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E-LEARNING AS A COMPLEMENTARY MECHANISM TO TEACH POLITICAL SCIENCE – BETWEEN THE VOID OF THE CLASSROOM AND THE DEMANDS OF AN ONLINE GENERATION

ABSTRACT: Online teaching has occupied a prominent place in the training process of new generations, whether through formal models of education and training, or through informal education and training. The pandemic caused by the SARS-COV-2 coronavirus has had an effect on the way societies function, having produced the need to adapt work and educational contexts to the demands associated with physical distancing. This paper derives from a reflection that takes into account the pedagogical dimensions associated with the context of the classroom, with the need to adapt training to the online model, at a time when digitalization occupies a leading place in the western way of life. For this purpose, the teaching experience in the academic year 2020/2021 at the University of Beira Interior is based on a characterization of the pedagogical models associated with Political Science teaching.

Key words: e-learning, political science, online generation, hybrid regime, educational model, university, COVID-19.

Е-УЧЕЊЕ КАО ОДГОВАРАЈУЋИ МЕХАНИЗАМ ЗА НАСТАВУ ПОЛИТИЧКИХ НАУКА – ИЗМЕЂУ ПРАЗНИХ УЧИОНИЦА И ЗАХТЕВА ОНЛАЈН ГЕНЕРАЦИЈЕ

АПСТРАКТ: Онлајн настава је заузела истакнуто место у процесу обуке нових генерација, како кроз формалне моделе образовања и обуке тако и кроз неформално образовање и обуку. Пандемија изазвана вирусом корона утицала је на начин функционисања друштва, произведши потребу за прилагођавањем радног и образовног контекста захтевима повезаним са физичким дистанцирањем. Овај чланак произлази из рефлексије која узима у обзир педагошке димензије повезане са контекстом учионице, са потребом прилагођавања обуке онлајн моделу, у време када дигитализација заузима водеће место у западном начину живота. У ту сврху, наставно искуство у академској 2020/2021. години на Универзитету у Беири Интериор заснива се на карактеризацији педагошких модела повезаних са наставом политичких наука.

Кључне речи: е-учење, политичке науке, генерација онлајн, хибридни режим, образовни модели, колеџ, COVID-19.

1. INTRODUCTION

The university education system carries a centennial history of pedagogical models centered on the transmission of knowledge. As the university is a secular institution, there is a process of consolidation and rooting of teaching models, centered on a functional hierarchy and that was fed by the “master-disciple” strand, in what can be called the “art of teaching” (Pintassilgo 2014). The formal and traditional aspects of knowledge transmission have given rise to deep reflections on the evolution of education, in different civilizational contexts (Brown & Luzmore 2021), which allows to decode models of knowledge transmission and to frame new solutions in the light of a different historical continuity perspective.

The model was based on an elitist perspective of teaching and access to knowledge, both due to the reduced number of literate people and the societal structure at the time, in a clear distinction between groups that needed/deserved to be given instruction. The process of universalization of education is long, and it is far from being concluded, as it can be demonstrated by the comparative tables of access to primary/basic education and by the data made available by The World Inequality Database on Education (WIDE) (UNESCO Institute for Statistics)¹. We can list several reasons associated with the difficulty of accessing education and any training model, namely the lack of qualified resources in the pedagogical aspect, gender issues, child labor, cultural, historical, religious and social issues, as well as the differences between countries (Marks 2005). This dimension is accompanied by the evolution of society, namely the affirmation of a set of social and political rights, as well as the formulation of the concept of citizenship, in a process guided by the State, but with the contribution of institutions such as the Church or specific social groups. Despite this finding, several studies (Heath & Clifford 1990) point to limited progress in the attenuation of the aforementioned inequalities during the 20th century.

The emancipation of the educational process, as a fundamental mechanism for the affirmation of the individual, corresponds to a fundamental foundation for understanding the structural changes in society, as well as for framing the political and social processes that characterize the history of humanity in the last 200 years.

¹ The data can be consulted at: <https://www.education-inequalities.org>.

In fact, liberal revolutions (in Britain, the USA, and France) made it possible to guarantee a set of rights based on the model of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines the right of everyone to access education (article 26²). Obviously, the ratification of the aforementioned declaration implies the adoption of public policies that can ensure the structures and the training process, in a model that has been characterized by a possible standardization in the Western context, although with very distinctive characteristics and rules between the different States.

The affirmation of higher education corresponds to a specialization and requires a distinctive pedagogical model, considering the ability previously acquired by students to analyze and reflect on the topics addressed. This level of education is characterized by greater student responsibility in the learning process, and during the second half of the 20th century the student-centered teaching process was disseminated, that is, taking into account these individuals' abilities, skills, interest and responsibility (Morgado 2001).

This new perspective entails a paradigm shift in the “teacher-student” relationship and at the same time alters the standards and pedagogy instruments used. There was no substitution of the more “masterful” perspective of teaching, in the “master-disciple” model, but the need to cohabit different models, considering the demands of teaching, the functioning of society and the changes registered in the functioning of communities. It is not our purpose to discuss the historical course of the teaching/training model, but rather to open space for the discussion around the potential of distance learning, a result of the dissemination of the internet, as well as the adoption of educational policies focused on education universal access, regardless of the region of each individual. This paper starts with the discovery of the consolidation of distance learning, as an alternative and complementary model to face-to-face teaching, and it aims to reflect on the adaptation of the pedagogical system to a generation centered/dependent on the internet and social networks. Will there be room to reconcile pedagogical models that aim to integrate the traditional model of knowledge transmission, with new platforms and disruptive mechanisms of interaction between professors and students? Although this path is already visible in several universities and

² “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit”. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

educational institutions, with multiple studies on the advantages and disadvantages of online teaching, as well as on the potential of the internet in the educational process, the recent pandemic generated by the SARS-COV-2 coronavirus introduced an accelerated step in the need to adapt teaching models, producing a significant change in the structure of educational institutions on a global scale. In fact, “with the situation that came suddenly and the whole campus were temporarily closed, lectures and students were forced to study from home” (Sakkir, Dollah & Ahmad 2021: 10).

The lockdown decreed by several States and the closure of schools led to the sudden change to a 100% online teaching model, and in several states schools/educational institutions, as well as households were not prepared (logistics, material, etc.) for such a significant change, especially in countries with significant socio-economic disparities (Wenczenovicz 2020). While it is true that several institutions presented an academic offer with hybrid models and others with the availability of curricular units and courses entirely online, others did not have the conditions to implement this change. This was a significant challenge for political institutions, particularly in the local context, with the adoption of educational policies and strategies in the face of the challenges generated by COVID-19 (Marques da Silva 2021). In fact, “community resilience and local government are relevant aspects to analyze proactivity and reaction to stressful situations” (Marques da Silva 2021: 661), in an action that has to be framed with the action of households and all the agents involved in the teaching-learning process. The disruption felt in the educational process was felt differently by groups that make up society, with an emphasis on studies that focus on the impact on students in mobility situations, with the finding that “there has been considerable disruption to their well-being, including strong feelings of isolation, a deepening of financial difficulties and, in regard to academic life, the transfer of studies onto online platforms” (Malet Calvo et al. 2022).

In order to narrow our analysis, we structure this paper in three key points, namely: i) online teaching – opportunities and obstacles; ii) online teaching as a solution to the school lockdown – the Portuguese case and iii) teaching political science through a hybrid model – between the void of the classroom and the demands of an online generation.

Although the imminently descriptive and reflective approach is recognized, it seeks, through the use of pedagogical models, to contribute to the presentation of alternatives that aim to reconcile the two teaching models, based on the teaching experience at the University of Beira Interior (2020/ 2021).

2. ONLINE TEACHING – OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Online teaching corresponds to a model of training and transmission of knowledge based on the evolution of new information technologies, having registered a very significant growth in recent decades, both due to technological evolution and the promotion of new models of life in societies. Some studies suggest that online teaching could become mainstream even during the present decade, which derives from the spread of the internet and the affirmation of an “online-dependent” generation (Palvia et al. 2018). In fact, “the diffusion of the internet (and its accompanying digital divides) has occurred at the intersection of both international and within-country differences in socioeconomic, technological, and linguistic factors” (Chen & Wellman 2004: 25).

This path was accompanied by an update of the knowledge and pedagogical tools made available by the teachers, in a process of specialization of the distance training model, substantiated by the creation of institutions specialized solely in this training model. With the universalization of access to education and mass training policies, there was a need to look for alternative teaching models to face-to-face teaching, whether due to logistical issues (spaces to provide training; origin of students; costs associated with the face-to-face aspect, predominance of information in English, lack of adequate technological support) (Chen & Wellman, 2004), or to strategic issues (diversification of training models, option to expand the scope of training provided, internationalization of training).

The proliferation of internet access was not transversal or similar in all parts of the world. In fact, “the digital divide involves the gap between individuals (and societies) that have the resources to participate in the information era and those that do not (Chen & Wellman 2004: 19). In other words, we are facing a teaching model that cannot be modeled on all institutional and/or geographical realities, but rather represents a complement to face-to-face training or presents itself as something very distinctive, although not a competitor to face-to-face training. Online teaching cannot be understood/perceived as a way to facilitate the learning process, in a kind of “evaluation bypass” supported by an argument centered on pedagogical innovation (Middleton 2010).

The path is supported by a set of advantages, traditionally associated with the online model, namely the greater flexibility in the creation and availability of the pedagogical offer, the possibility of promoting autonomous work, capable of promoting more introverted students, the possibility of reconciling this model of teaching with the performance of other activities (e.g. worker-students), the reduction of costs associated with attending face-to-face teaching, especially for

students residing in more remote locations and the organization of the degree itself, with material made available online, is less dependent on changes arising from the face-to-face circuit and ensures more efficient platforms to promote communication between teachers and students, ensuring regular feedback on the activity performed by students (Davis, Gough & Taylor 2019). Although a number of advantages are identified in the process, it is important to bear in mind that the digital world and online teaching entail a set of obstacles and difficulties for its implementation, namely: the reliability of the internet connection, the need for specific technical support/professional, the training of all agents involved in this process, the cost of materials/devices needed to access training, the adaptation of the contents taught to an online environment, a possible greater isolation of the training/learning process, maybe leading to misinterpretations/analysis of the available content and a greater difficulty in cementing interpersonal relationships, which is essential in the context of creating healthy learning environments (Davis, Gough & Taylor 2019). In turn, the promotion of online teaching can make it more difficult to separate learning times from other daily management times (work, leisure).

If it is true that no model guarantees absolute answers to the effectiveness of the teaching-learning model, nor does it apply to the universality of existing scenarios, the combination of online teaching and face-to-face teaching can represent an asset for the reformulation of teaching (Ibrahim & Padilla-Valdez 2021), through a strategy of integration and adaptation of digital tools to the skills to be acquired by students.

2.1. Student-centered learning

Technological innovation does not occur exclusively through channels/instruments for disseminating information or the platforms used to deliver training, but rather through communication processes and the creation of pedagogical solutions that encourage and dynamize the learning process, involving students directly in the knowledge acquisition process.

This student-centered teaching model, as opposed to the traditional teacher-centered teaching model, implies a new look at valuing the teaching-learning process, centered on five key areas: the balance of power (allowing greater sharing of the teacher's power to students, in a balance that aims to make the student co-responsible for the learning process; the function of content (representing not only an end to be achieved, but a means to ensure students' success); the role of the teacher (perceived as a guide that closely follows the

learning process); the responsibility for learning (assigned, in a more evident aspect, to the student) and the purpose and processes of evaluation (adapted to the main objective – to promote learning) (Weimer 2002). It is not about emphasizing the “study at home”, but rather fostering a teaching model in the school space, centered on valuing the role of the student, who goes from being a mere receptor, to becoming a transforming agent and modeler of the teaching process, highlighting the process of self-training and self-learning (Morgado 2001). The student-centered teaching model enhances a set of opportunities, requiring the teacher to be open to sharing the responsibilities traditionally assigned in the classroom context. This path is evidenced by the clarification of responsibilities, namely through the elaboration of the syllabus for each subject/curricular unit (Eberly, Newton & Wiggins 2001). The syllabus ends up corresponding to an action guide for the curricular unit, with a set of premises and rules that guide the functioning of each course. The need to implement online teaching, as a result of the face-to-face lockdown in the education sector, allows for a continuous affirmation of student-centered teaching, given the smaller component of face-to-face contact with teachers, and it also represents a different attitude of the individual in the process of knowledge transmission and acquisition (Tavangarian et al. 2004).

It is through this niche of opportunity, and avoiding entering into the broad conceptual debate between “e-learning” and “online learning” (Moore, Dickson-Deane & Galven 2011), that we intend to analyze the affirmation of online teaching in Portugal during the pandemic caused by Covid-19, more specifically in the field of Political Science.

3. ONLINE TEACHING AS A SOLUTION TO THE SCHOOL LOCKDOWN – THE PORTUGUESE CASE

The pandemic caused by the SARS-COV2 coronavirus promoted a lockdown of significant proportions in various sectors of society. The first cases emerged in early December 2019, spreading across the globe during 2020, with a pandemic being declared by the WHO on March 11, 2020³ (the first case in Portugal was registered on March 2, 2020⁴).

³ Info available here: <https://news.un.org/pt/story/2020/03/1706881>.

⁴ Info available here: <https://expresso.pt/sociedade/2020-03-02-Ministra-confirma-primeiro-caso-positivo-de-coronavirus-em-Portugal>.

The education sector was no exception, with the closure of thousands of schools at all levels of education during the 2020/2021 academic year, with the first decision in this regard being taken on March 12, 2020 (effective as of March 16, 2020)⁵. The adaptation to online teaching was made progressively and not immediately, since the traditional teaching structure was not prepared for a global dissemination of distance learning, both due to the absence of fundamental equipment for this teaching model (computers and access to the internet), as well as the need to adapt the teaching model to the characteristics of the virtual aspect. Assunção Flores and Marília Gago (2020) analyzed the Portuguese response to the closure of schools, with a special focus on teaching/training teachers, recording an impact on the professional development of teachers due to a shorter length of the face-to-face context. The government adopted a set of measures to mitigate this change, namely the creation of action guides, as well as of instruments to support online teaching, such as the “Estudo em Casa” platform, made available on the television channel “RTP Memória”, the promotion of training actions for a quick adaptation to online teaching and the provision of fundamental material tools for access to digital⁶. In fact, “the transition from face-to-face to online teaching has entailed some pedagogical challenges, not only in terms of teaching methods but also with regard to assessment strategies and tools” (Flores & Gago 2020: 510), which implied the need to adopt more transversal plans and strategies, taking into account each scientific area and each level of education.

In a study on students’ adaptation to online teaching in the Portuguese context, Flores et al. (2022) indicate that the “previous experience of online teaching and learning was related to a positive student adaptation to the closure of higher education institutions”, which corroborates the need to create mechanisms that mitigate these disparities in access to knowledge and which are produced by different social and economic contexts. Stated in this way, it is evident that the adoption of new pedagogical models or IT tools must take into account a broader set of factors that affect the context of the educational establishment, the surrounding social fabric, as well as the ability to integrate the aforementioned tools in the context of regular/daily education. In turn, the age group on which the

⁵ Info available here: <https://eco.sapo.pt/2020/03/12/coronavirus-governo-decreta-fecho-das-escolas-ate-9-de-abril-encerra-discotecas-e-reduz-lotacao-dos-restaurantes>.

⁶ The supply of computers ended up generating some controversy, due to the successive delays in the implementation of this measure. Info available here: https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/covid-19/60-dos-alunos-sem-computador-prometido-pelo-governo_v1337305.

training model focuses is one of the relevant factors for the choice of pedagogical methods and tools. Although there is a growing number of internet users and IT platforms, Portugal continues to record values below the European Union average, with only two regions of mainland Portugal (Lisbon and Vale do Tejo, and Algarve) registering more than 80% of family members accessing the internet at home⁷. These data are complemented with existing information on the possession of a computer at home, and in 2017 only 71% of households had this equipment in their homes⁸.

If the assessment of the impact of online teaching and the consequences of the face-to-face closure of teaching establishments implies a more mature set of studies and surveys, as well as a greater temporal distance, it is important to mention that, in structural terms, the response given in the education sector made it possible to ensure the regular functioning of the academic year, as well as to process all the necessary assessment elements in each teaching cycle. Despite this finding, a report prepared by the International Labor Organization (2020), entitled “Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on jobs, education, rights and mental well-being” found that about 65% of the students surveyed (more than 12,000 responses obtained) claim to have learned less during the pandemic period, also registering a very significant disparity in access to online education between students living in high-income countries (65%) compared to students residing in low-income countries (18%)⁹.

These data are corroborated by a study carried out in the Portuguese context (Flores et al. 2021), in which more than 2700 higher education students were surveyed during the 2nd semester of the 2019/2020 academic year. The study points to a negative view of the institutional responses given in the management of the crisis, as well as the way in which the individual adaptation to the new teaching conditions was carried out, with a significant number of students (75% and 71%) showing tiredness and stress in the face of internal and contextual resources in distance learning.

⁷ Info available here: <https://www.publico.pt/2021/02/20/infografia/transicao-digital-uniao-europeia-585>.

⁸ Info available here: [https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Aggregados+dom%c3%a9sticos+privados+com+computador++com+liga%c3%a7%c3%a3o+%c3%a0+Internet+e+com+liga%c3%a7%c3%a3o+%c3%a0+Internet+atrav%c3%a9s+de+banda+larga+\(percentagem\)-1158-9360](https://www.pordata.pt/Portugal/Aggregados+dom%c3%a9sticos+privados+com+computador++com+liga%c3%a7%c3%a3o+%c3%a0+Internet+e+com+liga%c3%a7%c3%a3o+%c3%a0+Internet+atrav%c3%a9s+de+banda+larga+(percentagem)-1158-9360).

⁹ The same study points out two fundamental concerns of students for the coming years: employability and concern about the psychological impact of lockdown.

The flexibility of the teaching model operated after the closure of educational institutions (March 2020) also depended on access and adaptation to the use of online platforms (e.g. Colibri/Zoom, Microsoft Teams) or a closer look at the platforms already made available by educational institutions (e.g. Moodle), in a process that guided educational agents towards a more intensive use of e-mail and platforms for the provision of pedagogical content. The success of the response in the education sector to the challenges of the pandemic cannot be measured by school results, but by using a broader set of indicators, considering the context and exceptionality of the period experienced, in a process that accompanies the necessary reforms to ensure a merit-based education system accessible to all.

4. TEACHING POLITICAL SCIENCE – BETWEEN THE VOID OF THE CLASSROOM AND THE DEMANDS OF AN ONLINE GENERATION

The 2020/2021 school year was marked by the adoption of an almost exclusively online regime, in continuity with the process adopted in the second half of the 2nd semester of the previous school year, when the closure of educational institutions was decreed for the first time in Portugal, in a response to the proliferation of SARS-COV-2 infection cases. After a more demanding period of adaptation, as a result of the change in the teaching model during the school year, the 2020/2021 school year had already been prepared/organized considering the strong possibility of continuing in the online model, namely in the context of higher education. Adaptation to a new teaching model is based on previously defined characteristics (previous experience in the use of digital platforms, access to the internet, possession of the necessary IT tools for monitoring classes, economic and social context of the agents involved, training in the context of online pedagogy), but it must also consider the specificity of each scientific area.

Political Science assumes itself as a multidisciplinary and comprehensive subject (Pasquino 2002), based on the objective identification of the object of study (what is politics?) and research models suitable for the study of political and social phenomena. The autonomy of this subject does not entail scientific isolation, but rather the affirmation of a path of consolidation of its object of study and of the respective methodology. In this domain, the increasing space of the empirical-quantitative approach stands out, in a process that does not devalue the conceptual and theoretical dimension but integrates this dimension in an analysis aimed at identifying explanations and determinants for political phenomena and behaviors.

4.1. Methodological approach

As mentioned earlier, the approach adopted reflects an imminently descriptive and reflective dimension on the transition process from face-to-face teaching to online teaching during the pandemic period. For the present study, we funnel the analysis based on the experience of teaching the curricular unit “Introduction to Political Science” in the academic year 2020/2021 at the University of Beira Interior, which took place online (resorting to Moodle and Zoom). We are looking at an exhaustive view of the pedagogical options and practices adopted in the teaching of the aforementioned curricular unit, using a qualitative approach and participant observation as research techniques. The objective and main contribution is to obtain an exhaustive analysis of the functioning of the curricular unit in a virtual context, in a model that requires direct participation, with the teacher being a fundamental element in the teaching process. In other words, there is a need to ensure teachers’ integration in the reality to be studied, playing a certain role that facilitates the direct observation (Malinowski 2014/1922). In fact, any observation model allows for a greater clarification and understanding of the reality to be studied, as well as for a deeper understanding of the applied models, also contributing to a specific holistic view of the analyzed study object (Evertson & Green 1986), highlighting a mission of observation and recording of the main activities and behaviors developed (spectator-actor model).

However, as this is an exploratory study, it was decided to record a set of global information about the Curricular Unit’s functioning, namely: number of students; number of sessions/classes; number of attendances; number of evaluation elements; success rate in the curricular unit; description of materials used¹⁰.

4.2. Online teaching in Political Science – a contribution to the study of teaching in Covid times

The curricular unit ran from September 2020 to February 2021, in a period characterized by the adoption of online teaching (100% virtual component), both in teaching and in the development of assessment elements. The curricular unit under analysis (Introduction to Political Science) is part of the study plan for the Degree in Political Science and International Relations at the University of Beira Interior

¹⁰ With regard to ethical issues, as there is no identification of attitudes, behaviors or student data, it is noted that the study complies with all the information protection indications.

(<https://www.ubi.pt/en/discipline/15444>). At first, with a global approach to the operation and characteristics of the curricular unit, it is important to mention that the Curricular Unit worked with the use of two platforms (Zoom and Moodle), having been made available and presented, during the first class, the subject's syllabus. The online classes were taught through the Zoom platform, while the Moodle platform allowed for the registration of the fundamental information regarding the subject (all contents). With regard to student participation, there is a considerable number of students enrolled, but a number far below the number of students evaluated (64% of students), which can mean a greater difficulty in moving to online teaching for a significant number of students.

Number of students enrolled	Number of students evaluated	Number of students approved (continuous assessment)	Number of students approved (exam)	Success rate	Number of online classes	Average attendance of students in online sessions	Number of evaluation elements
70	45	35	6	59% / 91%	15	29	3

Table 1. Curricular Unit operating data

In view of these data, there is a high percentage of students approved (91% of students evaluated)¹¹. All classes were taught using the Zoom platform, with the same link being maintained for all sessions, facilitating student access¹². In each session, the number of attendances was recorded, and the average attendance in the sessions was 29 students (64% of the evaluated students or 41% of the enrolled students), a number that can mean a greater difficulty in moving to online teaching regarding a significant number of students. The subject had three assessment elements (continuous assessment model), namely: an attendance and two reports, the assessments being carried out using support materials, so that students focused on aspects concerning greater reflection and interconnection of contents, as well as an analysis and understanding of texts provided by the teacher. 34 texts were made available on Moodle, divided by each topic of the Curricular Unit, and each topic corresponded to a support presentation (12 presentations were made available to support the study). The option for creating this material aimed at facilitating the monitoring of the class, as well as to ensure a guideline for the study for students (both those who attended classes and those who did not have this opportunity). The

¹¹ If the analysis focuses on the total number of students enrolled, the academic success rate stands at 59%.

¹² Access to the class was free, without a password.

platform allows for significant interaction, having created a forum for doubts, although there is a residual use of it. The students chose to ask their questions in the class context or via e-mail. In the management of the curricular unit, it is also worth mentioning the availability of two discussion videos on central concepts of political science, as well as the holding of an online debate on the left/right dichotomy. The greater interaction in the training process corresponds to a fundamental foundation that aims to reconcile the traditional teaching model (teacher-centered) to the student-centered teaching model, allowing for the availability of various tools, conducive to academic success. One of the current pillars for understanding pedagogical dynamics is the need to adapt materials and the pedagogical model to the characteristics of each scientific area. Despite the use of a significant diversity of methods and techniques, the approach to a more theoretical discipline requires a significant expository aspect, which can be more complex in a class model which is 100% virtual. It is therefore important to look at online teaching as a complement to face-to-face teaching (and not a substitute), creating pedagogical paths and options that correspond to the appreciation of face-to-face teaching, but taking into account the existence of a generation increasingly dependent on digital platforms and internet usage.

In a study carried out on different teaching models, “Introduction to American Government”, Bolsen, Evans & Fleming (2016) tested four options, namely: traditional model (100% face-to-face class with text analysis); breakout model (50% face-to-face class with 50% face-to-face small-group breakout discussion sections moderated by graduate students), blended model (with an online text and face-to-face full-class meetings, taught with a blend of lecture and discussions) and 100% online model. From the analysis to the results, there was a greater degree of dropout in students who followed the course 100% online, although this model reveals a significant number of students interested in discussing and getting involved in political activity. Likewise, there was a higher level of knowledge in students who followed the course in a hybrid mode or 100% online, compared to the traditional model, which may be associated with reading habits in the traditional format.

However, it is important that the model adopted directly overlaps with a very varied set of determinants (socioeconomic status, academic engagement, age, institutional context) (Bolsen, Evans & Fleming 2016). In this way, the first mission in the teaching context is related to a more transversal analysis of the enrolled students, in a process that aims to adapt the materials and the pedagogical model to each class. Teaching must be adequate and flexible to each reality,

avoiding standard responses to disparate realities, but the availability of a complementary solution between online teaching and face-to-face teaching corresponds to an opportunity to maximize student involvement and ensure a diversity of pedagogical tools in the teaching-learning process.

5. CONCLUSION

Between the void of the classroom and the emergence of a generation dependent on the online, there is a space for teaching social sciences, more specifically political science. The experience lived during the lockdown in the 2020/2021 school year “forced” educational institutions to adapt the pedagogical model, creating a generation that carried out part of their academic career without the experience of the face-to-face context.

While it is certain that new studies will be needed to measure the impact of this void in the classroom, the opportunities created to foster new tools and teaching approaches can be used for mixed/hybrid approaches, meeting the specificity of an increasingly technology and the fact that knowledge is disseminated across multiple platforms, just a click away. The mere traditional approach, with the use of textual instruments, is no longer attractive for the current context and, although we do not advocate its replacement, it is important to complement this teaching model with mechanisms that encourage student participation and involve them in an environment of sharing and building mutual knowledge.

Political Science occupies a prominent place in the study and analysis of classic and central authors for the understanding of society organization, and it also plays an increasingly important role in the establishment of relationships between phenomena that allow the redesign of the scientific knowledge produced in the sphere of political and social relations.

The experience of observing the functioning of a curricular unit in the academic year 2020/2021 allowed us to identify the added value of the online space, the constant dialogue and the creation of instruments to support the study, but it also allowed us to verify that teaching requires the face-to-face contact and a reflection on the classroom context.

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Е-УЧЕЊЕ КАО ОДГОВАРАЈУЋИ МЕХАНИЗАМ ЗА НАСТАВУ ПОЛИТИЧКИХ НАУКА – ИЗМЕЂУ ПРАЗНИХ УЧИОНИЦА И ЗАХТЕВА ОНЛАЈН ГЕНЕРАЦИЈЕ

Резиме

Већа интеракција у процесу обуке има за циљ помирење традиционалног модела наставе (усредсређеног на наставника) са моделом наставе усредсређеног на студента, омогућавајући доступност различитих алата за постизање академског успеха. За разумевање педагошке динамике потребно је прилагођавање материјала и педагошког модела карактеристикама сваке научне области. Онлајн настава је заузела истакнуто место у процесу обуке нових генерација како кроз формалне моделе образовања и обуке тако и кроз неформално образовање и обуку. Пандемија изазвана вирусом корона утицала је на начин функционисања друштва, произведши потребу за прилагођавањем радног и образовног контекста захтевима повезаним са физичким дистанцирањем. У контексту универзитета, учење на даљину било је масовно, уз коришћење више дигиталних платформи. То је подразумевало реорганизацију образовног система и прилагођавање модела обуке новој реалности. Појавила се и потреба за реорганизацијом наставе политичких наука, предмета који осим теоријске компоненте, има и све релевантнију емпиријску димензију. Овај чланак произлази из рефлексije која узима у обзир педагошке димензије повезане са контекстом учионице, са потребом прилагођавања обуке онлајн моделу, у време када дигитализација заузима водеће место у западном начину живота. У ту сврху се и наставно искуство у академској 2020/2021. години на Универзитету Беира Интериор у Ковиљи у Португалу заснива на карактеризацији педагошких модела повезаних са наставом политичких наука.

Кључне речи: е-учење, политичке науке, генерација онлајн, хибридни режим, образовни модели, колеџ, КОВИД-19.