



HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL: ACADEMY AND OPERATION, A CHALLENGE OR A PARADOX?

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Information (and consumption) Society: – Is that a good thing, by the way?

In a world where the “means” becomes the “end”, when I refer to the “massive use of technologies”, determining the speed of changes, behaviour, mood, or even economic level, being such phenomena originated from needs or fads, certain things are enhanced, while others, such as a country’s Education take a crucial time to endure any kind of change (exceeding patience or survival).

There is no need to bring up the famous jargons applied to Education, especially here in Brazil, where it has been facing a stationary state for centuries, in which its own temporal dimension is not acting in a linear way in practically nothing. It is incredible that such a crucial sector, in a country like ours, is not updated or fostered as an institution, application and operation. It is also clear that it is not possible to analyze this issue without the political and economical artifacts underpinning the induced maintenance of such *status quo* we still face today; and in not having significant goals and interest towards a fair and balanced development in Brazil, it is in the Education (or in the lack of it) where we can assure having an **ignorant** country.

I reinforce the criticism to people’s ignorance, taking as premise a society with “fake” access to information, but not the lack of access to such available information. Confusing? Let me clear that out.

If for some communication theories, information is not delivered with attached meaning, which is a fact, at least in a *Habermasian* line¹, the mere fact of having it in quantity, and with no knowledge, leads to the banalization of the information itself, for both those delivering it and those possessing it. It is like having access to a number of “things” we do not know what they are for or what their boundaries are. I very much appreciate neuroscientific perspectives², for they offer an important cognitive base to understand that “signs” or “meanings” are generated from learning and interacting with the whole.

¹ Habermas, Jürgen. Theory of Communicative Action. Source: Paidéia (Ribeirão Preto) By José Marcelino de Rezende Pinto. In http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0103-863X1995000100007

² Pinker, Steven. How the mind works. [s.l.]: São Paulo, Cia das Letras, 2000

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And within this scenario of *knowledge*, memories, cultures, perceptions, logic (among many other artifacts) are the grounds for decision making based on the thought. So, when information is delivered in all ways and quantities, having their appeal turned simply to consumption, we find ourselves in a type of “virtual floating or looping”, leading us nowhere in “knowledge”, thus carrying us to the mechanical “simply consuming”.

Our brain is a complex box that cannot be formed by a simple explanation, even about the mind. That way, **with no focus or intention**, we have boundaries (despite billions of existing neurons) to synaptic controls making us to think, or intertwine connections to develop intelligence, learning, findings and any similarity we wish. It is fundamental to take control of our brains!

Let us take as a simple example the service sector, such as telephone companies, internet, airlines, banks or credit card companies; among others... what do they have in common? – They promise a number of benefits for our “*customer fidelization*” in order to conquer their space in a world where competition relies no longer in the product itself or its presentation, but in the benefit the user gets with that provider; nevertheless, they will advertise their products along with the “bonus” but will not comply with them, besides that they will create internal and simply illegal rules regarding consumer rights or overacting ethics. We, on the other hand, only find that out when we are already inside a problem or an arbitrariness coming from one of these businesses. At times of great events like the ones Brazil is about to experience, in the World Soccer Cup and the Olympic Games, we can already see abuses from the airline companies, which nowadays practically determine *what is or what is not legal* in Brazil, regarding consumer rights. Be aware that if you buy a ticket and try to change the date of your flight, besides paying a fine (arbitrary), there are tickets (according to the company’s rules, **which nobody knows about**) that cannot be altered or canceled; as if it was possible for a customer not being able to have the right to cancel a purchase.

Why do such things happen? Because we almost don’t have time to analyze all information surrounding us. Not to mention, obviously, bad faith. We either analyze all data, losing our precious life time, or we do not consume within the time pre-determined by the WHOLE (which we take in) and take the risk of not being duly included in this society, being it more disposable than lasting. What is the way out after all? In having all sorts of information shall we analyze them all? Or would we be better off avoiding consumption? Is it such a binary choice or is there a way to establish filters for both consumption and information?

I particularly stand in with the third choice, as being an *Edgar Morin*³ follower and a SKANK fan⁴, life is much more complex than binary possibilities and there will always be more than only two sides.

³ Morin, Edgar. *Complex Thinking*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 1991. Method 4. Ideas. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2002. Method 3. *Knowing knowledge*. Porto Alegre: Sulina, 2005

⁴ SKANK. Quote on the Brazilian Rock Band

Before such fatal but also vital complexity for the autonomy, and therefore, life choices, is that I will always stand for a nation's Education, as its biggest trump.

Brazilian Education: Rankings and e Population Rates

Analyzing Brazil's trump in the latest ranking of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2013-2014)⁵, in math, for instance, we are only behind Latin countries like Chile, Mexico, Uruguay and Costa Rica, but ahead of Argentina, Colombia and Peru. Tunisia, Jordan, Qatar and Indonesia are other countries behind Brazil's performance. But what is really interesting in this issue is the duality of the political analysis of the presented data, with the conclusion floating between "a significant improvement when comparing to the latest 10 years' results (...), at the same time being ranked 58th among 65 countries analyzed. It is an alarming distortion. In an analogy with soccer, it is like enjoying "loosing", as long as it is not for Argentina (?)

Can we continue assessing Education with the latest years' or centuries' eyes? We do not hold the *chronos* or Cartesian time to solve such a high level problem as a folk's Education. Not knowing math does not merely mean not having education, when seen in a ranking, but it means not knowing how to compute, in other words, is lacking the development of high impact cognitive skills, for "thinking". Our children and youth are not only out of classrooms, but also heading towards a defective rationality, which is even worse. Today's time is more a quantum dimension than a relative one; it is a probabilistic dimension with trends, interconnected variables we are immersed in, leaving us no merely linear options. A society who "does not compute, does not know how to think"⁶.

Other relevant indicators for discussing Education in Brazil are the illiteracy rates and functional illiteracy. In this network society we live in the functional illiteracy is even more dangerous than the illiteracy itself, for a large part of exaggerated consumers or consumers with no knowledge on what they are consuming are part of this group. In 2013 IBGE (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics) presented this scenario, a country with a functional illiteracy rate⁷ of 18, 3% of the population (in a sample with people over 15 years old and less 4 years of completed studies), comprising 27.8 million people in 2012; quite a lot of people.

IBGE also states that, since 1998 the illiteracy rate hasn't been so high (*those who don't read don't write*), as it happened in 2012. Around 13.2 people were considered illiterate, corresponding to 8.7% of the 15 year old or older population. (...) "In 2011, there were 12.9 million illiterate, corresponding to 8.6% of the total" In addition, IBGE's assertion: (...)

⁵ PISA 2013: Source <http://educacao.uol.com.br/noticias/2013/12/03/pisa-desempenho-do-brasil-piora-em-leitura-e-empaca-em-ciencias.htm>

⁶ Pinker, Steven. *The blank slate*. [s.l.]: São Paulo, Cia das Letras, 2004. *The language instinct*. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2002.

⁷ Functional illiteracy (the proportion of 15-year-old people or older with less than 4 years of accomplished studies upon the total of the population in the same range) in Brazil: data from IBGE extracted from <http://noticias.terra.com.br/educacao/ibge-analfabetismo-cresce-pela-primeira-vez-desde-1998,e5e1e55448c51410VgnVCM3000009acceb0aRCRD.html>

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Illiteracy is mainly perceived amongst the older population. Among the 60 years old or older more than 24.4% do not know how to read or write. As for the age group 40 to 59 years old, the proportion is 9.8% from the total; between 30 and 39 years old 5.1% are illiterate; and between 25 to 29 years old, 2.8% are illiterate. We have practically a “Senegal” or a “Zambia” of illiterate people, isn’t it substantial? And taking into consideration the increasingly longevity, this must be considered worrying.

All types of illiteracy and society of technology and waste ruling us (...) a huge challenge for quality Education. And although Castells⁸ is already revealing the arousal of a new network society, less capitalist and more willing to share, “the current time” we are living in and which will be “the past” later on has to be changed, immediately.

On the contrary, we remain in the paradox “Consuming X Thinking”, because we still need to replace our cell phones with the latest upgrade from the industry, at the same way it is (still) necessary to join social or communication networks as soon as they become obsolete “even though the existing one still works fine”, because competition needs to win; and everything happening within a couple of month’s time. On the other hand, we will keep conceiving (and waiting for) the country’s educational development “for long years”. For our luck (or not) we do not need additional measures such as “wars” or “revolutions”, or even “*hunger games*”⁹, making a quick analogy to the cinema series which resembles the behavior in the past, to echo the changes needed.

The phenomenology of a no longer Cartesian velocity

The consumption/disposable society is the same one of the indebtedness and ignorance (from the beginning of this chapter); it is easily Platonized by the phenomenology of the Cavern Metaphor, where an ignorant world lives in the cave, accompanied by shadows, but adorns it with luxury brands; so, if before we had a great part of the population with no access to information, and therefore with no right of consumption, today we have the same population with access to consumption, and Homeric limits in the credit cards, but indebted in the long term, because they are not “aware” of the information they have.

Changes in a country’s core segments such as Education and Health, for instance, need intention and assignment of a GDP to be in fact applied, for the same previously agreed intentionality, and democratically disclosed, for the real development of the nation, duly measurable by indicators recognized and accepted by the population. Politics will and less verbal and acting corruption may also solve this issue.

For and in Education we have no chronological waiting time or with any other related allegory; I do not mean to adorn it; for accepting a chronological time for a solution in

⁸ Castells, Manuel: Reference source: The End of Millenium. Authors: Manuel Castells, Alexandra Figueiredo, Rita Espanha, José Manuel Paquete de Oliveira, Gustavo Leitão Cardoso. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2003

⁹ Hunger Games: American film series, based on the American writer Suzanne Collins’ books. Source: Wikipedia in [http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jogos_Vorazes_\(s%C3%A9rie_de_filmes\)](http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jogos_Vorazes_(s%C3%A9rie_de_filmes))

Education, being coherent with the Physics concepts, means also accepting the continental distance within Brazil. In a virtualized world such as ours, with the remote possibility and access, along with the mobility we hold for information, and therefore towards knowledge, distances are no longer constrains, but only subtle borders to be trespassed.

The online connected Distance Education modality, is already out there, having been conceptualized, decreed (despite being for only two segments, the professional and higher education), at the same time being neglected by the unbelieving parallelisms with face-to-face education, for a great deal of the population able to use it, and extremely bureaucratic due to theirs faults.

Let us leave DL for a little ahead and start by Higher Education in a generic way.

Higher Education and its KNOTS

Higher Education in Brazil has a bigger worsening than in most of the countries. There is a typological segmentation of *faculty, university centre and university*, as well as a typification according to the foment, being either Federal, state, and all kind of private, like the philanthropy (which do not want to be considered private), community and the “real” private ones, assuming being for profit.

In such a parallel universe of offers, how is it possible to legislate in an egalitarian way? Or should they rather be distinguished by type? Or, how to demonstrate efficiency to prospect (future student), foreseeing so many differences? Those are not exactly my issues, but they are pervading this segment’s existence. We start by making complex what could be extremely simple. Public Universities (with government foment) and private Universities (with no foment), therefore having different regulations.

Such complexity is present because, again, the “means” becomes the end. And in this case we are not referring to technology itself, but the endless bureaucracy losing within itself, ending up not helping the issue, but becoming “the issue itself”. A good metaphor is the intention of a “knot”, as a “hawser or lace”. Very used in Navy for either rescue or anchorage, the *Lais de Guia*¹⁰ has the function of a lace that does not run free, even with no pressure being applied, but that can also be easily untied, when wanted. Its purpose is to “tie something up” whereas making it easy to be release upon needed; it is what bureaucracy should bear in mind and become.

¹⁰ Lais de Guia: Guide for knot making. In http://www.guiadenos.com.br/nos_view.asp?id=%7BB5C6828E-86BD-4A02-8945-ED31644F9251%7D



Figure 1. Lais de Guia: Guide for knot making

The Brazilian University nowadays is no longer “the academy” which has given its philosophical origin, at the same time it is not able to update itself, conceptually speaking, before such a plural and diversified society, being still kept as the greatest Higher Education entity.

The “knot” is not only conceptual, but it also concentrates the operation that balances between the regulation, the market and the sustainability.

In a quick hindsight throughout recorded History, one of the first universities was born in Asia, the Nalanda University (Bihar, India), being in the II century home for the Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna. As for the European Universities, appeared in the Middle Age, they arouse during the Renaissance. Free from the religious schools, students and professors founded the University of Bologna¹¹ in Italy (in the year 1088), being a true paradigm against the more democratic concept of future Universities, for it was the outcome of no royal deed or pontiff, common to the creation of universities at the time. Under a little different perspective, in the century XII the University of Paris was created from the prestige of two French Schools of Theology and Philosophy, respectively in Notre Dame and the other in the cloister of the Abbey of Saint Genevieve.

Those Universities were the pioneers of the worldwide academic tradition we recognize in Higher Education. The idea “Academy”¹² was established by Plato in 387 B.C., at his Academy in the woods, near Athens. Its aim was to “learn” philosophy, mathematics and gymnastic. In an analogy (also from Greece) – *mens sana in corpore sano*, the duet between philosophy and mathematics leave no doubt about rationality, and therefore thinking.

Although modernity has caused knowledge to be specialized, it has also deepened knowledge, and today’s cathedras, schools or colleges have expanded scenarios, having broadened Plato’s Academy. However, the formal or classis basis from early forms always echoes.

¹¹ Creation of the firsts Universities: Source of query: Lisbon’s General Study – Casa de Sarmiento – Universidade do Minho (Portugal): Queried in http://www.csarmiento.uminho.pt/docs/amap/bth/bth1989_03.pdf

¹² About Academy: Plato’s concept of Academos in the text University. From Wikipedia <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universidade>

An opening University, but not and OPENED one

In the latest years, precisely in the latest 8 years, we have been hearing business jargons like IPO (Initial Public Offering)¹³, business going public or mergers and acquisitions, in the Higher Education sector. Universities like *Estácio*, *Anhanguera*, *Laureate* and *Devry* Grups spring stars in a competitive capital market, previously only present in the private business world, but not in the educational sector.

Within this new scenario, the idea of a purely Academic University does not sustain the concept of University anymore. However, every University must be academic, for its philosophical origin there is the objective of building knowledge.

The biggest challenge under this profitability perspective for Higher Education in Brazil is the binomial Academy X Operation, drawing the market's attention to the possibilities this new economy can bring the Country.

Here is an extract of an Edition of the International Business Times¹⁴ – *IBTimes* in July/2013 with the title: For Brazil, What's The Right Higher Education Equation?

*(...) **For-Profit Higher Education:** A further phenomenon in this sector, though not wholly uncontroversial, has been the recent rise of the for-profit sector as a response to the pent-up demand for access to higher education. Following the passage of legislation by the Brazilian government in the mid-1990s, which aimed to open up higher education, the for-profit sector has grown substantially and filled the gap in terms of access to higher education. Kroton Internacional, a for-profit educational group, just announced in April 2013 that it will merge with Anhanguera, a rival company, which would create the largest educational group in the world with over one million students. The next largest educational group is Estacio University with over 350,000 students. Other groups, including DeVry, have also entered the sector. This growing segment of the higher education market has offered Brazilians additional alternatives to public and not-for-profit private universities. Another area that is set to develop further is online learning, which still faces hurdles, including the slow process of gaining official sanctioning for new distance learning course offerings, and the challenge of building institutional capacity for better delivery of technology-based courses. However, given the sheer size of Brazil, expanding online learning will prove to be critical to the Brazilian government's education strategy as it seeks to increase access to higher education. Dr. Susane Garrido, President of Estacio University's campus in Porto Alegre, and member of the Ministry of Education's academic*

¹³ IPO (Initial Public Offering): Public offering of shares is the act of granting any person the opportunity of acquiring company's shares. Beto Veiga's Blog <http://www.betoveiga.com/log/index.php/2007/10/o-que-ipo/>

¹⁴ IBTimes – Article by David Felsen – Saint Leo University (Florida). Queried in <http://www.ibtimes.com/brazil-whats-right-higher-education-equation-1351047>

commission on distance learning, argues that distance learning is vital to Brazil's future and must be encouraged by government. She notes that, "Without expanding distance education you cannot move higher education forward. ... It needs to be allowed to develop freely." – David Felsen (author).

In a macro sphere, that binomial empowers economy as the science leading Higher Education moves in Brazil, taking into account that such "market" represents around 88% of national vacancies, therefore the access possibilities for a great deal of the working population in need of studying in a single shift or in the distance learning modality.

Private universities, by excellence, are the ones having (and in need of proving) their financial sustainability without government's foment, diverging from the Public ones having it. In this sense, and in an increasingly competitive scenario (with a suppressed demand though) remaining in the "game" and proving quality through assessment indicators from the official instrument established by MEC (Ministry of Education) forces the institutions to reinvent their concepts, creating different offers like DL; varied financing options for students; nationalization and internationalization projects, as distances become virtual; as well as mergers and acquisitions, all are now part of the inclusion or growing strategies, as long as it is not referring to organic growth.

The of Acquisitions and Mergers

The role of an Institution acquiring another is extremely more complex than the management *in natura* of an Institution with organic maintenance and/or growth, for several intrinsic aspects such as culture, punctual administrative/financial processes, syllabus, faculty, as well as the extrinsic ones such as "brand", "quality awareness", "surprise factor", among others, tent to an exponential reverberation (almost always negative at first) due to lack of knowledge of the new concept, as well as the new *modus operandi*.

Establishing clear parameters with controllable impacting gray areas (at least) within an operation, both in the integration and "changing" phases are difficult tasks, requiring management to have administration skills, University knowledge (academic), power for innovation (for there is much more movement than stillness in this field nowadays), as well as an excellent picture of the general context to be able to deal with people, lecturing faculty, students, staff, investors, prospects and other communities currently involved in the university community.

Under another perspective, these institutions' acquiring or merging capacity also usually express their ability of recovering others, bringing about a third option within a scenario showing only two in the past. Either it was federalization or auction, with institutions having not only their financial assets but also thousands of students left unassisted.

This way, in the attempt of recovering a Higher Education Institution, under the academic point of view, considerably improves the capacity of assessing knowledge. The institutional assessment, as a common sense, maybe seen as a bare indicator for MEC, now becomes a

crucial element of understanding the institution's internal dimensions, which can be currently blurred, being translated as inefficient class plans or poor facilities, whereas in a private HEI it can be seen in the default or students' evasion. How is it possible to know what happens without measuring or controlling? What to do? Who should do it?

Along our educational history, although being quite behaviourist (unfortunately), we become 'experts' in such controls, but is that worth by itself? – By itself it isn't, what is truly a relevant factor is creating a culture of co responsibility and co working together with the WHOLE academic (social) community.

Despite these implications or waivers, big Groups in healthy financial conditions, including Estácio, have the *input* of such acquisitions in their DNA, being also a possibility of growth for such private Education Institution. However, such processes also show a way of being co responsible for the recovering and improvement (both financial and academic) of HEI, representing 88% of the offers in the Brazilian higher Education sector¹⁵, being only 12% public.

That way, every deficient financial, academic or even innovative operation strike on no less than 73% of the total number of students in the country, representing 5 million students with problems (considering the total number of university students being 7 million), not to mention those who have STILL not embraced Higher Education.

Regarding the 'repressed demand', the Government is also doing its part by creating the BOU (Brazilian Open University) in order to assure mainly Teaching Certificates and technology related courses. A number of 63 federal universities are expected to join the BOU Program in the year 2014, according to MEC¹⁶.

But without private institutions' strength and capacity, in terms of mergers and acquisitions, Brazilian higher Education will strive to overcome the current 9% of teenagers "inside"; because we are living in the Era ruled by the speed of information and technical knowledgement, without that partnership Brazil is doomed to stall.

Regulation and Assessment of Brazilian Higher Education

Being a private institution has its advantages. The management overview, in all instances, is broadened in an almost *Gulliverian* way, since there is no financial income other than from the institution's revenues, coming from satisfied students willing to rely on a well ranked Institution.

¹⁵ Private Universities in Brazil: Sourced from Santander Universia
<http://noticias.universia.com.br/destaque/noticia/2003/10/20/528832/mec-88-das-universidades-so-particulares.html>

¹⁶ Portal Mec Gov Brasil: Queried in
http://portal.mec.gov.br/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12265:uab-universidade-aberta-do-brasil&catid=248:uab-universidade-aberta-dobrasil&Itemid=510

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Besides being efficient and effective, an institution of that nature has to be responsible, innovative and surprising in order not to struggle. The quote has no intention to be marketeer, but could be translated as: “Try using SINAES Cycle well”. By using it (with a certain effort), in 2013 Estácio presented an outcome better than in 2012, in all its institutions (including the acquired ones), representing 34% of IGC grades (General Courses Index). 14 from the Higher Education Institutions in the Group had growth, thus increasing the Institution’s CI (Institutions’ continuous grade), meaning that 29 of them had a growth of around 70.7%.

For a better understanding of our Higher Education Assessment parameters, I am exemplifying part of INEP’s assessment strategy, with the intention to show that the Assessment cannot be the “finish line”, but it has to be “the process”. We know how the game works, that the university has to operate like one, as well as we are aware of the Indicators we are assessed by. Under this perspective, and striving for quality and sustainability the operation shall happen.

Under the consent of MEC, SINAES (National System of Higher Education Assessment¹⁷ an assessment cycle is defined as (...) ‘comprehending a periodic assessment of higher education institutions, based on quarterly students’ performances, supporting, respectively, the credentialing and recycling of knowledge. Art. 33. Directive n. 40/2007, reissued on December 29, 2010. (NR)”.

Within this Cycle, processes like ENADE (National Exam for the Assessment of Student Performance)¹⁸, with parameters/concepts obtained from the results from the exam applied to students is one of the indicators of Brazilian Higher Education, enabling the student to both contribute to and “assess” the institutional process claimed by them. It is an Institutional role to inform and assess our own improvement, fostering an ENADE culture, not being limited to the STUDENT’S SCORE or INSTITUTION’S SCORE; it represents the student’s perception about his own learning.

¹⁷ SINAES Cycle. Source INEP: Presented by Cláudia Griboski in

http://www.google.com.br/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CCwQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fportal.mec.gov.br%2Findex.php%3Foption%3Dcom_docman%26task%3Ddoc_download%26gid%3D9744%26Itemid&ei=w0fZU5j9N5GNkAfjpoGwCQ&usq=AFQjCNEYNWOYMNwimHN_uSrbhD39HtDhJg&sig2=h4c6ozjeOqCo1-x-8QsR3A

¹⁸ ENADE: Exame Nacional de Estudantes (National Exam for the Assessment of Student Performance) carried out by INEP, according to the guidelines established by the National Committee for Higher Education Assessment (Comissão Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Superior) – CONAES, a coordination and supervision department of SINAES – National System of Higher Education Assessment. Sources: INEP website, accessed through

http://portal.inep.gov.br/c/journal/view_article_content?groupId=10157&articleId=115771&version=1.2 and data from the National Forum of Higher Education (Fórum Nacional de Educação) from Unicamp which took place in 2013, through: <http://www.fe.unicamp.br/anfope/menu2/links/arquivos/EducacaoBrasileira-Indicadores-versao23-04-13.pdf>

In the same way the CPC – Preliminary Concept of Courses¹⁹ is also a systemic indicator, being formed by the combination of CC (Course General Score) and ENADE results, being simply assessment, for it encloses from perceiving quality through the academic community to the satisfaction of all those involved in both intrinsic and extrinsic ways, because we compare results with other institutions that generate data for IGC (General Index of the Institutions Courses – from 0 to 500 points). The IGC also represents how much an IES is coherent and uniform in its quality as a whole, from graduation to post graduation (*stricto*), measured by CAPES.

Turning a private Higher Education Institution in Brazil profitable (for longstanding), with the minimum expected quality indicators, and at the same time meeting students' (and prospects') demands is quite an ambitious task, even for those already successful institutions. One's background nowadays is still attracting, but keeping in relies on feasible adaptability and innovation within an ever changing scenario.

Distance Education

Distance Education (or virtualized education)²⁰, in a common sense being a “bastard” sister of the face-to-face Education, is an innovation, but only if it carries along technological needs and possibilities, and students. Under this view, when thinking in medium or long terms, the models separating the two of them is not innovative, but it simply solves a short term problem, forgetting that sustainability is no longer portrayed that way.

Blended or combined models; or the dissemination of self customized offers (under the learning objects view as not mere objects) are an imminent reality we have to think about now. They also need to be aligned with the Rules and the Assessment, **because when we brake paradigms** from hampered syllabus, in which, still today, we cannot draw according to student's interests regarding modalities, we will keep having simple courses, training activities, programs, subjects or whatever we may call them, **either face to face or virtual ones**.

Those possibilities allow us to broaden Higher Education beyond the University physical walls, attracting internationalization movements for courses endorsed by all associated universities willing to have them. When reaching this level we can have hope on an international accreditation or double accreditation (more than one university accrediting a graduation course). We can take as an example the Bologna Agreement²¹ which unified Europe through mobility. Brazilian Universities have to be prepared for that.

¹⁹ CC and CPC: Indicators/grades from SINAES, respectively representing Course and Course plus ENADE. Source: INEP website, accessed through <http://portal.inep.gov.br>

²⁰ DE: Accessed through the link of the Census EaDBr from ABED: Queried through: http://www.abed.org.br/censoead/censoEAD.BR_2012_pt.pdf

²¹ Bologna Protocol: Source: Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education from Portugal, accessed through <http://www.dges.mctes.pt/DGES/pt/Estudantes/Processo+de+Bolonha/Processo+de+Bolonha/> International accreditation: In the Work of Fredric Litto and Marcos Formiga (organizers). DE: Distance Education: the State of Art. ABED Ed. Chapter: International Organizations and DE (GARRIDO, Susane M. L.; Paraskevi Bessa Rodrigues): 2012

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The *online* fever, being the web linked through satellite, internet or any other mobile or stationary device, is an exclusive virtual, timeless, non-territorial phenomenon. Breaking time barriers and Cartesian space limits broadens everything to be reached. It has to be conceived, regulated and operated with such perception not to become a Frankenstein constituted with parts from everything, at the same time not triggering or modifying anything, because it has not been established through a necessity or innovation. DE cannot be faced as a fad, for that way it wouldn't try on which models work (or not) for every Institution in particular, with customized aspects according to the current culture, with the efficiency impacting technology, people, beliefs, skills, and above all, the grounds and suitable instruments for the development of each knowledge are they are suppose to interact with.

Objectively understanding DE as a possible Education path, facilitating a great part of the population, who otherwise wouldn't, to enrol in Higher Education studies, should guide the choice of a University, due to a complex arsenal involving virtualized Education (different from the face-to-face one), with different models, specialized trainings, resources, as well as targeting where and how one wants to reach, and mainly, from people who are engaged on a very peculiar academic and administrative culture, working with autonomy after being installed.

I believe we are very close to the University of the future, one that does not abandon its conceptual beliefs from the past, but one that learns how to reinvent itself to always ECHO the public it is indeed serving.