

# Students' perceptions of online learning: to rethink University didactic mediation beyond COVID-19

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digitization and  
digitally enhanced  
learning and  
teaching

rethink teaching-  
learning, design  
and assessment  
processes

identify criteria of  
urgency, in order  
to provide  
educational and  
training activities,  
which cannot be  
carried out  
remotely

'Coronateaching'  
(Unesco-IESALC,  
2020)

**Italian context:** the D.P.C.M. (DPCM)  
of 9 March imposed on Italian  
universities the compulsory suspension  
of the attendance of degree courses

# The SWOT Analysis of Online Learning During Crises (Dhawan 2020)

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Time flexibility</li> <li>2. Location flexibility</li> <li>3. Catering to wide audience</li> <li>4. wide availability of courses &amp; content</li> <li>5. Immediate feedback</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technical Difficulties</li> <li>2. Learner's capability &amp; confidence level</li> <li>3. Time Management</li> <li>4. Distractions, frustration, anxiety &amp; confusion</li> <li>5. lack of personal/physical attention</li> </ol>
OPPORTUNITIES	CHALLENGES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scope for Innovation &amp; digital development</li> <li>2. Designing flexible programs</li> <li>3. Strengthen skills: problem solving, critical thinking, &amp; adaptability</li> <li>4. Users can be of any age</li> <li>5. An innovative pedagogical approach (Radical transformation in all aspects of education)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unequal Distribution of ICT Infrastructure</li> <li>2. Quality of Education</li> <li>3. Digital Illiteracy</li> <li>4. Digital Divide</li> <li>5. Technology cost &amp; Obsolescence</li> </ol>

# Among the group affected by crises and emergency situations are students

*“little is known regarding how students required to move to an online learning environment from an in-class learning environment during widespread emergencies” (Unger, Meiran 2020, p. 256)*

- Students should be more involved in **Faculty Development** research and actions
- Many of the lessons learned from **student perception and attitude surveys** can be helpful for educators and universities to design learning programs that engage students in an online environment

(Angelova, 2020; Arora & Srinivasan, 2020; Hebebcı, Bertiz, Alan, 2020; Gillies, 2008)



# Framework



- This study is inspired by the theoretical voice-student perspective (Fielding, 2012; Cook-Sather, 2002; Czerniawski, Kidd, 2011; Grion, Cook-Sather, 2013), which values the student voice
- **Student voice:** often ignored by teachers and policy makers, able to offer significant information for the improvement of teaching practices.
- The students' voices are fully legitimized as **support to the decision-making processes** that concern them, depending on the different contributions that can give to the improvement of current teaching practices, the reformulation of school/University reform projects, the enunciation of the commitments of renewal not yet undertaken (Cook-Sather, 2009)

# Objectives of the study



- to examine students' perceptions and attitudes toward distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic period
- to redesign a **"flexible" distance mediation**, investigating the metamorphosis taking place in the space of university mediation from the point of view of a theory of media education (Damiano, 2013; Perla, 2016)
- to define the **"hybrid mediation"** in a university context (Perla et al. *in press*)
- to understand how to implement online and blended learning most effectively is strictly connect with **students' perceptions** of online learning elements (Smart, Cappel, 2006)

# Methods



- Methodological approach of **practical analysis** to the phenomenological orientation (Laneve, 2005; Perla, 2005, 2010; Agrati, 2008)
- **Mixed methods** on quantitative and qualitative data
- **Questionnaire** and from the **in-depth interviews**
- **Data collected:** experience of 418 students of the Courses of Education and Training Sciences and Primary Education Sciences of the University of Bari



## Research questions

What are students' perceptions of online learning?

How has student attendance been affected by the impact of adopting distance learning?

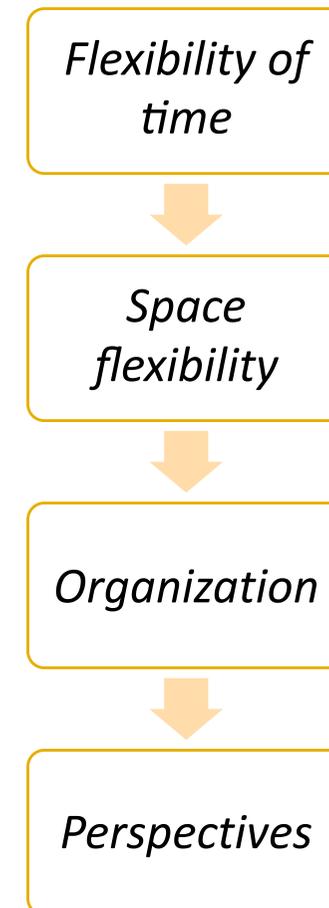
How did the modalities of flexibility of didactic mediation adopted in the Covid-19 pandemic affect the perception of virtual space?

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>Genre</b>	F 96,9% M 2,9% Rather not answer 0,7%
<b>Age</b>	18-20 years 42,8% 21- 23 years 32,1% 24-25 years 4,5% >25 years 21,9%
<b>Student with SEN</b>	yes 0,2% no 99,5%
<b>Employment condition</b>	Inactive (never worked) 44,7% Unemployed 22,5% Part-time employed 16,7% Other 13,8%
<b>Off-site student with accommodation in Bari</b>	yes 10,3%
<b>Commuter student</b>	yes 77,3%
<b>In-site student</b>	23%
<b>Technological competences</b>	very good 22,7% good 75,1% insufficient 1,9%

General data of interviewed students

# Results

There are four knots emerges from the interviews with respect to the flexibility of the didactic mediation adopted:



# Discussion



- The survey explored the impacts, in terms of student satisfaction, of the organizational restructuring of university teaching with outcomes that should be taken into account in the post-Covid future in higher education systems
- High appreciation from the **restructuring of the teaching space**: didactic structuring and organization, as well as mediatization, are an important aspect that can affect the way in which knowledge is conveyed and acquired (Siemens, 2005)
- Technologies have allowed many students to **reduce space-time barriers**: the relevance of the interaction with "cultural objects" has therefore overcome (and compensated for) the absence of "flesh and blood" relationships
- **Participatory dimension**: the distance formula allowed us to build an environment that made students more "uninhibited" from asking questions

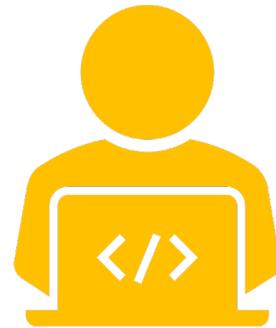
# Conclusion



- the exploratory study demonstrated a favorable perception on online learning during COVID-19 pandemic among university students
- it demonstrated the urgency of a reconfiguration of teaching in higher education systems
- the emergency situation has also proved to be a valuable opportunity to rethink the forms of mediation in distance learning through technology, with a view to **adaptive and flexible learning** (Huang et al., 2020), that is, capable of offering wider choices and with a higher level of **personalization** for students

## Next step...

.... research attention will be focused on the **role of the teacher in the management of hybridization**



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# *Thank you!*

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