience through time, produced polyphonies in arguments on generational gaps both between teachers and students and between different generations that use digital technologies demanding changes in educational and school dynamics to motivate students' engagement. The argument that new mediating instruments generate new consciousness was based on the lecturers' explanation on affordance with mediational tools through the history of humanity, in order to widen the concept of technologies adding other ones that are not digital.

The statement oriented arguments in the forum that technology is all human creation and students used historical data to further the idea through examples related

to practices in medieval hospitals; and the importance of access to images of human cultures in the production of visual arts and temporal arts. There were quotations of Bachelard's works and Bauman's on liquid societies. The arguments that supported that any new technologies in human history prompted transitions, creating obstacles in new contexts, generating learning and the new to new pedagogies. Some students claimed that digital technologies were just another possibility for the production of knowledge.

It was observed that transitions prompted ambivalences between uses of digital technology for educational purposes and their everyday usages. Some transitions produce ambivalences in usages of digital technologies in daily life and expectations of their practical use in education with the focus on the differences in intergenerational practices. The younger students marked generational differences with the use of qualifiers such as *millennials* and Y generation as the ones that consume and turn themselves into goods; and the Z generation and digital natives. They added that there is a generational gap between teachers and the new generation students producing an ambivalence as at the same time they claimed the adaptation to new technologies usages is challenging for teachers, as learning needs to be done according to the needs of the current generation, there were arguments that the simple access to digitalized books and annotations were already attractive to this generation. Teachers not knowing how students make use of technologies should not take decisions about the use of digital or other technologies as many do not keep up with students' knowledge and do not know how to analyze and adapt technologies pedagogically. There is a problem with teachers' education, and they should have access to continued education as old generation teachers are analogic and at the same time have to keep and direct students, punish, regulate and rule over students. They do not create ludic instruments which is the biggest failure of public policies of one student-one computer in Brazil, according to interlocutors in the forum.

Students are not motivated as they *hate* or *try to ignore* anachronic lessons, that produce frustration and annoyance to young people: lessons two centuries old. According to them, the use of the internet and derived multimodal tools could deepen critical knowledge in a few seconds, taking students to defy and oppose their teachers' perspectives and trigger new types of lessons giving students more autonomy in thinking and acting. These new pedagogies should be built with the teacher positioning her/himself, considering the differences and practices and forms of being in the world. Time flow experiences are different, as well as multitasking. Students are not in school only to obey, but to use their imagination and creativity in learning-oriented to autonomy.

Counter-arguments supported ideas for teachers' choice in how to find a balance among different mediations according to the aims and field of knowledge in activities centred in dialogue and knowledge. Teachers and students may create apps to be used in school activities and in the community they live in addition to all the tools offered by digital and other technologies. Interactive dynamics ease the building of knowledge in this generation. Teachers and students need to discuss the use of technologies in schools, everyday life, and also to produce new forms of problem-solving, generating opportunities for student agency. *Technologies prepare to adult*

life, although regulation of activity occurs in different contexts, as there are rules for their use in different contexts. As posts argued and commented each other, an ambivalence was produced between the use of technologies and overconnectivity in learning, oriented by a discussion on the creation of apps that support local practices and worries about the students' skilfulness for future professional actuations.

Mature students criticized the programmed quick obsolescence of gadgets and the consumerism it provokes and that the problem regards not only which technology should mediate educational activities but also the resources that are available to be adapted and created to provide opportunities for critical education, avoiding turning everything and everyone objects of trade. There is an inconsistency in the liquid society. Overuse of the internet generates worries, *fear of missing out* and stress in new generations that are over connected. To learn how to shift educational activities mediated by different technologies balance mental health. The experience is in the classroom and students have to take part in the building of knowledge. The student is active, and schools are anachronist and are not prepared for innovation, as they are islands isolated from the rest of the world, and produce learning based on coercion and not in creativity. The information age produces bridges between educational abstractions and everyday life and its needs, creativity, and imagination in the generation of projects of interest for the school and community. Multimodality offers more opportunities for creativity.

In two moments, the arguments generated metacognition as they hold that (a) technologies are successful in universities and that may obtain success also in High School; (b) the use of collective discussions in different moments of schooling grounded in everyday life problems may generate independence of thought.

The application of analysis of intersubjective dynamics indicated that the production of meaning in positions shifted from a concern in responding to the initial questions to the dialogue between participants while new problem-solving actions were generated in the distributed dynamics among the interlocutors. Tensions prompted reflexivity that contributed to perspectives' changes and meaning production during the activity, corroborating to the results obtained in the first level of analysis. The dialogue flux in the *inbetween* also occurred in polyphonic structural movements as voices transited from the development of a common theme to single voices that develop in different modes and break from it, introducing new argumentations.

The activity favoured students' use of metacognitive skills and to them to appropriate their production in complex ways. They manipulated communicative strategies under the impact of the news reports, initial orientations for the forum, and peers' positions promoting reflexivity actualizing values and beliefs of being a responsible teacher that builds bridges between abstract knowledge and actual problem-solving in educational practices mediated by technologies.

Positioning and meaning production are intertwined with discursive strategies to form the genres that compose multimodal activities. Discursive positions (Table 1) occurred mainly with the use of the following subcategories. Subcategory 1.a had a frequency of 34 and was produced in three ways: (a) as students, they wrote indicating a reference of the material, and used redundancy of terms and expressions to elaborate the comment, (b) they answered what was required (copy and paste the questions

Table 1 Categories of analysis

Category	Sub category	Movement
Category 1: Definition of the semiotic field	1.a Semiotic resources built inside the speech by conventionalization of the field as well as semiotic references semantically evoked as facts, information, events, speech etc. similar with terms or words connected with the material or the instruction given. Centripetal force	• Clear reference to the material or the instruction given to building semiotic field as a common base • Anchoring to the didactic proposal to answer what was required: Initiation-Response-Evaluation—IRE] • Instantiation of the semiotic field. Situationality of speech as potential meaning-making
Category 2: Levels of interaction	2.a I-Position Centripetal force	• Agree completely without bring new arguments, reformulation or elaboration
	2.b I-Position Centripetal and centrifugal force	• Agree completely with comment, suggestion, elaboration, reformulation, and expansion. Transformation of the shared-object, it gains new signification in the semiotic field with low variability. Movement to enter to achieve more levels of involvement, intentionality, addressivity, comprehension, and responsiveness. Complement with comment, suggestions, elaboration, reformulation, and expansion
Category 3: Voicing and positioning	3.a Discursive position The speaker assumes a viewpoint of the theme discursively and it results as a combination of various arguments. Centrifugal force	• Agree partially. Agency [+]. Evaluative words, observations, aim-oriented argument etc • Disagree. Agency [+ +]. Evaluative words, observations, arguments, aim-oriented argument, critics etc. High variability of the semiotic field • Refuse [critical comment, intervention, differentiation, contrast, speech discontinuities, intentionality, and orientedness. Agency [+ + +]. Divergences, coalitions, tension or opposing positions could be seen as potentials in intersubjective dynamics. High variability of the semiotic field

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Category	Sub category	Movement
	3.b Attunement to other's voices into the discourse [voices outside of the discourse or Otherness are invited]. Relate to values, ideologies, beliefs etc.]	• Polyphony when the speaker indicates explicitly the reference and brings it as an authoritative-voice [intentionality and orientedness + + +]. Instrumental use of language • The speaker is a transmitter or ventriloquist-speaker [maybe he/she cannot identify/explains the fact, information, event of reference. The referent is an icon, symbol, belief, moral, etc.]
	3.c Reciprocal attunement of the position. Identification, affinity, proximity of ideas etc. Centrifugal force	• Interstice. The process of identification discloses intersubjective interchanges and reciprocity. The interlocutors say something to complete each other thinking. Possibilities of alternation of positions and use of metalanguage • Choir movement. Voices overlap, melodic movement in a combination of single voices
	3.e Exotopic position When the interlocutor visualizes the problem in a 'third position'. Centripetal force	• Agency [+++] when the interlocutor recognizes him/herself in the situation and has an extra view of the connections, causes, relations, dimensions, complexity, interference etc. The speaker speaks about the fact, event or the situation as a viewer to disclose an 'extra' view of the shared-object

in the post and answer them based on the content of the didactic material, and (c) they used similar words to make reference to the didactic material. 2.a I-Position were, in 26 times, oriented by centripetal forced, of innovation. Subcategory 2.b was produced 38 times in 3 types of argument: (a) agreement followed by compliments with expansion using similar words; (b) agreement followed by the expansion of a comment, suggestion, elaboration, reformulation; and (c) with a discursive movement oriented towards the transformation of the shared-object, with its actualization in a new meaning in the semiotic field. Subcategory 3.a had 58 frequencies in total with high variability in the semiotic field with the production of centrifugal force. Besides, the agency was produced in argumentations between students as they partially agreed, disagree or refused each other positions on the matter. These differences are dynamogenic as they expand the semiotic field and promote the development of professional identity through positions shifts in different planes in the interpretations of self, other and situations intertwined with theory and practices in teaching-learning processes. Disagreement, oppositions, coalitions or divergent positions in collaborative dynamics are interpreted as developmental potentials to achieve other levels of intersubjective instances as they develop the argumentative and critical capacity.

Subcategory 3.b refers to the attunement of other's voices and indicated 11 occurrences in total, considering explicit references when one interlocutor mentioned the name of the authoritative-voice (George Orwell, Hamilton Werneck or the professor mentioned in the didactic material). Authoritative-voice encapsulated an infinity of cultural or historical information and their strengths as tools for the use of language. Subcategory 3.c appeared 27 times, mostly in two ways: (a) with an interstice as an intersubjective interchange, with the expansion of affinities, convergences, reciprocity of ideas and points of view that opened possibilities for metalanguage as well as other levels of comprehension. The sixth Subcategory 3.d showed 34 frequencies in total. It was observed that polyphonic structural movements were produced twice, both after the occurrence of exotopic position. Exotopic position requires more complex levels of abstraction and cognitive efforts as it shifted from one perspective to another as interlocutors connected to social and cultural elements in two dimensions: (a) individual, and (b) collective. Following we present our categories of analysis in Table 1.

Considering that the concept of interstice is used to describe the intersubjective instance to solve the polemic forums, there is an effort by the interlocutors to complete each other thinking in the posting turn-taking during the discussion (Beraldo 2017, 2018). These dynamics indicate an ongoing negotiation of meaning oriented to create bridges between theory and future practices. Collaborative learning that generates impact turned it possible for students to engage in socio-cognitive and communicative interactions moving from one position to another, positioning him/herself and being positioned by others (Davies and Harré 1990; Harrè and van Langenhove 1999) as new perspectives on the situation were being produced. Other positions functioned as mediators in the interplay to produce interwoven meanings by polyphony.

Exotopic position required complex abstraction and cognitive efforts shifting from one concept to another, in which interlocutors connected themselves in the collective

to social and cultural elements through argumentation and meaning negotiation. Reciprocal attunement of the position created collaboratively new possibilities of analysis occurring when interlocutors (a) shared ideas; (b) were confronted with different perspectives; (c) were confronted with good arguments with which they identified themselves, as, with arguments focused on one of the news reports about the QR code experiment developed by a local school for a math problem-solving activity; (d) experiences that were shared by colleagues about teachers actuations with technology in classrooms.

In the formation of communicative ground to achieve the goals, the interlocutors activated processes of decision making, meta-representation, metalanguage, logical reasoning, hypothesis, creation, spatial-temporal ordering of actions and discourses, which generated self-awareness. The instantiation of the shared-object depended on the foundation of distributed cognition and coordination of actions along the space-time of communicative activity and collaborative learning (Stahl 2016). In this way, collaborative learning produced subcategories that involved expanded goal-oriented strategies. The transformation of shared-object between peers and the attunement of reflexive and metacognitive abilities activated the production of novelty and originality of knowledge.

Joint attention in collaborative writing was identified in the performance of the task posed to the students in argumentations that interpreted the activity and prospected new future perspectives and scenarios. Situations that triggered the processes of negotiation opened possibilities of actualization of the meanings marked by shifting in positions with the addition of new senses to one's argumentation or loss of some meanings as posts were added to different parts of the argument in the asynchronous *inbetween*. Still, the subcategories of exotopic position, attunement of other voices and discursive positions opened possibilities to comprehend the task with more acuity since the students put themselves in each other's place. Borderlessness is prompt as centrifugal forces opened possibilities to combinations in the semiotic field, mainly when disagreement and refuse of an idea or argument occurred as the interlocutor has to shift positions and this affects hub changes in meanings values and ideology, intentionality, and authoritative-voice. Shifts to exotopic position, in which one of the interlocutors positioned him/herself as an observer, triggered metacognitive and metanalysis of the structure of the activity changing the orientation of the discussion.

3 Conclusion

This chapter presented a possibility of collaborative activity that transforms interlocutors as they learn together to interpret a polemic dialogic activity and find new solutions for an educational situation that involves moral judgement. Distance and blended learning prompt new forms of *inbetween* in which interlocutors learn in asynchronous and synchronous bordless settings generated by new possibilities of interdisciplinary and inter historical development of professional identification. These

types of education offer democratic access to knowledge in different contexts being a solution for maintaining educational activities in different situations in which people may find themselves during their lives and also in population movement and migration processes. Besides, distance education and blended learning contribute to the permanence of students at different levels of schooling and professional education.

Flipped classrooms activities promote collaborative learning and impact in the production of knowledge that intertwines theories and practices, negotiation of meanings, reflexivity, metacognition in problem-solving. It orients creativity, critical and authorial multimodal communication on human development and education, schooling, and mediational tools through argumentation and narrations of personal and collective experiences. Blended learning using strategies of flipped classrooms ground agenciality and authorship and may reverberate in future professional practices orienting shifts to practices that are based on intersubjective operations and affordances. The polemic forums are tools that may add new possibilities for collaborative learning and problem-solving. In this study, it was possible to understand different interpretations on the use of technologies in schools as relations between subjects and theoretical-practical knowledge developed in threadings of polyphonies grounded in intertextuality and interdisciplinarity.

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Subjective Senses of Learning in Hybrid Teaching Contexts

Wilsa Maria Ramos, Maristela Rossato, and Cíntia Inês Boll

1 Introduction

The digital culture provides various scenarios and resources for learning and teaching. Learning can occur from experiences with reading texts, personal contacts, Internet exploration, and formal learning opportunities. Each learning context is recognized as a unique combination of activities, resources, materials, relationships and interactions that emerge from the specific context (Barron 2004). Analysing the subjective senses of learning in hybrid teaching contexts, where analogue and digital resources coexist, becomes relevant to understanding how students react differently in hybrid and face-to-face teaching environments.

Learning mediated by the digital culture and especially by mobile technologies allows the learner to benefit from three unprecedented events in the history of humanity: hyperconnectivity, hypermobility and ubiquity. Mobile technologies, the Internet and their applications have brought the possibilities of instantaneous, synchronous or asynchronous interaction, resources and tools to interconnect and to produce objects and content for the Internet (the World Wide Web) at distinct and connected territorial locations. These interactions offer expanded and differentiated contexts that can potentialize the demands of different types of learners. The new contexts represent potential learning niches that are beyond the formal school offerings. Learning ecologies open various entry doors to access information and build knowledge, guided by interests and motivations (Coll 2013).

In the course studied as object of our research, the pedagogical proposal of the course had as educational principles the guarantee of the theory-practice relationship, transdisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, contextualization and flexibilization.

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Include attention and focus on appropriate methodologies for adult education, and sociocultural diversity as a cross-curricular theme of the programmatic contents and promotion of autonomy of students. The teaching plan included collaborative group activities, critical thinking exercises, web surveys, debates, seminars, etc. The activities aimed to put the student in the position of an author and process builder, processing and transforming information into knowledge, inquiring, criticizing and collaborating to improve the teaching and learning process.

For newly enrolled university students, participation in virtual learning environments (VLEs) can pose challenges and requires disruptive cultural changes relative to the teaching and learning process of secondary education. This process may cause low motivation towards the pedagogical activities or, in some other situations, it could serve as a new challenge that promotes human development (Ramos and Rossato 2017). The transition from high school to higher education points to the need to build new processes of socialization with other social agents, demanding that students adopt new positions as subjects of the learning process. Being a subject of the learning process implies developing autonomously and creatively one's own paths in the construction of knowledge with a continuous tension between the individual and the social subjectivity (González Rey 2014).

Individual subjectivity is constituted by the system of subjective configurations. Among them, the identity of the learner has the generative and organizing character of the subjective senses produced during the learning experiences throughout the life of the learner. Our discussion is inspired by the concepts of learner identity and learning experiences as approached by Valdés, Coll and Falsafi (2016). The identity of the apprentice is understood by the authors as a set of meanings built upon by themselves as apprentices and concerns where, when, with whom, from whom, how, what and for what purpose individuals learn. The act of recognizing oneself as an apprentice implies recognizing certain characteristics in certain situations or activities depending on how others recognize us or how we perceive others to recognize us. In this sense, the learning experiences would be based on how we place ourselves as learners, in relation to situations and activities, past, present and future, whether real or imaginary (Falsafi and Coll 2015).

Guided by the cultural-historical perspective of subjectivity, we assume that meanings are woven by the symbolic value that being student or apprentice has in the social and cultural context experienced by the person. The meanings of being an apprentice are developed in adherence to the cultural value that has the action of learning, geographically and temporally inscribed in the course of the learning history throughout the student's life but subjectively constituted in the here and now, as a symbolic-emotional unit.

The understanding of subjectivity from a cultural and historical perspective allows us to recognize that social experiences, including the learning experiences, are mobilizers of subjective meanings and are always singular for different individuals and social instances (González Rey et al. 2017). Unlike meanings, the subjective senses are the result of symbolic-emotional dynamics mobilized in the actions and relationships experienced by the individuals that continually evolve and adopt new forms

and are subtly distinguished by the system of subjective configurations constituted in the person.

We adopted the term hybrid teaching for evaluating strategic didactic plans and definitions that require a rethinking of activities and teaching practice, aiming to create contexts for learning processes as well as for human and professional development processes through challenging activities that replace the student from receiving information to become subject of his learning. This methodology foresees the choice of teaching strategies that promote students' human and professional development, involving them symbolically and emotionally, and opens the way for the development of new subjective senses due to the porous nature of VLCs.

When subjects are taught in the hybrid teaching context that occurs in the connection between classroom and distance learning, several development processes are triggered providing the production of new subjective senses as the student interacts with other participants in the virtual learning community (VLC) in a continuum of juxtaposed activities between these two methodologies where borders become imperceptible. The specificity of this phenomenon has been approached by the studies of Barron (2006), who proposes the analysis of the nature of transactional relations among students in their constant changes of times and learning spaces, aiming to understand more about the roles of redundancy, overlap and variety in the setting that promotes self-sustained and engaged learning.

In the context of the information society, connections through digital culture, and teaching practices, virtual learning communities (VLCs) appear as new educational scenarios, with particular characteristics that make them potential environments for sharing and learning (Coll 2013). They are timeless and delocalized; they transcend space-time constraints and subordinate participation to the shared interests of groups. Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) can be organized for the purpose of creating a virtual learning community. The VLCs is a hallmark of advances in digital culture and microelectronic technologies available in society (Boll 2013). In the VLCs, the interaction has a plural, porous and symbolic-emotional nature marked by the invisibility of semiotic productions, generated by immersion in a powerful VLCs of various media languages (hypertext, audio tracks, videos, images, etc.) marked by an instrumental nature and tooling that corresponds to the interactivity of the student's learning process. Constituted by the porosity of this dual symbolic-emotional and instrumental nature, VLCs organize themselves as potentially generating spaces of subjectivities, self-positions, dialogues and conflicts, constitution of identities and the sense of pertinence and of belonging by affiliation and by approximation (Serres 1994).

In both forms of participation - the face-to-face classroom and the virtual community - singular histories of interactions arising from different encounters of the subject with the environment are constructed. The way of being present also has its specificities in each and every learning environment. The VLCs can facilitate (or not) the expression of feelings and emotions, rationalized and mediated by the approach of teachers, e.g., in the form of instructions in the forums (Rossato et al. 2013).

For Strate (1996) and Stone (1995), the limitations (the absence of the physical body) give rise to other linguistic and aesthetic mechanisms for the construction of intelligibility of meanings produced individually or by a group (discursive markers, markers of continuation, alternation of shifts, closure, etc.). In addition to these mechanisms, the types of digital, poetic and informational narratives, including images, illustrations, hyperlinks, etc., are elements of the digital culture that potentiate discourse (Boll 2013). The absence of physical presence potentiates other forms of self-representation (identity in VLCs) and of being online through social presence, teaching and cognitive presence. New mechanisms are chosen to produce meanings in the communication process that express new productions and subjective formations mobilized by experience, students' history, and emotions and feelings present, where the medium becomes the differential in the mobilization of human subjectivity.

In research, it is necessary to discuss the complexity of the nature of development and learning in virtual environments (Akyol et al. 2009). The VLEs, as locus organizers of collective experiences that facilitate VLC construction, have been the subject of research in several areas (Valentini and Soares 2010). There are several conceptual, theoretical and methodological models of the formulation and implementation of VLCs developed in various areas of knowledge (Garrison et al. 2000; Garrison 2006; Rovai 2002).

Among the forms of teaching that use the digital culture, one of the methodologies that have gained expression in higher education is teaching in hybrid teaching contexts. This form of teaching organization provides a common agenda between teachers and students with asynchronous and synchronous interactions in VLC, meetings or classes and face-to-face discussions, mediated by supporting digital technologies and other more conventional didactic resources used in the classroom (PowerPoint files, videos, books, etc.). Teaching in hybrid teaching contexts benefits the student, e.g., via flexibility in the choice of place and time of study, allowing a balancing and distribution of hours for academic, work and family care activities, which can result in healthier relationships.

Based on the regulations, Brazilian higher education institutions reorganized the education systems, implementing the creation of AVA to provide resources, tools, multimedia and online activities for both studies and evaluative activities corresponding to a part of a curriculum. In Brazil, the concept of hybrid teaching has been used for the cases cited above. It is understood that the term "hybrid" emphasizes the online part of teaching, referring to the mix of activities that can be performed inside and outside the AVA, in the classroom or other spaces.

2 Constructive-Interpretative Methodology

The research presented here was guided by the assumptions of Qualitative Epistemology with the premise being the recognition of knowledge as a constructive-interpretative process, and the dialogical-communicational dimension as the basis of interaction with the participants and the legitimation of the unique contribution

of each case to the theoretical model under construction (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017; Rossato and Mitjáns Martínez 2017).

In the present chapter, we analyse the case of a student of the course named Psychological Development and Teaching (DPE) offered in 2016 as a semi-presential undergraduate course at the University of Brasília (UnB, Brazil) using the Modular Object-oriented Distance Learning (Moodle), a content management system for online courses that can also be called a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) or Learning Management System (LMS).

The process of producing the information had two distinct phases. Reports from the forums of the VLC - Forum Memórias da Escola (FME) - were used together with information from a narrative interview held one year after the end of the course. In the process of information analysis, guided by the constructive-interpretative model, indicators were initially formulated to point out the existence of subjective senses related to learning in hybrid teaching contexts; from these indicators, hypotheses were generated that made it possible to extend the understanding of the student as subject of his own learning. In the constructive-interpretative process of information analysis, the theoretical basis of researchers allows them to discuss the empirical evidence without considering it of second order. Empirical field and theoretical basis are articulated in a complex form to the constructive-interpretative process of knowledge production (González Rey and Mitjáns Martínez 2017).

In the next section we present the analysis of Maria's case. This analysis was divided in two different topics.

3 Analysis of Processes and Formations that Constitute the Subjective Senses of Learning

The information analysed below is derived from the student's participation in the course and from observations after its completion. The case analysed portrays the trajectory of Maria, 19 years old, a Physics student from University of Brasília, Brazil.

3.1 The Subjective Dimension of the Processes of Development, Learning and Socialization Prior to University Studies

In the introductory forums of the course, Maria[1] described her experiences in school, stating that she was very active, and participated in several activities that interested her, such as music and literature. She liked to sing and even to take part of a musical

[1]Maria is a fictitious name. The research project was approved by the Ethical Committee Human Science from University of Brasilia, Brazil.

band. She was enthusiastic about the friendships she had made, the people she had met, and the bonds of affection established during 12 years at this school. “It was ironic, because school has become one of my favourite places in the world. I would rather be there than anywhere else” (FME. Authors’ free translation).[2]

Maria perceived the school space-time as a milestone in her development that had given her transformative school experiences, generating a symbolic-emotional resource base that shaped the value of being in a school’s learning community that extended to the present, as we will observe in the course of the analysis. The memories she had recalled represented living affective experiences marked by the presence and joy of being with the other students.

In her narratives, she presented herself as an extroverted person who had many friends, participated actively in various activities, especially social activities such as cultural presentations, in which she played the guitar and sang with her colleagues. “From the eighth grade onwards, at almost every school event I participated in, I played the guitar: during animated breaks, masses, school events, and so on. In addition, other people who also played and sang joined me, and we were similar to a band” (FME. Authors’ free translation).[3]

The school experiences narrated by Maria express a symbolic-emotional content marked by sensitivity, social-affective involvement and attention to others that mediates her relationship with the world. We can recognize in this formation the first indicator of how learning was subjectively constituted by Maria.

“I talked a lot with some of them [teachers], I considered and I still consider them as a friend. Not only the teachers but also other school professionals who had contact with us. (…) There was a time, I was in a room next to the Sun room (teacher). There were days when we talked a lot. I helped her whenever I could and even when I could not. I really liked being called the ‘Sun’s assistant’”. (FME. Authors’ free translation).[4]

In narrating significant experiences of her school life before university studies, Maria showed how her identity as an apprentice was subjectively constituted, and she reaffirmed her capacity to become an active participant in school interactions, where she had a leading role, demonstrating a high degree of commitment to her personal goals. Referring to sport activities at school, she said: “It was the time of year that I waited the most. As I used to be very competitive, I got pretty involved

[2]“Irônico, porque a escola tornou-se um dos meus lugares favoritos no mundo. Eu preferia estar lá do que em qualquer outro lugar”.

[3]Desde da oitava série em diante, quase todos os eventos da escola que tinha, eu tocava violão: intervalos animados, missas, eventos da escola, etc. E outras pessoas que também tocavam e cantavam juntavam-se a mim e nós erámos como uma banda.

[4]Eu conversava muito com alguns deles [professores], considerava e considero, até hoje, como amigos. Não só os professores, mas outros profissionais da escola que tinham contato com a gente. (…) Teve uma época, eu estava numa sala ao lado da sala da Sol (professora). Tinha dias que a gente conversava muito, eu a ajudava sempre que podia e não que podia. Gostava muito de ser chamada de ”Assistente da Sol”.

with all the games. I played, I screamed, I sweated, I got tired, I cried (a lot), but I smiled a lot, too, and I loved it all" (FME. Authors' free translation).[5]

Her position in the school community shows that she was an active person who excelled in the positive aspects of facing challenges, fighting and competing. In this positivity in facing the challenges, we recognize a second indicator of Maria's subjective constitution, being able to exert a strong influence on the subjective configuration of her current apprentice identity. "I always tried to get very involved in all the things at school, but it was in high school, especially in the third year, that I got myself more involved in everything" (FME. Authors' free translation).[6]

Her relationship with high school teachers also contributed to trigger her symbolic-emotional resources that marked her identity as an apprentice, expressing the emotions and affections built in the relationships of friendship and reciprocity that also extended to the professionals of the school. "I always tried to be close to my teachers, I loved each one of them, even the bit boring ones that we stand. (…) The teacher-student relationship was a beautiful thing to see, surely we could know that, aside of being teachers, they were our friends" (FME. Authors' free translation).[7]

Maria seeks spaces of a protagonist in social interactions, which may represent a need to be admired, to be loved by others and to be recognized. Being named, making a difference, seducing, and loving everyone, even the little ones, are hallmarks of the emotions and feelings that subjectively mobilize Maria's socio-affective relations in the school context. In the process of leaving high school and entering higher education, Maria reveals her difficulty in dealing with leaving high school, the transition to a new phase of life, and the farewell to being a high school student.

"High school had a place in my heart forever. A place that cannot be filled, because will always belong to me. There, I experienced wonderful things. Of course, I had some difficulties during those years, but I prefer to keep the good memories that I had, because it was the best time of my life" (FME. Authors' free translation).[8]

The produced indicators allowed us to construct the hypothesis that Maria's experiences in high school constituted a symbolic-emotional base that permeated her apprentice identity as a subjective configuration recognized by sensitivity, social-affective involvement and attention to others, positivity in confronting challenges and the search for spaces of a protagonist in social interactions. Interactions with

[5]Era a época do ano que eu mais esperava. Como eu sou muito competitiva, envolvia-me bastante com todos os jogos. Joguei, gritei, suei, cansei, chorei (muito), mas sorri muito, também, e eu amava tudo aquilo.

[6]Eu sempre tentei me envolver bastante em todas as coisas da escola, mas, no ensino médio, principalmente no terceiro ano, foi quando mais me envolvi em tudo.

[7]Eu sempre busquei ser próxima dos meus professores, amava cada um deles, até os meio chatinho, mas a gente releva. (…) A relação professor-aluno era uma coisa linda de se ver, com certeza podíamos saber que, além de professores, eles eram nossos amigos.

[8]O colégio tem um lugar guardado para sempre no meu coração. Um lugar que não pode ser preenchido, porque sempre será dele. Lá eu vivi coisas maravilhosas. Claro que tive algumas dificuldades durante esses anos, mas eu prefiro as memórias boas que tenho, porque foi a melhor época da minha vida.

teachers, peers and school staff demonstrated that she had found or built socio relational spaces that enabled her to position herself as a student in her learning process. Maria sings and enchants all, sought the recognition of others and needed others to name her.

We may suppose that her subjective constitution unfolds in tensions and contradictions, for although it is actively positioned, its apprentice identity is permeated by the gaze of others that it has to attract, unite and make a difference to. Teachers, colleagues and staff at Maria's school are part of her learner identity, as well as the students who recognized and named her in the school community. The corporeal expression and Maria's various forms of social participation in the school environment had a special meaning for her social interaction at the university. Maria had written narrative about her schooling and socialization process at the elementary school yielded information that supported the construction of indicators of her learning senses in a hybrid teaching context.

3.2 Analyses of What Is Going on When Maria Leaves High School and Goes to University

Now, how are you doing, Maria? What will it be like to become a student at the university, experiencing a campus that is not only brick-and-mortar but also has online activities with dialogues and virtual interactions? Maria brings a learning experience in the face-to-face classroom of a high school with a sense of presence (being present) that has the marks of the look, enchantment and seduction that are very different from the activities she participated in during a higher education course with hybrid teaching contexts.

The first indicator of the subjective meanings that Maria has developed about learning in this new learning environment is related to the difficulty of being distinctly characterized as a student in both environments (VLE and the classroom), breaking with the presence paradigm the definition of what is real in the learning process. In this indicator, the propositions of immobilization are present due to wanting to be recognized as a student, the need of physical presence for learning, and the difficulty of replacing the absence of the body in motion by other ways of becoming present in the online environment. Describing her experience in the course with a hybrid teaching context, Maria states:

> "Such experience was somewhat shocking to me, because I had never attended any course in the semi-presential Moodle, so I was kind of surprised. I was not truly used to it, so I let some things pass also during the course"[9] (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview)

The symbolic-emotional formation that characterized a way of being an apprentice with a strong bodily presence that impacted those around Maria - something that, for

[9]Experiência meio impactante para mim, porque eu nunca tinha tido disciplina no Moodle semipresencial, então eu fiquei muito surpreendida. Realmente não era acostumada, então algumas coisas eu deixei passar também durante a disciplina.

her, was always a mark of her experiences of school learning - was hijacked by new forms of activities in the discussion forums, mobilizing new subjective productions in the experience of learning online, now marked by the challenges of the idea of non-presence and of the body without movement. Her understanding of the 'static body' in online interactions mobilize feelings of inhibition and shame in the VLC; as Maria said,

> "I'm ashamed to go there and comment. I just read things and I stayed there, alone with my thoughts. Some [times] I risked, but in most [of the times] I did not. So, it was kind of a new thing for me and it took me a while, huh? To accept, like this. This idea of participating in the forums and staying there, sharing my opinions within the forums and then responding to colleagues, these things, I was not accustomed to that. I'm very quiet. […] What's funny is that I read posts by everyone, but I was just there [watching]". (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[10]

We observed that, in Maria's case, the new forms of communication demanded in the VLC resulted in the need to reposition herself as a student who learns. She "listens" and knows everything that is happening but does not position herself in the dialogue with her colleagues in the VLC, indicating her difficulty to characterize herself distinctly as a student in both environments.

The second indicator of the subjective senses that Maria has been producing about learning in this new learning environment is related to the strength /fragility of her recognition of herself as an apprentice due to the lack of the teacher's approval and recognition. This indicator is based on the descriptions of learning experiences in which she felt inhibited or ashamed, or resisted participating in the discussion forums. The points of the narrative that allow the construction of this indicator are related to the dissatisfaction and a lack of motivation to accomplish the activities performed in the forums that demanded the exposition of opinions and positions, as well as to the posture behind the scenes and opting to not participate actively in the discussions and activities. "Because I'm a lot like this. I like to stay behind, behind the scenes" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[11]

We believe that the close relationship between a teacher and a student, which presented itself as strength of Maria, seems to become fragility for her in the learning experience in hybrid teaching contexts. When asked by the researcher if she was also silent in the classroom, Maria responded: "It depends on my level of closeness to the teacher. As far as he lets me, I get it. But it all depends a lot on my relationship with the teachers to make things flow" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[12]

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[10] Eu fico com vergonha de ir lá e ficar comentando. Eu só lia as coisas e eu ficava lá, só nos meus pensamentos. Algumas [vezes] eu arriscava, mas, na maioria [das vezes] não. Então foi uma coisa muito nova para mim e eu demorei um pouco, né? Para aceitar, assim. Esse negócio de participar dos fóruns e ficar compartilhando as minhas opiniões dentro dos fóruns e depois responder aos colegas, essas coisas, eu não estava acostumada a isso. […] Eu sou muito calada. […] O que é engraçado é que eu lia de todo mundo, mas eu ficava lá só [observando].

[11] Porque eu sou muito assim, eu gosto de ficar por trás, nos bastidores.

[12] Depende do meu nível de proximidade com o professor. Até onde ele deixa eu consigo, mas tudo depende muito do meu relacionamento com os professores para poder as coisas fluírem.

We identify the existence of other subjective senses that constitute her apprentice identity related to the ways the teacher recognizes her and approves her participation. The feelings of shame involved in participating in the VLE forum are associated with the models she brings from the relationship with the teacher as an authority in the face-to-face mode. At VLC, the expectation remains that the teacher must authorize and consent to her participation. Without the supportive gaze and physical presence, her performance in the learning environment remains that of a single observer because everything depends on how far the teacher "allows" her to go. The subjective formation of her identity as apprentice continues to require the recognition-consent of others to do something and to perform.

At VLE, this approval look was not clearly defined, which caused Maria to become passive and refrain from participation in the activities. She blocked herself, and stopped and inhibited herself in the act of interaction affected by the feeling of shame. Even if she does not see her colleagues in the forum, she knows they are there. She feels inhibited and ashamed to participate.

"When you are simply left alone [in the course] or the teacher does not give a damn, I feel already much unmotivated, however many courses I may need… I need to learn. I cannot, I have a blockage with the course itself, it's too bad for me" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[13]

In virtual interactions, Maria contradicted herself. This conflict, nourished by the desire to speak, but without the consent of the teacher, conceals her face. Not to be seen, she hides behind the scenes of the forums. This strength and fragility of Maria limits her capabilities as a learner who has developed in the modality of face-to-face teaching.

"It's because I'm that way, I like to stay behind, behind the scenes, looking, watching, well, I do not know. But… I think I should have participated more. I was really blocked, this semester, who knows, so, in the second [semester], maybe" (Maria's interview authors' free translation).[14]

The third indicator of the subjective meanings produced by Maria about learning in this new learning environment is related to the conflict generated by the tension between learning as a relational practice in the classroom and learning in the model of education in hybrid teaching contexts. This indicator summarizes the needs of peer reception, being with peers, having collective face-to-face activities as a way of welcoming, having examples of good models of host teachers, and being close to teachers as a motivation to learn. We recognize that there is a dialogue of these elements presented with the way in which the subjective configuration of the school is constituted in the identity of Maria as an apprentice.

In the new learning experience, Maria's desire to contact face to face with the members of the group interferes in her participation in the on-line interactions. In a

[13]Quando você simplesmente é jogado [na disciplina] ou o professor não tá nem aí, eu já fico muito desmotivada, por mais que algumas disciplinas eu precise… eu preciso aprender. Eu não consigo, tenho um bloqueio com a disciplina mesmo, é muito ruim pra mim.

[14]É porque eu sou muito, assim, eu gosto de ficar por trás, nos bastidores, olhando, observando, assim, não sei. Mas (…) eu acho que eu deveria que ter participado mais. Eu realmente estava bloqueada, nesse semestre, quem sabe, assim, no segundo [semestre], talvez.

hybrid teaching context, the methodological novelty adds the participation of students from different courses, generating new possibilities for interactions. For Maria, the possibility of breaking the membership groups with which she has already interacted that she refers to as "cliques" represents a tensioning of the symbolic-emotional bases that constitute her apprentice identity. The rupture of a pattern of participation in the activities built on the experiences of learning in the face-to-face modality forces the new subjective perceptions of the learning process in hybrid teaching contexts.

"I do not know why. When we enroll in a course, we always go with [the expectation of meeting friends]. Especially in the second semester, that we usually have friends from our course, the group becomes "subgroups", right? So, I had the subgroup of the Letters Course, there were the Music guys, there were the Chemistry guys, that get together. We knew who belonged to each group" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[15]

Maria states that even if people from other groups were interesting, it was better to keep the colleagues and friends from the same course. This approach gave her protection and security, as she was among her friends. "The difficult thing is to get people out of that comfort zone, you know? It can happen, but it's kind of difficult because it's really convenient for you to get together more with the guys who are on your way like this" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[16]

Even though she enjoys getting acquainted with others' opinions, reading the forums and recognizing the ideas of her colleagues with her own, Maria demonstrates a preference for face-to-face relationship, while acknowledging that the exchange within one's learning environment can benefit her as an apprentice.

"I like [physical] contact better. It was superficial [online]. […]. In this signature I did not meet persons that became friends as it happens when we study in a face-to-face classroom. So, I think this online course does not give us this possibility. It may happen, but it is more difficult" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[17]

In her experience in the course in a hybrid teaching context, Maria probably did not form bonds of friendship because she considered that it would be easier in the classroom. There is a symbolic-emotional production that there is a better place to learn, i.e., in the face-to-face classroom, which marks the existence of a conflict generated by the tension between learning as a physical relational practice and learning online.

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[15]Eu não sei por quê. Quando a gente vai fazer a disciplina, sempre a gente vai com [expectativa de encontrar os amigos]. Ainda mais no segundo semestre, que geralmente a gente tá com amigos do nosso curso, então acaba que tem umas panelinhas, né? Então, tinha a galera de letras, tinha a galera da música, aí tinha a galera da química, aí a gente ficava junto. A gente sabia quem era cada galera.

[16]O difícil é conseguir fazer com que as pessoas saiam um pouquinho dessa zona de conforto, entendeu? Pode acontecer, mas é meio difícil porque realmente é bem cômodo você se juntar mais com a galera que tá no seu curso assim.

[17]Eu gosto mais de contato [físico]. Então era meio raso [no on-line]. […] Com essa disciplina não era uma coisa eu não conheci pessoas que fiquei amiga como acontece como quando você estuda no presencial. Então, eu acho que essa disciplina [no on-line] acaba não dando essa possibilidade. Pode acontecer, mas é mais difícil, talvez.

The fourth indicator of the subjective senses that Maria had produced about learning in this new learning environment is related to the emergence of autonomy as a result of a symbolic-emotional shift of the learner identity in the environment with a hybrid teaching context. This indicator summarizes the existence of challenges to allocating the student's learning time without having the physical time-space marker of the classroom and people in it, mixing the ambiguous feelings of having autonomy and having everything simplified.

The guides developed to direct learning in hybrid teaching contexts can facilitate the development of autonomy, since they demarcate a temporal sequence of the course activities. In Maria's case, there is a shift in the need for security to learn that, in the face-to-face modality, she played the role of a teacher, and teaching in hybrid teaching contexts is recognized by her in the contents of the guides. We identified a displacement of the safety factor of learning, because when safety is withdrawn from the teacher's physical presence, Maria is mobilized to seek other support for safety, which she finds in the guides.

"I think that you get more interest in the online [environment] because you already have some things available, because there are some face-to-face courses that you just say Oh my God, what am I going to do now? Then you feel kind of lost. And then, when you have something guiding you, it's easier for you to learn things. I think that [the difference is] in the way it is organized [in the online environment]" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[18]

In Maria's expression, there is evidence of a change of perception of the safe place, so far guided by the face to face modality of the physical presence of a teacher, while the place was guided by the contents of the guides provided by teaching in hybrid teaching contexts. In this new place, the management and organization of time result in a new subjective configuration of the time-space of learning.

"Because when you're in the classroom, you're present there and ready, it's at that time. When you're online, most of the time, you do not stay there. So, that bothers you a bit till you get organized within the course. I think that's the main difference" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[19]

Maria points out the need for a reorganization of the way one manages time. Time and space, well defined in the face-to-face mode, become fluid when a student connects from various places. In practice, it is not necessary to be in the classroom at the time of the course, which gives the student the possibility to choose the time and place to study. However, due to the lack of experience with hybrid teaching, students end up losing themselves in the management of time-space learning. The

[18]Eu acho que aí você fica com mais vontade no on-line porque você já disponibiliza algumas coisas, porque tem umas disciplinas presenciais que você só fica: "Ai, meu Deus, o que eu vou fazer agora?" Então, você fica meio perdido, né? E aí, quando você tem alguma coisa te guiando, é mais fácil para você querer aprender as coisas. Eu acho que [a diferença está] na maneira como é organizado [no ambiente on-line].

[19]Porque, quando está no presencial, você está lá e pronto, é naquele horário, mas quando você está on-line, é aquele horário, mas, a maioria das vezes, você não fica lá naquele horário. Então, isso acaba atrapalhando um pouco até se organizar dentro da disciplina. Acho que essa é a principal diferença.

experiences of learning encountered in new times and places provoked subjective reconfigurations of her learning.

The symbolic-emotional displacement generated by the learning experience in hybrid teaching of the course of Psychological Development and Teaching caused Maria to apply for the role of a course monitor in VLE. This decision expresses the emergence of a new student status, motivating her to face a new challenge, as she reports next, when asked about a new learning technique she has developed during the course.

"I needed to learn how to use Moodle. Actually, I still get a little bit insecure but I'm learning more now because the course that I'm monitoring is in Moodle. (…) Then, I have to keep looking at what the students that follow the course post in the signature" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[20]

Assuming the role of a monitor in Moodle demonstrates the search for her own ways in the construction of knowledge, in the tension between individual subjectivity and the social subjectivity. The emergence of autonomy as a result of a symbolic-emotional shift of the learner's identity in a hybrid environment expresses the student's movement while becoming a subject of her own learning process (González Rey 2014).

Despite the conflicting experiences with some professors at the university, Maria remains determined to become a teacher. In her social history of learning, she has experienced many varied relationships with teachers, and everything she has experienced strengthens her desire to practice teaching. "I always remember my high school years, because in high school I had (bonds) with all my teachers, the relationship with them was wonderful, and it was because of that relationship that I wanted to do a degree, too" (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview).[21]

Another aspect highlighted by Maria refers to how the experience of being a student creates the foundation for the development of teaching autonomy, pointing out its importance for the development of a future teacher. "I would recommend (the course) anyway, whether online or not, I think it's a course that counts a lot for our academic lives." Regarding the importance of the course, Maria still emphasizes the following:

> This experience provoked new ways of thinking how my future practice will happen. Everything goes far beyond what we think: that is, just go there and start to teach. Or even to have ideas such as "to make a community with my students," or "to try to think of new things to innovate in the classroom". So, it is not just thinking about the thinkers [psychology theorists] that we studied or in all those ideas. It is not just thinking about how things happen, or trying to explain it, but it is also thinking outside of content. How can I make it easier to communicate with my future students?[22] (Authors' free translation from Maria's interview)

[20] Eu precisava aprender a mexer no Moodle. Na verdade, ainda apanho um pouco, mas agora eu estou aprendendo mais porque a disciplina que eu sou monitora está no Moodle. […] Aí eu tenho que ficar olhando o que os alunos postam na disciplina.

[21] Sempre eu lembro na minha época de ensino médio, porque na época de ensino médio tinha (vínculo) com todos os meus professores, o relacionamento com eles era tipo maravilhoso e foi por causa desse relacionamento que eu quis fazer licenciatura, também.

[22] A experiência provocou novas maneiras de pensar a minha prática futura, quando for acontecer. Tudo é muito além do que a gente pensa: que é só ir lá e chegar e dar aula. Ou até mesmo ideias

The four indicators presented above allow us to hypothesize that the processes and subjective senses of learning that constitute the subjective configuration of a learner's identity are developed throughout all the learning experiences interconnected with other experiences in other social spaces of living.

4 Conclusions

Maria's case illustrates that the expression of the development processes – autonomy construction - occurs in a span of time different from the experience lived by the subject. Maria begins by demonstrating the difficulty in characterizing herself distinctly as a learning student in both environments and, in a second observation, varies between the strength and fragility of her being recognized as an apprentice. Throughout the process, she experiences ruptures generated by the tension between learning as a face-to-face relational practice and learning in the hybrid model, emerging, after the end of the course, more autonomously as a result of a symbolic-emotional shift of learner identity in a hybrid environment.

The VLC modifies the forms of communication and socialization through uninterrupted connectivity that allows access to didactic resources, activities, and synchronous and asynchronous interactions among teachers and students. There are new forms of subjective production of learning related to online interactions that dispenses with physical presence.

The subjective configuration of the learner's identity as a resource for self-knowledge and self-recognition is dynamic and subject to new student placements that extend throughout the student's life. Researchers studying the subject agree that these experiences open various possibilities for the meaning and positioning of the self (Valdés et al. 2016).

It is necessary to support the university students in the construction of a strong learner identity through various access strategies and production of knowledge, giving students insights about themselves so that they can align their learning trajectories to their interests and motivations.

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do tipo: "ah fazer uma comunidade com os meus alunos", ou tentar pensar em coisas novas para inovar em sala de aula. Então, não é só pensar nos pensadores [teóricos da Psicologia] que a gente estudou ou em todas aquelas ideais, né? [Não é só pensar em] como acontecem as coisas, ou tentar explicar aquilo, mas também pensar por fora [do conteúdo]. Como eu posso fazer para facilitar a minha comunicação com os meus futuros alunos?

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The Teacher in the in-Between Place: Teacher Identity in ODL

Fabrícia Teixeira Borges, Ilka Miglio de Mesquita, and Andrea Cristina Versuti

1 The Teacher in the in-Between Place: Teacher Identity in ODL

The concern with identity is not new, but it has never been so discussed as in the present times. Stuart Hall (2005), a cultural studies theorist, explains that one can notice "a true discursive explosion around the concept of identity" (Hall 2005, p. 103). Why is identity so widely discussed? For Hall, the social theory argument for the question points to the identity crisis itself, because "the old identities, which for so long stabilized the social world, are in decline, giving rise to new identities and fragmenting the modern individual, hitherto seen as a unified subject " (Hall 2005, p. 7).

With the purpose of understanding identity today, Hall (re)constructs conceptions of identity and their character of change in late modernity. In this sense, he weaves concepts of identity linked to the subject of the Enlightenment, the sociological subject and the postmodern subject. How can we think, then, the teacher and his identity construction in this course? What's more, how do new technologies, especially in ODL, impact the teacher's construction of self?

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Thus, we intend to discuss, in this article, the teaching identity, a tangle of threads and textures that articulate both their knowledge and life histories and the academic paths they follow. Our objective is to analyze and discuss the identity constitution of teachers, as an inter-place, who work in distance education of a higher education institution in Sergipe, Brazil, from interviews about their academic pathways as well as the impact of their work in distance Education.

Therefore, it is indispensable to build the concept of Identity here, to also think about the identity of the distance learning teacher. To do so, we not only followed reading paths and sought the definition of identity in the mapping of these printed reflections, but we also discovered how identities are produced in times of "capitalist modernity", "late modernity", "postmodernity", "liquid modernity" or simply "modernity". Nonetheless, a dated modernity, which brings about changes in actions, in thinking, including the definition of what identity is. When, then, we think of modernity as opposed to contemporaneity, the question of the teacher's identity in his broad performances is recurrent, and important for our reflection.

The changes in the conception of identity to determine the subject of late modernity are predicted by the lived historicity itself. First, by the birth of Renaissance humanism, which placed man at the center of the universe and gave him the faculty and the ability to investigate and decipher the mysteries of nature. Second, by the very meaning given to the rational explanations imprinted by the rational and scientific man, the one who understands nature and human history. Third, the modern subject emerges from "a more social conception of the subject. The individual has come to be seen as more localized and 'defined' within these great structures and sustaining formations of modern society" (Hall 2005, p. 26). We, therefore, come to the conception given to the identity of the subject in late modernity: that of open, contradictory, unfinished, fragmented identities.

To analyze the issue of identity and difference, Woodward (2000) offers elements that can contribute to the explanation of how identities are formed and maintained. The author's ideas can be summarized as follows: one needs to conceptualize and divide identity into its different dimensions to understand how it works; identity often "involves essentialist claims about who belongs and who does not belong to a particular identity group" (Woodward 2000, p. 13); these claims may focus on representations based on essentialist versions of history and assumed as unchanging truths.

Identity is relational and difference is represented by a symbolic mark; identity may also be linked to social and material conditions; the social and the symbolic, each of them, even when referring to different processes, is "necessary for the construction and maintenance of identities"; it is essential in the conceptualization of identity to verify the classification systems established between two or more groups; identities are not unified because there may be contradictions within them; it is still necessary to explain "why people assume their identity positions and identify with them" (Woodward 2000, p. 15).

In the interplay between identity and representation, Kathryn Woodward (2000) shows that the meanings, which bring sense to our experiences and to who we are, are produced through representations, by which individual and collective identities are

established. The symbolic systems, upon which representation is based, can provide answers to questions such as: "Who am I? What could I become? Who do I want to be? Discourses and systems of representation build the places from which individuals can position themselves and from which they can speak" (Woodward 2000, p. 17). The meanings imprinted by the discourses only become effective "if they recruit us as subjects." In this sense, the "positions we take and with which we identify constitute our identities" (Woodward 2000, p. 55).

Identity in modernity today lives the emergence of interstices, which are characterized by the overlap and displacement of domains of difference, in which the interests of the community or the cultural value are negotiated. Cultural clashes arising out of the antagonism or affiliation itself are articulated by a complex negotiation that "gives authority to cultural hybrids that emerge in times of historical transformation." The right to express oneself does not depend on the persistence of tradition, but the discourse is nourished by the power of tradition, the recognition or identification granted by tradition. "By reenacting the past, it introduces other immeasurable cultural temporalities in the invention of tradition" (Bhabha 2005 p. 21).

Therefore, there is no possibility of a fixed identity, original in its precepts, but an identity produced from (re)constructed, (re)staged elements of a tradition, in a middle space and a revisionary time for interventions in the here and now.

The frontier work of culture requires an encounter with 'the new' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates an idea of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. This art not only takes up the past as a social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, reconfiguring it as a contingent 'middle-place' that innovates and disrupts the present. The 'present-past' becomes part of the need, and not the nostalgia, to live (Bhabha 2005, p. 27).

In the desire for recognition, springs up a hybrid cultural space, as an intervention space, wherein identity is staged. The identities in contemporary times are produced by this movement that takes place in the interstitial spaces of border territories, in the inter-places, where something comes to be and differences arise. The building of identity today requires understanding in the process of continuous transformation of social life through which social, professional, cultural, and political identity pass.

Identity has lost its old frame of reference and reveals itself as something to be invented, not discovered. Therefore, Bauman (2005) draws attention to the importance of the debate on the theme of identity and warns against seeking comforting answers in the classic founders of Sociology, to the problems of identity in times of "liquid modernity". "When identity loses the social anchors that made it appear 'natural', predetermined and non-negotiable, 'identification' becomes increasingly more important for individuals who desperately seek a 'we' to which they can ask for access" (Bauman 2005, p. 30). Maintaining something that unites or seeking group affiliations, which allow us to experience a sense of belonging and to build identity are part of a struggle against the loss of reference, in a logic of dissolution or fragmentation of values that had kept individuals stable until then.

Therefore, it is essential to define who we are and to which group we belong. So it is with teachers, where relationships in the construction of their own identities and their belongings have the clarity of the links, even if imaginary, that keep us

as a group. Collective identity located, perhaps, in interstitial zones, borders, or in-between places, but imprinted in the movement of manifestations and constitution of memories.

We will articulate here, then, identity as ideological positions that are built from verbal interactions. In this sense, we will adopt some concepts that delineate identity not as fixed, but as mobile places that are established in the interloculation with the groups and the stories to which we belong. (Bakhtin 2014, 2015; Harré 1999; Harré and Moghaddam 2003; Harré and Van Langenhove 1998). In this sense, it is possible to think of identity as a boundary, but one established by language, as proposed by Bakhtin 2014) by the dialogic dimension of relations. In this conception, the flow of positions, of the self and the other, configure themselves with dialogic constructions in the contemporary transits of the coincidence between spatiality and temporality, therefore of Chronotopes. Language is the space of ideological struggles (Bhabha 2005; Bakhtin 2015) that are established from the tensions of exotopy. It is the self and the other, which in their interactions and tensions produce the identity configuration, in our particular case the teachers who live experiences in person and in distance learning.

Identity, then, will be approached here as a creative configuration of oneself in which the other, the interlocutor, is present, therefore from an in-between place. The self-configuration (identity) is perceived by the other as an aesthetic, in which morals and activities are constructed from an ideologically and historically positioned verbal interaction (Borges 2008; Borges et al. 2016; Borges and Barbato 2015). Thus we have the questions that guide us: How then will the identity of the ODL teacher be given? What are the aesthetic configurations that constitute themselves as belonging to the group of teachers? What are the tensions that disrupt an identity that is constantly developing but screaming for an understanding of the new technological and cultural dynamics of the world?

The identity configuration of the distance education teacher occurs in dialogue with the students via VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). The mediation and the way of identity building cross over the times of the face-to-face encounters and now transit through a virtual space that extends the borders and at the same time bridges spaces and times. Belonging to a world of "liquid" identities in motion, the teacher also passes through these movements in their identity constructions. The "Who I am" and "how I am perceived" in their daily configuration, in their ways of performing their activities, are different from face-to-face. It resides in the motion-space of a spectacular organization (Dèbord 1997) that reaches the student in their interactions. In the message thread, the teacher is part of a written dialogue, deprived of the day-to-day oral routine. By their choices and by their virtual presence of activity. But they move through social media, making it a place of meaning making of self as well.

2 Studyng Teacher´s Identities from ODL

For the construction of the data of this research we made narrative and episodic interviews about both the in-person and distance learning teaching practices and the activities developed by 4 teachers. Narrative interviews focused on their life histories and episodic interviews aimed at revealing their academic trajectories as of their entry into distance education. The interviews were individual, all interviews were recorded and later fully transcribed for the analysis of empirical information. The duration of each interview was on average 40 min, and each participant was interviewed twice. During the investigation process we use fictitious names to assure confidentiality and protect the privacy of the participants.

We used thematic analysis through the dialogical analysis of conversation adapted to psychology (Barbato and Caixeta 2011; Linell 1995; Mey 2000; Rosa et al. 2009; Silva and Borges, 2017). Initially, the interviews were transcribed ipsis litteris. From the interview transcripts, we identified the themes developed in the different parts of the discourse, as well as the subthemes that best characterized each discourse stage, from which we built a semiotic map with the main meanings perceived in the interviews.

3 The Teacher's Identity: Moving Between the Face-to-Face and the ODL

There is one single identity, that of teacher. However, it meanders through different places and positions when we observe the interviews of the participants. We noticed, as in other research done by us (Borges 2012; Borges et al. 2014; Borges et al. 2012; Borges et al. 2016); that the identity construction in the interviewed teachers is also based upon the relationship with the student, with the other that guarantees their alterity, positioning them in the interaction (Harré 1999). It is from the student and his "absence" that the teachers' identity and role are placed

in tension, evidencing a conflict experienced by the teacher identity crisis when working in distance learning.

The following is the map built from the interviews with the ODL teachers: (Fig. 1)

See below an excerpt of the interview with one of the teachers.

Researcher: What is the teacher's role in ODL?

Teacher: It really is something that. I don't have an answer to give you. Because… We're not there right? And I don't know how the student perceives this. How does he feel the teacher, he is there watching, there is a screen and he is watching. So the teacher, the role of the teacher in the classroom is. It is not just pouring knowledge, but it is making that student reflect, that the student. He. Connects the knowledge of the subject with his daily life, with which he is stimulated. So I think there are a lot of questions that I think are really about stimulating learning

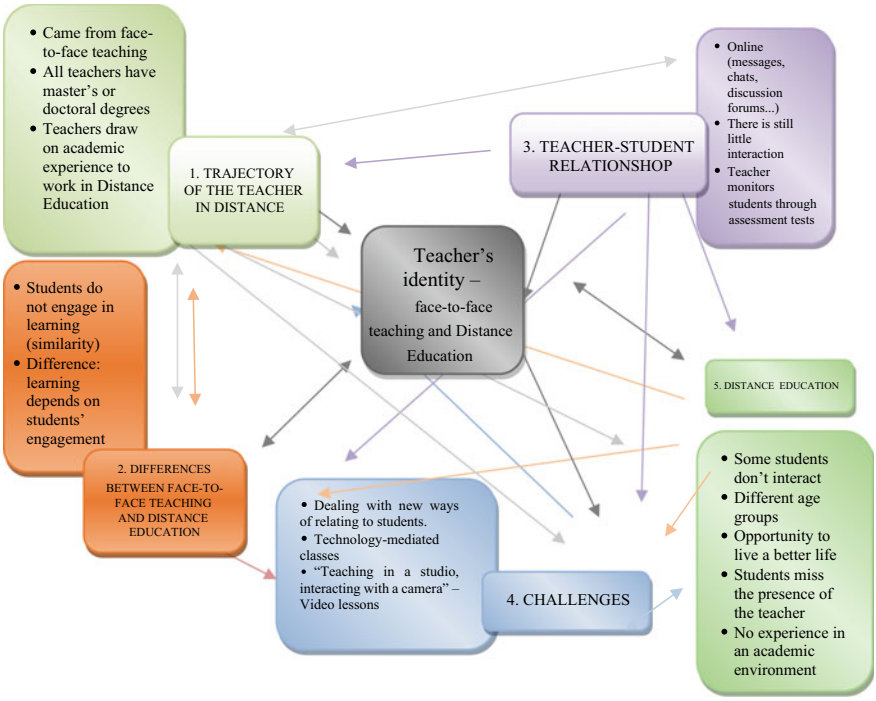

Fig. 1 Maps of identity threads

> right? Because learning it is not a one-way thing, I tell my students: you are responsible for your learning, if you think you will sit in the chair, listen to the teacher for an hour and fifty and you will be able to acquire something, you will not, so then you have the active role. And quite often that student does not see this active role, so our role is not paramount: the teacher is everything in the teaching process. He is not! The student also has a very important role. He needs to seek it, he needs to realize this. (Prof. Margarida)

The teacher interviewed makes clear in her speech the difficulty of perceiving herself as a teacher in ODL "I don't have an answer to give you. Because… We're not there, right? ". We noticed that the absence of oneself in the relationship with the other generates a tension that we understand as a movement to seek oneself as a teacher. Where? How? In what relationship? It is in a place that is not yet defined, because it changes from a face-to-face to a virtual relationship. At times face-to-face, at other times distance learning. But later in her speech, the teacher develops arguments that enable us to understand that there is an attempt to build oneself and the other in this relationship. Always from the student: "Because learning is not a one-way thing, I tell my students: you are responsible for your learning." Then, Margarida begins to identify with other functions of her activity.

How is this explained? For Stuart Hall (2005) broad changes in social structures have shaken the subject's frames of reference and thus do not have stable anchoring in their social world. It recognizes, if you will, the fragmentation or dislocation of modern identities, that is, they are being decentralized, no longer fixed or unique. In a constant process of transformation, the identities in late modernity are "constructed in multiple ways along discourses, practices and positions that may intersect or be antagonistic." (Hall 2005, p. 108)

From this line of analysis, Silva (2000) questions the identities defined in what they are in their essence, or sameness: I am Brazilian, I am from Minas Gerais, I am a historian and that is it. For the author:

> Identity and difference have to be actively produced. They are neither creatures of the natural world nor of a transcendental world, but of the cultural and social world. It is we who manufacture it in the context of cultural and social relations. Identity and difference are social and cultural creations (Silva 2000, p. 76).

It can then be said that the affirmation of identity and difference establishes connections with power relations. Both identity and difference "are not simply defined; they are imposed. They do not live harmoniously side by side in a field without hierarchies; they are disputed" (Silva 2000, p. 81). This dispute, translated by the affirmation of identity and the enunciation of difference, shows "the desire of the different and asymmetrically situated social groups to guarantee privileged access to social goods" (Silva 2000, p. 81).

4 Theme 1: Construction of the Teacher in ODL

All teachers interviewed started working in ODL after some time in face-to-face teaching, which seems to be, until now, one of the characteristics that mark the academic path of most distance learning teachers: starting to work in distance education from a collective history of ODL itself in the institutions they work. I say, so far, because you can already see a generation of teachers who start their academic career in distance learning, not having worked in face-to-face, classroom teaching previously.

Prof. Jorge: It's face-to-face that say face-to-face and distance learning that when I started at distance learning I had already worked over 30 years as a face-to-face and university professor at PUC and so on from Rio Grande Sul and now I work in undergraduate face-to-face courses […] 32 h in ODL I am either at the Center of Social Communication (CCS) transmitting via satellite or I am giving online support for students or I am producing like now after practically three years 2009 2010, 2011 2012 restructuring all the material that was posted on the OLE, which worked well for some time and can still work; but which has already been streamlined and improved … The texts were revised at the end

of the semester we are finally improving this proposal that will be education as much as classroom education or just a mode that happens via communication media that no longer limit in time and space this relationship between the educator and the student […]

Prof. Margarida: Look … my experience in ODL started about a year ago before we had an experience that was a shorter experience, of a partnership that formed with a Social Service college and a university in Brasilia my training is in Social Service and a college that had closed and the university made a deal with the Ministry of Education to complement the training of those students who no longer had a college halfway through their courses and then we built some material some handouts and later we came to have contact with these students in classes that were not via satellite as they are today right? So the contact was by phone via e-mail, chat and the material that was their book and they there in Brasilia it was such a bad thing because it was an emergency thing we didn't have well structured Social Service course it was very exhausting for the teachers, so much of the production of the material that was a soemthing very new for us it was the written language right? It has a very different connotation it has to interact with the student and this was very challenging for us and we did it and also challenging because it is for our training in Social Service there is the body of work right? The Social Service category in Brazil is extremely opposed to distance learning right? So we had to reconcile this direction that the teacher takes in Brazil to be contrary to distance learning and to what the university was pleading with us and then it was done and after that the Social Work the ODL Social Work course it assumed a new format which is the format that exists today together with other undergraduate and licensure courses

5 Theme 2: Differences Between Face-to-Face and Distance Learning

Prof. Jorge: Well I'm so delighted with ODL is how enthusiastic I am to get into a classroom like this morning with sixty students and stand upside down on my hands and tomorrow not a little later from five to ten at night I enter a TV studio here at UNIT that has really cool equipment right? And you have two classes there until ten at night and you are absolutely alone in a studio and making it happen feeling that there must be one now there must be two three thousand people that are following me at that moment

Prof. Margarida— So I see that the big difference is the classroom itself it is the contact with the student, the exchange of knowledge, obviously the fact that I already have a face-to-face experience a great teaching experience has made it possible for me to hold a dialogue right? From the intonation of your voice, your look, not going too fast all of this is not controlled in the classroom is in ODL, you have to look, you can't go too fast nor too slow, you have to have the answer because you are being recorded there huh?

We noticed in the teachers' discourse that the difference between face-to-face and distance education is important for how they position themselves as teachers. Although many draw from their face-to-face experiences in classroom teaching, the differences take over their reorganization as teachers. The lack of face-to-face contact with the student, their mode of communication and the resources for interaction.

6 Theme 3: Relationship Between Teacher and Student

Prof. Jorge— because they are in the countryside they go to the center where the tutors are there is the big screen there is the group so even though the teachers and the whole program come from a few hundred kilometers away and they are interacting via satellite and via this technological apparatus anyway right? From this extremely new virtual media they have support, so it's one thing I insist I think about over and over again if the learner is induced and seduced. Think of it! a Philosophy class with this conceited guy I tell stories I stand upside down on my hands […] But then you get eighteen hundred e-mails [] saying teacher when you go live all through one hundred minutes the class is alert and you can't hear a fly in the classroom there at the center because you tell stories you interact there are the tweets they send I mean and when it comes to ODL and Philosophy imagine that in this country you are wondering ask two girls about what their experience with Philosophy was like in high school and you get a boring teacher who spoke of Plato and Aristotle and other meaningless stuff and then take a test where you had to reproduce what such-and-such said right?

The positions taken by the subject are in the chronotopes of their activities, in the space-time relations or in the different systems of interactions.

> It is precisely because identities are constructed within and not outside discourse that we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional locations, within specific discursive formations and practices, by means of specific strategies and initiatives. Moreover, they emerge within the game of specific modes of power and are thus more the product of marking difference and exclusion than the sign of an identical, naturally

> constructed unity, of an 'identity' in its traditional meaning. - that is, an all-inclusive sameness identity, a seamless identity, whole, without internal differentiation (Hall 2005, p. 109).

With the incorporation of technologies in education in the current context, students and teachers yearn for some form of inclusion and adaptation. The former seeking their education and in need of guidance; the latter, having to know what and how to teach. With the innumerable existing sources of information and the considerable ease of access, the teacher's role as content transmitter is outdated and must be rethought, as well as the way to deal with new students, who are increasingly better prepared for the dynamism that technology favors.

In this new scenario, therefore, there is a change in the roles of teacher and student: both have to develop new skills and attitudes and always remain open to new conceptions about teaching and learning. It can be said that the change in the role of the teacher constitutes the great challenge posed by distance education. Given this process, the most effective teaching technologies in distance education will be those that offer better communication and enable learning. Everything possible should be done to bring back the connection between teacher and student in a similar way as that of the face-to-face classroom. If distance education ensures this connection, it could offer a quality leap for education in its broadest sense.

Kathryn Woodward (2000), in turn, points out that identity is relational, built by the marking of difference and sustained by exclusion, so it is both symbolic and social. In the text "Identity and Difference: A Theoretical and Conceptual Introduction", Woodward (2000) begins by quoting a story narrated by writer and broadcaster Michel Ignatieff, where he shows the issue of identity and difference in Serbian and Croatian relations. In this sense, identity is relational because:

> Serbian identity depends, for its existence, on something outside it: namely, another identity (Croatia), an identity that it is not, which differs from the Serbian identity, but which, nonetheless, provides the conditions for it to exist. Serbian identity is distinguished by what it is not. To be Serbian is to be a non-Croatian (Woodward 2000, p. 9).

The difference is thus marked by the denial of any similarity between the two peoples. Contemporary identities are characterized by conflict, contestation or possible crises that are sustained by the appeal to historical antecedents, in the sense of seeking the past to reaffirm one's identity. This, for Woodward (2000), can generate new identities. Therefore, in relation to the constitutions of teacher identity, we highlight the construction of identities not by geographical but by symbolic territory, understanding the activities as ideological markers of established relationships, in this case the difference between teachers and students, face-to-face and virtual.

So to speak, the author questions whether identity is fixed, whether there is a "true" identity, and points out that in order to address identity and difference there are alternatives for analysis, and discussions often focus on the tension between essentialist and non-essentialist identity perspectives. She shows that to work with the issues of identity and difference, it is necessary to clarify the core concepts that involve the discussion and also a theoretical framework for the understanding of the processes that point to the construction of identities.

7 Tema 4: Difficulties ODL

Profa. Margarida— The hard thing is, if I didn't have the experience that I have, and it is for me my great differential, it is precisely the contact that does not exist this exchange you do not see the student's reaction you do not observe this student right? So you're talking and being recorded, the students are there watching you but you don't have this feedback, you don't know how it is being received from the other side and this is very important for the teacher right? Even to change the voice intonation, to speak louder, because the student is more distracted, stop when the student does not understand and then return to, my class in the face-to-face classroom is very guided in relation to the student, so much is that I have the same classes with the same content and my relationship to productivity is totally different, because the student when interacting with the teacher sets a totally different dynamic in the classroom. So you're working the same content in a different room and another and the other is really pretty tiring, demotivating for the student and demotivating for the teacher because there is no exchange this is the big issue in ODL and it challenges us to keep up that pace all the time without having the exchange, so in relation to training it is how it came into this process right?

If he has the teaching practice. If he has the pedagogical experience this is quickly resolved. Because it's really about you learning new ways of interacting. But he needs to have this, this pedagogical look and then I think this is solved because it is really about you learning new ways of interaction I do not see myself, for example, being another teacher in ODL. I am the same, my language with the student, the way I speak to the student is the same way I speak in person. Right? The very same way. My concern that the student is following or not I do not have this feedback but my way is. So I think that the teacher is not prepared, but he is not prepared because he has not experienced it, today the teachers who are here I believe they already are, I no longer believe it is a very difficult thing to be resolved no.

Prof. Jorge; (…) there in the VLE there are many tasks there is a Philosophy book and there is the chat scheduled for such and such day he has to access because the teacher is there in real time with colleagues he can interact […] there is a discussion thread that has a series of questions that all students are invited to participate in and think a little and post their idea to hold an. Exchange. It is a work results […], for example, we are in the month of May already in the final stretch of the second semester yes because we started in February, March, April and May, beginning of June it already ends. Think of it! That there are people who don't know it yet. They have not yet realized the first assessments have gone

by already, a world of activities already happened they come desperate, a message from a student teacher what can I do, I'm enrolled in such and such discipline. Imagine that! I mean if there is no maturity in the counterpart nothing will happen […]

The difficulties that arise in distance learning are always compared to the face-to-face classroom, and focus mainly on the lack of contact and communication with the student. Teaching identities, by crossing boundaries between the face-to-face and the virtual, and moving freely between the symbolic territories of different identities, subvert the boundaries that delineate the territories, thus creating interstitial zones. In his analysis, Silva (2000) refers to movements that subvert and complicate identity. These are interstitial territories or zones where different identities move and hybridize.

These symbolic interstitial zones can mean the movement of different identities resulting in hybridization by the conjunction of different factors that blend together, bringing down the hegemonic identity without conflict. According to the author: "If the movement between borders highlights the instability of identity, it is on the borders themselves, on the thresholds, in the interstices, that their precariousness becomes more visible" (Silva 2000, p. 88). And it is about these areas of subversion that teacher identities are reorganized into spaces and chronotopes where new consciousnesses interact, as processes of a place in between.

8 Theme 5: Students in ODL

Prof. Jorge: Juliana, Danyelle: Where is Juliana? Where is Danyelle? They are in college they say proudly […] why this pride because they know that whenever they need to ask something ask Juliana or Danyelle right? Ask the girls why? Because you're in college, man. Such-and-such is not in college could not know this but my daughter is in college they ask one thing completely off and you can say mother but I have not yet studied this and they do not want to know if you have already dealt with it or not you You're in college and you have to get things done if they say or do something stupid, daughter! You're in college! […] they expect a young person, beyond the specific subjects, to be a thinking human being, so you can develop that even from a distance, you can seduce in the sense that they are motivated to read. I hear it all the time teacher the other day a girl said to me: teacher after our classes there is no news on television that go by without me asking why they are saying this why is Globo talking like this and the other talking the way they are, […] what they are hiding not that she is not able to sit in front of the television for entertainment, to play for fun she gets some things from a speech which hide other things unsaid and this is the formation of a critical spirit so well I'm so delighted with distance learning.

A crucial point in this perspective is to pay attention to the importance of the mediation of knowledge in virtual environments once knowledge occurs in the relationship between the Subject and the Object. In distance education, there are several mediating elements between the Subject and the Object of knowledge. The mediation of knowledge in distance education, using information and communication technologies, must integrate these elements and rely on them to their advantage.

The goal is that the presentation of content is made available in various ways. Each student (respecting their cognitive style) should anchor the construction of knowledge from one or more of them, using the different potentialities and resources they offer. The material available on the Internet therefore represent one of these possibilities. After all, as Pedro Demo would say, "Virtual reality has not just been discovered. It has always been part of reality - the gods are seen as real, though not physical. The feeling of missing a child who is far away or who has died creates its virtual presence. Reality is multidimensional." (Demo 2003, p. 83)

9 Final Considerations

If there is something coherent to be done in Distance Education is exactly to break the tendency to see it as a merely profitable service, and incorporate new languages (imagery, sound) in the teaching and learning process in these virtual environments, not dissociating the use of technologies from each society's unique and institutional conditions, as well as from the subjective conditions of teachers in particular.

Precisely because we are programmed, we are able to stand before programming and think about it, question and even to divert from it (…) we are capable of infering even within the programming of which we are a result (…) the human vocation is to "know" the world through the language we were able to invent socially (…) we become able to unveil the world and "speak the world" (…) In this sense, language is not only a vehicle of the act of knowing, but it is the act itself (…). We need men and women who, along with technical and scientific knowledge, are also inclined to know the world differently through non canonical types of knowledge. The denial of this would be to reproduce the hegemonic process of the ruling classes, which always determine what the dominated classes can and should know (Freire 1993, p. 241).

We assume that, as stated by Valente (1993,1999), technologies, when paying attention to the pedagogical component, can create circumstances in which the expression of individuals is broader and learning encompasses other aspects beyond only the formal, logical one, such as the aesthetic and the emotional aspects, the Cyberwriting and thus, meet the symbolic demands and the hypertextual logic that are characteristic of the current context, as well as build more plural, collective and interactive knowledge. This is because the formation of networks of interacting people facilitates the exploration of other human dimensions, enabling the construction of different teacher identity processes.

Affirming identity and difference implies inclusion and exclusion, the definition of what we are and what we are not, belonging and not belonging, the separation

between "us" and "them". Therefore, "it means delineating borders. It means making distinctions between what is inside and what is outside. (…) This establishment of boundaries, this separation and distinction, suppose and, at the same time, affirm and reaffirm power relations" (Silva 2000, p. 82).

An "in-between place" in then created, analyzed by Homi Bhabha (2005) as a bridge that determines neither one or another place, but a border territory, a result of identity hybridization. Bhabha (2005) shows that in contemporary times "we are at the moment of transit when space and time intersect to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, interior and exterior, inclusion and exclusion" (Bhabha 2005, p. 19). This sense of disorientation is a disturbance of direction, an exploratory movement of individuals to position themselves. However, the author states that:

> What is theoretically innovative and politically crucial is the need to move beyond the narratives of original and early subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences. These 'in-between places' provide the ground for the elaboration of strategies of subjectivation - singular or collective - that initiate new signs of identity and innovative positions of collaboration and contestation in the act of defining the very idea of society. (Bhabha 2005, p. 20)

In this sense, Bakhtin (2015) also explicits that identity is built on the exotopy of two consciousnesses. The dialogic interaction is established between the subjects and their exchanges provided by the encounter in a chronotopy, in which time and space coincide. But we wonder, in ODL, what is the time and space of the encounter? For if both are virtualized, then we no longer speak of a physical or virtual space, since in asynchronous communications time differs between the interlocutors. Therefore, we can say that the times and the spaces are those of the consciousness of the interlocutors. Teachers and students then build their identities in the dialogic games provided by the interlocution of their consciousnesses.

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Educating the Future Self - An Interdisciplinary View of Online Teaching - Learning Process

The Linguistic Landscape Approach as a Strategy for Reflection and Intervention in Higher Education: Mediations, Practices and Voices to Overcome Borders

María Beatriz Taboada

1 Introduction

This paper recovers didactic experiences developed in a university subject of a teaching training course, a context we consider essential to foster a critical look at our immediate discursive environment. In our proposal, the look is mainly centered in the identification, denaturation and critical analysis of violent and resistance discourses in the linguistic landscape of the city.

The notion of linguistic landscape, linked to the work of Landry and Bourhis (1997) and to which we will pay special attention in a following paragraph, refers to the way in which the discourses are present in the public spaces, in different formats (posters, shop signs, graffiti, etc.) and environments (institutional, commercial, etc.).

From here we take the challenge to look at our surroundings again, and to do so in the context of university teachers' education, also outlining a hybrid methodology which transcends the classroom limits employing the inclusion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), not as an end but as a means to strengthen the experiences fostered from the subject. These challenges are oriented to the development of competences not only for the training but also for the teachers' participation and support of didactic and practice decisions that we intend to analyze herein.

With this aim, we will briefly introduce the experiences to be analyzed within the institutional environment and also the decisions which support our subject project, which will allow us to interpret them as proposals located in and questioned by our didactic objectives but also by contextual factors. We will also explore the concept of linguistic landscape that we work to understand the way how this perspective let us place ourselves in front of violent discourses and discourse of resistance. In this

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framework, we are interested in revising the didactic decisions taken, in dialogue with our students' voices, to recover the way how their experiences are narrated.

2 Some Contextual Dimensions for Our Experience

As we have anticipated in the headline of this chapter, our interest is placed in the mediations, practices and voices articulated in a proposal thought to go beyond time-space boundaries but also those imposed by our own looks, by those elements we naturalize, and thus, we stop seeing.

This proposal is part of the Linguistic Seminar in the last year of the Language and Literature Teachers' training course in the Autonomous University of Entre Ríos (UADER), in Concepción del Uruguay,[1] and aims at the critical analysis of discursive materials included in the linguistic landscape of the city and its institutions. Departing from a look at our own institutional context, we know that every educational institution appears as a complex "ecological space where cultures cross" (Pérez Gómez 1995, p. 7, our translation) in which the public, academic, social, educational and private culture are tensed together and that this tension can only be addressed from the located knowledge which searches to promote not only reflection but also social transformation.

Methodologically, we aim at emphasizing the learning moments and the students' prominence, using a project-based design. In this way, we direct our actions towards learner-centered learning which promotes learning by doing.

Within this framework, we are interested in reflecting on the way how a design based on a hybrid methodology or blended learning allows us to address linguistic resistance and violent landscapes with our students—notions which will be analyzed in the following paragraphs. We understand the blended learning as "the combination of different training 'media' (technologies, activities, and types of events) to create an optimum training program for a specific audience. The term 'blended' means that traditional instructor-led training is being supplemented with other electronic formats" (Bersin 2004, p. 15). This means a design which combines class activities and activities mediated by information and communication technologies, based on the objectives of the subject and the students' needs.

In the subject proposal, the later activities involve the asynchronous exchange with other students and the interaction with the discourses provided in different formats, platforms, and applications, while class activities foster exchanges with small groups and with the class about tasks which are mainly practical, where teachers[2] adopt a guiding role. We also have face-to-face tutorial classes and an online consulting space

[1] In the context of this chapter we will focus on a project-based work proposed by our students during the school year 2018 and 2019.

[2] The subject currently has a teaching team formed by an associate professor, professor in charge of practical activities and an auxiliary student, who work together in the university classroom, sometimes with different sequential activities, and other times simultaneously, accompanying the analysis of processes performed by the students.

to accompany the development of the two articulated projects: one group project that we will analyze in this chapter—mapping of linguistic landscape—and one individual project—discourse analysis of a corpus—which encloses the designed path.

The activities suggested to our students within the group project refer to a methodological design of the flipped classroom (DeLozier and Rhodes 2017; O'Flaherty and Phillips 2015) as a possible model for blended learning (Graham et al. 2014). The project that we will analyze involves collaborative work among pairs guided by the teaching staff during the face-to-face classes, while the students interact with the contents autonomously by the use of bibliographic materials and other resources available online, in extra-class time. However, even though the student-student and student-teacher transactions constitute the axis for the face-to-face activities (Denner 2019), in our proposal the contents are not relegated to a supporting role nor are the interactions limited to the face-to-face activities. Complementary reading material provided, both as pre-task and post-task activities performed before and after the face-to-face encounters and which consider reading as a strategic activity to think and learn (Solé 2005), are brought to life again and worked with in the classes, with a look into the content but also into the epistemological potential of reading and writing.

On the other hand, we would like to point out that the virtual activities of the subject focus on a closed group on Facebook, created in the year 2015 where students who have taken the subject since that school year take part. In this way we have a group which grows year after year and whose members—some are current students of the subject, others are students who have already passed the subject and finished their course of studies—not only have access to the materials, resources and instructions brought up by the teaching staff but also interact, provide their opinions, ask questions and suggest complementary material, from a polyphony which enriches us and let us think of ourselves as a "community of practice" (Wenger 2001, our translation), as a group of people who share their worries and decide to delve into their knowledge or experience interacting regularly (Wenger et al. 2002). The space also fosters a sustained dialogue between graduates, students and teachers, while also paving the way to strengthen the bond between those who have already graduated, the course of studies and the Faculty.

This group constitutes a space of privilege for exchanges about the subject in situations which are not face-to-face: here instructions are stated to foster the deepening of the analysis encouraged in class, advances are shared, the group share their doubts and collaboratively contribute to dispelling them, materials are exchanged, etc. Also, from this space, access to suggested readings is provided, together with the guides and subject documents, and to the narrative of the face-to-face encounters which take place among the students.

We understand that the use of ICT resources which we promote encourage an autonomous but also scaffolding work and an increase in students' prominent role in the learning processes, from an ongoing process by doing. The design is presented as a continuous task which recovers advantages of both face-to-face interactions and distance interactions mediated by ICT, knowing that their use requires both a didactic project which provides the necessary framework and also an institutional plan.

However, we assume the potentialities and also the limitations of the methodological design, the specific time of the course of studies and the institutional context in which it is implemented. First, while we recognize the importance of defying the more stables methodologies in the teachers' education, we also understand that our experience is very limited and that it shall be thought of as another instance in the interaction of our students, future teachers, with ICT tools and more dynamic ways of building up knowledge. A general look at the course of studies lets us observe that there is still an isolated use of them, which is not sufficiently articulated with other elements of the academic curriculum, and which is more at the service of information supply than as tools to expand the limits of the formative experiences we propose to our students. In this way, a secondary use, many times linked to the technical needs of the curriculum, is promoted. Thus, the ICT appear "more to reproduce elements which we used to reproduce without them, or to make those elements more attractive, than as elements which allow us to present new communication scenes for the learning where students and teachers interact in more innovative ways of teaching" (Cabero Almenara 2015, our translation).

Although we might think of the experience that we will analyze as a step towards a more autonomous and ongoing work lined up with our students, we also want to put the question, from this introduction, about the limits and possibilities offered by the ICTs in the development of proposals at university level and, in particular, in the teachers' education. The orientation of the question aims at promoting, from our subject, a reflection about how the incorporation of ICT tools can let us establish, or not, more critical and transforming relations with our immediate contexts, encouraging a closer, less "mediated" and more committed look.

3 Linguistic Landscape, Violent Discourses and Discourses of Resistance

The notion of linguistic landscape lets us address the relationships existing between the language and the public and/or institutional space, from how it is expressed in posters, signs, graffiti and other discursive materials. Besides, it places us in front of a multidimensional and multidisciplinary object which forces us to look around again, to re-think the relationships between the subjects and objects of study, our research context and the methodological strategies we use.

The landscape has been the object of interest of different disciplines, which have addressed it from different methodological and theoretical perspectives. However, the studies of the linguistic landscape are relatively recent. In this way, as stated by Castillo Lluch y Sáez Rivera (2013), "to the history of the arts, architecture, urban design and gardening, sociology, anthropology, geography, ecology, literary theory, philosophy, aesthetics, etc., it has recently been added the linguistics, which takes the written signs from the public spaces and analyses them considering their social representations" (p. 11, our translation).

Thus, in their pioneer work and from the perspective of the sociolinguistic analysis, Landry y Bourhis (1997) link the linguistic landscape with "the visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory or region" (p. 23).

The landscape is a product of a certain cultural perception and it is introduced through the distance. This distance explains, for example, the difference between the natural physical space and the landscape as a sociocultural construct. We can observe here a clear link with the "spatial turn" of the human sciences since the linguistic landscape is in charge of explaining how a social construct of the space is produced from the linguistic uses.

In this context, it is possible to differentiate between outdoor and indoor linguistic landscapes to refer, for example, to discursive materials that we find in squares, parks, streets, public transport, on the one hand, and those we can find in public spaces of institutions such as schools or universities or even in commercial environments. For example, we can think of the shop windows or signs inside a shop but placed in such a way that any passerby can see them.

Thus, we are in an environment full of signs of very different types: ephemeral, more or less long-lasting and permanent; static and mobiles; graphic, linguistic and multimodal; monolingual and multilingual; standing alone or in dialogue with other signs nearby; silenced, etc. Besides, these signs present important challenges, both at the theoretical and methodological level: where does the linguistic landscape end? Are the pieces of clothing we use part of it? A tattoo? What discursive materials of a private sphere integrate it? And we could continue placing more questions.

Even though we will leave these questions open, we assume here the importance of the personal space in the linguistic landscape since, as stated by Martín Rojo (2012), "the body is drafted as a representation space which carries the recognition or the critic to its displacement around the city" (p. 282, our translation) (Fig. 1).

Finally, in all the spaces mentioned we can find discourses which allow us to approach to different realities: linguistic diversity, ethnolinguistic vitality, languages cohabitation, presence of global languages, as well as discursive violence and resistances. Our teaching proposal is focused on this last point.

We can assert, with no doubts, that we daily cohabit with resistance and violent discourses which integrate our linguistic landscapes although we might not always recognize them. Our departing point is a wide relational conception of the violence since it is not defined as "a substance or an isolated fact, totally complete and standing alone, but as social relations, or in other words, as the position certain social relations take" (Martínez Pacheco 2016, p. 15, our translation).

Many of the violent discourses we interact with constitute everyday micro-aggressions but the prefix is not used to refer to their dimensions but to the way how they impregnate our practices, in our surroundings, up to the point we can get to naturalize them or make them invisible. We will be able to recover this feature later, from the testimony provided by our students.

Resistance discourses, on the other hand, try to evince, defy, stop, revert the direction of violent practices, among which we find the discursive ones.

Facing these realities, from the proposal of the subject we are interested in analyzing violent signs and signs of resistance with verbal content as a way of

Fig. 1 Personal space and linguistic landscape (In the picture we can see a green scarf in favor of the legalization of abortion and an orange scarf belonging to the campaign that demands the separation between the State and the church in Argentina) (C. del Uruguay, 2018)

aggression and reply present in the linguistic landscape of our cities.[3] The implicit geolocation in the category of linguistic landscape demands not only to think about spatiality of those signs but also to bring it back in the context of our analysis; with this aim we resort to the application Urban Voices,[4] an online space of collaborative work which allows us to classify, locate and share photos to be analyzed later.

We understand that the proposal that we share herein also intends to face the tensions between the local and the global areas from the analysis proposed, at times when information and communication technology counts.

[3]The inclusive "we" which we use here refers to the inquiry, not only in the city where our faculty is but also in different cities and villages our students come from, all located in the Province of Entre Ríos, Argentina.

[4]The application was provided by Ph.D. Luisa Marín Rojo of the *Universidad Autónoma de Madrid*, adapted by the members of the *Observatorio del Discurso de la Asociación de Estudios sobre Discurso y Sociedad* (EDiSo), and can be retrieved from http://www.urbanvoices.net/. More information about the observatory and its proposal can be obtained in https://www.edisoportal.org/investigacion/observatorio-del-discurso.

4 About Territories, Landscapes and Borders: A Look to the Didactic Decisions Taken

As a starting point for the analysis of the didactic decisions taken by the subject team, we would like to try to answer the question of why we propose to analyze our linguistic landscapes to our students.

Here we need to present complementary answers since the analysis of the linguistic landscape as part of the subject Linguistic Seminar is both a means and an end in itself. A means since it lets us collaboratively address some challenges typical of the linguistic research linked to the way how we think our relationship with the objects of knowledge, our role as researchers, the methodological strategies at stake, the difficulties involved in articulating theoretical paths to analytical practices linked to the discourse analysis when in front of texts we interact with daily and yet, we may not always see. An end, in the sense that the analysis proposed searches for a more critical look towards our surroundings, not only from the experiences suggested by the subject but also in the teaching and learning processes encouraged by our students and future teachers. It is hereby intended to "raise awareness" (Bruner 1997, our translation), to accompany our students so that they can adopt an engaged and transforming look about society.

This also involved knowing that it is the culture that provides the tools to build our own world and to understand ourselves (Bruner 1997, our translation), turning the notion of dialogic and dynamic culture more necessary. Thus, following Guitart (2008):

> by "culture" we do not understand it as something merely physical, objective, far from human reality. On the contrary, people are responsible for the creation of realities when interpreting, valuing, discussing what happens to them, what surrounds them. In this way, culture is understood as shared symbols, concepts, meanings, practices which are defined and are generated through cultural units such as the family, the neighborhood, a community or a country. (p. 10, our translation)

From this perspective, education as a social practice is supported in a dialogical process which requires us to learn in and from the culture. It is set out in this way the need for mediation between cultural appearances and different ways of appropriation where the one who intercedes foster possibility conditions for the gathering, the dialogue and the transformation. Besides, it forces us to ask more questions: when and how is this context included in the classroom to be part of the object of knowledge? How much of what we teach encourages a critical and transforming look of the reality? The search for strategies to foster more critical-learning opportunities which encourage the demanded transformation, in this case, to accept that we are part of the environment we are analyzing, not only because we choose it as our object of study, but also because the same notion of context locates us inside it and it is from this place that we observe it and analyze it.

In our case, the decisions which support our work for this project—as we have previously explained, the first one of the school year—were articulated in a didactic sequence which started from the questioning about the notion of violence, addressed

the notion of linguistic landscape, provided tools for the mapping and the work in the Urban Voices platform, accompanied the process of material analyzes and the writing of a report—in the school year 2018[5]—and the oral presentation which closed the process. As supplementary activities, we requested our students to present their narrative expressing their experiences.

We can point out as a distinctive feature of the sequence the fact that it fosters an important interaction with different multimodal discourses—that is, discourses which include visual, audit and verbal resources, among others, to build senses—, both inside and outside the classroom. In this way, for example, the notion of violence is dealt with and questioned in class from the previous visualization of two videos of the Uruguayan band of street musicians *Agarrate Catalina*, both corresponding to the song "*La violencia*" (The violence). One is the official video clip of the song while the other shows a live presentation of this song performed by the street band.[6] Both discourses differ mainly in the graphic resources used and in the framework they are enclosed in. Thus, while the video clip starts with the song lyrics and shows different situations of violence taking place, in the live show one of the members starts talking about violence and includes a warning for the audience which results really meaningful for the objectives of the subject: "We'll talk about violence from the violence. Thus, we warn the spectators that the terminology to be used might offend some of those who are present here today, and for that we apologize but we are talking about violence" (Agarrate Catalina, La violencia—our translation).

In didactic terms, this is precisely the worthiest element of the resources: to introduce a violent discourse which builds up a representation of violence that also makes it its own topic. This lets us articulate it with one of the challenges we will present to our students: mapping discourses which are violent, and not about violence.

The work about pre-conceptions of violence and the way how it is materialized in the discourses will be the starting point to present the relationships and tensions between violence and resistance, wondering about their limits. The work about linguistic landscapes also articulates two different scenarios: while the mapping of the groups is focused in violent discourses, in the classroom we collaboratively address resistance discourses which shape a moving linguistic landscape, from a selection of photographs taken in the protest of 8th March (8M), Women's Day and International Women's Strike, in the city of Concepción del Uruguay.

All these activities are accompanied by bibliography which our students read outside the classroom and to which we resource back in our face-to-face classes or in the interactions in the Facebook Group of the subject (Fig. 2).

[5]As we have mentioned, in the context of this article we refer to experiences developed during the school years 2018 and 2019 and, even though both experiences were organized similarly, they differed in that only at the end of the first period mentioned, we requested the elaboration of a written report. In the second period, some limitations in the schedule of the subject forced us to withdraw this activity. However, we will try to include it again in the years to come.

[6]The mentioned videos are available at the following links: https://bit.ly/39TPdTO, https://bit.ly/2JL9gJj.

Fig. 2 Moving linguistic landscape: photography of the 8M taken by Antonella Cergneux (2019)

The analysis of photographs of the 8M points mainly at recognizing the polyphony or intertextuality[7] in the discourses, addressing the relationships of anchorage and relay established between a linguistic message and the images (Barthes 1964)[8]—when they exist—and analyzing the construction of enunciators, addressees and referents,[9] as instances of the process of enunciation. This process lets us address the relationships between the use of the language and the world:

> On the one hand, this process allows speakers to represent facts in their utterances; on the other, an utterance is also a fact, an event, which takes place in time and space. So, enunciative categories call into question the very frontier between language and the world. (Angermüller et al. 2014, p. 136)

Meanwhile, in class we also defined the criteria that each group would take in the mapping, in an activity which places them in the need of focusing, from previous experiences of observation of their environment. In this way, the landscapes to be

[7]When talking about intertextuality we refer to the proceedings by which who speaks or writes refers to what other people or texts have said or meant (Gee 2011). Following Fairclough (1992), it is the characteristic of a text of being built by other texts.

[8]In Barthes (1964)'s terms, the linguistic message has basically two functions in relation to the image: *relay*, which implies how the sense of text and image complement each other since some information is provided but which is not seen in the image, and *anchoring*, which guides in the way how to read it.

[9]*Enunciator* and *addressee* are the images of the one who speaks and the one who is being spoken to, built from the limits of the discourse itself (Filinich 2013). In the same way, the *referent* can be associated with the images built by the discourse about those aspect brought about by reality.

mapped can be an outdoor (streets, parks) or an indoor (the faculty, for example) landscape, static or in movement (a graffiti versus a banner in a demonstration or stickers in a car), and the choice of discourses can respond to a thematic criteria (politics, sexist discourses, etc.), a localization criteria (a certain area of the city, a square, etc.), linked to the type of format (walls, T-shirts, etc.), etc. Through the study we aimed at externalizing the proposal of the experience, making our choices, analysis and, as we will see later, also assessment criteria public.

The mapping is performed in groups, mostly using cell-phones to capture the images. In general, we suggest that the photographs taken let us observe contextual aspects, aspect of localization of the discourses mapped. The graphic record work is accompanied by a subject document named "Guide for the mapping of the linguistic landscape", which presents a series of methodological guidance for this work and requires students to fill in a record sheet where they include the following dimensions (Table 1):

Even though the linguistic landscapes could be addressed analogously, the proposal is enriched by the use of different technologies which allow us not only to record and share elements of our surroundings but also to include them in a dialogue with pictures obtained from different geographical places and varied contexts. Besides, the use of ICT resources makes it possible that agents external from the subject, who cooperate with the mapping activities, participate in it: family, friends, etc. This forces us to think about the role played by our viewpoint and the resources used in the trimming performed on the linguistic landscape.

Table 1 Dimensions for the record sheet

Dimensions	Required information
1. Localization	Address and place where the material registered is located
2. Other relevant information about location	If it is a shop, a square, if it is on a wall of a house, etc., or other meaningful data useful for the contextualization of the discourse
3. Types of aggression	If it is stereotyping, insult, threat, exclusion, silencing or other way of aggression
4. Language variety	Language/s used in the mapped discourse
5. Format	If it is on a wall, poster, T-shirt, shop window, noticeboard or other
6. Field	If it belongs to the institutional, commercial, education, health, hotel, transport, real estate, sports or other fields
7. Heteroglossia	If the discourse is a monologue or a dialogue
8. Author of record	Name and surname of the person who records it
9. Recorded date	Date when then photograph was taken

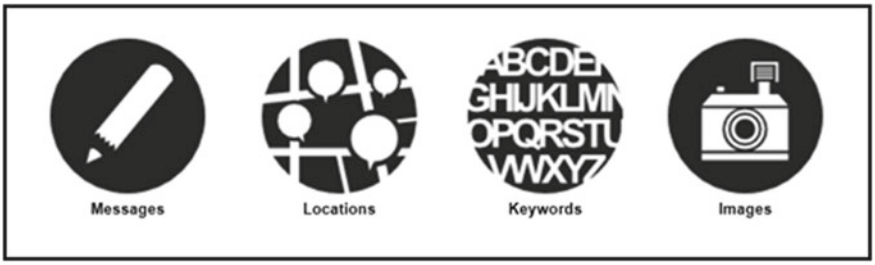

Fig. 3 Options to access to the discourses in the platform Urban Voices

The students must later upload the mapped images to the platform Urban Voices, within the project Discursive Violence (*Violencias Discursivas*[10]). They must perform certain tasks there, in the search of the adequate contextualization of the material being shared:

a. Describe the image briefly (What is it? Where was it taken and when? Are the author and the addressee known? Are there any other relevant aspects?).
b. Choose one of the micro-aggressions among five options provided in the platform: social class differences, ethnic and/or religious group, LGBT, women or other minorities.
c. Choose 5 tags for the image corresponding to the following categories: type of aggression/answer, language variety, format, field and heteroglossia.
d. Localize the image taken geographically in a Google map integrated within the platform.
e. Lastly, add an image or link to the graphic document.

As can be observed, the information required is directly related to the record sheet that our students had previously filled in.[11]

The platform lets us gain access to the discourses uploaded visualizing their descriptions (messages) and localization in the map, by using keywords or from a photographic collage (images) (Fig. 3).

However, we must mention that among the students there was certain resistance or difficulties to interact with Urban Voices, linked mainly to some own mistakes done during the first contact, mostly related to the uploading of images and their geographical localization. Due to this initial resistances in some groups only one person was in charge of the uploading of the mapped materials, even though we had suggested that this task was also performed as a group. Surely, more constant work with the platform will avoid some of the aforementioned difficulties, many of which

[10]When doing this work, the platform includes three current collaborative projects: Language diversity, Multilingualism and urban disputes, and Discursive Violence. Our students take part in the last one.

[11]The students also have slides—introduced first in class and available later in the subject group—which support the first interactions with the platform.

were overcome with the later edition of the texts that had not been well-described, tagged or located.

The different materials which were mapped by the groups are brought back to the face-to-face meetings, where we accompany the first analysis stages and we dispel doubts and answer questions which resulted from the collaborative work they perform. From the group work, we aim at favoring "mutual learning cultures" (Bruner 1997, our translation) where ideas, knowledge and helping activities are shared.

We also planned in class a brief report[12]—addressing its structure, expected content of each section, formal requirements, style, frequent mistakes, etc.—as well as an oral presentation about the experience, with written support material, as a closure to this project. For the later, we shared with our students a "Guide for the assessment of the presentation" which aims at supporting the decisions taken for the oral communication of the experience from five dimensions: organization, content, clarity, time and support.

The oral presentations demand the involvement of all the working group and the interaction with other groups through questions and observations, as well as feedback provided by the subject teaching staff following the guide previously addressed in class.

Within the small scope of our subject, this proposal of looking at our linguistic landscapes must identify and accept its own limits: we describe here a narrow experience, many times marked by immediate needs, which takes advantage of our students' enthusiasm but, we know, which does not take full advantage of the potential that our landscapes provide us with, as objects of analysis. However, we have tried to design a proposal which encourages the collaborative and critical work, which takes advantage of different spaces and time, which resources to ICT tools to try to go beyond the time borders that the face-to-face class impose on us and in which the teaching staff permanently accompanies the decision-taking process, both during the face-to-face meetings and while choosing the bibliography, didactic materials designed as framework for the process and the interactions on the Facebook group of the subject.

Beyond these limits, we like thinking that we propose an experience which works on the borders, the border between face-to-face and distance learning spaces, time within the classroom and time outside the classroom blend, and the commitment of our students with their own learning processes gains essential importance. We have also tried to avoid the existence of borders between virtual work and the one done in class which might threaten with turning the later into atomized practices and faintly linked to other actions.

[12] As mentioned before, only done during the school year 2018.

5 About Voices and Experiences

Up to now, we have shown only one face of our proposal, linked to our didactic decisions, but we kept this section to call for the voices of students which allows us to get closer to their experiences. In order to recover these voices, we will make use of their reports—belonging to students of the school year 2018—and narratives which were required at the end of the year, with the aim of addressing their assessments of the proposal and their own learning processes.

These materials have allowed us to identify different challenges that our students have recalled many times in their narratives, among which we can mention the need to denaturalize the look, constantly questioning their own knowledge and the social prejudice; articulating theoretical paths and analytical practices, and collaborative writing.

In this way, in the students' narratives and reports, the experience of mapping appears as challenging certainties, making the naturalization of certain discourses evident and encouraging a new and different look to the immediate environment:

> From the beginning, the subject was presented as a constant challenge to the certainties. It suggested the observation and the deep analysis of the discourses that surround us, breaking up our pre-existing arguments. (Group 1, narrative of experience)[13]

> Through the graffiti, we could observe how a popular demonstration pass on expressions which are loaded with violent content that, on many occasions, go unseen to our eyes and our reflection. (Group 1, report conclusions)

> Being used to find discursive violence in our everyday lives we believed that it was going to be easy but in practice, it was more difficult than expected. (Group 2, narrative of experience)

> The mapping work we did (…) allowed us to pay attention to the texts and images loaded with violence that surrounds us. Daily, I had come across many of the graffiti that we photographed and analyzed with the group without noticing the violent messages they express, either due to being chauvinist, homophobic, racist, or loaded with ideological or religious aggressions. (Group 3, narrative of experience)

> The mapping experience allows us to realize that we are surrounded by violent discourses that usually go unseen in our everyday life. (Group 4, report conclusions)

This brings about a foreign look, which invites us to rethink the violence, the everyday micro-aggressions which are materialized in different discourses of our linguistic landscapes. When facing those difficulties we have to see instances of naturalized aggressions, these experiences can be synthesized in the metaphor used by one of the groups in their narrative: "The mapping helped us open our eyes, put ourselves in the place of the analytical observer of the reality that surrounds us" (Group 3, narrative of experience).

On the other hand, when we are facing the mapped materials, the complexity of an analysis which requires that we move away from previous judgments in order to promote a deliberate articulation between the theoretical paths and the contextualized analytical practices is imposed. The practices of analysis suggested invert the traditional educational order: it is not a matter of "using" the theories learnt to

[13]The translations of the testimonials included are ours.

analyze discourse but to start from the discourse to recover the theories which let us explain the observed phenomena. This makes us go back to our readings and look for new theoretical tools to address the challenges that the discursive material presents us with.

This complexity, as we have mentioned before, appears insistently in our students' testimonies:

> When we started working things were not as simple as we thought they would be. When choosing the material, we already came across difficulties. We realized that putting them together in a series was harder than expected. Although we could see that some of the ideologies were present on the surface, we lacked tools and scientific arguments to support our analysis. The task made us revise already learnt concepts, to delve into linguistic theories, functions of words, vocabulary, etc. (Group 1, narrative of their experience)

> When we had to analyze each discourse we came across a big difficulty: the fact that we had to put theories into practice and revise linguistic categories that we had only seen as theory, or by reading discourse analysis which had been done by someone else. (Group 4, report conclusions)

The narrative brought about by our students shows this contrast between difficulties, problems and challenges, on the one hand, and positive assessment of the experience when finishing the experience, on the other. We can clearly see this in the following statement:

> However, what we found problematic at the beginning ended up being enriching and gratifying. (Group 4, report conclusions)

> When facing these complexities, they have especially valued the constant support received during the experience:

> There were moments when we felt lost and got a bit discouraged when we weren't able to find how to solve the activities in the right way. We felt that we lacked theoretical knowledge and that each analysis we performed, done with a lot of effort and based on previous readings, was incomplete. However, we were able to overcome those situations satisfactorily. We felt we were not alone. We listened to suggestions about the theory and practice which helped us reflect and calm down. (Group 1, experience narrative, 2018)

> We were very comfortable when doing the mapping and the excitement we felt when the project started continued during the whole process. This was due to the support provided by the teachers and their good disposition. (Group 2, narrative of experience, 2018)

Moreover, it is interesting to observe that the activity itself provokes emotions which enrich the experiences of mapping and analysis:

> At the moment of registering the first elements found in *8 de Junio* Street, we experienced the first feelings; first, the fact that we were taking photos of the graffiti in public places at midday produced interest in neighbors and passers-by, who looked skeptical and asked themselves 'what are these people doing?' A man even approached me and asked me why we were taking pictures, and I explained to him that it was for a university project. (Group 4, narrative of experience[14])

> Beyond the ideological assumptions that guided the choice of topic, we discovered that the mapped discourses questioned ourselves directly as women. Thus, the experience was

[14]We recover the narrative of one of the students in this group who chooses to tell his experience in the first person.

> simultaneously affected by political, personal and academic issues. This combination of different aspects of our lives lets us get involved comprehensively in the experience of localizing, registering and analyzing violent discourses. (Group 2, narrative of experience, 2018)

If, as stated by Nelson (2007), "the experience is the basic unit of development since nothing related to the psychological area happens without it" (p. 8, our translation), we are certain that the project shared with our students has fostered necessary and meaningful learning experiences which are worth recovering from our own voices:

> This has been an absolutely enriching experience for us, which made as constantly question our own knowledge and certainties, expose groundless preconceptions. Even though it produced uncertainty and doubts, it also lets us build a different way on how to look at the world, a more critic and sensitive way. (Group 1, narrative of experience)
>
> We learnt to support our reading of reality from the field of Discourse Analysis. (Group 2, narrative of experience)
>
> The experience was highly positive (…) and it provided a new perspective about the cartography of the city, a more critical and conscious one. (Group 4, narrative of experience)

A point to be highlighted is that there are no mentions, in the narrative analyzed, linked to face-to-face, distance and mediated by ICT activities, but for some references to the use of the platform Urban Voices as a resource to identify borders between the working modalities suggested, which could be read as a strength of the methodological design shared.

In that regard, one of the narrative highlights in the project planning the existence of a schedule of activities shared among teachers and students, as a didactic resource facilitator:

> The work proposals were all organized from the beginning of the year (dates, activities, deadlines, etc.) This organization let us be better organized and methodical and we could plan the steps to be followed. (Group 1, narrative of experience, 2018)

This schedule, aimed at organizing the shared tasks and articulating spaces, time and activities, was not a static tool but a didactic planning resource shared, revised and adjusted according to the needs which arose during the implementation of the project. Together with the subject documents and the didactic guides, it was a resource at the service of a more autonomous work done by the students.

6 Some Final Comments

We have previously mentioned that the mapping experience for our subject is both a means and an end, and we have paid special attention to the latter to analyze the experience suggested to our students. About the former, we would like to mention here—very briefly—an activity which works as a link between the two projects that nurture the subject—the mapping experience described herein and the discourse analysis of the corpus—.

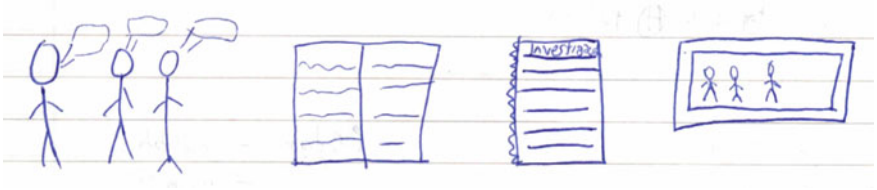

Fig. 4 Research as collective action (photography of Eugenia's drawing)

During other courses, before including the mapping experience into the seminar, we suggested our students draw a person doing research, as a strategy to externalize conceptions which allowed us to later outline the research as an axis for the didactic proposal of the subject. In the drawings the representations linked to the experimental science, recurring to special elements—laboratories—or specific objects—test tubs, magnifying glass, scrubs—were recurrent.

After the mapping experiences, we provided our students with the same instructions. Even though there still were some of the elements mentioned before in their drawings, we would like to mention here two productions: one, because it defies the limits of the instructions (image 4), and the other, because of how it articulates with the experience analyzed here (image 5).

In the first one, Eugenia chooses four images which move away from a static view of research to represent the processes and relationships: "three people are talking, there is an open book, a notebook and a screen", she explains. In this way, as a response to an instruction which required the drawing of "a person" it appears the need to represent the collective to be able to account for research which is necessarily dialogic. The research here is not inherent to an individual subject but to a social practice which is supported by the face-to-face or mediated dialogue and as a response to a text, and which is necessarily polyphonic (Fig. 4).

In the second image, Camila presents the mapping strategy as a research experience to show a researcher taking pictures. Considering the continuity of both activities,[15] the links are clear for the group and allow us to think of ourselves as researchers in the context of the practices promoted by the seminar (Fig. 5).

Camila's drawing makes it possible to articulate the discourses, interventions and perceptions about a doing which is not just looking but which is supported by the systematicity to foster interpretations which aim at a better and deeper understanding of the phenomena and also their transformation. It also lets us see the researcher of the Human and Social Sciences from a different perspective. The latter also appears in one of the stories obtained: "Another important issue was to understand the researcher of the social sciences from a different perspective" (Group 4, narrative of the experience).

The appearance of these drawing and these reflections in the context of our proposal is worth mentioning. In the same way, the fact that our students value in

[15] A clear continuity is observed not only at the level of actions and ICT resources drawn but also in the poster represented since it recovers a discourse previously mapped in the context of the subject.

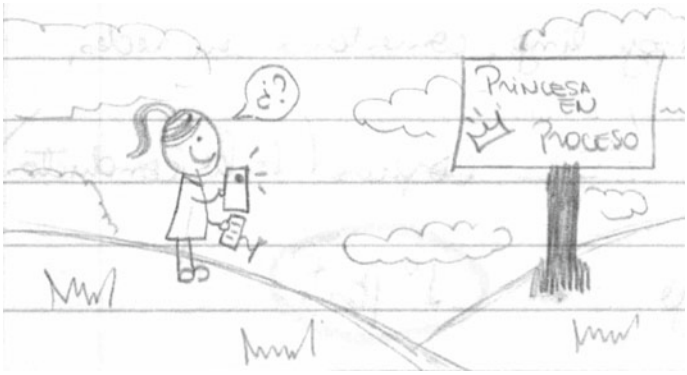

Fig. 5 Mapping as research (photography of Camila's drawing)

such a positive way the work done, a design which aims at widening the classroom limits, at going beyond temporal and spatial borders, and which wants to highlight the prominent role of each student, encourages us to revise it and strengthen it.

The use of ICT here makes the student-student and student-teacher dialogue possible, but also contributes to systematizing and sharing the mappings performed. Another technological tool allows us to record and keep the images of the linguistic landscape. However, we must go through the cities: mapping and analyzing the linguistic landscape requires movement, a special attitude, an effort to have a second look to what surrounds us with new eyes. Like a *flâneur* or *flâneuse* (Elkin 2017), we must walk through the city and observe it, in an active way, building the object of study.

What can technology do? What can't it do? The ICTs are here to accompany the process, to facilitate the collaborative work, but they do not replace the itineraries where we place ourselves not only as walkers but also as researchers. As stated by the words of one of our students:

> I started the search without previously fixed preconceptions, I just left my house with my camera in the search of places where I knew I could find graffiti. The first place I went to was the back of the city cemetery and the cemetery of the Israeli community next to it. I didn't find anything here, but I unexpectedly found my first picture near there … (Group 4, narrative of experience)

Revising this proposal, we consider that we have included technological tools to our educational proposal from three complementary perspectives (Cabero Almenara 2014):

- As ICT (information and communication technologies), as facilitators, passers of information and resources, by the active use of the Facebook group.
- As TLK (technologies for learning and knowledge), learning facilitators, reality analysis and knowledge spreading, using technological resources at the service of knowledge appropriation by our students.

- As TEP (technologies for empowerment and participation), tools for participation and collaboration, focusing on the social dimension of learnings, mainly through the collaborative use of the Urban Voices platform.

As stated by the quoted author, we believe that "the ICTs are just curricular elements, which work in interaction with others, and as a consequence, its meaning in the teaching-learning process will depend on the decisions taken with respect to the rest of the components." (Cabero Almenara 2014, our translation). In this case, the use of the chosen technologies has tried to encourage a more ubiquitous learning in the subject, from its design which—as we have mentioned before—tries to delete the frontier between face-to-face and distance activities.

To conclude this process, I would like to bring back another voice, Camila's, member of the teaching staff of the subject, and her assessment of the experience:

> In particular, I enjoyed this stage… I was mapping the city at times. In fact, after doing this job, no poster or graffiti in public spaces went unseen to me and I believe that from this activity our critical look at everyday discourses changed. I am sure that students experience this too. (Carolina, narrative and assessment of the proposal)

This project aims at fostering this critical look, though there are still many challenges to face, not only with regard to the deepening and continuity of the mapping of the linguistic landscape of our city, but also, and above all, in the search of new strategies which lead the students through educational paths which are becoming more autonomous but also more scaffolding, more engaged, collaborative and critical.

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Writing a Dissertation—Expanding the Borders of the Virtual Teaching and Learning Process

Guadalupe Álvarez and Hilda Difabio de Anglat

1 Approaches to Virtual Teaching of Dissertation Writing

Doctoral research is widely regarded as a vital area of innovation and development. This view has led to a growing emphasis on the need for higher quality and efficiency in the face of high withdrawal rates, in universities in both developed and developing countries such as Argentina. In fact, as Carlino (2005) explains, the term ABD (*All but dissertation*) describes, in central countries, the situation of students who have completed all the required classwork for a doctoral degree except for the dissertation. As it has been pointed out, prominent among the factors that make it difficult for students to produce their preliminary or final work during their candidature are the difficulties encountered by students in writing (Caffarella and Barnett 2000; Carlino 2005; D'Andrea 2002) and dealing with the task on their own, with little or no support from their tutors (Delamont 2005). As for the former, "(…) doctoral writing demands a certain length, some degree of original work, a higher degree of integration of knowledge and capacity for self-management and self-regulation of autonomous work which can only be attained through writing skills hardly acquired in earlier stages" (Arnoux et al. 2004, p. 3). As for the latter, teaching at this level should rise above the misleading assumption that candidates are "always-already" autonomous scholars from the beginning of their candidature (Johnson et al. 2000). In fact, they go back to being students who need to acquire the knowledge, skills, intellectual

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habits typical of a specific field of study (Gardner 2009), in a process that will help them conduct research on a relevant topic with a high level of professional skill.

In this context, it seems necessary to diversify, and strengthen the continuity of, learning aids needed by doctoral students (Arnoux et al. 2004). One such possibility, as shown by current literature (e.g. Aitchison and Lee 2006; Lassig et al. 2009; Maher et al. 2008), is to offer thesis writing seminars and/or peer writing groups which help students assess their progress and, more importantly, to share their experiences and understand that they are not alone in experiencing difficulties. In this regard, attention should be drawn to the possibilities offered by digital technologies to boost interaction between participants and interactivity between them, the materials and activities. This way, taking into account the findings at different educational levels (e.g. Álvarez and Bassa 2013; Davoli et al. 2009; Passig and Schwartz 2007), technology-mediated instruction, including both 100% online-based and blended learning, seems to be very appropriate for underpinning a doctoral education. However, there are few published experiences concerning online support for postgraduate writing in digital libraries (e.g., EBSCO, Google Scholar, JSTOR), in spite of the fact that a survey shows that a good deal of publications deal with scientific writing (Bazerman 1988; Bazerman et al. 2009; Myers 1990; Swales 2004; Swales and Feak 1994).

Therefore, it is worth mentioning an action research project (Bargal 2006; Maurer and Githens 2009) within whose framework a fully online workshop centered around dissertation writing in Spanish is cyclically designed, implemented, assessed and adjusted. So far, the workshop has been run on three occasions at the School of Philosophy and Letters of the *Universidad Nacional de Cuyo* (Mendoza, Argentina). In this paper, we will focus on those three editions. Two teachers-researchers and three groups of Social and Human Sciences doctoral students (11, 12 and 20 members, respectively) from various Argentine universities participated. This chapter discusses the basic theoretical background employed in designing the workshop, and various methodological aspects taken into account for implementation as well as a number of aspects of the assessment of the project. Based on the discussion and by way of conclusion, we will attempt to find answers to the following questions: In what sense does this experience expand the borders of teaching and learning (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Kolossov and Scott 2013)? How do digital and interactive technologies contribute to such expansion? And, based on the data reviewed, what are the upcoming challenges in the field of web-based teaching of dissertation writing?

2 Theoretical Foundations of the Teaching Proposal

The workshop was designed on the basis of a set of specific underlying pedagogical, didactic and technological principles.

Firstly, we view writing as a key tool for intellectual work and the development of higher cognitive operations (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987; Flower 1979; Flower and Hayes 1996). This is partly due to the fixed nature of written language, which allows the reader-writers to distance themselves from the text to review it; writing

makes it possible to "*objectify*" thought and make it the subject-matter of thinking. Because of the "*epistemic potential*" of writing (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987), a writer's own output can be transformed into a semiotic object in order to further understand and self-assess the text, so as to discover, clarify and elaborate on ideas and negotiate meanings. Additionally, because writing is a kind of deferred communication, it allows the writer to plan and review, which may lead to a partial or total recasting of the text.

Secondly, and in connection with this, we consider that academic writing, both at undergraduate and graduate levels (e.g., final seminar writing works, research projects and theses), calls for the writer's ability to focus not just on content-related issues, but also on rhetoric aspects, which in turn requires not only a knowledge of the topics being discussed, but also a knowledge of the specific genres used at the scholarly level (di Stefano and Pereira 2004). Accordingly, we have proposed to reconstruct, among other dimensions, the situation and communicative interaction model, the event model, and the underlying textual model (Cubo de Severino et al. 2011). The communicative situation model is concerned with the social relationships and the communicative roles of participants in an interaction and its context. The event model reflects the research process, the content and the extra-linguistic reality that the thesis refers to. The textual model refers to the specific features of the writing in relation to certain discursive tradition, the various dimensions of linguistic communication, and its variants. In this regard, we have set out to establish the general structure of the theses, and the moves and steps adopted in each of its sections. "A 'move' in genre analysis is a discoursal and rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (Swales 2004, p. 228). Rhetorical moves are made in steps (Swales 1990); a move can consist of a single step or a combination of them. Furthermore, we promoted the recognition of verbalization resources and strategies employed to state the meanings that the writers intended to convey. In accordance with these models, the proposal has sought to help students identify the context and communicative situation of a thesis, the meaning and content of the research, and the canonical structure of the text. Additionally, we have considered that the reconstruction of these models, carried out during the comprehension processes, would contribute to the development of the text production processes, and the other way round (Parodi 1999, 2001). That is, we expected that such development and feedback would constitute a good opportunity for students to begin to transition from being a seminar student, that is, a consumer of knowledge "(…) carefully doled out in the form of courses or modules, course outlines and reading lists, lecture topics and assessment tasks" (Lovitts 2005, p. 138), to being an "authorized enunciator facing the scientific community of future peers" (Carlino 2005, p. 52).

Thirdly, the processes involved in the writing process, which are recursive instances for each part of the thesis (planning, text production and reviewing), have been thought of as self-regulation strategies; that is, from a pedagogical perspective, attention is turned to self-regulated writing (Zimmerman and Risemberg 1997; Difabio de Anglat 2012) in connection with the physical and social environment

in which the writing is done, and personal and behavioral aspects. In this regard, the goal is to scaffold and encourage the students to deliberately monitor their own performance, which helps them to stand by and carry out the actions planned (i.e., this implies that the writer should be aware of their goals, develop a personal representation of the task which fits the communicative situation, and deal with the cognitive and emotional aspects during the composition process), regulate their efforts—which protects the achievement of the goal from difficulties or distraction during the course of the action—, ask the group for assistance and support, and structure the environment and the timeframe to control writing conditions.

Fourthly, we have considered the influence of conceptions (about knowledge/learning, research and writing) on the research process and on conceptual-linguistic production. Prior conceptions include belief networks, ideas, assumptions, which are credible enough to guide actions. That is, the construct *conceptions* is extended to include what may be termed a concept-system, a personal epistemology according to Hofer (2001, 2004). As for writing, Hounsell (1987, cited by Campbell et al. 1998, p. 459): "Grasping what constitutes academic discourse represents the kind of personal intellectual revolution charted in Perry's developmental scheme" (making reference to his work from 1968). Hounsell's view proposes a shift from a monolithic approach (i.e., knowledge as being non-problematic and which needs no justification) to an approach that assesses knowledge and how it is formulated.

Finally, we have acknowledged the considerable benefits which digital technologies have proved to offer at other educational levels for peer-review and peer-writing (Álvarez 2012; Álvarez and Bassa 2013; Bustos 2009; Davoli et al. 2009; Passig and Schwartz 2007; Sanz and Zangara 2012). Since, at the basis of our proposal is the scaffolding of technology-assisted writing from a self-regulatory perspective, we have found that, in open environments, regard must be had to the collective and situated whole, the relationship between players and the way it constitutes a system which structures activities and self-regulation, where—as Cassany (2000) points out—a variety of communicative channels and codes are use, and simultaneous interaction, instant transmission and the writer's cognitive profile are encouraged.

3 Writing a Doctoral Thesis in an Online and Collaborative Workshop. Methodological Aspects

As stated above, this chapter will discuss an action research project which builds knowledge through practice as it starts from concrete and situated problems, and seeks to intervene in the issues diagnosed in order to transform them (Hernández Sampieri et al. 2014). Specifically, problems related to scholarly writing are cyclically diagnosed, and then a completely online, computer-based workshop is designed, implemented, assessed and adjusted. The ultimate goal of the workshop is for students to write a chapter as part as their doctoral studies.

Table 1 Variables and dimensions of the academic writing inventory ($N = 110$)

Variables	Dimensions	No. of items	Alpha
Writing strategies (18 items)	Planning	4	0.59
	Searching for information	3	0.55
	Text production	5	0.67
	Reviewing	6	0.85
Writing regulation strategies (22 items)	Value of the task	3	0.51
	Control	7	0.77
	Search for assistance	3	0.57
	Peer group support	2	0.36
	Structuring of environment and time	4	0.65
	(Non-)procrastination	3	0.63
Conceptions about writing (23 ítems)	Writing as elaboration	13	0.78
	Writing as reproduction	10	0.68
Self-efficiency for writing (15 items)	Positive self-perception	4	0.72
	Performance achievements	7	0.72
	(No) Negative thoughts	4	0.67

At the diagnosis stage, we implemented a cloze text. It provides an accurate measure of the student's reading comprehension ability (Dastjerdi and Talebinezhad 2006; Difabio de Anglat 2008; Kletzien 1991, among others). As Kletzien points out (1991, p. 72), intellectual processes involved in the technique (anticipation, reasoning, assessment, judgment, problem-solving) are the same as those which are essential for reading. For this pedagogical experience, we adapted an excerpt from the text *Principios para un final: reflexiones en torno a la escritura de la tesis* [Principles for an ending: some thoughts on thesis writing] (Álvarez 2011).

A academic writing inventory (Difabio de Anglat 2012) was designed following a Likert scale—with a 5-point type response, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree"—initially for 70 items (most of them favorable) made up of four variables, as shown in Table 1[1]:

Additionally, the scale yields a total score by adding up all indicators (55 items) for writing strategies, writing regulation strategies, and self-efficiency (that is, excluding conceptions from this compound), known as "self-perceived competence for academic writing". The alpha turns out to be excellent (0.92).

An inventory of conceptions of learning/knowledge: this includes the Conceptions of Learning Questionnaire—CONAPRE—(Martínez-Fernández 2007) and certain indicators of the sub-scale Mental Models of the Inventory of Learning Styles

[1]This is a construct originally developed by Rothblum et al. (1986) which refers to the tendency to delay academic tasks, which is associated with the fear of failure; it includes general anxiety, perfectionism, low frustration tolerance, inability to ask for or accept help, lack of self-confidence, a difficulty in making decisions, an exaggerated need for structure. Procrastination is an emotionally costly strategy associated with self-sabotage.

Since this aspect and Negative thoughts (under Conceptions about writing) refer to personal traits that hinder the tasks (formulated as reverse items), they are rated in reverse way from 0 for Strongly Agree to 4 for Strongly Disagree in order to make them positive dimensions.

(ILS) (Vermunt 1994). For classification purposes, we have adopted the dimensions from the CONAPRE questionnaire, which Martínez-Fernández, following Pozo and Scheuer (1999), has classified into three categories: (1) direct, reproductive—receiving and remembering—: knowledge is a true copy of reality (a "closed" knowledge). From an epistemological viewpoint, this category corresponds with naïve realism; (2) interpretative: learning is conceived of as the output from a significant individual activity, although this view does not significantly depart from the manner in which content is presented. That is, even though the learner's activity is the decisive process which takes them from conditions to results, such results are seen as a single and accurate product; (3) constructive: a true recasting, involving processes which are "possibly specific to each learning situation (…) and transform the thing learned, generating know knowledge which, in that case, no longer reflect a single, objective reality that can be directly accessed" (Amezcua Prieto et al. 2012, p. 700). According to this view, the primary function of learning is to transform content and for content to be transformed.

- A questionnaire on the use of digital technologies: this includes questions about the use of digital technologies, particularly those used for writing. The questions address the type of text processor used and its features, and the frequency with which the student browses the Internet and uses Web 2.0 applications. The answers to these questions help identify what are the students' habits regarding technology, which is relevant for designing and later developing the activities.

As for the workshop's design, our goals were for students:

- to analyze how the scholarly enunciator builds themselves in their discourse and designs their audience, so that they can see themselves and their addressees as "characters" in the discursive play staged by the writing;
- to understand the features of the thesis as a genre; that is, what discursive and textual features are regularly found in doctoral theses;
- to be able to overcome the issues which arise from the putting into discourse of the thesis by reflecting on the existing output, including the students' own production;
- to know and correctly apply grammatical, syntactic and semantic rules of the linguistic code;
- to build and consolidate meta-cognitive strategies which help them consciously control their writing processes.

As regards digital technologies, a variety of applications were used in the first cycle: email for sending and receiving documents (i.e., bibliography, activity sheet, activity resolution); entries in a blog created for the purpose of discussion and exchange; documents shared on Googledocs for carrying out group activities. In the two subsequent cycles, students used Moodle and some of its main resources and tools instead: tags, files, forums, wikis, task uploads.

As for the activities proposed, after thinking about writing in general and scholarly writing in particular, we asked the students to analyze the paratextual elements (i.e., title, index, abstract) and the main sections of the thesis (i.e., introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, analysis of results, conclusions). A work module was

designed for each of these elements. Thus, based on each example thesis provided by the teachers or chosen by the students, we asked them to reconstruct the representations of the three cognitive models: the communicative situation model, the event model and the textual model, for each paratext and section. In some cases, students carried out the activities individually; in other cases, they did so in small groups or with the entire class. As a final assignment, students were asked to write one chapter of their thesis, a section of one of the chapters, or even a small fragment of some section. Students were offered a virtual environment (in the first cycle, a document shared on Google Docs; in subsequent cycles, a Moodle wiki) so that they could share their draft and receive teacher feedback before submission. In the first cycle, the students and teachers exchanged views through Word comments. In the subsequent cycles, different colors were used throughout the text.

At the end of the workshop, the following tools were used: (1) an ad hoc questionnaire, which probes into notions about research; (2) a second run of the postgraduate writing inventory and (3) a questionnaire which asks the students to rate the workshop. Instrument (2) has been described above. Questionnaire (1) is made up of two open questions (regarding the students' own definition of scientific research and which of their ideas have changed as a result of developing their doctoral thesis) and two closed questions (regarding functions of scientific research and features of "good" research). Questionnaire (3) includes a number of open questions aimed at reviewing the students' perspective regarding contributions and limitations of the proposed individual and group activities, and regarding the workshop in general.

As a closing of each research cycle, we have assessed the intervention based on the analysis of the data obtained in each of the prior stages. In the next section, we will discuss some of the aspects taken into account in the assessment process.

4 Aspects Assessed

In this section we will briefly examine the findings regarding some of the aspects assessed, including teacher feedback, interaction between peers, and its influence on meta-linguistic activity, the students' opinions on the workshop and the construction of their identity as dissertation writers.

4.1 Teacher Feedback and Learning

The expert feedback from a teacher or tutor is especially important for learning experiences of masters' and doctoral degree students, as teachers' comments are usually the main form of tutoring. Additionally, as pointed out by Padilla Carmona and Gil Flores (2008), feedback can boost learning provided that it involves an assessment of the student's work and an explanation of the criteria used for such assessment, as well as some action on the part of the student based on what they have learned.

Based only on these three components, it is possible to steer feedback towards future action, that is, towards the student's willingness to act upon the information received and use it to modify the text (i.e., feedforward). With regard to the virtual workshop described above, we have analyzed, using mixed methods, teacher feedback on the chapter written by students as a final assignment, and the changes they make in response to such feedback. Furthermore, we have assessed whether our approach to the student's profile, based on the diagnosis, is associated with the feedforward.

Data analysis has shown that teacher's comments most frequently focus on the textual model, specifically the language of the writing (i.e., discourse markers, lexical repetition, agreement, use of tenses, spelling). However, in light of the data from our study, we have also noted that the comments made under the event model, even though less important from a quantitative perspective, are qualitatively significant because they shine the spotlight on issues which, if taken into account, affect the chapter as a whole or even the manner in which the different parts of the dissertation articulate.

As for the function of teacher's comments, we have shown not only that the most frequent comments are those with a referential function, which provide information, make corrections or include a recast, but also that this function falls into two categories: suggesting corrections or directly offering recast. Comments with a directive function, which suggest or establish future action, seek to elicit information or suggest connections between ideas, are less frequent and instead only take the form of suggesting action.

The most frequent change made by students consists of recasting sections of their writing, which seems to correspond with the dominance of comments with a referential function, through which the teacher suggests edits or offers a recast. In this regard, it can be inferred that students in general accept the changes proposed by the teachers.

Finally, our approach to each student's profile with respect to their openness to receiving feedforward is associated with the rate of changes made to the final document: students who plan and revise their text, value the importance and usefulness of writing, monitor their own performance, selectively seek help from experts and/or peers, develop a sense of self-efficacy as writers and, consistent with an interpretative-constructive approach to knowledge/learning, conceive of writing as a process (that is, as a profound personal enterprise and a commitment towards that conceptualization), make the largest number of edits. The reverse is also true: a low rate of occurrence of these behaviors corresponds with a small number of edits to the documents. In order to alter this association, it seems necessary to implement a customized, more active follow-up for students with low scorings in the diagnosis.

4.2 Peer Interaction and Meta-Linguistic Activity

Several studies (e.g. Aitchison and Lee 2006; Colombo and Carlino 2015; Ferguson 2009; Lassig et al. 2009) have pointed out the value of peer interaction for the development of activities centered around the type of discourse and communication that is typical of graduate education, that is, meta-linguistic activities concerning academic writing. Thus, based on the first edition of the workshop, we have analyzed the conscious meta-linguistic activity materialized into language in the context of the peer interaction generated by a number of entries in the blog that was designed for that edition (Álvarez and Difabio de Anglat 2017). Specifically, our analysis focuses on group interaction associated to two types of entries: entries associated with three workshop modules (modules 3, 4 and 8), in which students were prompted to put general queries about the bibliography of a module or about the activity carried out individually or in small groups, but without suggesting the specific topic of the queries or peer interaction. Another focus of the analysis was the three entries regarding module 6 of the workshop, which deals with the conclusions. In this case, instead of general queries, we proposed a specific linguistic analysis activity performed by the entire group; at the same time, we proposed that students comment on the interventions of other participants, with the aim of promoting peer interaction throughout the activity.

One of the main conclusions of the experience is that peer group work helps supplement and enhance the meta-linguistic insight around the doctoral dissertation, as it encourages students to make an awareness and explicitation effort (Allal and Saada-Robert 1992) to an extent that would not be possible if undertaken alone (Camps et al. 2007). An enhanced analysis is supposed to help transition from global and macro-textual levels of analysis (i.e., determination of movements and steps) towards micro-textual levels, establishing in detail what linguistic resources and strategies are used in each section. Additionally, a more in-depth analysis seems to be linked to an increase in specialized vocabulary, specifically Language Sciences terminology. In this regard, students have been able to accurately establish the terms describing the movements and steps of every section of the dissertation genre, and the linguistic resources used in the different sections—a systematized meta-linguistic activity (Culioli 1990)—, a remarkable achievement in the case of doctoral students of other subjects (e.g., Education), who gradually incorporated linguistic conventions and protocols (Maher et al. 2008) thanks to their participation in a peer writing group focused on the development of shared knowledge, meta-cognitive strategies and critical competence (Aitchison and Lee 2006; Ferguson 2009), which works in very much the same way as a discursive community (Swales 1990). On the other hand, this group interaction does not seem to emerge spontaneously but as a response to some tasks specifically developed by the teacher (Arnoux et al. 2004; Camps 1994). By way of example, differences were identified between comments to the entries for module 6, in which a specific analysis activity was proposed, and those generated as a response to the entries for which students were prompted to make general queries.

As regards this last remark, it is extremely relevant to note the reflections by Dillenbourg (1999) on collaborative learning. According to this author, unlike cooperation, in which peers deal with sub-tasks individually and then combine all the partial productions into a final output (vertical distribution of tasks), in collaboration, peers carry out the task "together", even though some activities are distributed horizontally. Dillenbourg further proposes that collaborative learning is neither a method nor a mechanism, but a sort of social contract which, when it occurs between teachers and students, becomes a didactical contract. Thus, the likelihood that collaborative interactions occur increases if the appropriate initial conditions are provided (i.e., setting up the groups, establishing challenging issues, using the appropriate software, etc.) and if the teacher acts as a facilitator making minimum pedagogical interventions in order to steer the teamwork in a fruitful direction. This means that collaboration must be promoted proactively—in structuring the process—and retrospectively in regulating interactions (Dillenbourg 2002). In the case at hand, it might be suggested that virtualizing group interaction is an initial condition that would facilitate collaborative learning as it makes it possible, based on the design of appropriate environments (e.g., tasks in blog entries), to record in writing the analysis of academic texts and the reading of such record for ensuring the continuity of analysis.

4.3 Student's Perspective on the Workshop

As pointed out in Sect. 3, at the end of every edition of the workshop, students are asked to complete a number of assessment instruments, including a questionnaire dealing with the strengths and limitations of the activities (i.e., both individual and group activities) and the proposed workshop in general. The analysis of the answers to this questionnaire shows the students' perspective on the proposed workshop.

With regard to individual activities, students have identified two fundamental contributions. Firstly, they point out that these activities help understand the different aspects of the dissertation as a genre, fundamentally of the communicative situation entailed in writing and presenting the dissertation, and its linguistic-discursive organization (i.e., sections and movements in each chapter). Secondly, they consider that, thanks to the knowledge acquired from individual activities, they were able to review their own output, particularly their doctoral dissertation. In some cases, the knowledge acquired enhanced the planning skills required for dissertation writing; in other cases, they helped improve previously written chapters. Additionally, students also highlighted the possibility of using the knowledge to provide advice to undergraduate students.

As for the limitations of individual activities, students have pointed out problems with time management: incompatibility between the timeframes of student life, those of the cognitive maturation required by analysis and textual production, and the formal deadlines set for submitting the activities. Additionally, students without any undergraduate education in Language Sciences have pointed out, as another material

limitation, a lack of specific linguistic knowledge necessary to achieve meta-cognitive insight into both their own and others' writing.

As regards group activities, students agreed that peer interaction was very enriching and have highlighted the value of interactions for reaching agreements as to the activities, both in connection with the distribution of roles and tasks and with the content proper. According to students, interactions have helped them perceive different perspectives from their own as to the content and the manner of solving the activity, and supplement those perspectives. Students have valued the use of specific digital technologies for group work (i.e. Google Docs). Thus, some students have point out the possibility of using that application for future academic and professional activities.

The limitations of group activities, like those of individual activities, had to do with the time factor. Students have pointed out the difficulty to coordinate the availability of the members of the group. This has prevented one of the groups from meeting some of the deadlines. Additionally, students have stated that one major problem about group activities was the varying degrees by which students participated, causing an imbalance in the allocation of the tasks, making some group members overburdened with work.

Finally, the students' opinions indicate that they generally value the workshop positively. Prominent among the main strengths and contributions of the workshop are:

- The overall organization and management of the course, and teachers' flexibility, particularly as regards deadlines.
- Access to bibliography on academic writing which, for some students, was novel and illuminating.
- Development of contents that help understand the various aspects of academic writing and, more importantly, allow students to reflect on their own writing at postgraduate level.
- Constant and systematic review of the writing tasks.

4.4 Constitution of Student's Identity as Researchers and Dissertation Writers

Through an open-ended retrospective ad hoc questionnaire sent to all students two months after the workshop was over, we sought to assess the contribution of the workshop to building the *scientific habit* (Bourdieu 1976), their identity as researchers and writers. In this regard, Green (2005, p. 162) states that "doctoral pedagogy is as much about the production of identity … as it is the production of knowledge".

The results show that doctoral students mostly felt—at some point in the process—as "aliens" in a foreign community. Some illustrative responses evidence the various sources of this feeling and, therefore, the "symbolic boundaries" (Lamont and Molnár 2002) to be crossed:

Not having a "roadmap" telling me where I was standing in the construction of scientific discourse.

…at the beginning of the process as doctoral student I realized what skills I need to develop as dissertation writer, which I don't have. Also, … the acquisition of a knowledge that is necessary and is missing … it has to do with the necessary skills for developing scientific writing (dissertations, papers, etc.*) and the knowledge of the "sites" where this information is found, such as scientific journals, databases,* etc.

When asked about how much the workshop has helped mitigate this self-perceived feeling, students, more or less explicitly, have mentioned several aspects that can be analyzed using the "academic literacies" approach (Bazerman et al. 2009; Vargas Franco 2016). Among the most important are:

a. The constitution of a community linked through certain "language uses" (Swales 1990) and, in connection with it, the thesis as a genre, since "for the student, genres serve as key to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community" (Miller 1984, p. 165):

It helped me to understand the main components involved in constructing discourse and putting it into practice. Practice was very positive, it made me step into the shoes of an expert reader and, from that perspective, improve my academic discourse.

… I think all the learning instances of the workshop were very positive because they train your "eye" and help you take on the writer's role. Today, I try to thoroughly review my writing. For one thing, I try to pay more attention to the backbone, the central idea, from a conceptual point of view. For another, I try to rehearse the right way of writing, using connectors, an appropriate vocabulary, etc. *In addition, I plan my writing and review constantly. I also pay attention to citations and using the appropriate format.*

b. Preliminary enculturation in a "practice community" (Lave and Wenger 1991), a socio-cognitive learning that provides the foundations for the second and third forms of participation of doctoral students as set out by Prior (1998, cited by Paré et al. 2009, p. 182)—"passing", "procedural display" and "deep participation":

… it was a path to learning to be an inhabitant of this world [in reference to the scientific community] *experiencing it live, and the virtual world helped me familiarize with this new scientific space … It forced me to be very autonomous as a student and to self-regulate my own writing process.*

The virtual environment proved very useful to erase boundaries, as it allowed me— in the group activities— to build knowledge within my discipline together with other discipline and arrive at a process and an output that fits well into the scientific community; in other words, we have been able to "have a virtual dialogue in a scientific community".

c. A key concept within Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory is that of "situated learning" or activity located within participation processes, in this case the academic environment:

…the very virtual environment makes you convey a message into text … into a linguistic code that can be interpreted by the other participants.

Inter-learning was very productive; I loved the part where we were asked to complete tasks in groups or share experiences in the forum. I thought it was very valuable, as it helped me grow in three aspects: linguistic output; digital skills; and social skills, as it allowed me to share with others, and not necessarily at the same time.

d. A growing feeling of agency, "an evocation of identity" (McAlpine and Amundsen 2009, p. 112):

Not only did it stimulate [the conceptual and linguistic production of the dissertation] *but it lifted a veil that blocked my view from the important things. I learned to plan, write, correct and take on the doctoral writer's role.*

…the new light shed on the importance of including a chapter on the methodology used [a practice which is seldom used in this student's field of study, Philosophy]*; the steps and rhetorical movements involved in the parts making up the dissertation; thinking of the thesis as a communicative event.* ***I have begun to textualize my dissertation*** [emphasis in the original]. *I´m paying more attention, not only to ideas, but also to how to distribute them in paragraphs. I think about how to structure my sentences. I also put more efforts into thinking and projecting the various parts and I'm more open to correcting and, if I have to throw something out, I will do it with full confidence. I think I've grown as a writer because I've greatly developed a sense of readership.*

e. Obviously, the director's role, but also a "distributed mentoring" (Paré et al. 2009, p. 182) because the dissertation is developed with the help of others:

…learning from my peers stimulated my work and my personal reflection. Today, I read differently…

What was more stimulated for me was the thorough feedback on each of the assignments. I think the virtual environment helped me manage my own time to produce, read and revise my own work.

5 Contributions and Challenges for Online Teaching of Dissertation Writing

In this chapter, we have discussed very briefly the fundamental issues involved in designing, implementing and assessing a completely online workshop focused on doctoral dissertation writing. Among the aspects assessed were: teacher feedback, peer interaction and its influence on meta-linguistic activity, the students' perspective on the workshop and the constitution of their identity as dissertation writers. With regard to the aspects assessed, we have considered: teacher feedback, peer interaction and its influence on meta-linguistic activity, the students' perspective on the workshop and the constitution of the students' identity as dissertation writers. Based on the foregoing, it is possible to sketch out some answers, at least provisional ones, to the questions raised: How does this experience expand the borders (Lamont and Molnár 2002; Kolossov and Scott 2013) of teaching and learning? How do digital and interactive technologies contribute to this expansion? And, based on the data and findings, what are the current challenges in the area of online academic writing teaching?

As to the first question, the results seem to show that an extended in time online workshop aimed at teaching dissertation writing can expand the range of options for action, as it is structured as an environment with several inter-dependent functions: as a writing forum, where students learn about writing within the framework of genuine dissertation writing activities, which promote a proactive attitude towards generating meanings; the gradual creation of a discursive community, that is, a *safe area* to reach agreements on activities, share experiences and difficulties, which at the same time provides support and stimulation, guarantee certain continuity in carrying out the tasks; a "situated" training in research tools based on specific problems that were to be solved by groups or individual participants. In this regard, the workshop has promoted continued insight both on the part of students, who valued the challenge of an intense meta-cognitive work, and on the part of the tutors, who had to adjust the workshop to ongoing changes, promote participation, provide guidance with and extend the students' analysis, point out problems, and systematize and assess the students' work.

One important finding of the analysis is that the workshop seems to represent an *effective environment* for students, who are part of academic institutions (e.g. university teachers, scholarship researchers at universities or research institutes), and are mostly at the initial stages of the dissertation writing process, to begin to transition from knowledge consumers to members of a scientific community.

The transition is evidenced by the transformations experienced by the students, by the level of understanding of the context and the communicative situation involved in a dissertation as a genre, and the meanings that a dissertation must convey and the canonical form and linguistic strategies through which the meanings materialize into a text. This transformation can be seen in the way students have deepened their meta-linguistic insight as a result of interacting in the peer group in response to tasks specially designed to analyze sample dissertations according to models associated with dissertation writing (i.e. communicative situation model, event model, textual model). Moreover, students themselves have highlighted, as a positive aspect of the workshop, the possibility of becoming familiarized with bibliography regarding scholarly writing and the scope of the theoretical concepts for understanding and writing their own dissertation.

Additionally, and at the same time, the written output of the students also evidences a transition, albeit a slight one, in the way of transforming knowledge: from a perspective in which knowledge is reproduced without being problematized to a vision in which knowledge and its enunciation is assessed. This transition is mainly recognized in the changes made by the students to the chapter they write as the final assignment, in response to the feedback received from the teachers.

As regards the transformations referred to above, it must be highlighted that they are not only evident from the analysis of various aspects of the implementation of the workshop, but they are perceived by the very students. During the course of the workshop, tutors help students take on the role of members of the scientific community and promote self-perception of this change.

As for the second issue, regarding the scope of the technological assistance to the teaching and learning processes, we believe that the technologies used (email,

blogs, Moodle tools), because they allow for easy updating and interactivity, are productive as they function as dynamic environments which are not centered around a single design or a single type of task proposed, but they are combined and vary with the didactic needs of the groups. In this regard, this experience evidences the hermeneutic circle (Davoli et al. 2009) that may be generated between education and technology. Thus, the online tools and the pedagogical need to teach dissertation writing feed on each other.

Finally, the assessment of the various aspects of the workshop has highlighted some pending challenges in this area:

- It is necessary to design, implement and assess diverse assignments for group work focused on meta-linguistic insight.
- It is essential to focus on the results of the diagnostic and develop teaching strategies that help more actively follow up on students with lower scorings.
- We must not only diversify the kind of comments included in the feedback on the final assignments, but also to diversify the types of participants that can participate in the feedback. Thus, in addition to the expert teachers who coordinate the workshop, we believe that it would relevant that the thesis director and even other students and colleagues participate in that feedback.
- We acknowledge the need to find strategies to help students to manage their time and cope with the time limitations of other participants and of the workshop in order to more effectively participate in the workshop. We believe that online technologies can contribute to addressing this need.

To conclude with, we propose that, just as the workshop has been designed to help students become familiarized with the dissertation as a genre and face some of the problems posed by the putting into discourse in dissertations based on an insight into existing output, new workshop formats should be designed with the purpose of helping students who have made some progress with writing their dissertation to revise and edit their output. This will make it possible to assess, among other aspects, to what degree group interaction with peers and expert colleagues helps improve academic writing.

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Developing Educational Digital Literacies Among Preservice Teachers of Portuguese. an Analysis of Students' Resistance in an Argentinian University

Mariana Larrieu and Gabriela Di Gesú

1 Introduction

Digital technologies have brought profound cultural transformations redefining the notion of literacy and have introduced the debate on what should be considered essential knowledge for life in society. In this socio-historical construction, the concept of literacy gains other senses (Brito 2015). Digital information and communication technologies entail significant changes in the definition of text, author, reader, the ways of reading, and reading practices. The concept refers to the new skills and domains which are required to approach texts in digital environments (Brito 2015; Cassany 2013; Coll 2005). Thus, it arises the idea of multiliteracy involving the development of multiple literacies or digital literacies.

Following Dudeney et al. (2013), the development of digital literacies entails the achievement of micro-literacies (Rodriguez Velasco 2013) that are often overlooked, such as hypertextuality, internet search, participation, and intercultural awareness, among others (Dudeney et al. 2013). These examples of micro-literacies can give us a hint of the complexity of the learning process that a subject needs to engage in to develop digital literacy.

In the document *Innovative Schools in Latin America* (2017), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) lists the factors that should be taken as "engines of change" to incorporate innovation in education. These factors include the need and the climate

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of the moment, experimentation, distinction and authorship of innovation, the business, public policies, and technology in the educational transformation. The document also points out some obstacles that can hinder the incorporation of multiliteracies, such as the ethical risks, the fear of change, costs and regulations, and the innovation curve (p. 68).

From a cultural psychology perspective, we contextualize our engine of change as a catalyst to promote digital literacies. We aimed at turning a traditional class into a hybrid one to meet the need and climate of the moment.

This chapter describes the implementation of a hybrid course in the Initial Teacher Education of Portuguese as a Foreign Language at Universidad Nacional de La Plata, one of the most prestigious universities in Argentina. This work took place when the entrance exam was eliminated, thus posing new challenges to the Portuguese Department.

The modifications in some articles of the Higher Education Act (27,204) passed in Argentina in October 2015 promoted free and unrestricted access to University for all high school graduates. This public policy eliminated the entrance examinations because they are considered as excluding devices that deprive citizens of the possibility of getting the necessary credentials. For the teacher training colleges in foreign languages (FL), this Act forced them to change the curricula as students without previous knowledge of a foreign language could be admitted. Without the exam, the initial courses of the Teacher Education Program in FL at the University became multilevel classes with students showing different levels of proficiency in the chosen FL, in this case Portuguese. Such disparity was a novel situation for professors, and it triggered the need to rethink Larrieu's practice as a faculty member delivering Portuguese Language I, which is one of the first courses students take.

2 Discursive Genres and Information Technology

In Bakhtin's enunciative-discursive approach, discursive genres are not static; on the contrary, they are dynamic and flexible. Each sphere of human activity produces texts sharing features that are produced and consumed in that sphere. The emergence of technology and the internet sparked the expansion of the sphere boundaries resulting in new forms of textual interaction.

From a historical point of view, Marcuschi (2002) describes the emergence of textual genres in history. He introduces five phases: in the first one, he placed a limited set of genres developed by oral cultures. In the seventh century BC, the emergence of the alphabet gave rise to the written genres. The third and fourth phases saw the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century and industrialization in the eighteenth century. Finally, the "electronic culture" sees the telephone, the television, the radio, the personal computer, and especially the internet as new forms of oral and written communication which have been constantly reinvented. Text genres arise, are situated, and functionally integrated into the cultures in which they are developed. They are classified following their communicative, cognitive, and

institutional functions rather than by their linguistic and structural peculiarities" (Marcuschi 2002, p. 20). Text hybridity emerges as the traditional boundaries that genres exhibited in the past are blurred.

Human being-technology relationship can be considered as a matter of necessity (Marcuschi 2004). Some subjects adopt novelty to survive in new environments. Novel ways of communication are surging and surging. The internet enables new means of discourse production and new ways of relating and circulating discourses of experiences in social media. For Marcuschi (2004), the success of new technologies lies in the fact that various forms of expression, i.e., promoting fun, exchanging information, and interactive participation, are virtually placed on a single medium. These new forms present, on the one hand, a new language in which the boundaries of orality and writing are blurred. They integrate other multi-semiotic words, such as sounds, images, emoticons, and figures in movement. However, the immediacy of the interaction, the "immediateness" of the communication, disappears. In turn, hypertexts and hypermedia introduce new forms of text organization based on a non-linear logic (…) that replaces the linear logic the written text has, and that allows for the use of new schemes of argumentation and meaning-making (Coll 2005, p. 6).

Virtual environments have become as fundamental in communicative life as paper and sound. Discursive genres- as linguistic events- are characterized by being a socio-historical, discursive activity. The concept of cyberculture develops precisely as the sociocultural form emerging from the symbiotic relationship between society, culture, and new technologies (Araújo and Panerai 2012).

Cassany (2000), in turn, delves into the emergence of the "discursive community" made up of people from around the world who meet in specific virtual spaces fostered by digital development. Digitality enables sharing activities and interests beyond "traditional borders." While being virtually together, the members of the virtual groups develop their own culture regardless of their geographical origin. A concrete example is social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram. Subjects get in and out of their social media cultures as they move from online activities to face to face ones.

3 Digital Literacy in Teacher Training Courses

Incorporating digital literacy into a teaching context can be considered a catalyzing sign that sees as positive the cultural transformations resulting from technological development. Through a process of semiosis, the internet as a new sign seems to be resignified. The development of digital literacies needs to look for other didactic alternatives to accompany these changes and leads us to rethink and resignify the entire learning process, our pedagogical practice and the importance of educational institutions as an opportunity for digital access for students who do not have this possibility in their houses (Brito 2015).

Digital literates can communicate through multiple languages and technological means. They can internalize information and turn it into knowledge. They can understand hypertexts. They develop reading and communicative strategies to provide information in concrete communicative situations with speakers of other languages. (Area and Guarro 2012). The new skills imply the thematic and textual content in addition to the knowledge of the digital medium that enables new forms of production, circulation, and appropriation of information. Other argumentation strategies which are not linear or deductive are also developed (Brito 2015; Cobo 2016). On a metacognitive stance, self-learning, self-reflective, and critical thinking skills are also developed (Brito 2015).

In teacher training courses, developing digital literacy among student teachers is a challenge (Durán Rodrigez and Estay-Niculcar 2016; Durall et al. 2012). Pre service teachers will educate digital natives who do not conceive a world without information technology. The internet, social networks, and smartphones are part of their daily lives. These student teachers are expected to seek novel learning experiences in multiple formats and should be able to meet new learning demands. Therefore, becoming multiliterate here takes on a large scale concerning the new knowledge and skills required for the appropriation of digital culture (Brito 2015). However, many seem to be reluctant to see this literacy necessary in their professional life.

4 The Hybrid Proposal or "Blended Learning" in the Initial Teacher Education Program in Portuguese (ITEP)

In March 2014, a group of 20 students inaugurated the Initial Teacher Education Program in Portuguese (ITEP) at the Universidad Nacional de La Plata. This University is located in the capital city of the province of Buenos Aires. It is a prestigious institution that welcomes students from different places of the country and international students as well. Although its academic offer is mainly in person, it has recently fostered the creation of online courses to complement the face to face classes in undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate programs.

The students in this study were attending Portuguese Language and Grammar 1 (LGP1). It was delivered face-to-face in 2014 and 2015. After the modification of some articles of the Higher Education Act passed in Argentina in October 2015, access to the public universities in Argentina became unrestricted for high school graduates. Therefore, since 2016, classes have been populated with students showing different levels of proficiency in Portuguese, sparking the need to rethink our own teaching practice.

We decided to implement a hybrid class with the twofold objective of expanding the students' linguistic capacity by scaffolding learning with the use of an array of multimodal activities and, at the same time, facilitating a meaning-making process that could help them develop their digital literacy. Opting for a blended scheme seems to bridge their present *I position* as students with *their future one* as teachers. The

pedagogical practices of face-to-face teaching were enriched with the affordances of distance learning. Students were expected to expand their linguistic performance, and have hands-on experience as online students. We hoped that through a metacognitive process, they would grasp the intricacies of online learning, a skill we considered vital for future teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language.

The virtual classroom was organized into five major themes following the class syllabus and placed on Moodle. Most of the activities implied collaborative work, both synchronously and asynchronously.

4.1 The Student's Experiences

As we said, the human being-technology relationship can be considered as a matter of necessity. We are constantly adapting to novelty (Valsiner 2014a) in order to survive. More and better access to information, hyper-connectivity, social networks use are shaping new identities. Through interacting with others on the internet, subjects make new meanings through new encounters, sharing opinions, accessing documents in ways that were not possible just ten years ago. Teachers of foreign languages can see the internet as a powerful tool that helps students be in contact with everyday language while being physically far apart from that language community.

The students who participated in the hybrid course had access to and used technology. They used the WhatsApp group to be in contact with each other, they were active participants of the social networks, and they were online almost 24 hours a day. They replied messages immediately after receiving them. The professor expected that the students would use the virtual space to read the texts critically, work collaboratively in forums, participate responsibly in the activities, hand in the assignments on time. She saw her role as a guide, helping them with their questions and doubts, planning activities in a cooperative way, encouraging participation among students, and promoting autonomy in the student, etc. However, the students' involvement in the virtual classroom was not as expected. They seldom worked in the virtual room or rarely visited it.

Once the course was over, we decided to interview the members of two groups of students. We aimed to see their conceptions about online learning.

Group A had finished the blended course. Group B were juniors but had not taken the hybrid course. We wanted to see if more advanced students had a different perception of online learning.

The students interviewed were between 20 and 45 years old. Only one student had not had any experience in the use of Moodle platforms. The rest had only used it as a space to exchange reading material and upload assignments.

Group A said that none of them would take an online course because they preferred to have a teacher in front of the class, someone to ask questions to and get answers instantly. They all felt "forced" to participate in the virtual space designed for the course, although they admitted that the proposed topics and activities were exciting and dynamic. They found it difficult to find the time to participate in the Moodle room,

they did not read their classmates' interventions in the forums, and their interlocutor was always the teacher and not the group. They also claimed that they felt forced to "return to the computer." Their daily participation in digital life was mainly through smartphones.

Group B were juniors who had not taken the hybrid course. They all considered working on digital literacies as relevant in their teacher. They highlighted the importance of knowing how to use technology, having virtual spaces, and being able to implement them in their future teaching practice. They found digital spaces more dynamic; as a source of fun for their prospective students or themselves. However, they claimed that none of them had participated in a virtual classroom, and neither would do so because they found it as a source of distraction, and they preferred face-to-face classes with a teacher guiding them.

5 Discussion

Valsiner (2014a) suggests that all psychological phenomena—including representations of something- are results of personal human construction. Subjects internalize the meaning systems that operate in their context but also present in their personal system. For these students, the online environment and the objects that come with it were considered as a sign of distraction and entertainment. This sign has opposite meanings. Subjects in Group A felt that the use of the online learning environment implied a solemnity, deprived of the fun that exchanges using a smartphone provided. It seemed that their active use of social media hindered their chances to see the internet as a learning space.

In the same vein, subjects in Group B considered online learning as a powerful tool for their teaching practice, but again the use of internet for their own learning was perceived for entertainment and dynamism. This group also mentioned the other meaning ascribed to internet, internet as a locus of distraction, a learning inhibitor. The duality of internet as a sign, a positive tool to have fun, entertain oneself and entertain others in the class encountered the negative aspect as the place where one stops learning.

Other relevant matter is that both groups felt that they were forced to use Moodle classrooms to study. Group A did not meet teachers' expectations in the use of the online environment and Group B showed their reluctancy to study online. Both groups behaved contrarily as expected in a future teacher. As Valsiner (2014b) argued, subjects are guided by the environment, being immediate and mediated, but they are also governed by the self as they select and transform the environmental influences. In their construction of sign hierarchy, students needed to negotiate meaning with the teacher as a promoter sign (Cabell and Valsiner 2014), forcing them to use the Moodle room and their personal sense of internet. Thus, *I should use the moodle room to learn* was transformed into *I won't because it distracts me /because it is not fun.* These students seemed to understand the value of the online environment in their future teaching practice, but they did not use it in their present guided by their

belief of the internet as a source of distraction. It could be said that neither group could see themselves as agents controlling their behavior in front of the computer, but it could also be argued that these groups were agents making their own decisions and externalizing their internal sign hierarchy system.

6 Conclusions

From this experience, we can draw three lines of future research. The first would look into the need to make student teachers aware of the importance of developing technological competence and engaging them in online learning environments. Technology-mediated knowledge- construction requires teachers able to foster the development of digital literacy in their students. A techno pedagogy, i.e., the combination of technical competence and pedagogical practice, seems to be necessary to develop the micro literacies implied in digital literacy. So far, this skill has not been included in the study plan of the Initial Teacher Education in Portuguese at Universidad Nacional de La Plata. Online learning poses problems precisely because of the pervading representation of online environments. At the moment of writing this chapter, most Moodle classrooms in the Initial Teacher Education Program were used for sharing reading material or sending assignments; it seemed that students and faculty members follow the same grammar of the social media in which the internet space is a symbolic place to exchange information.

The second line of research would delve into the online discursive genres. Technological evolution changes dramatically during the time a student enters and graduates from a course of studies. Teachers should help students navigate in this ever-changing virtual world. However, students' reluctancy to use online environments seems to hinder this possibility. Would it be possible for teachers to help students promote a skill they do not want to develop? There is a need for students to master reading and writing strategies of digital texts. Students should be required to read and write genres that are in different media (Marcuschi 2004). Sometimes the Moodle platform seems too "static" in its design, as evidenced in Araújo and Panerai (2012). It seems the Moodle room is also perceived as a fixed place with demarcated boundaries. Dynamic virtual spaces are needed, with teachers ready to adapt quickly both to technological changes and to the students' needs. Research on the critical use of online teaching is required.

Finally, the third line of research would focus on entertainment. For Marcuschi (2004), the success of new technologies lies in the fact that there are various forms of expression in a single medium that promotes fun, as well as the exchange of information and interactive participation. However, the entertaining role of the internet seems to inhibit learning and generates resistance among academics.

In our daily practice, we meet university students who use technology in their everyday lives but resist the methodological renewal that blends online environment and in-person classes. For the students in our study, technology had boundaries; the ludic sphere was set apart of the knowledge sphere. Internet and social networks

were considered as a source of social interaction and fun while the serious business of education was only performed in an in-person class. Araújo and Panerai's (2012) narrated a blended learning experience developed simultaneously on Moodle and Facebook as extension environments of the classroom. Students perceived Moodle space as a static environment affording less interaction than Facebook. They used the discussion Forums on Facebook more than the ones on Moodle. The authors saw they were constantly logged in, and they perceived that Facebook was more dynamic, allowing greater interactivity. It seemed that the medium exerted an influence on the students' behavior. However, this hypothesis needs further studies.

Training in the Moodle platform must be continuous and not only focus on a tool in an innovation process but an integral part of the teachers and students' education. Following Pedró (2016), he considers that the virtual platform adds "an additional effort". As students grow, "their expectations about what quality teaching is become, paradoxically, more conservative and favorable to what is known, the methodologies they have been exposed during all the previous educational stages" (Pedró 2016, p. 250). In Valsiner's words, past positive experiences provide safe bases for their choices. Adventuring into the unknown seems a challenging endeavor they are not likely to engage in. At least, today.

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Engendering New Conversations

The Imposed Online Learning and Teaching During COVID-19 Times

María Gabriela Di Gesú and María Fernanda González

1 Introduction

When we submitted the book to Springer, COVID-19 was just a piece of news coming from Wuhan, China. The World Health Organization (WHO) had not declared it a pandemic, and the idea that the virus could hit countries around the world was remote and even seen as typical of an alarmist. However, while the book was under review, this minuscule virus landed. As an intense hurricane, this invisible- to- the- naked- eye pathogen triggered radical changes in our societies worldwide. A sense of war was installed through the systematic use of a semantic chain. A*n invisible enemy*, *fight*, *attack*, *battle, weapons* were used by governments and media to establish the idea of a world in peril that demanded a collective effort to combat the newcomer. Without soldiers or army, doctors and nurses were described as fighters on the frontline. Countries' internal and external borders were closed, strict control on the citizenry's movements was enforced to prevent the spread of the virus.

Consequently, human beings worldwide have experienced different levels of compulsory limitations on their behaviors. A new semantic jungle (García Aretio 2020) emerged. Lockdown, confinement, stay-at-home orders, quarantine pushed people to sever their relationships with the outside world. The illusion of *all being equal* in the eyes of the virus (Deaton 2020) was shattered by the opposites that the pandemic revealed. Doctors and nurses could be heroes/villains, i.e., fighting without sufficient protective equipment while being harassed by their neighbors who

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see them as the disease spreaders. Some old patterns recurred. Well -off families have fled from infected cities while the vulnerable members of our societies worldwide living in dense quarters have faced the disease without tools. The virus can initially infect all, but the death toll shows that the most vulnerable members of our societies, the old and the poor, are bearing the most burden (Deaton 2020).

As Rosemberg claimed

> *Thus, as a social phenomenon, an epidemic has a dramaturgic form. Epidemics start at a moment in time, proceed on a stage limited in space and duration, follow a plotline of increasing and revelatory tension, move to a crisis of individual and collective character, then drift toward closure. In another of its dramaturgic aspects, an epidemic takes on the quality of pageant mobilizing communities to act out proprietory rituals that incorporate and reaffirm fundamental social values and modes of understanding. It is their public character and dramatic intensity along with unity of place and time that make epidemics as well suited to the concerns of moralists as to the research of scholars seeking an understanding of the relationship among ideology, social structure, and the construction of particular selves.* (Rosenberg 1989)

Seeing the disease as a social phenomenon guides our analysis. At the moment of writing this chapter, six months have passed since WHO declared the COVID-19 epidemic. A digitalized word has afforded the illusion that we are living in a giant global laboratory in which tests, vaccines, and possible cures are being developed without the certainty of their effectiveness. A myriad of surveys has been carried out to make sense of the feelings, attitudes, and behaviors. Hard and soft research seems to have once buried their hatchet to help populations navigate their new ways among rules and procedures. Although necessary, regulations have forced individuals to isolate themselves from beloved ones, disrupted their everyday activities in the hope of avoiding harm not only for them but for their societies.

The dramaturgical event that Rosenberg suggests has given rise to a *new normal* (Howard 2009). This unexpected and atypical situation that becomes usual has forced subjects in some societies to go through a sense-making process of the transformation of the routine nature of their everyday activities. It seems that a new cultural reality (Znaniecki 1919) is emerging amid the uncertainty brought by an altered environment. Jobs, learning processes, religious rituals, health care, and leisure activities have all been displaced. More than ever, subjects perceive they are experiencing the dynamism of an open system that needs to adapt to a rapidly unexpected and imposed change in the environment. We ourselves, as academics, are shaping our own reflections in the midst of these collective dialogues. Following Bruner, human beings attempt to build their experience through a narrative when disruption and weirdness are experienced. A pandemic is a disruptive event that forces us to look at the strangeness that is taking place in our daily life. While a grand narrative of the virus is being construed and reconstrued, counternarratives also attempt to emerge. However, as we are living through it, the absence of a temporal perspective that interweaves the past, the present, and the future hinders the possibility of research analysis. A feeling of a prolonged present pervades. Yet, the possibility of construing a narrative emerges when the strangeness dialogues with some certainties arising from our practices (Bruner 1991).

In this midst of displacements and the emergence of novel ways of doing the old things, our focus will be the imposed transformation on higher education. This chapter attempts to open a dialogue with the new environmental conditions. During these months, we have opened our eyes and ears to listen to our colleagues' voices; we have collected newspaper articles, emails, and procedures that have helped us see how different *homo academicus* responded to this new educational demand. Since the declaration of the pandemic, subjects have been compelled to engage in an open process collectively. Brinkmann suggests that *open processes should be kept open rather than terminated* (Brinkmann 2020). Therefore, this chapter can be seen as an opening thread of an online forum, a partial description of a collective experience that is developing rapidly. Through the articulation of different narratives, a new personal and collective sense of the experience will be constructed. The limitations of this work are the resources collected. We have gathered information available at the moment of writing, and the students' and teachers' voices who participated in meetings and classes. Their names have been changed. We are grateful for their willingness to give us their consent to use their words in this work.

2 A Non-universal Response to the New Normal

Rosenberg's definition of an epidemic has helped us structure our work. Since WHO's declaration, education systems worldwide have been closed or partially closed, and an imposed online delivery of contents has been implemented (UNESCO 2020). Universities were also urged to move the in-person courses to online environments, thus leaving many faculty members figuring out how and what to do in an unknown educational modality. As best everybody could, the educational system worldwide responded to the need to continue educating in an adverse environment.

On the 11th webinar, Latin America Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Higher Education: impact and recommendations (*America Latina: El Coronavirus (COVID-19) y la Educación superior: impacto y recomendaciones*), UNESCO claimed that the campus closure triggered two interrelated effects. On the one hand, it suggested the emergence of the *Matthew effect* that sees better-off students profit from the situation while more vulnerable students see their vulnerability increase. Coined by the sociologist Robert K. Merton, the Mathew effect was used to explain the discrepancies in recognition received by eminent scientists and unknown researchers for similar work (Perc 2014). In education, the *Matthew effect* has been used to account for the difference in academic success relative to the students' early literacy development. Being the case, it seems that only when alterity takes place in the environment, is there public awareness of the existent and pervading inequities.

The digital divide has never been closed (Costantini and Raffaghelli in this book). Newspapers worldwide have been describing the perils and distress that many university students have faced since campus closure. Some international students became homeless and could not return to their countries of origin. Students returning home or part-time students have found that they could not participate in online synchronous

lessons because of slow internet speed or the lack of devices. In some Latin American countries, some part-time students cannot afford the cost of home internet, or they do not have a computer, being the smartphone the only device that connects them with their university studies. One of the most cited problems among students worldwide is the cost of access to the internet connection. Different countries have responded to that claim in diverse ways; for instance, in Argentina, the Consejo Inter Universitario Nacional (National Interuniversity Council) have signed an agreement with the leading internet and mobile service providers to allow students free access to university contents. Using smartphones to study has created the need to adapt the online content and activities to the device screen.

3 Teaching and Learning in COVID-19 Times

In this new semantic jungle, new words were created to make sense of other phenomena that the pandemic sparked. C*oronateaching* was coined to define the abrupt move from in-person to online education (UNESCO 2020). Ramos Torres considered it is as a syndrome that gives rise to feelings of frustration and powerlessness due to barriers in connectivity or lack of computer resources. Besides, coronateaching encompasses the diverse difficulties in the face of demands, and the lack of knowledge on how to integrate digital technologies in university courses (Ramos Torres 2020).

The abrupt switchover of curricular content to virtual environments deprived students and teachers of the traditional teaching and learning environment. Pedagogical deficiencies are perceived as this radical move did not allow for time to reflect on how to teach or study online (Rapanta et al. 2020; Demantowsky and Lauer 2020). The abundance of articles with tips and applications reveals the need to find ways to teach online.

Rosenberg considered the epidemics as events that firstly unfold unnoticed until they are admitted adequately in the societies. Societies fear their impact because the outbreaks disrupt the socially constructed ways of doing things. COVID-19 erupted as altering the familiar environment. This novelty has forced individuals and societies to engage in a *semiotically* mediated *trajectory of experience* (Rosa 2016; Rosa and Gonzalez 2013). The consecutive phases or *alterities* (Rosa 2016) of the trajectory have been helping subjects meditate about the event and gradually enabled the development of a self who engages in a lengthy sense-making process to grasp the changes in the environment and regain their agency.

Universities as human-made, sociocultural constructed institutions can also be seen as open social systems, constituted by individuals performing different roles. Like other institutions, in COVID-19 times, they have engaged in an imposed self-educational process in which many of their members are learning hands-on the intricacies of remote learning and working. The institutions and their members have engaged in a *trajectory of experience* to make sense of their work in an altered environment. Their response is unique due to its context-dependent nature. Following

the Trajectory Equifinality Approach (Valsiner and Sato 2006), when the pandemic resolves, each institution will emerge anew, and hopefully offer their students new academic trajectories.

Following Rosenberg, *one of the defining characteristics of an epidemic is, in fact, the pressure it generates for decisive and visible community response* (Rosenberg 1989). Following the trajectory of experience model, *coronateaching* is a representamen that describes a phase in this process. A new substantive that helps individuals understand the ways teaching and learning are occurring today. Likewise, It can be seen as an urgent need to respond as educational institutions that serve their societies. Instructors and faculty members have helped students continue their studies. The global academic community has experienced the pressure to respond to social distancing and imposed lockdowns. The urgency of the situation has not enabled preparedness. Faculty members, teachers, and students can be active users and consumers of social media. However, this fact has never meant that they are acquainted with teaching or studying online; neither are they with producing online content that encourages self-sufficiency, participation, and collaboration (Larrieu in this book).

Both students and academics have needed to go through a learning process to become online learners and teachers. Developing digital literacy implies a process that interweaves social, affective, and cognitive aspects (Barbato and Beraldo; Ramos, Rossato and Boll; Borges, Mesquita and Versutti, in this book). The declaration of the pandemic has imposed many new cultural artifacts such as the mask, and behaviors, i.e. new sanitizing habits, social distancing, isolating the elderly. COVID-19 has also imposed long stay- at- home periods that may vary from country to country. For many, this confinement has meant a source of distress, while others find it as a period to reconnect with themselves and beloved ones.

Like any other individuals, faculty members, and students have also necessitated to deal with the fears, the anxiety, stress, and pain that lockdown periods and movement curtailment have brought with them. As an academic community, they have followed their own *trajectory of experience* in an attempt to make sense of the alterity in their working/studying environment (Rosa 2016).

Several universities and academic centers have been carrying out different studies as we write this chapter.[1] They acknowledge the need to provide support and care to students during the pandemic, paying attention to the most vulnerable coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, it is suggested that the transition to online learning should be less abrupt and more sympathetic. They have even asked for adding compassion to classes (Head 2020). However, as students' distress is acknowledged and seems to be taken care of, professors' concerns appear to be scarcely attended.

Students' response to the abrupt change in their environment has been uneven. While some returned home, others decided to stay on campus. In countries like

[1]For a collection of studies, check https://www.daad.de/en/information-services-for-higher-education-institutions/centre-of-competence/covid-19-impact-on-international-higher-education-studies-and-forecasts/.

Fig. 1 A student taking an oral exam in a rustic bus stop in Argentina (Screenshot downloaded from https://www.facebook.com/UNCaWeb/videos/785028102. Last access, August 2020)

Argentina, where most students study part-time, when the university campuses closed, some students opted for halting their studies until the reopening of the campuses. However, some others found novel ways to cope with the new normal. This photo shows three professors and a student in an oral exam situation that took place in June, 2020. The student is currently studying at Universidad Nacional de Catamarca (Argentina) but, due to the quarantine, he had to attend classes from his hometown, a small village with 854 inhabitants surrounded by mountains in the north-west of the country. As the internet connection was unstable in his house, he decided to take the oral exam in a rustic cabin used as a bus stop because of better connectivity. For a moment, the student created a *bubble of university* inside that open cabin. He got in the bubble, delivered the exam, and burst the bubble. He later said that he wanted to share his story and experience because *there are so many people saying everything is impossible, but it is possible. With strength, willingness, and spirit, everything is possible* (Figs. 1 and 2).[2]

The preliminary results of a longitudinal analysis of the interaction on a Facebook page among university students attending a public university in Argentina reveal how time has helped students follow *their trajectory of experience* through engaging in a semiotic process mediated by their experience, comments, likes and shares. When the university campus closed following the mandatory stay-at-home order, the students demanded in-person classes, and considered that the switchover to online learning would jeopardize their studies. Their initial *negatricity* (Ardoino 1997) has been transformed through a semiotic process materialized in the online interchange on Facebook. By the end of the semester, students started exchanging information

[2]Di Gesú translated the student's comment for this work.

Fig. 2 The bus stop where the student took his exam (Screenshot downloaded from https://www.facebook.com/UNCaWeb/videos/785028102. Last access, August, 2020)

and recommendations on the courses to do online in the following term. They have organized petitions to force academics, who seemed reluctant to teach on line, to deliver courses. They criticized the university as an institution, but, at the same time, they became sympathetic to the academics who switched to online learning. Students see them as "*learners who are adapting to the new, as we are doing*." The traditional hierarchy seems to be maintained, but they feel their professors are learners as well.

4 COVID-19 and the New Meaning of Private Spaces

4.1 Home

If Rosemberg considered that pandemic develops on a particular stage, the homes have also become the stage where the different aspects of life, i.e. work, health, learning, social, well being, and spiritual, are taking place during lockdowns. Following Mallet, we understand home as a complex socioculturally- constructed sign. Home is perceived as a physical dwelling where subjects interact with others in a more intimate, affective way with permeable or impermeable boundaries (Mallet 2004).

Before Covid-19, students who opted for online learning were happy to share their intimate spaces (Gonzalez, in this book). However, the imposition to study online in COVID-19 times led to a profound transformation of home life turning its boundaries more permeable. The traditional dynamics of the *being at home* have become a new situation that sees all members of a household staying together twenty four hours a day performing activities usually carried out in other public spaces. During stay-at-home orders, people have worked, studied, prayed, played, taken gym classes while being all together. As newspapers all around the world depict, household members

have engaged in negotiations to use the computers, and do the house chores, as well. Lockdowns have sparked radical changes in home dynamics and the suspension of the performative role of the institutions. The *I-positions* (Hermans 2013) are now enacted in a juxtaposed scenario. Before COVID-19, *I as an employee/faculty member* was usually performed in an institution, while the *I as a spouse/partner/parent* was enacted at home. The pandemic forced subjects to perform the different selves in the same place and at the same moment.

A dual movement was experienced. On the one hand, the external world has intruded the privacy of the home. School and university have always been part of the domestic life through homework (Pontecorvo 2013), the study time at home, or due to choosing online learning. Yet, pandemic triggered the need of synchronous meetings in which teachers/academics and pupils/students engage in technology-mediated lessons while both actors stay at home. The serious business of higher education met the simplicity of home life, thus giving room to never seen situations. A student took an oral exam in her kitchen while her partner was pouring himself a coffee. Again, as we describe in this book, places and activities have been juxtaposed (Gonzalez and Di Gesú; Di Gesú in this book), making people find novel meanings to their quarters by creating bubbles. *Bubbles of work*, *bubbles of leisure, bubbles of study* allow the enactment of different *selfs.* The elasticity of those bubble walls enables permeable boundaries that facilitate being physically in one place but symbolically in a different one while performing various roles at the same time. Again, students and faculty members experience the same situation, and one could see that while they are in class, a toddler can demand attention, or a pet interrupts the scene.

The homes have welcomed the arrival of the university. COVID-19 has forced the university knowledge to leave its closure. In different interviews conducted by Di Gesú, a common topic arose around the idea of attending university from home. A low-middle class builder who has not finished high school commented about his daughter's participation in synchronous lessons.

> *Me gustó lo que decía el profesor de la universidad y mi hija prestando atención…* (I liked it what the (university) professor was saying and my daughter paying attention)

Another student who decided to spend the quarantine with his elderly mother said:

> *Mi madre se adaptó fácilmente a tenerme cursando en su casa con lo que conlleva (respetar espacios y generar cierto clima de silencio al estar cerca). De hecho creo que disfrutaba escuchar un rato de las clases.* (My mother easily adapted to my taking classes from her home, that is, respecting spaces and creating a quiet environment when she was close. In fact, I believe she enjoyed listening to the lessons for a while)

A part-time university commented that many family members were attending university classes simultaneously,

> *Mi familia, esta situación nos pegó a todos en casa, mi hijo y esposa también tuvieron clases virtuales, o sea, compartíamos las distintas experiencias, cuando almorzamos o cenamos las clases son temas relevantes en la mesa.* (My family,.. this situation struck us all at home, my son and my wife have been also having virtual classes, that means, we shared our different experiences when lunching or dining. Classes are relevant topics around the table.)

Other verbatim comments also illustrate the host of challenges many households faced during lockdowns.

> *Tener niños y adolescentes en la casa, se hace todo más complicado.* (Having kids and teens at home, makes everything more complicated). (Juan, an engineering student)
>
> *En mi casa, hay una sola computadora. Y mis padres se la dieron a mi hermano. Yo la puedo usar cuando él termina de trabajar.* (At home, there's only one computer. And my parents gave it to my brother. I can use it when he finishes working.) (Elena, an engineering student)

In some university systems, the university has become part of the home dynamics. Students and academics alike commented that they have come to terms with it but they voiced their discomfort on the use of WhatsApp for university purposes. As we said before, the smartphone has replaced the computer because of a myriad of reasons. The switchover found some students using their phones to log into the university campus, download readings, join online meetings, and even take exams. To not leave any student behind, some faculty members in Argentina decided to use WhatsApp to answer questions, explain topics, or give news. It was interesting to see that students and academics could cope with studying or teaching from home, but both actors in this dyad considered that the use of WhatsApp for teaching and learning as intruding on their privacy. WhatsApp seems to have become a symbolic place for privacy where fun and social interaction takes place but not for studying.

The following verbatim comments illustrate this finding.

> *Lo que no me gusta de estudiar en línea es mi WhatsApp. WhatsApp es para compartir cosas con amigos, no para estudiar. No me gusta* (The only thing that I don't like about studying online is that now the university is in my WhatsApp. WhatsApp is to share stuff with friends, not to study. I don't like it). (An engineering student)
>
> *No quiero que mis estudiantes tengan mi WhatsApp.; me escriben a cualquier hora, cualquier día.* (I don't want my students to have my WhatsApp; they text me at any time, any day.) (A Professor commented during a meeting)

These recounts are examples of a reflection on the "in-between" transformation occurring in the new emerging physical and symbolic spaces mediated by smart devices. In sum, it is necessary to acknowledge the changes taking place in these cultural contexts through the introduction of digital technology.

5 The New Meaning of Presence

University life is organized around the *culture of presence* (Demantowsky and Lauer 2020). Different kinds of devices are used to track professors' and students' attendance. Regulations and beliefs on how human beings learn better reinforce the idea that presence is fundamental in any teaching learning process. Most students and teachers need their mutual presence to enact their roles and learn (Di Gesú, in this book).

Early in the lockdown, a sort of nostalgia and a romantic view of the in-person classes seem to permeate in Facebook posts, emails, and verbatim comments.

However, this daring view of genuine interaction, real contact hides the fact that bodies can be physically in the classroom while minds are not. In a meeting, an adjunct professor, who never wanted to teach online before the pandemic, commented that online teaching has helped her known her students better, as she has been able to keep better contact with them.

In this book, the different authors described an online learning and teaching process that rely heavily on asynchronicity and the written text. However, video conferencing has seemingly given rise to a different way of delivering online content, thus forging new bonds between academics and students and novel approaches to online teaching. In-person advocates see videoconferencing as a stopgap that prevents more harm. They claim that students should be assessed in person, and demand the reopening of campuses. However, other faculty members committed to the digital switchover, and created encouraging and challenging online environments. A dual movement is taking place. While some individuals are looking forward to return to face to face classes, others are expecting a transformation of the educational practices in higher education if online learning succeeds.

6 Universities Are Leaving Closure

Since the declaration of the pandemic, the academic world has courted social media in novel ways, never seen before. As campus closed and academic events were canceled, home videos were released. Webinars, academic conversations could be followed on different social media platforms. All around the world, universities have organized academic meetings that it would have been difficult to happen in- person. Digital communication has allowed for connecting people in ways that would not be conceived before COVID-19. A positive viral spread of academic knowledge has flooded the social media platforms.

The possibility of attending online academic events for free is not new but has become more common during this time. A webinar could be viewed in real-time or saved for later on any platform. The sacred academic knowledge has mixed with the mundane experience that circulates on Facebook (Fig. 3).

The screenshot above shows the interviewer (top left) and two well-known linguists, Chomsky and Krashen. The interviewer and the scientists shared not only their ideas but also the glimpses of their dwellings. Viewers can appreciate the stage they created for the event, a decorated wall in the background, a room in a house, a dark room. However, when the video is posted on Facebook, the scene changes. It is stripped away from the seriousness of the academic stage. It becomes one video more in a pool of suggested videos. The bar on the right shows that the videos coming next are unrelated and not academic. Anytime the video is open, new videos are recommended for viewing. Users can scroll past it on social media, but only they will pause and engage if the users know these scientists or if the video content fits in with individuals' newsfeed. This interview has been shared by different users and resized to meet the sharers' purposes. The academic knowledge leaves its closure

Fig. 3 An interview with Chomsky and Krashen (*Source* https://www.facebook.com/mehmetceyhanyagli/videos/1358063124395705. Last access, August 2020)

to meet the triviality of popular culture and can be transformed in ways never seen before. Time is needed to analyze the impact of this phenomena.

7 Conclusion

This chapter was written six months after COVID-19 pandemic was declared. It aims at reflecting on the sense-making process subjects are going through a *trajectory of experience*. New habits and movement restrictions have been imposed. The irruption of a virus has halted the socially constructed sense of normalcy. Individuals have reacted to the disruptions in novel ways.

The change in the environment has forced subjects to make sense of the new situation through a discursive process in which novelty is semiotized, and a new self emerges. A self that can act upon novelty and transform it while being transformed.

If we consider universities as open systems, their *trajectory of experience* can be seen as a collective endeavor in which the actors that interact in the institution engage in a joint semiotic process to make sense of the new normalcy. It is not only the self who is treading the trajectory at the moment of writing this chapter, but the university system as Umwelt. Their educational practices based on the *culture of the presence* have been suspended, and even the traditional way online learning is delivered has been recreated with videoconferencing and other synchronous meetings on different platforms.

Covid-19 has abruptly changed the environment, and has also revealed that the digital divide is far from being closed. Lack of access to home internet and the use of the smartphone as a replacement of the computer has left many university students behind, especially in Latin America. We do not have data from other continents. It may be said that we are all equal to the eyes of COVID-19, but it places the burden

on the most vulnerable. However, individuals react to the challenges imposed by the new situation in creative manners. A student decides on taking an exam inside a bus stop because of better connectivity, another who could not afford the cost of home internet service decided to follow her lessons by texting her professors and classmates. These are not ideal situations but individual reactions to change. Both students shared the same argument, i.e., they did not want the pandemic to hinder their studies. As future-oriented agents, they followed their trajectory of experience, adopting an active self position, playing their *I as student self* on a different stage, deciding on the means to pursue their objectives.

We cannot conclude because the pandemic is unfolding. We can only hope that when COVID-19 resolves, as all pandemic do, universities will hopefully learn that the culture of presence is necessary, and so is the culture of online learning. Both can coexist and provide students with better tools in a digitalized world.

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Online Learning as a Cultural Phenomenon in a Complex Scenario a Critical View of Online Learning and Teaching Process in Higher Education

María Gabriela Di Gesú and María Fernanda González

In the Introduction to this book, we describe how art could produce an illusionary effect on visitors to a museum. The idea of being in one place but mirroring ourselves in other virtual spaces was the starting point to describe the content of this volume. The contributors in this book have depicted the different meaning-making processes occurring in an online learning environment in higher education. The overall premise was to study how faculty members and students pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree in various universities in Latin America and Europe deal with online learning as a new object in their environment. We wanted to discuss the different relationships that subjects need to engage in when they move in and out of the virtual and physical spheres to learn. We could see students and faculty members alike are not making use of technology uniformly. They are selective in the tools and the modes in using them.

Initially, this chapter attempted to summarize the book. Instead, it wants to become the beginning of a new discussion in Cultural Psychology of Education.

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1 OTL as a Stylized Object of Culture or a Socio-Cultural Phenomenon

Online teaching and learning (OTL) can be considered stylized objects of culture, i.e., a meaningful object in multiple senses at the same time (Valsiner 2014, p 173). Like any other object of culture, OTL can be seen as an artifact developed from the meaningful transformation of other objects thanks to the innovations in technology (Valsiner 2014). Seeing OTL as an artifact can enable a partial analysis of the interwoven complexity embedded. However, no single part can be separated from the whole of a methodological cycle (Valsiner 2019). From a cultural psychology perspective, the analysis of OTL as a social phenomenon needs to consider the seven axioms: the irreversibility of time; the role of signs mediating human psychological life; subjects forming dynamic sign hierarchies, human beings as teleogenetic future-oriented sign makers; context dependency of the constructed signs; the impossibility of seeing the phenomenon in direct causal relation and the sign as a catalyzer.

Throughout this book, the different contributors have attempted to see OTL as a social phenomenon that needs to be analyzed from multiple perspectives. This last chapter is aimed at opening new threads of discussion on this educational context through the lens of Cultural Psychology of Education.

2 The Liminal Space in Online Education

In the introduction, we talked about the performative role of spaces. Human beings perform different activities in different places. Like actors on a stage, subjects enact their positions according to the environment. They dress for the occasion; they follow the overt or hidden script of a place, and so on. Following Daniels, the institutional *structures are cultural-historical products (artifacts) which play a part in implicit […] or invisible […] mediation of human functioning and which are, in turn, transformed through human action* (Daniels 2012).

The different chapters in this book have revealed how students internalized the world of schooling and its daily routine before joining the University. At school, they did not only learn academic knowledge, but also that academic learning mainly takes place in a closed room shared with people who are similar in age and that an adult guides their learning. Through semiotic processes, they had made sense of the different cultural artifacts that an educational institution provides as signs that catalyze or inhibit their learning. The classroom, the desks, and chairs, the board are seen as indisputable signs of a teaching and learning activity.

The daily grind (Jackson 1991) of classroom life is so deeply rooted that subjects barely acknowledge their existence consciously. Smells, noises, colors are only remembered when the classroom environment is altered, or when some flashbacks evoke memories and feelings (Jackson 1991).

The classroom is also the first place where social interaction (Jackson 1991) takes place away from family. From the moment human beings join kindergarten, their primary social life follows a script in a classroom, a decorated stage where all actors interplay. From the moment student's eyes meet other students' eyes or their teachers', they cannot carry on the same observation. The interplay of gazes draws everybody into a relation with a particular person acknowledging one another and reaffirming their self-positions. This pedagogical eye contact between a teacher and their pupils can foster or hinder learning while the teacher's look demarcates the boundary between what is permitted and what is not.

Asymmetry features this intersubjective activity that is scaffolded by other symbolic objects such as the classroom layout, the school regulations, the hidden curriculum. Bodies and minds are shaped through the art of schooling (Foucault 2002; Marsico and Iannaccone 2012). Teachers are in control and they are controlled by regulations, parents, even their students. A myriad of symbolic and physical borders mold not only their positions but also the extensions of those positions. The *I as a teacher* can become *I as a benevolent/ strict teacher*, *I as a student* can become *I as a good/ bad student.*

Online learning -teaching (OTL) subverts this daily grind. No doors, no interplay of gazes, no particular smells. Subjects are deprived of the performative stage that the institution provides. An illusion of being freed from the constraint of fixed schedules and places leaves both actors without a script to follow. Students and faculty alike have to make sense of other spaces. Private intimate areas such as bedrooms can be transformed into new contexts for learning. Online learning and teaching demand that subjects forge new relationships with other life spaces or microcultures (Marsico et al. 2015). Thus, they make new senses of the acquired meaning of contexts for learning.

OTL is in a liminal space, i.e., a place where we are betwixt and between the familiar and the completely unknown (Rohr 1999, pp. 155–156). The ordinary world of the old schooling is left behind, while students/faculty are not yet sure of the new existence and validity of this mode of learning. Adopting remote learning for studying also means constructing a new sign hierarchy that ascribes a symbolic status of the to- be- learned activity in the learner's/instructor's world (Addison Stone 1993). For the subjects in this book, some disciplines can be studied online, while others require in-person classes (Di Gesú in this book).

However, we claim that the idea of liminality implies the existence of an adequate space where genuine novelty can begin (Gonzalez in this book). Students who get to complete and pass an online learning course feel that this mode of learning has not only provided them with the flexibility they needed but has also allowed them to reflect on their learner self. The pandemic of COVID 19 has revealed how subjects follow a trajectory of experience in novel and creative ways (Di Gesú & Gonzalez in this book). When students place themselves in the liminality provided by online learning and teaching, they suspend the idea of normalizing in-person learning. They engage in a constructive process of pondering the options available, and they make decisions grounded on the meditation of their learner self—unique decisions made by unique individuals.

3 The Role of Implicit Knowledge in OTL

Implicit knowledge or the knowledge acquired from personal experiences needs further analysis when discussing OTL. Orality is central in a traditional lesson, and the written word is pivotal in online learning. While the in-person university classes rely on an educator lecturing, answering questions, and questioning students in real time, traditional online learning finds both actors reading each other. The dialogue taking place in a physical classroom in irreversible time is transformed into a dialogue mediated by a diversity of objects that pose subjects with cognitive and social challenging practices. The written exchange is saved for future uses. For a teleogenetic future-oriented individual, this can lead to the emergence of emotions that can catalyze or inhibit their participation.

Literacy as a socio-cultural technology is at the heart of OTL (Thorne 2013). In order to develop literacy, subjects need to engage in a long, arduous process in which their identity as writers is shaped. In OTL, faceless communication forces interlocutors create an image of each other by reading their written productions. Students and teacher author their posts in Forums. They conjointly write their weekly lessons. They engage in a writing –reading process in which intersubjectivity is developed through an epistolary interchange. The interpersonal meaning of any texts involves values, attitudes and personal relationships between author and reader (Goodman1994). In online learning, this interpersonal meaning acquires a new significance as both actors are readers and authors at the same time. Each time, the teachers' or the students' production is read or listened, new meanings can emerge. This particular semiotic practice implies the existence of a set of other practices that contribute to making sense of different signs within the community of practice (Lave 1991). The mutual trust, conducive to learning, between learners and teachers, and among the community of learners is built upon this epistolary venture in which all subjects emerge transformed.

However, writing is a life- long journey (Bazerman 2013) that demands organizing ideas, selecting words, and effectively placing them in sentences. A socio culturally acquired skill that requires a lifetime of development to become an effective writer (Bazerman 2013). Writing itself is a virtual distance technology (Bazerman 2011), although learning how to write traditionally takes place in a classroom with face to face horizontal and vertical interactions. While the literature everywhere claims that online learning helps students voice their ideas because they are not seen or heard, for many authors, online learning objectifies the other because they cannot be seen or heard. This could lead to students failing to engage in written debates, and to weaken instructors' guidance (Bazerman 2011).

This depiction does not attempt to normalize the concept of deficit that pervades in online learning literature. It aims at acknowledging that online learning poses demands that enable learners to acquire or enhance their literacy, but these demands can also inhibit their participation in a moodle classroom. Undergrads are developing their academic literacy, and faculty members/instructors teaching online need to acknowledge the existence of this process.

The switchover to OTL due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought the oral word to online courses. The emergence of videoconferencing, video calls, live videos, and so on has brought the verbal dialogue of the classroom to the online class. New research is needed to compare the impact of introducing synchronous meetings in terms of students' engagement and pass rates.

4 The Extension of Contexts

Valsiner claims that the context specificity of human lives is a general principle that operates universally, giving rise to the high variability of particular forms (Valsiner 2014, p. 114). Many subjects in this book see classrooms as a context conducive to learning, a place where they feel safe to ask questions, to debate (Di Gesú in this book). The class as an indexical sign gives the subject a sense of belonging to the whole, i.e., I am a student because I am a member of this class— this University.

However, this view has failed to see how social norms and practices taking place in classrooms can also hinder, rather than catalyzing learning (Kotler et al. 2001). From a Vygotskian perspective, learning is interpersonally scaffolded in a mutual construction of situations (Addison Stone 1993). It implies a series of exchanges in which both actors build trust upon interweaving their past, present, and future interactions (Hatano 1993). The affective nature of the spontaneous conversations frames knowledge construction. So what happens when there is no spontaneity? Can knowledge be constructed without the dialogue? Is technologically mediated orality contributing to retrieve the talk that is missing in OTL?

Following the Vygotskian perspective, we claim that for knowledge construction to take place in OTL, instructors not only have to work on the students' Zone of Proximal Development in terms of their cognition but also in terms of their literacy skills and beliefs of the concept of learning. Thinking that learning only takes place in a classroom can act as a buffer that might hinder sign hierarchy construction, more research is needed, though.

Using Hatanos' words, we can analyze the existence of a moderate extension of the Vygotskian conception of learning by instruction (Hatano 1993, p. 155) in OTL. Adapting Hatano's categories, we claim that learners are active as they learn conceptual knowledge and techno skills that will help them shape their life- long learning process. They achieve understanding by internalizing the new information displayed in multiple formats that the online environment enables. The vertical and horizontal interactions catalyze their knowledge construction in Forums, videoconferences. The availability of sources of information when they study online help them clarify and enhance that construction. However, becoming online learners is a lengthy process, that as the chapters in this book reveal, involves cognitive and affective processes. These processes also challenge instructors as they need to engage in a sense-making process that de-normalize the idea that learning only takes place in institutions while raising new questions about their identities and their teaching and learning habits.

5 Experiencing Technology

Subjects can experience digital technology in different ways. Digital technology and subjects are embedded in a culture that shapes the enactment of their relationship. The smartphone has promoted the selfie phenomenon, which in turn has triggered the need for smartphones with better-embedded cameras. Subjects make, modify, and maintain cultural objects (Valsiner 2014)

One of the questions we had in the early stages of this book was whether online learning could be considered a matter of technology appropriation. From a cultural psychology perspective, the learning process is intrinsically related to human development, being individual, cultural, and historical (Dazzani et al. 2015; Marsico et al. 2015). Engaging in an online learning program would mean that students and teachers go through a semiotic process that will give value not only to technology per se but also the other features embedded in online learning, such as ubiquity, the notion of borders, and the emergence of a perceived new identity, an online persona. They do not belong to the techno sphere. They are part of the intrapsychological world of the self and operate as signs that catalyze or inhibit the appropriation process. In terms of cultural psychology, a dynamic sign with infinite borders (SWIB) operates as a generalized category of feelings that can promote or inhibit the participation in a learning activity that can be considered "no normal" in terms of the traditional view of academic learning.

6 Seeing Ubiquity as a Sign

Ubiquity seems to be one of the most popular tenants among online learning advocates. The word ubiquity emerged in 1570-80 to name a Lutheran theological position maintaining the omnipresence of Christ.[1] Throughout the history, this polysemic sign expanded its meaning to mean *omnipresence* in relationship with government in the British law, and the more modern meaning as the *presence everywhere or in many places simultaneously*. Feelings towards ubiquity can be positive or negative as the chapters in this book reveal. The idea of a supranatural force living everywhere, helping, and accompanying human beings can be comforting. Yet, it can also imply that the same force is perceived as a vigilante, a Big Eye watching the human beings. Internet and all the cultural artifacts that it enables can be seen as a SWIB socially constructed but individually experienced.

The word ubiquity is attached to online learning. When a word is fixed to the object, its repetition operates as an advertisement through a mechanism of universal repetition (Horkheimer and Adorno 1988). Subjects may respond to this advertisement in unique ways. Through the construction of a sign hierarchy, they set either the negative or the positive value to ubiquity and adopt or resist online learning accordingly.

[1] Etymology dictionary. www.gy.enacademi.com.

Ubiquity refers to the notion of heterotopias. Foucault explains heterotopias as the juxtaposition of disparate places. The sacralized borders that define seemingly opposite spheres are blurred, and so public vs. private, family vs. social, scientific knowledge vs. common knowledge, leisure vs. work can all take place. As we have seen in this book, for some individuals, juxtapositioning a university class with other spheres of their world is experienced as intimidating, uncomfortable, and intruding. A generalized feeling of protecting their intimate private spaces, even techno spaces, help them clearly define their uses and affordances. For some others, ubiquity is a positive feature that promotes their learning because it enables the possibility of advancing in the pursual of their goals.

Ubiquity, heterotopias, and borders are powerful signs to think about the educational, individual, and cultural aspects of the online learning phenomenon. Borders can be treated as a philosophical category as well as fundamental social phenomena (Kolossov and Scott 2013). Following Marsico (2016), borders are also ubiquitous. From a cultural psychology perspective, they operate as organizers and regulators of our social and psychological world. Some borders refer to *specific places, events, or conditions that make evident how borders actually work and all the complexity of the borders' process* (Marsico 2016). However, we agree with Marsico that it is difficult to see how they operate in the subjects' minds. We can only record and analyze what they say and how they behave. As we said before, OTL is in a liminal place, a blurred symbolic border that blends the material and the virtual world of the academic knowledge.

Temporal ubiquity can also be seen as a SWIB. Flexibility is another buzzword usually fixed to online learning (Houlden and Veletsianos 2019). We consider it rather naïve to sustain that flexibility is neutral. Our research on subjects' perception of flexibility reveals that it is not always seen as positive for both teachers and students. Teachers perceive that online teaching means a heavier work load and less quality time (Di Gesú, in press). The students in our book deal with this utopia of attending a class at their convenience. However, some students feel they are still struggling to self-regulate their behavior. Without a fixed schedule, online learning requires that the subject create their temporal organizer.

7 Integrating the Selfs

From Dialogical Self Theory, we know that *I-position acknowledges the multiplicity of the self while preserving, at the same time, its coherence and unity* (Hermans 2012). This book deals with teachers and students who move from face to face to virtual environments and vice versa. In this lateral movement, a new self emerges in *I student/ I teacher* position in each environment. Both students and teachers experience the emergence of *I as an online student / I as an online teacher.* In their narratives, teachers and students seem to engage in a metacognitive process that

helps them analyze these emerging online identities as different. As they move in and out online learning environments, they perceive the development of an online self (Gonzalez et al. 2014.). The online self does not function in isolation with the other internal position *I as a student./ I as an instructor*. Both actors in this dyad feel that their online persona is not in opposition to the in-person learner self, but unifies and enhances it. However, other self positions can arise. Some subjects perceive that participating in online environments triggers a hypergeneralized feeling, an overall sensation of not knowing what or how to work, and adopt the role of observers (lurkers).

8 Concluding or Tracing a New Path

In the introduction of this last chapter, we suggested that the seven axioms proposed by Valsiner as part of a methodological cycle to understand human phenomena are useful to articulate the research presented in this book. Our long experience as online instructors, course developers and researchers have helped us seen that a naïve, ever positive and optimistic view on online environments has not been useful. It has hidden the tensions and resistances that generally take place when a new cultural artifact is introduced into the culture.

Similarly, the negative depictions attempting to account for the failure of OTL are not conducive to see that for a cultural artifact to *become us* (Valsiner 2014), a semiosis is needed to construct a sign hierarchy that allows individuals internalize new contexts for learning. A partial view of online learning usually leads to see teachers/ instructors accountable for restricted and uncreative uses of technology or students for not having the skills needed to study online. From the perspective of Cultural Psychology of Education, we consider it necessary to engender a fresh conversation to study online learning in its multidimensionality and historicity. An analysis of the signs that are not technology-dependent is needed as part of the socio-historical process that started when writing was first used in academic settings.

Coming back to this book introduction, it would be good to sit again in Elrich's classroom and experience the opposite feelings that living in a liminal space can trigger. Liminality can lead to the emergence of a novelty not only in the students' learning processes but also in the possibility of researching students' phases of knowledge construction in irreversible time through the analysis of their written exchanges. Online learning acts can be transformed in an ongoing research practice for teachers/ instructors and a reflective act for students. New lines of research are needed within the Cultural Psychology of Education.

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