

**Pivoting to the Future of Postsecondary Education (PSE) in Canada:  
ACDME PSE Special Session**

**July 29, 2020, 11:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m. EDT**

**Remarks by Sir John Daniel**

*“Just moving your lectures online will only work once...use Zoom sparingly”  
Professor Tony Bates*

Thank you for inviting me to this discussion on *Pivoting to the Future of Postsecondary Education in Canada*. It's a pleasure to join several organisations and colleagues that I have worked with previously.

I assisted at the birth of Contact North in Sudbury 25 years ago, and Maxim Jean-Louis has built it brilliantly since then. Like Glen Jones I'm a former president of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education.

Jamil Salmi is a longstanding friend; and I enjoyed working with Peter Wells during my service at UNESCO.

Finally, after taking 20 FutureLearn courses I am a MOOCs junkie.

I make three points about post-secondary education's pivot to the future.

POINT 1: How will the pandemic end?

Will the pandemic end soon and cleanly with vaccines and therapies available in a few months? That seems unlikely!

Or, will it still end cleanly - but not until the end of 2021? That's possible!

Or, should we expect an 'on-again-off-again' future with new outbreaks and sporadic restrictions occurring for several years?

We should prepare for this scenario and maintain capacity and capability for Online and Distance Learning, or ODL, into the future.

POINT 2: The emergency online and distance **teaching** that was organised hastily this year is **not** a sufficient model for the future. Our eminent Canadian colleague, Tony Bates, gathered evidence globally on how institutions 'crashed into online learning', to use his phrase. He concluded that the results 'were not pretty'.

Most institutions gave themselves a passing grade for how they coped; but most students felt that the quality on offer was below par. We now hear of students trying to avoid ODL courses, postponing their registration or campaigning for substantial fee reductions.

Bates concluded that 'just moving lectures online will only work once'. He urged teachers to use Zoom sparingly. So, how **can** institutions offer ODL of better quality sustainably?

POINT 3: Think of quality ODL as a student sitting on a three-legged stool. The first leg is learning materials; the second is student support; the third is organisation and logistics. If any of these legs breaks, the student will fall, i.e. fail. During the early emergency period of COVID-19, most institutions built all three legs of the stool from synchronous communication on platforms like Zoom. This is neither effective nor sustainable. Institutions wishing to continue using ODL must build stools with three durable legs.

First, they should acquire or develop engaging learning materials of quality, drawing on the rich pool of Open Educational Resources, for students to use either synchronously or asynchronously.

Second, any institution hoping to deploy ODL at scale must appoint tutors or mentors to support the students as they work through the learning materials. To ensure quality, there should not be more than 25 to 30 students per tutor. Tutoring is different from classroom teaching, so tutors need regular training and professional development to help them make the switch.

Third, quality ODL demands impeccable organisation and logistics. In face-to-face settings spontaneous contacts among students and staff usually ensure that administrative problems are dealt with. When service to students relies on IT, institutions **must** ensure that the systems are always in tip-top order with back-ups.

I am sure that my colleagues will expand on these three points in their interventions.

Thank you.