Covid-19: Challenge or opportunity for distance learning?

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abstract:
From moocs to online classes, how the sanitary crisis forced higher education to adapt. Balance and perspectives.

participant's summary

Some years ago: from lectures to MOOCs to flipped classrooms.
The behavior of students was not much affected by this.
Covid-19 changed all of that.
How can we optimize the time-in-front-of-screen for students in this new time?
At Ecole Polytechnique:
End of February: students returning from Asia quarantined. How to teach them?
Mid March: Ecole Polytechnique totally closed.
Faculty was experienced for teaching in classrooms, very few had the right expertise to teach online (in spite of faculty education efforts in the past).
There were quick sessions about tools and didactics, 400 attended. People who could make videos, started right away. People who had recorded courses from previous years, cut them into pieces to make actual online courses. The learning platform became the heart of education, not an exchange place for files any longer.
The lecture scheme was converted to zoom-sessions.
People made mistakes (putting all material online without discriminating between main topics and minor ones), but in general students appeared to be better prepared for lectures than before.
Examination is the next challenge.
Not all teachers want to be evaluated on this hasty work. As an institution, we'll need to provide better support and framework for teachers.
What does the future offer? More MOOCs, probably. Students will not (and must not?) be sitting in front of screens all the time, however. They need to be challenged and activated in this learning more than is the case now.
Will students choose a university in the future judging its ability to offer online classes? Will we ever train students that not come to campus any more?

Q&A

Q: mooc: how did polytechnique manage to record sessions without going there in the recording room? or each teacher simply recorded on his/her side the lecture to be after put on moodle? or were there live streaming ?
A: sourced to faculties and made locally. webcams, whiteboards at home…

Q: Maintain working time structure: this was dictated by need, but are there maybe better solution than the lecture schedule?(1st session)
A: preserve normal time schedule, also

Q: how can a collaborative teaching environment be encouraged? (1st session)
A: efficiency of working together. Can't be forced

In the current crisis, everyone is looking for fast solutions. main guide: make short content ~ 7min after which attention wanes.

Interesting comment about "doubling" effect of flipped+real classroom. This is a real danger for unprepared lecturers. In ULiege many students complain of this kind of effect, and being overloaded, both in time (watching podcasts), and the mental load of having to manage themselves and many courses.