

A few days after this on-line event, some participants wrote down their most important take-away message. Here they are :

Firstly, I am positively surprised that this first (for me) wholly online event worked so smooth and was so interesting. The variety of the talks, approaches, points of view was a real richness. Had I to summarize in one message I would say that there was an unanimous consensus in the search for the best compromise (in the use of tools, how to deal with exams, how to record, how to appear, etc.) to reach an effective, attractive learning experience. There was no contribution that left me indifferent.

The current situation - forcing on Digital Learning - should be seen as an opportunity. It is not just about the media (digital/analogue) but about the learning process and the best way to facilitate. About the media, find effective and efficient ways to use it.

In this event, we touched on the subject of online education, the methods and basics of presenting and providing lessons, and the conditions necessary to increase the chances of entering the educational system significantly, as they moved to a system in which 50% of students now enter additional education.

My most important takeaway is that digital tools are an excellent way to focus the learning process to the needs of the students, because they allow each student to learn at their own pace, without requiring a disproportionate use of time from the teacher.

In the aftermath of this crisis, there will be several opportunities to catch to improve the quality of our learning process: Everything that CAN be done digital, SHOULD be done digital, saving precious time for a more proficient interaction between the teacher and the student.

As we emerge from the coronavirus crisis, and reflect on the merits of the various approaches that we have all taken to online teaching and assessment, we should take care to capture and share that data, to inform future plans and the evolution of high-level physics and mathematics teaching.

Depending on the type of event (conference vs. tutorial vs. teaching), in some cases it's better to have a streamed real-time event, in others it's better to have pre-recorded, and focus more on answering participants'/students' questions.

Thinking about how one would start education from scratch was most inspiring to me: What should we do if we weren't confined by the accidents of history? But I guess we should also think about whether or not those seeming accidents (such as high-stakes exams and the binge learning that goes along with them) are not accidents at all but have a hidden logic.

Did appreciate people I did not know yet, on a topic different from the one we were supposed to convene (we will hopefully), though technically important nowadays.

Did even learn new techniques like serious gaming.

The digital learning has many points that still are debated. Implications that even force to rediscuss some aspects of the learning process itself. Tolls are not a problem, to decide the best way, yes. On the practical side, for what was my interest, I learned that an on-line conference is doable and I learned some important points to be careful about.

The tools others are developing for online learning are becoming increasingly sophisticated and far superior to anything we can produce. A lecturer in a university does not, for instance, really have the time required to develop a serious game for the teaching of physics. Given this we need to start thinking about developing material for instruction with colleagues from other universities rather than spending time writing bespoke resources for our individual modules. The great benefit of using resources that are already out there is that we would then be free to spend more of our time on providing personalised feedback to students.

It seems that there exist a wide variety of possibilities available for eLearning (with different advantages and inconveniences). Some are accessible quite easily, other do require some efforts... In any case, it is worth to spend some time in testing them and trying to master those that seem the most appropriate. Sharing experiences is extremely useful.