

# UNIVERSITY IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE XXI CENTURY. DIGITAL IS EVERYTHING?

For technologies based on artificial intelligence to work, they require prior knowledge, so someone has to produce them and publish them in a journal such as *Interciencia*. In this task, the Latin American university has an important role to play.

So when introducing the digital in the university, it is required that professors, researchers, students, assistants, administrative staff, make sense of its mere use. Professors not only have to learn to manage in this new digital world and incorporate it into their teaching practice. They must sharpen their intelligence, continually enrich and update their intellectual world, and act as a hinge between the analog and digital worlds. Part of this has been done before, but since the Covid-19 pandemic, education via the Internet has increased, although with limitations.

It is alluded to the need for a new type of teacher "the digital", but we must also speak of a new student; the current student, most of the time, has a set of skills that although he shows his exposure and management of social networks, lacks a critical attitude: ability to evaluate, analyze and discern an own synthesis of what has been received, limiting himself to the mere "copy and paste".

The immediacy and quick access to various sources of information through networks, platforms, etc., but without discerning the reliability of the data, makes the young person trust that the knowledge is there, available, and therefore does not require him to spend time studying, especially in reading it carefully; and therefore, to reason, argue and expose it in his own terms; and in the long run, he may think, that he has no need to create knowledge.

The university must promote a change in basic and secondary education; although this should be a matter for the Ministries of Education, the university can do so by means of extension activities for primary and secondary school teachers, in order to create these new attitudes and abilities, which will allow them to incorporate and transmit them in the educational act.

It is required that students develop attitudes and skills that allow them to move with solvency in this world of

knowledge that the digital world makes available to them. The orientation to stimulate behaviors and capacities related to research, rather than the effort to transfer information, should be paramount. And obviously, if a student comes prepared to work in this way, university education should not be a mere curriculum of subjects that inform them about the career in which they intend to work. This could be related to changes in the curriculum and educational modalities. It is possible for careers to shorten their years of study, if emphasis is placed on the creation of good habits and skills in the student to continue his or her professional career.

Consequently, the student must learn to learn, to be in continuous learning; in a way, to take charge of his own academic performance, guided by a teacher/facilitator.

In this context of learning, the university professor should be defined as a researcher/facilitator, because relying on the former, he/she can create educational spaces where inquiry, reflection and search for solutions, allow the student to acquire these skills. It would be a new academic community, which would include the distance teacher, the researcher colleague, whether he/she resides in the country itself or abroad; a community, for example, of the Latin American region, which would allow the university to take advantage of knowledge through knowledge networks.

While during the mid-twentieth century the states of the Latin American region made an effort to create public higher education systems and make them available to their young population, the challenge in the twenty-first century involves not only reformulating these systems by merely introducing digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, but to take advantage of transforming the concept of teaching in knowledge, changing the content and teaching environments and self-learning.

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