



**D<sup>3</sup> Consultants**  
DEDICATION. DEVOTION. DEPENDABILITY.

# Education Plus | D<sup>3</sup> Monthly Newsletter

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## ONLINE LEARNING GETS ITS MOMENT DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC: Here's how education will change

Digital learning goes mainstream in a hurry and that's going to upend current education practices, models, and processes going forward.

It is online learning's big moment and education is about to be revamped just as much the industries that are going to remote work due to the novel coronavirus.

Here's a look at the moving parts and the ripple effects from the grand online learning experiment.

### TECHNOLOGY

The only reason that universities and some K-12 school have been able to go to remote learning is that the technology stack has evolved a good bit in the last few years.

Yet that stack could use further improvement, the big learning management systems to some degree, sum up the category this way:

- Google Classroom benefits because it is familiar to many.
- Canvas has an ecosystem of add-ons and solid workflow, but user interface could be cleaner.
- Blackboard is similar to Canvas.
- Video conferencing is critical to the education stack so there is a big opportunity for a company like Zoom to make a play for a younger almost-professional customer base.
- Apple, Google, and Microsoft have various parts of the education stack, but the process on the backend is where online education is enabled.

But, yes, online education is possible, and the stack works just in time for COVID-19.

### UPSKILLING TAKES CENTER STAGE

The educational process is going to be recast on an accelerated timetable due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Is education about continuous learning or landing a degree and a career?

Is education about self-exploration and being more well-rounded?

Or is education in a physical setting too rigid?

The recasting of education is probably going to revolve around continuous learning. Time being sheltered in place due to social distancing has enabled folks to think more about their own learning and interests.



## THE CULTURAL CHANGE

Like all technology shifts and transformation efforts the biggest challenges usually involve cultural change.

A few items worth pondering:

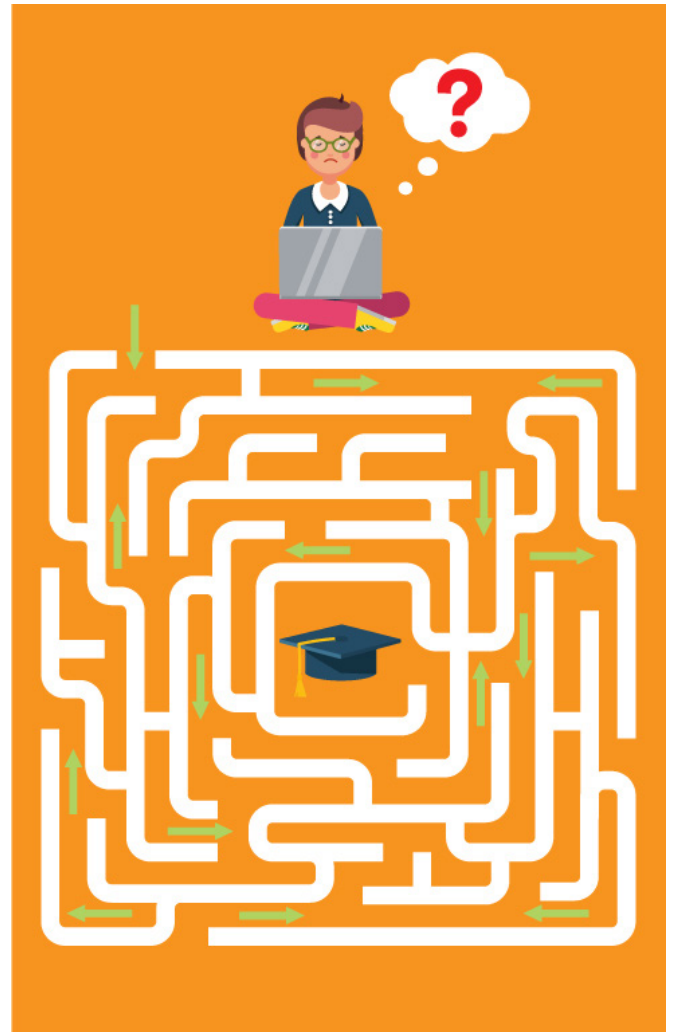
1. Online learning requires discipline. Education requires discipline too, but online learning has less handholding. That reality is going to favor a certain type of student over ones that are trying to find their bearings on their own timetable.
2. Learning will be digitized. Paper is somewhat comforting, and is going away. This process change will mean the faculty has to go digital and change styles.
3. Existing faculty may push back and usher in a new generation of instructors.
4. Analytics will become more prevalent. All you need to do is see some of the analytic capabilities in learning management systems to know that there will be a barrage of new learning metrics to ponder for students' and faculty's effectiveness.

## THE DIGITAL DIVIDE ISSUES

The biggest concern with this digital learning acceleration revolves around the digital divide.

This digital divide problem will appear at every level of education whether it is something as simple as needing a webcam or something more severe like Internet access and a computer. The issue is most pronounced K-12.

The digital divide problem in education isn't new, but it is magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures. Physical schools provide a structure, respite, and shelter in ways that digital learning never can.



## WHAT'S NEXT?

The fallout in education from COVID-19 and the mass move to remote learning is going to be dramatic. Here are just a few issues that are going to appear in the months to come.

### POSSIBLE MARGIN COMPRESSION FOR UNIVERSITIES

The debt load for students has been unsustainable and the issue is going to become more acute. Consider the following:

- College savings are taking a hit from stock market declines.
- Parents with college students who paid for a spring semester that went digital may want some fees refunded.
- Is an online degree as valuable as a traditional one?

### K-12 DIGITAL DIVIDE ISSUES ESCALATE

The school year is likely over already in multiple areas. How is that learning gap closed for those on the wrong end of the digital divide?

### HYBRID MODELS EMERGE

Given the financial moving parts of tuition, affordability, and costs to deliver online education versus physical, look for universities to offer hybrid models to deliver returns on investment.

### THE MAINSTREAMING OF REMOTE EDUCATION

COVID-19 has already pushed remote learning mainstream and some institutions are going to be caught flat-footed. As learning goes digital, there will be budget upheaval ahead that administrators will have to navigate.

### QUANTIFYING THE INTANGIBLE

There are significant benefits to finding yourself in college. What should those intangible benefits cost? This question has been emerging as tuition annually creeps higher. Digital learning just brought that question to the forefront.

### NEW ENTRANTS TO EDUCATION

If there was ever an industry waiting to be disrupted, education is. Now, education is digital for the foreseeable future, and there are alternative models on a back of a napkin somewhere.