There is no ‘Virtual Learning’: The Materiality of Digital Education

Introduction

Digital

Immaterial (does not require physical presence and is timeless).

Nevertheless the digital is sociomaterial and embodied.

The Materiality of the Digital

Bits ➔ are measured in microns in a CD-rom.

Physical World ➔ interacts with human intelligence.

Sociomaterial Framework

Digital ➔ The environment and other people are necessary.

➡️ A social and material entanglement is built.

➡️ Interaction and engagement with digital objects exist.

Distance, Absence and Presence

Topological Multiplicity of Distance University Education

- Sentimental Campus ➔ Emotional or family connection with the physical campus.

- Campus Envy ➔ Present university and absent students / present students and absent campus.

- Imagined Campus ➔ Students in churn and flow.

Academic Geographies under COVID-19

COVID-19 ➔ The university lacks a physical campus. The campus is absent, the university resides in thousands of dispersed bodies.

Conclusions

From a sociomaterial perspective of virtual learning, all its digital aspects are grounded on material and embodied entanglements with devices and other artefacts.