

Education in times of transition

Educação em tempos de transição

Iêda Aleluia¹ 

Ana Verônica Mascarenhas² 

Sandra Lúcia Brasil³ 

¹Corresponding author. Escola Bahiana de Medicina e Saúde Pública (Salvador). Bahia, Brazil. iedaleluia@bahiana.edu.br

^{2,3}Escola Bahiana de Medicina e Saúde Pública (Salvador). Bahia, Brazil. avmbatista@bahiana.edu.br, sandrabrasil@bahiana.edu.br

*Come gather 'round people, wherever you roam
And admit that the waters around you have grown
The Times They Are A-Changin', Bob Dylan¹*

We have been undergoing transitions in health education for some time now. We have been asking ourselves how to best reach out to students, those digital natives who force us to look differently at our teaching and learning methodologies, who question us about different ways of presenting our classes, students who “run away” from classrooms and leave us perplexed with their ability to find novel ways to find knowledge.

These same students who, at various times, rebel against active methodologies, which demand face-to-face theoretical classes, in an old fashion that we have been striving so much to change. Where is the root of the apparent paradox? In our own human condition, of rebellion, of questioning, of movement.

And, in this moment of COVID-19 pandemic, a mutant virus, in which we do have to establish social distance, keep classrooms closed, how to

weave all those threads together? How to run with the change, and arrive in one place in a place of balance? There are so many questions, so many uncertainties, so many gaps to be filled ... and in record time. We can no longer sit in a comfort zone, and make changes step by step, at snail speed. Our generation of transition must change quickly, must incorporate technologies quickly, must create new synapses, new ways of relating to the new. Quickly. Terminologies such as: video lessons, xyz platforms, links, virtual classrooms, synchronous and asynchronous chats and discussion forums, online tests ... everything we postponed and saved for later, because the “now” was in person and the touch, the stop in the hall to answer questions was the usual. All of that changed in a few weeks, the evolution that would take months, even years, has now happened in weeks ... and we are still adapting. As beings adaptable to the extreme, we show our ability to survive.

What is left to muse is not on our ability to adapt, it is on maintaining our critical reasoning on the process of adaptation, it is on keeping our humanity, our ethics and our commitment to each

other while stepping on the shifting sands of change. It is about maintaining the proximity in the distance, the transparency in dark times.

The world has changed. Education has not been left out of this change. Then we, professors, change with it, we sail in “seas never sailed before” with the uncertainty accompanying us; because it is with this uncertainty, with this feeling of fluidity, of constant change, that we will be able to fathom, and to launch ourselves in the various possibilities of new constructive paths during the ongoing crisis and beyond. May these changes make us better people, may they make us grow, foster our curiosity, our solidarity, our creativity. Let us see the importance of the collective construction of knowledge. Let us not be locked in vain certainties, in rigid formulas, in comfort zones that give apparent security and strength, since life is based on impermanence. Learning to deal with uncertainty is learning to deal with life.

Medicine, and the whole set of health professions, has a rigid base structure, necessary to maintain itself through the ages, bringing an image of trust to society, as it has a scientific basis in observation and experience. This basis is necessary, but the health professions are formed by people who care for people, and as such, changeable, adaptable, constantly evolving. And it is in this sense that education to train health professionals also evolves, changes, adapts to new challenges, and seeks to awaken this feeling

both in those who teach and learn and in those who learn to later teach.

It is under the season of challenges that this world presents us that we educate people and that we are educated, informed, formed. It is in the relationship with oneself and with the other that we evolve, that we grow into our better selves. The current moment forces us to strengthen our learning skills, building a new form of relationship with others, with oneself, with knowledge. May we use this moment of crisis to transform education.

We accept the challenge of venturing boldly into this new world that is being drawn, with the knowledge that we have accumulated over time, and with the determination to learn what we do not know yet. With a gaze full of sensitivity towards the new, towards ourselves and the others, as Rubens Alves² would say: “Without the Education of Sensibilities, all skills are foolish and meaningless.”

References

1. Dylan B. The Times They Are A-Changin' [Internet]. Disponível em: <https://www.letras.mus.br/bob-dylan/11920/traducao.html>
2. Aleluia IMB. Sobre educação médica e sensibilidades: revisitando Rubem Alves!. Rev Inter Educ Saúde. 2018;2(1):124-125. doi: [10.17267/2594-7907ijhe.v2i1.2091](https://doi.org/10.17267/2594-7907ijhe.v2i1.2091)