

A Pedagogical Model for Online Education at Universidade Aberta

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Abstract

The deep and fast transformations in today's society, determining the increasing necessity of long life learning, have come to demand new answers from the educational institutions. In the same way, the construction of a European higher education space and the consequent change of educational paradigm place new challenges. Distance education has been taking an increasingly important role in the education and general formation and training of citizens and professionals. The accumulated experience of distance teaching and the current technological advances place distance education in a privileged position to meet these challenges, but call for a renewal not only of its technological basis but also of its pedagogical models.

To require a bigger responsibility on the part of the student and a more active involvement in the construction of their own learning demand, at the same time, new ways of teaching and learning. It is therefore imperative to rethink distance education methodologies, the more so when we have at our disposal an enormous potential of technological mediation that provides new and multiple forms of interaction, absent in the industrial distance education models, and which allow us to create new and promising teaching and learning contexts.

The Pedagogical Model of Universidade Aberta presented here aims at meeting these challenges and providing a solid framework for delivering online education. The model is a transition from an industrial distance education approach, built around the delivery of a learning package to the student, to an approach focused on the development of competencies, resorting fully to the information and communication tools. This online model rests on four major principles: *student-centred learning*, *flexibility*, *interaction* and *digital inclusion*. We will describe the different pedagogical elements that structure the model and allow for its implementation both in the 1st and in the 2nd Study Cycles.

Keywords: Distance education, online education, pedagogical model, teaching-learning contexts.