

# Ubiquitous Learning in Higher Education in Chile: Educational Evolution or Disruption?

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## Opinion

Ubiquitous learning has become a critical component of contemporary higher education, where access to technology and the need for flexible training are increasingly relevant, the integration of digital technologies in educational processes allows for more dynamic and accessible learning spaces. With the increasing digitalization and globalization of education, the question arises as to whether ubiquitous learning is a mere adaptation to a new socio-educational environment or a logical evolution of traditional educational practices. As such, education must evolve to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which implies a critical review of our methodologies.

Methodologically, the theme was based on a comparative approach that allows analyzing similarities and differences in the disruption of ubiquitous learning in Chilean university education, highlighting a special emphasis on the reengineering of the educational system. Since the emergence of the phenomenon, several key questions have emerged to deepen with respect to educational models that could include, such as: How are teaching strategies reformulated to integrate learning anywhere and at any time? What competencies should teachers develop to facilitate learning that transcends the classroom? How can equity in access to digital educational resources be guaranteed among all students? How is the university curriculum adapted to incorporate informal and unstructured learning experiences? What assessment is required to measure the impact of ubiquitous learning on students' academic outcomes? The summarized questions are essential to assess the effectiveness of educational models in the face of the transformation driven by globalization, the technological revolution, the explosion of information and the need for more effective and flexible learning.

In Chile, it is noteworthy that only 2.9% of the total enrollment in the university education system is online or hybrid, characteristics that in comparison with countries such as Brazil, Australia and the United States that have significantly greater expression. However, it was since 2019, with the phenomenon of the social outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic, that this situation abruptly changed. This was made clear, when implementing ministerial guidelines on education and health, they abruptly imposed the implementation of online and hybrid classes in the education system. This situation meant that educational institutions quickly adapted to new ways of teaching and learning, encouraging the use of digital technologies that allow students to access knowledge at different times and places. During the development of the social outbreak with its demonstrations, all university classes were suspended between October 2019 and March 2020 due to the threat of the current constitutional guarantees, a situation that at the same time posed a challenge for the continuity of educational learning and service in universities. The urgency of maintaining the educational process in a context of social crisis led to an acceleration in the adoption, implementation and evaluation of technological tools, and hybrid or online learning environments.

Subsequently, once the political and social environment had calmed down, it was thought that the return to face-to-face learning could give a boost to traditional education, however, the arrival of COVID-19 gave rise to a completely different context. Thus, the pandemic forced us to rethink teaching modalities, establishing a framework for ubiquitous learning, where the "simultaneity" of access to education legally became a norm and curricular implied the increasing integration of information flows and activities into the institutional exercise of the university. Therefore, the phenomena of the social outbreak and the pandemic have acted as catalysts for a shift towards ubiquitous learning, transforming educational dynamics and offering new opportunities for teaching and learning in an increasingly digitalized environment that at the same time invites a deep reflection on the future of education and its capacity for innovation in adverse contexts.



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Thematically, ubiquitous learning refers to the ability to learn anywhere and anytime, taking advantage of digital technologies and constant access to educational information and resources. This concept, as indicated in the text, implies a "simultaneity" in which education becomes a fluid process that integrates various flows of information and activities in the social and individual context of learning. Thus, ubiquitous learning is based on the idea that the educational environment is not limited to traditional classrooms and schedules, but extends to virtual spaces and daily life experiences, allowing:

- a) Overcome geographic and temporal barriers, allowing more students to access educational opportunities regardless of their physical location.
- b) Employ a more flexible and adaptable approach, personalizing the educational process.
- c) Learn to use these tools effectively in different contexts, favoring continuous learning.
- d) To guide education to provide forms of learning that can be used at any time and place.
- e) It encourages social interaction and collaborative learning, crucial in an interconnected world where students work and solve problems together through digital platforms.
- f) Implement learning models that can be implemented remotely and flexibly, ensuring educational continuity.

The phenomenon of ubiquitous learning is the repository of digital culture. To understand how the ways of acquiring and sharing knowledge are being transformed, and at the same time, how those of learning vary at any time and place, it is only through digital culture that the practices, behaviors and values that emerge around the interaction with information and communication technologies dilute with increasing emphasis the vague difference between formal and informal education, mixing structured and intentional features of the curriculum with the unstructured and serendipitous mode of family and social learning, suggesting that, at present, learning is not limited to classrooms or traditional teaching techniques, but extends to multiple online platforms and environments where students can interact, collaborate and learn autonomously.

Evolution and at the same time educational disruption would then be different facets of a multifaceted phenomenon that challenges the hierarchical and traditional structures of higher education. For this reason, it is necessary to reorient a reengineering of the educational curriculum from a comparative approach to respond to these new dynamics of relationship between academics and students. In this way, ubiquitous learning not only represents an innovation in educational practice, but also invites reflection on the future of education and its ability to adapt to a constantly evolving reality in the midst of a vast ocean of information, platforms and virtual resources that can complement or, in some cases, replace formal education through self-directed and collaborative experiences, without necessarily being limited to traditional curricular structures.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, ubiquitous learning represents a significant transformation in contemporary education, adapting and abruptly inserting itself into the dynamics of an interconnected and digital world. By overcoming geographical and temporal barriers, this form of learning not only promotes accessibility and flexibility, but also enriches the educational experience through social interaction and collaborative learning. However, it is crucial that educational institutions identify the opportunities presented by this approach, effectively integrating digital culture and different technologies into their methodologies and curricula. In this way, educational agents can be trained to lead a revolution towards a more inclusive, relevant education aligned with the needs of students in a global context in constant revolution.