

ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING CONCEPTIONS AND TEACHING DEMOCRATIZATION IN GRADUATE CAREERS AT UNR

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Abstract

This article presents the results of research titled “Education of the subject: an approach from Social Imaginaries of Teachers in Training” which purpose was to understand the dynamics of the social imaginary trainee teachers on educability as a dimension of pedagogy. The study took as reference the theory of social imaginary and applications of this Education.

The approach and design methodology was developed from the complementarity, supporting itself on analysis of the speech from its main functions and relationships to dimensions of the social imaginary: (referential: instituted social imaginary; expressive and pragmatic: Radical/instituting social imaginary. Data analysis was performed on the logic of social arrangements. The study shows that the dynamics of the social imaginaries configuring teachers under formation is defined from what is agreed and socially validated as instituted imaginary with occasional hints of radical/instituting imaginaries. In such a sense, it reflects what is standardized at educational institutions, although it contains projects and psychosomatic demonstrations, some of them seen as social fulfillment option. Thus, the education processes and trainer education, are mainly configured by practical knowledge and permeated by disciplinary skills, pedagogical knowledge, curriculum and teaching, but at the same time, are crossed by the symbolic, cultural and everyday burden brought by the trainee teacher.

Keywords: Unesco Thesaurus: Teacher training, higher education, control.
Researchers: Educability, social imaginary, complementarity

Introduction

This article is a part of the research project: “Academic Policy(es), on Graduate Career and Teacher Training on Online Education at Universidad Nacional de Rosario” (POL148/10), filed with the School of Political Science and International Relations - Universidad Nacional de Rosario –UNR, Argentine.

The general purpose of the project is to critical and reflexively analyze UNR academic policy(es), on matters of graduate career Online Education, and the impact on teacher training within each academic unit.

This article provides results, focused on conceptions underlying UNR teachers performing their practice within Online education, regarding connection of this mode to teaching democratization in graduate education provided by such university.

Background

Data collected from previous research (Copertari and Morelli, 2013), have allowed to establish that UNR has had a systematic development of academic policies and proposals in graduate and graduate career which support Online education as a teaching mode.

Law 666, 2010 is the standard governing careers and graduate activities at UNR. Article 1st (b, c), includes careers which arrangement is semi-on-campus (using Online education resources for some activities), and those which mode is fully Online. Its implementation requires organization of interdisciplinary teams, which ensure teacher permanent training on this mode, as well as pedagogic use of technology required for such purpose. In turn, such activities should be adjusted to Resolution 160/2011, issued by the Ministry of National Education, Argentine.

As main background, it is worth to mention Maggio (2013), he holds that Online education fundamental pillars date back to the 80s and 90s in Argentine, within the framework of democracy recovery. In refounding this mode, state universities developed proposals mainly committed to access expansion and quality. Within this framework, the University Network of Online Education, Argentine –RUEDA, configured the space of analysis and establishment of agreements for policy on this mode in higher education. In the case of Buenos Aires University –UBA, creation in 1986 of the program UBA XXI, reflected democratization commitment to serve students of Common Basic Cycle –CBC, corresponding to the first year at the university.

In addition, Facundo (2013), comments that until several years ago, the concept of Online education was related to the criterion of no requiring physical presence, at the same time and space as the various education agents. Currently, such border between the two modes increasingly becomes more blurry. First, thanks to the wide band and interactive technology, virtual presence is achieved, which allows interaction by all

actors at the same time in the cyberspace, which process was used only by on-campus education. Secondly, the named on-campus education, increasingly use the various technological means, previously considered as typical of Online education. At this point, virtual education (both in Online programs, and on-campus programs, or a mixture of both) is a growing mode. The work performed by this actors emphasizes on the Colombian higher education system in terms of Online education, its evolution, tensions, achievements, and challenges, providing some criterions to characterize and better differentiate virtual programs which may serve as a reference for subsequent research.

Specialist Maria Mena, holds in Learning Review journal Latin America, (Inoue, 2009), that most universities provide virtual courses, and that graduate education offer could surpass on-campus proposals. Notwithstanding, she does not consider that any mode displaces the other one, even more, if dealing with permanent formation process requiring options which allow both in person encounter, and virtual work.

In addition, Moran and Alvarez (2013), perform a case study of the Workshop on Reading-Writing, of General Sarmiento National University –UNGS-Argentine), which implemented using Moodle platform. Parting from an open and flexible curricular organization, the authors highlight of potential of the *blended*, combined with on-campus classes, virtual, and opening resources through the Internet.

Among outstanding UNR specialists in Online education, is Doctor Susana Marchisio (2013), who talks about raising of this mode at the School of Exact Sciences, Engineering and Agrimensura at UNR (Rosario-Argentine), a pioneer institution on Online education implementation, in undergraduate and graduate careers. This School has an Online education department, which reports to the Graduate School and Continued Education, which supported the process and development of cathedra projects in order to: “Innovate teaching by using new technology” (Marchisio, 2013:114), while graduate students were given courses using own virtual space, where some experiences were semi-on-campus, and other just virtual. Marchisio emphasizes the ethic and political challenge posed on the university, before a society that question, state needs, and expect proper response. It is worth to highlight that Doctor Marchisio is a reference of Online education at UNR; his work contextualizes Online education arising on the 90s, and development of this mode. This university has many proposals, conferences, and scientific-academic articles, that evidence advancements, developments, evaluations, and results obtained from implementation of Online mode in courses of Physics IV and Electrotechnology, as well as in the Master of Hydric Resources, and the Major of Sanitary Engineering, both involving courses given by using Online mode.

Foundations of the Proposal

The importance of this topic lays on informing current status of online education in graduate teaching at UNR, regarding the need of highlighting two mode aspects. First, the teacher role before current education challenges to teach and learn, that

permanently question higher education. Secondly, the traditional concept of on-campus class, attending the need of promoting by universities hybrid systems and/or virtual, which facilitate incorporation of various devices and teaching means to teach and learn, supported by Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which allow better educative inclusion, and continuous teacher training.

New ways used by students to learn supported by technology, by teachers, thinking of recreating another ways of thought, in order to facilitate learning, which call for “coparticipation” in methods of regulating time and classroom spaces, taking into account that learning is no longer achieved at the classroom, because of growing expansion of mobile devices continuously connected to Internet. Nicholas Barbules (in Gvirtz and Necuzzi, 2011) names it “ubiquitous learning”, since it may happen in various environments: at the bar, at home, at work, at public places.

As found through research carried out since 2010, most experiences performed online at UNR are referred as *b-learning* (*blended learning*). Such mode refers to a semi-on-campus mode, including a mixture of classroom teaching and virtual activities. As Parra holds:

Many higher education institutions see in virtualizing their teaching process, the immediate solution for their financial problems, coverage and profit increase, notwithstanding, losing their social, cultural, labor and knowledge construction. Quality Standards for higher education centers require implementing systems in order to achieve optimal quality; Blended Learning being one of these systems. (Parra Herrera, 2008:101).

This formation model uses advantages made available both by virtual space and on-campus, by combining them into a single type in order to make quicker both teacher and student labor, specially on:

- Those attributed to e-learning: cost reduction, usually caused by displacement, accommodation, etc.; elimination of spatial barriers, and temporal flexibility, because in performing academic activities it is not necessary for all involved individuals to gather at the same place and time.
- On-campus formation: physical interaction, which greatly impacts motivation of those involved; it facilitates establishment of links, and provides the possibility of realizing activities more complex to be performed on virtual basis.

Blended Learning is a term that represents a great change of teaching strategies. Through the great importance achieved by technology in many countries, semi-on-campus (*b-learning*), is frequent and specifically applied to provision or use of resources which combine *e-learning* (online), or *m-learning* (mobile learning, with other education resources).

Some authors claim that *b-learning* basic means may also include e-monitoring or e-tutoring. These means tend to combine an online learning component with a human component, although application of e-mentor or *e-tutor* should not be in virtual environment. e-tutoring may be facilitated as a part of “autonomous” work (“*un-blended*”) (Ciberaula, 2010).

Researchers Heinze and Procter (2004), have created the following definition for *Blended Learning* applied to higher education:

Blended Learning (semi-on-campus learning), is learning facilitated through efficient combination of various teaching delivery methods, teaching models, and learning styles, and, based on a transparent communication of all areas involved in the course (Heinze and Procter, 2004, p.s.n.)

Some authors talk about “Hybrid Learning” (most common nomenclature in North America) or “Mixed Learning”. However, all of these concepts widely refer to integration (*blending*) of *e-learning* tools and on-campus teaching techniques. (Ciberaula, 2010).

In summary, *b-learning* is a combination of multiple approach tools to learning, and may be achieved by using “mixed” virtual and physical resources. An example could be combination of technology-based materials and face-to-face sessions, integrated together in order to achieve effective teaching.

The deepest sense of this model is to most properly reach this generation of students, by using technology and learning active techniques at the physical classroom, adding virtual tools of a social network.

Methodology

The interpretative-critical feature of this matter leads us to appeal to a methodological qualitative strategy. Following Vasilachis de Gialdino’s (1992) vision, we agreed that, in qualitative study interpretation it is more complex than in quantitative study, because of the fact that methodology, type of information, and the type of research questions they answer, are different in their nature; and issues such as, external and internal validity acquire other meaning.

Regarding qualitative studies, some tools which improve their validity and quality have been used, including intermethodological triangulation (Denzin, 1978). Therefore, the need of attending the following principles taking Guber’s (2002) ethnographic perspective:

a)The principle of intrasubjectivity: It is related to reliability, and that appreciation of repeated observation of the same answer by the same researcher should produce the same results.

b)The principle of intersubjectivity: It means that appreciation and repeated observation of the same answer by various researchers should produce (more or less) the same data.

c)The principle of validity: Data should be obtained in such a manner that legitimate inference may be made from obvious level to latent level.

d)The principle of constancy and consistence: It includes repetition study-oriented acts and/or observation for appreciation of results, repetition of appreciation acts by other individuals who observe the same phenomenon and recurrence of studies of other materials (previous studies) involved with the referred object.

Fundamentally, we combine three techniques parting from the second stage of the research: Documental analysis with semi-structured interviews, focused and open in depth to teachers (ended stage), in order to achieve interpretative and critical comprehension of education policies supporting them – in each experience, and allow us to recognize academic management styles at each faculty, and teaching practices measured by technology through the use of continuous comparative method. (Balseguy and Fuguet Smith, 2006).

The technique used in this research is semistructured interview, understood as the one that, as shown by its name, the interviewer deploys a mixed extrategy, by alternating structured questions with spontaneous questions. We consider this method of collecting data as one of the most complete, since, while the prepared part allows to compare professional conceptions among the various informants, the free part allows to expand on more specific characteristics on online education involvement democratization of knowledge in concordance with the stated problem, and purpose of the research, since more freedom and flexibility to collect information is possible.

Eleven individuals (E1...E11) are involved in the research, they are members of six different offices at UNR, and were interviewed between April 2010, and November 2011. Table 1 presents this detail.

Table 1. Parties involved in the research

Interviewed	Date	Institution
E1	28/04/2010	School of de Humanities and Arts
E2	28/05/2010	School of Exacta Sciences, Engineering and Agrimensure
E3	30/07/2010	School of Exacta Sciences, Engineering and Agrimensure
E4	06/08/2010	UNR Campus Virtual
E5	13/08/2010	School of Exacta Sciences, Engineering and Agrimensure
E6	06/09/2010	School of Law
E7	28/10/2010	School of Law
E8	17/09/2011	School of Economic Sciences and Statistics
E9	27/09/2011	School of Exacta Sciences, Engineering and Agrimensure
E10	24/11/2011	School of Biochemical Sciences and Pharmaceutics
E11	24/11/2011	School of Biochemical Sciences and Pharmaceutics

Source : authors

A 20-question protocol was applied, results of two of them are shared here (the first and the last), associated to categories related to conceptions of professionals, and democratization of knowledge (Table 2).

Table 2. Categories of analysis and asked questions

Category of analysis	Asked question
UNR professional conceptions about online education	¿How would you define current online education?
Online education involvement in knowledge democratization in Graduate study	¿How do you consider that this mode may involved in democratizing access to Graduate Courses System?

Source: authors

Results

Online education mode seems to be a suitable answer for those involved in labor world, or those living in communities far apart from urban centers. Together with development of digital technology, this mode assembles, as Morelli (2013) claims, "...new pedagogic languages, which modify the figure of the teacher, the student, and knowledge" (p.38).

The following is conceptual groups of answers collected along the field work, according to each category of analysis. They are accompanied by some textual abstracts of such answers (*in cursive*), as illustration of ideas.

Conceptions of UNR professionals about online education

Physical distance among actors, non-presence, is the autonomous characteristic defining this mode (Table 3).

Table 3. Fragments of answers from interviewed individuals on first recognized characteristic of online education: "physical distance, non-presentiality"

Interviewed	Fragments of answers
E1	<i>... intends an education process where both teacher and student are far apart ... with the same purpose – teaching and learning ... it is educating in the distance.</i>
E2	<i>... a mode through which links are remotely established in order to produce assisted self-learning.</i>
E4	<i>... democratizing answer, open ... education to be accessed by those unable to attend in person ... because of a number of reasons, beyond the geographic ... we have to look at scuh reality and just think about these distances ... which we face of every kind in today world...</i>
E6	<i>... definition by Victor Greedy: “it is a mode to transfer cognitive information, and formative messages through ways that do not require in-person relationships at determined spaces”.</i>
E8	<i>... it is the one lacking of personal direct contact between student and teacher.</i>

Source : authors

Answers shown in table 3 include changes involved in distance and non-presence in teacher – student relationship; which changes assume traits of this mode involved in “...communication, desing of teaching materials, and use of communication technology for education purpose” (Morelli, 2013:43).

In turn, these answers show a redefinition of teacher and student role in online education. The teacher appears in this mode as a composer and, through tutoring will intend to assist sudent learning, who acquires a more active role regarding his formation, by appealing to automony, which may be reflected in the idea of “Assisted self-learning”. E2.

Notwithstanding, conceptions by other teachers appear, considering it as one more education mode, which definition depends on standards at stake (table 4).

Answers detailed in table 4 lead to think, as a question, whether online education may be considered as a strategy, a complementary support which is a part of teacher teaching proposal in any field of conventional formation such as on-campus. This idea of “resource within education”, provided by E9, refers to decisions made by the teacher at the time of thinking his teaching proposal, and how he may use resources used by online education in order to enrich his practice.

In addition, although related to answers mentioned above, some teachers emphasize on possibilities opening provided by this mode (table 5).

Table 4. Fragments of answers by interviewees on the second recognized characteristic of online education: “a one more education mode”

Interviewed	Fragments of answers
E5	<p><i>... definition of the CONEAU... it mentions as essential mediation of education process and preferably realized by ICT... one may mention various definitions depending on what standards are more taken into account, for example, at CONEAU it is in operating terms... what we understand for distance, could be a spatial sense, temporal, or any distance perceived by the individuals ... many times there is more distance within an on-site classroom, where each pedagogic actor is in his world, than in education modes named online. I do not understand it as "online" but as a mode different from the one we conceive as "traditional" at the classroom, where there are tools to measure various spaces-times.</i></p>
E9	<p><i>... it is used as resource within education... its purpose is the same as on-campus education. The difference is how such mode is performed. The role played by the teacher and the role played by the student are different, but in the reality there would not be a great difference.</i></p>

Source: authors

Regarding answer by E4 (table 5), it is considered that online education and/or its various implementations through b-learning models, or semi-on-campus, show the need of reviewing those teaching aspects, related to the method used to pass knowledge, proposed activities, resources used, and evaluations. In on-campus education, these matters are not questioned, since sharing time and classroom space operates as “guarantors” of an effective knowledge transmission. Notwithstanding, online education as a mode is old, and its first proposals date back to XVII Century (Morelli,2013), some interviewed teachers recognized current days as a suitable moment to develop the same (table 6)

Finally, it is worth to mention an answer which clearly summarizes all issues mentioned in this section, recognizing changes made to online education, attending to the context of each proposal, providing it with a meaning other than presence – no presence of the teacher and students at the classroom:

... it always deals with those education processes surged from technology use, where teacher-student are not close... when there is no temporal space. But today, with the possibility of confluence existing at the virtual classroom, that definition would seem to make crisis; we could almost state that there is little of that instance ... lack of spatial and temporal confluence has been a trait of online education since its appearance through middle 1990; but today it is ceasing to be the case. Also, isolation, studying alone, used to be a characteristic of online education, today, any student at the virtual classroom which includes use of communication means, such as chat, video-conference, etc., space temporal confluence does not represent any difficulty, thus isolation may be overcome. Today, sometimes there is more presence through these “new” means perhaps than the one achieved at any on-site classroom. Then it could be possible to talk of various ways of presence (E5).

Tabla 5. Fragmentos de respuestas de los participantes acerca de la tercera característica de la EaD reconocida: “apertura de posibilidades”

Interviewed	Fragments of answers
E1	<i>... it comes phantastic in people lacking access to large cities, for disabled individuals, and for people of the farthest regions, perhaps.</i>
E4	<i>... I separate from this problem of geographic definition or physical positivity, and talk about something much deeper, which is in what sense is the individual to be educated, they are provided with the conditions for their subjective deployment...</i>
E7	<i>... it is one more tool made available for the society to access knowledge, in most of education levels.</i>
E11	<i>... any individual living in places very far from the education center ... it is important in contents updating... any individual may access through... informatic resources to updated contents, to various topics.. it is related to updating...as a professional question, and professional growth.</i>

Source: Authors

Table 6. Fragments of proposals by the interviews about the fourth characteristic of online education recognized: “actuality”

Interviewed	Fragments of answers
E1	<i>...it is really revolutionary at this time and its growing at giant steps</i>
E3	<i>... it is associated to development of communication means, which allow learning instance through a firtual room</i>
E5	<i>... today there is an abrupt manifestation of resources which make possible even more “online” mode.</i>

Source: Authors

Online education involvement in democratization of knowledge in graduate study

Involved individuals agreed that online education becomes a possible way of democratizing access to knowledge in continued formation, such as graduate. At the same time they warned about some condition issues regarding its real implementation:

Thus, for example E1 stated that not all individuals may access Internet:

... it is fully involved in a great democratization of teaching... the matter is that there

are always problems, that is, there is always the one who can not afford Internet. Conditions are not given in every corner of the country. But, as we continue to advance and producing better materials, and providing better products to the students, I think that the single space is opening and expanding.

In turn E2, saw access for those no digital native as obstructed:

... for digital natives this mode is inherent to democratization. For the others, today, in general, it becomes a barrier.

E3 located it within public policies promoting or not, democratization:

... this mode is an instrument. Yes, it contributes, provides possibilities and perspectives to many people, who may organize both spatial and temporally. It does not fully guarantee, it depends on public policy to democratize knowledge (free access to courses....

In this sense, E9, stated that at the institution he serves, it is required to perform any teaching job in order to freely access perfecting:

... in this question, it has been democratized, it does not require you to be free any day, in addition, I may add that at this Faculty any individual desiring to perfect, may freely do so, provided that such individual performs any teaching job, if graduated or a student of any doctoral course, he is allocated a minimal annual quota, and courses a free, in this sense it is very accessible.

In addition, E6 stressed on the need of economic investment to renew technological means:

... it may evolve with democratization since it allows or shorten geographic distances, Any way, for online education to become quality education, a strong constant economic investment is required, taking into account such fast obsolescence of informatic resources.

High cost of online training (E7), was also mentioned.

... it may mean a way of "democratizing access to graduate education. Basically, because it is a way of overcoming physical barriers (distance), or taking hours. Online studying systems provide wider freedom, regarding dedicated hours, self-planning, relative flexibility for test taking, etc. From the economic point of view, since now, because these alternatives are not the most economic.

A need for more cooperation in terms of proposals which articulate the various proposals, was pointed out by E5:

... it is very important for people that otherwise could not study. In some places, there are overlying proposals; they could be articulated; become cooperative networks.

E8 suggested to improve the teaching facility teaching through this mode:

... Regarding graduate courses, I think that the way of democratizing them, and, overall I hierarchize them, would be by promoting improvements in teacher staff. In personal terms, I have never been invited to give Graduate courses, taking into account my important background, but eventually and for friendship with individuals "managing such courses" at the National University. Under the same characteristics I participate in Graduate education at a Private University.

In turn, E11 stated that complexity could be increased in the case of dealing with a whole career under online mode.

... We had students at their towns, isolated from the city, and the main cities even far apart from their provinces, that is the possibility for that individual not to become dammed up in any situation, specially in careers with very notorious advancements in years; they are not careers with dammed knowledge, then its is possible to access in this manner to any important updating that, it is easier to establish it as a career; for the same reason that accreditation questions are established, and everything which is not the same as courses. And being courses, accreditation is one thing, but if we are talking of careers, it is another thing, it is much more complex from the point of view of what we should coordinate with the students ...

Taking into account information presented with results obtained, the following may be stressed:

Regarding conceptions of UNR professionals about online education, and effects from application of the constant comparative method, the following are pointed out as reference topics:

- It involves physical distance among actors (E1, E2);
- It is characterized by non-presence of those interacting (E4, E6, E8);
- It is one more education mode, with standards (E5) and roles (E9) to be defined;
- It provides opening of possibilities, regarding access to education (E1) and to knowledge (E7), professional updating (E11) and, even, subjective deployment (E4);
- Its development is currently promoted by available resources (E1, E3, E5)

- It is a changing process, served by ICT, in which “presentiality”, and “distance” are restated (E5).

In terms of online education involvement with knowledge democratization in graduate courses, everybody see this education mode as a way for such democratization, with some factors that could condition it, such as:

- Access to Internet, which is difficult in some regions of the country (E1),
- Barriers for those non-digital natives (E2);
- Public policies that promote (or not) democratization (E3),
- Free access for individuals performing teaching duties (E9);
- Economic investment for technological means (E6);
- High cost of online training (E7);
- (de)articulation of the various online graduate offers (E5);
- Qualifications of teacher plant (E8);
- Complexity in coordination with students (E11).

As Parra Herrera (2008) claims, we see that the ICT may support the various kinds of cognitive skills (creativity, logic, reasoning), through audiovisual and digital means. Such means are part of daily life of individuals, and used by teachers in their academic job. In addition, ICT contributes to motivate students, and also promotes more flexibility and profitability of academic and administrative processes. The author recognizes that most *e-learning* experiences discussed in congresses about online education are in virtual scenarios (i.e. a platform), but with traditional tools of on-campus education. Using these tools becomes a challenge. Taking into account this reality, we may then state, together with the author that currently:

(...) there is a financial crisis in Higher Education which is forcing program downsizing, and student withdrawal from post-secondary education. Such financial crisis faced by some higher education institutios, together with high cost for implementation of e-learning solutions, calling for structural changes involving high investments, ranging from acquisition of software and hardware tools, development of new contents, tutor contracting, or tutor training, students training, full time tutors, even, administrative changes, raise the need of taking a mixed alternative, the *Blended Learning* (Para Herrera, 2008:97).

Conclusions

Thinking of online education as teaching and learning mode to democratize higher education system, is thinking of an increasingly inclusive education, both undergraduate and graduate. Online education from the place assigned by studios

individuals, such as Rama (2006), Mena (2007), among others, is identified by a clearer expression: “the university of all places”. However, there are regions in our country where there is not Internet connection yet, therefore, the digital gap persists.

In general, it results from analyzed experiences, that teachers implement online education by means of a virtual platform, but they still appeal to on-campus mode in certain instances such as tutoring, exams, because of the need of meeting their students face-to-face; therefore, most of the time, experiences at UNR show a bimode system (combining on-campus and virtual). At this point, once more Litwin’s (2000) words are taken, regarding that modes of managing online education proposals are quickly transformed tending to a better technological efficiency. But this panorama is not always in agreement with pedagogic criterions of education projects that support such proposals. Even, coinciding with the author, and allowing an obvious possibility, the team performing this research restates the expression that characterizes this mode of emergent education: Online Education, since current distance by itself does not define it. It is also interesting to mention technology transcendence on culture, which produces new ways of operating, and access information in changing contexts.

It is worth to stress that, in general, informants have expressed the need for technology to be used specially in education field, with a social and pedagogic sense, in order to democratize not only knowledge, but, even more, the higher education system.

Blended Learning model is the prevailing one in experience analyzed. It is the learning mode which combines on-campus teaching with online technology: “which combines face-to-face and virtual teaching” (Coaten, 2003; Marsh, Mcfadden and Price, 2003). The “*B-Learning*” taken from “*Blended Learning*”, which translate as “Combined Formation” or “Mixed Learning”, also means “multiple scenarios”, where on-campus activities, synchronic, and e-learning are combined (electronic learning), as learning integrated mode.

These blended teaching and learning modes are taken from experiences because both undergraduate careers and graduate, teaching and learning processes have been transformed. Teachers guide students of different classes, but with the same intellectual and professional interests, by taking advantage of ICT, from on-campus scenarios, promoting cooperative work.

Blended Learning provides students with formation that empowers pedagogic means, and promotes different learning, in general with characteristics of semi-on-campus classes, or hybrid (Pascual, 2003), trying to directly reach students ready to acquire knowledge and using motivating tools.

Online education in hybrid environments provide opportunities that increase student motivation, and also promote creativity and more flexible learning styles, where the

teacher role is restated, and used as a guide, using in turn, synchronic and asynchronous communication.

This education mode is a way of meeting such accelerated changes, which impact current academic policies of Argentine Universities, where analyzed experiences are deployed to place university system to serve the students, in order to allow them, within a short term, to enter to, remain in, and graduate from the system, making such system increasingly inclusive and democratizing; and promote expansion teaching and learning virtualization in graduate career at our university, and also, allocate major funding and technological equipping to expand the horizon of this type of education.

Finally, it is recognized that at starting this research project, offers in this mode, were practically a vacancy area at UNR.

After four years, it is worth to highlight such progress made by the UNR on this field. Notwithstanding, it is very important to continue delving deeply into this subject, until achieving management processes based on systematic academic policies and more solid in this senses, in order to provide students with full graduate careers using this education option (semi-on-campus, and/or fully virtual).

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