

# Pedagogical interactive choices for distance continuation of undergraduate studies in traditional universities during potential future crises

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to investigate, through the lens of sociological theoretical concepts, the choices that traditional universities need to adopt to establish a pedagogical and interactive framework for delivering distance education during periods of crisis. The research findings indicate that participants, whose habitus integrates knowledge and skills related to the implementation of emergency remote teaching, believe that traditional universities should employ mixed pedagogical approaches to ensure the quality of both synchronous and asynchronous distance education in times of crisis. Specifically, the application of mixed pedagogies is necessary both for the hierarchical rules that shape pedagogical and interactive relationships between instructors and students and for the instructional rules concerning selection, sequence, pacing, and criteria in the delivery of synchronous and asynchronous undergraduate teaching.*

## KEYWORDS

*Distance learning, universities (traditional), undergraduate studies, habitus, emergency remote teaching, regulative discourse, instructional discourse, crisis conditions*

## RÉSUMÉ

*Cette étude vise à examiner, à travers le prisme des concepts théoriques sociologiques, les choix que les universités traditionnelles doivent adopter afin d'établir un cadre pédagogique et interactif pour dispenser l'enseignement à distance durant les périodes de crise. Les résultats de la recherche indiquent que les participants, dont l'habitus intègre des connaissances et des compétences relatives à la mise en œuvre de l'enseignement à distance d'urgence, estiment que les universités traditionnelles devraient recourir à des approches pédagogiques mixtes afin de garantir la qualité de l'enseignement à distance, tant synchrone qu'asynchrone, en temps de crise. Plus précisément, l'application de pédagogies mixtes s'avère nécessaire aussi bien pour les règles hiérarchiques qui structurent les relations pédagogiques et interactives entre enseignants et étudiants, que pour les règles didactiques concernant la sélection, la séquence, le rythme et les critères dans la prestation de l'enseignement de premier cycle en mode synchrone et asynchrone.*

## MOTS-CLÉS

*Enseignement à distance, universités traditionnelles, études de licence, habitus, enseignement à distance d'urgence, discours régulateur, discours didactique, situations de crise*

## INTRODUCTION

The forced transition to distance education in traditional universities has been observed in the past, even prior to the emergence of Covid-19, in regions affected by severe natural disasters, such as New Zealand and areas of the USA (Ayebi-Arthur, 2017; DiCarlo et al., 2007; Krane et al., 2007; Meyer & Wilson, 2011; Tull et al., 2017). However, the Covid-19 pandemic, due to its global spread and the significant number of fatalities it caused, led to the widespread adoption of “emergency remote teaching” in traditional universities as well (Bollino, 2023; Hodges et al., 2020; Rahman & Thill, 2022; Whittle et al., 2000). Specifically, during 2020–2021, this resulted in the temporary choice of continuing educational activities remotely in order to protect students and faculty from the uncontrolled transmission of the virus during the initial phase of its global outbreak.

The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerability of the contemporary globalized world. Although undergraduate teaching has largely returned to face-to-face instruction in the lecture halls of traditional universities, the scientific community continues to engage with several critical issues (Alexander, 2023; Awashreh, 2025; Koustourakis, 2026; Nyakoty & Goronga, 2024; Patel et al., 2023; Sholes et al., 2023; Sosa-Díaz et al., 2025). To what extent are traditional universities prepared, or taking steps to prepare, for a potential sudden transition to high-quality remote undergraduate education in response to significant external factors? Additionally, what preparations are essential for traditional universities to proficiently oversee a potential mandated transition of their undergraduate courses to remote delivery during crises?

This study seeks to contribute to the ongoing scholarly debate concerning the necessity for traditional universities to develop organized strategies for effectively navigating challenging circumstances that may disrupt face-to-face educational activities during periods of crisis. This focus is warranted, as recent scientific studies indicate that traditional universities do not appear to be adequately prepared, nor are they actively preparing, for such scenarios (Alexander, 2023; Case & Luongo, 2025; McNaughtan et al., 2025; Koustourakis, 2026; Patel et al., 2023; Sosa-Díaz et al., 2025). Consequently, in the event of a significant incident impacting in-person operations, the conditions for the implementation of “emergency remote teaching” are likely to re-emerge.

The aim of this study is to investigate the perspectives of postgraduate students who possess both practical and theoretical knowledge regarding the implementation of emergency remote teaching, focusing on the choices that traditional universities must make to develop a pedagogical and interactive framework for undergraduate education. The objective is to ensure the high-quality continuation of distance learning, should such a transition become necessary in the future.

This paper begins with a section on theoretical perspectives, followed by sections outlining the research question and methodology, as well as the presentation and discussion of the research findings. The study ends with a section dedicated to conclusion and recommendations.

## THEORETICAL POINTINGS OUT

The university field represents a microcosm governed by specific “rules of the game”, as articulated by Pierre Bourdieu (1988, 1990, 2013). These rules pertain to roles, institutionally sanctioned and normatively appropriate forms of action and behavior, as well as personality characteristics of those participating in this field. In order for participants in the educational process to effectively enact their roles within the university field, they must possess a form of

habitus that enables them to engage in interactive relationships according to the prevailing “rules of the game”. The concept of habitus encompasses an individual’s knowledge, skills, dispositions, modes of thinking and communication, preferences, and competencies. That is, it includes all elements that are products of successive socializations and that shape one’s identity, culture, and distinctive personality traits, which become activated in daily interactions within the social fields in which one participates (Asimaki & Koustourakis, 2014; Bourdieu, 1986, 1990, 2013; Cross et al., 2025; Deer, 2003; Nash, 2003). Furthermore, the university field - through its unique organizational culture, or institutional habitus, as accepted in the scholarly literature - significantly contributes to the formation of the habitus of both faculty and students (Byrd, 2025; Koustourakis & Paizis, 2013; Reay, 1998; Reay et al., 2001; Thomas, 2002). At the same time, the institutional habitus of a university may itself be influenced to some extent by the actions and practices of its academic community (faculty and students). This results from the activation of their individual habitus in connection with efforts to utilize the “rules of the game” within the field to achieve specific desired changes (Bourdieu, 1990; Burke et al., 2013; Reay, 1998; Reay et al., 2005; Thomas, 2002).

The concept of framing from Basil Bernstein’s sociological theory (1990, 2000) is particularly significant for analyzing the educational process during the implementation of university activities and regulating the interactive relationships among participants. Framing denotes the activation of social control principles in distance education, comprising two essential elements: the “instructional discourse” (instructional rules) and the prevailing “regulative discourse” (hierarchical rules), both of which shape and influence the formulation and execution of teaching practices (Bernstein, 1990, 2000).

Regulative discourse refers to the nature of control exercised by both instructors and students in establishing and enacting the rules that govern remote interactions during the educational process. It also reveals which forms of communication and the shaping of social–academic relationships among agents operating within the academic field are considered institutionally appropriate and ethically acceptable (Bernstein, 2000; Koustourakis, 2018; Morais, 2002). When the instructor, through specific communicative strategies, seeks to grant students the initiative to respond, collaborate, and actively participate in the distance learning process, a weak framing of regulative discourse is promoted.

Instructional discourse focuses on the synchronous and asynchronous interactions between instructors and students during the implementation of distance teaching, particularly in relation to selection, sequence, pacing, and criteria (Bernstein, 1990, 2000; Koustourakis, 2018; Moore, 2013). Selection pertains to the types of knowledge chosen, accepted, and utilized during a lesson. For instance, if examples from contemporary reality and students’ personal experiences are incorporated to support understanding of scientific knowledge, a weak framing of instructional discourse on “selection” is being applied. Sequence refers to the degree of control exercised by the instructor over the presentation order of the scientific content delivered remotely, including decisions about what should be addressed first and what should follow. Pacing, in synchronous distance teaching, concerns the amount of time allotted to students for attending lectures and participating in instructional activities during live online lessons. In asynchronous distance teaching, pacing refers to the time students have available to engage with and comprehend the scientific content. Finally, criteria relate to the implementation of assessment procedures. When educators explicitly outline and communicate the methods and standards of assessment to students in advance, they establish a strong framework for criteria.

The theoretical framework proposed by Basil Bernstein, specifically with regard to regulative discourse and instructional discourse, will be utilized in this study for the analysis and discussion of the research findings.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS – METHODOLOGY

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- What choices must traditional universities make in shaping hierarchical rules regarding pedagogical interactive relationships and the implementation of educational activities to ensure the high-quality continuation of undergraduate education through distance learning during periods of crisis?
- What decisions should traditional universities undertake in formulating instructional rules, based on the insights of postgraduate students possessing both practical and theoretical knowledge in emergency remote teaching, to guarantee the high-quality continuation of undergraduate education via distance learning during crises?

The research was conducted in March 2025 with postgraduate students enrolled in the “Master’s in Education” program who attended the module “Open Distance Learning” at the Hellenic Open University, utilizing convenience sampling among those to whom we had access. Criterion sampling was also applied, based on the following conditions (Cohen et al., 2008; Mertens, 2009): (a) participants had completed their undergraduate studies at traditional universities; (b) resided in island regions that periodically experience significant seismic events; and (c) possessed both theoretical and practical knowledge of emergency remote teaching, due to their studies in the “Open Distance Learning” module at the Hellenic Open University and because, during the Covid-19 period, they either attended Greek traditional universities or worked as educators in public or private schools. This study leveraged the coinciding period of seismic activity in the Cyclades and the resulting concern within the Aegean region (Gatopoulos, 2025; Mavroulis et al., 2025).

The study involved 12 postgraduate students with the following demographic characteristics: 2 were men (16.7%) and 10 were women (83.3%). During the Covid-19 period, 6 participants (50%) worked as educators in public or private education, while 6 had been undergraduates at traditional universities where emergency remote teaching was implemented. The average age of the sample was 32.1 years (ranging from 24 to 43 years). Among them, 5 were employed in the tourism sector and 7 taught in public or private schools. The study adhered to ethical and deontological guidelines (Creswell, 2016; Giddens & Sutton, 2020). We ensured anonymity and protected personal data, following comprehensive briefings about the research's purpose and procedures, and participation was voluntary.

The study was carried out during the fourth contact session with postgraduate students enrolled in the “Open Distance Learning” module at the Hellenic Open University, employing a questionnaire and a semi-structured focus group interview as research instruments (methodological triangulation) (Creswell, 2016; Robson & McCartan, 2023). Before the commencement of this contact session, students intending to participate completed a questionnaire with open-ended questions, articulating their views on the research questions central to this study. Subsequent to the completion of the fourth contact session, five postgraduate students who had finalized the questionnaire and were accessible engaged in a recorded group interview, conducted with their consent. This interview allowed participants to articulate, clarify, and expand upon their perspectives concerning the issues examined in the study. In compliance with the participants' agreement, the digital recording of the group interview was obliterated following the verbatim transcription of its contents.

The qualitative content analysis technique was utilized for the examination and processing of research data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire responses and the group interview. The unit of analysis selected was the “sentence”, defined by the semantic attributes of the text. In this context, a “sentence” may comprise several grammatical clauses in order to convey a clear and complete meaning (Koustourakis & Zacharos, 2011;

Krippendorff, 2004; Mayring, 2022). Subsequently, the identified units of analysis were classified into one of the following two categories of analysis, which were established based on the research questions and theoretical framework (Krippendorff, 2004; Robson & McCartan, 2023):

- A. Hierarchical rules for organizing distance education.
- B. Instructional rules for the implementation of distance education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We will present and discuss the research findings in the two categories of analysis of the research material.

### *Hierarchical rules for organizing distance education*

The research findings revealed that participants recognize faculty members as holding the authority to establish and regulate the rules governing the provision of undergraduate courses via distance learning during crisis situations. Specifically, they believe that, to ensure the quality of remote undergraduate education, instructors need to implement both synchronous and asynchronous modes of distance learning through the use of a learning management system (LMS) platform. Within the LMS, faculty should aim to upload and share, in the form of permanent digital files, both the rules and guidelines for conducting their courses remotely, as well as other important resources to support students' asynchronous learning efforts. These resources include videos of live online lessons and recontextualized teaching materials.

*“Instructors have the authority to design the courses they will teach remotely and to establish the rules for their delivery using learning management systems. To make these courses beneficial for students, they must adapt their instructional materials with consideration for remote conditions and the principles of distance education”* (Questionnaire 4 – Q.4).

*“Instructors set the rules concerning students' roles and the acceptable modes of communication and participation in distance learning courses during emergency situations. These rules, along with other important resources—such as explanatory notes for course content and recorded lectures—should be available in digital format. All of these materials should be uploaded to a learning management system to ensure accessibility for every student”* (Focus group, postgraduate student 5 – F.g., p.s. 5).

The above research material demonstrates that participants explicitly recognize the existence of asymmetrical hierarchical relationships within the university field, with instructors possessing the authority to regulate the rules governing the implementation of distance education (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). It is also evident that, in order for instructors to create the necessary conditions for high-quality delivery of their courses, their habitus must incorporate knowledge and skills relevant to distance teaching (Bourdieu, 1986, 1990; Koustourakis & Paizis, 2013). When this scenario is the case, their dispositions can be activated to shape pedagogical practices—practices in which the recontextualization of teaching material plays a significant role by integrating elements that simplify scientific knowledge, such as examples and videos from contemporary reality, making the content more engaging and accessible to undergraduates (Bernstein, 2000; Bourdieu, 1986, 1990; Cross et al., 2025; Morais, 2002). Furthermore, it appears that instructors, by leveraging the capabilities of the LMS, must make the “rules of the game” regarding remote educational delivery absolutely explicit and understandable to students (Bourdieu, 1988, 1990; Ko & Rossen, 2021; Koustourakis & Paizis, 2013). This scenario represents the application of a strong framing of regulative

discourse, whereby, in accordance with prevailing hierarchical rules, instructors control and direct the educational process and make visible the acceptable and expected behaviors in both synchronous and asynchronous undergraduate distance teaching (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). In this context, the views and preferences expressed by the sample members seem to be influenced by the institutional habitus of the traditional universities where they completed their undergraduate studies and developed their experiences and habitus (Byrd, 2025; Bourdieu, 1986; Reay, 1998; Thomas, 2002).

The majority of the sample (8 postgraduate students, 75%) emphasized the importance of instructors utilizing the LMS to provide asynchronous support for distance learning in their courses, as well as the significant role of activating the forum function. Instructors are expected to post motivational messages for students, pose questions that stimulate group discussions, and express concerns about potential difficulties some students may face, thereby encouraging them to reach out for conversation and psychological support.

*“It would be very helpful for the instructor to use the forum to post messages that encourage students and motivate them to continue, especially during emergency periods when they may feel high levels of anxiety, isolation, and insecurity” (Q.5).*

*“The instructor should use forum messages to remind students that they are available for any support. Even a simple message of encouragement during challenging times can make a significant difference to students’ psychological well-being” (Q.1).*

In such cases, a weak framing of regulative discourse is promoted, as the asynchronous online environment appears to intentionally weaken hierarchical relationships to help students—especially those who may hesitate or feel embarrassed to speak and express themselves during synchronous distance teaching—feel more comfortable (Bernstein, 1990, 2000; Demir et al., 2023; Griffin & Roy, 2020; Hew & Cheung, 2012). Furthermore, the forum serves as a space in which the hierarchical rules that prevail in synchronous distance teaching are less pronounced, even though indications of hierarchy remain since the instructor manages the forum and posts their messages and questions. However, students enjoy considerable freedom to decide whether to use the forum for learning purposes, whether to respond to a question and contribute to a discussion, or whether to post their comment or question (Gasmi, 2022; Kipling et al., 2023; Lewis & Seaton, 2022).

The weakening of hierarchical relationships at the initiative of instructors is considered necessary by the participants in the context of the remote transfer of teaching in traditional universities. This is because they wish instructors to approach undergraduates in a friendly, encouraging, advisory, and motivational manner during periods when students may feel unsettled due to both the enforced change in educational delivery and the extraordinary circumstances arising from the crisis itself.

*“Instructors need to make an effort to alleviate the negative emotions experienced by students as a result of the emergency situation. They should be compassionate, available to listen to students’ concerns, and characterized by understanding and empathy” (Q.3).*

These findings highlight the need to apply a weak framing of regulative discourse (Bernstein, 2000) to create a positive and interactive communicative environment between instructors and students during distance education under crisis conditions. This aligns with the results of other studies (Acro et al., 2021; Cao et al., 2025; Tharapos et al., 2023), which underscore the benefits of relaxing the hierarchical relationships inherent in the instructor–student roles during the implementation of remote undergraduate education. In this context, instructors who retain control over the educational process should strive to foster strong communicative

relationships with undergraduates to effectively support their distance learning journey and efforts.

Furthermore, as indicated by the following representative interview excerpts, the students in the sample believe that their perspectives on the development of regulative discourse should be considered by traditional universities if they wish to proactively establish the conditions necessary for delivering high-quality remote undergraduate education in the future, should the need arise:

*“If universities implement ideas coming from those of us who understand what distance education truly means, they will be able to adapt to challenging situations and offer high-quality remote studies to their students”* (F.g., p.s.3).

*“It is very important for us to know that our suggestions are considered by universities, because we have studied there and know how they conducted distance teaching during the Covid era. We are aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of the educational process, and universities must definitely listen to our voices in order to prepare and provide a quality educational experience for students should a serious crisis occur and remote operation become necessary”* (F.g., p.s.1).

These recent results support the ongoing discussion regarding the need to adapt the institutional habitus of traditional universities, particularly with respect to their proactive interventions and the development of sustainable and functional plans that can be activated in the event of future major crises. Such plans would ensure the high-quality continuation of undergraduate education through distance learning. A key factor in facilitating the adaptation of the institutional habitus of traditional universities is the presence of agents within the university field whose habitus incorporates both theoretical and practical knowledge of open distance learning (Annala et al., 2021; Bourdieu, 1988, 1990; Byrd, 2025; Makori et al., 2025; Thomas, 2002).

### ***Instructional rules for the implementation of distance education***

We will present and analyze the research findings regarding the distinct dimensions of instructional discourse.

#### ***Selection***

The research participants believe that, to make lectures during live online lessons engaging and to enhance students' understanding of scientific knowledge, instructors should draw on examples from students' own experiences as well as from representative real-world situations. Additionally, during the interactive phase of synchronous distance education, instructors should utilize the breakout rooms available in videoconferencing platforms to assign group collaborative activities to students, enabling them to take initiative and develop their learning competences.

*“In online courses, instructors should use break sessions to divide students into small groups, assigning them activities and exercises that will help them collaborate, discuss, resolve questions, and achieve a better understanding of the lesson”* (Q. 2).

*“Distance collaboration among students is very important during online classes. If instructors establish the use of break rooms, they will make the lesson more interactive and effective, as students will be able to collaborate, work on practical exercises, and have more opportunities to gain an in-depth understanding of the course content”* (F.g., p.s.3).

These findings are consistent with theoretical perspectives from the field of open distance learning and also reflect the impact of the knowledge and experiences that

participants have gained through their studies at the Hellenic Open University, which have enriched their habitus (Bolliger & Martin, 2018; Bourdieu, 1986; De Metz & Bezuidenhout, 2018; Ko & Rossen, 2021; Muir et al., 2022). Furthermore, in the context of asynchronous distance teaching, participants consider it important for instructors to draw upon students' knowledge and experiences, both in the content of recontextualized teaching material uploaded to the LMS and in the topics selected for forum discussions or for individual and group assignments.

Additionally, a significant portion of the sample (5 participants, 41.7%) recommended adopting the “flipped classroom” model to promote undergraduates' initiative and engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous learning processes, thereby encouraging them to become active participants and to acquire scientific knowledge (Bernstein, 1990). In this approach, students are assigned to engage with diverse learning materials that connect scientific knowledge to their own experiences and to real-world problems or significant situations in order to spark their interest and involvement in the learning process. The flipped classroom model is presented as an effective instructional method for distance learning, as it fosters students' participation and autonomy in remote education (Pan & He, 2024; Yang & Chen, 2026; Yorganci, 2025).

The above research findings, which focus on the type of knowledge to be utilized in the delivery of remote undergraduate courses by traditional universities, indicate that participants consider the application of a weak framing on selection to be important (Bernstein, 2000). In this context, instructors—both during live lessons and within the framework of asynchronous distance teaching—should adopt constructivist instructional strategies to activate students' dispositions and encourage their engagement in the learning process (Bernstein, 1990, 2000; Bourdieu, 1990). Such an approach is expected to connect scientific knowledge delivered remotely with students' cognitive and experiential frameworks, thereby enhancing their understanding and fostering the development of their competences (Bernstein, 1990, p. 62; Orhan, 2024; Rovai, 2004).

### *Sequence and pacing*

The postgraduate students involved in the study assert that the adoption of constructivist instructional strategies should function as supportive mechanisms in the provision of distance courses. They regard live online lessons – where visible pedagogies prevail and are associated with the transmission of knowledge from instructor to students, whose performances are assessed at the conclusion of the instructional process – as particularly significant (Bernstein, 1990). Specifically, the participants agree that lessons should be delivered via the videoconferencing platform selected by the traditional university and should be scheduled at fixed and specific times according to the weekly timetable.

*“In an emergency situation, teaching should take place via Zoom or Webex, and the instructor should be organized, have a clear plan for what will be taught, and allocate specific time for presenting each chapter. PowerPoint should be used to highlight the key points of the lesson and to explain them, in order to help students understand the material” (Q.8.)*

The above representative excerpt indicates that, in live online lessons, a strong framing of instructional rules is desirable, where instructors maintain control over both the manner and sequence of presenting scientific knowledge to students, as well as the allocation of instructional time for this purpose (sequence and pacing) (Bernstein, 1990, 2000).

Moreover, the study participants argued that instructors should make instructional rules and schedules for both the live online lessons and the recommended progressive study of course materials explicit by providing them as permanent digital files in the LMS.

*“Instructors should provide clear and explicit instructions on how online courses will be conducted during periods of crisis, specifying what students should study and attend at the beginning and what comes next” (Q.12).*

*“It is essential to design a ‘roadmap’ that the instructor should upload to the learning management system so that students are aware of it. This roadmap should specify the schedules for classes and study, the instructional and supplementary materials students need to study, the sequence in which they should do so, and the activities to be completed in each lesson” (F.g., p.s.2).*

In this case, it appears that the study schedules and educational materials uploaded by instructors to the LMS promote the application of a strong framing of instructional discourse, as it is necessary to make the sequence and pacing of scientific knowledge presentation and the exact duration of its instruction explicit to undergraduates (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). At the same time, the asynchronous dimension of distance education is associated with a weak framing of sequence and pacing, since students control both the timing of their access to digital materials posted on the LMS and the manner and order in which they study them (Bernstein, 2000; Broadbent & Poon, 2015; Hrastinski, 2008; Sun et al., 2023). Thus, in the asynchronous implementation of undergraduate distance education, there is a relaxation of boundaries regarding sequence and pacing, as control over these aspects is regulated by the undergraduates themselves, according to their individual capacities and needs. Moreover, as highlighted in the following representative excerpt, the asynchronous delivery of distance education can benefit students from socio-economically vulnerable groups who may face difficulties attending live online lessons.

*“Recorded lectures and asynchronous activities provide helpful opportunities for students who encounter difficulties and are unable to join live online sessions, as they may be facing various social or other challenges” (Q.6).*

Specifically, as Bernstein (2000) points out, the application of strong framing on pacing in synchronous distance undergraduate teaching may disadvantage students from vulnerable social backgrounds, such as those from low-income or large families. This is because students from these social groups may lack a quiet personal space at home, preventing them from attending live online lessons without interruption and from participating in group collaborative activities assigned by the instructor. Therefore, opting for an asynchronous online environment, which complements and supports the implementation of synchronous distance undergraduate teaching, can benefit working students and those from sensitive social backgrounds by promoting autonomy and self-regulation. In this context, these students gain greater control over sequence and pacing (weak framing), as asynchronous access to LMS-posted course materials allows them to view recorded lectures and study educational content in their preferred sequence and at their own available time.

#### *Criteria of instructional discourse*

The study participants argued that, if undergraduate courses at traditional universities are delivered remotely, it is important to implement formative assessments of students' learning efforts through the use of explicit visual pedagogy and the adoption of a variety of assessment methods and approaches.

*“Instructors should provide continuous, clear, and immediate feedback, and students' performance should be assessed holistically, that is, through assignments and other activities for as long as this teaching model is applied” (Q.9).*

*“Feedback should be ongoing to ensure the continuous improvement of students' efforts. Interactive tools, such as quizzes and polls, should be used to assess students'*

*understanding and to provide immediate feedback. Traditional assessment methods, such as written exams, should be combined with alternative methods, such as project presentations” (F.g., p.s.4).*

Moreover, the implementation of visual pedagogical approaches is considered important, as these make explicit to undergraduates how their performances will be assessed in the final grade. In this context, it is recommended to adopt the model of final examinations used by the Hellenic Open University.

*“In the case of examinations, which cause stress and anxiety for students, the model of the Hellenic Open University with online final exams is appropriate, as it is tried and tested and has been implemented since the Covid era to the present” (Q.7).*

*“It is easy to conclude that any university in Greece conducting courses remotely during emergency situations can adopt the final examination method of the Hellenic Open University” (Q.11).*

From the above responses, it becomes evident once again that the habitus of the sample members is activated, reflecting the knowledge and experiences they acquired through their postgraduate studies at the Hellenic Open University. These are significant influences that appear to shape their beliefs, dispositions, preferences, and decisions regarding how to address issues related to the operation of the field of traditional universities during times of crisis (Bourdieu, 1986, 1988, 1990).

Therefore, the findings of this study showed that, in all aspects of the remote implementation of undergraduate education by traditional universities, the application of strong framing on criteria should be adopted (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). Indeed, as indicated by the findings of other studies, in distance teaching it is essential that students are explicitly informed in advance about the ways in which their learning efforts will be assessed. This is because, when visual assessment approaches are applied both at the end and throughout the course of studies, students' learning efforts are facilitated, as the outcomes of formative assessment can help address their learning gaps and promote a more understanding of the scientific knowledge being taught (Carless & Boud, 2018; Koustourakis, 2020; Mulliner & Tucker, 2017; Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2007; O'Donovan et al., 2019).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aims to investigate the views of postgraduate students, who possess both theoretical and practical knowledge of open distance learning and emergency remote teaching, regarding how traditional universities should anticipate and design their distance teaching and interactive activities for periods of crisis that may disrupt face-to-face operations.

The findings of this study regarding the research questions addressed indicate that the sample members consider it essential for traditional universities to adopt mixed pedagogical choices in times of crisis that require the remote delivery of their educational activities. Thus, to ensure high-quality undergraduate distance education in these institutions, it is necessary to draw on elements of both strong and weak framing (Bernstein, 1990, 2000). As highlighted in the scientific literature, university-level studies delivered via distance education methodology commonly employ mixed pedagogies, both in shaping the pedagogical, hierarchical, and interactive communication relationships between instructors and students (regulative discourse) and in the implementation of synchronous and asynchronous teaching activities

(instructional discourse) (Anderson, 2011; Bates, 2019; Dennen & Jones, 2023; Koustourakis et al., 2008; Martin et al., 2023; McPhail, 2013; Sholes et al., 2023; Sosa-Díaz et al., 2025).

The findings of this study are not generalizable; however, they are noteworthy as they reveal the actions that traditional universities could take to ensure the continuation of their undergraduate programs remotely and with quality, according to the views of agents within the university field who possess the necessary knowledge, dispositions, and skills (*habitus*) and who are familiar with the rules and procedures for implementing distance education (Bourdieu, 1986, 1988, 1990). Based on both the research data of this study and the scientific literature reviewed, we are able to make the following recommendations to the administrative bodies of traditional universities for planning the remote operation of their institutions in potential future cases:

- Universities should provide faculty development in innovative teaching methods aimed at delivering online distance education and actively engaging students in the learning process.
- Selection of synchronous and asynchronous distance teaching, employing LMS platforms.
- Redesign undergraduate course materials utilizing the distance learning model; for instance, content must be structured into concise units and include examples, case studies, explanatory videos, and components for student feedback.
- Utilization of the features offered by asynchronous communication and e-learning management platforms, such as e-class or Moodle (e.g., for communication and exchange of ideas among students and with the instructor using forums, for posting learning materials and lesson information by the instructor, posting self-assessment exercises for students, etc.).
- Implementation of the constructivist approach to knowledge in both synchronous online lessons—where students participate in learning activities—and in asynchronous instruction, necessitating self-directed learning through the examination of educational materials according to a prescribed guide and study timetable. Every instructor in his/her courses must develop and explicitly convey these materials and schedules to their students. The implementation of the flipped classroom model is advised for particular instructional units where its use is suitable.

In concluding this study, it would be valuable to explore the perspectives of faculty who implemented emergency remote teaching, as well as those of university administrators and decision-makers responsible for shaping the educational direction of traditional universities, regarding the proactive preparation of their institutions for providing high-quality undergraduate distance education. This is particularly relevant in light of the increasing occurrence of unpredictable natural disasters due to climate change, as well as contemporary geopolitical crises and tensions.

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