

Hybrid education: Tec rector analyzes post-covid future for education



David Garza, rector and executive president of [Tec de Monterrey](#), reflected on the **future of education** once the **COVID-19 pandemic** has been overcome: he believes that it will be a combination of in-person and virtual formats.

“I don’t think the *in-person university will disappear* [...] It will not be solely **online** or **in-person**, but rather **hybrid**,” Garza pointed out during the **inauguration** of the **7th Tec de Monterrey International Conference on Educational Innovation**, which took place **virtually** for the **first time**.

He also shared that **equal access**, the **digital divide**, new **strategies** for **teaching**, and student **mental health** will be the **biggest challenges** after the pandemic.

The rector also pointed out that the **pandemic** came at a **time** when **technological changes** were already in process and made them happen earlier.

“*What we have is the collision of two storms: one that came with the fourth industrial revolution and the other with COVID-19. Things will not be the same again,*” he said.



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Coming changes for universities

One of the **reflections** Garza shared had to do with **in-person education** in the future.

He said that **post-pandemic education** could be complemented with **hybrid** online and in-person classes via new educational models.

"In the last 30 years, we'd had 160,000 online students at the Tec and now (in just 1 year) we've had 90,000 students," said Garza.

He also mentioned **micro-credentials**, which are given to students to **accredit certain skills** without them having to complete a **full degree**.

These are becoming increasingly **popular** and universities such as [Columbia](#), [MIT](#), and [Tec de Monterrey](#) itself were already offering some online even **before the pandemic**.



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“At the Tec, we had **3,400** users. This year we’ve had **39,000**. The **pandemic** has brought us such a large amount of **change**,” said Garza.

Another of the changes mentioned by the rector were the **partnerships** developed between **different universities**, as well as those between **universities and companies**.

“The pandemic has been an example of how we can **contribute to society**. **Universities** have been like **black boxes**, with all the decisions being made inside them.

“These **boxes** are being **opened** and decisions will be **complemented** in collaboration and synergy with other potential stakeholders,” Garza said.

He also told the audience that the **most important** thing is to find ways to **add value** to what students will be able to do when they graduate from their degrees.

Adaptation to provide integrated education

One of the main **changes in education** brought about by the health crisis was in the **way teaching** happens.

However, **distance education** began in **1858** with the first **classes by mail** offered by the [University of London](#), Garza said.

“**1966** was also a year of **evolution** (in distance education) at **Tec de Monterrey** with **classes filmed using closed circuit television**,” recalled the rector.

With the arrival of the **pandemic**, the Tec and other **universities** around the world **innovated ways of offering classes** responsively and quickly.

*“(At the Tec), more than **1.3 million online class sessions have been taught** by more than **10,000 teachers**,” explained the president.*

In addition to the academic area, Tec has also carried out more than **250 social impact projects** by providing **educational resources** and **collaborating** with NGOs.

*“From the **manufacture of ventilators**, **treatment**, and **support** for different organizations, and through **TecSalud’s** great leadership, more than **29 protocols** were developed and more than **2,000 patients treated**,” he added.*

Another aspect that Garza mentioned was **taking care of the mental health** of **students** and the **community** in general, as well as events to provide a **memorable experience**, even in the pandemic.

*“This week we have **Malala** as a guest speaker; we also welcomed **Bill Gates**, who met the chairman of our board and some students.*

*“We have implemented **financial support programs**, followed up on student and employee **COVID cases**, as well as **supporting opportunities to work from home**,” he said.*



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Technology for distance education

Similarly, the Tec implemented **initiatives** that were already being developed **prior** to the **pandemic**:

Artificial intelligence, machine learning, virtual reality classes, **online** classes, augmented reality, and recently a **pilot classroom** called the *Hall Immersive Room*.

The room has **screens** that provide teachers with a **panoramic view** where they can see their students, their presentations, and make use of technology in class.

Garza also mentioned the use of **specialized software** to provide **laboratory experiences** to students who can control them and their **simulators** from home.



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The beginning of the future of education

Garza mentioned **data** from analyst **surveys** that foresee **changes** in **education** in the **future**.

“More than 25,000 adults in more than 25 countries were surveyed about how they perceive higher education.”

*“The big conclusion is that the future will happen via **hybrid** education, and that the **consumption** of video (including online courses) has **increased**,”* he said.

Another aspect addressed by the rector were the **challenges** that **online education** will bring for **future cohorts**.

Learning gaps, issues with **socio-emotional development**, and even **young people’s appreciation** for **social interaction** not being so much online, were some of those mentioned by David Garza.

*“Young people **have been appreciating physical interaction** and **adults** have been **appreciating digital tools** during the pandemic,” he added.*

He also mentioned that one of the **main concerns** is promoting students’ **emotional and physical wellbeing**.

*“These are **elements** that will continue to be there **even when the pandemic is over**. As **educators**, this is what we are going to be **living with**,” he shared.*



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The 7th annual CIIE

This is the **7th** Tec de Monterrey [International Conference on Educational Innovation](#).

The event is held **annually** and (for the **first time**) **virtually** on this occasion for 5 days from **December 14 to 18, 2020**.

More than **4,500 attendees** from **25 countries** participated at this year’s conference and had the opportunity to listen to **25 university rectors** and more than **70 international experts**.

10 CONFERENCIAS MAGISTRALES



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This year's conference focused on **6 main topics**:

- **Trends in education**
- **Technology in education**
- **Managing educational innovation**
- **Academic innovations in health**
- **Life-long learning**
- **EdTech entrepreneurship**

In addition, **virtual exhibitions** and awards such as the [TPrize](#) were held in association with the [University of Los Andes](#) and [MIT](#).

This event recognized **startups** proposing **solutions for reducing the education gap in Latin America**.

*"If you're interested in a **topic** that **isn't your specialty**, you can also **join** the conference.*

*"One **advantage** is that the conference is **virtual**, and the talks are recorded so you can access them afterwards," said **José Escamilla**, the Tec's Director of Educational Innovation.*



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