

Reflexión sobre el Aula Virtual de Salud y su utilización en la educación médica Regarding the Use of the Virtual Health Classroom in Higher Medical Education

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Cite as: Acosta Perdomo YD. Reflection on the Virtual Health Classroom and its use in Higher Medical Education. Medimay [Internet]. 2026 [cited: date cited];33:e2814. Available from: <https://medimay.sld.cu/index.php/rcmh/article/view/2814>

Dear Editor.

Given the importance of Virtual Teaching-Learning Environments (EVEA) in the context of the new pedagogical model, which the world is currently adopting, the points made in the article "Regarding the Virtual Health Classroom and its use in Higher Medical Education" are reaffirmed. The benefits offered by EVEAs in the development of the Teaching-Learning Process (PEA) are undeniable, as they foster critical thinking, increase student motivation, provide flexibility for independent learning regardless of space and time, and facilitate the construction, acquisition, and retention of knowledge, skills, and values.⁽¹⁾

The incorporation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into the PEA promotes the transition from traditional forms to more modern and efficient ways of teaching and learning.⁽²⁾

Changes in the educational paradigm requires teachers at different educational levels to develop the skills that allow them to teach in a different way, according to the demands of the new context. Cuban higher medical education is supported by the Telematic Health Information Network (Infomed), which since 1992 has interconnected healthcare centers, educational institutions, and health libraries nationwide. Through the incorporation of websites, software, educational platforms, and digital libraries, it offers new spaces and resources to support the development of the teaching process.⁽³⁾

In Cuba, the Guidelines of the economic and social policy of the Party and the Revolution, in Articles 141 and 152, outline the continued

advancement, enhancement of quality, and rigor of the educational teaching process, as well as the prioritization of permanent professional development and the use of information and communication technologies.⁽¹⁾ The Ministry of Higher Education, through Resolution 47/2022, the Organizational Regulations for the Teaching Process and the Direction of Teaching and Methodological Work for University Degree Programs, stipulates in its Article 20, concerning study modalities and course types, the promotion of the use of virtual teaching-learning environments.⁽⁴⁾

The incorporation of EVEAs and Educational Technology (ET) characterizes the modern, humanistic, universalized, scientific, technological, innovative Cuban medical university, integrated into society and committed to the construction of a prosperous and sustainable socialism. Educational Technology, seen as the discipline responsible for studying the media, materials, web portals, and technological platforms in the service of learning processes, in whose field lie the resources applied for formative and instructional purposes, designed in response to the needs and concerns of users, utilizes teaching media and resources as active components in any process aimed at developing learning.⁽⁵⁾

To achieve its aims, education systematically uses educational technology, establishing the way to plan and implement teaching and learning processes, their resources, spaces, and times. Pedagogical discourse superimposes the concept of educational technology (technologies of education) over that of information and communication technologies (technologies in education). While the former implies a peda-

Received: 08/24/2025 | Accepted: 12/16/2026 | Published: 02/17/2026

gological reflection, underpinned by a theory, a methodology, and a formative practice in specific educational contexts, the latter constitutes the digital tools that allow for storing, representing, and transmitting information with educational potential.⁽⁶⁾

Taking advantage of the benefits offered by the incorporation of educational technology into the teaching-learning process is an obligation for every educator. This enables new forms of synchronous and asynchronous interaction, expands learning spaces and timeframes, and provides new pathways for learning. Educational Technology (ET) represents an opportunity for educational innovation in higher education institutions, of particular importance in organizational forms of teaching such as independent work,⁽⁷⁾ as it fosters greater autonomy.

Methodological groups must identify topics that require the use of learning resources supported by educational technology to meet their objectives. The essence of the proper use of ET in universities lies in educational goals, with planned activities that fulfill a methodological function.

The efficient and rational use of ET in favor of student learning is necessary, as is the scientific-technical advancement of professionals and educators.⁽⁸⁾ This must be based on the ethical and responsible use of information from reliable sources, grounded in clinical evidence. The new educational model demands information-literate professionals—those who have developed competencies to use information, know how to locate it, and how to use it responsibly and ethically.⁽⁹⁾ Hence, the importance of developing critical thinking skills, information analysis and synthesis, source evaluation, and effective communication in health professionals.

Developing informational competencies in medical science professionals through workshops and training enhances the quality of the Teaching-Learning Process (PEA) and the comprehensive training of human resources in health, contributing to sustainable development.⁽⁸⁾ It is necessary to incorporate informational competencies transversally into curricular plans and the educational praxis of university courses to promote their effective and sustained application.⁽⁹⁾ It is the responsibility of university teaching departments to foster the development of information-literate educators capable of using information responsibly, effectively, and ethically.

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Conflict of Interest.

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Authorship Statement. The author assumes responsibility for the published text.

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Translation and edition.

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