

# PANDEMIC PEDAGOGY

# INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

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INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND  
LEARNING VOLUME 49

**PANDEMIC PEDAGOGY:  
PREPAREDNESS IN UNCERTAIN  
TIMES**

EDITED BY

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Created in partnership with the  
International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association



<https://www.hetl.org/>



United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2023

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80071-471-7 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-470-0 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80071-472-4 (Epub)

ISSN: 2055-3641 (Series)



ISOQAR certified  
Management System,  
awarded to Emerald  
for adherence to  
Environmental  
standard  
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985  
ISO 14001



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# **SERIES EDITORS' INTRODUCTION**

## **INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The purpose of this series is to publish current research and scholarship on innovative teaching and learning practices in higher education. The series is developed around the premise that teaching and learning is more effective when instructors and students are actively and meaningfully engaged in the teaching–learning process.

The main objectives of this series are to:

- (1) present how innovative teaching and learning practices are being used in higher education institutions around the world across a wide variety of disciplines and countries,
- (2) present the latest models, theories, concepts, paradigms, and frameworks that educators should consider when adopting, implementing, assessing, and evaluating innovative teaching and learning practices, and
- (3) consider the implications of theory and practice on policy, strategy, and leadership.

This series will appeal to anyone in higher education who is involved in the teaching and learning process from any discipline, institutional type, or nationality. The volumes in this series will focus on a variety of authentic case studies and other empirical research that illustrates how educators from around the world are using innovative approaches to create more effective and meaningful learning environments.

Innovation teaching and learning is any approach, strategy, method, practice, or means that has been shown to improve, enhance, or transform the teaching–learning environment. Innovation involves doing things differently or in a novel way in order to improve outcomes. In short, innovation is positive change. With respect to teaching and learning, innovation is the implementation of new or improved educational practices that result in improved educational and learning outcomes. This innovation can be any positive change related to teaching, curriculum, assessment, technology, or other tools, programs, policies, or processes that leads to improved educational and learning outcomes. Innovation can occur in institutional development, program development, professional development, or learning development.

The volumes in this series will not only highlight the benefits and theoretical frameworks of such innovations through authentic case studies and other empirical research but also look at the challenges and contexts associated with

implementing and assessing innovative teaching and learning practices. The volumes represent all disciplines from a wide range of national, cultural, and organizational contexts. The volumes in this series will explore a wide variety of teaching and learning topics such as active learning, integrative learning, transformative learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, meaningful learning, blended learning, creative learning, experiential learning, lifelong and life-wide learning, global learning, learning assessment and analytics, student research, faculty and student learning communities, as well as other topics.

This series brings together distinguished scholars and educational practitioners from around the world to disseminate the latest knowledge on innovative teaching and learning scholarship and practices. The authors offer a range of disciplinary perspectives from different cultural contexts. This series provides a unique and valuable resource for instructors, administrators, and anyone interested in improving and transforming teaching and learning.

Patrick Blessinger  
Founder, Executive Director, and Chief Research Scientist,  
International HETL Association

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Independent Researcher & Scholar

PART I

ENGAGING STUDENTS

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO PANDEMIC PEDAGOGY: PREPAREDNESS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Enakshi Sengupta

### ABSTRACT

*What started as an apparently benign virus in a remote district of China suddenly had the entire world under its grip, with thousands dying every day in all parts of the world. World Health Organization declared it a pandemic and requested every country and every institution to minimize human contact and maintain spatial distance. The pandemic was there to stay and while the world tried to find its antidote months and years passed before a solution was found, or nearly so. Educational institution was affected with the entire economy of every country. Future of our next generation and the continuity of education were at stake. The only possible solution was to teach and learn from the safe corner of one's home. It meant a transition of the entire education system to an online mode, which was unprecedented. Institutions grappled with technology, trying to find the right approach of imparting education, with added expenses and training the academicians to find a level of comfort teaching online. This book explores the theory that evolved around online teaching and cites evidence that has been gathered toward self-regulation and resiliency, highlighting the power and privilege and the best practices for implementing techniques to support students. COVID—19 meant a paradigm shift toward teaching–learning methods and soon became the “new norm” in designing curricula so that students can continue with their journey toward acquiring high-standard quality education without any disruption in the future.*

**Keywords:** Pandemic; online education; teaching and learning; challenges; transition; resilience; quality education; high standards

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**Pandemic Pedagogy: Preparedness in Uncertain Times**  
**Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning, Volume 49, 3–10**  
Copyright © 2023 by Emerald Publishing Limited  
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ISSN: 2055-3641/doi:[10.1108/S2055-36412023000049001](https://doi.org/10.1108/S2055-36412023000049001)

## INTRODUCTION

It has been estimated that at the beginning of the Spring semester in 2019, millions of institutions declared shutting down of campus leaving, hundreds and thousands of students in limbo who were eager to know how they would continue with their education. The main fear was the loss of a semester or maybe a year. Students and academicians were undergoing trauma and stress with an uncertain future and an entirely new way to get used to an environment of online learning. Colleges and universities were eager to convert their existing system into an online learning mode and were rather in a hurry to shift the attention of the academics to this new online learning mode, academics were fumbling to grasp the idea of true online learning and what has been at the same time labeled as “emergency remote teaching” (Hodges et al., 2020). The distinction was rather blurred in the mind of people as the primary goal of emergency remote teaching is to “provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis” (Hodges et al., 2020, p. 2). The unique and rare circumstances ushered in by the pandemic created both an opportunity and a challenge and thus urged those involved in academia to investigate best practices for emergency remote teaching, and this “great experiment” (Zimmerman, 2021, p. 1), for everyone was adding their bit to this worldwide experiment.

Even before the pandemic, researchers were engaged in debating to coin an appropriate term that would be best suited to this new mode of teaching and learning. Highly variable solutions were designed and put to practice, and some of the popularly coined terms were distance learning, distributed learning, blended learning, online learning, mobile learning, and others (Barbour & LaBonte, 2015; Irvine, 2020). The differences in terminology remained confined to the insular world of education and among instructional designers and researchers engaged in this field and did not percolate to the level of the students. Some academics were satisfied with “emergency remote teaching” as a common alternative that they could use to draw a clear contrast with what many of us are concerned with and are known as high-quality online education.

One cannot claim that online teaching during the pandemic is a new phenomenon, as in the past, universities have resorted to online education to avert extreme weather conditions and natural calamities (Helvie-Mason, 2010). What was not established was a clear and concise codification of best practices and the right approach to transitioning rapidly from a face-to-face to a remote teaching context. Academics were lost in redesigning a course structure that will be suitable for remote teaching and evaluation of coursework and provide a seamless learning experience.

Online learning can be defined as “a learner’s interaction with content and/or people via the internet for the purposes of learning” (Means et al., 2014, p. 6). It can be said that online learning is a subset of distance learning, very broadly it is the form of learning that occurs when instructor and student are physically separated, and not necessarily these courses are delivered using internet-based formats (Means et al., 2014). Evidence shows that at times the instructions and teaching

material delivered to the students are fully asynchronously via the internet or in a hybrid (blended) format incorporating a mix of asynchronous online and occasional face-to-face meetings (Means et al., 2014).

The transition to the online mode of education is often rugged and comes with challenges of providing quality education, adopting of the right mode and the correct platform for delivery, accessibility for all, and the role of educators whose traditional form of work changed drastically (Sengupta & Blessinger, 2021).

Universities scrambled to conduct training modules to equip the faculty members to adapt to the online mode along with the support of the local government whose main aim was to boost digital literacy and digitization of educational services (Rashid & Yadav, 2020). Every new phenomenon has been debated, and controversy surrounding them and some academics believe that remote learning offers a myriad of advantages for individuals who are unable to attend a traditional full-time face-to-face university due to personal circumstances. The flexibility inherent in asynchronous form of learning may provide wider access to those individuals thus providing them an opportunity to complete their education. Traditional higher education institutions (HEIs) are also exploring the concept of hybrid, or blended forms of learning that may help improve the quality of face-to-face teaching by moving content delivery online and focusing in-person sessions on active learning, post-pandemic (Bowen, 2012; Riffe, 2003).

## CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

“When the “Cultural Other” Becomes Socially Close during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Afghani (American University of Afghanistan)–Lebanese (Phoenicia University) Intercultural Communication Narrative” written by Ahmad Samarji and Enakshi Sengupta speaks about perceiving the world as a global village which has never been a more acceptable and realistic notion than nowadays. The COVID-19 pandemic has – beyond a reasonable doubt – united the world as never before into the one human community striving to achieve the one goal: survive and go back to “normal” life. Educationally, there is a true demand to set effective approaches, initiatives, and programs that would promote and prompt intercultural citizenship and global citizenship for students, particularly tertiary students, Generation Z, who will be leading the world or the global village post-COVID-19. In response to such a demand, the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) and Phoenicia University (PU), Lebanon, planned and implemented a joint intercultural program: The Global Cultural Village. The Village connected and brought together 20 students (10 Afghani and 10 Lebanese) from two different cultures at a time of social and physical distancing all over the world. Over a period of five months, virtual, fortnightly meetings (discussions and presentations) were led by the students themselves and facilitated by three conveners from both universities. This chapter evaluates the effectiveness of the intercultural experiences and competencies acquired by the students throughout this program and the subsequent impact on students’ intercultural citizenship and global citizenship knowledge and skills. The methodology adopted was a mixed

methods one, entailing a pre-test questionnaire (76 candidates), observational field notes (three conveners), and post-test semi-structured interviews (14 participants). The study found that the Global Cultural Village created a safe and pleasant virtual environment that stimulated sufficient curiosity, a genuine desire to learn about the other culture, and mutual respect among both the Afghani and Lebanese students. The Village has succeeded in developing students' intercultural competencies and intercultural communication skills. Students' intercultural citizenship knowledge, skills, and capabilities have significantly developed as a result. Such a significant development has positively impacted students' global citizenship knowledge and skills, where they started authentically connecting and practically engaging in global issues and discussions amid COVID-19 and are equipped to do so post the pandemic. This case study will inform HEIs (executives, faculty, and staff) in meeting their commitments toward internationalization and contribute to the developing literature about intercultural citizenship and global citizenship amid and post-COVID-19.

"Strengthening Online Education Approaches in Institutions of Higher Learning" written by Grace Adhiambo Were, Kevin Odhiambo Okelo, and Rosemary Akech Obat is about Online, distance and eLearning (ODEL) which continues to gain recognition as a mandatory component of delivery of education in institutions of higher learning (IHL) around the world following the outbreak of COVID-19. This paradigm shift is informed by the need to ensure uninterrupted, valuable, and safe learning experiences for learners during the pandemic. However, governments ordered the closure of schools and colleges following the declaration of COVID-19 as a world pandemic by the WHO. A report by UNESCO revealed that there was a significant loss of schooling time following the closure of educational facilities which affected over 1.5 billion learners in 194 nations globally. This study explored the use of online approaches to intensify online learning efficacy in IHL. Data collection was conducted using qualitative methods and data analysis done using themes and sub-themes. Findings from this study indicate that students' engagements on discussion forums are consistent with collaborative learning. Results further support the view that regular, prompt and meaningful feedback is critical in promoting constructive learning and reflection among students. Based on the findings of this study, practical implications are discussed for stakeholders interested in establishing and strengthening effective delivery of online learning content to enhance students' learning experiences.

"Evidence-informed Practices for Fostering Self-regulated and Resilient Learners" by Krystal Nunes, Ann Gagné, Nicole Laliberté, and Fiona Rawle talks about how as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, both educators and students adapted to course delivery modes no longer centered on in-person interactions. Resiliency and self-regulation are key to success in online contexts, but the rapid transition to remote learning left many students without the necessary support to develop these skills. Much of the existing literature on self-regulation and resiliency focuses on cognitive processes and strategies such as goal orientation, time management, and mindset. However, the added stress and trauma of learning in the context of a global pandemic highlighted the many other factors relevant to students' development of these skills. Drawing from the literature, the

authors explore evidence-informed teaching practices to foster self-regulation and resiliency, highlight the power and privilege of being able to be resilient, advocate for the development of pedagogies of kindness, and emphasize the “how” of implementing techniques to best support students. The authors provide evidence-informed suggestions with the goal of assisting instructors and students during times of high stress, while acknowledging their limitations in addressing structural inequalities highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, we argue that evidence-informed techniques and compassionate pedagogies adopted during a period of upheaval remain applicable to future in-person and online pedagogies.

“Humanizing the Classroom in the Face of a Dehumanizing Pandemic” by Micah G. Modell, Jodie T. Fahey, Yasmine L. Konheim-Kalkstein, Rob Wakeman, and Emily Mazzurco writes about the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic which forced the world to rapidly translate our face-to-face interactions to ones that were remote and often computer-mediated many faculty, ourselves included, struggled to adapt. This transition was particularly pronounced in the realm of education where since many instructors have focused their careers on rich in-person relationships. How, then, would we maintain the humanity of an emergency-remote classroom? How would we support our students’ growth when a rapid change in venue was demanded? The small, liberal arts college, like so many others like it, took up this challenge. In this chapter, the authors attempt to answer these questions using reflections of student and student perceptions of successful and unsuccessful experiences. Following coincident with the switch to remote learning, the authors implemented scrambled to develop and gain Institutional Review Board’s approval for a protocol which surveyed a rolling sample of our student population daily. Due to the brief window of opportunity, the authors were unable to pilot the protocol and it was, instead, based upon the team’s collective knowledge and experience as scholars and educators. The following fall, the authors followed up with a survey (aligned with the prior survey) and focus groups. They found that empathy within the classroom in this time of stress made all the difference. The focus on relating what they have learned with respect to compassionate communications and course design and adaptation. In each section, the authors offer a set of specific recommendations.

“The Changing Dynamics of Student Engagement” by Claire Hughes aims to provoke reflection around how higher education engaged students in online learning during COVID-19. Discussion will also outline the challenges that higher education (HE) faced in engaging students in a complex and uncertain COVID-19 landscape and how this changed the dynamics of student engagement and support. It also discusses the role of the academic in the use of inclusive pedagogies to ensure that learning and support met the needs of the students in their online learning journeys. The chapter concludes that while COVID-19 meant wide scale change for HEIs that the best practices should create the “new norm” in curriculum design and is an era where HE professionals should be proud of the legacy they leave and the support they gave to ensure that students could continue their learning journeys.

“From Emergency to Strategic Interventions: Future-proofing the Library’s Approach to Curriculum Influence Pre-, During, and post-COVID” by Claire

Wotherspoon explores the contribution of The Open University Library to influencing curriculum decisions about embedding digital and information literacies in an online environment. Recommendations can be applied to HEIs as they develop permanent e-learning strategies to prepare for a long-term solution to online learning experiences. Learning providers are creating strategies for online content creation, student engagement and skills development. It is an opportunity to demonstrate their value by making an effective transition to online learning, streamlining services to create student-centered experiences. It investigates existing e-pedagogical approaches developed pre- and during the COVID-19 pandemic to embedding digital literacies in practice, drawing on the OU's experience of developing effective frameworks for online teaching programs. The aim is to review institutional preparedness for effective transition, so that staff members and students can adapt to post-COVID-19 realities. This draws upon student-centered, holistic design of programs to embed accessible and inclusive processes in distance learning, utilizing technological solutions to create optimal teaching and learning environments. It will also make recommendations about how embedding digital literacies within the curriculum will equip graduates for post-education experiences within working and social contexts, by building activities into module that develop digital capabilities. For effective learning experiences to take place, institutions require development of born-digital support material to develop staff confidence and ability to produce effective, accessible online learning objects. As more organizations move to online, hybrid and flipped learning interventions, high-level university strategy can future-proof learning design by developing the support that staff need to provide the best experiences for their learners.

“Rethinking Study Abroad Programs for the Post-COVID World. A Technology-based Proposal” by Ismael López Medel speaks about the Coronavirus pandemic which has profoundly altered the zeitgeist of American Higher Education. Currently, these institutions struggle to find safe and creative ways to reopen in the fall. While the debate is mainly focused on the reopening possibilities, one area of the university experience is profoundly impacted and overlooked: the study abroad programs. The chapter overviews the role and importance of international education for American Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and explains the pandemic's profound disruption. The author will review how institutions reacted, first reactively and then proactively. This chapter will argue for adopting technology not just as a tool to save the immediate study abroad offerings but as a catalyst for change. In the post-pandemic world, universities need to create more robust and agile international experiences for students using alternative formats, facilitating shorter travel experiences, more cultural exposure through technology, and allowing more options for international faculty and students to participate in the life of the college. Universities have an invaluable opportunity to rethink their international offers and approaches, working with the assumption that students will still want to travel (even more than before) and that international travel will eventually resume operations.

“The Application of Online and Blended Learning during Outbreaks, Epidemics and Pandemics: The Case of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)”