Virtual experience in higher education: Application of the CoI Model

The return to classes after the pandemic led to a new normality characterised by educational scenarios that alternate between face-to-face and virtual learning. Along this line, the Faculty of Languages started promoting hybrid undergraduate education, a goal that called for further research on theoretical frameworks that could guide the design and implementation of activities. One of the most frequently cited techno-models in distance education is the Community of Inquiry (CoI) developed by Garrison, Archer and Anderson (2000). This model consists of three elements that structure not only the design but also the implementation of all the activities that conform the pedagogical proposal. These elements are: a) the social presence, b) the teaching presence, and c) the cognitive presence. Based on the preliminary results of pilot experiences, the Faculty of Languages implemented content virtualization in different subjects; specifically, the institution proposed a plan of action called 70/30, which consists of virtualizing up to a maximum of 30% of the syllabus and continuing face-to-face lessons in the remaining percentage. Although teachers as well as students face the challenge of assembling synchronous and asynchronous activities, there are many benefits associated with this new plan of action that aligns well with new scenarios and results in plenty of lessons learned. After four years of implementing the 70/30 program, the teaching teams of Didactics and History of the language will share the reflections that such a program has brought about.