

**Moving Higher Education
Beyond Covid-19**

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Moving Higher Education Beyond Covid-19: Innovative and Technology-Enhanced Approaches to Teaching and Learning

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

First edition 2023

Editorial matter and selection © 2023 Anna Visvizi, Miltiadis D. Lytras, and Haifa Jamal Al-Lail
Individual chapters © 2023 The authors.
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

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

ISBN: 978-1-80382-518-2 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80382-517-5 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80382-519-9 (Epub)



Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001

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Preface

This book derives from the understanding that institutions, including higher education institutions (HEIs), may use crises as an opportunity to develop, to transform and to improve their institutional resilience. The Covid-19 pandemic is an instance of a crisis. The pandemic, the related to it levels of morbidity and the resulting restrictions to mobility, forced HEIs to switch to remote learning overnight. At that time the scale and the scope of the challenge seemed to be beyond the capacity of several HEIs around the world. Gradually however, through trial and error, the majority of the HEIs moved to remote learning, not only changing the basics of their operation, but also restoring one of most important pillars of stability of modern societies, that is, the education system.

Today, that the worst of the pandemic is over, HEIs around the world successfully implement several novel innovative practices that were acquired during the pandemic. This includes technology-enhanced approaches to teaching and learning as well as a set of managerial practices related to it. It is argued therefore that Covid-19 served as one of the most important push factors for the HEIs to redesign their approaches to teaching and learning, thereby also to rethink their business model. In this process, substantial changes in the organizational culture have taken place. This book explores this multifaceted issue. While so doing, this book makes a case for restoring the emphasis on the faculty and on education. HEIs are meant to educate the students, not merely to teach.

We would like to thank all contributing authors for sharing their work with us and for their patience as their chapters were reviewed, edited, resubmitted, and made ready for publication. It is perhaps these moments of collaboration, which are the most creative and, ultimately, the most satisfying in academic life. A sense of community emerges, based on trust, commitment, and willingness to make the world a better place. The Publisher, Emerald Publishing, always supportive, is a part of the community. We would like to thank the entire Emerald team, and especially the Senior Editor, Kim Chadwick, for her professionalism and kindness.

The Editors,
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Chapter 1

To Educate, Not Simply to Teach: Higher Education Institutions Post-Covid-19

Anna Visvizi, Miltiadis D. Lytras and Haifa Jamal Al-Lail

Abstract

Institutions, including higher education institutions (HEIs), may use crises as an opportunity to develop, to transform and to improve their institutional resilience. Indeed, the Covid-19 pandemic proves that a vast majority of HEIs around the world effectively adapted to the circumstances of the pandemic and successfully embarked on remote learning. The analysis of HEIs proves as well that the nearly overnight switch to remote learning was but one aspect of the quiet transformation that HEIs worldwide were subdued to. In this context, this chapter identifies the administrative practices, including talent management, operations management, and above all, the organizational culture. The notion of changed expectations on the part of the faculty and the students is highlighted. The key point that this chapter makes is that the faculty and the art of education, rather than simply teaching, need to be placed first if HEIs are to retain their resilience.

Keywords: Covid-19; higher education institutions (HEIs); faculty; education; technology-enhanced learning (TEL); society

To educate, not simply to teach

1. Introduction

This book derives from the understanding that institutions, including HEIs may use crises as an opportunity to develop, to transform and to improve their resilience (Sia & Abbas Adamu, 2021; Sihag & Dhoopar, 2022). The Covid-19

Moving Higher Education Beyond Covid-19:

Innovative and Technology-Enhanced Approaches to Teaching and Learning, 1–10

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doi:[10.1108/978-1-80382-517-520231001](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80382-517-520231001)

pandemic represents such as crisis. That is, at the beginning of the pandemic, when the levels of morbidity and harsh restrictions to mobility forced HEIs to switch to remote learning overnight (Daniela & Visvizi, 2021), the scale and scope of the challenge seemed to go beyond the capacity of several HEIs around the world. Gradually however, through trial and error, the majority of the HEIs around the world successfully adopted a variety of solutions enabling the faculty and the students to continue the processes of teaching and learning (Bokayev, Torebekova, Abdykalikova, & Davletbayeva, 2021; Johnson, Roberto, & Rauhaus, 2021; Sciarrone & Temperini, 2021). By so doing, a substantial, even if quiet, reform of the HEIs' modes of operation was introduced, and a major change in organizational culture took place.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a stir in HEIs. The challenge included the scope and ways of institutional adaptation, especially the administrative process (cf. Treve, 2021). Notably, under conditions of strain related to Covid-19 related absences from work, the (wo)manpower of HEIs was substantially diminished. In this context, HEIs would also have to navigate safety issues at work, including the rotation of administrative staff. The notion of the adoption of technology to facilitate remote learning constituted another pressing issue (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Kidwell, 2021). The key issues at stake were to secure resources, to make the optimal choice of the remote learning platform, to facilitate the faculty to effectively employ the technology-enhanced tools, and to make students able to follow. Here issues as basic as internet access, the quality of the internet connection, and the availability of devices, i.e., laptop, PC, tablet, would frequently come up to the surface as major challenges. Several other issues emerged too.

On the one hand, the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to teach remotely prompted the question of how to deliver the course content to students in general, i.e., not only under crisis situation. On the other hand, the realization that that remote teaching and learning grant flexibility and efficiency gains, e.g., time, have had a lasting impact on all stakeholders' perception of onsite versus online modes of working. For faculty engaged in research, the flexibility and time-gain related to working remotely creates the opportunity to conduct research on a daily basis, and thus not only on weekends and holidays. It allows for attending conferences. However, it also allows balancing life and work; somehow. From a different vantage point, the Covid-19 related restrictions to mobility and the resulting isolation, loneliness, detachment grief, that the students, the faculty, and the administration experienced (Lehr & Vaughan, 2021), have shed new light on the salience of socializing and community building through ... being together. Against this backdrop, a "new normal" consolidates in HEIs today. It is important that the lessons learnt during the pandemic are not unlearned. This book suggests how to do just that.

2. The Context and the Book's Relevance

Today, that the worst of the pandemic is over, HEIs around the world successfully implement several novel innovative practices that were acquired during the pandemic. This includes technology-enhanced approaches to teaching and learning.

However, it also includes the set of managerial practices related to the process of facilitating and administering diverse forms of technology-enhanced learning (TEL). It is argued therefore that Covid-19 served as one of the most important push factors for the HEIs to redesign their approaches to teaching and learning, and thereby also rethink their business model. This book derives from the understanding that more research is needed to explore this issue in greater detail. It is important to understand in which ways the outstanding degree of institutional change that the HEIs underwent impacts all stakeholders, i.e., the administration, the faculty, and the students. It is important to understand how the traumatic experience of the pandemic influences the stakeholders' perceptions of HEIs. In this context, the curious question is how the faculty, and the students conceive of teaching and learning. This includes questions not only of the mode of the course content delivery (cf. [Zogheib & Daniela, 2021](#)), but also of the actual content delivered and the skills emulated onto students. Admittedly, the faculty, especially those faculty members who are actively engaged in research, consulting work and publications, may have a whole new set of ideas of what really matters and what does not. Similarly, the students – marked with the experience of the pandemic – view the world differently than before and, hence, their priorities have changed (cf. [Dhar, Ayittey, & Sarkar, 2020](#); [Lehr & Vaughan, 2021](#)). The challenge is to make the faculty and the students to engage in a conversation, while also allowing each of them grow, excel, and flourish, professionally and personally ([Ahmad, Muazzam, Anjum, Visvizi, & Nawaz, 2020](#)).

Against this backdrop, the objective of this book is to reflect on the Covid-19 pandemic as a moment of growth and adaptation through crisis. However, this book also wants to be clear about the fact that not all institutional innovation is to be related to the Covid-19 pandemic. HEIs, due to creativity, experience, and knowledge of the faculty, have always been the cradles of innovation. If uninhibited by narrowmindedness, politicking and bullying (cf. [Hodgins & McNamara, 2019](#); [Muazzam, Anjum, & Visvizi, 2020](#)), the faculty, especially faculty also engaged in research, is the harbinger of HEIs' growth. It is the values, the commitment, and the example that these faculty members set that constitute the fabric of HEIs. The objective of HEIs is to educate, not merely to teach.

3. Review of the Chapter's Content

The chapters included in this book address several topics pertaining to challenges HEIs had to face during the pandemic and to lessons learnt in course of Covid-19. These topics include the very notion of innovation in teaching and learning in HEIs and the imperative of quality education (cf. [Loia et al., 2016](#); [Visvizi, Daniela, & Chen, 2020](#)); innovation in teaching and learning driven by the circumstances of the global Covid-19 pandemic; and lessons that can be drawn from the period of adaptation and change driven in HEIs by the Covid-19 pandemic. The book has been divided into three parts. Part 1 (Chapters 2–4) offers an insight into the broad question of emergencies, adaptation and the imperative of quality education as seen through the lens of the pandemic. Part 2 (Chapters 5–7) elaborates on lessons the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us. The chapters included in

Part 3 (Chapters 8–11) focus on the day to come, i.e., on how to conceive of HEIs in the post-Covid world.

Specifically, Chapter 2, authored by Radosław Malik and Michał Siczek, titled “HEIs in Times of Covid-19: A Bibliometric Analysis of Key Research Themes,” applies science mapping analysis (SciMat) and literature review as research methods to examine literature about HEIs during the Covid-19 pandemic. User acceptance, satisfaction, and perception were identified as the most productive research themes in the sample of 561 Web of Science (WoS) indexed articles about HEIs during the pandemic. The literature review of the top themes reveals that user acceptance is influenced by the perceived usefulness of online learning and ease of using online tools. The level of satisfaction among students in online learning is relatively high and linked with the perceived benefits of online courses. Conditions influencing user acceptance and perceived satisfaction differ between students and lecturers. Technology-related themes appeared to be relatively under-researched as standalone themes, but technological aspects turned out to be important components of the most prolific research themes identified.

In Chapter 3, titled “Online Teaching in HEIs Versus Online International Negotiation: Analogies and Transferable Good Practices,” a seasoned diplomat Christian Pauletto, makes a case that the concept of innovation should not be reduced to its technological dimension but encompasses the whole context of its deployment and implementation. Regardless of technology, an innovation may be successful or not depending on how well its implementation suits each single context. In the case of education, this consists to a sizeable extent in a communicational and interpersonal context. The hypothesis of this piece is that maintaining optimal communication between participants is a key factor of success of new online teaching methods. Given that in this regard, there are similarities between negotiating practice and teaching practice, it is worth examining whether good practices developed in online international negotiation are transferable to online teaching. The chapter identifies a number of practices from online negotiation that perform well in online teaching. It focuses on communicational aspects, mutual understanding (monitoring and optimization of understanding), motivation to listen, attention, active participation, and non-verbal communication. Online teaching and online negotiation share another common feature: some unresolved challenges are common to both disciplines. This should also be taken into account when migrating educational programmes online. The research is informed by the author’s first-hand experience from practice in both international diplomatic negotiation and academic teaching.

In Chapter 4, written by Zuccoli Alejandra and Maximiliano E. Korstanje, and titled “PANCOE: A Fresh Alternative to Post-Covid-19 Challenges in Education: The Case of Tourism Education,” the cases of tourism industry and tourism education during and after the pandemic are discussed. The restrictive measures disposed by governments generated not only an unparalleled economic crisis but also serious social maladies in society and education (i.e., higher dropout rates and low academic grades). Needless to say, tourism education was in crisis much time earlier than the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 introduced a new opportunity to reform the epistemology and the basis of the tourism education curricula.

Centered on the role played by pleasure and joy, which is boosted by the digital technologies, the present book chapter synthesizes the findings of PANCOE, a successful experiment conducted by the University of Palermo, Argentina, to reduce the dropout rates whilst improving students' academic performance. The experiment was drawn and applied in the years before and after the pandemic. Results show how pleasure plays a vital role giving students better opportunities in contexts of fear and deprivation.

The authors of Chapter 5, i.e., Daiga Kalniņa, Dita Nīmanīte, Sanita Baranova and Alise Oļesika, explore the question of the opportunities pertaining to remote learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. As the authors observe, Covid-19 forced the entire global education system to adapt to the new circumstances. This chapter continues the worldwide discussion on how student learning on courses and programs that were moved partially online due to remote teaching and learning in HEIs during the Covid-19 pandemic was assured and what opportunities this has brought to higher education. Although there is a tendency in the theoretical literature to focus on the problems, difficulties, and challenges associated with the transition to remote learning in higher education during the pandemic, our study suggests that, contrary to the common belief, students actually identify a great number of positive issues associated with remote learning. The findings of the study highlight that students see both personal benefits and challenges in remote learning. Overall, students are satisfied with the quality of the remote teaching and learning process, and students' positive assessment of the quality of their studies' organization increased with age. Stability and routine were important for the students in the study process. These ensure that the study process continues uninterrupted and thus that results can be achieved. The results of the study bring us to the conclusion that the Covid-19 pandemic could be used to speed up changes in HEIs around the globe to find better and more student-centered and innovative solutions in teaching and learning in the future.

In Chapter 6, titled "Life Career Skills Development in Higher Education Due to Covid-19: A Multivariate Approach to Students' Perceptions," by Ioanna Papavassiliou-Alexiou, Christina Zourna, Nikos Koutsoupas and Aikaterini Papakota, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the course of studies and life career skills' development of undergraduate students are examined. By focusing on the case of the University of Macedonia, a mid-sized public Greek University, the authors investigate how the students, first-hand experienced the unexpected changes from face-to-face on campus to synchronous online education during the lockdown and how they coped with these changes. Change is considered and described as a main component within current life and career trajectories addressing chaotic and unpredictable circumstances while Chaos Theory of Careers offers the theoretical background of the chapter. The research followed the mixed methods paradigm: a multilevel embedded sequential explanatory design including a participant selection model and multivariate data analysis methods. A survey ($N = 621$) was conducted; individual interviews and focus groups' discussions further explained the quantitative findings. The emerging clusters of students revealed similarities in feelings, motivation, adaptation, and life career skills development. The first cluster comprised of older, digitally high-skilled students,

with the required technological equipment, adaptable to change, self-regulated, strongly in favor of synchronous online education; in the second cluster were grouped the younger, digitally medium-skilled students, who regularly participated in both modalities, critically recognized the advantages of either one, feeling strongly in favor of a combination; finally, the third cluster included digitally medium-skilled students who found serious difficulty in using online platforms, dissatisfied with social isolation and distant interaction, strongly preferring face-to-face instruction, valuing direct physical contact, social connection, and networking.

In Chapter 7, authored by Francesca Loia and Davide de Gennaro, action learning during the Covid-19 pandemic is examined. By focusing on the case of Italy, the authors argue that over the past years, the educational environment has undergone a revolution, caused mainly by the wide diffusion of information and communication technologies (ICTs), and the multi-scalar implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. This chapter taps into educators' first-hand experience relating to the adoption of online technologies in an action learning process during the pandemic. Action learning is one of the experiential training methodologies aimed at individual, group, and organizational growth and development through practical, hands-on experience. It is an educational process that facilitates and improves the mechanism and functioning of groups of people who come together to support real challenges or activities, also by learning from direct experience. To this end, the case study of a University Master Course in leadership and change management is examined, based on unstructured interviews and analysis of written documents. The case study represents an emblematic case of adaptation and response to the change imposed by Covid-19 through the promotion of an innovative teaching and learning method. Results show how the adjustments devised to cope with the consequence of teamwork virtualization proved to be synergistic, delivering positive outcomes in terms of participants' satisfaction, learning and impact, and producing deeply innovative change management projects. Implications for theory and practice are discussed.

Chapter 8, titled "Enabling Students' Uptake of Feedback," written by Anna Moni the challenge of students' ability to use feedback they receive is examined. As the author explains, in light of a new paradigm to feedback, the focus shifts from how and when instructors deliver feedback to how the learning environment and the feedback practices sustain agentic behavior on feedback. Feedback produces learning if the students are given the opportunity to use and to act on it, and thus to move forward. Ample research on innovative models and designs for feedback and assessment in higher education courses exists. However, a one-size-fits-all model does not exist. Each university setting represents a unique case, and hence the replicability of a model is impossible. This poses a challenge for innovative HEIs that consider the promotion of students' agency on feedback a distinguishing attribute for their learning experience onsite, and in the Covid-19 inflicted transition to remote instruction. This study used content analysis to investigate how feedback and assessment feedback design, in the online component of a blended course in English for Academic Purposes, can sustain opportunities for feedback encounters and enable student uptake of feedback. After exploring the

process of assessment and feedback design, different agents of the course and potential feedback encounters were mapped and analyzed in a sociocultural perspective. An established matrix of feedback for learning was used to investigate and code the feedback encounters generated in the course. The results of the content analysis indicated satisfactory student uptake of feedback and opportunities for potential feedback encounters before, during, and after the assessment. Additionally, the results pointed to the need for more feedforward and self-regulatory commentaries.

The “Implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic on High School Graduates Plans and Education Path” are elaborated by Zane Varpina, Kata Fredheim and Marija Krumina in Chapter 9. As the authors observe, over the period 2020–2021 Latvian schools experienced one of the longest closure periods in Europe. Hence, Covid-19 significantly impacted high school pupils, especially those graduating in 2021, i.e., half of the secondary school programme they acquired was delivered remotely. Their learning and social experiences are distinct from that of previous cohorts. The findings are directly relevant for HEIs to further adapt to the background and needs of this student cohort. To examine this cohort’s experience, this chapter empirically examines adolescents at the point of their graduation from high school to learn what impact the pandemic has had on their quality education and plans. The findings provide insight into how they evaluate the remote studies and their knowledge, how they perceive their mental state, and what disruption to plans it has caused. We learn that most students found remote studies more difficult than onsite learning and associate it with lack of knowledge behind the grades earned. They have experienced lack of motivation and miss real-life communication with their friends, even though they occasionally admit not breaking lockdown rules and meeting peers. The most common concern among graduates is lost opportunities they would otherwise have, however, we also notice impressive resilience when they imply that the pandemic has opened new opportunities that otherwise would not be possible, along with self-development and character growth. Overall, the stress level for adolescents was moderate to high. Covid-19 has caused disruptions to plans, some more like opportunities others like limitations. The insights may provide understanding to how these students require a very different approach from educators and staff alike. HEIs have the opportunity to adapt and innovate, to custom the content of studies and communication form to the diverse incoming generations.

In Chapter 10, titled “The Pandemic Experience as a New Challenge for Public Czech Universities,” the authors, i.e., Miroslav Dopita, Lucie Rohlíková, Andrea Sojková and Vít Zouhar, focus on the case of the Czech universities and the pandemic. It is argued that prior to 2020, the Czech HEIs did not have much experience with distance learning and blended learning. Experience with hybrid teaching was minimal. The Covid-19 pandemic therefore presented the management of public universities in the Czech Republic with a number of new tasks in resolving the crisis situation. It also made the possibilities of distance education and other flexible forms of education significantly more visible. In 2021, a total of 26 public universities joined together in a central development project, in order to discuss the most important issues of distance education and blended learning,

the current background for the implementation of flexible forms of education, and also their future plans in this area. In this chapter, we present in detail the results of a study on the background of public universities for the implementation of distance education and blended learning, which have become the basis for creating the action plans of individual institutions. The results of the analysis showed, among other things, online supported education is important, especially in emergency situations.

The book ends with a very eloquent Chapter 11 on “Humanistic Leadership and Its Enduring Legacy in a Post-Covid-19 World.” The authors, Angela Lehr and Susie Vaughan, stress that as societies worldwide continue to navigate and recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the world is at a unique crossroads. How can leaders in HEIs prioritize holistic human needs and maximize interpersonal and collegial human connection, while continuing to guide and grow successful learning communities both in-person and virtually? With potential costs and benefits in mind, pertinent literature is reviewed, and the limitations and silver linings presented by the ongoing pandemic are explored. Different forms of grief and loss experienced by faculty and students as well as the effects of technostress amid this time of change are also recognized. Concepts and practices introduced by prominent humanistic thought-leaders are discussed as a way to navigate the educational impacts created by the pandemic. A key finding presented is that leaders and HEIs that prioritize human connections and relationships, in concert with adopting technological advancements, are better equipped to maintain personal well-being while enhancing academic success in the long term. By fostering learning environments based on psychological safety, compassion, autonomy, and adaptability, humanistic leaders contribute to the betterment of HEIs as a whole. To this end, the enduring legacy of humanistic leadership is pivotal in this new era of global and individual humanistic transformation amid change.

4. Final Remarks

This book offers an insight into the vast question of adaptation and change in HEIs in the post-Covid world. The value added of this book is threefold, i.e., first and foremost, this book goes beyond reporting on the Covid-19 pandemic by placing the pandemic in the broader societal and institutional contexts. Indeed, the chapters included in this book offer a detailed insight into how the pandemic influenced the students, the faculty and the HEIs. Second, this book focuses on adaptation and change in HEIs as a function of an overall innovative capacity of HEIs, whereby approaches to teaching and learning form the thrust of that capacity. Notably, the chapters included in this book suggest how the teaching and learning process can be improved, either by a more effective uptake of feedback or by employing techniques from, e.g., international negotiations. Third, this book offers a critical appraisal of lessons learnt throughout the pandemic and their legacy in the post-Covid world. Here the questions of career choices, matching teaching methods to developments in the industry and other are explored. More research is needed to explore and uncover the lasting impact of the pandemic on HEIs and its stakeholders, i.e., the faculty, the