

Five ways the lecture halls of 2030 will be different

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The inverted classroom will no longer be the exception to the rule

Eighty per cent of information will be delivered by massive open online courses, online courses, video and video-call sessions from experts in the field – methods that do not require attendance in class.

As a consequence, valuable time in class will be used not for lecturing but for question and answer sessions, activities, exercises, case studies and peer group feedback.

Contact-hour teaching will be based on active participation and exercises focusing on the personal benefit to the students, motivated by their interests instead of their careers.

Students will have to take responsibility for their learning. This inverted classroom approach will represent an emancipatory process – empowering students to count on their individual strengths. Communication skills, teamwork and self-development will be of great value, even in a world of digital individualisation.

Students will become ‘personal information managers’

Learning processes will become highly personalised, with information presented (either via digital media or the teacher in class) filtered according to personal requirements.

Students will no longer be “consumers” of information (“Tell me what I have to do to pass!”), but interactive participants in the process of learning. They will define by themselves what “knowledge” means, and the teacher will pave the way for this endeavour. Learning will no longer mean regurgitating information but arranging information in a personally meaningful way.

Lecture halls will be replaced by study labs

Groups in large lecture halls will be dismissed in favour of smaller groups who meet in person in a study lab for work productivity. In 2030, a class will likely be largely composed of international students, and they will meet in person once or twice a month.

The activities in class are “framed” by the teacher but have to allow the utmost flexibility. There won’t be classes in the traditional sense any more, but space for diverse activities.

These labs will allow for a number of room arrangements, using elements such as flexible partition walls and diverse light to create the required learning atmosphere, and furniture for concentration as well as relaxation.

Access to computers, the internet and electronic media go without saying. So the lecture hall in 2030 will turn into a holistic and emotional learning experience where students are able to express their identities.

University architecture in the future has to follow the needs of students, not vice versa.

Teachers will be ‘personal guides’ through the learning process

The role of teachers will change in many ways. They are no longer “senders of information” but will serve as personal guides showing the way through the learning process – like a tour guide. Hence, classroom teaching will be replaced with instruction in diverse learning settings.

As learning processes are highly individualised, teachers will give individual feedback to students and guide peer feedback processes between students. The teacher will need to be equipped with solid communication skills.

Teachers will also have to define the content for the study labs and will be expected to invite colleagues (from all over the world) for participation in lectures (online or in class).

Respect towards teachers is related to competence and experience instead of status and power, so any hierarchy in the class will be dismissed in favour of interconnectivity between all participants in the learning process.

Digital literacy will go hand in hand with traditional forms of writing

The extensive use of digital media will have huge consequences for both learning habits and teaching styles, and will also impact on academic writing.

Students are used to writing on social networks and online communities, so why not make use of these competencies?

Many students struggle with writing a 30-page thesis for their bachelor's degree, because they lack the required writing skills, but writing a thesis will be only one method of assessment at higher education institutions in the future. In the world of digital literacy, why not deliver a video documentation, citing the experts in interviews, or creating a scientific blog instead of writing a traditional thesis?

This means that classroom teaching will have to fully implement digital media such as podcasts, blogs and videos. Teachers will have to apply these media didactically for instruction and teach students how to produce digital content in an academic manner.

Petra Hauptfeld is a professor at the University of Applied Sciences, Burgenland, Austria. She will be presenting the poster session “Future-proof your classroom: a 2030 instruction model” at the EAIE conference at 3pm on 14 September, in the Arena foyer, Level -1, ACC.