



Teaching Online: voices, roles and competencies in distance learning in pandemic times

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Abstract

Universities around the world have integrated the latest digital technologies and new pedagogies to carry out their mission, on account of this millennium's great technological evolution and Internet's expansion. The most recent unprecedented challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic, reinforced the need to take a closer look at teaching processes in online learning contexts and digital transformation

The online teaching process is different from face-to-face teaching, since it is distributed by several specific actors, such as teachers, tutors, technologists, and the teaching materials developed *per se*.

Thus, the new learning scenarios caused changes in education. The online teacher deals with specific roles and competencies, which go beyond the transfer of competencies from classroom teaching to online.

In this context, the online teacher plays several roles and has different competencies, not only limited to technology, but also pedagogical, social and administrator/ manager. In an ever-changing field as distance learning (DL) is, these competencies are also added to the researcher component.

The importance of research in this area is fundamental, to promote critical reflections on online teaching practices, to provide important data for the understanding and adaptation of theories and pedagogical models in these new online pedagogical environments.

In the midst of a pandemic, the need for research in this area has been reinforced, as a way to respond to current needs, looking ahead to the future and in the urgent search for online solutions for the conception and conclusion of distance classes, by teachers around the world.

As part of the Doctoral Programme in Education, specialisation in Distance Education and eLearning¹, Universidade Aberta, Portugal, this presentation aims to characterize online teachers' roles and competencies in distance learning contexts. It is intended to present the research done so far and the results of an online teaching focus group.

Key words: distance learning; online teaching; online teacher' roles.

¹ - This study is funded by the **Research Grant with the reference DFA/BD/7328/2020**, under the POCH - Human Capital Operational Program, co-financed by the European Social Fund and national funds from MCTES through FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology.