Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work in Higher Education

Global Perspectives, Policies, and Practices after COVID-19

Edited by Roy Y. Chan · Xi Lin · Krishna Bista
Foreword by Terrell L. Strayhorn

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Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work in Higher Education

"*This is a* timely volume for practitioners and researchers alike as they grapple with how to best support leaders and employees in the evolving higher education workforce."

—Jon McNaughtan, *Associate Professor of Higher Education and Associate Department Chair, Texas Tech University, USA*

"This book provides important information on current and emerging hybrid and remote work practices in higher educational institutions around the world. Most importantly, the chapters in this volume provide excellent profiles of how educators can use technology to redefine their practices and create a sense of place and belonging."

—Rosalind Latiner Raby, Senior Lecturer, *California State University, Northridge, California, USA* and Director, *California Community Colleges for International Education, USA*

"This is an exceptionally important volume which will shape a higher education discourse on the futures of academic labor and university workplace in the coming years."

—Anatoly V. Oleksiyenko, *Professor of International Higher Education, The Education University of Hong Kong, China*

"This book is a must read for anyone who wants to understand remote and hybrid work in the context of higher education. It provides comprehensive, interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and cross-national perspectives on a topic that is long overdue."

—Wen Fan, *Associate Professor of Sociology & Director of Graduate Admissions, Boston College, USA*

"This groundbreaking book illuminates a path forward, providing invaluable insights to thrive in the future of education today. Blending research with real-world examples, it's an essential guide to rethinking hybrid and remote work in higher education."

—Gustavo Razzetti, CEO & Founder of Fearless Culture, USA and author of *Remote Not Distant: Design a Company Culture That Will Help You Thrive in a Hybrid Workplace* (2022)

"So much has changed in universities because of the pandemic. *Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work in Higher Education* will help the reader understand how vast these changes are. The various chapters provide not only a summary of much of the research that has been done on post-pandemic higher education but also present creative ideas to make the most out of the new situation in which both professors and administrators find themselves."

—David R. Dunaetz, *Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Leadership, Organizational Psychology, and Public Administration, Azusa Pacific University, USA*

"Apart from the hospitality industry, no other sector was as dramatically affected by our response to the pandemic (lockdowns and in-person restrictions) than education. As these pandemic-era responses (hybrid and remote work and student engagement) have lingered into post-pandemic period, Chan, Lin, and Bista have provided us with a comprehensive view into what has worked and can be leveraged to enhance our traditional models and what has failed. No other volume looks as thoroughly into these questions."

—Cole Clark, Managing Director, *Higher Education, Deloitte Services, USA*

"This book is a must-have resource for navigating our research, teaching, and service work. The volume is full of keen insights, reflections, and narrative data that can facilitate and (re)orient the ways in which newer and highly experienced faculty and practitioners may use in the post-pandemic higher education landscape."

—Matthew A. Witenstein, *Assistant Professor of Educational Administration, University of Dayton, USA; Past Secretary of the Comparative & International Education Society (CIES), USA*

"Higher education institutions must improve their support for hybrid and remote work as researchers and practitioners expand their national and international networks, embed cultural competencies into their curricula, and consider how mindful and meaningful innovation can impact global development. Hence, this timely book sits at the vanguard of one of the most significant emerging topics in higher education administration, and each of the individual chapters will generate considerable discussion and debate."

—Michael Lanford, *Assistant Professor of Higher Education, University of North Georgia, USA; Author of "Creating a Culture of Mindful Innovation in Higher Education" (SUNY Press, 2022)*

Roy Y. Chan • Xi Lin • Krishna Bista
Editors

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FOREWORD

Hard to believe but it has been over three years (at the time of this writing) since the first reported confirmed case of COVID-19 in the United States. Since January 2020, there have been over 700 million positive cases of COVID-19 in the world (100+ million in the United States alone) and approximately 7 million COVID-related deaths, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. Though large-scale, contact-tracing data efforts have ended, and the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19 no longer a pandemic, its effects are far-reaching and long-standing.

As we wind our way through the first quarter of the twenty-first century, it is clear that the global COVID-19 pandemic has had a deleterious impact on every aspect of our lives, especially work and education. Indeed, higher or postsecondary education is no exception, with colleges and universities around the world being forced to renew, revise, and, yes, *rethink* their core operations amid unprecedented challenges and opportunities. For example, consider the fact that many institutions had to rethink and re-engineer their delivery system(s) in response to the physical, fiscal, and existential threat of the pandemic. Most were able to ensure business continuity by transitioning to hybrid and remote modes of teaching, learning, and "doing." That seismic shift was possible virtually overnight due to the adoption of new learning management systems (LMS), incorporation of tech-responsive pedagogies, and infusion of digital technologies, to name a few.

Now three years later, the global enterprise of higher education has more questions than answers about the future of its work. What does

higher education look like in a post-COVID reality? How do we best serve our faculty, staff, and students in today's "new normal," if that truly exists? Are hybrid and remote modalities here to stay? What's needed are book-length authoritative texts that take up these questions from myriad geographic viewpoints. Look no further as you're holding one of them in your hands now.

The book, *Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work in Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Policies and Practices after COVID-19*, by Dr. Roy Y. Chan, Dr. Xi Lin, and Dr. Krishna Bista, delves into the deep and less obvious issues related to new approaches in higher education. Specifically, the volume brings together a range of almost 40 experts from around the world to provide critical evidence-based insights and practical solutions concerning hybrid and remote work in higher education settings with an international perspective. Authors, many who are leading voices in their respective field(s), tackle an impressive cast of topics including without limits: flex-work in student affairs, service-learning, research engagement, study abroad, gamification, teacher preparation, and, yes, sense of belonging, which has been the focus of my own scholarship for nearly two decades.

At a time marked by great uncertainty and even greater opportunities, this important book provides comprehensive coverage of key issues. It serves as a guide for navigating the challenges posed by hybrid and remote education, offering a "playbook" of sorts rooted in some of higher education's high-impact practices. It breaks new ground on largely uncharted terrain and offers a bold vision for the future that's diverse, inclusive, and high quality. For educators, administrators, students, and researchers alike, *Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work in Higher Education* will likely serve as an essential resource for reconsidering age-old questions, rethinking outdated models, and revising existing policies and practices all while recasting a way forward to the bright future ahead.

Terrell L. Strayhorn, is Professor of Education and Psychology in the Evelyn Reid Syphax School of Education at Virginia Union University (VUU), where he also serves as Director of the Center for the Study of Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Principal Investigator of The Belonging Lab. Outside of academia, Dr. Strayhorn serves as Founder & CEO at Do Good Work Consulting Group.

An internationally recognized scholar, Dr. Strayhorn is the author of 12 books and over 200+ book chapters and journal articles and other scholarly publications. Dr. Strayhorn award-winning book, *College Students'*

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Prior to joining the faculty at VUU, Dr. Strayhorn served on the faculty at several institutions, most notably at The Ohio State University (OSU), The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), and LeMoyne-Owen College (LOC). Dr. Strayhorn holds a Ph.D. in higher education from Virginia Tech, an MEd in education policy from the University of Virginia, and a B.A. from the University of Virginia. He is an active member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and a proud native of Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA.

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About the Book

This timely volume explores the current state of hybrid and remote work in higher education from national, regional, and global perspectives. Today, colleges and universities worldwide must ensure that they have adequate information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure, equipment, and systems (e.g., software, hardware, firmware, networks, websites) to adapt to the "new normal" post-COVID-19. Hybrid and remote work can be a source of boosting productivity and advancing institutional change in higher education. Common within the management and leadership literature, hybrid and remote work is an understudied phenomenon in higher education administration. This book investigates the rapid rise of remote and hybrid work during and after the global pandemic and what it means for the future of higher education in the United States and abroad.

Contributors with expertise in higher education, comparative and international education, public policy, management, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and linguistics use novel theoretical frameworks and cases from the United States, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and Africa to understand the digital transformation technologies, processes, and practices to engage in remote work and online learning. Empirical cases and literature analysis show that hybrid and remote work is not only necessarily reasonable or feasible for certain campus positions but also for institutional commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The primary audiences of this book are teacher-scholars, policymakers, and practitioners working in academic and student affairs, human resources, and centers for teaching and learning. The volume also targets faculty members, senior administrators (e.g., presidents, vice presidents, provosts, and deans), and graduate teaching assistants who work remotely in colleges and universities, whether as senior international officers (SIOs), academic program directors, or instructional designers. In the long run, we hope that this foundational text will inform institutional policy and strategy for designing, facilitating, and investing in better workplace environments at colleges and universities around the world.

Contents

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LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

Prologue

Sarah Holtan

The technological advances in the past three decades have globalized our world, shrinking the limitations of physical distance. While the nature of work has changed over the decades, the pace of change accelerated unpredictably during COVID-19. We are expected to work, teach, and learn in multiple settings. However, the discussion of in-person, hybrid, and remote work is larger than the setting of *where* we do our work. We should widen our lens to rethink what work is to us and our relationship with our workplace, colleagues, and students. This book examines the relationship among the work environment, sociocultural expectations, our capacity for resilience, and lessons for sustainable learning organizations.

As this book outlines, work environments are dynamic, leading to a messy, complicated set of variables to explore. COVID-19 forced widespread, unprecedented changes without a clear plan for us to "land" safely. Faculty and staff scrambled to teach, advise, and work virtually while simultaneously balancing individual stressors at home. The rapid shift to remote work erased the workplace comfort zone. Employees floundered

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to adjust to new ways of working, with some people sacrificing personal boundaries and social connections. A common scenario was that a family would eat breakfast at the kitchen table and then convert it into the office and school for the rest of day, not leaving the house except for essentials.

Something had to be given, and it turned out to be our mental wellness. Work burnout was common, an added injury to the pandemic. A 2022 Deloitte report discovered that females opted out of the workforce more than their male counterparts. One theory is that those burdened with disproportionate domestic care duties, particularly females, felt forced to resign due to unrealistic working conditions.

While some corporations have required their employees to return to in-person work, others have retained a remote or hybrid working environment. There are cultural, social, and practical implications of each type of work. The implications need to be carefully considered before setting a one-size-fits-all solution. Remote and hybrid work is appealing for flexibility in individual schedules, especially for those with domestic care duties or a long commute. However, not all types of jobs can be done well remotely. Additionally, some employees fear becoming invisible if working remotely. The natural social connections created while sharing physical space together are reduced. In turn, this affects organizational culture.

The larger workforce challenges apply to higher ed. and inspired this book. What will the higher ed. workplace look like in the future? Which external pressures, such as an uncertain economy, will force changes, and how will leaders and employees adapt to them? What is workplace resilience? What does it take for employees to withstand the current adversities and stressors and recover in a way that maximizes organizational potential?

I confront these types of resilience questions in my work at High-level Leadership, LLC. I embrace the shifting higher education landscape and seek to convert modern challenges into opportunities. The greater the resiliency of employees, the greater the long-term sustainability of organizations. To be sustainable, employees must adapt to new work conditions without damaging themselves or their social or physical environments. Resilience is a necessary phenomenon first on the individual employee level and second for the positive effect they have on their institutions.

However, there is a necessary first step to creating a resilient workforce: we need to set a clear and desirable future state of work. The lack of one is partly attributed to the varied experiences of individuals during the pandemic, resulting in differing perspectives of how work should be accomplished. The lack of a shared experience and understanding dictates that

no one solution will work for all. Organizations will need to intentionally design the future work experience based on unique cultural and social variables, leadership priorities, wellness considerations, and technological logistics. The old strategies will no longer work. As this book dissects in three parts, the data and case studies for examination can help guide colleges and universities to forge new solutions.

Readers will expand their thinking of the nature of work and how it can be accomplished. They will learn new insights and techniques to apply as faculty members, researchers, student affairs practitioners, and support staff. This book pledges both theoretical frameworks and practical tools for how employees can adjust to resiliency postpandemic. We all have the same overarching goal: to cultivate a safe, transformative learning environment in which our students thrive. However, first, we must examine our own work-specific challenges and find opportunities to create resilience during an uncertain time.

Rethinking Hybrid and Remote Work
in Higher Education

CHAPTER 2

Is Hybrid and Remote Work Here to Stay? Opportunities and Challenges in the United States and Abroad

Roy Y. Chan, Xi Lin, and Krishna Bista

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected all businesses worldwide, especially higher education institutions. Externally, colleges and universities around the world are dealing with the aftermath of the global pandemic, which includes travel restrictions and vaccine requirements, recruitment limitations (e.g., college fairs, summer camps), and ongoing

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7

hiring freezes and budget cuts (Bastedo et al., 2023; McKeown et al., 2022). Internally, postsecondary institutions are forced to adapt to changes in the environment, including changes to academic courses and program offerings, online student support services and initiatives (e.g., virtual office hours, virtual breakout rooms, virtual whiteboards, virtual lecture recordings, virtual study sessions), diverse modes of remote learning (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, bichronous, hybrid, hyflex, flipped), recruitment of underrepresented students (e.g., low-income, rural, refugee, people of color[1]) and, in most cases, international students (Berry, 2022; Chan et al., 2021).

In the United States alone, there has been a sharp decline in college enrollment and attendance, reduced perceived value of college degrees, decreased investment in public higher education, increased demand for college promise programs (i.e., free college), and the rise of test-optional examinations (SAT, ACT) becoming standard in college admissions (Chan, 2022; Fischer, 2022; Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). Furthermore, institutions of higher education are dealing with employee retention issues and challenges to filling senior leadership positions (e.g., presidents, vice presidents, provosts, deans), with more than half of university staff considering leaving their jobs according (Bichsel et al., 2022). The report by Bichsel et al. (2022) from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) concluded that 76 percent of American respondents are seeking new work opportunities because they want increased pay, 43 percent want remote work options, 32 percent are seeking flexible work schedules, and another 30 percent want a promotion or additional work responsibilities. While 63.1 percent of respondents reported working "completely or mostly on-site," the vast majority—70.5 percent—believe that most of their work duties can be performed from a distance.

With increased demand for hybrid and fully remote work styles, most organizations understand that some form of distance work is here to stay (Watson & Spraggs, 2023). In higher education, reinventing and revitalizing hybrid and remote work requires good communication, good policies to protect faculty and staff, and regular rest (Carrell & Zemsky, 2021; Hughes, 2022). Colleges and universities must develop both remote and

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[1] The term People of Color refers to those who identify as one or more of the following: American Indian/Alaska Native/Native American, Asian American, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina/o/x, or Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian.

hybrid work procedures and practices that are informed by the institution's mission and identity (Turner, 2021). For example, the outcomes and hybrid campuses around the world—where faculty and staff work remotely—can allow institutions to offer more academic programs, teach more programs for less cost, improve economic outcomes, and increase college access in rural communities (all of which can generate enrollment growth and reduce costs) (Docking & Harrington, 2022). Hybrid campuses can also help global learners have a blend of both on-campus and off-campus experiences, such as playing sports, meeting lifelong best friends, engaging with faculty mentors, and forming a bond with their community (i.e., long-term benefits) (Docking & Harrington, 2022). As our society moves toward a more hybrid and remote workforce, we believe that it is imperative for teacher-scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to begin examining the opportunities and challenges with distance or remote work in higher education.

In this volume, we illustrate how a hybrid and remote campus is not only necessarily reasonable or feasible for certain campus positions in the United States and abroad but also for institutional commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (Kezar & Posselt, 2019). Specifically, we believe that developing a remote and hybrid campus can help better support marginalized populations, students with childcare needs, people with disabilities, and refugee and migrant students in developing and transitional economies. With the ongoing Great Resignation and Great Reshuffle period, we believe that college leaders must use this time to create newer, disruption proof systems that will give faculty and staff members the freedom to manage work-life balance while remaining in compliance with labor laws. Senior administrators (e.g., presidents, provosts, deans) must weigh the needs of on-campus students against the desires of workers for flexibility and remote work (Bloom et al., 2023; Drexler, 2022). While there is still much hesitation and uncertainty after COVID-19, we firmly believe that colleges and universities positioned for success in the next decade will seize on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity by prioritizing an innovative institutional culture (or mindful innovation) to remote and hybrid working conditions while simultaneously building inclusive workplace environments for all faculty and staff around the world (Lanford & Tierney, 2022; Razzetti, 2022).

The Opportunities and Challenges of International Remote and Hybrid Work

The worldwide shift to remote and hybrid work has drastically changed how colleges and universities approach hiring in crisis times (Kezar, 2023; Netswera et al., 2022). Prior to the global pandemic, hiring international professors, practitioners, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows simply involved managing contracts and obtaining visas. Today, human resource professionals and faculty members have begun to accept that radical change in hiring remote and hybrid employees is and will be the "new normal." The reality is that flexible work arrangements in higher education bring many rewards and benefits (talent, productivity, retention) to the institutional culture and enhance the quality of life for workers (satisfaction, engagement, experience) within the environment (Drexler, 2022; Glass et al., 2021; Makridis & Schloetzer, 2022).

For example, colleges and universities that flex to accommodate hybrid and remote work demands will be able to choose from among the most talented scholars in academia (e.g., distinguished professors, chair professors, full professors) (Staley & Endicott, 2023). Furthermore, there is growing evidence to suggest that educational institutions that offer flexible worktime reduction, such as four-day workweeks, can help improve human well-being, organizational performance, and environmental outcomes (Kelly et al., 2022; Schor et al., 2023). A recent study by Wels et al. (2023) found no significant adverse effects on social and mental well-being with increased hybrid and remote work. The challenge, however, is that many institutions seeking to hire renowned faculty members in the United States and abroad must comply with the specific and varied employment laws of their home countries regarding remote work. Noncompliance can carry heavy penalties for the university. For instance, if international faculty have previously taught in the United States but now teach 100 percent remotely, existing contracts will need to be converted to new contracts that adhere to local labor laws. Additionally, human resource professionals must analyze complex labor regulations in both developing and emerging market economies because top foreign faculty may be unable or unwilling to move to the United States. In other words, institutions of higher education will need to adapt to new hiring processes and procedures to eliminate compliance risks for remote work (Dyer & Shepherd, 2021).

In addition to employment law and regulation, college leaders must also deal with equitable compensation for remote and hybrid workers. For instance, the hourly support staff is harder to manage at a distance, especially in developing and transitional countries where academic corruption and mismanagement are prevalent (Denisova-Schmidt, 2020). Furthermore, calculating how many hours employees have worked remotely at under-resourced and unwealthy institutions can be a daunting task where digital, information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure may be lacking (Netswera et al., 2022). Because higher education is made up of a wide variety of employee types, departments, and sections, human resource professionals and senior leaders must develop innovative mechanisms and procedures during the Great Resignation and Great Reshuffle era to track whether responsibilities match the expected and required hours of labor.

The Great Resignation, Quiet Quitting, and Faculty and Staff Disengagement

In the post-COVID-19 period, morethanhalf of higher education employees in the United States have indicated that they plan to leave during the Great Resignation (i.e., "Big Quit") (Moody, 2022) and that a large number of professors are quitting their jobs due to greater rates of faculty burnout (Pope-Rauark, 2022; Salle, 2022). A report by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) suggests that the Great Resignation saw a record 47.4 million Americans quit their jobs in 2021. In higher education, a report by Skyfactor Benchworks and Southern Association for College Student Affairs (SACSA) (, 2022) found that 37 percent of student affairs professionals in the United States are looking to leave their roles (i.e., quiet quitting) due to low pay, poor work-life balance regarding hybrid and remote work, and little opportunity to advance in their organization (Brown, 2022).

In general, quiet quitting is defined as "performing only what's necessary at work without going the extra mile and looking beyond what is requited" from their job description (Harter, 2022). It is a way for workers to deal with burnout, especially among younger employees in higher education. There are many reasons why faculty and staff members may quietly quit, including unfair compensation, job insecurity and reorganization, organizational leadership lacked empathy, and toxic workplace culture and politics (Jackson & Cherwin, 2022; Sull et al., 2022). In addition,

employees are leaving higher education and student affairs for increased pay, better work-life balance, and better benefits (i.e., opportunity to work hybrid or remote, childcare services) and career advancement (Alonso, 2022). Although the big quit and quiet quitting are here to stay (McClure & Fryar, 2022), we believe that faculty and staff members should be given the right to determine the conditions under which they work (in-person, hybrid, or remote), in addition to assisting them to be mindful of how their own choices affect the well-being and productivity of others (Hughes, 2022).

Along with academic and student affairs employees, college students must also be given more options to engage in different modes of learning (e.g., synchronous, asynchronous, and in-person deliveries) to avoid potential burnout and fatigue (Chan et al., 2021). A national survey of parents conducted during the pandemic by Gallup and the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2021) found that nearly half of American parents wished more postsecondary options existed. Dr. Gene Block, chancellor of the University of California at Los Angeles, once stated, "There are students who believe very strongly that … 'I should be able to look through the course catalog and decide which ones I take remotely and which ones I take in person'" (Future U, 2022). By offering more choices, college students can avoid the growing number of students who are 'quiet quitting' during the post-COVID-19 era. For students, quiet quitting refers to those who are only doing what is required in courses and not putting in their full or extra effort (Jackson & Cherwin, 2022). A report by Intelligent (2022) claims that one-third of U.S. college students are 'quiet quitting' to preserve their mental health, due in part to global pandemic burnout. The report concluded that 34 percent of U.S. college students said they do not go above and beyond what is needed and 30 percent said they just put "some" effort into the work.

To address this challenge, some institutions around the world have begun to offer fully online courses and academic programs to address ongoing enrollment cliffs and budget cuts (Turner, 2021). The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) (2022) annual data report claims that U.S. undergraduate enrollment among 18- to 20-year-olds at online colleges—which typically enroll working adults—was up 3.2 percent from the previous year. Online colleges typically offer both fully virtual and hybrid courses by allowing undergraduate students who prefer flexibility,

convenience, and autonomy (e.g., how they do their work, how they fit their schedule) for remote learning (Chan et al., 2021). As undergraduate college enrollment continues to decline, with more than 1 million fewer U.S. students enrolled in college since the fall of 2020 (NSC Research Center, 2022), many students in the Millennial and Gen Z period are now preferring online and distance education over in-person instruction. A study by Hanover Research (2022) showed that student interest in fully on-campus, face-to-face courses continues to decline, from 66 percent in 2020 to 49 percent in 2022. A follow-up study by Anthology (2022) suggests that more than one-third of college students now prefer fully online asynchronous courses (37 percent), followed by a mix of online and in-person (28 percent), fully online synchronous courses (21 percent), and fully in-person (13 percent). In other words, online learning and remote work are here to stay in the United States and abroad after COVID-19 (Chan et al., 2021). Hybrid competence and digital literacy are the newest soft skills (e.g., virtual teamwork, leveraging your brand of social media, networking online) for college graduates (Bischof, 2022). We must extend the same endless care we give to students to those entrusted to serve them on our campuses.

The Future of Work and Hybrid Learning: Flexibility and Accountability in Higher Education

We believe that the future state of remote work and hybrid learning will likely consist of a combination of both on-campus and hybrid-campus experiences. In general, a hybrid campus is defined as "a campus reimagined residential education in a tech-enabled world … this is not only hybrid instruction, but rather a blended, immersive, and digital residential experience that fuses the online and physical worlds across campus" (Deloitte's Center for Higher Education Excellence and Strada Education Network, 2022, p. 2). A hybrid campus not only focuses on adding online capabilities regarding academic programs and curricula but also leveraging digital technology and software that reimagines the residential experience (Selingo et al., 2021).

For example, Rize Education[2] offers a hybrid degree pathway in key data-driven programs such as digital marketing, publish health, public administration, and data analytics. A few examples of a hybrid campus include Adrian College, Rochester University, Newberry College, Tiffin University, and Centenary University. Institutions that offer hybrid programs via Rize Education can allow campus leaders to hire hybrid faculty who are well-experienced leaders in their field. As jobs become more remote post-COVID-19, faculty and staff members will need to be more successful in both the virtual and in-person worlds. They need to manage and work with different realms across the United States and be effective in communicating with different people around the world (Ricevuto & McLaughlin, 2022). At the same time, human resource professionals must also provide employees in higher education with flexible work arrangements that can contribute to staff retention and overall job satisfaction (Tapani et al., 2022). As more campuses set up hybrid and remote work environments for employees, along with navigating employees back to campus after quarantine, college leaders must focus on developing a distributed workforce capable of collaborating with remote colleagues globally (Netswera et al., 2022). Offering employees more flexible work is not one size fits all, especially when dealing with faculty and staff sabbaticals, release time, easing workloads, and cross-campus workgroups. However, we believe that those campuses that do not reconsider their remote work practices and procedures will continue to struggle with international recruitment, retention, and employee engagement in the post-COVID-19 era.

There is no one thing that will "save" the higher education industry from the current wave of employee resignations around the world. If campuses are determined to return to normal and return to the way things were, then we need campus leaders to listen to the challenges of their workers (Carrell & Zemsky, 2021). Dr. Thomas Dickson, the assistant vice provost for undergraduate education at the University of California,

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[2] Rize Education is a higher education company in partnership with the Lower Cost Models for Independent Colleges (LCMC) Consortium. The LCMC, formed in 2015, is pioneering an innovative course-sharing model to help private colleges and universities grow enrollment through new degree programs while streamlining and lowering institutional costs. Rize provides the LCMC with the platform that powers this collaborative model, allowing member institutions to adopt high-demand majors, minors, and certificates that are built to get students ready for careers in the fastest-growing fields.

Riverside, once said, "In the aggregate, I do not feel that remote or flexible work arrangements compromise the residential or commuter student experience at all. In most cases, flexible hours and remote options only serve to expand access for many student services areas" (McClure, 2022).

Developing Remote and Hybrid Work Policies in Higher Education: Recruitment, Retention, and Productivity

Since the global COVID-19 pandemic, colleges and universities around the world have struggled to move their workforces fully remote or hybrid to keep their operations going (Levine & Van Pelt, 2021). On top of that challenge, a growing number of faculty and staff members are grappling with the logistics of making long-term remote and hybrid work possible in addition to recruiting and onboarding employees virtually. The shift to "work from anywhere" employment, combined with international hiring, means increased opportunities to participate in research projects and partnerships that may have been considered unrealistic or undesirable before (Deardorff et al., 2021). Remote and hybrid work options, along with intentional policies, will be crucial to ensure employee satisfaction and engagement. Examples of supportive and intentional policies include sufficient medical leave policies for parents; effective or enforced sexual harassment policy; transparent salaries (i.e., salary history); flexible work schedules; and formal mentorship and sponsorship (Bichsel et al., 2022). With ICT infrastructure expanding in higher education, campus leaders have many digital tools to use to intentionally develop equity-based work environments that focus on long-term goals and successes (Kelly & Zakrajsek, Kelly & Zakrajsek, 2020).

For example, Howard University has created a permanent telework policy for all regular full-time and part-time, nonunion, nonfaculty, and nonstudent employees. Telework allows employees to work from home or an offsite workstation for all or part of their workweek (Howard University, 2021). Likewise, at Montclair State University, eligible employees may request one or more of the following: (1) compressed schedule, (2) flextime schedule, and (3) hybrid schedule (Montclair State University, 2021). Comparatively, the University of Iowa recently released the final report for its Future of Work@Iowa project. The project sought to "reimagine" how and where employees work after the pandemic, with a focus on

"understanding the long-term potential for remote and hybrid work, flexible schedules, and other types of work arrangements"—arrangements it collectively calls "flexible work." Furthermore, the Division of Student Affairs at the University of Texas A&M created the campaign Behind the Scenes with Students Affairs. They describe the human-centered storytelling initiative as a short-term strategy to equip and empower their workforce at a distance. In other words, several institutions of higher education have begun to develop new policies, procedures, and practices for working remotely to survive and thrive in this new future of work (Calhoun, 2022; Hughes, 2022). Renowned American educator Jeffrey J. Selingo once emphasized that colleges and universities that flex to accommodate hybrid and remote work demands will be able to choose from among the best and brightest talent—and those who refuse to adapt will lose out (McClure, 2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS

To assist faculty and staff members with remote and hybrid work in higher education, we provide several *suggestive* recommendations for individuals to consider during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

For senior administrators and faculty members:

1. *Encourage—and foster—open communication and workplace belonging*: With massive job turnover in higher education worldwide, it is critical that open communication between faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community supporters is encouraged. In addition, workplace belonging is essential in creating a positive and productive work environment (Strayhorn, 2023). During times of uncertainty, forward-thinking educational institutions are reinventing and reimagining the number of meetings they have (either remote or hybrid), with the goal of fostering intelligent communication around change (Carrell & Zemsky, 2021). If a department or school enjoys asking intentional questions about their futures at the institution, trust will be enhanced, a sense of belonging at work will be embraced, and stability will grow. A solid approach to foster this change is to perform a culture audit to better conceptualize what is hindering communication and develop new reward structures to celebrate the contributions, talents, and skills of faculty and staff.

2. *Promote rest*: Individuals who have not resigned and stayed at their institution post-COVID-19 are likely to encounter some level of anxiety and burnout, especially women (Salle, 2022). Statistically, women on average spend 4.1 hours/day on unpaid care and domestic work, compared to 1.7 hours/day for men (Srivastava, 2020). The global pandemic and the big quit have not only changed people's work ethic but have also exacerbated burnout dynamics for women which has resulted in a "Shecession[3]" (Razzetti, 2022). During travel lockdowns and restrictions, many stakeholders were forced to move toward remote and hybrid work, which created a wide range of job duties and responsibilities in people's job descriptions. This was highlighted evidently in the landscape of higher education, where faculty and staff are dealing with higher levels of stress and emotional exhaustion from the pandemic, in addition to dealing with political and social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Stop AAPI Hate) that have promoted new job expectations and requirements since the start of the global pandemic (Kezar, 2023). As a result, many campus leaders are now required to not only maintain traditional, face-to-face interaction with students but also foster an authentic online experience for those attending from a distance (Chan et al., 2021). Hence, university presidents, provosts, and deans should encourage their faculty and staff to rest by giving them additional days off (e.g., mental wellness day) and following up with them on how they spent their time off rather than catching up on work.

3. *Reducing working hours*: The traditional 40-, 50-, or 60-hour workweek may not be sustainable for workers' mental health, especially for women (Wang et al., 2022). Instead, higher education stakeholders should consider developing an accountability system to ensure that their empl0oyees have a work-life balance. A few examples include remote work, flex time, parental leave, education benefits, and four-day workweeks (Salle, 2022). Faculty and staff must set boundaries for themselves that encourage mental health and well-being. By simply reducing the number of hours at work, one

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[3] The term "Shecession" is likely due to the overrepresentation of women in health care, food preparation, and personal service occupations that were curtailed at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; increased childcare needs; providing care for family members; and gender and income wage gap (Thoreau, 2022).

can live a stronger and sustainable work-life balance while experiencing 'administrative joy' in higher education (Crowley & Roberts, 2022).

4. *Other*: There are several other recommendations teacher-scholars and practitioners should consider in higher education including but not limited to increasing compensation, expanding benefits such as remote work or flexible scheduling, establishing career plan with clear paths to promotion, encouraging managers to provide high potential employees with stretch assignments, promoting warmth-competence,[4] as well as demonstrating cultural humility and empathy.

For human resource professionals:

1. *Leverage digital transformation technologies*: Develop cost/benefit analysis based on research and understand how technologies can strengthen remote workforces within higher education culture.

   (a) If ICT infrastructure is already in place, one must understand how to leverage that technology and software to its greatest advantage.
   (b) If these systems are not keeping up with campus's current needs, higher education must reevaluate the use of software and offer changes that allow accurate tracking of hours and access to the remote systems higher education needs.

2. *Develop policies and procures*: Establish remote and hybrid policies as a tool for the recruitment and retention of talent (McNaughtan et al., 2022).

   (a) If policy is already in place, it can be used as an opportunity to expand talent searches by geography (i.e., talent magnet).
   (b) If policy is not established, then inform upper-level management (e.g., presidents, vice presidents, provosts, deans) how it can be used to entice, recruit, and retain the best employees (Clark, 2023).

3. *Promote professional development and support*: Provide training in connection with remote and hybrid policies.

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[4] The term "warmth-competence" refers to the need to balance perceived warmth (kind, welcoming, caring, empathetic) while appearing competent (direct, clear, knowledgeable, decisive) (Trezbiatowski et al., 2023).

(a) If the policy is to be developed, provide formalized remote work and learning policies to current faculty and staff.

    i. For faculty and staff who take advantage of remote work, policies should include provisions that they have adequate Internet and technology to complete their work, and institutions should be prepared to invest in their employees (Davis, 2022).

(b) If the policy does not exist, then develop day-one orientations that can be used to onboard new employees with key resources necessary to be effective.

In short, we believe that university leaders must use their expertise to equip and empower a new generation of hybrid-competence, forward-thinking leaders in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Great Resignation and quiet quitting continue to proliferate, we hope that this book will remind faculty and staff of the purposes and aims of remote and hybrid work and what it means for the future of higher education. It is important to note that we are not advocating a specific formula with remote and hybrid work (because there is no one-size-fits-all model). Instead, we believe that teacher-scholars, policymakers, and practitioners around the world should begin the process of developing equity-based remote and hybrid policies to ensure that all stakeholders are served well, and institutions continue to thrive in the postpandemic era.

Organization of the Book

This book provides a broad range of issues pertaining to hybrid and remote work in global higher education. The chapters selected in this book bring a diverse perspective around the world of how distance work can be leveraged to enhance employee recruitment, retention, and engagement at colleges and universities. The book is divided into three parts.

The first section of the book includes four chapters that discuss the opportunities and challenges to hybrid and remote work during and after the pandemic. In this chapter, we provide an overview of how hybrid and remote work is not only necessarily reasonable or feasible for certain campus positions in the United States and abroad but also for institutional commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We highlight several challenges pertaining to employment law and regulation and discuss

key issues regarding faculty fatigue and burnout, quiet quitting, and staff disengagement in higher education. Finally, we offer a few recommendations for remote teacher-scholars and practitioners to consider during times of uncertainty after the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chap. 3, Tony Lee and Brianna Karasek explore the challenges faced by student affairs practitioners and the steps they have taken to overcome their struggles. The authors provide practical implications of current practices and evidence-based predictions and how hybrid and remote student affairs practitioners provide essential services and operations to support students during turbulent times. In Chap. 4, James Morgan Lewing and Lisa Bunkowski examine the role of faculty development on faculty sense of belonging utilizing support for online teaching as an example. The authors argue that episodic programs are potentially less effective in supporting faculty belonging, especially with remote employees, compared to academic development efforts. Finally, in Chap. 5, Lingfei Luan, Xiaofei Huang, Shaotang Zhu, Le Jiang, Weiyang Chen, and Sarah Ostadabbas investigate how universities and professors can ensure the quality of remote and in-person instruction. The authors interviewed 16 professors from 12 universities in the United States and China. They concluded that the traditional "visible" school-based method of instruction is turned into the "invisible" web-based mode of instruction.

The second section of the book includes five chapters that address the perceptions, policies, and practices of remote work and online learning at colleges and universities worldwide. In Chap. 6, Hastowohadi Hadi, Hafida Ruminar, Susanna Ackermann Burger, and Ahmad Mubarok examine the academic experience of faculty members teaching in online or mixed learning environments and how they perceive their developed instruction, teaching activities, and senses as remote instructors. Using a transitivity analysis, the authors found varied perceptions from hybrid teaching preparations at Indonesian higher education institutions. In Chap. 7, Belle Li, Yina Patterson, and Xiang Lu use the Chinese flagship program at Indiana University as a case study to understand efforts taken to offset the consequences of the shift to emergency remote teaching and learning. The authors propose a new blended "double-loop" model for different foreign language programs in the postpandemic era within the scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education. In Chap. 8, Vincent Wiggins analyzes students' perspectives in a flexible learning environment from a self-efficacy perspective and offers recommendations for practitioners seeking to support students' success in a flexible learning

environment. In Chap. 9, Beatrice Y.Y. Dang, Hei-hang Hayes Tang, and Joanna W.Y. Yeung explore how a sudden shift from physical classrooms to online learning provides opportunities for students to practice self-directed learning (SDL) skills. The study seeks to examine how and to what extent online learning fostered SDL at Hong Kong teaching-focused higher education institutions, especially the digital transformation of teaching and learning in post-COVID times. Last, in Chap. 10, Sanfeng Miao examines how the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor force is not gender-neutral. The author concludes that women academics are more likely to be in contingent positions in academia and take on more teaching and administrative work, thereby exacerbating structural gender inequality in the academic profession.

The third and final section of the book includes five chapters that address specific case studies of lessons learned from hybrid and remote work around the world. In Chap. 11, Charl Wolhuter and Susan Greyling share what can be learned from distance and hybrid forms of higher education and how the experience can be used to improve higher education in the postpandemic world. Using South Africa as a country case study, the authors believe that ongoing collaborations with divisions and structures need to take place to ensure alignment with overall institutional policies regarding remote and distance learning. In Chap. 12, M. Sion Collier-Murayama explores how virtual exchange programs and hybrid online/offline study abroad programs (programs that combine traditional study abroad with online learning) have come to increasing prominence in the COVID-19 era. The author describes and reflects on lessons learned from Terps to Tohoku, a University of Maryland hybrid short-term study abroad program, and offers several insights for practitioners seeking to work in virtual exchange programs from a distance. In Chap. 13, Thir Bahadur Khadka and Bhola Nath Acharya analyze faculty, staff, and students' digital readiness and preparation in higher education. Using Nepal as a country case study, the authors implementing adequate policies based on national priorities could help Nepalese universities to have adequate digital readiness and future educational preparedness essential for academic excellence. In Chap. 14, Ourania Katsara discusses the complexity of cultural identity in Egypt by using the Dell Hymes SPEAKING model as a tool to raise intercultural competence and communication from a distance. In Chap. 15, Soraya Yrigoyen Fajardo, Magna Guerrero, and Giovanna Vassallo explore the relationship between attitudes toward gamification and motivation perceived by mathematics remedial students.

Using Peru as a country case study, the authors believe that helping college students improve their motivation toward mathematics is significant to overcome negative attitudes toward the subject, especially when teaching and learning from a distance. Finally, in Chap. 16, Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan, Ha Hai Nguyen, and Thuy Thanh Nguyen investigate ten Vietnamese millennial university teachers' self-perceptions of their own graduate transition to work. The authors found that millennial university teachers were challenged by the reality of classroom teaching practices compared with what they were trained during their teacher education and pedagogical training programs. The authors argue for the need for professional development and support to help millennial teachers become more aware of the teaching profession in higher education.

In summary, we believe that the 17 chapters found in this timely volume will empower educators, administrators, practitioners, policymakers, and families with new ideas, principles, and advice that they can apply during this academic year and beyond. A few guiding questions in this book are as follows:

1. How can hybrid or remote work accelerate current academic programs, policies, or initiatives while tackling an unaddressed priority (e.g., access, gender equality, mental health, recruitment) in higher education?
2. What academic programs and services (e.g., virtual office hours, virtual breakout rooms, virtual whiteboards, virtual lecture recordings, virtual study sessions) can you offer hybrid or remote that can create equitable opportunities for your graduates?
3. What do liberal arts skills (i.e., twenty-first-century skills) look like in a hybrid or remote environment?
4. How do we balance the various interests in evaluating hybrid or remote work accommodation requests?
5. How can we turn the Great Resignation and Great Reshuffle period into an extraordinary opportunity for faculty and staff to realize a better tomorrow in higher education?

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CHAPTER 3

Essential Hybrid and Remote Workers in Higher Education: Challenges and Resiliency of Student Affairs Practitioners

Tony Lee and Brianna Karasek

Introduction

The recent coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has upended the lives of students, faculty, and staff across higher education institutions (HEIs) globally. During the pandemic, HEIs were forced to move all in-person education to remote learning. Research has focused primarily on the impacts of the pandemic on students' experiences and the financial well-being of institutions. However, there is a lack of research that focuses on student affairs practitioners, who play a critical role in the transition

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process. Student affairs practitioners (hereafter referred to as practitioners) are frontline staff who provide essential services and operations to support students during turbulent times (Moscaritolo et al., 2022; Perozzi et al., 2022). They have been charged with the daunting task of fulfilling ever-changing expectations amidst the tumultuous response in the field of higher education to the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in role, policy, and operational capabilities have created challenges for practitioners that necessitated rapid reassessment and recalibration to maintain success. This chapter explores the challenges faced by practitioners during this time of crisis and the steps they can take to overcome their struggles. Additionally, the chapter also includes practical implications of current practices and evidence-based predictions of their legacy. The resiliency of practitioners in the present affects the future of student support services and the field of higher education as it moves into a new age characterized by technology, flexibility, and a "new normal."

What Is Student Affairs?

Student affairs encompass a diverse set of functional areas and may vary from institution to institution. Scholars generally regard academic advising, admissions and enrollment management, campus ministries, campus safety, career services, Dean of Students offices, disability services, Greek affairs, health and counseling operations, housing and residential life, multicultural student support, new student programs, student activities, and recreation programs as typical student affairs units on university and college campuses (Long, 2012). While some universities may combine these units or prefer to host certain departments in other administrative areas (such as placing academic advising in Academic Affairs), student affairs can generally be understood as a division that seeks to provide student support services and promote student learning and development outside of the classroom (Seifert et al., 2023).

Student affairs, sometimes known as "student services," "student life," or "student development," is an important division in HEIs (Cabellon & Junco, 2015). Student affairs practitioners within this division perform a wide range of job responsibilities, ranging from advising and counseling students and planning and organizing large-scale events to dealing with student crises (McClellan & Stringer, 2016; Mullen et al., 2018). Prior to the pandemic, the practitioners stayed busy in the fall and spring semesters planning and implementing programs designed to promote student

growth and development. In the summer, they engaged in continuing education, training, and brainstorming to discover new ways to serve students in the coming year. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the practitioners' day-to-day work shifted as they adapted to social distancing guidelines and the closure of HEIs. Student affairs practitioners played key roles in attending to the issues, concerns, and well-being of the students. In addition, they offered innovative solutions to ensure that teaching and learning continued (Loyola, 2021). As much of student affairs work entails group in-person events and close, personal one-on-one interactions, the practitioners had to learn to serve students virtually during the pandemic. In instances where this was not possible, such as in-residence halls where all students were forced to move out due to campus closures, the practitioners' duties shifted entirely as their primary function, which was to oversee residential communities living on campus, was rendered momentarily obsolete. However, HEI leaders worked to reopen their campuses as soon as possible, and administrators found creative ways to reorganize departments and restructure practitioners' roles to fit the "new normal."

Student Affairs Practitioners as Essential Personnel

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines essential nonhealthcare workers as "workers who are essential to maintain critical infrastructure and continue critical services and functions" (2021). In addition, essential frontline personnel are defined as employees whose duties "must be performed on-site and involve being in close proximity to the public or coworkers" (Centers for Disease Control, 2021). During the pandemic, some sectors or professions were able to work remotely, but essential frontline personnel had to brave the virus because their job could not be digitized (Allen & McLaren, 2022, p. 377). These definitions apply to many student affairs practitioners, particularly practitioners whose workplace is also their home, such as residence hall coordinators who are contractually required to live within the residence halls in their purview. Student affairs practitioners quickly became the essential frontline personnel of universities and colleges during the pandemic. They were forced to put their lives in danger to keep the essential aspects of the university running to attend to the needs of students (Allen & McLaren, 2022; Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022). They fulfill this by running essential operations on campuses, such as supervising facilities' oversight, offering emergency services, monitoring and maintaining the physical and mental well-being of

students, tracing COVID-19 exposures, providing resources to students who tested positive, and creating a socially distanced community (Gansemer-Topf, 2022; Seifert et al., 2023).

Beyond the technical definition, practitioners are essential frontline personnel in the sense that they, more so than other higher education employees, are the first responders to student challenges and crises (Anderson, 2020). For example, when a student has a mental health emergency, counseling services respond. When a student lacks a sense of belonging on campus, student activity organizations provide opportunities for engagement. When a student argues with their roommate, residence life mediates the conflict and provides resolution training. Each facet of student affairs works proactively and reactively to provide an environment conducive to student success. Due to this responsibility, not surprisingly, practitioners also report the highest level of stress and pressure compared to employees from other areas within higher education (Volkwein & Zhou, 2003, as cited in Marshall et al., 2016). In Perozzi et al.'s (2022) research, participants representing seven regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Oceania, North America, and Latin America and Caribbean) reported that counseling, health care, academic support, residence halls, student centers, and dining were considered "essential" functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though most of these services were offered virtually, practitioners were expected to provide face-to-face services to students dealing with emergency services, health care, and residential needs (Moscaritolo et al., 2022).

CHALLENGES

PwC's (2021) Global Crisis Survey lists higher education as the sector hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with 83% of the HEIs reporting a "negative" or "significantly negative" impact. The pandemic ushered in an age characterized by health, social, and economic crises, forcing the higher education sector to adjust its operations quickly. Lockdowns and mandatory social distancing guidelines closed university and college campuses worldwide, forcing HEIs to move to virtual delivery (Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021). In addition to financial concerns, HEIs worldwide experienced challenges in the realms of e-learning, change management, cultural development, student support, and mental health (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022; Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021; Seifert et al., 2023). Mutambisi et al. (2021) assert that practitioners at Bindura University of

Science Education in Zimbabwe were required to learn new skills and adapt to new work arrangements. As faculty, staff, and institutional leadership worked to overcome the obstacles posed by COVID-19, virtual operations became the "new normal" during the pandemic. Nonessential personnel could work remotely from home, but the practitioners who were tasked as essential frontline staff were required to be present on campus. Student affairs practitioners felt the pressure immediately. The need to adapt forced essential services into a "survival mode" with frontline staff bearing the bulk of the weight (World Health Organization, 2020, as cited in Arday, 2022). The disruption affected the practitioners, presenting unique challenges to their work due to a shift in practice, uncertainty, well-being, resources, and employee turnover.

A Shift in Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most disruptive events in recent history, forcing HEIs to close campuses to students and move to virtual operations in spring 2020 (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022; Schleicher, 2020). For essential frontline staff (the practitioners), this meant a significant shift in day-to-day operations. Student affairs practitioners began questioning their roles, duties, and job security. Their work was further impeded by institutional and public policies outside of their control (Gansemer-Topf, 2022). In addition to the need to determine institutional policy and adhere to unit guidelines, student affairs leadership was also held at the mercy of public health guidance, scientific knowledge and discovery, and clinical best practices, which may frequently change (ACHA, 2020). Additionally, state, federal, and national government initiatives, such as the U.S. White House's "Opening Up America Again" plan, created additional considerations for HEIs but was largely reliant on COVID-19 activity and, therefore, unpredictable (ACHA, 2020). Failure to monitor and respond to changes in policies or guidelines would result in obsolete practices and create more upheaval in practitioners' lives (ACHA, 2020).

Essentially, the shift in practice necessitated by COVID-19 was complicated by the need for adaptation on an accelerated timeline to quickly return to essential services and the rapidly evolving national, federal, state, and local policies that restricted institutional leadership's control over business operations. These changes also contributed to increased uncertainty in the practitioners' personal and work lives, including how they

were expected to do their jobs, what exactly they were expected to do, where they would do it, and the available resources. For example, HEI counselors were used to provide counseling support to students face to face. However, during the pandemic, counselors were threatened by the confidentiality aspect of the counseling support they provided to their students because they were concerned about the privacy of the student's location. As a result, some counselors were uncomfortable offering counseling services online (Mutambisi et al., 2021). The combination of these conditions created stress for the practitioners and may have also negatively affected their well-being.

Uncertainty

Student affairs encompass a wide range of services, most of which are essential to the continued operation of HEIs. During the pandemic, practitioners in these units faced a new challenge, which was to identify ways to serve their students who were not physically present on campus. For some areas, such as academic advising, the answer to this question remained relatively simple, if not always easy to execute—moving to virtual services and adopting a work-from-home schedule. In other areas, such as residence life, the solution is not as evident. For example, residence directors' primary function is to create an environment conducive to student success through facility oversight, crisis response, and implementation of residential programming or curriculum models. Students who are part of vulnerable populations, including international students, homeless students, LGBTQ+ students, and immunocompromised students, cannot immediately return home when college campuses across the world close (Dickerson, 2020; Keierleber, 2020; Moscaritolo et al., 2022). Moscaritolo et al. (2022) asserted that practitioners in Asia (10%) and the Middle East (7%) continued to provide face-to-face services to support international students. Out of the 781 respondents from the 7 regions, over half (51%) of the practitioners indicated that they would be able to offer virtual services, 45% would offer both face-to-face and virtual services, and 4% would offer face-to-face services. Among the different services offered by HEIs, housing/student accommodation was the primary concern for students, particularly international students; therefore, residence directors were not able to work virtually or from home to care for these students, as crisis response required in-person care (Moscaritolo et al., 2022).

Even when a move to virtual operations is feasible, practitioners remain uncertain. For example, Mutambisi et al. (2021) reported that practitioners at Bindura University of Science Education in Zimbabwe experienced challenges in providing student development, psycho-social support, and orientation programs via online modes of delivery because they lacked skills, knowledge, experience, and confidence in managing virtual campuses. In addition to adjusting to a new work environment, the practitioners who shifted to online engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic were required to adapt to new web-based platforms for work-related communication, develop innovative models for student outreach and support, and craft new forms of assessment for their work efforts. Beyond the changes in their everyday work schedule, practitioners were also forced to contend with the general concerns related to the pandemic, including when lockdown mandates would be lifted, thus allowing them to see friends and family again.

The uncertainty surrounding the practitioners' lives was additionally complicated by the timeline for HEIs' response to COVID-19. Closing campuses due to the pandemic created a significant loss of funds for HEIs, especially in auxiliary units (Purcell & Lumbreras, 2021). This prompted higher education leadership to make reopening and a return to regular business practices a priority in institutional goals, a goal in which student affairs is one of many stakeholders. Simultaneously, there was an acknowledgment that the restrictions and limitations related to COVID-19 would need to be contended for extended periods of time, ranging from at least 12 to 18 months or longer (American College Health Association [ACHA], 2020). The conflict between the need for a rapid response to the pandemic and the need for sustainable practices and policies for the future of HEIs placed additional pressure on institutional leadership to create new and effective operational models on an accelerated timeline. This, in turn, created further tension and stress for the practitioners as they learned to shift their practice in unprecedented ways.

Well-Being

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused mass mental health distress in various sectors, including higher education. Stressors unique to the pandemic, such as isolationism from remote work, quarantines, social distancing, the imposition of new health regulations that impinge upon personal freedoms and mixed messages from national authorities, and grief about

COVID-19-related deaths, have harmful effects on the health, safety, and well-being of individuals and communities (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). For example, student affairs practitioners in Zimbabwe expressed fear, anxiety, anger, depression, and acceptance when transitioning to virtual campuses (Mutambisi et al., 2021). Student affairs practitioners in the Philippines also experienced adverse effects on mental health during the pandemic (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022). Concurrently, the National Center for Health Statistics reported that 40.9% of American adults had symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorders in 2020, a 29.9% uptick from 2019 (Zablotsky et al., 2022).

As essential frontline personnel in higher education, practitioners were particularly affected by the pandemic (Anderson, 2020). Chessman (2021) asserts that practitioners' work environment plays an essential part in their well-being. In other words, their ability to set and talk about their goals, engage in professional development and training, and develop a relationship with their supervisor detects their overall well-being (p. 158). Mutambisi et al. (2021) added that HEI practitioners in Zimbabwe were accustomed to receiving collegial support and encouragement. However, the changing nature of their jobs and the remote working arrangements forced them to be separated from their work colleagues and students. This led to job insecurity, poor mental health, and well-being among the practitioners. Several studies on factors that influence wellness, such as job satisfaction, stress, and work-life autonomy, indicate that practitioners' well-being is in jeopardy (Chessman, 2021; Marshall et al., 2016; Moran, 2001; Rosser & Javinar, 2003; Wilson et al., 2016). For example, in a study regarding attrition themes in student affairs workers, Marshall et al. (2016) found that 70% of the practitioners reported excessive weekend and evening work-related commitments as a contributing factor to exiting the profession.

As practitioners increasingly serve as first responders to student crises, the prevalence and severity of secondary traumatic stress is a critical area of concern (Lynch & Glass, 2019). Secondary traumatic stress describes the adverse effects of repeated exposure to traumatic events, including "stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person," and is a qualifying condition of posttraumatic stress disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Figley, 1995, p. 10; Lynch & Glass, 2019). In addition, trauma-related stress negatively affects the wellness of individuals who suffer from it in various ways, including "states of prolonged psychological distress, persistent negative emotional states,

sleep disturbance and problems with concentration, and feelings of detachment from others" (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 271).

The COVID-19 pandemic has been proven to harm the mental health of college students, including increases in anxiety, loneliness, and depression (Lee et al., 2021). As students' mental health declines, practitioners are increasingly relied upon to respond, particularly in counseling and residence life units, due to the proximity of their work (Pope et al., 2004). Despite the prevalence of trauma exposure in the student affairs field, most practitioners are not taught how to identify symptoms of secondary traumatic stress or adequately prepared to mitigate its consequences (Spano, 2011, as cited in Lynch & Glass, 2019). Because they are not ready to avoid or manage trauma-related stress and are increasingly exposed to traumatic events as students' mental health declines, the wellness of practitioners should be considered at-risk, and steps need to be taken to care for their health and well-being. Gansemer-Topf (2022) emphasizes the need to focus on the mental, physical, and emotional well-being of student affairs leaders and practitioners involved in crisis management.

Resources

Employees' well-being is intrinsically linked to other facets of their work. While a healthy mind and body can contribute positively to professionals' experience at work, their duties and work environment can also affect their well-being (Chessman, 2021). Therefore, student affairs practitioners need adequate resources to perform effectively in the workplace. The COVID-19 pandemic has decreased the resources available to practitioners in many ways, but most notably, it has created challenges for practitioners to receive appropriate funding, staffing, and training as they adapt to a "new normal" operationally. For example, Mutambisi et al.'s (2021) research found that a university in Zimbabwe had no budget to support the training of human capital and retooling of services for online learning. Most practitioners did not even have the requisite computer literacy and technology to support their virtual staff meetings. Additionally, the practitioners had to compete for the few available resources, which deteriorated the relationship between practitioners. Similarly, practitioners in the Philippines experienced a lack of facilities and equipment to support students during the pandemic (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022). As essential frontline personnel, practitioners need opportunities to develop the

knowledge, skills, and competencies required to address, resolve, and mitigate the crises they encounter, their aftermath, and their day-to-day duties (Kuk, 2012). When HEIs were forced to move almost entirely to virtual operations, the practitioners had to quickly adapt and learn new information within a short period, particularly in technical knowledge such as Zoom and Discord. Due to the heavy workload, the practitioners faced obstacles to taking advantage of typical professional development opportunities such as conferences and seminars. While some organizations were able to transition conferences to an online format, many continuing education events were canceled due to the pandemic. Although some opportunities remained available, COVID-19-related expenses and constrained revenues had reduced staffing expenses, which included professional development funds (Kim, 2020).

While continuing education, professional development, and fiscal resources are essential facets of success in student support services, human resources remain the most valuable resource for employees. The existence of formally defined essential personnel emphasizes the importance of in-person response to crises and implies the necessity of a human component within organizations. Despite the significance of staff to the success of operations, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously affected the higher education sector (Anderson, 2020). The pandemic necessitated budget cuts, lockdown orders, campus closures, and social distancing guidelines to reduce staffing at HEIs in both direct and indirect ways. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (as cited in Whitford, 2020), publicly owned universities and colleges lost 49,000 jobs in September 2020, continuing a trend of layoffs and furloughs occurring in the mere six months that the COVID-19 pandemic had raged. While this is only a snapshot of the massive number of jobs lost in education due to the pandemic, it is representative of the struggles that HEIs, student affairs division included, suffered following the loss of income as campuses were reduced to skeleton crews. Those who were not laid off were left to make up for the work of those no longer at the institution, sometimes while also balancing adjustments to remote work. Extra pressures such as these and a lack of team support in the student affairs division contribute to challenges in practitioners' well-being (Chessman, 2021; Marshall et al., 2016).

As of June 2022, 610,000 individuals remained unemployed in the United States due to ongoing pandemic concerns; 2.1 million individuals reported that they were still working but at reduced hours (up to a full- to part-time cut) due to the pandemic (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics,

2022). As HEIs recover from the pandemic, there is speculation regarding the nature and level of staffing that will exist in the "new normal" (Kim, 2020; Whitford, 2020). While some staff wanted to remain in the hybrid- or remote-work model they adopted during the pandemic, others, particularly in the student affairs division, hoped to return to full, on-campus status and a break from the additional duties brought by the pandemic (Anderson, 2020). Additionally, a hybrid- or remote-work model cannot replace practitioners' in-person experience that is created outside the classroom setting. As Allen and McLaren (2022) put it, "in the physical world, we cannot just escape an in-person interaction with the click of a button … we are forced to interact with a host of different kinds of people" (p. 384). Regardless, the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student affairs and staffing resources is yet to be seen, but it remains a challenge to practitioners, as institutional leadership struggles to bounce back from campus closures and contend with ongoing waves of new variants of the virus.

Employee Turnover

Student affairs practitioners often enter the profession from student employment experiences, such as resident assistantships or peer mentors (Long, 2012). Many practitioners have chosen their career path due to their positive experiences as a student at the university or college campus. Other practitioners might have chosen their work because they want to give back and positively influence other college students (Seifert et al., 2023). The student affairs profession has become competitive and selective in higher education. In the United States, many practitioners possess a master's degree, especially as graduate degrees are increasingly required for entry-level student affairs positions (Long, 2012). Doctoral degrees are expected among upper-level administration positions, such as deans of students, directors of housing, or Student Life. Despite their education and experience, many practitioners are relegated to what some may consider the "dirty work" of higher education.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many practitioners were expected (and required) to remain on campus as essential personnel. As campuses reopened, this meant more opportunities for exposure to the virus and an increase in COVID-19-specific duties. For example, residence life professionals may have been required to deliver meals to students who had tested positive for COVID-19 and remained in isolation or quarantine on campus, shop for basic needs, and dispose of residential trash to

eliminate the students' need to exit their room. These additional duties, along with the general stressors associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, may diminish their job satisfaction and impede work-related characteristics that are positively associated with a happy work life, such as autonomy, pay, and development opportunities (Chessman, 2021). In addition, as practitioners continue to serve as first responders to crises, many wonder if their work is worth the accompanying burnout (Pettit, 2021).

The student affairs division has suffered a persistent retention problem over time, with approximately 50–60% of new practitioners having left their field of higher education entirely within five years of completing a master's degree (Tull, 2006). Burnout, salary issues, limited advancement opportunities, family/work conflict, issues with supervisors, and institutional fit are among the general themes contributing to the high attrition rate for practitioners (Marshall et al., 2016). In addition, student affairs work often demands employees' time, effort, and well-being, with many positions (especially at the entry level) requiring work on evenings and weekends. While many practitioners remain in the profession each year, citing good benefits (e.g., health care, retirement, reduced tuition) and a genuine dedication to student success, the pandemic has led many practitioners to reconsider their dedication to their position (Ellis, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought along a phenomenon called "the Great Resignation" (Stebletohn & Buford, 2021). Recorded numbers of employees have quit since the start of the pandemic, with more seemingly on the way to quitting (Thompson, 2021). Problems that already contributed to the high turnover rate in the student affairs division have only been exacerbated by the operational changes necessitated in the wake of university campus closures. At the same time, new challenges have raised their heads. For example, practitioners were forced to redefine how to build communities in an online format and how to remotely manage employees, in addition to taking on more banal tasks such as packing up students' rooms and more complex charges such as managing family members' emotions and concerns surrounding COVID-19 (Rothenberg, 2020, as cited in Chessman, 2021). Additionally, practitioners reported that new duties were added, such as developing testing, quarantining, and contact tracing infrastructure and monitoring college students' social distancing and mask-wearing behaviors (Pettit, 2021). Mkwizu and Junio-Sabio's (2022) research found that practitioners in the Philippines and Tanzania lacked the skillset they needed to perform their work virtually during the pandemic.

These challenges have contributed to increased burnout, fatigue, and mental health concerns in the profession, resulting in increased turnover (Anderson, 2020). The increased turnover creates further headache for practitioners, as the student affairs division faces unprecedented costs of recruiting, hiring, and training during a transition period (Marshall et al., 2016). In addition to the fiscal challenges presented by turnover, the "units lose efficiency, consistency, and quality in the delivery of services, as well as the investment made in the knowledge base of the institutions or units" (Rosser & Javinar, 2003, p. 825).

Resiliency

Resilience is a concept that originated from the study of socioecological systems. "The resiliency theory is defined by how individuals adapt when facing adversity or risk situation" (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022, p. 114). It is also referred to as the capacity to "bounce back" from unexpected events and disturbances (Folke et al., 2005). Bento et al. (2021) assert that resilience is a system's adaptive capacity to rearrange structures and practices to overcome internal failures or environmental changes. Previous research reveals that resilient higher education institutions have adapted and survived disasters and crises (Ayebi-Arthur, 2017; Bento et al., 2021). Student affairs and higher education leadership can learn to mitigate the challenges they experience through different resiliency factors. They include organizational leadership, collaboration, the use of technology, and work-life balance.

Organizational Leadership

Higher education leaders (e.g., chancellor, president, vice-presidents, deans, executive directors, and directors) have developed visions and plans to support the university and college missions. However, during the pandemic, higher education leaders focused on the institution's financial challenges, and they neglected the well-being of the practitioners responsible for executing the campus closure and reopening plans. Pfaff (2020) asserts that "a positive relationship allows for, and even encourages, critiques" (para. 12). To promote a resilient and supportive work environment among essential personnel, higher education leaders need to encourage positive working relationships and open communication among their practitioners so that the practitioners feel comfortable sharing their ideas,

thoughts, and concerns related to their work. Additionally, higher education leaders should challenge their existing beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors and understand new ways of supporting their practitioners (Mutambisi et al., 2021).

Friedman (2015, as cited in Pfaff, 2020) suggests that improving morale and being aware of employees' feelings is another way higher education leaders can consider strengthening the overall work atmosphere. With the amount of work that practitioners put in to support their students and colleagues, having positive reaffirmation and feedback from their leaders during times of crisis can help improve their morale. Student affairs and higher education leaders can also be attentive to the needs of their practitioners during times of crisis. Instead of waiting for practitioners to ask for help, they can reach out to them to offer assistance and support to help them complete their work. This may be physical, emotional, or mental support, which is often overlooked by student affairs and higher education leaders, especially during times of crisis. Perozzi et al. (2022) assert that some HEIs would reduce their budgets and make staffing changes postpandemic. Student affairs and higher education leaders should be transparent about the changes and communicate any changes to their practitioners promptly. Additionally, student affairs and higher education leaders should be innovative and actively looking for strategies to improve practitioners' work life. This may include restructuring student affairs organizations and making changes to the services provided to students (Moscaritolo et al., 2022).

Collaboration

Previous research has discussed and emphasized the importance of collaboration in HEIs; however, most of the research focuses on the collaboration efforts between student affairs and academic affairs (Cho & Sriram, 2016; Harder & McGowan, 2020; Leary et al., 2022) instead of the values and benefits of collaboration among practitioners and their peers. To focus on the institution's mission, students' successes, and practitioners' well-being, collaboration among the different entities within HEIs is inevitable, particularly when institutions find themselves underresourced (Coxmodore et al., 2018; Mutambisi et al., 2021). To promote collaboration efforts, practitioners can work closely with student leaders and volunteers who are actively engaged in campus programming. Such collaboration provides an opportunity for student leaders and volunteers to take on

different leadership roles in serving their peers and allows other students to be more connected and involved in the programming effort (Claar & Cuyjet, 2000).

Sandeen (2000) asserts that "effective Student Affairs leaders know their successes rarely come from acting alone. Instead, successes occur due to close collaboration and planning with key colleagues on the campus, most of whom are not in Student Affairs" (p. 382). In Gansemer-Topf's (2022) research, she noted that student affairs leaders were not only watching what other institutions were doing in managing the crisis but also had meetings with their peers at other institutions. Other researchers have also suggested that practitioners can work collaboratively with academic affairs for the sake of their students (Cho & Sriram, 2016; Coxmodore et al., 2018; Leary et al., 2022; Patterson, 2019). Having practitioners work collaboratively with academic affairs outside the classroom may enable them to explore new ways to serve their students. For example, faculty and practitioners have heard countless stories from their students about their day-to-day struggles during the pandemic. Some common challenges included but were not limited to mental health, housing, finances, discrimination, and social isolation (Harder & McGowan, 2020; Lederer et al., 2021). Faculty were among the first to recognize their struggling students, yet most of them were unfamiliar with campus-based resources and support services. As a result, they became frustrated and felt helpless. On the other hand, the practitioners worked long hours to check their students' well-being, but most students chose not to engage outside their learning space due to Zoom fatigue. In this situation, practitioners need to be resilient and seek opportunities to collaborate and share resources with faculty so that they can work together in serving their students, particularly underrepresented and vulnerable student groups, such as first-generation and low-income students, the LGBTQ+ community, students from domestic abuse families, students struggling with mental health, and international students.

Last, practitioners can also collaborate with the public and private sectors in their community to provide additional support and resources to their students (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022). For example, they can partner with the shelter and food bank to provide temporary housing and meals to students in need during times of crisis. They can also partner with the local counseling center and domestic abuse support center to provide counseling support to students who struggle with mental health, suicidal

thoughts, or domestic violence. The collaboration initiatives can help practitioners identify new ways of working and serving their students.

Use of Technology

Technology is necessary for students to learn and engage with their peers, faculty, and staff during the pandemic. It has also become an essential tool for practitioners to conduct their day-to-day work as essential frontline personnel. In addition, technology can be used as a temporary tool to help practitioners create an effective and supportive work environment during times of crisis. For example, practitioners can use technology to host virtual coffee sessions, virtual town halls, exercise programs, peer mentor/ support groups, and other activities during campus closure to cater to the needs of their students. Student affairs practitioners in Asia and Africa even utilized technology to set up "virtual resident assistants" and "wellbeing warriors" to support students who were living on campus during the pandemic (Perozzi et al., 2022). Other practitioners can also utilize technology to conduct enrollment and academic advising sessions and organize new student orientation for incoming students. Nyangarika and Mtani (2020) even suggested that practitioners use technology to monitor Tanzania's Open and Distance Learning programs.

In addition to using technology to support practitioners' work settings, practitioners can also utilize technology for learning and skill training and development (Loyola, 2021). Student affairs practitioners stay busy supporting and nurturing their students, yet they often do not receive the training and support they need. With technology, practitioners can attend relevant professional skill training workshops and join professional networks to stay informed with current student affairs practices, learn new technological skills, and acquire the emotional and moral support they desire to maintain and improve their work performance. Additionally, they can use technology to streamline procedures and remove unnecessary paperwork (Moneta, 2005). They can also advertise their programming through social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok), university websites, and different TV screen displays in different campus buildings. Most importantly, practitioners can connect and communicate with their peers and students directly via social media (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Clubhouse). During the pandemic, practitioners used social media to disseminate institutional information to students, faculty, and staff (Perozzi et al., 2022). In Zimbabwe, Bindura University of Science

Education empowered practitioners to embrace technology and accept changes that technology has brought to campus during the pandemic. They found that information that was shared through social media eliminated practitioners' fears, anxiety, misconceptions, shock, and depression (Lardi & Fuchs, 2013; Mutambisi et al., 2021).

Work-Life Balance

Burnout tends to develop due to prolonged exposure to stress-inducing circumstances (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Maslach, 2003; Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Burnout is shared among practitioners during the pandemic due to their long work hours and overly committed work attitude. To manage burnout, practitioners must keep a resilient mindset and focus on cultivating a work-life balance habit at work and in their daily lives. Student affairs and higher education leaders can also encourage and promote healthy lifestyle behaviors among practitioners by encouraging them to take short breaks at work, promote healthy working habits in the workplace, and provide work-life balance training workshops to practitioners who need additional support. Moreover, higher education leaders can schedule semiannual or annual meetings with practitioners, particularly entry-level professionals, to have regular employee wellness conversations. Outside the institution, practitioners can initiate wellness conversations by connecting with peer mentors whom they have met through professional associations or networks.

Turk et al. (2020) posited that the mental health of faculty and staff was among the top five most pressing issues for higher education administrators in 2020. In addition to the encouragement and support the practitioners receive from their student affairs and higher education leaders, practitioners need to take responsibility for their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This may include identifying ways to develop a work-life balance routine. For example, practitioners can focus on the tasks that demand their full attention and delegate nonessential administrative tasks to their office assistants or student workers (i.e., graduate assistants and student employees) who have the privilege of working remotely. This helps reduce their workload and provides a learning opportunity for their colleagues (i.e., graduate assistants) who plan to enter the profession. Additionally, practitioners should feel comfortable seeking professional help when needed, such as meeting with a professional counselor to discuss their struggles when they feel overwhelmed and stressed.

Finally, they also need to recognize their work limit and learn to say "No" when they already have too many added responsibilities and tasks.

Research reveals that practitioners often go above and beyond their job for the sake of their students (Anderson, 2020). Therefore, it is common for practitioners not to take time off due to their "able" and "can do" spirit. However, for their physical and mental health, they need to learn to take time off regularly to relax and recharge. Most importantly, they need to learn to disconnect or detach from their electronic devices after work hours unless they expect important text messages, emails, or phone calls.

Discussion and Conclusion

Student affairs practitioners have played a significant role in students' development, growth, and well-being in higher education institutions. Many practitioners work hard daily to provide their students with the best college experience. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned their world upside down. They were forced to adapt to a shift in their work practice and the uncertainty that was presented to them due to the constant changes in COVID-19 regulations and financial concerns that their higher education leadership experienced. Student affairs practitioners were key stakeholders assisting with the closing and reopening of their institutions. They also served as essential personnel during the pandemic to cater to the needs of students who could not return home. Additionally, they were first responders to student challenges and crises, whether in person or virtually (Moscaritolo et al., 2022). The accumulation of long work hours and the pressure of putting their life at risk for the sake of students have added physical, mental, and emotional stress on practitioners. Consequently, it affects their well-being and leads to mental health issues and burnout (Mkwizu & Junio-Sabio, 2022; Mullen et al., 2018). Many practitioners have begun to wonder if their work is worth the accompanying burnout (Pettit, 2021). Research shows that practitioners have started to leave the profession due to accumulated stress, burnout, and poor work-life balance in the last two years (Whitford, 2022). Nine in ten participants also remarked that salaries and compensation are not competitive enough given the level of education and experience required for their position (Whitford, 2022). To help student affairs practitioners regain their confidence and work motivation, student affairs and higher education leaders need to focus on the positive impacts and values of resiliency during times of crisis. Additionally, they should help practitioners

continue to find joy and satisfaction in helping students, make positive impacts in a broader community, understand the values of collaborating among colleagues, and engage in student affairs work (Seifert et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential roles and challenges practitioners have experienced in higher education institutions. For the work that practitioners have contributed to their institutions, higher education leaders are responsible for helping practitioners regain their love and passion for their profession and retain them in their institutions. This may include revising current institutional policies, creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment, and offering training, resources, and ongoing support systems to practitioners because the resiliency of practitioners affects the future of student support services and the field of higher education. Student affairs practitioners who survived the pandemic should recognize that their ability to survive the pandemic has made them stronger and feel more confident in handling the next institutional challenge. They should use their experience as a teachable moment for other practitioners who are new to the field so that they can encourage one another to grow professionally. Practitioners should also identify new ways to manage their well-being, stress, and burnout.

Practical Implications

This chapter provides important findings about the challenges experienced by practitioners and resiliency factors that can improve practitioners' well-being and work-life balance. In addition, several practical implications for student affairs and higher education leaders have been revealed:

First, higher education professionals must acknowledge that practitioners' current well-being issues are long-term, interrelated, and cyclical problems. They need to view the challenges related to the pandemic as a wake-up call to issues that have historically persisted in the field but were magnified and accelerated considering the global disaster. Most importantly, they need to start taking the first step to unravel the kinks in a long overdue system and develop more effective methods of adjusting to the "new normal" in higher education.

Second, the study reveals that practitioners have experienced high stress and burnout during the pandemic. To help reduce practitioners' stress and burnout issues, higher education leaders should focus and invest in employees' well-being by offering ongoing professional development opportunities and counseling support. They should also encourage

practitioners to develop collaborative working relationships with faculty, staff, and departments across campuses, as well as organizations in the community.

Third, student affairs and higher education leaders should learn from the recent COVID-19 experience and identify areas in which they have done well and areas where they can use improvement. They should develop emergency protocols and training plans that can be incorporated and used in employees' hiring and onboarding training.

Fourth, based on what we have learned in the past two years, we know things will not be the same post-COVID-19 pandemic. The "new normal" is an age characterized by innovation aided by technological advancement. As students' desires change and interest in hybrid educational models grows, student affairs must adapt and be innovative as they continue serving their student population. This may include using technology to serve the growing distance learner population and working remotely with colleagues worldwide.

FUTURE RESEARCH

While most existing research surrounding the effects of the pandemic on the field of higher education focuses on students, scholars need to conduct more research related to student affairs practitioners' lives and work. Specifically, there is an interest in organizational structures that support the unique nature of student affairs work and studies regarding the well-being and job satisfaction of practitioners who spend long hours planning and serving their students. Additionally, scholars should consider researching the job satisfaction of student affairs practitioners who work remotely postpandemic. Future research focused on these areas can lead to meaningful changes in how higher education leadership takes care of practitioners, which opens the door for more positive systemic changes within the realm of student affairs.

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Sense of Place and Belonging: The Role of Service-Learning and Faculty Development Centers in Promoting Community Among Hybrid and Remote Faculty Members

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INTRODUCTION

The coronavirusdisease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemicpresented a myriad of challenges for most workplace environments. Strategies aimed at ensuring remote employees maintained a sense of belonging within their

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55

organization became ubiquitous. Supportive efforts often took the form of virtual social events or online human resource programs. Higher education administrators faced similar issues with promoting faculty engagement and community service with the onset of the pandemic. The professoriate, however, represents a relatively unique role in comparison to many other sectors of the workforce. As a result, episodic programs are potentially less effective in supporting faculty belonging, especially those working remotely, compared to academic development efforts, which represent a more systematic approach (Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017).

A possible opportunity for colleges and universities seeking to maintain faculty belonging across the traditional-to-remote workplace continuum may be found in reconceptualizing faculty development centers (i.e., Center for Faculty Engagement, Center for Teaching Excellence) away from serving as support structures for online teaching and instead as institutional catalysts for faculty success through the implementation of high impact teaching practices, specifically service-learning. Although it may appear counterintuitive to suggest a shift away from promoting quality virtual instruction as remote work increases, an increased presence of academic units specifically charged with administering virtual instruction has resulted in the opportunity for faculty development centers to reimagine their roles around faculty innovation (Kelley et al., 2017). Professional development explicitly focused on service-learning provides a specific and unique opportunity to support faculty engagement because of an alignment between multiple potential individual motivators for faculty members and goals of the institution.

The following chapter will explore this concept within the context of emerging scholarship regarding faculty development centers as well as literature on the role of faculty development on faculty belonging utilizing support for online teaching as a recent example. Furthermore, the effects of service-learning on faculty learning and engagement and frameworks such as Organizational Support Theory and the concept of Corporate and Social Responsibility will ground the discussion.

A Brief Overview of Faculty Development

The modern American professoriate emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century with the professionalization of faculty work. This shift included an increase in disciplinary expertise, the development of professional ranks, and the awarding of tenure and promotion along with the privileges of

academic freedom (Thelin, 2019). Although academia benefits from a great deal of autonomy, it is nevertheless still vulnerable to social trends and public policy. With each shift in direction, the academy has taken on additional responsibilities that have increased workload demands.

By the end of the twentieth century, the workload of American faculty had increased, and the division of faculty time between the three pillars of teaching, research, and service duties (Boyer, 1990) varied according to the type of institution (Altbach, 2016). The faculty experience is further differentiated as many institutions shift to increasing numbers of contingent faculty and geo-separated adjunct faculty (Taylor & Bunkowski, 2020) and as new types of institutions, such as online for-profit institutions, unbundle faculty roles (Maxey & Kezar, 2016). Increasingly, as public funding of higher education has waned, governmental pressure for increased accountability has renewed the emphasis on teaching in faculty work (Altbach, 2016). Further developing teaching effectiveness is the conceptualization of teaching as scholarly work (Boyer, 1990; Hutchings et al., 2011).

Support for Online Teaching

Since the late twentiethcentury, technological innovation has both advanced and complicated faculty workloads. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, student demand for online and hybrid course programs increased (Allen & Seaman, 2016), and faculty members were expected to meet that demand, often with little support. Although increasing numbers of faculty developed technological expertise, there continued to be challenges in teaching with new modalities and with ever-changing technology (Diaz et al., 2009). These concerns include external barriers such as time, workload, lack of or insufficient incentives including compensation and rewards, and inadequate training and technology (Hunt et al., 2014; Lloyd et al., 2012; Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013; Terosky & Heasley, 2015), as well as intrinsic concerns such as feelings of fear and anxiety (Bunk et al., 2015; Horvitz et al., 2015).

Although our focus is on higher education in the U.S., these barriers and concerns are not unique to this geographic location. Setting aside specific cultural differences that may impact faculty attitudes toward teaching with technology and distinct economic concerns in different geographic areas, a common theme in many international studies aligned with those in the U.S. is an emphasis on the need for strong administrator

support (compensation policies, promotion and tenure policies, training, up to date technology). These aspects are also noted, for example, in studies conducted in Iran (Zamani et al., 2016), Guyana (Livingstone, 2015), Turkey (Al-Alawneh, 2014), and Tanzania (Kisanga & Ireson, 2015). In an earlier study in Jordan, the researchers noted the importance of the actions of university administrators, but they also emphasized faculty concerns about normative pressure as a potential barrier or bridge to faculty participation (Al-alak & Alnawas, 2011). Normative pressure has also been examined among U.S. faculty (Hopewell, 2012; Hung & Jeng, 2013; Porter et al., 2016). Other key points noted in the literature focused on faculty concerns about student support and access (equity) and quality (Al-Alawneh, 2014; Livingstone, 2015), which were all noted as points of significance by the U.S. (Allen & Seaman, 2016).

To address these challenges, faculty need a range of institutional support systems (e.g., policy positions, compensation, strategic plans) (Diaz et al., 2009) that prioritize teaching with technology (Bunk et al., 2015; Lloyd et al., Ortagus & Stedrak, 2013; Terosky & Heasley, 2015). This emphasis on increased institutional or administrative support for distance education, often expressed in general terms, articulated a need to feel supported by administrators to perceive that their work in teaching online was valued. A useful framework for understanding the value of such institutional support is found in Organizational Support Theory, more specifically, Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which emphasizes the significance of the employee's (i.e., faculty member's) perception that their work is valued and their well-being is important to the organization (Kim et al., 2016; Shanock et al., 2019). For participation in new teaching and learning modalities or the application of new high-impact pedagogical practices (HIPs), institutional approaches that could generate POS and reinforce the commitment to the institution include ongoing faculty development, policies that recognize the workload demands of these modalities and practices, and reward structures such as promotion and tenure policies that recognize these efforts, including engaged scholarship and the scholarship of teaching and learning related to the online and hybrid environment. Furthermore, the alignment of these activities with institutional goals enhances faculty perceptions of the competence of the institution and contributes to a sense of perceived organizational support (Kim et al., 2016).

The role faculty development centers play in demonstrating organizational support for faculty reached a pivotal point during the pandemic.

Previous trends included the elimination of some centers because of constricting budgets and the absorption of others into different departments or offices with unique missions (Schumann et al., 2013). As the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to online instruction, the need for faculty support increased. Seaman and Seaman (2021) found that "Twice as many faculty taught online during the Fall 2020 term as compared to previous years" (p. 10).

During the pandemic, faculty development centers provided necessary, far-reaching pedagogy and technology training as colleges and universities shifted to emergency remote instruction. Johnson et al. (2020) surveyed faculty and administrators from 672 U.S. institutions about their needs during the fall of 2020. Topping their list of concerns was to increase support for students, followed by an emphasis on best practices and support for faculty (pp. 14–16). The researchers recommend extending faculty support beyond technology training to pedagogy, assessment, and a better understanding of the needs of diverse learners (p. 17). In their study, Jelińska and Paradowski (2021) surveyed instructors from 118 countries, including the U.S., from kindergarten through higher education. Their detailed study highlights (among other points) the initial importance of instructor attitude and the longer-term significance of training, support, and infrastructure in instructor resilience in the new modality (p. 319).

As the pandemic progressed, faculty confidence in teaching with technology increased. This was demonstrated in the U.S. (Gordy et al., 2022), and beyond. Trevisan et al. (2023) surveyed faculty in the U.S., Italy, and the Netherlands and focused on resilience. They note the taxing impact of online teaching during the pandemic but emphasize the increased significance of institutional support, particularly individualized professional development (p. 93). The need for continued institutional support persists. In Saudi Arabia, for example, two recent studies emphasize the importance of institutional support, including training in technology and pedagogy, developing infrastructure, and improved communication (Al-Freih, 2022; Alharbi et al., 2022).

As the emergency transition has passed and demand for training and support plateaued, an opportunity has arisen for these faculty development centers to reassess their approach and expand their reach across their institutions (Hakala, 2022). "Now is the time," Hakala explains, "for teaching centers to take a leadership role in the institution and help faculty understand that teaching and learning are distinctly relational processes" (2022, para. 6). A crucial factor in strengthening this new role for faculty

development centers is an emphasis on creating a sense of community and belonging. Developing a culture of support and connectedness across institutions is vital to the long-term success of faculty development initiatives (Eib & Miller, 2006). A sense of connectedness and belonging contributes to a more engaged faculty (SEP, 2022) and has been particularly apparent with online, adjunct faculty (Ferencz, 2017; Taylor & Bunkowski, 2020). The supportive community extends beyond the faculty peer group to the reciprocal process of teaching and learning. Through well-designed, active, student-centered courses and learning environments, faculty and students can cocreate a community of learners that fosters student success (Jankowski, 2017, p. 12) and better meets the needs of diverse learners (Johnson et al., 2020).

Service-Learning as a Faculty Engagement Mechanism

An interesting trend in employee engagement research is the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and employee engagement. The concept of CSR is typically associated with the demands that external stakeholders place on for-profit organizations to engage in business practices that promote social, economic, and environmental wellbeing (Aguinis, 2011; McWilliams & Siegel, 2001; Orlitzky et al., 2003). Often viewed as an essential element of organizational strategy (Waddock et al., 2002), CSR is commonly used in external marketing efforts (Suliman & Al-Khatib, 2014).

In addition to external stakeholders, CSR also pertains to internal (i.e., employee) expectations of organizational action. Employees have been found to report stronger job satisfaction and commitment to employers when individuals believed CSR was important to the organization (Valentine & Fleischman, 2008; Peterson, 2004; Brammer et al., 2007). In response, companies may elect to develop programs in which employees are encouraged to volunteer on paid time (CECP, 2007; Fegley, 2006; Timberland, 2007). Such programs, when clearly supported by the organization, can foster greater organizational loyalty, identification, and pride in employees (Veleva et al., 2012). Individuals who more strongly identify with their employers are likely to engage in behaviors that align with organizational goals (Eisenberger et al., 2001); therefore, such measures represent meaningful metrics for managers seeking to promote employee engagement.

There are multiple rationales attempting to explain why CSR tends to promote greater employee engagement. Reasonings are typically based on the merit of providing opportunities for individuals to discover greater congruence between personal values and their work (Glavas, 2012), and the facilitation of employees' perceived contribution to the greater good (Rosso et al., 2010) can in turn improve their own self-concept and organizational identification (Grant et al., 2008). It is worth noting, however, that the positive effects of CSR-related programs are potentially strongest when employee involvement is embedded into one's job rather than a peripheral activity (Aguinis & Glavas, 2013) since organizational pressure to engage in extra-role CSR activities can prompt negative effects on employees (Grant, 2012).

The concept of CSR is generally understood within the scope of the for-profit business sector, but there is an analogous term in higher education and faculty work: community engagement. As previously noted, the expectations of the professoriate predominantly consist of teaching, scholarship, and service. Community engagement is essentially an external orientation of these three domains and is reflective of the Kellogg Commission's 1999 call for colleges and universities to reconceptualize "their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities, however community may be defined" (1999, p. 9). The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2002) summarized such calls when employing the term "stewards of place."

Within the umbrella term of community engagement, service-learning encompasses the domain of teaching and is likely the most applicable element to the greatest number of faculty members considering the current prevalence of nontenure and adjunct instructors with little, if any, research expectations. Service-learning can be generally understood as a course-based educational experience that is centered around an intentional and reciprocally beneficial service activity that addresses subject-matter learning outcomes through student reflection and aligns with community partner goals (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995). In a comparable manner to employee involvement in CSR, faculty engagement in service-learning has been associated with a variety of positive outcomes, such as reinvigorated teaching, deeper relationships with students, professional recognition, and an increased appreciation for the application of an academic discipline to community issues (Jacoby, 2015).

As previously noted, CSR initiatives do not thrive and can be counter-productive when not integrated within employee work. Accordingly, just as there are relatively clear comparisons between the effects of CSR and service-learning on employee engagement and belonging, it is important to note that faculty involvement in service-learning suffers when it is not viewed as valued by the institution or external to their existing work (Bloomgarden & O'Meara, 2007; O'Meara, 2013; O'Meara & Niehaus, 2009). Therefore, the challenge is clearly articulating the practice's worth to the institution through the existing framework of teaching excellence (Lewing & Bunkowski, 2022).

IMPLICATIONS

The preceding discussion has attempted to provide a rationale for framing service-learning as an explicit and incentivized faculty engagement strategy through recognition of the practice within the existing framework of teaching excellence and, consequently, faculty reward processes. While partnerships between faculty development centers and stand-alone community engagement centers can provide effective collaborations supportive of an institution's community engagement initiatives, such work may be more effective if human, fiscal, and intellectual resources are intentionally combined to provide faculty development and incentives (Lewing & Bunkowski, 2022). An integrative approach, rather than that of two isolated units, may be the most efficient route to sustaining civically based teaching, especially at institutions with limited resources. Such an approach could entail the establishment of a single faculty engagement structure within academic affairs that clearly prioritizes service-learning as an evidence-based teaching practice and champions faculty development and engagement within reward processes. If such a reorganization is not appropriate for a given institution, a feasible step for academic administrators would include formalizing intentional collaborations between faculty development centers and stand-alone community engagement centers as part of a long-term portfolio of jointly led faculty development initiatives. This action item may appear relatively simplistic and self-evident, but there is initial evidence that most collaborations between centers are relatively episodic and may not emphasize faculty development (Lewing & Bunkowski, 2022).

Aside from exploring the general effectiveness of the abovementioned recommendations for practice, future research could explore how an integrative approach that reconceptualizes faculty development centers could

potentially be leveraged specifically at promoting the recruitment, development, and retention of faculty members from historically underrepresented demographics (Lewing, 2021). Faculty members from Black and Latin(o/a/x) backgrounds are often more likely to engage in community-based teaching but often face challenges in reward processes. Structural approaches that more clearly frame service-learning, community-based research and the scholarship of teaching and learning as valued endeavors could prove helpful in supporting a sense of belonging and organizational support among faculty members from historically underrepresented demographics. Furthermore, research is also needed concerning the nuances of adjunct faculty engagement and practices that promote their sense of belonging. Analogous approaches to scholarship related to engaging part-time contract employees in CSR initiatives in the business sector may provide appropriate methods of understanding the nuances of effectively engaging part-time instructors as well.

Discussion

Service-learning, much like CSR initiatives, can positively affect the sense of belonging across a university's faculty members in addition to the myriad of benefits for students, communities, and institutions. However, such effects can only manifest if service-learning is supported by institutional structures and processes and is implemented by individual faculty members. Faculty development centers are often highly visible administrative units broadly focused on exemplary teaching (Kelley et al., 2017). In contrast to more niche coordinating structures specifically supporting service-learning and community engagement, faculty development centers may be situated to most effectively frame service-learning as teaching excellence within faculty reward structures. Altering faculty members' understanding of service-learning from the category of service to an indicator of teaching excellence is key to widespread integration of civic learning into the curriculum (Cress, 2012; Rowe et al., 2015; Simonet, 2008), and faculty development centers offer a visible platform for doing so. Such a consolidation of effort may be even more prescient for institutions encountering significant resource limitations in which faculty development must serve multiple goals.

Texas A&M University-Central Texas recently adopted a similar consolidation strategy by combining the institution's Faculty Center for Teaching & Learning and the Faculty Center for Civic & Community

Engagement to form the Center for Faculty Engagement. In doing so, the new center explicitly promotes service-learning as a high impact teaching practice. The move was prompted following reflections regarding the changes needed on behalf of the two formerly separate structures to best serve faculty engagement during a period of isolation and disengagement resulting from the recent pandemic. Like many other institutions, most of the oversight and facilitation of online teaching at A&M-Central Texas was directed by the Division of Technology Enhanced Learning; therefore, the Center for Teaching & Learning was shifting the emphasis of its faculty development portfolio to more heavily center on high impact teaching practices. Concurrently, the Faculty Center for Civic & Community Engagement was attempting to transition the institution from a critical mass building phase of service-learning institutionalization to a more established stage of quality building. The identified tipping point was more clearly establishing service-learning as an indicator of teaching excellence.

Human and financial resources were limited when the two centers existed independently. However, the merger and combined resources allowed a greater portfolio of faculty development, including fellowships aimed at introducing faculty members to effective service-learning implementation, a seminar series on framing tenure and promotion narratives around service-learning and community engagement, and communities of practice revolving around the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Often, the impetus behind an institutional push for faculty implementation of high-impact practices, notably service-learning, revolves around student success and community support. However, as the preceding discussion has attempted to articulate, academic and instructional development around service-learning can provide a driver for faculty engagement by efficiently engaging in work that overlaps multiple areas of faculty motivations and institutional reward processes. Beyond the pragmatic promotion of faculty development, the potentially unique nuance of the consolidated focus at A&M-Central Texas is the vital role faculty engagement and organizational support play in its mission and philosophy. As depicted in Figs. 4.1 and 4.2, the center has been reconceptualized as a liaison and intermediary between faculty members and administrators to assist in the facilitation of the reciprocal relationship outlined in Organizational Support Theory literature.
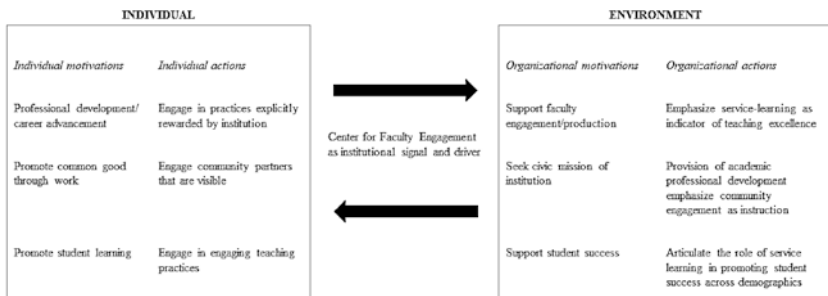
Fig. 4.1 Faculty engagement as alignment between potential motivations and actions of individual and organization. (Note: Reciprocal interaction of individual and organizational motivations and actions related to faculty engagement. The Center for Faculty Engagement serves to highlight the relationships and work with faculty to maximize opportunities for professional growth)

LESSONS LEARNED

Fig. 4.2 Selected Center for Faculty Engagement initiatives that promote the development of community. (Note: The Center for Faculty Engagement actively promotes community and belonging to support professional growth for faculty and student success (Jankowski, 2017; SEP, 2022))

At our institution, communication continues to be a challenge. It has been more than a year since the merger of the two Faculty Centers ("Teaching & Learning" with "Civic & Community Engagement"), but many on our campus have yet to fully grasp the change. Despite our efforts to publicize what we offer (in multiple locations online), confusion persists about our combined service approach, and we are often conflated with the Division

of Technology Enhanced Learning. To address this confusion, we have added a new channel of communication, available internally and externally to the university, to promote our new initiatives. In addition, we have proposed that many of the new center's initiatives be included as components of the university's new academic strategic plan. This will reinforce the role of the Center at the institutional level and more firmly establish its place as a faculty resource through the division of academic affairs.

CONCLUSION

Promoting employees' sense of belonging and engagement has gained increased attention in step with recent increases in remote and hybrid work. Faculty work has a long history of autonomy and flexibility, and that aspect is unlikely to significantly diminish with the continuing upward trend of virtual and hybrid instruction. Therefore, the preceding discussion attempted to examine why higher education administrators should consider service-learning as a specific opportunity to support faculty belonging and engagement across the virtual-to-traditional spectrum.

As previously discussed, there is potential for service-learning to be analogous to CSR initiatives in business. However, faculty engagement in service-learning is often a counternormative effort (Clayton & Ash, 2004) and requires institutional provision of academic development opportunities (Chism et al., 2013). According to Cook-Sather and Felten (2017), "institutions contribute to faculty members' sense of belonging in a variety of ways, but perhaps most systematically through academic development efforts" (p. 4). Reconceptualizing faculty development centers as a key driver of faculty engagement in service-learning has the potential to center service-learning within the existing expectations of faculty (i.e., teaching) and reward systems (i.e., tenure and promotion) while providing the type of academic development efforts so strongly connected to faculty sense of belonging.

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An Exploratory Examination of Online Learning During and After the Pandemic: Learning Goal Congruence in Lecturing and Research Activities

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INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that we are now living in a postpandemic era. Most universities and colleges worldwide have moved away from online or hybrid courses to in-person instruction. However, when the epidemic is brought under control, its influence will not fade away. Due to the pandemic, universities and teachers have been compelled to shift from traditional face-to-face instruction to online and hybrid models with inadequate

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73

preparation and cognitive reserve. How to prepare for teaching in a completely different environment while maintaining teaching quality is an essential topic for teachers. Unfortunately, it remains a problem in the postpandemic era when students switch from online to in-person learning environments.

The traditional educational management system confronts numerous new issues and circumstances. For instance, how can online instruction, which began during the outbreak, be connected to formal postin-person instruction? How do universities compute online and in-person teaching hours, credits, and instructors' workloads? How can universities and professors ensure the quality of online and in-person instruction? How can lecturers assist students in transitioning from online to in-person learning? How to differentiate between online and in-person classroom teaching materials and effectively collaborate with TA via email or online platforms. How can lecturers guarantee that most students can participate in online learning or discussion? How can students who might be having difficulty following the online teaching schedule be dealt with? How should instructors deal with this situation or inclusive class? Should instructors spend additional time working with students who are having learning difficulties? How do instructors schedule another online exam for students if students miss the exam?

Online and hybrid teaching introduces not only new challenges to education but also extraordinary opportunities. If we develop innovative thinking and novel ideas to embrace this unique opportunity and advance education and teaching reform, we would transform adversity into an advantage and a crisis into an opportunity. First, this is an unprecedented large-scale online education project that has, in a short amount of time, acquired a great deal of experience and lessons, making it worthy of a thorough summary and discussion. Never has there been a greater understanding of the significance and need to extend online education and instruction. As a result, online education has ushered in an unprecedented chance for substantial expansion. Third, the public's understanding of the importance and urgency of educational change will be significantly enhanced, and the discussion of educational theory and concepts will become more intense. In addition, there would be an emphasis on reviewing and reflecting on the education direction, future education path, and the development of educational technologies and specializations. We interviewed sixteen professors (most of whom are principal investigators) from twelve universities in the United States and China, including math

departments, statistics departments, psychology, cognitive sciences, engineering, humanities, and the arts, to further answer these issues and investigate the impact of the pandemic on online education. With nearly an hour of in-depth interviews, the challenges of online and hybrid teaching, the forms of coupling coworkers with students, collaboration levels, and technological issues were examined to demonstrate the pandemic's impact on higher education issues.

Synchronous, Asynchronous, and Hybrid Online Learning Before and After Coronavirus 2019

Advances in technology have profoundly altered the educational environment, resulting in the creation of new kinds of distant learning. In recent years, synchronous and asynchronous remote learning systems have gained popularity, each providing unique benefits and difficulties to students and teachers alike. The coronavirus 2019 epidemic has highlighted the necessity of effective and accessible online learning, driving educators to quickly adapt and develop unique teaching approaches to engage students and maximize learning experiences in this technology-driven era. This study will investigate the features, benefits, and drawbacks of synchronous and asynchronous remote learning, as well as the feasibility of combining these techniques to provide a more complete and adaptable learning experience for a varied student population.

Synchronous distance learning is an educational approach where both the instructor and students engage in learning simultaneously through video conferencing (Ruiz et al., 2006). This learning mode allows students to have their questions answered in real time, and it also reduces feelings of isolation, as it enhances social presence and community (McDaniels et al., 2016; Lowenthal et al., 2017). Social presence refers to "the degree of salience of the other person in a mediated interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal interaction" (Parker et al., 1978, p. 65). It is an essential factor that determines the level of interaction in an online learning environment (Mykota & Duncan, 2007), while interaction is a crucial dimension of the sense of community (Rovai, 2002). In synchronous learning, students often develop a strong sense of community as they feel connected to their classmates and instructor and are highly engaged in classroom activities (Young & Bruce, 2011; Shackelford & Maxwell, 2012; Yamagata-Lynch, 2014; Lin & Gao,

2020). Moreover, real-time discussions and immediate feedback shorten the perceived distance among students, thus fostering a strong sense of community (Pattillo, 2007; Parker & Martin, 2010; Francescucci & Rohani, 2019). However, synchronous classes may become long lectures that encourage multitasking and distraction (Lederman, 2020). Synchronous courses can also be challenging to participate in, especially when there are conflicts with personal schedules, which can leave learners feeling frustrated and fatigued (Schulman, 2020). This situation has changed during the coronavirus 2019 pandemic, as students are eager to learn how to utilize emergency remote teaching more effectively to achieve academic success (Shim & Lee, 2020; Mutmainah et al., 2023). Coronavirus 2019 has necessitated a rapid learning curve for educators, who have had to swiftly adapt and develop novel teaching methodologies that engage students and optimize the learning experience in a technology-driven era (Ahshan, 2021; Chiu, 2022). This is especially beneficial for students with emotional and speech anxiety, as learning in the familiar and comfortable surroundings of their homes provides a conducive environment (Prentiss, 2021; Mihai et al., 2022).

Asynchronous distance learning refers to a learning approach where students and instructors do not engage in real-time interaction. Instead, instructors rely on emails and online discussion boards to conduct interactions (Ruiz et al., 2006). This approach offers several advantages, including the flexibility for students to engage in learning at any time, allowing students to work at their own pace, and providing opportunities for students to reflect on learning content and refine their contributions (Hrastinski, 2008; Kim et al., 2016; Riggs & Linder, 2016; Pang & Jen, 2018). Additionally, students have more time to express their thoughts in a thoughtful manner on an asynchronous online discussion board (Brierton et al., 2016; Collison et al., 2000). However, asynchronous online classes have limited interaction, especially real-time interaction with peers and instructors, which can lead to feelings of frustration due to a lack of immediate response or timely support (Vonderwell, 2003; Frimming & Bordelon, 2016). Scholars have noted that students may develop a sense of isolation and loneliness due to a lack of interpersonal relationships with classmates and the instructor, leading to a perceived disconnection from the learning community (McMahon, 2013; Bowers & Kumar, 2015; Parte & Herrador-Alcaide, 2021; Woods, 2002). These feelings of isolation can further contribute to the online course dropout rate (McMahon, 2013; Ali & Smith, 2015; Bowers & Kumar, 2015). Based on the research,

undergraduate students generally expressed some level of satisfaction with asynchronous distance education. However, the study found a positive correlation between satisfaction and students' ownership of a computer and access to the internet (Taner et al., 2021). Asynchrony was helpful in improving learning outcomes and abilities in utilizing office software, as well as promoting learning independence (Mairing et al., 2021).

Blending synchronous and asynchronous online learning has been recognized as a highly effective mode of learning delivery (Gregory, 2003). It is often referred to as the hybrid teaching and learning model. The combination of both modes can bring various benefits to student learning. For instance, asynchronous learning allows instructors to provide extra content exposure to students who require additional time without slowing down the class, while synchronous learning enables instructors to read students' body language to determine if they understand the content and provide further assistance (Horvitz et al., 2019). Furthermore, students feel validated by the instructor and their peers during live meetings (Norberg et al., 2017). However, conducting blended courses comes with its own set of challenges. Clinefelter and Aslanian (2015) reported that 75% of online students who are not opposed to participating in synchronous meetings cannot do so regularly due to personal scheduling issues. Among these students, 33% would not mind meeting two or three times per course, while 18% are willing to meet only once per course (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2015). Moreover, many instructors prefer teaching asynchronously for several reasons (Finol, 2020). First, streaming videos and live meetings require fast internet connections, which not all students have access to, and low-speed internet can influence course quality. Second, instructors may face technical difficulties such as audio and video troubleshooting, which can take up a significant portion of online meetings. In asynchronous courses, instructors can take their time to set up the learning path and maintain good course quality. Additionally, student conflicts in personal schedules can prevent students from logging in on time for live meetings, particularly in large classes. Finally, an hour-long lecture or live meeting can be tiring for both the instructor and learners. However, concerns regarding online learning have been reevaluated in light of COVID-19. Due to policy changes implemented by the CDC, schools now have the option to provide a hybrid approach that combines online and in-person learning, catering to the needs of students who prefer face-to-face interaction while providing greater flexibility for those who face health or scheduling difficulties. Additionally, the pandemic has had a

significant impact on the global economy, prompting many individuals to return to school or pursue education in their spare time. As a result, the demographics of traditional college students are changing, with older adults seeking higher education, individuals returning to school to complete their degrees, and those seeking new career paths. This new blended learning style is better suited for these nontraditional, part-time, and remote learners (McKenzie & Solovyova, 2021; Irani-Kermani et al., 2021; Whalley et al., 2021).

In conclusion, synchronous and asynchronous distance learning systems, as well as their hybrid forms, have had a tremendous impact on the educational scene, especially in light of the coronavirus 2019 epidemic. While each technique has advantages and disadvantages, combining different modalities of learning has the potential to produce a more engaging, inclusive, and adaptable educational experience for students with diverse needs and situations. As the pandemic continues to have an impact on the world and the way we approach education, more research into the challenges and opportunities presented by these modes of learning will be critical to the development of effective and accessible online learning environments that cater to the evolving needs of students and educators alike.

The Challenges of Online and Hybrid Teaching: Decentralization and Desynchronization

With the rapid expansion of technology and its associated fields, agreement on standard definitions and terminologies remains a challenge among practitioners and researchers in the domain of learning technology. Online learning has been defined as the ability to access learning activities through technology, and it has been characterized as a contemporary form of remote learning that provides access to educational opportunities for nontraditional and disadvantaged learners. Hybrid course delivery methods have emerged as a blend of in-person classroom instruction and online activities. The fundamental differences between online and in-person learning are explored through three key domains: decentralization, open source, and desynchronization. This chapter focuses on the impact of these domains on teaching and learning methodologies in virtual education, including the challenges and opportunities they present. The research question for this chapter is as follows: How do decentralization, open source, and desynchronization impact teaching and learning

methodologies in virtual education? The hypothesis is that these domains have profound impacts on teaching and learning methodologies in virtual education.

Agreement on standard definitions and terminologies remains elusive among practitioners and researchers as the domain of learning technology and its associated fields continue to expand (Lowenthal & Wilson, 2010; Volery & Lord, 2000; Moore et al., 2011). The majority of authors define online learning as the ability to access learning activities via technology (Benson, 2002; Conrad, 2002; Carliner, 2004). Scholars have characterized online learning as a contemporary form of remote learning that provides access to educational opportunities for nontraditional and disadvantaged learners (Benson, 2002; Conrad, 2002). For the purposes of this chapter, online learning and teaching denote online lectures delivered through software such as Zoom, Webex, and Microsoft Teams. Hybrid course delivery methods incorporate a blend of in-person classroom instruction and online activities. This approach minimizes the amount of time students spend in traditional face-to-face courses and increases the emphasis on online course delivery (Mupinga, 2005).

Virtual learning represents a significant departure from traditional in-person education, with numerous changes in teaching and learning methodologies. This session focuses on three key domains—decentralization, open source, and desynchronization—to explore the fundamental differences between online and in-person learning. Decentralization arises from the internet's nonhierarchical, parallel structure, in contrast to the traditional instructor-centered, top-down approach (Gaynor, 1998; Sawada & Ragatz, 2005). In-person education used to revolve around the instructors, who held a dominant role in teaching activities. However, virtual teaching and learning have altered this dynamic. Participants indicated that they no longer felt at the center of online education. For instance, in Zoom teaching, instructors may appear to be at the center, but in reality, no one is. Simply being a network administrator does not automatically confer gravitational centrality to instructors.

First, virtual learning is characterized by a lack of centralized authority or hierarchy, with course-related information and content distributed equitably among the network's nodes (Hemetsberger & Reinhardt, 2009). Students can access online materials easily and quickly by entering keywords into the search engine during or after virtual courses. However, this instant search capability may discourage students from communicating with instructors, leading to a decrease in the instructors' prominence

as the primary course content resource. Based on feedback from participants and course evaluations, it is evident that students tend to ask fewer questions during virtual classes and instead search for answers to their course-related questions online. This trend was observed among the fifteen professors from ten different disciplines who were interviewed. In laboratory classes, students collaborate online using tools such as Google Docs, Overleaf, or Co-Lab and ask fewer questions than they would in traditional face-to-face classes. This is especially true in quantitative fields such as engineering and math, where there are numerous mathematical formulas to consider. In in-person instruction, students can ask questions and interrupt the lecturer at any time if they encounter a problem. However, in online education, students tend to seek immediate answers to their questions from websites such as Google, leading to the dilemma that students who seek direct answers may not gain a thorough understanding of the solutions. This approach may lead to a lack of deeper comprehension of problem solving, which can pose difficulties during examinations where questions may be changed, and students may lack a profound grasp of the reasons for the absence of the correct response. Hybrid methods now make it easier for instructors to ask questions, with students more inclined to ask questions during in-person encounters with their instructors. Many instructors remain online for ten to fifteen minutes after class to assist students with their questions. However, students still ask fewer questions online than they would during in-person or hybrid classes, which could impact the self-motivated learning goal, a critical factor in adult learning (Lin & Wang, 2015).

Second, virtual education introduces desynchronization as a means of disseminating teaching and learning. Online learning behavior is autonomous and spontaneous rather than unified and constant. It is not practical to expect everyone to attend and leave class simultaneously over the internet. However, making it a standard is not appropriate because it does not align with the internet's characteristics. The internet's most significant advantage is that it eliminates space-time boundaries, enabling learning to occur anytime and anywhere. Instructors can record their lectures and upload them to platforms such as Canvas or Blackboard after class. Consequently, students do not miss the course or lose access to original course materials; they can watch the lecture videos without temporal and spatial limitations. For students, teaching and learning no longer need to occur concurrently in time and space. However, they must engage in online learning within a limited time frame (Lin & Gao, 2020).

Moreover, desynchronization in teaching and learning offers teachers and students greater flexibility. Along with text materials, the internet provides instructors with an array of multimedia resources, such as graphics, photos, videos, streaming media, virtual reality, augmented reality, and mixed reality, that cannot be conveyed verbally or acquired through conventional face-to-face instruction. These multimedia tools can assist instructors in presenting concepts and formulas more efficiently and naturally. Studies have shown that multimedia can help readers and viewers remember more content in stimuli and create a comprehensive mental representation of the content (Luan, 2016, 2021; Luan et al., 2022). Desynchronization also provides teachers with buffer time for course preparation and student inquiries. For example, one professor stated that he had to teach a course he had never taught before because another instructor had to take medical leave in the middle of the semester. In addition to flipping through the syllabus, online resources provided him with a time buffer to answer students' questions, allowing him to search for answers and prepare a proper interpretation for students. Online learning presents significant challenges for students. They are exposed to an environment rich in information and distractions, lacking the traditional learning environment of a classroom and the dialog with peers seated next to them. They can only learn by observing the instructor's online instruction and after-class videos, and they must address their problems through text input, such as email or online chat, or explore the web for solutions. However, the information, knowledge, and skills acquired through online learning surpass the scope stipulated in teaching materials and syllabi. Information acquisition, screening, selection, integration, reorganization, online communication, and multitype cooperation are essential skills in the current era, and they represent core literacy and skills for future career development.

In effect, decentralization offers a more effective and structured methodology for teaching and learning in hybrid education. Based on the interviews, most courses during the 2020 school year were hybrid, with students completing one week of online courses and one week of in-person courses. During the second week of in-person instruction, students were encouraged to ask questions, which required them to complete their homework while engaging in an online lecture or watching a video.

In contrast to traditional in-person instruction, this technique requires students to be more present in class and actively engage with the teacher's teaching model. Students must be proactive in identifying academic issues

and finding answers to their queries, receiving new information from the teacher's response. The pandemic facilitated the transition from passive to active learning for students. Furthermore, many professors have had students lead other lab members in group reading activities, such as the Reading Club/Journal Club, during the pandemic. For example, ACLab at Northeastern University offers two hours of student-led learning activities every Monday morning through Zoom meetings, alternating between a reading club and a journal club. Students can use the mark functions provided by Zoom to highlight key points in papers, while other students can post their questions through the chat function responding to the paper. The media research lab at Peking University provides an alternative way for students to exchange their ideas and make comments on other students' research opinions by using the WeChat group chat function. WeChat is a free messaging and calling application available for iOS, Android, Windows, and MacOS. During the online lecture, students are allowed to post their opinions or questions in the WeChat group. After class, each student is required to review the chat history and write a reflection essay. By offering more opportunities to express their ideas without interrupting the lecture, students feel more involved in the course content.

Through the preceding examination of online and hybrid instruction, it is evident that the most significant factor influencing virtual learning is teaching methods and that teaching and learning as a whole are undergoing a profound transformation. For instructors, the centrality of instructors in traditional education has diminished, and the need to harness the characteristics of the network to develop more intuitive and effective teaching content is a new challenge to their teaching design and abilities. Students' self-discipline and online learning skills are critical variables in ensuring the quality of virtual learning.

The analysis of online and hybrid instruction highlights the significant transformation taking place in teaching and learning as a whole. Decentralization, open source, and desynchronization are the three key domains that impact teaching and learning methodologies in virtual education. Decentralization offers a more effective and structured methodology for teaching and learning in hybrid education, where students must be more present in class and actively engage with the teacher's teaching model. Desynchronization provides teachers with buffer time for course preparation and student inquiries while offering greater flexibility to students. The challenges and opportunities presented by these domains are essential to consider for developing intuitive and effective teaching

content in virtual education. Ensuring the quality of virtual learning depends on students' self-discipline and online learning skills, emphasizing the need for instructors to harness the characteristics of the network to develop effective teaching strategies.

Types of Coupling Work with Students

The coronavirus 2019 has had a huge influence on the area of education, with traditional classroom-based learning taking place in virtual or online schooling. The semantic base space (SBS) hypothesis provides a useful framework for understanding communication processes in both traditional and online classrooms (Hougaard et al., 2022). Instructors establish the presentation space, while students develop the SBS space to evaluate and comprehend the material received. While online learning offers some advantages, such as overcoming time and space constraints, it also has considerable drawbacks. This begs the question of how teachers and students can react to these changes and maximize the benefits of virtual training. This section investigates the pros and downsides of online learning, as well as the changes in teaching styles that have arisen in reaction to the epidemic. While virtual instruction offers considerable obstacles, instructors who adapt their teaching approaches and use technology may create an interesting and successful learning environment for their students.

Oakley's notion of Semiotic Base Space suggests that there exists a semiotic space in all forms of communication. This SBS is connected to two "input" spaces, namely, the Presentation Space and the Reference Space (Hougaard et al., 2022). The reference space relates to the subject at hand, the signified item, while the signifier is introduced in the presentation space. The construal in the presentation space and the object in the reference space are combined in the virtual blend space. Notably, blending in the virtual blend space is performed by an interpreter whose concerns restrict the relevant emergent inferences.

Teaching is essentially a form of communication or interaction between instructors and students to transfer knowledge. Instructors are responsible for constructing the original version of the presentation space, while students are responsible for reprocessing the information by creating the SBS space to recognize, reconstruct, and analyze the received information. Online teaching is a form of education and instruction in an open virtual environment. In this virtual arena, instructors and students, students and students, and students and learning resources can be linked indirectly via

the network and terminal devices. Terminal devices present and exchange information via interactive windows on the local device (computer or laptop); hence, this interaction can only be local and directional. Therefore, every information interchange is a process of SBS space building and interpretation for students.

While the benefits of online learning in overcoming temporal and spatial limitations are apparent, there are also several drawbacks. Both students and instructors must create multiple semiotic base spaces through a network platform/channel to facilitate two-way communication. If several SBS spaces are produced or switched simultaneously, instructors and students must invest additional cognitive resources to transition and integrate different SBS environments. In the case of live lecturing, instructors are unable to capture the full reaction of students, as the camera's scale limitation obscures their body language, a crucial means of conveying meaning (Parrill & Sweetser, 2004). This poses a challenge for teachers attempting to engage with students without the ability to capture feedback signals. Additionally, the involvement of a vast range of networks and electronic devices often necessitates technical assistance to resolve any issues that may arise at any time. For example, certain courses may require a large chalkboard to be used during instruction, which is readily achievable through traditional in-person teaching using a marker and whiteboard. However, with virtual instruction, particularly through the Zoom platform, professors must log into two separate electronic devices: one for video and viewing student responses and another (an iPad, for instance) for writing on the chalkboard. Given the screen size, the lecturer must devote a significant amount of time writing while simultaneously paying close attention to students' responses and ensuring the proper display and preservation of the blackboard's content.

Participating in online instruction can place students in a vulnerable situation, where their attention is easily diverted. Without the physical presence of instructors and a common learning environment, students are prone to distractions, particularly when they encounter difficulties in understanding the course material. They may be hesitant to interrupt their instructors and ask questions, leading to a loss of focus and feelings of burnout and isolation. To address this issue, instructors need to adjust their teaching plans and approaches to accommodate the challenges of virtual learning. Interviews with instructors revealed that they spent significant time reviewing recorded videos to observe students' facial expressions and better understand their comprehension of the course content.

Some instructors also took a more personalized approach, reaching out to students directly to provide additional support and assistance in problem solving. Others allowed students to submit questions through Zoom's private chat feature during online lectures, which the instructor would periodically check and address. These measures not only ease students' concerns about interrupting the lecturer or being recorded but also help them stay engaged with the lecture and overcome any learning obstacles they may encounter.

Based on the responses from interviewees, hybrid learning, particularly during in-person sessions, required CDC-mandated safety measures that involved seating two students on opposite ends of a long table, thus requiring instructors to move back and forth between workstations to attend to student inquiries and guide their discussions. Another advantage of online education mentioned by the interviewees was the abundance of data available on student behavior, such as time spent on the online platform, number of logins, and assignment performance, which can be utilized to measure student engagement quantitatively. However, online tests present a challenge, as students may perform exceptionally well due to access to online resources during the exam, resulting in a decline in performance without such resources, highlighting the issue of academic integrity in the online learning environment.

The utilization of PowerPoint presentations as a primary teaching method has undergone a significant transformation since the outbreak of the epidemic. Prior to the pandemic, PowerPoint presentations were not the mainstay of instruction. Instructors had the liberty to expand and supplement their presentations in the classroom based on student input. However, with the transition to online education, this paradigm has shifted. Instructors must now prepare comprehensive PowerPoint presentations, incorporating multimedia channels to convey information more effectively due to the lack of instant and direct feedback from students. Consequently, lecturers must anticipate the difficulties and misunderstandings that students may encounter while introducing complex concepts, placing themselves in the position of the students.

During the discussion on the integration of technology with education, a comparison was drawn between teaching strategies before and after the pandemic, including the preparation of PowerPoint presentations, responding to students' questions, and tracking their performance. It is evident that technology has had a significant impact on the relationship between instructors and students, with the link evolving as the educational

environment changes. Technology has become not only an instrument and method of education and instruction but also the foundation of the educational environment, fostering a collaborative relationship between instructors and students. As such, many professors would not be able to teach in the postpandemic era without the teaching methods and tactics they became accustomed to during the pandemic. Some instructors who previously had little experience with electronic gadgets have become so proficient in using them that they can no longer function without them. For instance, in a machine learning class with at least seventy-five students, the instructor requires that all students have their cameras turned on. Therefore, the instructor uses a supersized screen to display all the students' windows while utilizing a computer to display PowerPoint presentations and an iPad to display chalk writing. The instructor also offers random questions based on the students' facial expressions on the screen or allows for free discussion.

The coronavirus 2019 epidemic has changed schooling, resulting in a considerable move toward virtual instruction. This section discusses the advantages and disadvantages of online learning and the influence of technology on teaching practices. The Semiotic Base Space Theory provides a valuable foundation for comprehending the communication process in virtual education. While online learning offers substantial obstacles, instructors who adapt their teaching techniques and skillfully use technology may provide their students with an interesting and effective learning environment. It is clear that technology has evolved into more than just a tool and technique of education and instruction; it has also become the cornerstone of the educational environment, creating a collaborative interaction between instructors and students. As a result, to maximize the benefits of virtual training, lecturers and students must continue to adapt to the changing educational landscape.

Collaboration Levels

The teaching assistant (TA) system distinguishes the American educational system from the Chinese educational system. TAs help teachers handle large enrollment classes, offering critical support to both students and instructors. The coronavirus 2019 epidemic has had a huge influence on how TAs engage with instructors, with many sessions now taking place on virtual platforms. TAs have also been given new tasks, such as gathering feedback from students during online lectures and solving student

concerns. This raises concerns about how the TA job has evolved throughout the epidemic, as well as the effectiveness of instructors' innovative approaches. This section will look at the study topic and hypothesis: How has the function of the TA changed throughout the epidemic, and what new techniques have instructors implemented to guarantee successful collaboration with their TAs? The pandemic is said to have prompted instructors to change their communication tactics with TAs, resulting in more virtual meetings and increasing usage of online communication platforms. However, TAs have been given additional tasks, such as gathering student feedback, which has increased their burden.

The teaching assistant (TA) system is one of the distinguishing features between the Chinese and American educational systems based on the investigation from the PI's interview. While most Chinese universities do not provide TAs to instructors, under the American education system, instructors with course sizes exceeding thirty students are assigned at least one TA. Collaborating and communicating with TAs is thus an equally essential aspect of ensuring teaching quality for American instructors.

Typically, teaching assistants (TAs) hold office hours to assist students with questions and provide feedback to professors, enabling instructors to refine their teaching plans and methods. According to the interviewees, the pandemic also affected the instructors' previous collaboration approaches with their TAs. Before the pandemic, instructors and TAs would meet to clarify their respective roles and duties. However, due to the pandemic, presemester meetings were canceled or shifted to online platforms such as email or Zoom. TAs' responsibilities, which previously required their physical presence in the classroom, became a part of online instruction during the semester, with TAs joining Zoom meetings like other students. Since most interviewees were unable to meet their TAs in person, they would outline all of the TAs' responsibilities and commitments in the initial email. Thus, TAs had a comprehensive understanding of their roles and duties through the clear TA descriptions provided by instructors.

Moreover, online education has bestowed upon TAs an additional responsibility of collecting feedback from students during online lectures and subsequently sharing it with the instructors. Some TAs also serve as research assistants to the instructors and therefore have a better understanding of the course material and teaching methods. Hence, they can assist the instructor in providing solutions to the challenges and problems faced by students. Prior to the pandemic, TAs were required to meet with

instructors in person on a weekly or biweekly basis to report on student performance and questions. However, with the convenience of online communication, TAs can now send emails or messages via communication channels such as Slack to instructors at any time, enabling faster feedback and appropriate revisions by the instructors.

The TA system is a key component of the American educational system, offering valuable assistance to both students and professors. Coronavirus 2019 has prompted instructors to change their cooperation techniques with TAs, focusing increasingly on virtual meetings and online communication channels. TAs have also been given extra tasks, which has increased their burden. The innovative tactics chosen by teachers have both advantages and downsides, and they will most certainly continue to change as the epidemic diminishes. Nonetheless, teamwork between instructors and TAs is crucial for guaranteeing instructional quality and student success.

Technology Issues

Technology integration in education has changed the way students study and gain information. In recent years, the emphasis in education has turned to encouraging collaborative learning and creating a varied learning environment, with online education playing an important part. With the spread of the internet, online education has become a need, necessitating the resolution of technological difficulties and solutions related to online instruction. According to the interviews, the biggest technological problem connected with online education is coordinating the usage of numerous software applications. This section will look at the technological problems of online training and highlight some of the ways instructors have used to overcome them.

The research question and hypothesis offered are as follows: What are the key technological obstacles connected with online training, and what solutions have instructors used to meet these challenges? It is expected that the use of technology in education will continue to increase and affect the way students learn and apply information and that tackling technological challenges related to online instruction is crucial for the online education system's success.

As technology continues to advance and be applied in education, the focus of schooling is shifting from simply imparting textbook knowledge to facilitating collaborative learning among students and constructing a diverse learning environment. When considering the future of education,

it is important to address technical issues and solutions associated with online instruction, particularly in response to the pandemic. According to the interviewees, the primary technical challenge associated with online education is coordinating the use of various software programs. As previously mentioned, instructors often require multiple devices for chalkboard writing and multimedia presentations. Instructors also employ a range of simultaneous presentation and student interaction strategies. Some have experimented with writing and streaming on paper using phones set vertically on their desks, while others use software that allows PDF files to be annotated, such as Liquid. On Zoom, instructors can preprogram the course into a PDF and deliver it to students in a screen share format, using Liquid's many color markers, highlighting, drawing, and other functions to illustrate course content and essential topics during their explanations.

In coding-focused classes, instructors may utilize simultaneous editing platforms such as Overleaf or Google Colab. These platforms allow students to collaborate on a project document and enable multiple students to register online concurrently, enabling instructors to observe their coding problems in real time. However, these software programs are not free and require instructors to submit an application to the school to purchase them. Additionally, some instructors utilize platforms such as Piazza to foster interaction and discussion among students. Students are required to post their questions on the platform based on the day's events and are encouraged to participate in postclass conversations about the course material. These activities assist students in cultivating their self-regulation abilities, which are crucial for performing well in coursework (Lin et al., 2020; Lin & Dai, 2022).

Indeed, the limitless nature of knowledge and the constantly evolving technological landscape highlight the importance of teaching students' skills beyond mere content acquisition. The shift toward online education has further emphasized the need for students to develop the ability to critically evaluate and select information, as well as to apply and adapt that knowledge to solve complex problems. With the increasing availability and accessibility of online resources, students can become self-directed learners, taking ownership of their education and pursuing their interests and passions. Instructors can play a vital role in facilitating this process by guiding students toward reputable sources, encouraging collaboration and discussion, and providing opportunities for practical application and experimentation. Overall, online education has not only expanded access

to knowledge but also transformed the way in which students learn and apply that knowledge in real-world contexts.

The use of technology in education has increased access to knowledge and revolutionized how students learn and apply that knowledge in real-world circumstances, especially during the COVID-19 era. While the change to online education has given various benefits, it has also posed technological hurdles that teachers must overcome to ensure the quality of online learning. Coordination of the usage of numerous software applications has been a main technological problem connected with online training, and instructors have devised a variety of ways to handle this issue. As technology evolves and is employed in education, overcoming technological issues related to online instruction will be critical in guaranteeing the success of the online education system.

Conclusion

Through the preceding discussion of the online and hybrid education challenges, coupling work with students, collaboration levels, and technology issues, the traditional "visible" school-based method of instruction is turned into the "invisible" web-based mode of instruction. Teaching and learning are no longer a specific time for students and teachers to congregate in a single location but across time and space through the network platform, from conventional chalkboard writing to advanced multimedia and multiway displays. Specifically, in-person instruction is an educational and instructional activity conducted in a confined physical environment. Instructors and students, students and students, and students and learning resources are in full three-dimensional touch in this physical area, making interaction highly convenient. Instructors routinely interact with students during instruction, especially in small class settings. Through direct observation, eye contact, discourse questions, responses, and the sense of atmosphere, instructors will consciously or subconsciously modify the topic, tone, speaking speed, and even instruction. Students also receive the impression that they are being closely cared for. The atmosphere of collective learning in the classroom also enhances students' attention, while the classroom is usually separated from outside disturbances. The comparison of online, hybrid, and in-person learning is shown in Table 5.1.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online and hybrid instruction was initially considered a temporary replacement for in-person learning.

Table 5.1 Comparison of three types of teaching methods

	In-person	Online	Hybrid
Temporal requirement	Instructors and students appear at the same time	Students should present themselves at the course time but may have some flexibility	No requirement
Spatial requirement	Instructors and students appear at the same physical location	No	Yes
Communication signals	Body language, oral expression, facial expression, eye contact	Verbal expression, facial expression (limited), eye contact (limited), online chat	Body language, oral expression, facial expression, eye contact
Requirement for instructors	Low demands in capturing the students' feedback	Highest demands in capturing the students' feedback	Could capture the students' feedback during the in-person meeting
Synchronical need	Yes	No	Mixed
Learning environment	High	Easy distraction	High for an in-person meeting
Technology requirement	Low	High	High for online teaching and low for the in-person meeting

However, it is not just a stop-gap solution but an essential and inevitable development for future education. Virtual education is not meant to replace traditional classrooms but to enhance them by adapting to technological advancements. The pandemic presents an opportunity to accelerate the acceptance of virtual education and increase social awareness about the core concept and future of education. The focus should be on understanding the purpose of education, fostering adaptability among students to diverse learning environments, enabling collaboration online and offline, and presenting course material successfully and vividly. These are the challenges that traditional education must address to keep pace with the changing needs of students and advancements in technology.

APPENDIX: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Basic Questions

1. How many courses did you teach before the pandemic, and did they change during the pandemic?
2. Could you tell us the average classroom size before and during the pandemic?

3. What is the most challenging issue in your teaching during the pandemic?
4. How do you make the course materials relevant in terms of complexity for students with different levels of field knowledge?
5. Name three of your greatest strengths in your teaching style; have they remained the same during the online/hybrid teaching in the past three years? How do you bridge the abstract concepts with real-world examples, keeping the contents up to date?

Knowledge of Common Ground

1. Could you briefly explain a course you taught last year? What teaching methods do you employ in addition to direct instruction?
2. How do you get student feedback if you're concerned about the content you have taught?
3. How do you make accommodations for a smart student in your online class?
4. How do you monitor the performance of students during online learning outside of exams?
5. What are your thoughts on an inclusive classroom?

Coupling of Work Types

1. Give us an example of how you dealt with students' questions before the pandemic and another example of your solution during online teaching (in class and after class)
2. What is your PPT-making strategy before the pandemic? How about during the online teaching?
3. How did you allow students to express their creativity and ideas before the pandemic? Are you following the same strategy during online teaching? Give us an example.
4. What do you do if the whole class is "not getting it"?
5. How many exams are in your course? Did you change the number of exams due to online teaching? How do you know this is a good amount?
6. How do you connect your class and your students to the real examples?

7. What software or approaches do you use during online teaching?
8. How do you identify students' distractions?

Collaboration Level and Evaluation

1. What is your classroom management plan before the pandemic? What has changed during the pandemic? What do you wish to accomplish with it?
2. Do you have an active TA? Could you describe the TA's duty before and during the pandemic?
3. How do you communicate with your TA? How does your TA report the issues he/she encountered in his/her work? How did you deal with it? Could you give us an example? Give us an example of effective communication with your collaborator and your TA.
4. How do you develop self-esteem with students?

Technology Issues

1. What is the biggest challenge in technology you encountered during your online teaching experience?
2. What software or techniques do you use for tracking students' performance in the class?
3. What software or techniques do you use to communicate with your students after class?
4. What if students do not have access to the recommended computer? What is your solution?
5. What are the digital and online resources for you to distribute to your students in preparing for the class? Are you showing more videos in your online teaching? Do you prefer to use online teaching tools?

Random Questions at the End

1. What was the most important thing you learned from your teaching experience during the last three years?
2. What was the most impressive thing you encountered in your teaching experience during the last three years?

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Reinventing Remote Work and Online Learning at Colleges and Universities Worldwide

Exploring Faculty Members' Perceptions of Hybrid Teaching in Indonesian Higher Education: Using Transitivity Analysis

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103

INTRODUCTION

Since theco ronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020, the demand for online and distance education has grown dramatically around the globe (Chan et al., 2022). Therefore, blending online and face-to-face classroom interaction must be a solution for successfully maintaining the learning process. Furthermore, the focus of quality online teaching in higher education involves more than asynchronously replicating face-to-face instructions. As online pedagogical coverage and hybrid teaching have evolved, it is vital to consider connecting students with content, peers, and the teacher. Faculty members have moved their teaching into this realm and have attempted to incorporate these exciting strategies into technology 2.0-mediated information literacy instruction. In this research, faculty members refer to Indonesian higher education lecturers. When faculty members are put in this growing learning environment, it is relevant to consider what factors shape faculty members' perceptions and instructional practices.

Meanwhile, the context of providing information varies regarding online or hybrid instructions by faculty members. Research perceptions of faculty members and best practices in developing this professional self-concept in a face-to-face arrangement have been studied. However, it is vital to consider whether faculty members teach in these two formats—entirely online or hybrid interaction—having the same or similar experiences in developing the perception of faculty members as one another and as those who provide only face-to-face instruction.

In this study, the author examines the academic experience of faculty members teaching in online or mixed-learning environments and how they perceive their developed instruction, teaching activities, and their senses as educators. We gathered the data to compose stories from participants about their hybrid teaching and pedagogy in higher education settings. In determining what they have prepared about teaching tasks, combining synchronous and asynchronous online systems, institutional guidance, technological devices, and reflective practice, we proposed that they narrate what they have perceived with these processes thoroughly. In recognizing the merging process, we can better understand what faculty members are needed to provide high-quality teaching and improved technology. Although several studies have been conducted to describe the perceptions and experiences of participants in hybrid teaching, more studies are needed in the Indonesian higher education context. Therefore, our

research explores faculty members' perceptions of hybrid teaching in Indonesia. To this end, this research will contribute to the concept of hybrid teaching practices in the higher education context.

Research questions:

1. How do faculty members perceive hybrid teaching?
2. What do faculty members reflect on hybrid teaching?

Literature Review

Researchers define different concepts of many university teaching concepts. For example, Brown (1993) suggested that the meaning of teaching includes course design, classroom management, teacher-student interaction, providing other learning opportunities, assessments, and feedback to students. In addition, additional learning opportunities can be linked to the use of media, such as computer-assisted learning or tape slides programmers. Furthermore, university teaching stimulates students' thinking about concepts and ideas to transform their knowledge domain into depth understanding (Ashwin et al., 2014). To that end, university teaching concepts should emphasize the current worldwide teaching paradigm that considers students' need to reach out to study goals.

Tailored in a hybrid teaching context, it refers to technology information that combines a traditional classroom with an online learning setting (Wu et al., 2021). In a broader sense, technology plays a significant role in reorganizing various teaching elements so that technology application and traditional teaching can complete each other. In another mind, hybrid teaching, or mixed teaching methods, triggered classroom activities to be alleviated so that the students could explore and strengthen their sense of identity and encourage a good emotional experience. The hybrid system empowers students' preference in a situated learning background to pursue learning goals in a particular context. In line with this, hybrid teaching is constructed by constructivism, cognitivism, and humanism so that students can have lively experience, think critically, and improve their social ventures.

Making a fundamental change in the classroom requires introducing an educational innovation (MacLeod & Fraser, 2010). On the other hand, educators need to reflect on their teaching and learning practices. Therefore, educators must try to design and arrange a learning environment conducive

to student learning (Light & Cox, 2001). Furthermore, instructional design addresses hybrid teaching covering the progress of student learning, cultivating comprehensive quality, expanding learning content, and constructing the learning process. Faculty members' perceptions of the reception of their use of hybrid approaches in the classroom are crucial to the success of their professional endeavors. Learning outcomes may also be influenced by faculty members' expectations of the classroom setting (Tshewang et al., 2016). Existing research implies that an ecological lens is necessary for investigating how faculty members guide hybrid courses in higher education.

In a hybrid context, when many groups of students use various communication channels, media, and technologies, it is pivotal for students and teachers to communicate with one another effectively. For example, Bower et al. (2014) wrote about a study in which different hybrid interactive learning activities could be implemented by evaluating things, asking questions as a group, solving problems, playing roles, having class discussions, and designing things together. Those activities might be applied across many fields and disciplines with the help of various technologies, including video conferencing, web conferencing, and virtual worlds. However, communication issues (recording and organizing classroom conversations) and the mental strain of teaching two groups at once were cited most frequently by teachers as the most problematic aspects of their work. The teachers must be aware of both remote and face-to-face student participation, use collaborative technology, fix technical problems for remote students, watch the reactions, and figure out what both groups of students think.

In terms of using a variety of media and communication platforms, Bower et al. (2015) investigated seven cases in Australia; they found that both instructors and students were experiencing technological exposure as a result. On the other hand, they also stated that for particular students, the various sources kept them engaged and motivated, resulting in more active learning. In addition, most students who participated in online and onsite activities reported feeling a sense of copresence with their counterparts in different locations. Qualitative comments showed that students frequently felt a robust understanding of the community due to the hybrid synchronous mode. Online students largely enjoyed the flexibility of hybrid synchronous learning, and onsite students also noted how they benefitted from the wider variety of various channels. Mixed synchronous learning is supported because almost three-quarters of online and onsite

students wanted to adopt the technique in their other classes across all seven samples.

In contrast, Hayes and Tucker (2021) reported that it is harder for online students to be involved and contribute to the learning environment than for in-class students. Vale et al. (2020) explained that online participants might obtain lower grades. After all, they are distracted because they learn remotely. For example, the distance between people could make it hard to work as a group, or problems with technology could make it hard for students to learn. Nevertheless, they also said that the chat feature allows students to ask questions they would not ask otherwise (anonymous).

Findings from other studies suggested that online and onsite students might have unequal access to learning opportunities due to differences in how they communicate in a hybrid context. Laforune and Lakhal (2019) found that students' perceptions of teaching presence were lower in hybrid settings than in fully online or fully hybrid environments. Students who engage online may benefit from teachers with more expertise in hybrid settings since this will increase their ability to communicate and the quality of their conversations (Flynn-Wilson & Reynolds, 2020).

Based on those various case studies of hybrid implementations, pedagogy should drive technology, and faculty members should choose the best mode for their courses. In addition, hybrid deployment needs more preparation, a willingness to take risks, assistance from well-versed technologies, and the requirement of continuous professional growth as technology advances. Finally, the faculty members' roles and technological skills are critical in hybrid classrooms.

Cross-cultural Lens on Hybrid Teaching Policy

Hybrid teaching policy has met with the emergence of an organic structure that has long been part of teaching cultures in some countries. It comes up because of a regulation linked with education reform policy due to the phenomenon. In China, teaching culture has become a predominant aspect of teacher quality in terms of economic, social, and political aspects (Paine & Fang, 2006). With regard to the cultural part, Massey et al. (1994) pinpointed that creating a culture where faculty members frequently interact formally and informally can result in fruitful discussion of issues related to undergraduate education (p. 46). Furthermore, Indonesia has high inequality in many education indicators, let alone socioeconomic status (Thamrin et al., 2023, p. 15).

Moreover, hybrid teaching in the USA has been successfully implemented; however, it needs improvements regarding teaching pedagogy and classroom management (Joseph et al., 2018). In contrast, socioeconomic factors are not the main concern of hybrid teaching implementation in the USA; however, they need improvement. In this regard, socioeconomic status determines hybrid teaching policy; it is urgently necessary to look at the overall aspect of implementing hybrids in terms of global scope. Therefore, a hybrid cultural lens is importantly provided in this study to explain a phenomenon that occurs in hybrid applications. This issue has been empirically well established, yet more integrated transitivity analysis into hybrid teaching is needed.

METHODOLOGY

Design

We conducted a narrative inquiry to explore a story between researchers and participants to showcase a phenomenon directly experienced by human participants (Clandinin & Huber, 2010). Narrative researchers look for ways to understand and represent participants' lives and authentic experiences through the events they express. Handoyo Puji Widodo (Personal Communication, July 27, 2020) noted that the narrative inquiry design emphasizes life experiences influenced by social and cultural contexts and the time dimension. The bonding experience of participants in a particular context describes individuals who are rich in experience and search for meaning through a narrative approach.

Participants

Faculty members from two higher institutions in Indonesia teaching hybrid were invited from different subjects and ages. Six participants voluntarily participated and were invited to join in this research. Moreover, the researchers have a close relationship with them and easy access. We are positioned as insiders, making it easy to recruit participants to join our research (Emic perspective). Information will be obtained through mental exploration of the informant's life in a particular context (Harris, 1976). The six participants are MT, ST, and RK; they are from the same university; meanwhile, US, RX, and AS are from another campus.

Instrument and Data Collection

The research instrument was a semistructured interview to gain rich data. Therefore, researchers can determine the complete participants' stories by listening to their original versions (Clandinin & Huber, 2010; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Chou, Tu, and Huang: 'In a life story interview, the interviewee is a storyteller, the narrator of the story being told, whereas the interviewer is a guide, or director, in this process. The two are collaborators, composing and constructing a story the teller can be pleased with.' The participants hold the power of knowledge because they are the only experts on their lived and truthful experiences. As researchers, we had to offer our participants respect, sympathy, and insider perspective positioning during the ongoing interview process.

The interview mode was performed via the Zoom application, which was recorded to make it easy to transcribe the conversation among us. The data record was created in written form that was completed a sequence of times.

Data Analysis

The process makes sense because the pitch text is part of the data analysis. The level of resonance with consideration of various aspects, such as the actual substance of the proposed text, is fully strengthened in the essence of codification in the story and expanded outward. Nuances of tone and pauses in conversation; observing participants' interactions with other people and their sociocultural discourse become our consideration by looking at their past and present experiences, physical places, dreams, and ambitions. Widodo (2014) proposed data analysis steps starting with listening to interview records and taking meaningful notes, writing and codifying the data, and interpreting and validating the data. We offered them the preteaching plan, the ongoing teaching activities, and future plans and reflections as part of a holistic hybrid teaching perception. We determined our interpretation based on transitivity analysis. Transitivity is the lexico-grammatical system to construe the world experience into a set of process types (material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential) that participant and circumstance accompany on the clause level (Halliday, 1994, pp. 106–107).

Findings and Discussion

In portraying the overall view of the extract of research data, we determined the emotions experienced within participants' experiences along with the story's beginning. It started with faculty members' involvement in the preparation, implementation, and future contribution as perceptions in practicing hybrid teaching. We split the two faculty members, namely, MK, ST, and RK, from faculty members A; meanwhile, US, RX, and AS are from faculty members B. We come up with the voices of faculty members from two different campuses to see the uniqueness of their experiences as well as perceptions. The institution's policy in the transition era from online to hybrid teaching has been documented and narrated by faculty members. We assigned the narration to reconstruct the messages into a holistic story framework conveyed by deduction language. The story is delivered into five subthematic titles:

Hybrid Teaching Preparations

The transition from total online teaching activity to hybrid teaching was unexpected. Faculty member B thought that his institution would assist him in creating fully hybrid teaching tasks that combine online Zoom teaching and a face-to-face classroom setting. The guidelines offer general direction in using the method and technologies teaching aid to promote the hybrid system. However, it does not explicitly direct faculty members to use the hybrid system. It confused him to stir up hybrid teaching activities, teaching materials and technological devices synchronized. In contrast, the A faculty member had been assisted by his institution to link all three matters in managing hybrid teaching preparations.

MT, ST, and RK, who teach at the same campus, shared their experiences preparing to lead with a hybrid system. They told me that the campus had provided direction at the beginning of the semester to use the campus LMS, which is an online teaching system that was created to facilitate its lecturers in preparing teaching materials/materials, learning activities, evaluation systems, and assessments under the learning quality supervision bureau. Otherwise, US, RX, and AS have been informed by their institution to implement hybrid.

In this excerpt, **MT** describes his experience during preparation before the semester starts.

> I **(Participant)** received **(Mental-material)** detailed instructions **(Relational)** regarding the preparation for implementing hybrid teaching, such as selecting materials **(Cir-manner)** for synchronous and asynchronous forms of learning activities and evaluation and assessment systems.

From this narration, **MT** has processed the instruction as input-driven to implement hybrid teaching. She has repeatedly noticed the selection of materials to apply a synchronous and asynchronous learning ecosystem. The mental-material aspects show that she has explicit instruction and is related to the following teaching materials: 'received' word and 'selecting' materials. Furthermore, it indicates that he has been instructed to implement hybrid teaching.

The news comes up; **ST** gets directions to implement hybrid teaching from her institution

> I **(Participant)** was briefed **(Mental-material)** to apply **(Relational)** hybrid teaching before the semester started by my institution. The directions **(Participant)** are **(Relational)** in the form of **(Cir-manner)** using the campus LMS and how to use it. Selection of types of teaching materials or materials, other supporting technology applications **(Participant)** that can be used **(Mental-material)** and how to **(Cir-manner)** evaluate and assess them.

In this regard, **ST** felt that hybrid teaching was a part of the unit that she needed to link to how to create a scaffolding process and the use of the LMS system as well as an evaluation system as information to assess the student's progress. It clearly describes the mental-material process that indicates she has participated in gaining new information regarding the implementation of hybrid teaching, as shown by 'was briefed.' She also related the perceived goal of implementing hybrid teaching by putting a clear circumstance-manner 'in the form' using LMS.

In this matter, **RK** tells us her genuine experience from her college.

> The directions from my campus **(Participant)** were **(relational)** quite complete, **(Mental)** starting from **(Cir-manner)** how to use the LMS, the selection of teaching materials, and the form of evaluation in synchronous and asynchronous modes were **(Relational)** conveyed neatly. **(Behavioral)**

In this case, **RK** connects his institution's instruction to the implementation of hybrid teaching by using LMS as a verbal process to have already planned in synchronous and asynchronous modes in presentable materials. It is stated 'the directions from my campus,' and he processed it by the mental facet phrase 'quite complete,' indicating a clear direction for implementing a teaching hybrid. The behavioral aspect is shown by 'neatly,' which means she should have done with creating and arranging good synchronous and asynchronous teaching evaluations in terms of hybrid teaching implementation.

US

I **(Participant)** got **(Mental)** a guide from **(Relational)** the campus for **(Cir-manner)** the implementation of hybrid teaching, but **(Relational)** it **(Participant)** was not explained **(Mental-material)** in detail, **(Cir-manner),** especially regarding the learning instructions in it.

He does not think that the institution does not support his hybrid teaching preparation. This mental process exposed unpreparedness to guide the lecturer using a hybrid teaching ecosystem. It is stated from his statement 'was not explained,' and it further explains with no clear directions regarding circumstance-manner 'in detail.' It describes that he has no detailed information on implementing hybrid teaching.

RX

There **(Participant)** is **(Relational)** socialization **(Behavioral)** regarding **(Cir-manner)** distance learning from campus. The guide **(Participant)** is **(Relational)** quite complete **(Mental)**; however, it needs to explain in detail **(Cir-manner)** the tasks in face-to-face and remote modes in a concrete way.

He thinks socialization is a part of campus readiness in implementing distance learning and classroom teaching. However, the mental process describing the hybrid teaching guidance from the institution could be more concrete. Furthermore, it needs a robust teaching destination. As it clearly stated, 'it does not explain in detail the tasks in face-to-face and remote modes in a concrete way' means it is appropriate with a previous explanation about the regardless of specific hybrid teaching in its application. Transitivity

analysis showcases circumstance-manner 'in detail' that the higher institution does not explain how to implement hybrid teaching.

AS

> There **(Participant)** are **(Relational)** general guidelines **(Mental-material)** regarding **(Cir-manner)** the implementation of hybrid teaching on campus. Nevertheless, they must explain in detail **(Cir-manner)** how to make in-house instructions and tools to evaluate online learning participation.

He encapsulates his story as a mental process to the standard instruction in implementing hybrid teaching. He further explains that it would be beneficial if the institution could let their lecturers know how to apply the instructions within the framework of hybrid teaching practically; it is explained explicitly by the word 'in detail' as a process of a circumstance of the manner in transitivity analysis.

I Struggle to Manage Hybrid Teaching Activities

Translating the institutional policy to manage hybrid teaching was challenging. The faculty members had to interpret and implement it in the hybrid classroom. Faculty member B, **US**, had to determine teaching tasks and materials.

> I **(Participant)** found **(Mental-material)** difficult **(behavioral)** to absorb my institution guidelines for **(Relational)** specific implementation **(Cir-manner)** in the hybrid classroom setting. **(Cir-place)** Therefore, **(Relational)** I **(Participant)** need to **(Mental)** look out for any specific interpretation from the internet. **(Cir-manner)** I **(Participant)** was enlightened (Mental) from (Relational) this way. I (Participant) knew (Mental-material) a bit about how to (Relational) transform my background of information into the actual practice of hybrid teachings, such as (Cir-manner) combining synchronous and asynchronous online systems.

It can be interpreted that **US** processed his mental process to say that managing hybrid teaching tasks is not easy; it can be known from his word 'found' that he relates with the word 'difficult.' To respond, **RX** confirmed that he had received guidance on implementing hybrid teaching in his institution. Nevertheless, he had yet to receive an apparent execution of its implementation, how to combine synchronous and asynchronous

online and face-to-face learning activities, and how to evaluate learning activities. In addition, information is still limited to the application used.

> I **(Participant)** got **(Mental)** quite clear information from **(Relational**) my institution regarding the implementation **(Cir-manner)** of hybrid teaching; application usage. However, **(Relational)** I **(Participant)** have not fully understood **(Mental-material)** the concrete form of synchronous and asynchronous teaching activities through **(Cir-manner)** online and face-to-face.

He relates the phrase 'quite clear information to the successful hybrid guidance implementation from his institution,' which is portrayed by circumstances-manner 'online and offline teaching mode.' This means that the information could be more transparent for him to undergo hybrid teaching. Hence, it is also underpinned by another mental-material analysis that says 'have not fully understood.' The circumstance manner points out that hybrid teaching in the form of synchronous and asynchronous is not vividly explained.

In other words, faculty member A received apparent hybrid teaching activity from his institution before the implementation. In this case, the hybrid teaching scaffold has been informed and delivered in a specific manner.

> **MT** found her institution (Participant) clearly (Relational) informed (Material-verbal) their faculty members on how to apply hybrid teaching by mediating through LMS before the semester begins. The institution lets her freely select (Cir-manner) teaching material, activities, and evaluation process by sustainable report at the beginning and the end of the semester (Cir-loc-time). On the other hand, I struggled (Verbal-process) to overcome the slow system of LMS; therefore, I solved (Verbal) by using (Cir-manner) another technological learning platform such as Canvas and Moodle.

The participant positioning was her institution linked to the phrase 'how to apply hybrid teaching' considered a verbal process to state that it is vital to support the hybrid teaching mode. Furthermore, it is firmly convinced by the following phrases that show the circumstance-manner 'freely select teaching material,' which indicates that freedom of choice in selecting teaching material and activities is one of the critical points of autonomous learning.

Furthermore, **ST** has a more extended working period than MT and narrated how her institution well-prepared hybrid teaching through seminars before the class starts.

> My institution **(Participant)** provided **(Verbal)** me with how to **(Relational)** manage hybrid teaching by **(Cir-manner)** disseminating hybrid preparation for **(Relational)** al faculty members. She **(Participant)** said **(Mental)** that the mentor assigned her to **(Relational)** prepare teaching material in terms of **(Cir-manner)** synchronous and asynchronous online system, including **(Mental-material)** teaching tasks and evaluation to kindly report before and after **(Cir-loc-time)** the semester.

From this analysis, **ST** connects his institution-hybrid-teaching-preparation with the verbal process 'provided' that strongly emphasizes the circumstance-manner phrase 'disseminating hybrid preparation.' In addition, she has been given the authority to prepare both synchronous and asynchronous teaching material and teaching tasks and evaluations shown by relational and circumstance-manner facets.

Her campus has provided information on how to apply hybrid teaching, including giving an LMS and how to operate it. She supports the basic knowledge that the campus has given by looking for references about the role of LMS, YouTube, and the Zoom application.

> So **(Relational)**, I **(Participant)** determine **(Mental-material)** what learning activities I **(Participant)** can apply **(Verbal)** in various **(Relational)** reference sources on the internet. **(Cir-manner)**

From this exegesis voice, she processes the mental word 'determine' with the phrase 'learning activities,' which is verbalized concerning the reference. This means that she is eager to look for other learning sources that could be applied to hybrid teaching.

Mirroring is pivotal to improve my hybrid teaching.

MT

> I **(Participant)** found a reflection was a **(Relational)** kind of practice to improve my hybrid teaching in class; therefore, I **(Participant)** need to do it a lot of frequently. I **(Participant)** propose my reflective practice on 'Do I integrate **(Verbal)** technological aid for **(Relational)** synchronous and asynchronous well?', 'Do I elaborate my teaching instruction to my students

well?' **(Mental)** 'Do I give reflective practice to my students and read their responses carefully?' **(Mental)**

This narration describes the relational facet in practicing to improve hybrid teaching, which is best portrayed by the word 'integrate' as a verbal process linking technological aid and (a) synchronous teaching mode. This means that MT was eager to improve his teaching in the future with technological aids and reflective practice for every topic of discussion in class.

ST

Sometimes I **(Participant)** reflect **(Verbal)** to see the positives and negatives of my learning process so **(Relational)** that this can be used **(Mental-material)** as **(Relational)** material for future evaluation and improvisation **(Cir-loc-time)**, such as making clear and detailed instructions for the asynchronous learning process.

It can be captured from these data that the **ST** verbalizes her reflection that she has been done with hybrid teaching to the future conceptual contribution, which is explained by the circ-loc-time phrase 'future evaluation and improvisation.' In another sense, a concrete instructional design will automatically assist her in implementing better hybrid concepts in the future.

RK

Eventually, RK reported that she found it difficult to evaluate his hybrid learning system and how to measure active participation in online synchronous and asynchronous learning activities, such as implementing E-Portfolios and student participation.

I **(Participant)** have difficulty **(Mental)** measuring **(Cir-manner)** student engagement in synchronous and asynchronous modes. I **(Participant)** also find implementing an E-portfolio difficult **(Mental)**. Need detailed and concrete guidance **(Cir-manner)** from **(Relational)** my institution.

In short, **RK** has established the way with the cir-manner word 'measuring' to explain the phrase 'have difficulty' in engaging the learning

process mode, synchronous and asynchronous. This means that she wants to engage in future hybrid teaching by implementing an e-portfolio. However, the higher institution should direct its faculty members.

AS

I **(Participant)** find it burdensome **(Relational)** to apply the instructions for teaching activities in hybrid teaching. How to determine **(Cir-manner)** whether students can follow the learning activities that are just running; **(Behavioral)** related to the scaffolding process.

He activates his voice to relate the word 'burdensome' with teaching instructions in hybrid teaching. He refers to the cir-manner phrase 'how to determine' suitable hybrid learning activities for scaffolding. The behavioral facet supports better hybrid teaching that 'can be followed by students,' which means the students could clearly explain and understand the instructions.

US

Instruction **(Participant)** in hybrid learning turned out to be very difficult. **(Mental)** Need special assistance **(Mental)** from **(Relational)** institutions to prepare **(Cir-manner)** learning activities in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

From this information, it can be vividly interpreted that his mental statement phrase 'turned out to be very difficult' has to be improved by 'special assistance' to relate to institution preparation. Furthermore, it means that he needs further help in translating teaching instructional design and its application.

RX

It **(Participant)** turns out **(Mental-material)** that **(Relational)** the process of implementing hybrid teaching into the world of teaching is **(Relational)** quite complex **(Mental)**; I have to **(Mental)** design learning activities both from **(Relational)** synchronous and asynchronous modes and face to face. It **(Participant)** is (Relational) to my challenge **(Behavioral)** to improve.

Moving another narration is about **RX**'s reflection on relating the word 'turns out' with hybrid teaching implementation, which is complex; he behaves to improve his online and offline teaching mode to be implemented concretely.

The Future Hope of My Hybrid Teaching

The application of hybrid learning requires the effort and perception of each lecturer to use, develop, and utilize all the resources of using technology as hybrid support. In addition, the learning activities encourage students to be motivated and innovate with the system. It is the basis for comments from faculty members regarding the future use of hybrids.

RK

I **(Participant)** need to **(Mental-material)** reconstruct my journey of teaching as **(Relational)** a part of an integral hybrid system experience. However, **(Relational)** I **(Participant)** need to **(Mental-material)** communicate on how **(Relational)** to improve and integrate faculty members' expertise to support a conceptual-driven framework with other colleagues on campus. It **(Participant)** will bring **(Verbal)** us to sharpen **(Relational)** the implementation of our hybrid teaching.

She operates the mental material with the word 'need.' She relates to integrating the hybrid system, meaning she wants to rebuild her experience to engage her collaborative hybrid teaching with her colleagues.

MT

I **(Participant)** think **(Mental-material)** this hybrid pattern should be **(Relational)** developed in the future. **(Cir-loc-time)** How the development of learning activities in it truly must be made **(Mental-material)** as **(Relational)** and attractive as possible to attract student participation in learning more actively. **(Behavioral)**

She captures that hybrid mode as his mental process relates to the future development of the hybrid system. She hopes that she can make her students more active, as seen from the behavioral analysis shown by the phrase 'learning more actively.'

ST

I **(Participant)** want **(Mental-material**) hybrid teaching to continue to be implemented in the learning system after **(Relational)** the COVID-19 pandemic. This system **(Participant)** makes it **(Mental)** easy to continue using remote technologies such as Zoom for **(Relational)** synchronous activities and LMS, which can be used for asynchronous activities. It will be very interesting if it can be maintained in the future.

From this narration, ST is eager to proceed with hybrid teaching, which is shown by the mental clue word 'want' and relates to the unpredictable COVID-19 outbreak.

US

In the future, **(Cir-loc-time)** I **(Participant)** want to **(Mental)** continue that hybrid teaching can be applied, **(Relational)** but attention to how to process learning activities in hybrid mode can be informed in more detail and concretely**. (Cir-manner)**

This text showcases that he put the exact time with 'in the future,' which means he is eager to continue hybrid teaching with circumstance-manner 'in more detail and concretely.' This means that the USA wants the higher institution to have established concrete and specific guidelines that could be applied in the institution for future hybrid teaching.

RX

Learning activities **(Participant)** in **(Relational)** hybrid teaching must be given **(Material)** concrete examples. **(Cir-manner)** Hopefully, there is **(Relational)** a special team that provides a detailed explanation of this. However, **(Relational)** the model should be accommodated.

This excerpt portrays that he relates hybrid teaching tasks with the material process 'must be given,' which means it should be proven and improved with circumstance-manner 'concrete examples.' Furthermore, the simulation should be applied for faculty members to obtain better hybrid teaching.

AS

This hybrid campus **(Participant)** can be implemented **(Mental)** properly if the institution concretely bridges the system's socialization. **(Cir-manner)**

This short excerpt explains that as a participant facet of 'this hybrid system,' he wants to apply the coordination between the higher institution and its faculty members shown by circumstance-manner 'in a concrete way'; it suggests better implementation of hybrid teaching in the future.

Indonesian Higher Institutions Should Manage a Hybrid System

Faculty members hope that the hybrid system can be implemented post-pandemic because it accommodates learning in the twenty-first century, prioritizing learning technology and systematic and basic solid knowledge. In addition, a face-to-face system is also needed to accommodate physical meetings, which will provide a different touch to teaching. Both combinations are welcome in the twenty-first-century teaching paradigm that encourages teacher-educators to promote autonomous learning, learning content, and knowledge construction in which a hybrid system has its nature (Wu et al., 2021).

US

I **(Participant)** hope **(Mental)** that **(Relational)** my higher institution **(Participant)** could **(Verbal)** mediate and manage their faculty members' experience in **(Relational**) implementing hybrid systems better. **(Mental)** The hybrid teaching **(Participant)** tasks, instructions, and materials should be integrated **(Mental-material)** into the **(Relational)** LMS system that the institution issues.

The discussion within the excerpt explains that the mental process 'hope' is considered to relate to his goal to improve the communication between the higher institution and faculty members, which is shown by verbal analysis 'immediately.' In addition, the improvement should be considered based on three facets: 'tasks, instructions, and materials that are part of mental material.' These factors will encourage and improve the LMS system with its hybrid teaching model.

RX

Campuses **(Participant)** need to **(Mental)** use reference sources for **(Relational)** the use of technology to support hybrid lecture systems in the future. **(Cir-loc-time)**

He refers to the mental facet by showing 'need,' which means an intention to engage in hybrid teaching with the aid of technology support; it is demonstrated by the relational word 'for.' He tries to relate the technology devices to support the hybrid model in the future.

AS

There must be reasonable (**Mental-material**) steps from **(Relational)** the institution **(Participant)** to design hybrid teaching well. **(Cir)**

The text indicates the mental process proclaimed by the word 'be good' and relates the higher institution to improving the hybrid model's design. It portrays that the higher institution should prepare hybrid teaching, which could be elaborated into some scaffolding processes to make the faculty members understand how to implement in future implementation.

MT

The hybrid concept **(Participant)** is **(Relational)** outstanding **(Mental-process)** for **(Relational)** postpandemic conditions, and it is hoped that in the future **(Cir-loc-time)**, it **(Participant)** can be used **(Mental process)** as an alternative teaching method. The campus **(Participant)** has been excellent **(Relational)** at mediating this system.

The excerpt explains the mental analysis as 'very good,' which refers to the description of her hope for the future use of hybrid teaching; it is appropriate for the postpandemic context. It describes that the higher institution should already prepare the teaching methods to mediate the postpandemic policy in applying hybrid teaching.

ST

In the future **(Cir-loc-time)**, the hybrid system can still be relied **(Material)** for teaching on campus, especially for **(Relational)** students **(Participant)** from **(Cir-manner)** abroad, indeed, accommodates them.

She processes the material word 'relied on' to support hybrid teaching on campus with an exchange program for students abroad. The hybrid teaching could allow overseas students to participate freely in classroom interaction, whether they want to study in their country or they can learn in Indonesia for face-to-face interaction.

RK

Campuses **(Participant)** need **(Relational)** to use reference sources for the use of technology to support hybrid lecture systems in the future. **(Cir-loc-time)**

She connects the relational aspect of transitivity to depict technology support for maintaining classroom activities in the future, best described by circumstance-loc-time 'in the future for better application.'

Discussion

First and foremost, faculty members have different backgrounds in institutions where they implement their hybrid teaching. Moreover, the institutions have a particular mechanism for connecting their hybrid framework to the policy and implementation maker. This resulted in participants' different voices when asked about the implementation of hybrid teaching in their institutions. The three participants from University 'A' have clarified their voices with an equal narration and certain perceptions in using a hybrid system on their campus. They perceived that there should be a collaborative system to support a suitable ecology for implementing such LMS (Learning Management System) and other mediated-technology-enhanced LMS systems for hybrid and freedom of choice for faculty members in creating authentic lesson material, learning activities, instructions, and evaluation processes. These gaps should be communicated well with stakeholders and higher institutions to build better future hybrid teaching.

On the other hand, the other three faculty members should engage their struggle more in suggesting that stakeholders and higher institutions accommodate a teaching system such as LMS, which incorporates vivid guidance from the institution, creating hybrid teaching material, hybrid tasks, and an evaluation process to create a comfortable hybrid teaching ecology. Kist (2015) found that hybrid or blended learning generally incorporates both online and face-to-face components. One of the participants said that the development of hybrid teaching on their campus is still ongoing, and he believed that the hybrid teaching system would dramatically move to peak performance; the unit of hybrid development had been trying to accomplish hybrid ecology in the next two years.

The researchers have narrated faculty members' perceptions of implementing hybrid teaching in Indonesia's higher education setting. Six participants from two universities have told us they want to choose teaching material freely; three faculty members from campus B stressed this point and want the institution to set up the LMS. Furthermore, institutions should allow them to decide their freedom to implement synchronous and asynchronous online and face-to-face environments. Therefore, the hybrid system has to be a better teaching encounter that empowers faculty members to promote a task-based evaluation process, including the assessment facet; faculty members are free to showcase their independence at this point. Another three faculty members described that their institution had guided them to link hybrid teaching with the LMS system. Stabile and Ritchie (2013) pinpointed that faculty members' mindset should focus on creation instead of production at the center of academic work, including reflective practice to promote continuous improvement in one's teaching practice. Therefore, it makes it easier for them to manage teaching material, instruction, and evaluation; they are free to select these aspects and to conduct both synchronous and asynchronous online or face-to-face settings.

From various cultural values, it can be seen that the faculty members perceived and experienced their rigidity resulting from thematic narrative stories among the participants. They valued hybrid implementation in Indonesia as constructive, cooperation between stakeholders and the participant, and a dynamic and negotiable process. This study has presented evidence that faculty members' hybrid teaching is considered a complex and heterogeneous task and teaching material; meanwhile, it provides freedom of choice in selection and implementation. In addition, online and offline learning spaces must tailor students' need analysis to teaching

hybrid practices in university settings. It must be supported by the university's policy contingent on theoretical and practical application in the hybrid teaching environment. However, more attention should be given to online teaching challenges that would bring prerequisites for hybrid improvement. Major (2010) has stated that online teaching challenges can often be sources of trepidation and uncertainty for faculty members when they encounter changes. Hence, constructive feedback should be incorporated from teaching experiences that come from reflection. This chapter also critically examines teaching hybrid reflection that needs to reconstruct faculty members' experiences to support the ecology system; it comprises hybrid teaching provision and guidance from university policy.

Conclusion

The chapter explored the perception of six participants from two different universities in responding to hybrid teaching in the transition from teaching online to offline in the postpandemic era. The results point to varied perceptions from 'hybrid teaching preparations' to suggestions that 'Indonesian higher institutions should manage a hybrid system.' The study's implication is the readiness for hybrid teaching to use both LMS supported by the university system or faculty members' free material, such as the use of Google classrooms or Facebook and other teaching ecologies. Another contribution of this study is that hybrid teaching practices should enact constructive, communicative, and cooperative learning pedagogy with the use of technology for students to explore asynchronous online activities such as searching for authentic material from any internet sources with the lecturers' assistance, providing scaffolding steps to complete the learning tasks, and providing guidance for corrective feedback. These suggestions are constructive for solving students with poor internet connectivity problems. However, we are concerned that this study needs to be delivered to broader audiences by adding a more global perspective. Yang et al. (2023) showed that constructing a hybrid teaching model can motivate students' engagement in learning. The study suggests overcoming Inequality in learning access; we could provide offline material in well-structured LMS or educational websites or social media so faculty members can access it anytime. In brief, it will support the conceptual and practical contribution of hybrid teaching in the postpandemic era in Indonesian higher education and the global context.

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Building, Bonding, and Growing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of Indiana University's Chinese Flagship Program

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127

Introduction

In the wake of coronavirus 2019 (henceforth COVID-19), the educational landscape has undergone significant changes (Marinoni et al., 2020; Peters et al., 2020). As institutions of higher education worldwide have enforced travel bans, quarantine measures, and suspended face-to-face teaching, policymakers and educational practitioners have implemented new policies and procedures to mitigate the effects of the pandemic (Chan, 2020). Toquero (2020) highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected higher education institutions globally, including those in the Philippines. He draws on their experiences, research, observations in the academy, and COVID-19 guidelines to recommend that higher education institutions strengthen their curriculum practices to be more responsive to the learning needs of students beyond traditional classrooms. Chan (2021) investigates the policies, perspectives, and practices involved in creating and managing international joint and dual degree programs in higher education, with a focus on North America and Asia. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the policy positions, cultural differences, and institutional rules and policies that influence the development of such programs.

Likewise, language educators and practitioners have been forced to confront difficult questions and make tough decisions about how to best serve their students in the rapidly changing time. The sudden shift to emergency remote teaching and learning has presented unprecedented challenges, particularly for language programs that rely heavily on in-person interaction, cultural immersion, and linguistic exchange. Chung and Choi (2021) investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected language instructors' teaching and assessment practices in an English language program in South Korea. The authors found that instructors formed a professional learning community to develop new process-oriented and formative assessment practices, and students were highly satisfied with the new assessment strategies. However, instructors' satisfaction with their assessment practices was low, highlighting the need for more sustainable and innovative language assessment strategies. Ross and DiSalvo (2020) explore how the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted language pedagogy and instructional modes at Harvard University and how the Language Center responded to these challenges. The article outlines the steps taken by the Language Center to mitigate the effects of the transition to remote teaching and learning, including changes in

communication strategies, support mechanisms for faculty and students, and modifications to the Center's operational policies.

The current literature on language programs has mainly focused on leadership and teacher practices (e.g., Chung & Choi, 2021; Ritz & Sherf, 2022; Ross & DiSalvo, 2020), academic strategies such as rethinking placement tests during the COVID-19 pandemic (Imamura et al., 2022) or the organizing management of language programs (e.g., Opier & Mufidah, 2022). However, there has been limited research on how tutoring and cultural activities have shifted to online and adapted to the "new normal" era. As language programs adapt to the new reality of remote learning, there is a growing need for research on the challenges and opportunities that emerge in the transition to online language tutoring and cultural activities. Therefore, in this chapter, we seek to explore the experiences of the Chinese Language Flagship Program at Indiana University (IU) during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a specific focus on tutoring and cultural activities. Through a cross-cultural lens, we examine the challenges and opportunities that emerged in the program's efforts to adapt to the new reality of remote language learning. Drawing on insights from administrators, faculty, tutors, and students, this chapter highlights the program's responses in recruitment and management, training and professional development, and community building during COVID-19. Throughout our discussion, we pay particular attention to the cultural and linguistic dimensions of the challenges faced by the IU Chinese Language Flagship Program. Except for concrete recommendations for academic support units in similar transitions, we will also share the lessons learned from these experiences and propose a new blended "double-loop" model for cross-cultural tutoring management that incorporates both online and face-to-face instruction to better meet the needs of language learners in the new normal learning era.

Chinese Flagship Program

The Language Flagship is a national initiative in the United States aimed at revolutionizing the way Americans learn languages. It provides language programs at schools across the country for undergraduate students to learn critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu. The goal of The Language Flagship is to graduate students who possess superior proficiency in one of these critical languages, making them well-equipped to become

global professionals and leaders in fields crucial to U.S. national security and economic competitiveness (The Language Flagship, n.d.).

The flagship sponsors twelve Chinese Flagship Programs at colleges and universities across the United States. The Chinese Flagship Program at Indiana University (IU) is a federally funded language program. It is designed to help students majoring in any field of study develop marketable language skills to prepare for global careers. In addition to required coursework, the program offers students intensive language and culture instruction, including group training and individual tutoring sessions, as well as various events to enrich students' cultural exposure and build their social networks. The Chinese Flagship Program also provides extensive study abroad opportunities, including summer studying abroad and a capstone year in Taiwan and mainland China (before COVID-19), where students can enroll in coursework and participate in various internship opportunities.

As part of the Chinese Flagship Program, students at IU are partnered with native speakers to promote language growth and development. Flagship students and their Chinese-speaking tutors meet weekly to improve both their Chinese language skills and cultural understanding of China. More advanced students in their third year of Chinese study and beyond have the opportunity to meet twice a week with native-speaking students who have expertise related to the flagship student's own areas of study. The focus of these biweekly meetings is to provide one-on-one exposure to discipline-specific concepts in Mandarin. These tutors assist students in finding articles relevant to their field and aid them in building vocabulary related to their areas of study (Indiana University Chinese Flagship Program, n.d.).

Program Challenges

Since the program's inception over a decade ago, our tutoring program has been one of the most significant and effective components of the system. Aside from scholarship opportunities and study abroad prospects, students cited the tutoring program as a key factor in their consideration of the flagship program, where they can obtain one-on-one individualized practice with native Chinese speakers who are either overseas students at IU or full-time tutors hired directly from Taiwan. However, due to the visa restriction imposed by the US embassy in Taiwan and the severe COVID-19 situation here in the United States, we faced a shortage of

manpower due to the lack of full-time overseas tutors. Therefore, we had to apply a new strategy to recruit enough qualified tutors by seeking collaboration with more overseas universities by utilizing online technology. However, this approach presented new challenges, including identifying appropriate online tools for tutoring and navigating China's Great Firewall.

In addition to the obstacles of recruiting and managing tutors, we also faced significant pedagogical challenges. The transition to online learning was sudden for both students and faculty. Our students faced emotional depression and apathy, which stems from uncertainty regarding academic success, future professions, and social life, among other things that negatively affected them, thereby reducing their motivation to attend online tutoring sessions. On the other hand, the abrupt change required tutors, instructors, staff, and stakeholders to develop new pedagogical strategies applicable for online teaching. The lack of a language teaching background in our local tutors as well as a linguistic and cultural barrier in our overseas tutors added additional challenges. To provide students with an authentic, functional, interactive, and constructive language learning environment, more training in technology, instructional design, and emotional support needed to be included.

The importance of students' sense of belonging has been argued as a determining factor for their engagement, success, and retention (Reed & Dunn, 2022; Thomas, 2012). Our flagship program used to be a tight-knit community. The quarantine put a halt on the majority of get-togethers. Although we continually hosted online events, attendance and engagement were major concerns due to our lack of experience in holding online events as well as students' loss of opportunities to have authentic cultural experiences and close interactions with peers. The crisis posed by COVID-19 has profoundly impacted the ways in which communication tactics, support mechanisms, and operational procedures are employed in our Chinese Flagship Program. New ways of connecting students and rebuilding our community were at stake. The traditional management approach was in urgent need of reform.

The present chapter describes the dilemmas faced by the IU's Chinese Flagship Program during COVID-19 and the efforts taken by the administrators to offset the consequences of the shift to emergency remote teaching and learning. By discussing our program's responses in recruitment and management, training and professional development, and

community building during COVID-19, this chapter seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What specific efforts did the IU Chinese Flagship Program make to offset the consequences of the shift to emergency remote teaching and learning in the above three aspects?
2. What lessons can we draw from reflecting on our online experiences during COVID-19 when moving forward to the postpandemic era?

Based on our reflection on the practices during the pandemic, the chapter will introduce a new blended "double-loop" model incorporating an online teaching mode with traditional face-to-face classroom instructions, which may be adopted by other foreign language programs that hope to explore the potential advantages of online teaching in their programs.

We are under no illusions that our efforts during the COVID-19 were always successful and can be adopted blindly to any language programs, but we believe that our experiences offer a valuable case to study for several reasons. First, the program's successful collaboration with overseas universities and its management of tutors of various backgrounds in an online setting offer valuable insights for other programs in similar situations. Second, the program's focus on building a strong online community and incorporating regular evaluations offers a unique perspective on how to establish a learner-centered online teaching environment. Finally, our proposal for an innovative blended "double-loop" model incorporating online and face-to-face teaching modes may open up dialogs among language instructors, researchers, and institutions who are exploring new approaches combining the advantages of different learning modes to benefit language teaching and students in different situations in the new normal learning era.

PROGRAM RESPONSES

In this section, we will discuss our paradigm change during COVID-19 in the following four aspects: (1) switching the recruitment process from one-way demand to two-way collaboration; (2) implementing a new approach for managing tutors of different backgrounds; (3) adopting emerging platforms and methods of periodical training sessions; and (4) generating new tactics for rebuilding the community.

Enable Two-Way Collaboration

It is well documented that one-on-one tutoring is superior to normal learning experiences in traditional classroom settings, such as large lectures and group drill sessions (Bloom, 1984; Graesser et al., 2004). As mentioned above, our tutoring program has been one of the most effective features of our program. Prior to the pandemic, our tutors consisted mainly of local tutors, who were international Chinese students studying at IU, and full-time Taiwanese tutors recruited directly from universities in Taiwan. However, at the beginning of the fall semester of 2020, we were suddenly facing a shortage of manpower due to the travel limitations posed between different countries and thus the need for an alternative way to recruit native Chinese speakers.

At this time, we quickly learned that the Rhode Island Chinese Flagship Program had been cooperating with universities overseas via online platforms since early 2020. Due to the shutdown policy in different parts of East Asia, those universities were in need of an alternative way for their graduate students who majored in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language (TCSL) to fulfill academic requirements such as internship experiences in another country. Our program promptly reached out to several well-known TCSL universities and, after a month of interviews and administrative processes, gained official approval for interinstitutional collaboration with overseas universities through online platforms. We recruited seven tutors from Beijing Normal University, five tutors from Beijing Language and Culture University, and three tutors from Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages in Taiwan. In the spring semester of 2021, we followed the same protocols and were pleasantly surprised by the number of overseas mentors who volunteered to stay in the program for another semester despite already fulfilling their internship requirements.

Previously, there was only a one-way demand of our program, that is, to hire Chinese native speakers to practice Chinese with our students. However, the gateway opened up by the pandemic via online collaboration between overseas institutions served as a new opportunity for meeting both the demands of the TCSL majors who were in need of practical experience by overseas universities and our demands for a lack of professional native Chinese teachers. This led to a shift from one-way demand to a two-way collaboration between different parties. In fact, a similar mode of online collaboration has been adopted by other universities and is continuously in use by various institutions in the postpandemic era.

Different Online Platforms Expand Educational Affordance

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many institutions of higher education, particularly those in middle- and upper-income countries, to adopt new technologies and approaches in all departments, including face-to-face, online, synchronous, and asynchronous modes (Chan, 2020). However, little thought has been given to how these information and communication technologies (ICT) will be utilized (Altbach & de Wit, 2020), including the selection of appropriate tools and strategies to prepare and support students and educators.

Our tutoring program faced challenges in supervising both local IU tutors and overseas tutors from Asia. We approached these challenges by using the video conferencing platform Zoom, which was accessible to IU students and local tutors for free through the university's subscription. Although overseas tutors did not have free access to unlimited meeting time, students could send a meeting link to their tutors using their accounts. We also advised our teachers and students to prepare for potential internet disruptions, which could occur during long-distance connections. Tutors and students found that using mobile chatting apps such as WeChat and Line (the most popular versions in China and Taiwan) were convenient alternatives for communication, as they allowed users to use their mobile data regardless of internet availability.

Previously, our program used the online management system Canvas, as was adopted on the university scale. However, most overseas tutors had trouble accessing this platform due to internet restrictions in China. In addition, we adopted the online collaboration system Lark, which is accessible in China. Since our tutoring program works closely tied to the curriculum of the Chinese department, most tutors designed their lesson plans in accordance with students' class schedules. Hence, the online platforms served as a great way for tutors to stay up-to-date with the class materials. We also provided them with additional resources such as lesson plan templates, extra reading and video materials, and online training videos. Furthermore, tutors and students used online platforms to submit documents and assignments, which was a more efficient workflow than managing hundreds of email chains. At the beginning of each semester, tutors went through technological training to ensure that they received adequate support for their tutoring sessions and to reduce their psychological stress associated with synchronous lessons.

Two-Pronged Approach Training

Apart from management and technological obstacles, our main challenge during COVID-19 involved difficulties in pedagogical training. The purpose of this section is to provide a brief introduction to the tutoring program's operating model, with an emphasis on the ways in which the tutoring training and the tutoring mode work in concert to provide a two-pronged approach.

Overview of the Tutoring Pairing and Schedule

An effective tutor-student pairing can maximize good communication and success in tutoring sessions. Our general criteria for student assignment were that (1) students' majors were related to those of tutors (in the case of local tutors) to benefit students' domain training; (2) there was a good match between personalities; and (3) the tutor needed to be slightly older than the student.

Table 7.1 demonstrates the tutoring schedule required by our flagship students. This schedule was designed based on students' level and course workload. Tutors are assigned certain numbers of students based on their availability and our demands. In addition, due to the fluctuation of the students in our program, having a tutor pool turned out to be effective in case a last-minute tutor-student pairing is made during the semester.

Online Teaching Training

As mentioned above, by utilizing tutors from different majors, our program hoped to utilize their specialty in different fields to facilitate domain training for our students. Providing individualized feedback and instant assistance to students encountering difficulties can greatly enhance their

Table 7.1 Tutoring schedule

Chinese level	Frequency per week	Length per session
1st year	1	45 mins
2nd year	2	45 mins
3rd year	2	1 h
4th year	2	1 h
5th year	2	1 h

language skills and abilities (Wang et al., 2022). However, most of these tutors were not experts in language teaching. While our overseas students were TCSL majors, they had no experience in online teaching, especially in an emergency setting during the pandemic. Previous studies have argued that online language teaching requires unique skills that are different from traditional face-to-face instruction (Hampel & Stickler, 2005; Tseng, 2017, among others). Moreover, these teachers had never taught in an American classroom, and they were not familiar with the different teaching etiquette and study habits of students from different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, many overseas tutors also encountered a language barrier due to their lower level of English proficiency, which caused difficulties in many training sessions, such as the oral proficiency interview (OPI) training by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which was conducted entirely in English.

To solve the first problem, we conducted different forms of training throughout the semester. In the first tutoring orientation at the beginning of each semester, faculty from the Chinese department came to talk about the basics of Chinese teaching, such as how to teach tones and use a proficiency-based curriculum. Instructors of different levels would also meet with tutors of their level to give specific guidance and expectations. To ease the burden of our overseas tutors, we also conducted a separate tutoring orientation to specifically address their questions.

During the semester, our pedagogy specialists conducted class observations twice by visiting individual tutoring sessions (virtually during the pandemic) and giving tutors detailed feedback. The focus of our feedback was on the preparation of the tutor, the format of the lesson, and the level of interaction between tutors and students. Here, we included some common problems that existed from our observations:

a. The teacher explains too much in class, and students have few opportunities to practice.
b. The teacher uses too much English.
c. The teacher uses words that are too difficult and not adjusted to the students' level.
d. The teacher designs activities that are problematic or do not have a clear purpose, such as simply asking students to read words and texts.
e. The teacher does not appropriately correct students' pronunciation and grammatical errors.

    f. The supplemental content is too difficult or students spend too much time listening and reading and not enough time producing orally.

    g. The teacher adds too many vocabulary words without focused practice.

    h. The teacher's class content is rather boring, such as going through the PowerPoint from beginning to end and having students retell the text.

After the class observations, we provided immediate feedback by sending out a detailed feedback form, having conversations with tutors after class, or communicating with them via messages. Common problems would be addressed in midterm tutoring training. During the pandemic, we tended the tutors more by focusing not only on their teaching practices and students' performances but also teachers' and students' motivation and mental well-being. We also focused on building a strong connection among tutors. For example, we invited tutors who performed well during our observations to share their experiences in the midterm training.

In addition to providing training sessions for all tutors, we also offered a variety of training programs, not limited to tutoring sessions per se but for the benefit of overseas tutors in line with their career plans. These training sessions provided these tutors with more opportunities regarding online teaching and classroom protocols and served as our compensation for their work since we were unable to pay tutors who are outside the United States based on US government policy. For example, knowing that most of the overseas tutors intended to teach group classes in the future, we invited experienced teachers to share relevant teaching experiences and techniques. We also provided them with opportunities to observe Chinese courses at all levels, access more teaching materials, and participate in lesson planning sessions. We also issued internship certificates (and other relevant documents such as recommendation letters on an individual basis). Most importantly, as OPI is widely used for assessing students' oral proficiency in the United States and since our overseas tutors were not familiar with this type of assessment, we offered them a professional development opportunity to participate in a 10–14-hour online OPI Familiarization workshop so that they could be familiar with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines and incorporate these guidelines into teaching. To help overseas tutors overcome the cultural and linguistic barriers, the director of our flagship program designed a pre-OPI training session to

cover the content in Chinese. We also invited a Chinese OPI tester to conduct live workshops to help tutors solidify what they had learned in the online courses.

Tutoring Mode

Highlight the challenges faced by educators during remote instruction, including the need for quality instruction, increased workload, and limited resources for online teaching. To address these challenges and support student learning, Chan (2020) suggests that faculty and instructional designers must adopt new pedagogical approaches and practices. In our case, apart from various training, one potential solution is to develop new tutoring modes that can be easily utilized by tutors of different backgrounds. We are introducing it here so that it may benefit different programs and platforms.

Altbach and de Wit (2020) warned that the lack of motivation among students for online delivery may become an issue, particularly with the cohort of students who began their higher education during the pandemic. Motivation has been shown to have multiple benefits on students' learning, including the tendency to utilize a deep learning approach and demonstrate increased performance, persistence, and creativity, as well as enthusiasm in participating in challenging activities (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). To stimulate students' motivation, our tutoring mode was designed following J.M. Keller's ARCS model (Keller, 1983, 1984, 1987) and was created based on his motivational concepts of four categories: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. From the explanation of our mode below, you may see that we attempted to increase students' motivation by attracting their attention to topics relevant to their situations and goals, increasing their confidence and satisfaction by designing appropriate incentive strategies, and using a variety of methods and approaches combined with technology. All these strategies are crucial to creating a learner-centered, interactive, and constructive learning environment.

Specifically, the tutoring mode divides a session into four parts: free talk, main topic, parallel topic, and summary. The initial free talk is a warm-up time where tutors and students can discuss topics relevant to students' life, the upcoming session, or the previous lesson. We encouraged tutors to document students' learning progress in a tutoring log so that they might keep track of what to review. During free talks, grammar

mistakes or pronunciation problems may surface, which can be addressed later.

The main topic stage helps students solidify their memorization and deepen their understanding of the knowledge with direct application. Students in our program had materials to review from their lectures and drill classes. If a tutoring session does not have a textbook, we recommend providing learners with achievable authentic materials with goal orientation. Choosing content that is relevant to learners' current life or their future, such as finding a job or internship, can greatly increase their motivation to learn.

The application of conceptual knowledge is crucial in language learning. Direct application should occur immediately after reviewing certain materials. If the situation permits it, tutors can employ more topics in the parallel topic stage. Since our tutoring session was designed to be a vertical spiraling process, utilizing parallel topics would involve stretching students' abilities by employing a wider range of topics and new information. We encourage using a variety of methods and approaches (e.g., videos, social media, gamification, role-playing, debate) to sustain students' interests and develop their reasoning, critical thinking, organizing, and analytical skills.

The ideal tutoring session will end with a summary of the key points. We recommend conducting a reflective review to allow learners to step back and analyze what they have learned and the effectiveness of their methods. Throughout the session, tutors are encouraged to provide learners with constructive feedback, success opportunities, and positive reinforcement. This is extremely important in online learning during the pandemic when it was reported to adversely affect students' behavioral and emotional functioning (Copeland et al., 2021).

Create a Strong Culturally Immersive Network

Apart from our pedagogical support in online teaching, we implemented different approaches to strengthen connections among students and tutors during this difficult time of isolation.

Rebuild Students' Community Through Cultural Immersion

Although recent research has suggested that study abroad programs may not always be the most effective way to provide students with access to

culture and achieve desired levels of cultural or linguistic learning (e.g., Kinginger, 2008; Wilkinson, 1998), it is often assumed that classroom environments are incapable of fostering profound cultural understanding simply because they are physically distant from communities of target language speakers (Kearney, 2010). This assumption is rarely challenged, especially during the pandemic and online learning. To address this issue, our program has implemented a strategy of providing cultural immersion experiences through a combination of virtual events and multiline communication in an effort to rebuild our students' sense of community.

Previous literature has reported various online learning challenges that students faced during the pandemic, including social isolation from peers and lack of communication (Adarkwah, 2021; Copeland et al., 2021; Rasheed et al., 2020; Suryaman et al., 2020). Garrison and Kanuka (2004) maintained that connection with others is essential to promote students' commitment and ensure that they have meaningful educational experiences in both in-person and online learning settings. To ensure students' emotional well-being in the program, we made additional efforts to stay connected with them in different ways. First, because tutors had regular one-on-one interactions with students and some of them became good mentors for students, we reached out to them more often than we had before to check on students' performances and to determine if any of the students were in need of additional help. Because of the uncertainty that the pandemic brought to each student's life, we also decided to be more lenient and flexible with the consequences they had to face when violating the program's guidelines, for example, absences and retardness for tutoring sessions. Instead of direct penalties, we would reach out to them, try to understand the situation, provide them with suggestions, and give them another chance if needed. Additionally, since social media has been found to increase social inclusion and connectivity in higher education during COVID-19 in different countries (Dutta, 2020; Sobaih et al., 2020), we also took advantage of online platforms and created different mobile chat groups on WeChat and Line, which allowed students and teachers to have sustained interaction. Alawamleh et al. (2022) also suggested that instructors should communicate with students through more informal channels, such as instant messages and online chat groups, in addition to formal channels (emails, online platforms) to improve effective communication during online learning.

In normal circumstances, our program regularly hosts various activities to help students connect with each other, such as a welcome-back party,

the Chinese Tidings Lecture Series, and a Chinese New Year's party. During the pandemic, most activities transitioned to online platforms. This provided us with both opportunities and challenges. For example, scholars from other universities could give lectures to our students without having to travel physically. We were able to collaborate with the flagship students from other universities and invite our alumni from overseas to come to talk to our students. Our overseas tutors were also able to participate in the activities to introduce authentic Chinese culture. On the other hand, one of the biggest challenges that students expressed was that online activities were harder to engage in. To address this issue, we designed gifts that are tied to the educational purposes of the activities to engage students. For the 2021 Chinese New Year celebration, our program administrators distributed gifts in advance by meeting with students in person or sending them to their dorms. During the celebration online, we explained the symbolic meaning of the gifts and designed interactive activities. Many students expressed that this made the online activities more enjoyable and engaging, and they also felt valued and appreciative of the opportunity to connect with teachers in person.

In addition to our traditional cultural events, we also organized smaller online gatherings, such as cooking events, to provide students with more opportunities for socialization and cultural immersion. One such event was a cooking class hosted by a tutor from Beijing and her mother, who demonstrated how to cook scallion pancakes from their own kitchen via video conferencing technology. Despite the distance, the tutor and her mother provided a detailed, step-by-step tutorial, allowing students to follow along and learn how to cook the dish themselves. This provided students with a truly immersive cultural experience, as they were able to see inside a real Chinese kitchen and learn from local experts. The cooking event was casual and optional, and students did not have to feel pressured to attend. Our goal was simply to provide students with more social and practical opportunities during the isolation period. At the end of the event, the students shared photos of their own scallion pancakes, creating a sense of community and shared experience despite the physical distance between them.

Our program traditionally had an annual publication of students' essays. During COVID-19, instead of suspending the procedure entirely, we published a digital copy so that every student could have access to the journal. We viewed this as a great way to rebuild our community, as it gave

students a chance to value each other's success and created beautiful memories during this difficult time.

Finally, during the novelty of online learning, students' opinions on the program were particularly valued. In addition to conducting students' evaluations twice a semester asking for their feedback on the tutoring sessions, we also asked them to provide thoughts on areas such as the effectiveness of online activities and communication with tutors and staff during the pandemic, how they would compare their online and in-person learning experiences and how we may need to change our approach. We also solicited feedback from our tutors concerning, for example, their experiences of different training programs to ensure that the transition to a novel online approach could go as smoothly as possible.

Rebond Tutors with the Chinese Flagship Program

Effective online learning is highly dependent on faculty training. Faculty members who are open to change are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction with online and distance education than less experienced faculty (Cutri & Mena, 2020). While our students faced significant changes to their learning methods, we realized our tutors also faced new pressures. Studies have emphasized the anxiety online teachers face due to factors such as high workload, the uncertainty of online communication, the temporal stress generated by synchronous communication and any technical failings (Develotte et al., 2008; Gautam & Sharma, 2020; Sokal et al., 2020). Moreover, our tutors were also students themselves. The isolation from their peers and the change in learning mode in their own studies may have also affected their mental well-being. To better assist them and notice any problems, we created different tutor groups on WeChat where we can communicate more timely than responding through emails. It also turned out to be a good platform for sharing information such as online workshops and conference information.

Furthermore, we sought every opportunity to make our tutors feel valued and appreciated. For example, we provided gifts to our local tutors as a gesture of appreciation during the Chinese New Year and an opportunity to meet them in person. We realize this might not be realistic for every program, but we highly recommend it if the situation permits. As recommended by our tutors, we also gave them opportunities to organize their own informal gatherings online without the presence of the

2020 Fall

8/29/2020 Fall Semester Tutor Orientation
8/30/2020 Fall Semester Tutor Orientation (Overseas tutors)
9/4/2020 Fall-Welcome Back Party
9/12/2020 Film Discussion
9/18/2020 Q&A Session for Oversea Tutors
9/14/2020 (#1) OPI Familiarization Online Workshop
10/4/2020 (#2) OPI Familiarization Online Workshop
10/10/2020 Film Discussion
10/14/2020 Chinese Tidings Lectures
10/24/2020 Tutor Midterm Training
11/17/2020 Chinese Tidings Lectures
11/23/2020 Cooking Event
12/26/2020 Farewell Party to Overseas Tutors
1/3/2021 Cooking Event
1/4/2021 Film Discussion

Fig. 7.1 2020 Fall IU Chinese flagship events timeline

administrators. We realize that everyone needs a place to vent their emotions freely and exchange their thoughts on how to work with students during COVID-19 times.

To summarize this session of our programs' response during the pandemic, Figs. 7.1 and 7.2 provide an overall timeline of all the events in 2020–2021.

Reflection and Moving Forward

Online Learning Revisited

The debate on the effectiveness of online learning (e-learning and distance learning) versus traditional face-to-face learning has spanned generations. However, in recent years, online learning has gained prevalence and proven to have numerous advantages. Nguyen (2015) conducted a study that suggests that online learning is as effective, if not more so, than traditional face-to-face learning. It offers flexibility and adaptability to

2021 Spring

1/10/2021 Professor Liang's Workshop on one-on-one Tutoring
1/15/2021 Spring Semester Tutor Orientation
1/16/2021 Spring Semester Tutor Orientation (Overseas tutors)
1/23/2021 OPI Familiarization Online Workshop
1/26/2021 Chinese Tidings Lectures
2/12/2021 Chinese New Year Event
2/21/2021 How to Help Students Practice OPI (Professor Lyu)
2/24/2021 Chinese Tidings Lectures
3/6/2021 Professor Liang's 2nd Workshop on One-on-one Tutoring
3/20/2021 Midterm Tutor Orientation
4/16/2021 Career Talk with Chinese Flagship Alumni (Professor Lyu)
5/6/2021 End-of-Year-Party

Fig. 7.2   2021 Spring IU Chinese flagship event timeline

individual needs and enables remote innovation within the classroom (Dhawan, 2020). Integrating technology such as texts, videos, and interactive graphics into learning is now easier than ever before (Dhawan, 2020). According to Kramsch, language teaching and learning have never been as interactive and imaginative as they are today thanks to online learning. In addition, online learning has fostered collaborations and joint degree programs between institutions of higher education. This trend is expected to continue in the post-COVID era, generating revenue and attracting international distance-learning students.

This is consistent with our survey results at the end of the 2020–2021 academic year. We found that students who preferred online tutoring appreciated its flexibility in terms of time and location. They also enjoyed the opportunity to connect with native speakers overseas, gaining unique perspectives on course materials. The use of online tools facilitated the sharing of materials and research questions, enabling coverage of a wider variety of topics and promoting learning about Chinese culture. Our survey results align with previous findings on the disadvantages of online learning. Students expressed concerns about a lack of natural communication, which could be attributed to problems such as internet lagging, sound distortion, and limited physical interaction. These factors may hinder students' ability to correct tones and improve their

pronunciation and listening skills. Another significant concern was the lack of connection and communication with tutors and peers, a challenge that has also been documented in other studies (Alawamleh et al., 2022; Burke, 2020; Dhawan, 2020; Dumford & Miller, 2018; Islam et al., 2015; Joseph et al., 2020; Rasheed et al., 2020). Additionally, some students reported feeling tired and unmotivated when staring at a screen all day, and they expressed a desire for a more immersive Chinese learning environment. According to Cohen (2003), creating a sense of community is crucial for online learners, as technology lacks a human element and can contribute to feelings of isolation.

Concerning online activities, students preferred the immersion and interaction of in-person events, but they mentioned that online events allowed them to meet a wider range of distinguished speakers and alumni, and they enjoyed the flexibility of being able to attend these events without being constrained by space.

Overall, 73% of the students in our survey indicated that they would like to keep online tutoring as an option in the future, while another 27% of students indicated that they prefer only the in-person mode.

Decision: Adopting a Hybrid Model

- Promote in-person tutoring while remaining open to online tutoring.
- Continuing to offer online lectures that do not require extensive student-tutor interaction, such as Chinese Tidings lectures and ACTFL OPI training, enables us to invite distinguished scholars from national and international institutions in a cost-effective manner.
- Organize hybrid events, such as the capstone year predeparture culture workshop, that are accessible to a larger audience, including students who are currently studying abroad.
- Maximizing the cross-border potential of the internet to create opportunities and expand students' exposure to native speakers in their target language and country.

By streamlining our operations in this manner, we aim to maximize flexibility while still delivering quality educational experiences to our students.

Technology and Learner Autonomy

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to foster self-directed learning, which is crucial when students cope with stressors or the skills needed to adapt to a changing environment. However, much of our previous tutoring sessions focused on instructor-leading grammar drills and knowledge consolidation, without providing students enough autonomy in their own learning process to actively engage in knowledge making. Studies on individual differences, motivation, and learners' beliefs have pointed to the importance of the contributions learners make to their own learning experience (Bråten & Olaussen, 2005). In addition, as advocated by Cope and Kalantzis (2017), in the digital era where learning can occur ubiquitously, it has become possible for learning to become lifelong and meet different social and personal needs.

Decision: Developing a "Double-loop" Model

Based on the reflection of online teaching, student autonomy, and online technology, we designed a "double-loop" model to ensure quality tutoring sessions while cultivating students' self-directed learning ability. This model combines online and offline one-on-one practice, an online reflective e-portfolio, and materials for online self-directed learning. The model proposes that regular tutoring sessions with local tutors (either online or offline) are mandatory, while additional online tutoring with tutors majoring in TCSL or other target languages is optional. The frequency of tutoring sessions with online overseas tutors and local tutors can be adjusted as needed. The online reflective e-portfolio can be used to modify the goals and contents of the tutoring sessions based on students' language proficiency. Figure 7.3 visualizes the operation of this model.

The critical element of this model is the self-development learning course developed by our program. Even though tutoring sessions filled a niche with personalization, an inclusive context needs to be considered as the basis of the course design. Therefore, we created a secondary development based on the grammar and vocabulary of the textbooks, which is a series of learning materials that are carefully structured according to the ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, Evaluate) instructional framework. Moreover, research has shown that short bursts of learning content and activities enabled by the microlearning approach
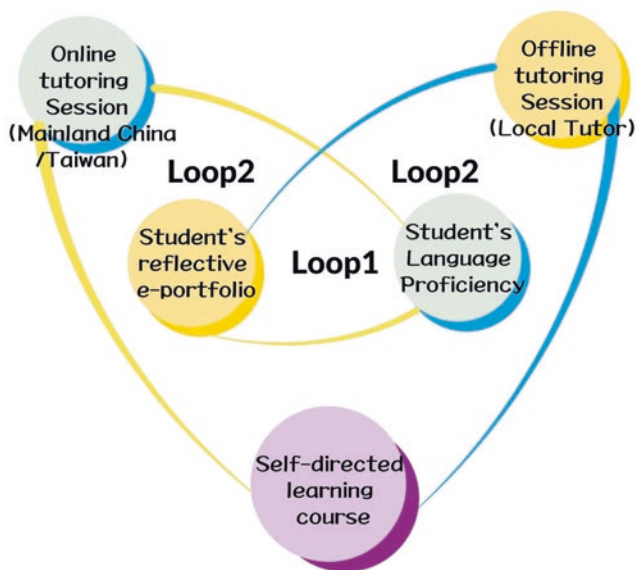
Fig. 7.3 "Double-loop" model

positively impact learning outcomes by allowing learners to access knowledge at their own pace and in a more modular manner (Shail, 2019). Students' self-directed learning skills when interacting more actively with such content can be increased, and their self-efficacy and confidence in studying in a digital environment can be boosted. Therefore, we divided the content into smaller chunks in the form of short videos to help students better retain information. This improved their performance in the tutoring sessions.

The tutors are also guided by corresponding worksheets based on the concept of tier teaching. These worksheets are tailored to students' different proficiency levels and used to assess students' performance on self-directed learning courses and direct tutors to appropriate learning activities. In addition, our program acknowledges the vast differences between traditional classrooms and the ubiquitous learning spaces created by the new digital technologies. With the module functions of Lark and Canvas, we integrated the course and learning materials so that students

could access our learning materials anywhere and at any time. Ultimately, this model provides a high degree of freedom and is based on the interests of the students.

Conclusion

Our reflection on the online experiences of the program during the COVID-19 pandemic may offer several valuable lessons for language programs moving forward into the postpandemic era. First, it is clear that online language learning can be successful, as demonstrated by our program's ability to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic and deliver high-quality language education online. All the experiences highlight the importance of being adaptable, collaborative, and focusing on building a strong online community to successfully navigate the challenges of online language learning during times of crisis:

Flexibility is key: One key lesson learned from this experience is the importance of flexibility and adaptability in education. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for educators to be able to quickly pivot and adjust to unexpected changes in the learning environment. Alternative methods such as blended learning, asynchronous learning, and personalized learning can be effective and should be embraced.

Technology is a powerful tool: Technology has proven to be a powerful tool in facilitating effective online learning experiences. The adoption of new technologies and teaching methods played a critical role in ensuring the success of the online language program during the pandemic. The use of technology can help bridge the gap between traditional classroom learning and online learning. Educational programs need to be able to embrace new technologies and teaching methods to provide high-quality education. However, it is important for educational programs to recognize that not all students and teachers may have access to technology or possess the necessary digital literacy skills.

Cross-collaboration and communication: Effective communication and collaboration among cross-country collaborators, faculty, staff, and students are crucial for the success of a program. To ensure successful collaboration, clear communication channels and protocols should be established, and technology should be used to facilitate communication and document sharing. Additionally, building a culture of trust and respect among collaborators from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds is crucial for effective cross-country collaboration. Encouraging regular

evaluations and feedback from all stakeholders will help ensure continuous improvement and adjustment of the collaboration process.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional educational models and highlighted the need for educational institutions to incorporate virtual learning as a valuable addition to their educational proposals in response to the new postpandemic context. Our "double-loop" model provides a framework for other foreign language programs to consider as they navigate this era, emphasizing the importance of strengthening the use of ICT in virtual language classes to provide innovative and effective language training experiences. By incorporating feedback and evaluations from stakeholders, the model emphasizes adaptability and ongoing reflection in creating a successful and inclusive language learning environment.

Moving forward, our program will continue to adapt and innovate to provide students with the best possible language learning experience. By drawing on the experiences and lessons learned from the past, as well as other case studies and research during the pandemic, we believe language programs can foster a sense of community and support students' language proficiency in the face of ongoing challenges.

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The Importance of Including Students' Perspectives in Research to Further Understand New Learning Environments

Vincent Wiggins

Introduction

During the last several decades, there has been a move toward providing a flexible learning hybrid, simulation labs, remote labs, and other variations of a flexible learning environment. However, the recent pandemic has accelerated the need for what was thought to be a short-term learning environment solution to implementing the best solution for the new learning environment. From a global students' perspective, in this chapter, how the recent coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has forced a shift in education that expedited a flexible learning environment is discussed. The information provided in this chapter is intentionally from a global students' perspective to demonstrate the importance of including

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their voices as we continue to identify how to be successful in approaching the new learning environment.

As we modify the new learning environment, it is important to consider obtaining students' and faculty members' perspectives related to a flexible learning environment. Historically, significant research has cited the support provided to faculty as it relates to technical support, professional development, and other resources to offer a flexible learning environment. However, recent research has identified the lack of understanding of students' perspectives and the need for research to increase the identification of concerns from students' experiences at a global level. Hypothetically, the students' perspective can reveal how to support them in the different options to successfully succeed in our current and developing flexible learning environments. By looking at the historical trends related to the development of instructional technology integration into the learning environment and current identified trends from the students' perspective, a deeper insight into this topic from a self-efficacy perspective is presented.

The first part of the chapter will provide a brief literature review and historical reference related to the development of instructional technology in the learning environment. This information will assist in creating a foundation in terminology. The information also shares how instructional technology started and the trend in how it has shifted to exist in our current learning environment, mostly from a faculty perspective. The second part of the chapter will provide key terms and definitions to assist in understanding the key areas related to successfully using instructional technology in a flexible learning environment. This information will provide consistency in how to relate historical terms to current terms when reviewing global students' perspectives in recent research compared to historical research. The third part of the chapter shares research study findings that include global students' perspectives in a flexible learning environment and recommendations that support students' success in a flexible learning environment. This information will provide support in the new direction of research and hopefully provide insight into how to continue future research that includes perspectives from a cross-cultural lens.

Literature Review

History of Instructional Technology

Development of Technology in Education

Historically, the learning environment was perceived to be best provided in a physical classroom environment with the teacher at the front of the classroom and the students facing the instructor.

This format was accepted as allowing a structured space for students to gain content information from the instructor, which also considered the subject matter expert. For several years, this structure was the learning environment that was understood as the best format for successful learning.

Starting in the early 1900s, educators recognized the need to change this conventional format. In the 1920s, the structured classroom format started to change, as it was recognized that a more technologically enhanced learning environment was needed as society started using more technology in their daily lives, such as visual media and other technology tools. The use of technology accelerated in the 1930s with the need to increase military training. In the 1950s, the use of instructional technology significantly increased, making it mainstream to support students' academic success (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 2023). After the 1950s, there has been a significant increase in the integration of instructional technology into the learning environment to support students' academic success (Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 2023). This increased flexibility in the modality in learning.

Historical Reference of the Development of Modality

Initially, learning environments were limited, and the modality in learning was not an option. However, due to the accelerated use of technology in teaching and the need to meet the need of student learning opportunities to achieve their academic goals, the flexibility in modality in learning has significantly increased. The invention of computers, laptops, tablets, learning management systems, video conferencing, and the ease of using the internet have created multiple learning options. Some of the major options to learn include the following:

- Traditional face-to-face learning with instructional technology—This learning modality is usually in a physical space with the instructor and the students in the same room focusing on the course content. Due to the development of instructional technology, a significant number of face-to-face learning environments have some type of technology being used, including the faculty using technology to share course content and/or the students taking notes on laptops and researching the information being discussed in the classroom.
- Flipped classroom—This learning modality is similar to the traditional face-to-face learning modality; however, the expectation is for the students to review the course content using online resources prior to arriving at class. During class time, the students focus on discussing specific topics and practice the concepts they reviewed using online resources prior to coming to class.
- Asynchronous online learning—This learning modality occurs completely online. At minimum, the students are expected to review the course content posted by the faculty, complete assignments, and complete tests by the deadlines posted by the faculty. In this modality, the student does not meet with the faculty in a physical space and has flexibility in reviewing the course content and completing required assignments usually located in a learning management system. This modality significantly relies on the student's self-directed learning ability.
- Synchronous online learning—This learning modality is similar to a combination of the asynchronous online learning environment and face-to-face learning environment. This modality is similar to the asynchronous online learning environment in that learning occurs completely online. This learning modality is also similar to the traditional face-to-face learning environment in that the student has to meet with the class, including the faculty, at a specific time and day online. The synchronous online learning environment provides a real-time online experience.
- Blended learning—This learning modality consists of learning in a face-to-face modality and an online learning modality. Students are expected to engage in the face-to-face learning environment and online learning assignments.
- Hybrid—This learning modality is similar to the blended learning modality with more defined guidelines on how much time is allocated for face-to-face learning and online learning. The usual percentage

allocated for this modality is to include at least 50% face-to-face modality.

- HyFlex/Hybrid Flexible—This learning modality provides the option for students to use the synchronous online learning modality or face-to-face learning modality for the same class. It is the most flexible modality in learning by providing students options to attend class in person or participate remotely. (Educause; Online Learning Community; Quality Matters)

The modalities continue to evolve as students' demand increases for flexibility in formats within which to complete their academic goals. The students' demand for flexibility includes location of learning, time of learning, level of interaction with classmates and faculty, access to course content and assignments, accessibility, and ability to select a variation of learning modality for the same course throughout the semester. The recent pandemic has had a significant impact in accelerating how higher education is adjusting teaching approaches that have been proven effective in not only a physical learning environment but also in an online learning environment. Although there has been significant success, instructors in some disciplines find it challenging to create a variety of learning modalities based on students' needs and feedback.

Modality Based on Discipline

During the pandemic, institutions were forced to move many classes or create other options for students to complete courses in a remote environment. Although there are a significant number of disciplines to make the transition from face-to-face modality to some form of an online learning modality, it was a challenge for some disciplines and students' experience in those disciplines. Disciplines in which an introductory level of information was presented, had a low level of hands-on requirements, or a minimum of interaction during classroom sessions were easier to transition to online learning modalities. In addition, students shared that they have a good online learning experience in those same disciplines. Some of the disciplines identified were Business Administration, English, Geography, Information Technology, Literature, Sociology, and Psychology (Kennesaw State University; Iowa State University).

In some of the challenges transitioning course content and instruction to an online learning modality, supporting a blended learning environment was possible for those courses that originally had a face-to-face modality

that consisted of a lecture and lab component. Those disciplines were able to offer the lecture in one of the online learning modalities, and the labs were offered in a face-to-face modality. However, there were courses in disciplines in which the labs were offered online by developing a safe home lab kit that could be sent to the students' homes or using simulation software that allowed the students to complete the labs on the computer.

Discipline	Modality	Student experience
Automotive Technology	Face-to-Face	Prefer hands-on experience to meet industry requirements.
Biology	Face-to-Face Hybrid	Prefer face-to-face to gain a better understanding of what is expected in the labs. Hybrid is an option, but some of the at-home lab activities are not the same level of experience in the face-to-face environment.
Business Administration	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.
Chemistry	Face-to-Face Hybrid	Prefer face-to-face to gain a better understanding of what is expected in the labs. Hybrid is an option, but some of the at-home lab activities are not the same level of experience in the face-to-face environment.
Computer Science	All modalities	Online modality is preferred for upper-level classes.
English	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.
Geography	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.
Information Technology	All modalities	Online modality is preferred for upper-level classes.
Literature	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.
Mathematics	All modalities	Prefer face-to-face modality for students who have a historical challenge with the discipline.
Sociology	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.

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Discipline	Modality	Student experience
Psychology	All modalities	Modality depends on the personal needs of the students. Online modalities are a challenge for students who are digital immigrants or have a challenge with the content in the discipline.

Online Learning Terms and Definitions

Digital Nations and Digital Immigrants

Within the context of the current pandemic, aggressive changes in the learning environment now include a more flexible modality that is enhanced by the integration of technology. Overall, the transition has shown significant success and overall positive feedback from students. One of the contributions to the success of students in enhanced technology learning environments is that most students are digital natives and not digital immigrants. Digital natives are defined as people born or brought up during the age of digital technology and therefore familiar with computers and the internet from an early age (Oxford, 2022). Digital immigrants are defined as people born or brought up before the widespread use of digital technology (Oxford, 2022). Students who are digital immigrants have expressed concerns and negative experiences with the different online learning modalities. The students' main concerns relate to the use of the instructional technology tool and not the course content.

Research has stressed the importance of approaching online learning modalities to include the understanding that the instructional technology tools used in the learning environment must include the capability and comfortability of the students to use the instructional technology (Kennedy et al., 2008; Collins & Halverson, 2009). The original definition of digital immigrants and digital natives does not include the spectrum of knowledge related to digital natives using social media compared to instructional technology, which is also an identified challenge.

Social Media Versus Instructional Technology

Research has identified digital immigrants as often having challenges in using technology, which results in limiting students' flexibility in utilizing the different modalities in learning. This same concern could be a factor for digital natives who are comfortable in using technology for social purposes but not familiar with how to effectively use technology in education,

specifically instructional technology that is required in most recently developed modalities of learning. Students shared their experience in using instructional technology that does not have the same user interface that they experience when using social media and gaming software. Digital natives' ease of using technology does not correlate with their ease of using *instructional* technology.

Social media does not have the same level of restrictions and expectations required in using instructional technology for learning. Social media is the use of various forms of applications, software, internet, computer devices, and other digital formats to share content for the purpose of relating to society in an online environment. Instructional technology is the use of various forms of applications, software, internet, computer devices, and other digital formats to provide learning in an online environment. The similarities can be misleading in that social media and instructional technology use the same formats; however, there is a clear distinction between the use of creating connections versus learning new content. Digital natives have been comfortable in using digital formats since they were born, but that does not translate to the same skills required to use the same tools for learning new content to achieve academic success.

Social, Teaching, and Cognitive Presence

Another key concept in understanding learning from a student's perspective is the difference between the faculty's level of presence in an online learning environment.

- Social Presence: Similar to social media, social presence is the state of existing in a space, such as the acknowledgment of being in an online environment. Social presence does not require an in-depth perspective when interacting online, only the state of acknowledging the instructor's presence in the online learning environment.
- Teaching Presence: Similar to teaching in a virtual environment, teaching presence requires the faculty member to facilitate a learning environment that is inclusive of facilitating the learning of course content, frequent and timely check-in, and assessment related to learning outcomes.
- Cognitive Presence: Cognitive presence takes the learning to a deeper level in that it requires the faculty member to engage the students' minds in learning the content. This level of presence is

most beneficial to students when using instructional technology. (Educause; Online Learning Consortium; Quality Matters)

Methodology

This section includes the research method used to gather the information for this review related to the topic.

The information for this chapter was compiled from similar research studies that intentionally collected information from students in higher education who had an online learning experience. The information was received by accessing several peer-reviewed journals, professional organizations, and universities identified in the research and online databases. The search was focused on research that utilizes student perspectives in learning. Additional searches were completed to intentionally seek out online modalities and flexible learning environments. The methodology was intended to include research studies that utilized a method that obtained information from students in higher education to obtain their perception of their individual online learning experience.

In general, the various research studies used in this summary of research studies included student surveys from diverse backgrounds to understand their experiences and expectations in learning in various modalities, especially online learning experiences. The research studies consisted of different research methods that included participants' information, details of the instruments, design of the study, procedure for collecting the data, and data analysis method. After locating the several research studies, the studies were reviewed for commonalities. Below are some commonalities found in the research studies.

Participants

Demographic information on the students who participated in the research study provided useful information that was similar to the national average for students who are at risk. The students involved in the research were enrolled in higher education and taking courses from various delivery modes that included an aspect of online learning.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation in the various studies were surveys completed by students. This instrumentation has been most effective in obtaining students' perspectives that could be utilized to represent a larger sample based on obtaining an effective number of participants.

Procedures

The design of each of the studies was to increase the experience in online learning that included faculty presence, learning management systems, and students' interaction. The research studies involved the college administration to ensure that the proper process was used for the involvement of students participating in the research. The sample of students selected for the research was based on their enrollment at specific colleges that utilized instructional technology in the course, specifically online learning environments.

Research Findings

Overview

Research in the following section has clearly identified the benefit of online learning to support students in academic success. The benefits include an increase in flexibility in format for course offering, reinforcement in learning, and providing customized learning to support different learning styles. The recent pandemic has increased the preference for online learning to meet students' learning needs and success in a more restrictive learning environment. Historical research continues to identify the need for professional development for instructors to support students' success in achieving academic goals in an online learning environment. However, not as much detailed historical research exists related to global students' perspectives in an online learning environment. The recent pandemic has been an impetus in increasing research that includes global contributions. The research has identified that students' perspectives are important in better understanding how to use instructional technology.

The recent pandemic was a global challenge that provided insightful information related to students' perspectives across the world. In most of the recent research, some commonalities in global students' perspectives

were identified that can benefit the development of a new learning environment that utilizes instructional technology, especially modalities that provide a flexible learning environment (Bączek et al., 2021; Boughton et al., 2023; Brod et al., 2023; Demuyakor, 2020; Froman et al., 2020; O'Malley & McCraw, 2019; O'Neill et al., 2021; Rusticus et al., 2023; Yeung et al., 2023). Reported findings in such research were obtained via a survey about students' perspectives. The surveys had similar categories of questions that focused on the following: student demographics, comparison of face-to-face and flexible/online learning experiences, faculty engagement, social interaction in a flexible learning environment, support in a flexible learning environment, self-efficacy, and technology requirements.

From global student perspectives, the overall survey results identify the benefit of online learning and that it is an accepted method of learning from students' perspectives (Almendingen et al., 2021; Yang, 2021; Zeng & Wang, 2021). The surveys included students from different demographics that varied in age, cultural background, gender, and academic program. The major benefits in all demographics are related to flexibility in learning to achieve academic goals. However, there were some key areas identified in the new learning environment that could benefit from further research and development. The areas included the student's level of expectation in a flexible learning environment, online learning experience compared to face-to-face learning, and online learning infrastructure (Almendingen et al., 2021; Yang, 2021; Zeng & Wang, 2021).

Student's Level of Expectation

The first area in the new online learning environment that could benefit from future research and development from the students' perspective aligned with the commonalities related to the student's level of expectation in a flexible learning environment. The commonalities include faculty level of engagement, interaction with classmates, class discussions, student's level of self-efficacy, and preassessment related to learning style (Bączek et al., 2021; Carlsson et al., 2023; Demuyakor, 2020; Froman et al., 2020; O'Malley & McCraw, 1999; O'Neill et al., 2021; Quigley et al., 2023; Rudolph et al., 2023; Zhang & Wu, 2022; Zizka & Probst, 2023).

The faculty level of engagement from a student's perspective consists of multiple levels that include social presence, learning presence, and

cognitive presence (Baczek et al., 2021; O'Malley & McCraw, 1999; Demuyakor, 2020; Froman et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2021). Students confirmed that the learning environment has a hierarchical level of engagement from faculty. The major levels of engagement were determined as follows:

- Social Presence—faculty general interaction and acknowledgment of students in the classroom.
- Learning Presence—Faculty presenting the course content.
- Cognitive Presence—Faculty facilitate student learning the content of the course. (Baczek et al., 2021; O'Malley & McCraw, 1999; Demuyakor, 2020; Froman et al., 2020; O'Neill et al., 2021)

In general, the students identified that social presence was often present in all modalities. However, learning presence and cognitive presence were often identified as lacking in a flexible learning environment. The students shared that they received timely replies when posting questions and sending emails. However, the students' responses to assignments were not as detailed as they had experienced in traditional face-to-face learning environments. The students received grades and acknowledgment from faculty when class assignments met expectations, but feedback was not as detailed or provided when there were components assessed as not meeting the expectation of the assignments. Students shared that this type of detailed instruction feedback often occurred when the student was able to meet with the instructor before or after class in the face-to-face environment (Asgarova et al., 2023; Baczek et al., 2021; Demuyakor, 2020; Froman et al., 2020; O'Malley & McCraw, 1999; O'Neill et al., 2021).

The students shared the need for more intentional interaction with classmates and engaging class discussions. From a student perspective in the flexible learning environment, intentional interaction did exist as it related to the instructor but was not the same level of intention as it related to classmates' collaboration. The students' perspective indicated that the interaction in the flexible learning environment is rigid in that interaction is either initiated by the instructor by creating breakout sessions or classmates taking initiatives to arrange meets among them. This rigid structure does not exist in face-to-learning environments in that students are given the opportunity to self-select to interact with other classmates during class times and have informal group discussions that occur before class, after class, and during class breaks.

Students identified the need to have a prior understanding of an online learning experience that included preassessment related to learning style and self-efficacy. Students find it challenging to understand the expectation by the instructor in the different modalities to successfully complete the course. In the face-to-face learning environment, students shared that they had multiple opportunities to know the expectation based on past K-12 learning experience. However, the students shared that the flexible learning environment was a significant change to much of their learning experience prior to their first year in higher education. Some of the students identified options to self-assess if online learning was appropriate, but the resources to support their gap from the self-assessment were not enough to support what they needed to successfully complete the flexible learning environment.

Consistent Delivery Modes

The second area consisted of commonalities related to the consistency in the delivery modes. The commonalities include expectation of the course, course objectives, consistency across delivery modes, and asynchronous limitations.

The content of the course was another area identified from the student perspective that included expectations to successfully complete the course assignments related to the course objectives (Ironsi, 2023; Chiu, 2021). The students identified that sharing the expectation of the course varies in each modality. The students identified that flexible modalities can be a challenge in that the learning modalities do not have a consistent meeting pattern that exists in historical traditional learning environments. Students expressed confusion when trying to understand the meeting patterns for the course and what participation was required to successfully complete the class. The students also expressed the challenge in understanding the syllabus that is usually covered during the beginning of the course but not covered in the same level of detail in flexible learning environments.

The content of the course was also impacted by understanding the consistency across delivery modes, especially considering the limitations in the asynchronous modality (Thomas, 2021; Wu & You, 2022). As previously stated, consistency in modalities is a challenge in flexible learning, which includes the mode of communication in the courses. Historically, learning environments were limited and based on a rigid structure that was implemented from a K-12 learning experience to a higher education

environment. In recent years, the rigid environment has basically remained in K-12 learning environments but has become more flexible in the higher education environment. This change has presented a challenge for students' transition from the K-12 learning environment to the higher education learning environment (Reyes-Mercado et al., 2023; Thomas, 2021). This transition has especially impacted students who are considered at risk, such as first-generation students entering higher education.

Online Learning Infrastructure

The third area consisted of commonalities related to the online learning infrastructure. The commonalities include equity, social norms, tools for diverse learners, student instruction costs, and community infrastructure.

The lack of equity, including students' instruction costs and community infrastructure, has increased in impacting a specific demographic of students who find challenges in face-to-face modalities (Froman et al., 2020; Haider & Al-Salman, 2023; Pohlenz et al., 2023; Hoi, 2022; Thurm et al., 2023). The students' perspectives identified the various challenges that might impact students from underserved communities. The flexible learning environment often relies on community infrastructures to support the online component for the course that include reliable internet connection and the student's remote location to have the needed hardware and software to participate in the online learning environment. The students shared that the hardware and software required for student use is often the responsibility of the student to purchase the required devices that must meet the standards for effective online engagement and access to course material located online.

When using the tools offered in an online environment, students found the need for an increased focus on social norms and tools for diverse learners (Demuyakor, 2020; Tang et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2022). Students identified the need to better understand the assumptions made with digital natives. Digital natives have been using technology from a very early age in life; however, that does not include the understanding of how to communicate in an online social environment compared to an online learning environment. Students shared that the technology used for learning is not the same format used in social media and other uses of technology for socializing. In addition, the students shared that the instructors' expectations of interaction and use of terms were not the same as how the students navigated the use of technology in social settings.

Recommendations

Overall Recommendation

It is important to develop a model utilizing global students' perspectives that will consider how to provide learning across modalities and which modalities are not appropriate for specific disciplines. As a result of the pandemic, modalities have expanded at an exponential rate that has proven to be effective in providing learning opportunities to meet the needs of diverse learners. However, the modalities of learning have been identified as having some limitations from the global students' perspectives. To expand on this opportunity to provide flexible learning, a model utilizing global students' perspectives will reflect on the past implementation of the modalities and allow for the implementation of a plan to best serve the students in various modalities to remove barriers that can have a negative impact on their academic success. The following recommendations are based on the research studies, professional organizations, and online learning departments at the colleges listed below.

- DePaul University
- Educause
- Hong Kong Polytechnic University
- Iowa State University
- Jordanian University
- Kaplan Higher Education Singapore
- Kennesaw State University
- Lincoln Land Community College
- Online Learning Consortium
- Oxford
- Quality Matters
- Southern California University of Health Sciences
- Stanford
- University of Antwerp
- University of Hong Kong
- University of Siegen
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Waubonsee Community College

Recommendations for Student's Level of Expectation in a Flexible Learning Environment Based on Students' Perspectives

- Timely, quality, and courteous feedback should be provided to the students.
- Discussion boards should be appropriate numbers that are facilitated by the instructor.
- The design of a curriculum should take an active approach that supports active learner-centered learning from an inclusive cross-cultural lens that avoids cultural biases.
- Materials should be provided to students to engage in learning outside of the online learning environment.
- Further development of preassessment and surveys to assist students from various backgrounds in identifying their gaps in flexible learning environments.

Recommendations Related to Expectation in Delivery Mode Based on Global Students' Perspectives

- Students should know what is needed to contribute to the course and what they will receive from the course.
- The information of what is expected in the course should be in multiple formats, such as videos and short clips, and not just in the course syllabus.
- Design the class based on the specific modality used for learning that does not group all of the modalities in learning with instructional technology as the same.
- Encourage faculty to be more flexible with deadlines and scheduling.

Recommendations Related to the Online Learning Infrastructure Based on Global Students' Perspectives

- Make sure adequate online resources are available to students, including video options, to not invade students' privacy at home.
- Encourage students to utilize online resources available to them.
- Intentional focus on social skills, clinical skills, and industry interaction is appropriate to reinforce students' future working environment.

- Increase awareness of emotional wellbeing, cross-cultural lens, and mental health services.
- Make sure to consider cultural differences when using instructional technology in learning.
- Utilize UDL aspects when using instructional technology in learning.
- Technology plans should be developed to provide access to devices and the internet in students' local communities.
- Guidelines for student's online presence during synchronous sessions to protect students' privacy and equity concerns.

Conclusion

The trend in the creation of various modalities has continued to grow over the last several decades. However, the adoption of those modalities was slow until the recent pandemic, which forced education to look at how to offer learning with the limitation of physical space. As a result, a significant number of institutions have increased the various modalities to support students' learning. As the modalities have increased, there have been several successes and some challenges in how to utilize the different modalities. Although progression continues to address the concerns, new concerns arrive that might be resolved and better implemented by intentionally proceeding with the inclusion of global students' perspectives when developing plans to further support flexibility in learning.

The global students' perspectives shared in this chapter have identified key trends and a better insight into what higher education needs to focus on as the learning environment continues to develop into a more flexible learning environment by integrating various modalities. The approach to intentionally include global students' perspectives could also benefit the flexible learning environment in the anticipation of creating additional modalities such as learning immersed in a virtual reality simulator. The major areas from the global students' perspective that must be included in future plans when developing curricula in various modalities are students' level of expectation in a flexible learning environment, consistency in the delivery modes, online learning infrastructure, awareness of cultural differences, student support, and the understanding that additional areas will need to be included as flexibility in learning continues to be developed.

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Post-COVID, Learning Redefined: Self-Directed Learning in Higher Education

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Introduction

COVID-19 has greatly increased worldwide education technology levels in terms of delivering knowledge. Both students and teachers have adopted the digital transformation and therefore created a new workforce that is more digitally literate. This contributes greatly to the need for skills to

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173

survive in the post-COVID era as blended learning will become the trend. A survey conducted between November 2021 and April 2022 at 41 different UK universities and colleges showed that the majority of students want blended learning (Jisc, 2022). This implies that the students see the valuable role of online learning. The forced requirement for students to participate online means that they are more aware of the benefits and challenges of online and mixed-mode learning. It is suggested that higher education may take the chance to innovate and upskill.

Over the years, most of the higher education institutions in Hong Kong have calibrated their education program in a face-to-face environment. The sudden shift from physical classrooms to online learning provides opportunities for students to practice self-directed learning (SDL) skills. In 2020, a study conducted by the University of Toronto on students' online learning experiences revealed that the capacity for SDL became essential to academic success; students who were better equipped with SDL skills tended to better cope with challenges (Liu et al., 2021). Therefore, higher education institutions should include SDL strategies in their programs to enhance students' learning capabilities.

This study seeks to examine how and to what extent online learning fostered SDL at Hong Kong teaching-focused higher education institutions due to the pandemic and generate sustainable impacts on higher education, especially the digital transformation of teaching and learning, in upcoming uncertain global pandemic situations and in post-COVID times.

Literature Review

Understanding Self-Directed Learning

The concept of SDL can be traced to Knowles's work in 1975. Knowles proposes SDL as "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (p. 7). Guglielmino (1977) also claims that "a highly self-directed learner is one who exhibits initiative, persistence in learning, one who accepts responsibility for his or her own learning, one who has a high degree of curiosity; one who has a strong desire to learn or change and is self-confident" (p. 3), one who is independent and initiative. A similar concept, "learner autonomy", sees learners as more self-directed;

they will be able to monitor their own learning progress, independently reflecting on their work and setting goals (Oates, 2019). As Merriam and Bierema (2014) state, "Autonomy is synonymous with self-directedness" (p. 147). Implementing SDL strategies in the classroom enables students to become self-directed, autonomous, strategic learners (Hawkins, 2018).

On the other hand, Merriam et al. (2007) point out that SDL is a process where individuals take charge of planning and evaluating their learning experiences. One of the objectives of higher education is to develop self-efficacy among students. Through SDL, students will become more independent and responsible for their learning (Ku et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2021). Furthermore, SDL promotes lifelong learning and prepares individuals for becoming lifelong learners (Tekkol & Demirel, 2018). Learning across the life span will become common human activities for the construction of global knowledge societies and economies.

Online Learning under the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused higher education institution closures all across the world. Most teaching and learning activities in colleges or universities are undertaken on digital platforms. The sudden shift away from the classroom brings the importance of having good infrastructure to conduct online teaching. Online education provides a wide range of benefits but poses some challenges. With the rapid move to online learning under the pandemic, this leads to three fundamental questions. The first question concerns institutions' readiness in online learning, such as providing training on using online teaching devices, sophisticated software resources, and financial support (Maphalala et al. 2021, Law, et al. 2022). Some higher education institutions in developed countries have adequate resources to facilitate online learning, while many others do not have the required equipment in low-income countries (Almahasees et al., 2021). Another question is how much faculty members are ready for online learning. Unlike conventional face-to-face teaching, many teaching staff are overwhelmed by new learning technologies due to insufficient training and little preparation (Scherer et al. 2021; Moorhouse, 2021). Similarly, Bolliger and Halupa (2022) find that half of faculty members lacked the confidence to allocate time to learn about new strategies in online learning. Other research has revealed that faculty members find it difficult to maintain students' learning motivation and engagement in online learning (Curti et al., 2020; Ng et al. 2021)).

The third question is how prepared students are for online learning? Mishra et al. (2020) report that the major challenge for students was unstable Internet connections. In addition, students with low socioeconomic backgrounds did not have laptops or desktops for online learning. On the other hand, Tang et al. (2021) state that students were unable to concentrate in online classes and less motivated to engage in learning activities without peer pressure. Likewise, Liu et al. (2021) report students' lack of motivation in multiple aspects of the online learning environment. These included being constrained at home, lack of social interactions, dissonance with an online learning environment, challenges in time management, and perceptions that certain aspects of course delivery were unhelpful to their learning. It is fair to conclude that online learning poses some challenges for higher education institutions, faculty members, and students; however, it has opened up more possibilities for facilitating SDL learning strategies.

Online Learning and SDL

Online learning facilities independent learning and empowerment, which is essential to self-directed learners (Yeoh et al., 2017). The literature shows that students are able to manage learning activities without being guided by others, and they can develop self-directed and self-pace learning skills by studying the conten prepared by the teacher (Khodaei et al., 2022; Maphalala et al., 2021; Roberson et al., 2021). Self-directed learners are more engaged in learning activities such as reading online learning materials, completing classroom assignments, and preparing and reviewing learning achievements (Geng et al., 2019). Students have accumulated experience with SDL during online classes, and their satisfaction with learning could increase (Kim et al., 2022). In short, the literature reveals that learners or institutions will continue to engage with SDL after the pandemic (Alghamdi, 2021; Kim et al., 2022). Hong Kong postsecondary students used to learn in the face-to-face environment before the pandemic. However, when the schools closed and lessons shifted to the online mode, students were doing much more on their own. To understand how and to what extent online learning fosters SDL practices in higher education institutions due to the pandemic, this study attempts to address the following two questions:

1. How has online learning promoted self-directed learning practices among students?
2. What are the impacts of COVID-19 on higher education, especially the digital transformation of teaching and learning, in upcoming uncertain global pandemic situations and in post-COVID-19 times?

Research Design

The present study was based on a qualitative research design. The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation; it focuses on participants' perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives (Creswell, 2003, pp. 198–199). More specifically, using a qualitative methodology allows researchers to study the phenomenon in a naturalistic setting, for example, in a classroom. A qualitative approach allows us to gain a new perspective about a phenomenon where much is already known, or as in this study, when "little is known" about how online learning fosters SDL practices in Hong Kong higher education institutions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 11).

Research Procedure

The data were gathered through semistructured interviews in September 2022. Conducting in-depth interviews provided us with an opportunity to discuss and listen to the stories of the participants with regard to their online learning experience. Participants were invited through convenience sampling from three teaching-focused higher education institutions in Hong Kong. The higher education that those institutions deliver traditionally depends on the concept of a dynamic learning community, featuring liberal teacher-student interactions and dynamic student activities and engagement. A small campus serves as a hub of geographic location where the abovementioned activities take place in real time. Little is known about how and to what extent online teaching fosters students' SDL experience due to the pandemic. We carried out one hour-long, in-depth interviews with 16 postsecondary students from education, health sciences, and social sciences disciplines ranging from year 2 to year 4 in their program. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analytical approach was adopted to analyze the data in this study. The research processes for data analysis involved the systematic procedures of (1) familiarizing with the data, where the authors read (and reread) the transcripts several times and listened to the recordings; (2) generating initial codes, identifying preliminary codes and fine-tuning; (3) searching for themes, codes were identified across the data set; (4) reviewing themes: the authors reviewed and checked the themes in relation to the coded extracts; and (5) defining and naming themes: five themes emerged from the interview data, namely, [i] 'online learning is not thoroughly suitable for all students'; [ii] 'positive impact of lecture recording'; [iii] 'better time management'; [iv] 'independent learning'; and [v] 'formatively assess academic performance'.

Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine how online learning fostered self-directed learning at colleges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings were thematized as follows in view of addressing the two research questions.

Theme 1: Online Learning Is Not Thoroughly Suitable for All Students

When we asked students to reflect on their online learning experience throughout the two years, our findings show that the majority of participants preferred face-to-face teaching due to the learning atmosphere.

> If I compare face-to-face with online learning, I would choose face-to-face. At least all the students sit together, and we will not be in a daydream. For me, there is a learning atmosphere that everyone is present. I need to jot notes in class because there are no lesson recordings under the face-to-face mode. I am more motivated to learn during lessons. I have to force myself to listen and jot down the key points. (#5)

> Face-to-face interaction with lecturers would be better. Because we can meet each other. Online is not efficient, I have difficulty with focus. (#9)

> I would understand better in face-to-face mode. In online class, I cannot see the 'real person', and there are too many distractions at home. (#15)

> Basically, F2F allows me to ask questions and interact with my classmates. I do think that interactions are an essential process for students to apply what they have learnt and internalize such stuff. (#2)

They also reported that at the beginning of the pandemic, the instructors were unfamiliar with online teaching devices:

> However, it is difficult for teachers. Most of the teachers in my program are already in their 40s or above. Some of them are not familiar with using the computer. This causes chaos in the lessons at the beginning of the semester. (#14)

> They usually teach in front of people during lessons. However, now, they have to teach in front of the screen. Even if they teach in this way for one to two years, their teaching skills cannot be changed immediately. Usually, teachers do not know what they are talking about, and they are not passionate about teaching, so I am in a daydream during lessons. (#13)

A few students found that they got used to online instruction and thought it was flexible:

> I prefer online learning because I have grown quite accustomed to the learning and teaching styles. It is flexible in terms of time and space and therefore can save considerable energy and resources. (#1)

> It is more convenient for both teachers and students. First, we do not need to wake up early in the morning to rush back to work or school. Second, even if you need to contact the teacher after lessons or at other times, using Teams will be more flexible in terms of time. In addition, if you turn on the camera during online lessons, it is not much different from face-to-face classes. (#14)

Theme 2: Positive Impact of Lecture Recording

Lecture recording has become an essential component in online learning. In our study, most of the interviewees appreciated the recorded lecture videos, as they enhanced their learning. They could catch up with course

content by revisiting lecture recordings of synchronous classes. A student expressed,

> I reviewed the lecture recordings, they were very helpful, and I understand the lecture better. (#6)

A few interviewees also revealed that the lecture videos allow them to self-pace their learning, for example, reviewing the videos before tests and exams. It is considered extremely convenient, as students can pause, repeat, playback, and forward the videos.

> The lecture recordings will be used when I revise them along with the notes. Then, I reviewed the video 2 to 3 times. (#15)

> I would review the recording once but with frequent stops to find the source. For example, chest drain, I will play the YouTube along with the lecture. (#16)

> They record their lectures, and we just need to watch the video. I am a slow-minded person, and I can pause the video so that I can digest what I heard and take notes if applicable. (#7)

> I can ask questions and catch up with course content by revisiting lecture recordings of synchronous classes. (#11)

Theme 3: Better Time Management

Our interview data show that online learning has a positive influence on the time management of students during the pandemic. However, one of the interviewees reflected that "my time management was bad, as I did not follow the class schedule to attend the online class and just revisit the video in my own free time" (#9). The majority agreed that they can manage their time freely and more self-regulated.

> It makes my time management easier. I mean in terms of planning for personal time. I have specific time for learning and having lectures, and I save time from transports, which are counted as some uncertainties. (#2)

I guess my time management skill can be improved in online learning. I can be more aware of a series of deadlines when they are displayed in a digital calendar, rather than being recorded in notebooks for different courses. (#7)

Since I have more time to myself at home rather than traveling to school, I can manage my work more efficiently and have more time to cool myself off when I do too much work, definitely good on the mental side. (#6)

In the face-to-face mode, I would revise after coming back from school. In the online mode, I need to set a timetable to force myself to revise. Set the deadline for revision. (#15)

Another student added:

My GPA in the semester when I had face-to-face lessons was lower than the semester I had online lessons because I had to spend 4 hours on transportation if I had face-to-face lessons on campus. I didn't even have enough time. For online lessons, I could stay at home to do assignments. I could allocate my time well. (#12)

Theme 4: Independent Learning

The online environment provides good facilitation for students' independent learning strategies. Nearly all participants illustrated that online learning motivated them to explore a wider spectrum of knowledge sources by themselves. They learned to filter useful websites and information as well as legitimate papers for their essays during the online period:

Stopped being dependent on school and relied on myself. I know what resources to access and the assignment procedures to follow. Not about grades anymore. (#8)

When I encounter something not sure, I will search for the information by myself. (#14)

We have to find the answer by ourselves. We can learn other things during the process. We cannot find the answers immediately after searching the Internet. We need to explore a wider scope of topics. For example, I can find

the contradiction. I judge by myself and think about the reasons. Maybe it is a kind of critical thinking and clinical reasoning. (#15)

Online learning enables students to take responsibility for their own learning and gain more confidence.

> Online learning helps me build confidence and have less reliance. Take asking questions for example. Because I learn by myself and ask fewer questions when I do assignments. Sometimes I will ask the lecturer in breakout rooms, but the number of times I ask the lecturer is less than that of face-to-face lessons. (#9)

> I learned not to rely on someone else in asking questions. It might be fun to do the research and to dig the topic deeper by ourselves. (#2)

Theme 5: Formatively Assess Academic Performance

A few participants reported that feedback seeking was a way of self-assessing their academic achievement, mostly through peer and instructor feedback. Self-assessment allows students to judge their own performance and identify areas that they still need improvement.

> We do not know the grades until the semester ends. It would be better to get some feedback during the semester so we can improve gradually. (#4)

> I usually communicate directly and proactively with professors every time after assignments to get some feedback. (#8)

> I would more often ask a few close classmates to exchange papers with me (if they agreed and the topics were different enough to not cause accidental plagiarism). Their feedback provided me with very detailed sources for improvement. The professors' feedback often came after the assessment was handed in, but nevertheless, they were important notes for future courses. (#10)

Another student pointed out that the strategy of seeking feedback helped him retain learning motivation:

> My form of evaluation is getting feedback from my classmates and professors either in class or in my scores. Sometimes I notice my performance

being affected by external factors, and I find ways to keep myself motivated. (#1)

Discussion

Our study reveals that the majority of the participants preferred face-to-face teaching, whereas only a few of them were accustomed to online instruction. Consistent with most of the studies (Jang et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021), students did not prefer online learning because of lack of interaction, demotivation, distraction, and lack of understanding. Nevertheless, flexibility and convenience were identified as strengths of online learning. This result is in line with the findings of Tang et al. (2021). Thus, to enhance students' online learning satisfaction, instructors should try to increase student engagement by implementing interactive class activities. Develop practical ways to enhance students' understanding, such as providing prompt feedback online and implanting online tests and quizzes for self-evaluation. Indeed, we should not ignore the positive changes from classroom learning to online learning. Before the pandemic, online learning existed only in some communities or places, but now it has become the new normal worldwide at the same time. It is a good prompt for many students and teachers to practice the integration of digital technologies into learning and teaching.

The virtual learning environment has its pros and cons and can deliver appropriate levels of education in different areas. In this study, strong evidence reveals that online learning facilitates SDL skills among tertiary students. According to Knowles's SDL model, selecting appropriate learning strategies was most often mentioned by participants, followed by finding learning resources and evaluating learning outcomes.

Selecting Appropriate Learning Strategies

In online courses, instructors must upload their recorded lecture video for students to watch. The effectiveness of the lecture video has been highlighted in this study. The findings reveal that the students were able to access the lecture video at any time based on their convenience. It allowed them to have self-paced learning. They could recall the lesson by watching the videos again, while face-to-face learning did not provide video recording. This is in line with Ng et al. (2021), who point out that "teaching video provides the flexibility for students to learn at their pace

and at a time that is convenient to them". SDL skills include the capability to manage learning at one's own pace according to one's needs and preferences.

The second aspect of the SDL learning strategy is good time management. The majority of participants reported that their time management skills were improved in online learning due to saving time from commutes. Thus, they had more time to manage their study efficiently. They used various planning apps to write down lists of tasks they needed to finish within the day. This result is inconsistent with Liu et al. (2021), who found that learning online detracted from students' abilities to manage time.

Finding Learning Resources

With less advising and support from instructors (i.e., as in face-to-face classrooms), participants needed to find resources by themselves to achieve the learning goal. Online learning has enhanced students' independence as they learn on their own (Maphalala et al. 2021). In addition, collaborative learning has occurred more often under online learning. Various online communication tools, for example, WhatsApp and Discord, have been used to communicate with their peers or exchange learning resources. This suggests that the virtual environment stimulates collaborative learning, which is essential in promoting SDL (Liu et al., 2021).

Evaluating Learning Outcome

Under the new learning mode, participants were able to monitor and evaluate the quality of their work by seeking feedback from their peers and instructors. Participants perceived that peers were an important feedback source during the pandemic. Thus, the virtual environment enables students' capability to actively seek help and feedback from their peers and instructors, an attitude that is in line with self-directed learning (Knowles, 1975; Maphalala et al., 2021).

According to Geng et al. (2019), a self-directed learner tends to actively engage in the learning process, such as acquiring information and planning and evaluating their learning activities. From the findings of our study, students actively seek online information and manage and self-evaluate their learning activities, which results in more independent and focused learning. Nevertheless, participants reported that their SDL experiences in

college were quite limited before the pandemic. They found that the subjects were not keen to implement SDL and that the instructors were comfortable with the teacher-centered approach. Thus, the transition from traditional learning to online learning has provided room for students to develop their SDL skills. Based on these findings, we recommend that the SDL approach should be incorporated into more education programs in tertiary education settings. Thus, training sessions should be provided to familiarize instructors with SDL so that they can shift from a teacher-centered approach and facilitate SDL.

Conclusion

This study contributes to enriching the current understanding of SDL capabilities among students in an online learning environment during the pandemic. Online learning provides opportunities for learners to develop and enhance their SDL skills. With the improvement of the pandemic situation, teaching and learning activities will shift back to the classroom. Nevertheless, online learning will take over in some way in our education in the long run. Attention should be given to instructors' training for practicing SDL activities in both online and offline settings to facilitate better teaching and learning.

In Hong Kong, innovative teaching tools, methods, and pedagogies were developed and utilized to cope with the pandemic crisis, which limits the normal practice of face-to-face classroom instruction. Seeing COVID-19 as an emergency circumstance, the practices that emerged over the 'new normal' spanning across the pandemic period will fade out when the norm in regular times will be gradually resumed in the post-COVID era.

Whether self-directed learning, as a special and innovative practice briefly experimented with during the pandemic, will become part of the post-COVID future will depend on three factors: (1) the policy paradigm of government and institutional policies; (2) the availability, concerns and innovative space of professionally learning communities; and (3) the capacity and entrepreneurial leadership of innovative practitioners to lead innovation and creatively disrupt normal professional practices.

The global development of knowledge-based societies, economies, and innovation systems drives institutions and individuals to the new reality of learning, unlearning, and relearning. Such learning is not limited to the core activities of schooling and higher education for school leavers. It is

concerned with learning across the life span. Moreover, it also implies intersectoral, interprofessional, intergenerational, and international learning. In the future, what underpins global and intracommunity inequalities is not just sociocultural and economic inequalities but also inequalities in learning motivation and capacity for self-directed learning. Awareness of this global trend may affect macro government and institutional policies to change and reconsider the new gains and bright spots from the COVID-19 pandemic rather than seeing it as an emergency that uses innovation to respond.

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CHAPTER 10

Research Discourses on Women Academics During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Has a Bad Situation Turned Worse?

Sanfeng Miao

INTRODUCTION

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labor force is not gender-neutral. Despite both genders being affected by disruptions in the workplace, women are particularly vulnerable due to long-standing occupational gender segregation and labor market inequalities (Carli, 2020; Zarrilli & Luomaranta, 2021). Data show that women's jobs are 1.8 times more vulnerable to the pandemic's consequences. Additionally, more women have transitioned from full-time to part-time employment to take on increased domestic and childcare responsibilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). This is because women tend to cluster in occupations requiring higher personal contact, making them more susceptible to the pandemic's

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fallout (Madgavkar et al., 2020). Women in less developed countries face even greater challenges, such as rising levels of poverty, hunger, and social inequality due to employment changes, further exacerbating their situation (Al-Ali, 2020).

Women working in academia are not immune to the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic due to preexisting gender disparities in the field. Despite global efforts to diversify academia, a quick overview of the literature reveals representational and experiential disparities (Gonzales et al., 2023). For instance, women are more likely to be employed in less stable, more teaching-focused positions with limited power and resources (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Studies also indicate that women academics take on or are implicitly assigned care work both at the workplace and at home (Dengate et al., 2019). Female academics are expected to engage in non-academic tasks, such as caring for students' and colleagues' needs (Gonzales et al., 2023), and tend to invest more time in housework and childcare than male academics (Naz et al., 2017). Furthermore, organizational cultures within higher education institutions across the globe are often gendered, leading to women academics feeling unwelcome (Rhoads & Gu, 2012). With universities worldwide shifting to online classes and remote work and higher education institutions cutting pay and laying off employees due to financial hardship (Rapanta et al., 2020; Lederman, 2020), the COVID-19 crisis may have exacerbated the structural gender inequality in academia, particularly for women academics in contingent positions who take on more teaching and administrative work.

This literature review aims to provide a sneak peek into the research published before April 2022 concerning women academics' experiences during the pandemic, diving into the research discourse that first surfaced. Understanding the gendered impact of the pandemic on academia is crucial for those interested in addressing gender disparities within the profession. The review question is as follows: How does research discourse represent the experiences of women academics during the pandemic?

Conceptual Lens

The conceptual lens of this review draws upon colonial logics. Specifically, the notion of colonial logics helps me unpack how "social classifications" are created, shaping contemporary global structures. Quijano (2000) argued that identity categories were one of the most powerful colonial impositions, while Oyěwùmí (1997) suggested that the colonial state's

creation of the "woman category" was one of its earliest accomplishments. Along the same line of thought, Lugones (2010) suggests that gender is mapped onto the labor hierarchy so that women, especially women of color, are positioned in the lower strata in the labor hierarchy. Gonzales et al. (2023) build upon these arguments by highlighting how colonial logics construct women as inferior to men and nonwhite women as inferior to white women based on physical attributes. Furthermore, the immense economic inequalities in the world today are a path-dependent outcome of colonial processes (Acemoglu et al., 2001). Understanding these colonial legacies is essential for understanding how the pandemic has affected women academics across the globe and disciplines, as these inequalities continue to shape the academic profession.

Methodology

Critical Discourse Analysis

I employed critical discourse analysis (CDA) in this review, which allowed me to examine how the literature reflects and reproduces the issues of dominance, inequity, and power originating from structures and powerful actors (Foucault, 1970; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Gee (2015) illustrated the basic types of discourse analysis: "small d" discourse analysis ("language-in-use") and "big D" discourse analysis (the enactment of socially and historically significant identities and social structures). Fairclough (2003) distinguishes between the abstract concept of "discourse" as the dual property of construing and describing social life and the count noun "discourse/discourses" as different ways of representing social reality or diverse perspectives on a particular issue. I follow Foucault's perspectives and view discourse broadly as the history of knowledge and practice and as the process by which knowledge and practice become solidified and normalized (Knights & Morgan, 1991; Stahl, 2008).

Discourse analysis has been considered to have great potential in higher education research (Sousa & Magalhães, 2014; Nokkala & Saarinen, 2018) and has been adopted in systematic literature reviews to discern power relations demonstrated through texts (e.g., Yao & Mwangi, 2022). According to Foucault (1970), discourse and structures of power and inequity are interrelated. This aligns with my belief that the literature concerning women academics during the COVID-19 pandemic not only depicts their experiences during the pandemic but also integrates issues of

inequity, which places their experience in a wider historical and social context where women have traditionally been marginalized and oppressed in academia.

Data Collection and Analysis

To identify eligible studies, I conducted a search on ERIC, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search terms included *women* OR *female*, AND *professor* OR *academics* OR *teacher*, AND *COVID-19* OR *pandemic* OR *COVID-19 pandemic*. For studies to be included, they needed to be (1) published in a peer-reviewed journal, (2) published in English, (3) collected empirical data, (4) addressed women academics in higher education contexts, and (5) addressed the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Fig. 10.1, the literature search generated 66 results. Data collection was completed by the end of April 2022. After removing articles based on the inclusion criteria and deleting duplicates across search results from different search engines, 25 were included for further analysis.

The data analysis process followed the general analytical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Mullet (2018). First, I examined the background of each text and summarized their primary characteristics, such as the research context, primary research questions, overarching research methodology, and primary results. Second, using an inductive approach, I coded the texts and identified three major themes: increased care work, reduced research productivity, and impacts on mental health and career outlook. Next, I conducted external analysis, comparing the literature on women academics during the COVID-19 pandemic with other related literature to uncover similarities and differences in the discourses. I also included studies on women academics beyond the pandemic to better understand the commonalities and uniqueness of this body of literature. Additionally, I conducted internal analysis, examining patterns, words, and linguistic devices that represent power relations, social context, or speakers' positionalities. Finally, I interpreted the meaning of the major themes and external and internal relations in relation to my research question and conceptual lens.
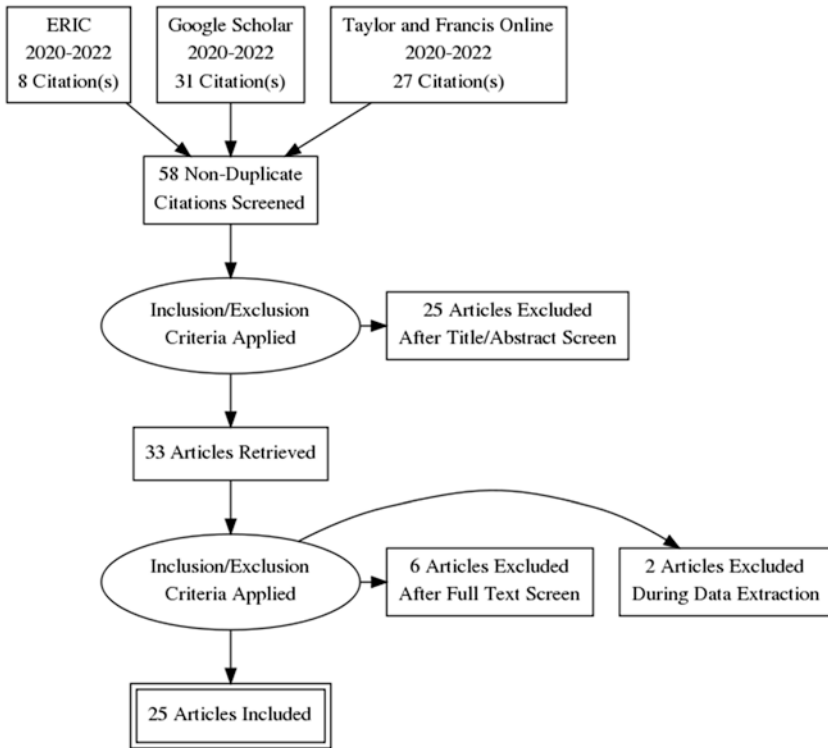
Fig. 10.1   Literature search process

Findings

The literature analyzed in this study demonstrates rich diversity in terms of disciplinary and geographical representation. It focuses on women academics across various fields such as social sciences, humanities, medicine, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). This diversity is reflected in the types of journals where the articles were published. While only two of the selected articles were published in education-related journals, the rest were published in either discipline-specific journals or those that focus on labor, leisure, and family relations. The literature also covers a wide range of geographic locations, including the U.S., the U.K., Australia, South Africa, Canada, Pakistan, Poland, Turkey, France,

Germany, Sweden, Italy, Norway, and Brazil. Methodologically, surveys, interviews, personal reflective narratives, and visual methods are utilized in the studies to investigate women academics' experiences during the pandemic. The following sections summarize three major themes that emerged in the literature: declined research productivity, increased care work, and mental health and career prospect impacts. The conceptual lens will be used to unpack the implications of the themes.

Increased Care Work

Several studies included in this review have highlighted the increased demand for care labor during the pandemic, particularly for women, both at home and in the workplace. The pandemic has further exacerbated the uneven distribution of domestic work, which was already present before the pandemic. The lockdown measures implemented in many countries have resulted in reduced availability of childcare and domestic support, such as in-person school attendance, daycare facilities, and extended family support. Additionally, the closure of restaurants has forced people to cook more often at home. As Górska et al. (2021) noted, "as homes turned into workspaces, the motherhood penalty and patriarchal division of labor within the private sphere set different starting points for male and female academics' ability to perform professional work" (p. 1550). The pandemic has indeed affected male and female academics differently (Ali & Ullah, 2021; Bender et al., 2021; Górska et al., 2021) since women are more likely to take on extra care work. In addition, women academics often find themselves as the primary emotional support provider for their family members (Minello et al., 2021; Bender et al., 2021). For instance, Bender et al. (2021) found that women academics felt responsible for mitigating the negative consequences of the pandemic for their children. However, the physical, emotional, and cognitive energy required for this mitigation, particularly when they had to take on the primary default caregiver role, was often overwhelming.

There was also an increased amount of care work related to teaching as most classes moved online. A study collecting qualitative and quantitative data from 2029 women academics in South Africa specified that the pandemic complicated teaching and administration the most. While women are more likely than men to hold teaching positions, the added responsibilities of teaching and administration associated with switching classes online have "implications for an already elusive gender equality in research"

(Walters et al., 2022, p. 1). Similarly, both men and women claimed to have more individualized interactions with students than before the pandemic, yet men focused on formal support in terms of course content, while women reported a sense of responsibility for supporting students not only academically but also psychologically and emotionally (Górska et al., 2021).

The compelling evidence concerning care work women have taken on further exposed the structural gender inequity in academia. In comparison to the prepandemic literature examining women academics' experiences, the literature in this review has paid more attention to how women manage their conflicting roles as researchers, teachers, administrators, mothers, and caretakers amid increased care work. Indeed, the preexisting uneven expectation and distribution of care work widened the care labor gap during a challenging time. Overall, women struggle more with work-life balance due to the blurred boundary between one's personal and professional lives under the condition of lockdowns (Crabtree et al., 2021). When examining these phenomena through the lens of colonial logics, I posit that these problems linger because the academic labor force all around the world is invested in and built from colonialist "social classifications," which assign certain types of work to certain individuals (e.g., women academics are assigned or expected to take on care work).

Decreased Research Productivity

Several studies have found a decline in women's research productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using databases from journals and scholarly preprint repositories, researchers measured women academics' research output before and during the pandemic (Ribarovska et al., 2021; Squazzoni et al., 2021; King & Frederickson, 2021). For instance, Squazzoni et al. (2021) analyzed submitted manuscripts and peer-reviewed activities for all Elsevier journals between February and May from 2018 to 2020. They found that during the first wave of the pandemic, women submitted proportionally fewer manuscripts than men, and this disparity was more pronounced among junior cohorts of women academics. Similarly, King & Frederickson (2021) examined the gender composition of more than 450,000 authorships in the arXiv and bioRxiv scholarly preprint repositories and found gender disparities in first, middle, and solo authorship submission rates during the pandemic. Women with children were more severely affected, reporting greater disruptions to their

routines than men or women without children (Yildirim & Eslen-Ziya, 2020).

Some studies focus on how female and male academics perceive the impact of the pandemic on their productivity across various geographical locations (Breuning et al., 2021; Staniscuaski et al., 2021; Parlak et al., 2020). These findings were consistent with data presented in studies that focused on journal publications and authorships. For instance, Breuning et al. (2021) surveyed women and men academics and found that both groups considered the pandemic disruptive to their research activities, but they agreed that "women will be worse off than men in academia, post-pandemic" (p. 429). Similarly, Staniscuaski et al. (2021) surveyed 3345 Brazilian academics from various research institutions and knowledge areas, asking whether they were able to submit papers as planned and meet deadlines during the initial period of social isolation. The results indicated that male academics, particularly those without children, were the least affected group, while Black women and mothers were the most impacted groups.

The classification of labor based on gender, as previously discussed, is coupled with the hierarchical assignment of value to different types of work, which only further amplifies gendered labor hierarchies during times of crisis. There have been abundant discussions on the disruptions in productivity and achievements (or lack thereof) in the production of research outputs among women academics (Lerchenmüller et al., 2021; Ribarovska et al., 2021; Squazzoni et al., 2021; King & Frederickson, 2021). The heightened focus on research output is not surprising. Mar Pereira (2021) argued that data on research output are relatively easy and quick to collect on both small and large scales. While research output is also an important theme in studies conducted prior to the pandemic (e.g., Aiston & Jung, 2015; O'Brien & Hapgood, 2012), the overwhelming dominance of this type of research in the pandemic-related literature is unprecedented. However, it is important to note that the focus on publication reflects the institutionalized cultures of performativity where publication increasingly becomes the indicator of academics' performance and excellence (Mar Pereira, 2021). In contrast to the way research publication is centered, care work in both domestic and public spheres is usually invisible and unrewarded, which affirms that the stratified academic labor force positions women in vulnerable positions.

Aversive Effects on Mental Health and Career Prospects

Another theme that emerged from the literature is the aversive effects of the pandemic on women academics, specifically regarding their mental health and long-term career outlook. Several studies have highlighted the increased risk of mental health challenges faced by women academics during the pandemic (Ali & Ullah, 2021; Docka-Filipek & Stone, 2021). Docka-Filipek and Stone's (2021) survey study found that gender was a significant predictor of pandemic-related risks to mental health. While their study did not fully explain academic women's heightened clinical measures of depression and anxiety, other studies offer some insights into potential reasons. In addition to the increased challenges of balancing professional and family responsibilities (Bender et al., 2021; Burk et al., 2021; Kim & Patterson Jr., 2022), Burk et al. (2021) argued that the lockdown situation reproduced feelings of maternal guilt and shame, as women were more evidently "unavailable" to their children in a sociocultural context where expectations of intensive mothering remain dominant. Indeed, most studies indicate that women with children experienced greater pressure. However, Gao and Sai (2020) nuanced the discussion by highlighting the social isolation and struggles of single women academics. The authors argue that masculine policies that emphasized "scientific and strategic" responses to the pandemic have been dominant, adding to the sense of exclusion, isolation, and loneliness experienced by single women who live alone during the lockdown.

Research also indicates that the long-term effects of the pandemic on women academics may impact their career prospects. Kim and Patterson Jr. (2022) found that female academics, particularly those in junior positions, tweeted less about their professional accomplishments than their male counterparts. This decrease in professional communication could potentially damage the reputation of women academics and may be attributed to the added family responsibilities resulting from the pandemic. Tso and Parikh (2021) predict that women academics may experience delayed career progression due to the pandemic, and there is even a risk that some women may lose their jobs in the long run (Spradley et al., 2020). Moreover, women academics may face scrutiny of their professionalism, and their multitasking to fulfill academic responsibilities and caregiving duties may be seen as unprofessional, leading to potential punishment. As a result, women academics may experience increased insecurity and

pressure to prove their worth to their institutions to counteract any inter-ruptions to their work (Spradley et al., 2020).

Despite a rich body of literature on the organizational structure and culture of higher education and its relationship to the experiences of women academics prior to the pandemic (Carapinha et al., 2017; Makori et al., 2016), the literature that emerged in the early phase of the pandemic does not appear to address the issue at the organizational level. As Gumport (2012) argues, some researchers have approached the equity problem as if it were an individual or isolated issue. Studies that address the struggles of women academics with mental health and career prospects should also challenge the academic system that values certain epistemologies, labor, and bodies while devaluing others to dismantle colonialism and its "social classifications." Neglecting the organizational dimension of the problem is a significant drawback in seeking to understand the underlying factors that enable and sustain gender inequality in academia worldwide or in initiating transformative changes to improve female academics' career advancement opportunities and work environments.

Discussion

Pushing the Discourse Forward

The literature examined in this study uncovers the gender inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic by underscoring various challenges women academics are faced with. However, I argue that the discourses manifested in the literature may reproduce problematic assumptions about gender and academic labor globally. In several of the studies, productivity was assumed to be research productivity, which was measured through the number of articles published and whether women academics were the first authors of the publication. The problematic equation implicitly or explicitly made between productivity and research output is concerning, as women academics' domestic and academic care work that is productive is devalued and framed as a counterforce against their research productivity (Bender et al., 2021; Breuning et al., 2021). Pointing out the fact that women academics' professional identities are under threat, Couch et al. (2020) guarded against the implicit assumption that women are less "focused" or are not truly "working" at home. Regardless of the intention, the discourses that heavily focus on research outputs may reproduce the colonialist ideologies of what counts as work and productivity.

Additionally, this body of literature lacks discussions on intersectionality. The prepandemic literature concerning women academics entails rich discussions about women academics' complex intersectional identities, such as race, class, sexuality, position type, and nationality (Moore et al., 2019), which is not as visible in the literature examined in this study. This body of literature also tends to address women academics from different parts of the world through a "one size fits all" approach, which is what transnational feminism argues against. Transnational feminism critiques the concept of a "global sisterhood" and recognizes that the experiences of women vary depending on their local and global contexts (Morgan, 1984). In essence, transnational feminism aims to challenge the idea that women worldwide share the same types of experiences, oppressions, forms of exploitation, and privileges and instead explores how the diverse experiences of women who live within, between, and at the margins or boundaries of nation-states around the world may differ or intersect (Zerbe Enns et al., 2021). The current studies are either smaller in scale and context-specific (Ali & Ullah, 2021; Docka-Filipek & Stone, 2021) or large-scale quantitative studies that include different contexts but do not differentiate or contrast the context differences (Staniscuaski et al., 2021; Kim & Patterson Jr., 2022). The current research discourses might leave the audience with the false assumption that women academics across the globe share the same pandemic experiences despite much evidence suggesting otherwise.

Implications and Future Steps

The impact of the pandemic on the academic labor force is gendered. What is less obvious is "how exactly one should conceptualize academic work, academic productivity, and even gender, when analyzing these phenomena and making policy demands about them" (Mar Pereira, 2021, p. 500). While it is true that the COVID-19 pandemic might have execrated the structural inequity in academia, all hope is not lost. While few, there are scholars who urge disruptions of the current labor distribution and how value is assigned to different types of work. Couch et al. (2020) argued against positioning women's work and their way of working as lesser. They asked whether the pandemic might help people recognize the problem behind these assumptions. Similarly, Oleschuk (2020) suggests higher education institutions to "work toward shifting institutional norms around gender, work, and carework" (p. 511). As such, future studies may

ask different questions that disrupt the prepandemic status quo by challenging colonial impositions. Instead of measuring research productivity by counting the number of articles published, for example, future researchers may consider how other types of labor that have long been devalued can be centered and valued.

Meanwhile, I call for reflexivity, which requires exploration, critique, and deconstruction of the reproduction of Northern or Eurocentric knowledge, particularly regarding gender-related experiences (Canetto, 2019; Yakushko, 2020). There is an urgent need to examine women academics' experiences during the pandemic across different races, classes, and nationalities. This body of literature offered perspectives from various contexts other than the Global North such as Pakistan, South Africa, Turkey, and Brazil (e.g. Parry & Gordon, 2021; Walters et al., 2022; Ali & Ullah, 2021; Parlak et al, 2020; Staniscuaski et al., 2021), yet further analysis is needed to nuance women academics' intersectional identities by taking global power and economic differences into consideration. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to dive into how higher education institutions may further diversify academia in detail, I maintain that higher education institutions should open the doors for more flexible work schedules and acknowledge the contributions that women academics make outside of research. With that, scholars and practitioners may focus on exploring educational practices that resist the colonial "social classification" in academia.

The studies analyzed in this review were published by April 2022, but it is important to note that many more studies may have been published since then. Therefore, the themes that emerged in this review may not fully represent the experiences of women academics worldwide. This review provides a snapshot of the research discourse when people just started to write and publish on the issue of academic gender disparities during the pandemic. As more studies are conducted, future research should examine the literature on this issue over time to see how the discourse evolves and its implications. For example, there may be more studies concerning women academics in the Global South or those in less research-focused institutions and position types that have not been fully represented in the first wave of publications. It would be valuable for researchers to examine whose voices are being prioritized and represented in research in a timely manner and whose experiences and voices are being ignored or delayed in representation. This will allow us to better understand the complex experiences of women academics during the pandemic

and work toward creating a more inclusive and equitable academic environment for all.

CONCLUSION

The studies analyzed in this review showcased that women academics struggle with increased care work, decreased research output, and challenges associated with mental health and long-term career prospects. By using colonialism as a conceptual lens, I interpret the challenges that women academics face during the pandemic as a result of a stratified academic labor force, where "social classification" dictates the roles that women academics are assigned and whose work is valued and rewarded. While studies published during the first two years of the pandemic have exposed gender inequities in academia across the world, I caution against the danger of the research discourse further perpetuating colonial logics by reinforcing the superiority of research and publication and viewing women's epistemology and work as less valuable. Drawing on arguments made by transnational feminists, I also emphasize the importance of understanding women's experiences worldwide from different perspectives, rejecting the "one size fits all" or "global sisterhood" assumptions. Finally, when examining the discourse in research, it is crucial to reflect on who is being represented and whose voices are being heard and prioritized. Through conducting this review, I challenge readers to consider whose experiences might be missing from early publications on women academics and the implications of such representational issues in research.

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Lessons Learned from Hybrid and Remote Work: Comparative Case Studies

CHAPTER 11

Changes to Hybrid Higher Education Induced by the COVID-19 Pandemic: A South African Case Study

Susan Greyling and Charl Wolhuter

Introduction

One of the defining (if often overlooked) and encouraging features of the new world and globalized society unfolding during the first two decades of the twenty-first century has been the global higher education revolution. Then, in 2020, this global revolution was marred by the outbreak of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic induced major changes in higher education systems and institutions around the world, as those leading such systems and institutions devised contingency plans to attempt to sustain the momentum of the global higher education revolution on their turf in the face of the pandemic.

No small part of this adjustment and reform is related to seeing an opportunity in distance and hybrid forms of higher education to head off

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the onslaught of the pandemic. As part of the global higher education revolution, distance and hybrid forms of higher education received a boost from the pandemic. As the return to normal (i.e., to times after the pandemic has run its course), the question is what can be learned from this experiment of enhanced resort and harnessing of distance and hybrid forms of higher education and how the experience can be used to improve higher education in the postpandemic world.

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has led to significant changes in higher education, with a shift toward hybrid or blended models of instruction. Hybrid models combine online and face-to-face instruction, offering greater flexibility, accessibility, and affordability. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of hybrid models, with many institutions implementing these models to address the challenges posed by the pandemic (Marshall & Taylor, 2021; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012).

One of the main benefits of hybrid models is increased flexibility for learners. Hybrid models allow students to access course content online and attend face-to-face classes or lectures, providing greater control over their learning and schedules. Hybrid models also allow students to access courses and programs offered by institutions located outside their geographical region, enabling greater access to higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). The pandemic has also highlighted the potential cost savings associated with hybrid models. By offering online courses, institutions can reduce costs associated with physical infrastructure, such as buildings, classrooms, and libraries (Jaschik, 2021). This can lead to cost savings for both institutions and students, making higher education more accessible and affordable. The shift toward hybrid models has also highlighted the need for greater investment in digital infrastructure, including online learning platforms, digital resources, and Internet connectivity. This investment can improve the quality of online instruction and increase access to higher education.

The adoption of hybrid models has also raised concerns about the quality and effectiveness of online instruction. Institutions must ensure that online instruction is of high quality, engaging, and interactive to ensure that students are learning effectively. Institutions must also ensure that face-to-face instruction remains an integral part of hybrid models, providing opportunities for interaction, collaboration, and experiential learning (Marshall & Taylor, 2021; Kennedy & Archambault, 2012). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has led to significant changes in higher education, with a shift toward hybrid models of instruction.

Hybrid models offer greater flexibility, accessibility, and affordability but require significant investment in digital infrastructure and quality assurance. It is with this aim that this case study of the Distance Higher Education Unit at North-West University, South Africa, is offered in this volume.

The Distance Higher Education Unit at North-West University, South Africa, was established over 20 years ago, responding to the imperatives for higher education in South Africa, within the context of the post-1994 sociopolitical and education reconstruction. It has since grown to the second largest distance education higher education supplier in South Africa (having had an enrollment of more than 30,000 students at its high-water mark). The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has induced a major overhaul of the model introduced in approximately 2000 with the vision of providing access to increasing numbers of students and to quality education programs by means of ongoing effective support and technology. These entailed i.a. ways of contacting, advising, and supporting students, ways of submitting assignments, the way faculty do their work, ways of ensuring quality, and modes of assessment. These changes also opened a window of opportunity for the contact and distance mode of programs at the university, moving closer together toward a single model. Some of these changes will remain in force after the pandemic has swept over the country and have resulted in better, more accessible, and higher quality education. This chapter will survey this trajectory. Given the similarities between the South African context and many other parts in the world, especially in the Global South, this experience is instructive for higher education systems far beyond South Africa.

The chapter commences with a survey of the global higher education revolution and its causes, extent, achievements, discontent, and remaining challenges in higher education. The next section shifts the focus to the disruption brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. This framework is then used to interpret the case study. The focus is narrowed to first the South African higher education system and then to the case study university. The impact of the pandemic on hybrid delivery at the case study university is described and assessed, with the final aim of deriving insights into how to use hybrid modes of delivery to take higher education into the twenty-first century.

The Global Higher Education Revolution

While not often noted, much less appreciated as such, one of the defining features of the present era of 3.0 globalization is the worldwide higher education revolution. Since 1990, a global higher education revolution has taken off (see Altbach et al., 2009). A basic theorem in the scholarly field of Comparative and International Education is that education systems are called into being and are being shaped by contextual societal forces (for analytical purposes typically enumerated as geography, demography, level of scientific and technological development, social system, economy, political system, and religion and life and world philosophy) and that education systems can only be understood from these societal forces (Harris & Jones, 2018; Sobe & Kowalczyk, 2012, 2014). Similarly, the global higher education revolution has been driven by a number of societal drivers, and to fully understand and assess this revolution, this section will commence with a survey of these societal drivers of the global higher education revolution. This will be followed by a discussion of the main dimensions defining this revolution, after which the revolution will be assessed. The last few decades have witnessed a global higher education revolution characterized by rapid growth, expansion, and diversification of higher education systems worldwide. This revolution has brought about significant changes in the way higher education is accessed, delivered, and funded.

At least nine interrelated societal forces are driving the global higher education revolution. These are demographic shifts, increasing affluence, the rise of knowledge economies, the neo-liberal economic revolution, the information, communication, and transport technology (ICT) revolution, the rise of multicultural societies, democratization, individualization, and the rise of the Creed of Human Rights (see Wolhuter & Jacobs, 2021). One of the major drivers of this revolution has been the increasing demand for higher education. According to UNESCO, global enrollment in higher education has more than doubled since 2000, reaching 220 million in 2019. This demand has been fueled by the need for higher education to improve employment prospects, social mobility, and personal development.

The growth of higher education has also been facilitated by the expansion of digital technologies and the emergence of online learning platforms. These platforms have made education more accessible, affordable, and flexible and have enabled learners to access courses and degrees from institutions around the world. Another factor driving the global higher

education revolution is the increasing role of private sector providers in the delivery of higher education. Private universities, colleges, and for-profit institutions have become more prominent in many countries, challenging the traditional dominance of public institutions. This has led to greater competition, diversity, and innovation in higher education provision.

The global higher education revolution has also been characterized by increasing internationalization, with greater mobility of students, staff, and knowledge across borders. According to the OECD, the number of international students worldwide reached 5.3 million in 2019, with China, India, and South Korea being the top sending countries. The global higher education revolution has brought about significant changes in the way higher education is accessed, delivered, and funded worldwide. It has facilitated greater access, diversity, and internationalization of higher education while also posing challenges and opportunities for institutions and policymakers.

The population explosion and especially the more youthful demographic profiles of the nations of the Global South means that the demand for higher education grows every year. Because of growing affluence, higher education is affordable to more families. The ICT revolution enables higher education to be extended to a larger range of people by means of technology and distance education programs. As part of the neo-liberal higher education revolution, the principles of the neo-liberal economy, such as profit motive, quality control, and performativity, are also carried into the higher education sector. The rise of multicultural societies contributed to the more diverse make-up of the student corps of higher education institutions. Democratization, individualism, and the rise of the Creed of Human Rights resulted in students gaining more say in managing higher education.

Turning to the dimensions of the global higher education revolution, the defining feature of this revolution is massification, that is, the massification of higher education. As enrollments have expanded, higher education systems have matured from elite higher education to mass higher education systems to approach universal higher education. In terms of gross enrollment ratios, Greece is leading, with a gross higher education enrollment ratio reaching a staggering 132 percent. Other features include the rise of open and distant higher education, managerialism, students, industry, and governments gaining more say in the running of universities, a more intense pursuit of internationalization in higher education, and a

call for relevance (in curricula and programs, this is evident in, e.g., the rise of Mode 2 knowledge compared to Mode 1 knowledge).

On the assessment of the global higher education revolution, while this revolution constitutes an impressive achievement of humanity the past 30 years, and while it gave access to higher education and new life chances to large numbers of people, and while it resulted in a more educated citizenry standing to benefit society, Wolhuter and Jacobs (2021) table a number of cautionary notes regarding the global higher education revolution.

The first of these cautionary notes is the rising levels of graduate unemployment in virtually all parts of the world. The problem is that when higher education results in unemployment, valuable public and private resources are wasted. The question as to who should pay for higher education (client, i.e., student and family, industry, or government) remains unsolved, cogent arguments for each side exist. There is always the issue of quantity versus quality; that is, the unchecked expansion of higher education constitutes a force eroding the quality of higher education. Another concern is the denigration or marginalization or outright scrubbing of basic research, as higher education yields before the demands of relevance and the exigencies of the neo-liberal economic revolution.

The expansion and commercialization of higher education—under the impact of the neo-liberal economic revolution—together with the impact of the societal forces of democratization and individualization meant that the academic profession has come to find itself sandwiched between two impinging forces. Traditionally or historically autonomous, free, and enjoying the greatest of respect and even revere from society and from students, the academic profession now experiences itself under the command of university managers at the top and simultaneously from students at the other end. Finally, the pressures of the neo-liberal economic revolution result in a neglect of the function of the university with regard to the preservation, transmittance, and development of the cultural wealth of humanity and the function of the university to exercise societal critique.

That, in summary, was the situation of higher education globally, when, in the first months of 2020, the global higher education revolution, still at full speed at that stage, was suddenly, unexpectedly, marred by the outbreak of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Disruption Brought by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education systems around the world. Schools and universities have been forced to close or shift to online instruction, affecting millions of learners, educators, and families. The pandemic has highlighted preexisting inequalities and challenges in education systems and has prompted a rethink of how education can be delivered in the future. One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic has been the disruption to learning. According to UNESCO (2021), at the height of the pandemic in 2020, over 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries were affected by school closures. This has led to significant learning loss and increased the risk of dropouts and educational inequality, particularly among disadvantaged and marginalized groups. The shift to online learning has also highlighted the digital divide and unequal access to technology and Internet connectivity. Many learners and educators in low-income countries and underserved communities have been unable to access online learning resources, exacerbating existing inequalities in education.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of learners and educators. The sudden shift to remote learning and social isolation has caused stress, anxiety, and loneliness, affecting the overall wellbeing of students and educators. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the education workforce, with many educators facing job losses, salary cuts, and increased workload. The shift to online learning has required educators to adapt quickly to new teaching modalities and technologies, often with limited training and resources. The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education systems worldwide, highlighting preexisting inequalities and challenges and prompting a rethink of how education can be delivered in the future. This pandemic forced higher education institutions to urgently devise contingency plans, as the pandemic made it impossible to carry on as usual. The authors of this chapter believe that the pandemic, necessitating changes, has brought on an opportunity that, used wisely, can improve the global higher education project.

The most conspicuous and immediate change in the higher education sector, precipitated by the pandemic, was to accelerate the movement from contact tuition to move toward distance education, which is a hybrid form of teaching and learning. The words "accelerated" and "hybrid" are

used deliberately: "accelerated" as, as technology became more and more advanced, available, and attractive, the trend toward using technology for more cost-effective and more user-flexible "hybrid" (i.e., not replacing the lecturer in class, but supplementing) had already been noticeable in pre-Pandemic times. As with any element of an education system, the change in teaching modus is not isolated from contextual factors. The success, challenges, benefits, and advantages of such an exercise are all contingent upon a host of contextual factors. These contextual factors include both the education system (every other facet of the education system) and societal contextual factors. To derive statements regarding what has been learned from this trial run with the enhanced use of technology in hybrid forms of higher education supply, contextual factors and their impact on hybrid forms of higher education delivery should be teased out. The field of scholarship studying education systems and institutions in their contextual embeddedness (i.e., the interrelationships between education systems/institutions and context) is Comparative and International Education.

Within Comparative and International Education, transitologies (also named transitiologies) have grown into a formidable study (see De Wet & Wolhuter, 2009). However, research has been limited to the national level, that is, the sociopolitical collapse or rapid change or reconstruction at the national level. It is especially transitions to democracy and the development path (as understood within the paradigm of modernization theory) that have attracted attention and, in the latest spurt of interest in transitologies, the reconstruction of education in postsocialist countries in the post-1990 era (see Jules, 2021). How a seismic event at a global scale, such as the outbreak of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, impacted education has hitherto (at least up to the time of the pandemic) escaped the attention of scholars of transitologies in comparative and international education.

In the adaptation of higher education systems and institutions to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, their resorting to and co-option of hybrid forms of delivery, the South African case is very instructive.

South African Higher Education

Societal Context

South Africa occupies 1.2 million square kilometers at the southernmost end of the African continent. This is a peripheral location far from the North American and Western European core of the world economic and political systems.

The total population of South Africa is 60.4 million (at the time of writing, June 2022). The annual growth rate is 1.3 percent. This rate has been steadily declining; in 2000, it was still 2 percent. Historically, the population was classified into four categories, still used for redressing historical inequities (i.e., policies of affirmative action): Blacks (people of African descent), currently making up 80 percent of the total population; Whites (South Africans of European descent), currently 8 percent of the population; Asians (South Africans of Asian descent), currently making up 3 percent of the population; and "Coloreds" (a controversial term, referring to people in the past judged to be of mixed racial origin), making up 9 percent of the population.

The main outlines of the history of South Africa are as follows. From 1652, it was first a Dutch colony and then, after 1806, a British colony. Then, since the beginning of the twentieth century, it was ruled by the White section of the population, who attempted to implement a policy of extreme racial segregation ("Apartheid"). After decades of civil unrest, international pressure and sanctions against these policies, and demographic and economic realities making these policies increasingly untenable, a new Constitution and political dispensation commenced in 1994. This dispensation was built on a Constitution on a Western liberal model. Unfortunately, this encouraging example of 1994 has now, after more than two decades, been tarnished by poor and ineffectual governance, a lack of presence of rule of law and respect for constitutionalism and widespread corruption. Together with a government ever more curtailing the autonomy of civil society, this makes for a toxic mix.

In terms of the World Bank classification, South Africa is an upper middle-income country. However, as measured by the Gini index, it is also one of the most unequal countries in the world. Economic growth slowed down in the adverse political context, even before 2020. The onset of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic aggravated the problem of inadequate economic growth. Unemployment levels have grown for at

least a decade and are approaching alarming rates. According to the extended definition of unemployment, 44.4 percent of the total adult population is unemployed (Dlamini, 2022: 6). In the case of 15- to 24-year-olds, this figure is a staggering 74.8 percent (Ibid.). Even among graduates in this age group, the unemployment rate stands at 33.1 percent (Statistics South Africa, 2021).

South African Higher Education: Historical Development and Current Challenges

Formal education (at least in the form recognized in the contemporary world) in South Africa began with the onset of the colonial era in 1652. The development of education was slow and that of higher education was even lower than that of primary and secondary education. At first, the very few who proceeded to higher education had to go to the Netherlands or the United Kingdom, and the first university was established only in the mid-nineteenth century. The history of universities fit into the segregation template of colonialism and apartheid: separate, segregated universities were created for White and Black South Africans. By the end of the 1980s, there were 11 White universities and 11 Black universities. Progressive political opinion in South Africa, especially among the political organizations of Black South Africans, rejected the notion of segregated universities.

With the dawn of the new sociopolitical dispensation in 1994, the new government formulated a new education policy based upon the following four principles (*cf.* Wolhuter, 1999):

- Democratization: education and training should be built upon the principle of democracy, characterized by active participation by all parties, that is, teachers, students, parents, and community
- Equity
- Deaggregation
- Multicultural education.

Education has also been sought to achieve a host of societal objectives, such as stimulating economic growth, eradicating unemployment, entrenching democracy, and creating a society based on equality, nonracism, nondiscrimination, and respect for human rights (*cf.* Wolhuter, 2021).

There are currently 26 public universities in South Africa. While the Constitution and the Higher Education Act allow for Private Universities, the size of this sector, mainly because of government hostility, remains negligibly small.

Despite spectacular progress in enrollment growth since 1994, the higher education sector in South Africa is beset by a host of pressing problems. Higher education enrollments have increased from 495,355 in 1994 (Department of Education, 1995) to 1,172,595 in 2020 (UNESCO, 2022). However, the gross higher education enrollment ratio is low: 24 percent in 2018 (latest available figure); in other upper middle-income countries, this figure is more than double that of South Africa. Only 6 percent of South Africans have a university degree (Dlamini, 2022: 6). While graduate unemployment is rising, university education is still one of the few available avenues for upward mobility and an escape from the poverty and unemployment trap. Of the pool of unemployed individuals in South Africa, only 2.4 percent are graduates, 38.5 percent have passed the secondary school termination examination, and 51.3 percent have not completed secondary education (Dlamini, 2022: 6). The demand for places at universities grossly exceeds the number of available places. The University of the Witwatersrand (admittedly, the second highest ranked South African university on global university rankings) receives 80,000 applicants annually but has place for only 5000 (Govender, 2022: 14).

A second problem is that this ever-growing higher education project is becoming unaffordable, in view of a limited fiscus, faced with many other competing demands. Participation is still unequal, with enrollment ratios of (previously classified) White and Indian South Africans much higher than that of (previously classified) Colored and Black South Africans.

Internal inefficiency or waste is high: 47 percent of students enrolling for contact tuition do not complete their programs, and this figure rises to 68 percent if distance education students are also included (Lategan, 2021). What makes the high attrition rate worse is that some categories of students are disproportionally affected; thus, the attrition cancels out much of the equalization won at the access or entry point (cf. Letseka & Maile, 2008).

A final, regrettable feature of South African higher education is the excessive managerialism that has taken hold in the past 30 years. During the last three decades, stifling managerialism has descended in the South African academic profession. Managerialism came down in the South African academic profession much faster and harsher than international

norms. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this article, but for more on the reasons and the extent of this rising managerialism in South African higher education, the interested reader is referred to the publication by Wolhuter et al. (2011).

The Impact of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic on South African Higher Education

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on higher education in South Africa, affecting students, educators, and institutions across the country. The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities and challenges in the South African higher education system, with implications for access, quality, and sustainability. One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on South African higher education has been the disruption of learning. Like many countries, South Africa has had to close universities and colleges or shift to online instruction, causing significant learning loss and exacerbating existing inequalities in access to education. According to the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (2020), over 1 million students were affected by the disruptions caused by the pandemic in 2020.

The shift to online learning has also highlighted the digital divide in South Africa, with many students lacking access to reliable Internet connectivity and digital devices. This has further exacerbated existing inequalities in access to education, with students from disadvantaged backgrounds and rural areas being particularly affected. The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the financial sustainability of South African higher education institutions. Universities and colleges have faced reduced revenue from student fees, decreased research funding, and increased costs associated with implementing health and safety measures. This has led to financial instability and the potential closure of some institutions.

The pandemic has also highlighted the need for greater collaboration and innovation in higher education. South African institutions have responded to the crisis by developing new online learning platforms, partnerships with industry and government, and alternative funding models (Kopano, 2020). The coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on higher education in South Africa, exacerbating existing inequalities and challenges and highlighting the need for greater collaboration, innovation, and sustainability (National Education, Health & Allied Workers' Union, 2020).

Thus, in South Africa, global higher education was at full speed when it was hit head-on by the unexpected outbreak of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic during the first months of 2020. As a result of a particular set of contextual factors, a large part of the student body at South African university is residential students, that is, they stay on campus in university residences. The contextual realities making for this feature are first the historic factor, South African universities, having been established in the colonial era, were modeled on both the British College System and the English public schools (with their boarding school tradition). Universities are sparsely distributed. There are only 26 universities serving a large tract of land. Public transport is very poorly developed in South Africa. Universities historically (and less so, but still demonstrable) catered to particular (language community and otherwise) sectors of the population. Thus, a large percentage of students at South African universities have always stayed in on-campus residences.

The reflexive response of universities was the same as their counterparts abroad, namely, to send students home and to resort to the distance teaching and learning mode. That is, the movement toward using technology and to move toward a hybrid form of teaching and learning received a catalyst from the contingency plans induced by the pandemic. Reflecting on these changes at the time of the pandemic, Wolhuter and Jacobs (2021) contended that these changes bring with them a set of new challenges and at the same time aggravate many existing challenges, but wisely responded too, can go a long way to address a range of challenges besetting South African higher education.

Going the way toward more distance education is an attractive, relatively inexpensive potential way of extending access to and participation in higher education to more students. On the other hand, especially with the digital divide running right through South Africa, an inconsiderate harnessing of technology in moving toward distance education can exacerbate existing inequalities in South African higher education. While not all South Africans have access to electricity and personal computers, the cell phone is ubiquitous (see Delport, 2022). NWU, in line with other universities in South Africa, when sending students home and going online in response to the pandemic, made laptop computers and prepaid data available to all students.

Assessment practices at South African universities have historically revolved strongly around summative assessment in the form of end-of-semester examinations. This is also a relic of colonial times and the fact

that during the isolation years before 1994, when an international academic boycott was waged against the country, South African universities fell behind world trends to move more toward formative assessment. Summative assessment has made a heavy emphasis on testing lower-order learning objectives such as rote memorization. Going online brought with it a shift toward more formative assessment. This kind of assessment is more conducive to assessing higher-order learning objectives and independent, critical, and creative thinking.

As explained earlier, the kind of global higher education revolution meant that the academic profession was caught between two sets of vicious forces. While the ICT revolution makes managerialism, micromanagement, and control possible on an unprecedented scale (see Zuboff, 2019; Hillman, 2021), the new arrangements regarding working conditions necessitated by the outbreak of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic can also be used to loosen the stifling grip and dispiriting control structures the academic profession had to contend with and assist or enable the academic profession to reclaim its professional autonomy.

The Case Study University: North-West University

North-West University is, in terms of student numbers, the third largest university in South Africa (after the University of South Africa and the Tshwane University of Technology). The university has three campuses: Potchefstroom, Mahikeng, and Vaal Triangle. Potchefstroom is a large town in Northwest Province. Mahikeng is the capital of Northwest Province, while the Vaal Triangle campus is situated in Gauteng Province: a megalopolis and South Africa's economic hub. North-West University came into existence on 1 January 2004 by means of an amalgamation of two universities, Potchefstroom University and the University of North-West. Potchefstroom University was a historically White university attached to the Reformed (Calvinist) Church, and its history dates back to 1869. The University of North-West was historically a Black university, the University of the Bantustan of Bophuthatswana (in fact, its original name was the University of Bophuthatswana).

After the University of South Africa (an exclusive distance education institution), North-West University has the largest distance education unit of all universities in South Africa. In 2018, 17,794 of the total student body of 61,212 were distance education students (North-West University, 2022). The distance education unit is located in Potchefstroom. The

distance education unit operates by means of an electronic web-based platform (named e-Fundi). Students communicate with lecturers by means of emails, telephone calls, including mobile telephone calls (as was explained earlier, in South Africa, mobile phones have a much stronger penetration than laptops), the electronic teaching-learning platform, and personal, physical consultations with lecturers.

On the 2021 Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, or Shanghai), North-West University was the fifth highest ranking South African university, falling in the 601–700 category of highest ranked universities in the world (Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2021).

The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic and Hybrid Mode Tuition Internationally

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has drastically changed the way education is delivered around the world. In response to the pandemic, many schools and universities have transitioned to hybrid mode tuition, which combines in-person and online instruction.

Hybrid mode tuition allows for greater flexibility and reduces the risk of transmission of the virus by limiting the number of students physically present in the classroom. This approach has become popular among many schools and universities, especially during the pandemic. Research has shown that hybrid mode tuition can be effective in enhancing student learning outcomes. A study by Xie and Ke (2021) found that hybrid mode instruction can lead to better academic performance, engagement, and motivation among students. Similarly, a study by Hossain and Robinson (2020) found that hybrid mode tuition can improve student satisfaction, learning outcomes, and retention rates.

However, hybrid mode tuition also presents its own set of challenges, including technological issues and a lack of face-to-face interaction. It can be difficult for students to stay motivated and engaged in an online environment, and some may struggle with time management and self-directed learning. The hybrid mode tuition has become an important tool for educational institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. While it has its challenges, research suggests that it can be an effective way to enhance student learning outcomes and maintain academic continuity in a safe and flexible manner.

The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic and Hybrid Mode Tuition at North-West University

As in the case with education institutions at all levels all over the world, the knee jerk reaction of South African universities at the outbreak of the pandemic was to send students home and to begin to rely more on online teaching and learning.

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has had a huge impact on higher education institutions (HEIs), especially on contact tuition programs and on the offering of paper-based programs on distance. Distance students at higher education institutions (HEIs) faced a new way of adjusting to a new platform of working, and suddenly, they had to face circumstances that they were not used to. They had to refocus and plan more to cope with time management, connectivity, and self-directed learning.

As noted by Parker (2020), the virus has affected everyone and has left a strain on education and all other aspects of life. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) (2020) estimated that over 90 percent of the global student population has been sent home and has been staying out of school since the pandemic assumed a global crisis status in March 2020. An estimation was made that as many as 177 countries had closed schools because of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic (UNESCO, 2020). The closure of schools formed part of concerted efforts by world leaders and institutions to fight the spread of the virus. This was, indeed, a very sharp learning curve that had to happen almost overnight, as it resonates with Corbera et al.'s (2020) advocacy for the need to learn new ways of operating within the educational landscape.

The unit of distance learning (UDL) at NWU was not spared from the disruptions brought about by the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The UDL delivers several distance programs on behalf of the various faculties at several learning support centers (LSCs) in southern Africa that include three paper-based programs that do not make use of the electronic platform Learning Management System (e-Fundi). These three programs are the Advanced Certificate in Teaching (ACT), the Advanced Diploma in Education (ADE), and the Diploma in Grade R Teaching (Dipl Gr R). Harrison (2017) defines paper based as using paper rather than an electronic system to deliver the program. Classes are presented in English via Interactive Whiteboards (IWBs). For each model, three contact sessions are scheduled during a semester or six for a year module.

Although a computer is not a prerequisite, it will be to the students benefit since assignments and portfolios need to be typed and they need the Internet to complete assignments and portfolios. The study material is available in hard copy (paper-based), and IWB classes are presented. These lessons can be attended at one of the many learning support centers where computers with Internet access are available or may be downloaded from there.

These paper-based programs focus on enhanced accessibility to education and training, limiting or eliminating barriers such as time, place, and pace of learning. The NWU promotes distance learning by allowing students to register for the modules of a program, offering technology-mediated instruction and examination opportunities at various LSCs nationally and internationally, and providing student support to enhance the student learning experience. Students who study via distance education are still subject to specific admission requirements as determined by the Institutional Admissions Requirements Committee, fixed dates for the commencement of academic programs, a minimum and maximum duration for the completion of their studies, and specific scheduled assessment opportunities (BEd Foundation Phase Information booklet, 2018). All assignments must be posted, couriered, or submitted at the LSCs for distribution and assessment.

According to Van Wyk (2017: 274), South African higher education institutions of distance education had to be revolutionary and think of ways to make the submission of assignments possible. Because of the first strict coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions that were set, students could not submit their hard copy assignments. Therefore, UDL needed to make a radical move to shift information from a paper-based system of delivery to an online approach to contact paper-based program students in strict coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) restrictions. A suggestion of submission on the web as an alternative for students that was used to submit their assignments in hard copy at the LSCs and writing an examination. A decision was made that an assessment submission and download page will be created for submission of the first assignment. It was also decided that formative assessments, that is, assignments submitted electronically, will replace the examination paper for both semesters. This extra examination assignment could be downloaded to have earlier access to the assessment that was sent by courier to each student. Although the electronic assignment and submission page was active for distance students to make use of, there were still students in need of hard copy final assessment, as they had

no access to the Internet, no Wi-Fi or data to make use of the electronic platform, or were not used to (or comfortable enough) with the technology. The hard copy assessments were meant for those students who could not complete their assessment obligations because of circumstances owing to the state of disaster. New assessments had to be set for all students. This special assessment opportunity served as a final assessment opportunity for the continuous assessment period of the first semester. The same protocol applied to the second semester. Communication went out to lecturers and outside markers on these assignments received through the web page. A document was compiled to assist the lecturers who were used to marking only hard copy assignments, informing them on the way forward.

In light of the above, the statistics showed that the Diploma in Grade R students submitted the most assignments, and discussions started on the way forward for the paper-based programs to launch a pilot group to see if an upload and download of assignments will be possible through NWU's e-Fundi platform. For the phase-in period, students can make use of the technology/equipment that has been installed at some LSCs, which will enable students to link to Wi-Fi, free of charge, that will enable students to download resources and assessments and upload them after completing.

Following the interruption of academic work by the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) global pandemic for submission of assignments and the replacement for sit-down examinations, a new normal was generated. As there were limited research findings on the influence of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, contact students were formally on campus, attending classes on-site. As previously mentioned, our aligned programs, distance students, focus on accessibility to education and training, limiting or eliminating barriers such as time, place, and pace of learning. Some lecturers are in both modes of delivery for distance students. A lecturer can teach in the aligned programs as well as the paper-based programs, and therefore these lecturers had to know that there were different measures and dates for the paper-based and the aligned programs. It was not difficult to give assessment tasks and take-home assessments on the electronic platform that the aligned programs followed.

Contact classes were mainly presented by means of interactive whiteboards (IWBs) at the LSCs in Southern Africa, supported by facilitators. Lecturers could be contacted via email if the students had access to the Internet. All modules presented, using IWBs boards, were stored on the Internet for students to access at a later stage. Students were supported

through a call center, social media (Facebook), and telephonic or electronic contact with lecturers and facilitators. Prior to the pandemic, examinations were written at several examination centers throughout Southern Africa, but the NWU could request students to write a specific module (e.g., Computer Science) at the campus in Potchefstroom, where the UDL is situated (BEd Foundation Phase Information booklet, 2018). These aligned programs (BEd, BEd Hons Level 8, and PGCE) implemented continuous assessment successfully, making use of the e-Fundi platform. Multiple assessment opportunities were given for the aligned programs to enable students to successfully partake in the continuous assessment.

Following the Hybrid Mode Tuition at NWU, the decision was made that the first semester should be aligned with the second semester. The aligned programs made use of video recordings during the pandemic. The lecturers could record all their lectures through whiteboard sessions, that is, PowerPoint voice-overs, and so on, from home and upload them on the video platform Panopto. Lecturers were also allowed to make use of the whiteboard media rooms on campus at the UDL but had to arrange this before their arrival. In the absence of a scheduled IWB timetable, students might be more inclined to feel uncertain, especially during the ongoing pandemic; therefore, instead of the timetable, lecturers had to make sure they drew up a semester program that indicated when they would upload lecture recordings as well as assignments due dates. This benefited both the lecturer and the students in terms of the flexibility it offered. Lecturers had to remember that there would be no summative examination at NWU, as a continuous assessment instructional design was followed. Lecturers had to add an announcement on the e-Fundi sites for the distance students to inform them when the semesters would start and end and that all communication for the aligned programs would be via e-Fundi.

The protocol that was followed for the aligned BEd distance programs during the pandemic, where lecturers had to teach contact and distance students, managed the teaching and learning process of NWU in a way that both groups were treated in the same way and to obtain, as far as possible, the same learning experience. NWU believes that students who study over distance need to follow that route, as most distance students have full-time jobs and find it difficult to attend classes according to specific timeslots on a timetable. Classes on a timetable for undergraduate BEd studies are also time-restricted to three classes of ±45 minutes when presenting it through the IWB sessions.

From experience, before lockdown and mostly online studies, the lecturers started to use the three scheduled classes as feedback sessions. According to the attendance registers, few distance students attended these scheduled classes in real time. They normally downloaded the recordings at times that suited them better. That is why distance lecturers decided at that time to prerecord their classes. By doing so, they did not have to infatuate everything into the three 45 (in effect 35) minute sessions. The lecturers recorded everything that was dealt with in the module. They went out of their way to truly try to explain all the different concepts that are covered in the different study units of the module. In doing so, the distance students certainly received much more class time than they would have obtained from the 3×45-minute sessions during the semester prior to the pandemic. Another advantage of doing it in a hybrid mode was that all the class recordings could be uploaded on e-Fundi within the first two weeks of each semester. Feedback from students was very positive, and they said that even though the recordings might be quite long, they truly appreciated the extensive coverage. One of the classes was approximately 2½ hours, but they stopped when they needed to and carried on later.

Keeping the hybrid mode tuition at NWU in mind, when lockdown came, all these prerecordings were made available to contact students as well. Interpreting services translated them to Afrikaans for immediate use, but the next year, the lecturers made Afrikaans recordings of everything to make accessible to the contact students. The Afrikaans-speaking distance students then benefitted from that again because all these recordings were available to both distance and contact students. As the flipped classroom approach had been used in the contact classes during precoronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) times, the class recordings worked well for this approach because students had to watch the recordings before they came to class. Distance students contacted lecturers by email when they had any questions about the content of the module. Distance and contact students performed the exact same assessments during the semester: two major assignments, weekly test and quizzes on e-Fundi, and a final examination or assignment at the end of the semester. Lecturers recorded an assignment discussion after they graded assignments. That recording was then uploaded onto e-Fundi so that both contact and distance students could peruse it.

Online teaching and learning worked best when classes, communication, and all relevant information were available and accessible to all

students on e-Fundi. Although not always easy, lecturers preferred to have the whole site ready and fully set up at the start of the semester or at least within the first month of the semester. Distance students should be able to have online access to everything at times that suit them. Serious distance students would do their planning ahead and would spend time on their studies in a self-directed manner; therefore, teaching resources should be easily accessible and available to distance students. In this new way of teaching, lecturers do not want students to finish everything within a week or two and then sit back for the rest of the semester. To prevent this, lecturers gave students a Module and Assessment Plan to follow during the semester. That was to help them to pace their studies, guiding and instructing the students that they should not go slower than this program but to plan accordingly.

After the pandemic, the contact wing of the university is now considering the implementation of these elements, such as hybrid learning and the HyFlex model, whereas UDL has always offered live lecture sessions to distance students. Distance students have the flexibility to either attend in person (LSCs) or online (own device).

Taking the Hybrid Mode Tuition at NWU further, the focus is on technology and physical infrastructure that allows for hybrid learning. UDL has ten multimedia venues onsite and an additional three venues offsite. These venues are equipped with relevant technological and physical infrastructure that allows for hybrid learning. There are learner support centers (LSCs) across South Africa and Namibia that support the hybrid learning model. The e-learning unit at UDL has implemented the use of the Microsoft Teams platform as the medium for synchronous learning and is responsible for the maintenance of multimedia venues. During the pandemic, UDL immediately responded and rolled out its own device use for lecturers to record video/lecture content and share it with students via e-Fundi. Lecturers further have the option to schedule additional online synchronous "connect" sessions with their students and share digital material via e-Fundi. Some UDL programs are offered fully online via e-Fundi, and bichronous learning is deployed via e-Learning, which is responsible for video capture management platforms and training lecturers on the use of relevant teaching and learning technologies. UDL lecturers have the option to book one of the multimedia venues to record lecture content or host a live session with online participants with the e-learning unit that facilitates the bookings and provides support to lecturers using the multimedia venues.

Conclusions

What was learned from this exercise was the following: all distance programs should make the transition to being offered fully online, as this allows for UDL to transcend geographical boundaries, thus enabling growth opportunities. Blended approach to incorporate asynchronous and synchronous (purposeful) online learning. Curriculum design and development, specifically for distance learning, is essential. Upskill lecturers and module facilitators to effectively present content for distance learning. Good systems need to be in place to support lecture capture management, electronic platform access and use, and training for students and lecturers on the use of systems. Good operational processes and turnaround times in place, for example, applications, registrations, assessments, and assignments.

An important (if unexpected) result of the exercise was to allow faculty more flexibility regarding working hours, including the opportunity to work more from home. This was not possible in the precoronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) mode of teaching. This significantly rolled back the pernicious tide of managerialism.

To continue with the Hybrid Mode Tuition at NWU, ongoing collaborations with NWU divisions and structures need to take place to ensure alignment with overall NWU policies and present an opportunity to comprehend specialist skills and services. In the reform of on-campus programs, the experience of this trial run should also be instructive. Finally, the experience of students should be assessed. The speed with which these reforms had to be effected and the requirement for time-consuming ethical clearance have thus far prevented such research, but surveys of student experience would be a valuable follow-up study to complement this research.

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Lessons from Virtual Exchange Programs and Hybrid Study Abroad Programs Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

M. Sion Collier-Murayama

INTRODUCTION

Within the field of international higher education, virtual exchange programs and hybrid online/offline study abroad programs (programs that combine traditional study abroad with online learning) predate the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, even as COVID-19 has spurred intense interest in the field. Alongside those who have practiced virtual and hybrid international education programs (VHIEPs) for decades largely by choice are now those whose VHIEP practices began largely out of necessity. In this chapter, I bring together the literature authored by both populations, first providing an account of the prepandemic context in which VHIEPs first emerged and then reviewing literature on lessons

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235

learned by scholar-practitioners who entered the field during the pandemic as well as literature by scholar-practitioners whose initial VHIEP work predates the pandemic but who have published on work they conducted during the pandemic. I then apply this learning to a case study, first describing the prepandemic development and implementation of a hybrid short-term study abroad program and then reflecting on how this program might (or might not) have been developed differently if its design had been informed by lessons learned during the pandemic. In conducting this reflection, I solidify my belief in the importance of virtual and hybrid study abroad to the larger international education field. I ultimately propose that international higher education in general and studying abroad in particular can benefit from taking a new approach to risk mitigation that views virtual and hybrid designs as important tools for ensuring the adaptability, resilience, and sustainability of international education initiatives.

The Pre-COVID-19 Emergence of VHIEPs

The two types of VHIEPs that are the focus of this chapter are virtual exchanges and hybrid online/offline study abroad. In the field of international education, virtual exchange has had multiple lineages and has been known by multiple names, such as telecollaboration or online intercultural exchange (O'Dowd, 2021), and "is a pedagogical practice that engages geographically and culturally distant learners in collaborative work" (Wicking, 2022, p. 9). Regardless of the particulars of the implementation, virtual exchange is generally typified by the use of information and communications technologies (ICT) to enable communication and collaboration between individuals from disparate locations and/or different cultural backgrounds. In a higher education context, this may involve students from colleges and universities in multiple countries using ICT to take a course together, as in Wicking's (2022) description of an exchange between Japanese and U.S. students. In contrast, hybrid study abroad is generally typified by the use of ICT to enable participants' learning before, during, and/or after in-person, on-site activities in a location that is in a different country from the participants' home institution. In a higher education context, this may take the form of a short-term, faculty-led study abroad program that involves online coursework for some duration of time prior to departure, as in the case of the Oregon University System Cuba program (Below, 2016). Although there are differences between

these two types of VHIEPs, they can be understood as emerging from shared historical contexts.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been an increasing amount of global "momentum" behind and "interest" in virtual exchanges, in particular (Bali et al., 2021, p. 118). Prior to COVID-19, however, the development and administration of VHIEPs could generally be characterized as "very much a peripheral activity, carried out and promoted by a small but convinced group of practitioners," with VHIEPs never neatly fitting into many institutions' existing structures or priorities and therefore eking out relatively marginal existences within their home institutions (O'Dowd, 2021, p. 213). Much of this marginality might be attributable to the same barriers facing the uptake of other forms of ICT-enabled pedagogies and programs: "time, lack of academic staff knowledge, lack of funding and university and/or department culture," and "academic workload allocation" among faculty (Gregory & Lodge, 2015, p. 211), as well as "the often deeply embedded pedagogical conservatism of academic groups" (Spratt, 2003, p. 1). One avenue to better understand the emergence of pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs in the margins is to examine the following interrelated contextual factors affecting U.S. higher education in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries: the rise of the Internet and other ICT, the spread of neoliberalism, and the globalization-induced ascendence of internationalization rhetoric. I limit the discussion of pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs to the U.S. context, as this is the context from which this chapter's case study emerged.

The Rise of the Internet and Other ICTs

Despite the pre-COVID-19 marginality of VHIEPs within U.S. higher education, U.S. institutions of higher education were once integral to the development of the underlying ICT that makes VHIEPs possible. In particular, a U.S.-government-funded precursor to the Internet known as ARPANET was initially developed in U.S. universities beginning in 1969 (Kleinrock, 2010). Computer scientist Leonard Kleinrock (2010), who played a major role in ARPANET's development, reports that this government funding was necessary to the project's success, as the private sector had declined to fund the academic research upon which ARPANET was based. The institutional members of ARPANET were entirely based in the U.S. at first, although by 1973 ARPANET had expanded to include connections to the Norwegian Seismic Array in Norway and the University

College of London in the United Kingdom (Kleinrock, 2010). Perhaps as a byproduct of the involvement of national government and military interests, networked computing projects that were broadly international in scope generally did not proliferate until the 1980s.

The Spread of Neoliberalism

Following the early years of the development of networked computing, Internet technologies and related ICT proliferated at U.S. colleges and universities. This proliferation occurred in the context of neoliberal economic and educational policies. Neoliberalism is an "economics discourse" with "political, social, and cultural dimensions," which emphasizes privatization, efficiency over equity, and the preferability of the free market to government intervention or regulation (Klees, 2017, p. 4). In the U.S. higher education sector, neoliberalism has been associated with declines in public funding, cuts to foreign language programs, and the outsourcing of study abroad programming to third-party providers (Johnson, 2019; Woodman, 2019). For VHIEPs, this meant that funding may have been scarce, but it also meant that the efficiencies associated with some VHIEPs—which Bowen et al. (2021) note may incur far fewer financial costs than traditional study abroad programs—were congruent with the priorities of institutions under the pressures of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism has also been associated with the increased involvement of for-profit ICT companies in the U.S. higher education sector, where institutions have spent substantial sums to acquire ICT to remain competitive within the market and in response to perceived student demand (Castañeda & Selwyn, 2018; McKenzie, 2018). This has meant that "the commercial design of educational systems and software increasingly shapes the forms of teaching and learning that take place in universities," including, I would argue, the teaching and learning enabled by VHIEPs (Castañeda & Selwyn, 2018, p. 6). In these ways, neoliberalism affected the funding and (via neoliberalism's intersection with ICT) the design and delivery of VHIEPs.

The Globalization-Induced Ascendence of Internationalization Rhetoric

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, neoliberalism often operated in tandem with the phenomenon of globalization, which also shaped the emergence of VHIEPs. Globalization is a term used to describe processes of increasing interconnection and interdependency among nations and, like neoliberalism, can be understood as "political, technological and cultural, as well as economic" (Coleman et al., 2009, p. 2). Globalization gave the concept of internationality a certain cachet in U.S. higher education circles. This led to the emergence of the rhetoric, if not the practice, of internationalization. Internationalization, within higher education, is a term encapsulating "the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions—and even individuals—to cope with the global academic environment" (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290). Altbach and Knight (2007) attribute the rise of internationalization as an ideal in U.S. higher education to developments in "IT; the knowledge economy; increased mobility for students, faculty, programs, and providers; and the integrated world economy" (p. 303). Internationalization rhetoric would seem to be highly compatible with the stated aims of many VHIEPs. One problem in realizing the ideals of internationalization, however, has been the aforementioned neoliberalism-induced challenges with funding and, consequently, difficulties with fulfilling the promises of internationalization rhetoric (Altbach & Teichler, 2001). It is therefore difficult to say with certainty the extent to which internationalization rhetoric meaningfully contributed to the pre-COVID-19 rise of VHIEPs, despite the seeming congruence between the two. Ultimately, ICT, neoliberalism, globalization, and internationalization—combined with barriers such as the cultural inertia of institutions and the reticence of faculty (Gregory & Lodge, 2015; Spratt, 2003)—converged to create a situation in which pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs were technologically feasible and nominally desirable and yet might not have been substantively supported by their home institutions or highly valued within the broader higher education community.

Virtual and Hybrid International Education Programs in the Time of COVID-19

I now move from pre-COVID-19 programs to programs in the COVID-19 context. During the pandemic, traditional, face-to-face international education programs (especially study abroad programs) were significantly disrupted. While many such programs were canceled entirely, some transitioned to online or hybrid formats as an emergency measure to ensure program continuity (e.g., Culbert, 2021; Cummings, 2021; Deacon & Miles, 2022; Gaitanidis, 2021; Griffin, 2022; Kautz, 2021; Kolovou, 2021; Krishnan et al., 2022; Liu & Shirley, 2021; Paradise et al., 2022; Suehiro, 2022; Tong et al., 2022; Ward et al., 2020).

Challenges

The literature on VHIEPs during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals that these "emergency-mode" virtual exchange programs experienced both challenges and successes (Erdei et al., 2023). Challenges revealed by the pandemic included exacerbation of preexisting systemic biases and student marginalization (Alami et al., 2022), dissatisfaction from students who had expected to participate in face-to-face study abroad programs (Basterretxea Santiso & Sanz, 2022), a lack of institutional preparedness to transition to online programs (Li & Ai, 2022), technological gaps between partners (Armstrong-Mensah, 2022), difficulties with curriculum development due to a lack of extant research on how "the use of online meeting tools affects intercultural learning" (Guo et al., 2022, p. 15), difficulties aligning learning objectives with the online learning context (Prevratilova, 2022), difficulties "reestablishing a safe and positive social environment" for study abroad (Blake & Morris, 2023, p. 3), difficulties "creat[ing] a friendly atmosphere" to encourage collaboration among students (Inada, 2022, p. 26), scheduling difficulties due to students' home and work obligations (Köster et al., 2022), students' emotional hardships due to pandemic-induced disruptions to daily life (Graham, 2020), and student "fatigue" due to "emergency e-learning" (Ennis et al., 2021, p. 74).

Positive Outcomes

Educators involved in these emergency VHIEPs also saw positive outcomes that may be particular to hybrid or virtual formats. Cummings (2021), based on her experiences transitioning a U.S. study abroad program to Poland online, argues that online programs "create[…] new cultural spaces through interaction," with the technologies that enable VHIEPs providing essential means of networking in the twenty-first century (p. 1). In addition, such programs helped students cope with the pandemic and other world events. For example, Callahan (2020) observes that students in one online program demonstrated a strong interest in engaging themes related to the Black Lives Matter movement, which then became incorporated into the course. Examining multiple emergency virtual exchange programs, Erdei et al. (2023) find that emergency virtual exchanges served an "emancipatory function" in the context of the pandemic, as such programs "support expanding the feeling of freedom and the possibility of self-determination while empowering students to act self-efficiently under pandemic restrictions" (pp. 10–11). The "socialization function" of such virtual exchanges is also highlighted, with emergency virtual exchanges providing important social outlets to students during a time of disruption and isolation (Erdei et al., 2023, p. 11).

For VHIEPs that were planned prior to the pandemic (or that were planned from the beginning as hybrid or virtual programs during the pandemic), the pandemic revealed unique strengths of these program formats. For example, Yasya et al. (2022), presenting a case study of a virtual exchange between students in Indonesia and the Philippines, find that the use of mobile communications platforms and technologies "has positive effects on the students' learning experience," such as improving their language skills and overall "communication skills," even in the context of COVID-19 (p. 168). Likewise, Hilliker and Loranc (2022) detail the "21st century skills" cultivated in students participating in a virtual exchange between a university in the U.S. and a university in Turkey (p. 1). The authors observe that the program "continued with scattered interruption because our participants already knew how to use the technology, how to collaborate and interact online, and how to stay socially connected despite the distance" (Hilliker & Loranc, 2022, p. 1). Similarly, Harris et al. (2021), writing of a collaborative online international learning (COIL) project conducted between a U.S. institution and an

institution in the Netherlands, find that "learning flourished in this COIL context where it often suffered in others" (p. 1353).

Sebastian and Souza (2022) echo this finding, as the "virtual learning environment" used for a Spanish-language virtual exchange between university students based in Spain and the U.S. "was largely unaffected by the worldwide pandemic," in contrast to disruptions faced by traditional programs (p. 103). Cotoman et al. (2021), in their account of a "British-Japanese COIL project" focused on "political responses" to the pandemic, also speak to the strengths of the online format. Cotoman et al. (2021) assert that COIL "helps to mitigate the pandemics' physical restrictions and sustain a global space of learning" (p. 1). The authors find that COIL can engage students' emotions, resulting in learning that has the potential to heighten students' empathetic responses when studying sensitive political science and international relations subjects, such as "gender inequalities, genocide, and war" (Cotoman et al., 2021, p. 3). Porto et al. (2023) likewise find, in the case of an "arts-based" telecollaboration between U.S.-based and Argentina-based university students, that online learning enabled engagement with "discomforting themes," such as "human suffering" during the pandemic (p. 294). Similarly, leveraging the intersection of technology and broader human and societal themes, Parsons and Garant (2022) detail a case study of a telecollaboration program for students based in China and Japan; students produced podcasts on topics related to the United Nations Sustainable Development goals. In another case, Jacobs et al. (2021) describe the unfolding of the South African-led iKudu project, finding that "COIL offered a consciousness raising activity" for faculty and staff around issues of internationalizing and decolonizing the curriculum; the authors characterize this consciousness-raising function of COIL as a "positive impact of the pandemic" (Jacobs et al., 2021, p. 353). The authors contend that "[a]s the pandemic hit, the importance of the project became stronger," with its emphasis on decolonization and internationalization of higher education curricula (Jacobs et al., 2021, p. 361). Jacobs et al. (2021) conclude that "capacity development based on virtual exchange could strengthen capacity in ways that we could not have foreseen" (p. 369).

The mass pivot to online learning also enabled the creation of programs that might not have otherwise come into existence and sparked broader institutional changes. For example, the University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and Western Sydney University (Australia) began to establish new initiatives as a result of the pandemic, including plans for virtual exchanges

(Bennett et al., 2020). Ritchie and Miller (2021) present the case of the Summit International Institute Seminar, a virtual exchange created during the pandemic via cooperation between the Burundi-based Summit International Institute and multiple universities in Japan and involving lecturers from other institutions in Africa and Asia. In another case, Brandauer et al. (2022) detail how the challenges posed by the pandemic resulted in a multiuniversity collaboration that led to the creation of an online summer course and "open-access, online teaching materials" (p. 11). These teaching materials allowed educators to pool and share their learning as their understandings of the aims of international education transitioned, in the context of the challenges of the pandemic, from an emphasis on fostering students' global citizenship to an emphasis on fostering students' awareness of and commitment to global interdependence and solidarity (Brandauer et al., 2022). Informal partnerships also emerged: Koris and McKinnon (2022) examine "reflections from academics… from 12 higher education institutions in eight countries who relied on informal conversations in an online community of practice to switch to emergency remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic" (p. 121). The authors find that participation in the online community of practice improved teachers' self-reported attitudes toward and confidence in "using technologies for teaching" and that this type of grassroots, informal approach to supporting academics therefore ought to be valued and prioritized more by higher education institutions (Koris & McKinnon, 2022, p. 130).

In addition to shifts in institutions, national contexts also shifted: Li and Ai (2022) focus on the Chinese context, where "virtual mobility programmes were hardly conducted before the outbreak" (pp. 251–252). The authors observe that "COVID-19 has made Chinese university realize the great potential of virtual mobility" (Li & Ai, 2022, p. 252). In another context, Hammond and Radjai (2022) point to COIL during the pandemic as an "enabler" of "internationalization of the curriculum" in Japan, a country where internationalization of the curriculum "is still a novel concept" (p. 87). This enabling of internationalization can be observed in Miller and Takahashi (2022), who present a case study of a virtual exchange between a Japanese university, Osaka Jogakuin University, and a Palestinian university, Birzeit University. In this case, COVID-19 "posed a valuable opportunity," as "security related concerns" about travel to Palestine made it difficult to arrange for traditional study abroad programs for Japanese students (Miller & Takahashi, 2022, p. 88). The

creation of a virtual exchange allowed for engagement between students that would have otherwise been unfeasible.

SPECULATIVE AND THEORETICAL RESEARCH

Speculative and theoretical research on VHIEPs has also been conducted during the pandemic. Working from a disability perspective, de Klerk and Palmer (2022) assert that "the creation of inclusive and transformed spaces" can serve as "a basis for COIL" and that the "inclusion of technology" into higher education in the time of COVID-19 "should be geared toward assisting students living with disabilities to experience international learning processes as accessible and transformative" (p. 89). De la Garza and Maher (2022) advocate for the potential of COIL to decolonize curricula in the context of film studies. In contrast, Witt (2022) connects the pivot to online learning in international higher education to universities' financial interests and the "neoliberal priority of the profit imperative" (p. 10). Witt (2022) observes that "program providers were able to retain portions of the funding they would have had without the pandemic," with "costs for such programming… often borne by the student" (p. 9). While calling these emergency online programs "commendable" for "provid[ing] some kind of ongoing academic programming for students," Witt (2022) critiques this model, asserting that "[c]learly much of the careful planning and operation that is so critical in study abroad was forfeited in an effort to preserve the financial model that sustained many of the higher education international partnerships and related industries" (p. 9). Witt's (2022) words are a reminder of the connection between VHIEPs and neoliberalism. COVID-19 has perhaps not so much caused a rupture in the history of VHIEPs but has instead put different pressures on the field, with the result that certain preexisting structures and biases may have become more deeply entrenched even as this altered environment has created new challenges and opportunities.

TERPS TO TOHOKU: A PRE-COVID-19 HYBRID STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

I will now narrate the development of one pre-COVID-19 VHIEP and will then reflect on how learning from VHIEPs conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic would or would not change the design of this

program. In April 2014, in my position as assistant director of an undergraduate-level living-learning program at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), in College Park, Maryland, USA, I proposed the creation of a five-week hybrid short-term study abroad program to Japan for UMCP students from any academic major. The program Terps to Tohoku (TTT) was designed to give UMCP students opportunities to learn about disaster preparedness and recovery directly from Japanese national and local government officials, students and educators, nonprofit organizations, and small businesses affected by the March 11, 2011, Great East Japan Earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear disaster (sometimes called the March 2011 triple disaster).

Terps to Tohoku took place in March 2015 and was offered as a three-credit, undergraduate-level course funded by student program fees. The program was conducted in English and comprised two weeks of online and offline predeparture coursework in the U.S., one week of on-site coursework in Japan, and two weeks of online and offline postreturn coursework in the U.S. After a successful first year in 2015, the program returned in 2016, which would be my last year with the program. That year, I co-led TTT together with another UMCP staff member, who subsequently became the program's long-term director. The program continued for several years afterwards before going on hiatus due to COVID-19.

Developing Online Program Components

From the beginning, I wanted ICT to play a role in TTT, in part because I was unsatisfied with the notion of creating a program that was only one week in duration. Given that TTT would be offered as a full, three-credit course, I worried that I was not equipped to provide a sufficiently rigorous or meaningful academic and intercultural experience to students in a single week. I initially decided to expand this one-week program into a five-week hybrid program as a way of mitigating some of my concerns over the program format's potential shortcomings: I hoped that a hybrid approach would give the program more academic rigor, would provide students with better preparation for their time in Japan, and would also provide them with more opportunities to make sense of their experiences. My approach to the online components of the program was informed by my prior experiences with teaching online and hybrid courses, as well as my experiences taking such courses as a student.

I developed the online components of TTT with two guiding ideas in mind, the first of which was the Japanese word *kizuna*. Following the March 2011 triple disaster, this word, meaning bond or tie and especially referring to relationships of mutual support between human beings, emerged in Japanese mass media and government discourses. I wanted TTT to explore the theme of *kizuna*, helping students to understand the term's meaning in post-March 2011 Japan while also enabling them to forge bonds with each other through collaborative educational activities. My approach to the online components of TTT was also informed by Keri Facer's (2012) ICT-focused reformulation of educational philosopher John Macmurray's notion that education's goal is "from the standpoint of its victims, learning to be human" (Macmurray, 1958, p. 1, as cited in Facer, 2012, p. 709). Facer (2012) builds on Macmurray by envisioning educational uses of ICT "starting from the assumption of young people as authors of rich accounts of themselves" (p. 721). Facer (2012) contrasts this with the now-standard use of educational technology for purposes of data-driven assessment and tracking. In Facer's (2012) view, this latter use of technology is dehumanizing for students and educators alike, and Facer therefore advocates for the creation of learning experiences that draw on technology to advance humanization by fostering interpersonal relationships, especially friendships. Inspired by *Kizuna* and Facer's (2012) work, my goal for the online portion of the TTT was not only to expose students to information about Japan but also to help students build relationships—friendships—with each other. Accordingly, the online portion of the coursework, such as asynchronous group discussions, emphasized interaction and building *kizuna* between students. An online fundraiser to defray program costs fostered additional opportunities for student collaboration.

Integrating Online and Offline Program Components

I wanted a way to more explicitly integrate the online and offline components of the program. I sought to accomplish this by creating a workbook for students to complete in Japan. I designed the workbook in Microsoft Word and then printed and bound the workbooks. The workbook included essential program information, such as detailed itineraries and instructions on how to travel from each site to the next, but it also included

open-ended essay prompts and other activities related to each day's itinerary or assigned readings. In addition, I required students to exchange their workbooks with a new peer each evening and provided space in each workbook for students to write responses to their peer's daily reflections. In this way, the rhythms of online course discussions were echoed offline: respond to a prompt and then respond to a peer's response. This approach flipped the conventional idea of trying to bring offline course activities online by instead bringing aspects of the online course experience offline. Given that today's students are digital natives and are now, due to COVID-19, often acquainted with online coursework, integrating elements of online course design into offline course design is an approach that merits further investigation.

Applying the Lessons of COVID-19 to a Pre-COVID-19 VHIEP

I will now reflect on how I might have designed TTT differently if I had been influenced by the knowledge others have gained about VHIEPs during the pandemic. The purpose of this exercise is to combine my pre-COVID-19 philosophy of online education with lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. I would make two key changes: taking a trauma-informed approach to international education and creating an online-only version of the TTT as an alternative model for the program.

Taking a Trauma-Informed Approach

The events of the COVID-19 era would need to affect the program's handling of the theme of living with disasters as well as other aspects of the program's content and design: as Anzaldúa (2022) writes, "[m]ost students will have been exposed to traumatic experiences personally or vicariously during the COVID-19 era" (p. 159). Given students' experiences of living with COVID-19-era disasters and crises—including (but not exclusive to) "economic, health, and natural crises" alongside "mass protests and civil uprisings"—Anzaldúa (2022) argues that a trauma-informed approach to higher education programming and administration is required (pp. 154, 156). In a medical and emergency response context, principles for trauma-informed care identified by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration are "1. safety; 2. trustworthiness

[and] transparency; 3. peer support; 4. collaboration [and] mutuality; 5. empowerment… [and] choice; 6. cultural, historical, [and] gender issues" (Center for Preparedness and Response, 2022, para. 3). These principles can be applied to VHIEPs. For example, building on Wright et al. (2017), who write on trauma occurring during study abroad, and on Berger and Paul (2017), who write on teaching about trauma via study abroad, a trauma-informed approach to TTT in the COVID-19 era would need to take students' own histories into account while also teaching about trauma—an experience that risks being traumatizing or retraumatizing to students. A program that was originally designed to help UMCP students empathize with and learn from disaster survivors in Japan would need to more explicitly contend with something that had been implicitly true all along: participants themselves may have first-hand experiences with disasters and other traumas. Working from a trauma-informed approach, a VHIEP can provide a space where it is safe to process such experiences among peers if students wish to do so.

DEVELOPING AN ONLINE-ONLY, ALTERNATIVE VERSION OF THE PROGRAM

In reviewing the literature on VHIEPs during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have come to understand that my previous approach to risk mitigation was insufficient. My previous approach assumed only three scenarios: the program is able to be carried out as planned, the program is able to be carried out mostly as planned but with some restrictions on travel in Japan due to unforeseen events, or the program is unable to be carried out in Japan and therefore must be canceled. I see now that I have another option: if travel to Japan is impossible or is otherwise severely constrained, it should nonetheless be possible to carry out the program via an online-only format, based on an online curriculum that has been developed in advance and which could be used on an emergency basis.

Designing an online-only, alternative curriculum for an otherwise hybrid program has several advantages. Creating an online-only, alternative curriculum for a hybrid program might be a more straightforward process than creating such a curriculum for a program with no preexisting online components. Compared to a program with no preexisting online components, a hybrid program has the advantage of already being designed to make use of certain online platforms and learning materials. Furthermore,

students and instructors involved in a hybrid program are already expecting to participate in online learning, so the transition from a hybrid program to an online-only program (if circumstances require) may be smoother. The ability to pivot from a hybrid program design to an online-only program design is not only useful for emergency situations but also means that the program could potentially be offered more often and become accessible to more students in an online-only format and at a lower cost. Overall, a hybrid program that is designed alongside an online-only, alternative curriculum is likely to be more adaptable, resilient, and sustainable.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I juxtaposed pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs and VHIEPs after the outbreak of COVID-19. Pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs were not, taken as a whole, created out of institutional necessity—at least not in the same way as COVID-19-era VHIEPs. Pre-COVID-19 VHIEPs also faced the barrier of marginalization and being viewed as "peripheral 'add-on' activit[ies]" to traditional programming (O'Dowd, 2011, p. 368). It therefore remains to be seen whether the COVID-19-related increase in interest in virtual exchanges will endure. It also remains to be seen what place there might be for hybrid study abroad in today's international education landscape. However, as Griffin (2023) writes, the shift from understanding COVID-19 as a pandemic to understanding COVID-19 as endemic must come alongside a shift in our thinking about international education, including our attitudes about risk. Griffin (2023) argues that "[a] sustainable program is a program that will survive the constant world crises that seem to occur with frightening frequency… The question is: What is needed to make a program resilient enough to be considered sustainable in these circumstances?" (p. 163). I have offered one possible response: an expanded use of hybrid program designs, ones that are trauma-informed and capable of pivoting to online-only formats. Rather than existing at the margins, hybrid and virtual program designs could become central to international education and study abroad.

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Digital Readiness and Preparation in a University Setting: An Examination of Faculty, Staff and Students' Practices of Online Education in Nepal

Thir Bahadur Khadka and Bhola Nath Acharya

Introduction

To tackle the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)-induced challenges in teaching-learning and assessment practices, many universities around the world have adopted emergency remote teaching and e-learning either online or in blended form (Chakraborty et al., 2021; Bruggeman et al., 2022), which has also proven to be the best alternative arrangement of preparations for digital readiness during the crisis (Murphy, 2020). Responding to the long closure of physical classes during the pandemic,

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257

universities commenced online educational practices, although they had different challenges, particularly the lack of adequate arrangement of digital devices, Internet and electricity (Dhawan, 2020). Unlike universities with advanced ICT infrastructure, trained manpower and ICT-friendly students, the majority of universities face difficulty managing even the basic requirements of e-learning. It created confusion among the learners and in some cases was responded to as less effective in comparison to the face-to-face modality of teaching and learning, which was in practice before the pandemic (Sharma et al., 2021). However, the second phase of the COVID crisis forced them to implement online educational practices along with developing their basic requirements. It accelerated the digitalization of universities foregrounding the hybrid campus environment, although it is still not exactly predictable whether universities will assimilate technology-enhanced teaching and learning as the best alternative to the physical mode of education by reinventing teaching (Skulmowski & Rey, 2020).

According to data from the University Grants Commission of Nepal (2022), there are eleven universities in Nepal, including one public autonomous university. Although the limited number of Nepali universities started open and distance learning programs much earlier, they adopted an online mode of teaching and learning when COVID-19 caused physical classes to be totally suspended (Devkota, 2021). Teachers' poor digital skills, the absence of adequate policies and the development of ICT infrastructure prevented the effective delivery of lessons in the beginning (Laudari & Maher, 2019). However, relying on the guidelines issued by the government of Nepal to facilitate students' learning in alternative modes during lockdown (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2020), universities formulated their own specific guidelines to manage online education. Despite having the problems of limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, lack of experience, frequent power cuts, unstable Internet, digital illiteracy and lack of clarity in the assessment (Salmi et al., 2020; Dawadi et al., 2020), some of the universities also conducted fully online or home-take examinations. The faculty members and students developed skills in using digital tools (Facebook-Messenger, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, etc.) and devices such as computers and smartphones for virtual classes (Shrestha et al., 2022). The consistent practice of digital technology developed their confidence in virtual education, which ultimately enabled e-learning during the second phase of the pandemic (Paudyal & Rana, 2021). However, surprisingly few universities

that adopted online and blended modes of examinations during the first phase of the COVID crisis rejected conducting such examinations in the second phase. The majority of them returned to the earlier mode of teaching-learning and examination pattern in the post-COVID time. Even a fully online university in Nepal published its examination schedules in physical mode, although it conducted online-based examinations during the pandemic (Acharya et al., 2022). The public autonomous university, on the other hand, could be observed conducting online assessment and examinations for some special courses in the time of the new normal.

This study reports university faculty, staff and students' digital readiness and preparation for future educational practices. It begins with contextual international practices of preparation of digital readiness, particularly after the outbreak of COVID-19, to continue their educational practices. The remainder of this study describes the findings and results.

Literature Review

Coping with Emergency Teaching and Learning

Higher educational institutions worldwide, as their preparations for digital readiness, adopted online and blended forms of education to cope with the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19)-induced emergency when physical classes were all suspended. Many scholars (Ali, 2020; Bond et al., 2021; Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Xueet al., 2022) have reported on how they started online and blended modes of teaching and learning during the crisis along with basic digital preparation. In a study about the essence of online-remote learning during the COVID crisis in Fiji, Ali (2020) found that online teaching and learning took place to continue higher education after the uncertain lockdown. Similarly, in their investigation on curriculum transition to virtual teaching-learning and academic experience, Porter et al. (2020) found that Australian academicians developed content suitable for delivery in both online and physical modes. Likewise, in a study on mapping online education in different countries, Bond et al. (2021) identified remote teaching and learning as compulsion during the emergency and found that some universities practiced it even before the pandemic. In a case study on students' performance after remote teaching and learning practice in Spain, Iglesias-Pradas et al. (2021) reported that although online and blended forms of education were adapted without much preparation and planning during the crisis, they remained successful

in helping students learn well and obtain good results. However, a study in Pakistan by Adnan and Anwar (2020) found that the majority of educational institutions in underdeveloped countries such as Pakistan did not obtain the desired results in online teaching and learning in the absence of special funds to have better technological preparation necessary for online classes. Similarly, in their study in the UK, Watermeyer et al. (2021) found that academicians were afflicted due to the sudden shift to e-pedagogy for online teaching and learning, particularly because they were suffering from the crisis.

In the context of Gulf countries, Bensaid and Brahimi (2020) investigated the management of higher education during the COVID crisis and reported that higher educational institutions were able to better cope in the emergency due to the previously established system of distance teaching-learning and digital transformation. Likewise, a comparative study on coping with emergencies and the engagement of teachers in remote teaching by Jelinska and Paradowski (2021) reported that teachers with better digital skills managed remote-online teaching and learning. In an earlier case study on the effect of the COVID crisis on managing digital-higher education in Germany, Zawacki-Richter (2020) reported that the crisis positively pressurized faculty members and administrators to develop digital innovative capabilities and commitment. However, the study by Kerres (2020) found difficulties in using digital technology for online teaching and learning during the initial phase of the pandemic, particularly because of some technological safety provisions in the constitution, although Germany maintained higher digital capabilities with proper preparation and readiness. In a similar case of the prospects and challenges of the management of online and distance higher education during the COVID crisis in the USA, Bhagat and Kim (2020) found that despite various difficulties, faculty members modified the existing curriculum in the spirit of online teaching and learning practices that also developed digital resilience for future higher education. In a study on students' perceptions of digital readability, Händel et al. (2022) investigated the necessity of student support programs and packages both to sustain their lives and to continue remote learning during the COVID-induced emergency.

Many international studies have explored that the management of online and blended teaching and learning was the beginning of preparation for digital readiness, which achieved positive results in the absence of a physical mode of teaching and learning in higher education. In the

context of Nepal, a study conducted by Laudari et al. (2021) identified teachers' motivation to be highly supportive of managing online teaching and learning in higher education despite having poor Internet connectivity and frequent power cuts. Likewise, a study by Gautam and Gautam (2021) found that the positive attitude of university teachers and students to adopt new technology helped to change the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to begin virtual teaching-learning practices. However, Ghimire et al. (2022) reported that disadvantaged students in higher education in Nepal lacked adequate digital preparation that affected their learning engagement in online/blended classes and achieved quality results during the pandemic.

Developing ICT Capability for Digital Readiness and Preparation

Many scholars have investigated how faculties and higher educational institutions around the world developed ICT capacity and carried out online educational activities along with having digital readiness. For example, in his study in Africa, Muftahu (2020) found that despite having no earlier preparation, universities adopted new technology along with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and released their teaching-learning practices from traditional physical-based classes to flexible learning approaches such as online and virtual modes with broader scope. Likewise, Perifanou et al. (2021), in their research in Greece, reported that teachers struggled to build their digital capacity to effectively deliver their lessons in online mode during the pandemic, although the institutions needed a long-term action plan to be adequately digitized. In a similar context in India, Saboowala and Manghirmalani Mishra (2021) found that teachers' training made them confidently manage online and blended forms of teaching and learning during and after the pandemic. Similarly, Xue et al. (2022) reported that the Chinese government established sustainable ICT infrastructure to digitize universities and standardize online or blended forms of educational programs either during crises or in normal circumstances. In their study in Russia, Samoylenko et al. (2022) also found the increasing use of ICT at the universities not only supported the students to develop language specific and professional skills but also the universities to redesign their courses as well as implement online teaching strategies. However, in their study in Canada on higher education policy, El Masri and Sabzalieva (2020) found a lack of coordination among local,

provincial and central governments to address the emergency and plan for the future, although teachers did their best to successfully conduct online classes during the crisis. Likewise, a study in Saudi Arabia by Sharadgah and Sa'di (2020) reported that although teachers' preparedness to conduct online assessments remained successful, they felt the necessity of a mechanism to prevent academic dishonesty.

In the context of Nepal, Pradhan et al. (2021) stated that COVID-19 not only posed a threat to sustainable development but also brought different transformative opportunities, including the integration of ICT in education and better digital preparation for future educational activities. Likewise, Adhikari and Rana (2022) found that the COVID crisis had a positive impact on the use of ICT in teaching and learning practices in Nepal and contributed to the integration of digital technology in education. Emphasizing the use of ICT as an integral part of education and establishing infrastructure in educational institutions, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2019) developed the *National Education Policy.* It reiterated the spirit of *National Information and Communication Technology Policy, 2015* developed by the Ministry of Information and Communication (2015), which envisioned building a foundation of 'Digital Nepal' incorporating the development of sustainable ICT infrastructure by 2020 all over the country. However, earlier studies (Rana & Rana, 2020; Rana et al. 2021) concluded that it is a great challenge in Nepal to implement educational policies and integrate ICT into education, particularly in remote and rural areas. Likewise, Acharya et al. (2022) investigated higher authorities and administrators' traditional mentality, unwillingness and negative attitude toward online modes of teaching-learning and examinations as the major hindrances to the formation of appropriate policies and guidelines to promote digital readiness in Nepali universities. Additionally, they argued that neoliberal interest remained at the background of educational policies and guidelines (Regmi, 2016) that, in the name of financial support and educational reformation (Carney, 2003), privileged fulfilling neoliberal interests instead of promoting digital readiness and preparation essential for quality higher education.

Although the existing research on online/blended teaching-learning and examination in higher education indicates the state of digital readiness and educational preparations, there are no extensive studies in this area in the context of university education in Nepal. Taking this reality at hand, this study investigates the digital readiness and preparation of university staff, faculty and students in Nepal.

Research Design and Procedures

This research, designed as a case study, has been conducted in five Nepali universities using a qualitative approach to explore the existing educational practices, their digital readiness and preparation for future educational practices. The universities were selected based on their representation from the eastern, middle and western parts of the country considering the inclusion of both governmental and public autonomous universities. The universities and the interviewed participants are listed in Table 13.1, where pseudonyms of both the universities and the participants have been used to maintain research ethics and anonymity.

The data were collected using online and face-to-face semistructured interviews and the collection of national policy guidelines, education-related acts, government reports and related official documents. As suggested by Cohen et al. (2007), we obtained qualitative data from one public autonomous and four government-funded universities in Nepal. Based on the concept of Denzin and Lincoln (2018), we purposively selected ten faculty members, ten administrative staff and fifteen students considering an equal number of participants from each university to collect the data. The participants were interviewed based on their voluntary participation after obtaining their prior consent.

Table 13.1 Participant university/campuses, faculty and students (pseudonym)

University/Colleges	Faculty	Staff	Student
Amar University	Ankita	Amar	Aaditya
	Anamol	Amrit	Ankit
			Ajaya
Baraha University	Babita	Benjan	Bijaya
	Bikesh	Binod	Bipin
			Birendra
Chunare University	Chandra	Chankha	Chakra
	Chetana	Chinta	Chitra
			Chuman
Deurali University	Dambar	Damu	Dadhi
	Dhansing	Danda	Dharendra
			Dhurba
Ekanta University	Ekendra	Ekmani	Ekraj
	Emija	Ekata	Emal
			Elarbin

Employing thematic analysis with the idea of Bryman (2016), we translated and transcribed recorded data to English and organized in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets manually. As suggested by Smith et al. (2009), interpretive phenomenological analysis was performed to recognize participants' perceptions and experiences and to refine the analysis.

Findings

The analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with the faculty members, administrative staff and students from five universities in Nepal has identified the specific themes that have been systematically analyzed and presented as follows.

Digital Readiness and Future Educational Preparedness: Policy and Planning

The majority of the participants of the study focused on the need to develop appropriate acts, policies and guidelines and their practical implementation to promote digital readiness and preparation for effective teaching-learning and examination practices either in crisis or in normal situations. They stated that crises such as COVID-19 could come at any time with identical challenges in education that could be addressed only with adequate policy and planning. Almost all the faculty members reported that they encountered difficulties while shifting to the online mode of education during the first phase of the pandemic, mainly due to the absence of adequate digital preparation. However, the difficulties were minimized at some level up to the second phase, particularly because of the basic preparation, training and practice regarding how to operate ICT tools and devices for conducting online classes and assessment. The universities as a whole learned a lesson to have systematic preparations for smooth future educational practices even in crisis.

The participants at Baraha University, for example, reported that envisioning the need to digitize the university to make it the center of academic excellence, the university formulated "Digital, Virtual & Alternative Teaching-Learning & Operating Systems Policy Guidelines 2020" and approved it on July 8, 2020. The realization of the university authority for the need to transform the university into an e-university played an important role in the formulation and approval of the policy. Binod, a senior staff member at the university, for example, said:

> Under well-formulated policy and guidelines, we are preparing to shift our university to a paperless university. Joining our mission through a global tender, more than 20 engineers are developing necessary software. Initially, 70 lakh rupees was allocated, while 20 to 25 lakh will be allocated each year. The provincial government has promised to provide funding to digitize the university, and we can also obtain support from the University Grants Commission and World Bank. As a part of this mission, the process of appointing 25 professors, associate professors and lecturers with PhD and postPhD degrees has been going ahead.

His argument gave a much clearer picture of digital preparation and planning for future educational and academic practices at Bahara University. Allocating a huge amount of money for developing necessary software, the appointment process of highly skilled professors and searching the possible funding sources clearly replicated the digital consciousness among the university authorities. The participants hoped for ongoing preparation to help the university smoothly conduct fully online teaching-learning and examination practices in need. For example, Benjan, the chief official at the Examination Management Office, said:

> The process of developing a learning management system (LMS) at the university has been ongoing, through which students can receive reading materials as well as upload their assignments. Conducting fully online examinations during any sort of crisis such as COVID-19 will be possible.

His comment replicated the university's journey to develop a systematic learning platform and digital mode of educational activities. In a further conversation, he said that their university conducted only blended forms of examination during the COVID-19 crisis, as they did not have adequate management of necessary devices, software and manpower to conduct fully online examinations. However, the formation of adequate policy, investment and preparation exhibited how the university learned lessons from the past and began the journey to upgrade itself in terms of e-educational practices with adequate digital preparations and planning.

Unlike the participants of Bahara University, the participants from Ekanta University, one of the autonomous educational institutions in Nepal, reported that their university successfully conducted online teaching-learning and assessment practices during the COVID crisis. It was possible because it formulated the policy of alternative teaching-learning and examination during the crisis and immediately implemented

them. Moreover, the university highly preferred managing qualified faculty members with adequate digital skills and helped them update their skills in different ways. For example, Ekendra, a faculty member at the university, said:

> Our university has done MOU with many universities around the globe. Under faculty exchange programs, we could go to those universities and learn many things, including new research skills, technology and teaching methods. We also learn from foreign professors who come out university. We are ready for any sort of crisis.

His comment replicated the way faculties could update their learning and become ready for any way of teaching. The university's faculty exchange program proved to be beneficial to making them digitally friendly for quality physical or virtual teaching. As a public autonomous educational institution, the university authorities do not have external pressures and political interventions, unlike the case of government-funded universities in Nepal. It could formulate necessary policies, programs and planning to cope with any type of emergency and continue its educational activities. It indicates how the university is prepared for future educational activities such as to integrate digital devices and tools in teaching and learning practices necessary to maintain quality education in the ongoing technologically advanced society.

Faculty Preferences for Online/Blended Teaching

The interviews with the participants revealed that although the majority of the university colleges returned to the physical mode in the post-COVID scenario, some universities and their colleges continued online and blended forms of teaching and learning. Some colleges under Deurali University, for example, were undertaking a blended form of education although it was not a compulsion as the university itself resumed in physical mode. In this context, Danda, Head of the Department at a university college, said:

> After lockdown, we resumed physical classes. However, we have been taking online classes three days a week. It is also a preparation for future-crisis if any. If the physical teaching and learning gets disturbed, we automatically shift our classes to online. Students submit assignments using a digital

platform. However, end-semester examination is taken in physical mode as per the university policy.

His expression on the existing physical-cum-online classes reflected the faculties' preferences to continue online and blended educational practices. Such a practice not only minimized the possibility of forgetting the digital and virtual modality of education widely practiced during the COVID pandemic but also indicated its future potentiality. It is also a reflection of ongoing digital readiness for future educational practices either in crisis when physical classes have to be suspended or in normal situations.

The interviews with the participants revealed that even an individual's sincere efforts can bring changes in academia, particularly in shifting the universities from traditional physical teaching and learning practices to the online and blended mode integrated with modern digital technology with remarkable achievement. Narrating how she worked in the university, Ankita, a faculty member at Amar University, stated:

> I designed a fully online-based course for MPhil students. They not only actively participated in virtual learning but also prepared full-length paper as their assignment. Some of them are already published in standard international journals, while others are in the process. I am happy to see my students becoming good researchers.

Her experience reflected what success adequate planning, processing and implementation of online education could bring. It also proved the necessity of managing digital-friendly platforms for university education to make them truly the center of academic excellence. The success of students in publishing research in standard international journals not only justified the worth of appointing energetic, ICT-friendly and qualified professors at the university but also the necessity of allowing them to integrate modern and advanced technology in the classroom.

The interviews with the faculty members also explored their realization of the strength of the virtual mode of teaching and learning effectively employing digital technology. Chetana, a faculty member at Chunare University, for example, shared her experience: "I used to show relevant YouTube videos, lectures and many other materials in online classes that can also be utilized even at present". Her comment replicated the teachers' enjoyment in virtual classes conducted during the COVID crisis

mainly because they were able to prepare the materials for the class, send them to the students in advance and conveniently demonstrate the videos, charts, graphs, documents, papers or anything supportive of the lectures. It also indicated why the teachers preferred the adequate use of digital materials in classes, particularly in online and blended modes.

Students' Satisfaction with Virtual Learning and Integration of Digital Technology

The interviews with the students revealed that despite having difficulty managing necessary ICT devices, tools and Internet facilities at the beginning of online classes during the pandemic, the students managed basic problems and gradually developed digital learning skills. Their growing familiarity with the benefits of learning increased their satisfaction with online or virtual modes. Dharma, a Master student at Deurali University, for example, said:

> We will participate at least three days a week in online classes and submit at least one online assessment. Teachers' comments on our document help us to learn more. We feel it easy now although we were quite confused in the beginning and felt difficulty managing laptop and Wi-Fi.

His argument clarified the students' growing familiarity and willingness to participate in the digital mode of education. Pleasing responses to receive teachers' feedback on the assignments also indicated the students' enthusiasm and enjoyment in online learning activities. In addition to the willingness of the teachers to continue alternative modes of teaching by integrating digital devices and tools, the students have shown their interest in leaning employing alternative platforms of teaching and learning.

The universities that implemented the online mode of learning adequately with a strict time frame and proper teaching and learning activities also built the trust of the students toward this mode of learning. During COVID-19, many universities and their colleges worldwide bore disturbances in their academic calendar. However, the students from Ekanta University in Nepal reported that it properly managed its educational activities, further motivating the continuity of some programs in online mode even in normal situations. For example, Emala, one of the students at Ekanta University, said:

I have just completed my one-year Master of Education in STEAM Education in a fully online modality. The Dean of our faculty said that it was not appropriate to return to the traditional modality after beginning online, particularly during the pandemic. Thus, we used Google Meet for class and Moodle as LMS even after the pandemic.

Her comment provided a picture of students' positive response toward how the university continued some of its special courses in online modality even in the post-COVID scenario. The academic calendar was strictly followed due to the availability of adequate guidelines for virtual mode of teaching and learning, adequate utilization of availability of ICT devices and tools, and the way students obtained both knowledge and educational degree in time reflected the university's digital capacity, its proper management and, of course, future possibility of alternative modality of teaching and learning based on the integration of digital technology.

Barriers of University Digitalization and E-educational Practices: Government's Minimal Priority to Education and Political Intervention

The majority of the faculty members and administrative staff interviewed in the study reported that the government's lower priority to the educational sector has affected the adequate development of universities, including the process of digitalization and maintenance of quality education. They stated the government's minimal priority, particularly in allocating limited budgets in the educational sector, including university education, as well as in formulating effective policies to reform educational programs. Chetana, a lecturer at Chunare University, for example, said:

Dozens of governments have been changed but we couldn't experience their positive attitude toward education. They allocate a limited budget. Education Ministers and secretaries could be found under some external influences rather than pure educational development.

Her comment reiterated how the government's less attention to education has caused educational institutions, including universities, to lack advanced modern facilities in the absence of an adequate budget and effective policies. It also indicated the feeble role of the concerned authorities in terms of establishing advanced facilities in the universities and

leading them to provide quality education. Limited budget allocation has impacted the process of modernizing universities with adequate digital development along with advanced courses, highly skilled manpower and teaching-learning activities, which has further impacted adequate educational activities.

In addition, the majority of the participants iterated on how political appointments, particularly in higher posts, have affected regular educational activities in universities in Nepal. Unnecessary political intervention has been reported as one of the barriers to adequate digital preparation and advancement in universities. For example,

> Out university received VC only after six months. Since ten months, we don't have Dean at our faculty. Without the Dean, the policy of an alternative mode of exam for postpandemic time has not yet been approved. The examination schedules have been postponed. This is just an example. (Anamol, a faculty member at Amar University)

> Political parties struggle to appoint officials in their favor. Therefore, it is very difficult to appoint qualified persons in the university. It not only decreases the quality of education but also causes movements, strikes and lockout. (Chankha, administrative staff member at Chunare University)

Their comments revealed how unnecessary political interventions, particularly in the appointment processes, have hindered universities from conducting important functions. They indicated that the practice of appointing higher officials based on their political affiliation made them primarily responsible for political parties, while universities came to the second priority. Their conflicting political affiliations have impacted many things, including the adequate infrastructural development of the universities on the one hand and the management of an advanced modern educational environment on the other.

Dilemma to Online Education and Attachment to Traditional Physical-Based Teaching

Although some universities and their colleges continued online or blended forms of education either for all or for some special courses in postpandemic situations, some universities and their colleges fully shifted to the physical mode. They conducted virtual classes during the COVID crisis by

obligation since physical classes were totally suspended. However, they left online-based teaching and learning activities when the universities resumed physical activities at the end of lockdown. Chandra, a faculty member at Chunare University, for instance, said:

> During the COVID lockdown, I taught my students in online classes. Initially, I used Zoom and then Microsoft Teams. I used to give assignments using Google Classroom and email. However, final examinations were conducted only in normal time. It was an obvious thing for us to return to the physical mode of education in the postpandemic scenario. We no longer take online classes at present.

Chandra's expression not only gave the picture of how the teachers and students left a virtual mode of teaching and learning but also the university's emphasis on physical examination both during and after the crisis. Although the teachers learned to operate different ICT tools and devices for online classes during lockdown, they left it as soon as lockdown stopped. Neither the university nor the faculty preferred digital platforms for educational activities. It indicated the movement back from digital readiness and preparedness for future educational activities in online or blended mode to the traditionally practiced physical mode.

The total shift to the traditional physical mode, however, created dissatisfaction among the students. With few exceptions, the majority of the students of the university colleges that shifted to the physical mode reported that they began enjoying online classes accompanied by interesting educational videos, pictures, graphs and many other digital materials, which, however, came to an end in the physical classes. The dilemma and confusion regarding whether to begin or continue online educational activities during and after the crisis also affected the academic calendar. For example, Chitra, a student at Chunare University, said:

> We attended online classes well during the second phase of lockdown. However, there were no classes during the first. It pushed our calendar one year back. It was a great loss for us. One of my friends was in another university. He attended online exam and now has completed Master's Degree but I haven't.

Her comment indicated that the affected academic calendar resulted when university colleges failed to manage alternative teaching and learning

during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. It appeared as a barrier for the future preparation of online and blended modes of education accompanied by advanced digital devices and tools. The comparative clarification sufficiently stated how proper management of online educational practice helped the students complete their studies in time and offered opportunities to develop their careers in a systematic manner on the one hand and how preferences only for the physical mode of education affected students' timely academic achievement on the other hand. At the same time, it also emphasized digital readiness and future educational preparedness to effectively manage educational activities in case similar crises take place.

Lack of Accountability and Dedication in the University Leaders

University leaders and senior faculty members should have a greater degree of commitment in terms of modernizing the universities and academic activities. However, the majority of the participants stated that the preferences of the physical mode of education on the part of senior faculty members as well as university leaders obstructed the practice of online education and further digitalization processes. They reported that despite living in higher academic positions, the majority of old generation faculties and officials neither updated themselves with advanced digital technologies nor promoted a digital-friendly virtual mode of teaching and learning. For example, Ankita, a faculty member at Amar University, stated:

> I struggled a lot for the approval of the online course I developed from the Academic Council as well as its implementation. Primarily senior university leaders and professors with traditional mentality have been obstructed, although they have accepted online teaching-learning and examination practices at present.

Her experience of the struggle to initiate online-based courses at the university indicated the lack of accountability and dedication among the university leaders for the adequate development of university digitalization and digitally advanced new modalities of teaching and learning. It also revealed the tussle between two groups of educational persons: those wishing to promote digital platforms for new modalities of teaching and learning and those who prefer traditionally established physical modes of

education. Such a tussle has obstructed adequate digital readiness and preparedness for future educational practices.

DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that universities in Nepal, as their interest in digital readiness and practices, followed different modalities of teaching-learning and examinations in the post-COVID scenario. Some of them continued online teaching and learning activities, some practiced physical-cum-online and some universities fully returned to the traditional physical mode of education. Those continuing fully online or blended modes enabled the teachers and students to update their digital skills for better educational practices either in crisis or in normal situations. Universities preferring the physical mode not only pushed the academic calendar a year back, as they rejected online examinations during the pandemic but also overlooked the need for adequate digital readiness and future educational preparations despite students' dissatisfaction. However, all the participants emphasized the need to upgrade the universities as per the changes taking place in the present techno-lead digital age.

Consistent with earlier studies (Laudari et al., 2021; Acharya et al., 2022), the findings indicated that university authorities, particularly old generations, are unwilling to upgrade their ICT capabilities by focusing on the physical mode of teaching, learning and assessment. Their negative attitude toward virtual teaching and learning impacted the development process of digital readiness and e-pedagogy. However, with professional dedication, adequate ICT skills and personal accountability, even an individual exemplified the possibility of great achievement if he or she acted with strong willpower and high motivation even with limited resources and great challenges. This finding aligned with an earlier study by Laudari et al. (2021) that personal efforts play an important role in addition to the remarkable space of institutions for digital preparation. As evident with the case of a university, it reflected how formulating adequate policy, allocating sufficient budget and appointing skilled manpower could lead universities in the path of digital development essential for quality online education (Devkota, 2021). It reflected how visionary leadership could give universities a direction of academic excellence.

The findings show that public autonomous universities have fewer external political interventions and are thus free to formulate necessary educational policies and implement them, appoint qualified teaching and

nonteaching staff and have adequate planning for future educational activities. In contrast, the majority of government-funded universities faced unnecessary political interventions that ultimately obstructed preparations for sustainable ICT infrastructure and digital readiness. As reported by the literature (Khanal et al., 2021; Rana et al., 2019), the findings indicated that the selfishness of the people in high authority has caused Nepali educational policies to be influenced by donor agencies and their neoliberal agendas, which overshadowed the national priorities as well as the practical implementation of existing policies.

Conclusion

The discussion identified the mixed interest of university authorities to be prepared for digital readiness to practice mixed (online, physical-cum-online and physical) teaching-learning and examination practices going on in the universities of Nepal, although all of them adopted a virtual mode during the COVID crisis. After the end of lockdown, some universities returned to a fully physical mode, while some continued either online or blended forms of education. Replicating the ongoing process of digital readiness and preparations, few universities accelerated their paperless/e-university journey by allocating certain budgets and appointing skilled manpower for developing adequate ICT infrastructure and applications. Likewise, young, proactive and dedicated professors successfully led the students into international research platforms, enabling them to publish their papers in renowned world journals. With few exceptional cases, however, massive political interference, allocation of limited budgets, selfish motives of higher authorities and lack of professional dedication among university leaders, particularly in government-funded universities, have hindered universities from formulating adequate policies, implementing them and modernizing their educational programs. Formulating and implementing adequate policies based on national priorities, making the universities resourceful and allowing them to conduct academic activities without external interference could help the universities to have adequate digital readiness and future educational preparedness essential for academic excellence.

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Using Dell Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL as a Tool to Teach Intercultural Competence and Communication: Cultural Identity in Alexandria, Egypt

Ourania Katsara

Introduction

Benish-Weisman and Horenczyk (2010) argue that cultural identity can be seen as a complex and multifaceted construct consisting of three aspects: (a) the construction of the in-group and its characteristics, (b) the individual's feeling and evaluation of the cultural features he or she ascribes to the group, and (c) the individual's view of the extent to which the

This chapter is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Ioannis Vlastoudakis, a graduate of Salvago Commerce School in Alexandria, Egypt.

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281

group's characteristics are reflected in one's self. There is also evidence in the literature on research across disciplines revealing that cultural identity has various academic conceptions.

To enumerate, Kim (2007) identified in his literature review work five basic themes of cultural identity, namely, (a) cultural identity as an adaptive and evolving entity of an individual; (b) cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual; (c) cultural identity as a discrete social category and an individual choice; (d) cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual; and (e) cultural identity as a discrete and nonnegotiable social category and group right. More specifically, Kim (2007) refers to various theories to explain and consolidate the nature of each of the five themes of cultural identity. Regarding the first theme "cultural identity as an adaptive and evolving entity of an individual," Kim (2007) argues that empirical findings suggest that this theme of cultural identity indicates that cultural identity is evolving over time and is not static and categorical. Kim refers to the theory of integrative communication theory of cross-cultural adaptation, noting that the key issue is assimilation. Referring to his work Kim (2001, 2005a, as cited in Kim, 2007, p. 243), he asserts that since adaptation concerns individuals' effort to establish a stable and functioning relationship with the environment, intensive and cumulative experiences of intercultural communication provoke the gradual transformation of an individual's original cultural identity. For example, Kim (2007, p. 243) refers to Page's study (1994), who examined the case of the first Japanese immigrants to Brazil as contact workers for coffee plantations. Those immigrants initially resisted assimilation; however, it was found that third generations were fully integrated into the Brazilian community.

Regarding the second theme "cultural identity as a flexible and negotiable entity of an individual," Kim (2007) argues that this conception implies that cultural identity can be categorized as integrationist embracing an ideological position. He refers to Imahori and Cupach's (2005, as cited in Kim, 2007, p. 245) identity management theory, which stresses the necessity of flexible "identity management" when dealing with cultural identities that differ from one's own. As Imahori and Cupach (2005, as cited in Kim, 2007, p. 245) argue, this theory dictates that individuals' claimed identities are situated (i.e., presentation of face) and that the ability to maintain face in interactions is considered to be a sign of an individual's interpersonal communication competence in intercultural contexts.

Regarding the third theme "cultural identity as a discrete social category and an individual choice," cultural identity is seen as a social discrete

category; however, individuals opt to identify themselves with one or more categories through a voluntary identification act. Kim (op. cit, p. 245) refers to Phinney and Rosenthal (1992), who describe "cultural identity development," which stresses the importance individuals attach to a minority culture. For instance, Kim (op. cit, p. 245) refers to Phinney and Rosenthal (1992) examined minority adolescents who strived to achieve a secure sense of themselves as cultural-group members and a commitment to their cultural identity. Failure to achieve such a commitment was viewed as a detriment to their psychological and social functioning.

Regarding the fourth theme, "Cultural Identity as a Distinct System of Communal Practices," cultural identity is seen as a communally shared system to communicate practices enduring over time and being unique to a community. Kim (2007) refers to the value of interpretive theories aiming to be used as a basis to identify, describe, and illuminate key cultural features of communication that are used as a means to discern a difference of one community from another. For example, studies have focused on conversation patterns and other communication practices unique to a given cultural community, for example, recognizable Indian ways of speaking in Native American communities (Pratt, 1998, as cited in Kim, 2007, p. 246).

The fifth theme, "Cultural Identity as a Discreet and Non-Negotiable Social Category and Group Right," is aligned with many critical conceptions of cultural identity. For example, Kim (2007) notes the argument put forward by Hall (1989), who asserts that social theories seem to fail to address the position of traditionally underprivileged group members who are found to be victims of systematic oppression serving to reproduce the status quo of the dominant cultural ideology. Similarly, the conception of cultural identity as a discreet, largely monolithic, and nonnegotiable social category is discussed by Tsuda (1996), who discusses the ideological perspective by criticizing Western ideological domination as a trigger of distorted intercultural communication throughout the world. Tsuda (1996) argues that the dominance of the English language restricts non-Western peoples' freedom of expression, damaging their identity.

Within this context, the purpose of the chapter is to discuss ways of teaching cultural identity within the discipline of communication in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class offered in a department of a Greek university. The paper argues that one interesting way of exploring the meaning of the communicative approach to cultural identities could be by examining ways in which language is used by particular cultural groups. The case of immigrants could be of particular interest and useful

to be analyzed through the interpretive cultural approach since, as Phinney (1990) and Tartakovsky (2013) (as cited in Ngo & Li, 2016, p. 734) argue, immigrants' cultural identity refers to one's membership with an ethnic group and with a nation and may include the use of a shared language, the practice of certain traditions and rituals, the support of specific norms, values and beliefs, participation in gatherings, the knowledge of one's own ethnic and national history, and the sense of belonging.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Relationship Between Culture and Communication

Garrett-Rucks (2018) argues that culture is about what is created by society and society's beliefs, values, and behavior. Tomalin and Stempleski (1993) assert that the distinction between big culture and little culture is of vital importance. The researchers explain that big "C" culture or "achievement culture" comprises history, geography, institutions, literature, art, and music. On the other hand, small "c" culture, also known as "behavior culture," encompasses a broader scope, incorporating culturally influenced beliefs, perceptions, and expressions through language (Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993, p. 6). Kramsch (2006) explains that big culture is seen as a humanistic concept, whereas small culture is seen as a sociolinguistic concept. This distinction between Big C and Little C is further expanded by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Learning Project (1999, p. 47), which indicates that "products and practices are derived from the philosophical perspectives that form the world view of a cultural group"—3Ps. Specifically, this cultural context dictates that cultural products are tangible (e.g., painting, a sculpture, etc.) or intangible (e.g., a political system, a system of education etc.) creations of a particular culture. Practices are patterns of social interactions and behaviors and involve the use of products (e.g., rites of passage, use of forms of discourse). Finally, perspectives are the philosophical perspectives, meanings, attitudes, values, beliefs, and ideas that underlie the cultural practices and products of a society representing a culture's view of the world (e.g., attitudes toward foods, attitudes about what is funny, etc.). The national Standards for Foreign Language Learning (ACTFL, 1996, 1999, 2006), currently called the World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015), argues that effective practices in teaching culture dictate that (a) students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices

and perspectives of the culture studied, and (b) students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the products and perspectives of the culture studied.

Intercultural communication refers to the demonstration of one's knowledge of culture through language, while intercultural communicative competence (ICC) is about the usage of language skills and cultural knowledge and understanding to effectively interact with individuals (Byram & Gobuleva, 2012). A key issue refers to the fact that the ability to become aware of one's own assumptions of viewing the world is a process necessary for reflection that offers opportunities for alternative perspectives (Deardorff, 2006). McConachy (2017) further maintains that language mediates human experience since language reflects social meanings, thus exploring underlying assumptions and values. Within this context, a central argument refers to the relationship between communication and messages with regard to sharing our knowledge about life with others.

According to Chamberlain et al. (1999), communication involves the transmission and interpretation of messages. The sender's thoughts, feelings, and attitudes are reflected through messages that are encoded in symbols (e.g., words) and then transmitted via a channel (e.g., voice) to a receiver who must interpret the message. As the researchers argue, both sides will bring to this process their social and cultural background together with their own experiences. Therefore, it is implied that communication creates meaning based on individuals' understanding of language and their experiences and knowledge about the world (Chamberlain et al., 1999).

The Concept of Cultural Identity Within the Discipline of Communication

The study of cultural identity has been approached from diverse scholarly orientations. However, intercultural communication scholars agree that cultural identities are inherently relational and shaped by communication choices, behaviors, and negotiations. There is evidence that cultural identities have been conceptualized in a different way from various approaches (Chen & Lin, 2016). The researchers (ibid.) discuss different approaches (social scientific approaches, interpretive cultural approaches, and critical approaches) to cultural identities, arguing among other things that these different approaches differ on questions surrounding the relationship between cultural identities and social structures. Chen and Lin (2016) further argue that cultural identities overlap with key constructs such as competence, face and subjectivity when studying intercultural communication.

They suggest that it would prove useful to explore the meaning of the communicative approach to cultural identities, taking into consideration all complexities and contradictions involved.

Specifically, Chen and Lin (2016) explain that first, social scientific approaches conceptualize cultural identity as "*a social categorization process*" based in part on individual choices and in part on the relationship(s) between the individual and the group, or groups, to which she/he belongs (Yep, 2004, p. 74, as cited in Chen & Lin, 2016, p. 3). Second, the researchers note that interpretive cultural approaches view cultural identity as *a social and cultural construction* that is dynamically cocreated, negotiated, and reinforced via interactions with other group members and nongroup members. The aim of these approaches is to explore how individuals as members of a cultural group experience, be, do, or know their cultural identities. Theories that inform these approaches include social identity, cultural identity theory, and ethnography of communication (Collier & Thomas, 1988; Tajfel, 1982; Philipsen, 1992; Carbaugh, 1995; Hymes, 1964, as cited in Chen & Lin, 2016, p. 4). Third, Chen and Lin (ibid.) remark that critical approaches view cultural identity as "*an ideological construct and representation of power structures*" (Shin & Jackson, 2003, p. 220, as cited in Chen & Lin, 2016, p. 5). The goal of these theories is to challenge existing power structures that produce and reproduce inequalities based on a variety of factors, such as race, gender, class, etc.

The Interpretive Cultural Approach and the Cultural Identity of Diaspora

An immigrants' case is an exploration of how they experience, be, do, or know their cultural identities (Chen & Lin, 2016). This exploration is informed by the notion of ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1964) since Dell Hymes defines communicative competence as the ability "…to participate in [the child's] society as not only a speaking but also a communicating member" (Magnan, 2008, p. 353).

Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL (1974) consists of eight main components that specify the dimensions of context and form that conjointly give meaning, shape, and credence to specific speech utterances. Milburn (2016) argues that Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL provides the method of analyzing events that are unique to one cultural context while being flexible in terms of analyzing communicative processes. Specifically, S

designates Setting or Scene and refers to the physical aspects of the environment, including time (e.g., durations, intervals, etc.) and psychological settings and cultural definitions relevant to the event. P designates participants and participant identities, including social categories used within the encounter (e.g., sex, age, social status, and relationships between participants). E designates Ends referring to the goals of communicative events, suggesting that social behavior is often purposeful. A designates Act sequence and Act topic, which concern the structure and unfolding of communication as well as of the topics and themes that are being communicated. Act sequence refers to the actual form and content of what is said. It includes the precise words used, how they are used, and the relationship of what is said to the actual topic at hand. K designates Key or tone, which refers to ways in which communication is framed. However, the key or tone of communication is not often explicitly coded. I designate instrumentalities or the linguistic code, and it refers to the dialect and the communicative channel used (e.g., face-to-face communication, technologically mediated communication). N designates norms, which are the rules of interaction and interpretation governing whether communication adheres to common formal and informal guidelines. G designates Genre and refers to a literary type of communicative event.

It is important to note that the above model can serve as a point of reference for analysis, but depending on the focus of a study, particular salient dimensions of the sociocultural context in the particular case are highlighted (Katriel, 2012, p. 274). As Hall (1994, p. 225) explains, for immigrants, cultural identity refers to "the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past." He maintains that the negotiation of the past and present renders a third space in the diaspora in which immigrants' cultural identities evolve. The sociocultural context of the diaspora can be identified through a communication event. The question is the examination of how the event is framed, that is, who accomplishes the framing of it all of which forms part of its sociocultural and organizational meaning (Hall, 1994).

Teaching Cultural Identity in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Class

There are various appraisals of the current position of EAP and its development over time that have dealt with an analysis of contributions by both EAP practitioners and academics and researchers (Charles, 2022; Douglas

& Rosvold, 2018; Hyland & Jiang, 2021; Riazi et al., 2020). Douglas and Rosvold (2018) reviewed articles published during the period 1996–2016 in major journals in the Canadian context, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database and the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global Database. Their aim was to identify emerging themes related to intercultural communicative competence and EAP. Riazi et al.'s (2020) work investigated empirical journal articles in the Journal of English for Academic Purposes (JEAP), examining 416 articles divided between two time periods, 2002–2011 and 2012–2019. The researchers explored the research contexts, research foci/theoretical approaches, and methodology. Hyland and Jiang (2021) provided a bibliometric study of 12,619 articles on EAP from 40 journals comparing two time periods, 1980–2000 and 2001–2020. They reported on issues in relation to the most cited authors and publications and the most productive regions. They also identified the most frequently explored topics. Charles (2022) investigated practitioners' contributions in volumes of BALEAP conference proceedings and accounts of important issues of the day (PIMs) from 1975 to 2019. As Charles (2022) explains, PIMs focus on a single issue of importance in EAP. A total of 919 PIMs and 391 conference proceedings were examined.

Interestingly, a comparison of findings indicated that the less frequently researched topics over the years referred to intercultural approaches (Charles, 2022; Riazi et al., 2020), while Douglas and Rosvold (2018) found only 15 related works where intercultural communicative competence was the outcome rather than the focus of investigation within an EAP context. What needs to be pointed out is that even though Hyland and Jiang (2021) identified an increase in topic identity, Hyland and Jiang (2021) identified a decrease in case studies, approaches to teaching and teaching practice and asserted that these changes reflect a shift in focus from practical classroom concerns to an examination of more advanced literacy practices within EAP.

The main implication drawn from the above is that there is a need for more empirical research. The author of this chapter teaches EAP at the University of Patras (Agrinio campus). Katsara (2008, 2014, 2018) researched Greek students' academic behavior by using Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. In this sense, Katsara has conducted some research on identifying Greek students' cultural learning profile, that is, their identity as Greek learners. The current paper adds more strength to Anonymous' endeavor to implement an intercultural approach to her

teaching. The paper describes a lesson plan aiming to help Greek students enhance their understanding of one type of cultural identity academic conception, that is, the cultural identity of the diaspora as a distinct and communal system of communicative practices using Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL as a tool. The contribution of the paper lies in the fact that it responds to work by Hyland and Jiang (2021), who contextualized a gap in the field with regard to the need to conduct more case studies using different teaching approaches in an EAP class. In addition, this paper responds to Douglas' and Rosvold's (2018) suggestion on the need to design educational approaches imbued with an understanding of culture that stimulates intercultural awareness.

The Case of the University of Patras Department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Enterprises[1]

Teaching Process and Suggested Activities

It is suggested that teachers need to explain to students that culture is an integral component in language learning, clarifying the aims and objectives of the suggested lesson delivered in class. One way to help students enhance their intercultural awareness is by examining how language is used in discourse. Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL could help students recognize relevant sociocultural factors in discourse. As Hymes (1972) argues, with respect to the components of the model, individuals can identify participants' goals, needs, levels of satisfaction, and how language is used in the context. In this way, students could be given the opportunity to understand that cultural identities are seen to have local roots. Hauser (2009) argues that cultural identities are attached to local contexts, such as values, symbols, and language, and are specified historically. The process is described below.

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[1] According to article 2 of 52/2022 (Gazette 131/7-7-2022, Vol. A) the Department of Business Administration of Food and Agricultural Enterprises of the School of Economics and Business Administration, merged with the department Food Science and Technology of the School of Agricultural Sciences (Agrinio campus).

Instructions

Form small groups of students and ask them to read the newspaper extracts on the celebration of the jubilee of Salvago Commerce School. Then, the teacher is suggested to (a) explain the definition of culture, namely, the 3Ps (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999) and (b) the components of Hymes model giving a handout to students and asking them to identify the eight components of Hymes' model in information presented in the newspaper extracts.

Steps in delivering the activity. Step (1) Ask students to identify the eight components of Hymes' model in the information presented in the extracts. An analysis of the eight components in the speeches published in Tahithromos newspaper is offered below. Information about the setting and scene is offered in Tables 14.1 and 14.2.

Participants: Graduates of the Salvago Commerce School were invited to attend.

Ends: Jubilee of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding/establishment of the school of commerce. The goal of the event is to celebrate the Jubilee of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Salvago Commerce School to honor its founders. As an outcome or as a whole, the speakers' speeches aim to respond to the current situation in Alexandria. Due to the establishment of the school, the speakers aim at giving their response. Hymes states that with respect to both outcomes and goals, communication must be differentiated from interaction as a whole and in terms of purposiveness.

Table 14.1 Setting and scene in delivering the activity: Part I

Setting	*Information (Tahithromos newspaper)*
Date	21-12-1958
Day	Sunday
Time	11am
Venue	Schoolyard of Salvago Commerce School
Physical aspects	• The schoolyard was decorated with Greek and Arabic flags

Table 14.2 Setting and scene in delivering the activity: Part II

Scene	*Information (Tahithromos newspaper)*
Abstract Psychological setting: The scene involves a formal celebration	• At the beginning a prayer was sung by the girls' choir of secondary schools • The philharmonic was playing marches

Table 14.3 Searle's speech acts

Assertives	These are statements that describe a state of affairs in the world which could be true or false. They commit the hearer to the truth of the expressed proposition
Directives	These are statements that compel or make another person's action fit the propositional element. It is usually used to give order thereby causing the hearer to take a particular action, request, command, or advice
Commissives	These statements commit the speaker to certain future action represented in the propositional content. It could be in the form of a promise
Expressives	These statements are used to express the speaker's psychological attitude toward a state of affairs that the illocution presupposes
Declaratives	These statements are used to bring about a change in the world by representing it as having been changed

Act sequence and Act topic are useful for students to understand the purpose of the outcome and purposiveness of the jubilee. A number of speeches were delivered by various speakers for such an event. Since the texts analyzed are celebratory speech extracts, the discussion of act sequences focuses on performative speech acts. Searle (1969) states that speech act theory is about the use of language to do things, providing a universal characterization between uttering and doing. Searle's taxonomy of speech acts is said to be an improvement of Austin's classifications of verdictives, exercitives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives. Searle (1969) devised a set of five categories, named illocutionary acts, as seen in Table 14.3.

Some types of performative speech acts can be found in the speech extracts of the speakers. These performative speech acts are highlighted in italics in specific sentences selected from the speech extracts published in Tahithromos newspaper.

Assertives

(1) Mr. Salvagos said:
My family members' actions are the most valuable part of our heritage because, thanks to them, a large portion of our community was able to progress, prosper, and uphold the Greek name in the country we live in, as well as strengthen the ties we have with the Arab world. ***Trade is the fundamental profession that strengthens the bonds between peoples*** *due to the constant contact that traders must have with each other.* ***Moreover, trade fosters a desire for peace****. I wish my friends and those favored by luck to enjoy the rare privilege of experiencing what my family feels today: the* ***fulfillment of a duty to society***.

(2) Mr. Theodorakis said:

*Many sectors were covered by the community, the union, and the private activity of Greeks. However, if we examine the **education sector**, it was not only today's special celebration but also **the most important for the development of a civilization.** To the memorable 'euergete' Constantine Salvagos and all his family members, we owe a lot of gratitude because they have always attached great importance to the education sector.*

(3) Mr. Baizos said:

***The Greeks of Egypt, living in a cosmopolitan environment and having to compete for their survival, faced the imposition from other foreign elements** with much more resources, which the homeland could not provide. **They early recognized the need to establish effective schools where education was of a much higher standard than what the Greek homeland could offer to the children living in Greece**. The establishment of these schools was achieved almost exclusively thanks to the **generosity and charity of the great 'euergetes' who honored our nation and provided the means for future generations to continue the progressive work of Hellenism in Egypt**.*

Directives

(4) Mr. Meraklis said:

***I take advantage of the opportunity given to me today to make a plea to all graduates** to get involved more and not just express their sympathy from a distance.*

(5) Mr. Symeonidis said:

*Fifty years of fruitful and valued community work deeply moves us and encourages us for the future—an optimistic and hopeful future, no matter how the times have changed and the living conditions have changed. **Our community must always remain optimistic. We will never be deprived of courage and hope as long as we live in the everlasting hospitable Egypt, regenerated** within a state of sanctification and evolution.*

Commissives

(6) Mr. Salvagos said:

*For us, the descendants, this act of the founders of Salvago school **is a shining example which we will always follow by the will of God.***

(7) Mr. Meraklis said:

I am extremely happy and excited because in the modest ceremony that we were invited to attend today, **it fell to my lot, and I was honored to represent hundreds of graduates of the Salvago Commerce School to pay tribute** *to the memorable Konstantinos Salvagos, who was the instigator of a vocational school. The Salvago Vocational school has evolved over time into the brilliant Commerce school that operates to this day, making it one of the most beautiful gems of the educational complex of the Greek community of Alexandria.*

Expressives

(8) Mr. Symeonidis said:

We Egyptian Greeks all have the right to be proud for the following reason: *From the innermost heart of our community, many great children of Greece were born. Their patriotism, national feelings, generous generosity, and worship of spirit and religion contributed to the composition of a great work that garnered admiration outside of Hellenism. This work's foundations refer to the schools of Egyptian Hellenism that have acted and continue to act effectively for the prestige and the great idea of the beloved motherland, our second homeland, our friend Egypt.*

(9) Mr. Meraklis said:

I believe I represent the feelings of every graduate when I say that every time we look at Salvago Commerce School, our thoughts unintentionally go back to our school years. How anxiously *we awaited the results, and now we are present to receive the school's diploma, the theoretical supply that will open the doors of success for us.* **With what joy, pride, and satisfaction** *we hear our names mentioned among the successful students. For the majority, student life ends with this ceremony, and then a hard life struggle begins.*

Declaratives

(10) Mr. Baizos said:

Today, there are some obstacles due to the new law for private schools, but it is certain that, thanks to the goodwill of this hospitable country *that wants Greeks to stay here, a way will be found to overcome the emerging obstacles so that the Greek schools in Egypt will be able to continue their fruitful action.*

(11) Mr. Symeonidis said:

Ladies and gentlemen, Salvago Commerce School will remain a symbol of Greek greatness, a humanitarian symbol, a symbol of education, and a symbol of the great 'euergetes'—the Salvago family to which our community owes much more.

The analysis of ends and act sequence above shows that speakers have the same purpose as a whole but are different in purposiveness. The whole purpose is to honor the Salvago family for their *Euergesia* to establish the school. However, each speaker has different objectives in terms of purposiveness. Mikes Salvago aims at enhancing the relationship between benevolence, honor, and national consciousness (i.e., *euergesia*). Mr. Theodorakis aims to exemplify the reason why education is important to civilization. Baizos aims to highlight the need for Greeks in Egypt to look after themselves by continuing the progressive work of Hellenism in Egypt. Mr. Meraklis aims to highlight graduates' role in supporting the school. Mr. Symeonidis aims to pronounce the importance of the good relationship between Greeks and Egyptians. A closer look at the extracts indicates that the speakers tend to share ideas and feelings with the audience. The main implication is that the above discussion shows that language can be used to show various purposes. This is because the actual motives of participants may be varied (Hymes, 1964).

Key or tone, manner, or spirit: Different types of tone are conveyed in the extracts.

(a) Touching and Modest

(12) The patriarch, *deeply moved*, addressed the audience and said that the church is very pleased with the atmosphere created by this nice gathering.

(13) Mr. Symeonidis said:

At this time, we are modestly celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the school's operation and gratefully our thought turns to… the memorable principals and teachers. Teachers who spent their lives in the noble work of the Greek-Christian education of the youth who entrusted them with incomparable zeal and devotion. … to the ones who passed away with a clear conscience that they had faithfully performed their duty.

(b) Honorary and Festive

(14) The Metropolitan of Pelousiou stood up and wished for the rest of the deceased members of the Salvago family. Then, the president of the community**, *Mr. Theodorakis, got up and asked the attendees to observe a minute of silence in memory of the founders of the school and for the school's teaching staff*.** After observing a minute of silence, the Most Reverend Ioannis Karaminas, amid general applause, announced to the audience that ***His Most Godly Beatitude A.TH. M, the Patriarch of Alexandria, sir Christoforos, accepts to award Mr. Salvagos and Mrs. Argini Salvagos the cross of St. Markou B class. A march by the Greek Philharmonic followed, as well as a psalm of the national anthems of Greece and Egypt.***

(15) The community commissioner, Mr. Sakellarios, said:
Today's joyful celebration of the school's fiftieth anniversary *under the shadow of the statue of Mikes Salvagos gives us the opportunity, on the one hand, to pay tribute to the Salvagos family* for their many *Euergesies*, and on the other hand, to wish *the respected* Mrs. Algini Michael Salvagos and the dear vice president of the community, Mr. Konstantinos Salvagos, and his sister, ***the respected*** Mrs. Julia Mela, and their descendants and members of their families health and longevity.

A particular key may also be associated primarily with a particular function of language use, role-relationship between participants, or message form and content. The fact that the audience applauds when it is announced that His Most Godly Beatitude A.TH. M, the Patriarch of Alexandria, sir Christoforos, accepts to award Mr. Salvagos and Mrs. Argini Salvagos the cross of St. The Markou B class shows that this honor awarded to the members of the Salvago family is even more pronounced. For Greek orthodox, the role of church is vital in defining Greek nationalism; therefore, the manner in which the message is conveyed justifies the honorary tone. The expression His Godly Beatitude shows how the honorary tone is associated with a particular function of language and the role-relationship between participants.

Channel: Both Vocal (Spoken language) and Nonvocal (Paralinguistic and prosodic features—Silence and Kinesics) were identified in the extracts.
Both Katharevousa and Arabic were used in the delivered speeches.

(16) The community commissioner, Mr. Sakellarios, said in Arabic:
The training of good Arab-speaking and useful executives in our community and the life of the Arab world is one of the primary purposes of our education. For the Salvago family, whose generations have offered many *contributions* and continue to offer to our community, there is no greater satisfaction than seeing the fruits of their labor.

(17) *A graduate student, Mr. Zach Katsimbris, recited a poem in Arabic*, and the inspector of the schools, Mr. Mohammed Sayed Rocha referred to the ties that unite the Greek and Egyptian people. Mr. Rocha specifically said that Greeks and Egyptians are brothers. *This beautiful speech was translated into Greek* by Professor Aly Nour.

In the nineteenth century, Katharevousa—the midpoint between ancient Greek and modern Greek—was spoken by Greeks in their daily lives, but it was officially abolished in 1976 (Mennen & Okalidou, 2006).

Some forms of speech were also identified to show the power of language to deliver messages. Examples drawn from the community repertoire.

(18) Mr. Symeonidis said:
The real Greek inhabitants of Egypt of the nineteenth century served as *Kerdoos Hermes* through his sweat and toil but did not fail to serve as *Logios Hermes* aiming at the establishment of a school and a church. This thought quickly became a reality, and everything was grounded. These were the principles of the then Greek families that were members of the Greek communities of Egypt. These principles pushed these individuals and their families to always contribute generously to education and the church. Thus, the remarkable Salvago Commerce School was founded providing wonderful education and Greek-Christian vitality to the Greek generations.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Symeonidis used some forms of speech., that is, specific adjectives to describe the behavior of the Greeks of Egypt, which reflect Greeks' common cultural knowledge. Symeonidis refers to *Kerdoos* Hermes and *Logios Hermes*. Hermes was one of the 12 Gods of

Olympus. This God was the protector of traders and therefore called *Kerdoos*, which means profitable. However, since eloquence is required in any business situation, he was also called *Logios*, which means eloquent and well educated (Ntekastro & Betsis, 2006). The forms of speech Symeonidis used reflect the arguments put forward by Wertsch (2002) and Vlachaki et al. (2019). The former argues that ancient Greek myths are viewed as "cultural tools," while the latter argues that mythical thought, among other things, is concerned with causality, which facilitates an analysis of human behavior by the introduction of the schema of cause and effect.

In this way, the speaker uses a conventionalized metaphor to highlight a known, shared property between the two. *Kerdoos* and *Logios Hermes* are compared to the action by the Greek Egyptian to justify their functional behavior. Emphasis is placed on the context in which benevolence took place by referring to Greek mythology.

The second type of channel used, which refers to paralinguistic and prosodic features (Silence and Kinesics), is also evident in the extracts.

(19) The Metropolitan of Pelion stood up and wished for the rest of the deceased members of the Salvago family. Then, the president of the community, Mr. An. Theodorakis, got up and ***asked the attendees to observe a minute of silence*** **in** memory of the founders of the school and for the school's teaching staff.

(20) After observing a minute of silence, the Most Reverend Ioannis Karaminas, ***amid general applause***, announced to the audience that His Most Godly Beatitude A.TH. M, the Patriarch of Alexandria, sir Christoforos, accepts to award Mr. Salvagos and Mrs. Argini Salvagos the cross of St. Markou B class.

It should be noted that silent communicative acts that convey propositional content can be part of communicative interaction (Saville-Troike, 2003) since just as "one can utter words without saying anything" (Searle, 1969, p. 24), one can say something without uttering words (Saville-Troike, ibid., p. 117). In addition, Poyatos (1976) asserts that there are different types of kinesic behaviors, such as finger snapping, clapping, desk tapping, and back tapping. One of the most common sounds used by humans without voice is clapping. It is used as a social gesture to show approval and admiration in groups, crowds, or by individuals themselves

(Smith et al., 2007), and it becomes applause "when several do so repeat-edly and at the same time" (Atkinson, 1984, p. 21).

Norms refers to rules of interactions and norms of interpretation as reflected in the information presented in the speech extracts.
Rules of interaction:

(a) The speakers must explain to the audience why an event commemo-rating 50 years of operation of Salvago Commerce School is important
(b) At emotional climax, there should be a) silence (paying tribute to people who passed away) as a gesture of respect and b) applaud where the audience should applaud when the speaker awards someone who is an '*euerget*'.

The norms of interpretation:

(a) Shared understandings: The significance of the establishment of the Greek community in Alexandria is that its members were exclusively Greek Orthodox Christians (Papakyriacou, 2010).
(b) Cultural understandings: Orthodoxy remains nationalistic in orienta-tion and associated with the nineteenth-century interpretation of Greek national identity, in which Orthodoxy and Greece are viewed as indivisible (Fokas, 2008). The nationalization of the Orthodox Church of Greece is the result of a historical process and refers to the Greek Revolution of 1821 against the Ottomans and the subsequent creation of an independent Greek State in 1830 (Fokas, ibid.).

In Greece, since 2007, a Memorial Day for National '*Euergetes*' is cele-brated on September 30 to honor wealthy Greeks whose donations con-tributed to enabling growth in areas such as Education, Culture, and Social Welfare so that the National Conscience could remain alive in dif-ficult times (Government Gazette, 1/Á /2-1-2007).

Greek mythology: Religion played an important role in the life of the ancient Greeks and influenced most aspects of their cultural and spiritual activity. The ideas of the Olympic Games and Ancient Drama started with the worship of God. The tale of the 12 Olympians (who were the major deities of the Greek pantheon and resided on Mount Olympus) held great significance in Greek mythology (Ntekastro & Betsis, 2006). The Gods of Olympus were symbols and not idols. Hermes was the messenger of the spiritual divine councils but also of the circulation of commercial wealth

and God of Commerce. Since eloquence and persuasive power are needed in transactions, Hermes was worshipped as *Kerdoos* (i.e., profitable, as God of Commerce) and then as *Logios*, (i.e., Hermes the scholar) Thus, Hermes also became the protector of orators and men of letters and those who deal with them (Ntekastro & Betsis, 2006).

Genres are shown through the following examples identified in the extracts:

(a) Prayer

At the beginning, a prayer was sung by the girls' choir of secondary schools (Tahithromos newspaper 22-12-58: 1).

(b) poem

A graduate student Mr. Zach Katsimbris recited a poem in Arabic (Tahithromos newspaper 22-12-58: 1)

(c) blessing

(21) Mr. Symeonidis said:
I will read an extract from the protocol of the school's foundation-stone laying ceremony: In glory of the Father and of the Son of the Holy Spirit of the One and Only God. In 1906, under King George I and the ruler of Egypt, Abba Hilmi II, today, Saturday, the twenty-fifth of March, the feast of the Annunciation, the foundation stone of Salvago school was laid at the expense of the pious and patriotic family of Konstantinos Salvagos at the site of the Greek community in Alexandria in Siatby. The ceremony was represented by high-ranking Greek government officials, His Excellency Greek Consul of Greece, Mr. Nikolaos Schotidou, and the most noble president of the Greek community, Mr. Emmanuel Benakis, for the education of Greeks aiming to educate them to become good men and women and loyal sons and daughters of the homeland. This act is enclosed in this foundation-stone laying, and God will firmly establish it for centuries. Amen. The Pope and the Patriarch of Alexandria, FOTIOS.

Step (2) Ask students to recognize the 3Ps in the information where Hymes' components were identified. The 3Ps are analyzed below.
Product: Salvago Commerce School

Practice: Greeks in Alexandria attached great value to education. Therefore, a jubilee of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Salvago Commerce School was organized. A number of speeches were delivered to commemorate the foundation of the school where all graduates were invited to attend. The speech ceremony is seen as a pattern of social interaction. Greeks of Egypt felt that it was their duty to attend such an event.

Perspectives: This celebration is an optimistic aspect/dimension for the future of the activities undertaken by the Greek community in Alexandria. Egyptian Greeks were proud of their activities, for example, the establishment of the Salvago Commerce School, which stood as a symbol of Greek greatness, education, and the benevolent Salvago family. They felt that they should honor the Salvago family as an exchange for their benefaction. This illuminates the meaning of the Greek term '*euegertism*', which describes a characteristically Greek institution that involves the reciprocal relationship between giver and receiver (Gygax, 2016).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The paper argues that Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL offers the opportunity for students to raise their cultural awareness of the identity of the Greek community in Alexandria, Egypt. Its components are suggested to facilitate students' understanding of the socioculturally significant dimensions of communication (McConachy, 2009); in other words, students become aware of the interactions of the elements of culture, the 3Ps (ACTFL 1996, 1999, 2006).

Through an analysis of the 3Ps, students are encouraged to explore the situated nature of communication. In the current lesson plan, students are asked to explore observable practices, naturally occurring communicative events, not being stimulated by themselves, in this case speeches delivered many years ago by Greeks residing in Alexandria of Egypt. In addition, they are encouraged to explore the special cultural aspects of communicative events and rituals, examining a commemorative event in relation to the establishment of Salvago Commerce School seeking to understand "participants' ways of understanding." This process reflects the argument put forward by Noy (2017, p. 3), who argues that the ethnography of communication "is a reflexive approach to social life and communication where reflexivity is seen as present in and shaping social interactions, and

as manifest in ongoing behavior." The 3Ps revealed that the Greeks of Egypt cultural identity as a shared communal system is shaped by both the actions of the benefactor and the public recognition of these actions as benefactions through grants of honors by the community (Gygax, 2016), reflecting the meaning of the unique Greek term '*euegertism*'.

Future analysis of qualitative and quantitative data from the student population would prove useful in order to identify the extent to which Hymes' SPEAKING MODEL was useful in helping Greeks deconstruct the concept of cultural identity. Students' feedback could be invaluable in identifying parameters that need to be further investigated to design an effective EAP lesson plan that embraces an intercultural awareness approach.

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Attitude and Motivation of Gamified Mathematics Virtual Remedial Students: Case Study of a Business School in Lima, Peru

Soraya Yrigoyen Fajardo, Magna Guerrero, and Giovanna Vassallo

Introduction

The challenges of teaching in higher education in this century and in the context of the pandemic have been very great. However, since the Declaration of Salamanca, during the 15th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government of the region in 2005, a paradigm change for higher education was agreed upon, which should be an education based on competencies and new teaching methodologies with the use of ICTs. Although these demands would require a certain infrastructure (connectivity, digital devices), the most important and necessary aspect was the change in the way teachers teach (Pérez-López & García, 2017).

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Before the pandemic, some studies showed just how enriching the contribution of ICTs and other new technologies is with respect to the learning process, including the use of gamification, such as the study by Muñoz-Repiso and Tejedor (2017). Gamification is the use of games in contexts that are not game-related. Such studies were even in line with others that showed that the student profile is different now, as Prensky (2001) with his concept of "digital natives," to refer to those young generations that have been socialized with new communication technologies, the Internet, and the use of digital devices to learn and communicate.

The pandemic and global health emergency were major drivers of the use of ICTs in teaching due to the mandatory nature of remote education. This implied that teachers look for new teaching and learning strategies and methodologies. In this context, the objective of the present research is to determine the relationship between gamification as a learning strategy and the attitudes perceived by students regarding the motivation they could experience in their mathematics learning process when gamification is used. All this with the aim of improving student learning, for which teachers involved, must transform their methodologies by taking advantage of the opportunity now available with virtuality.

As is well known, Peruvian students, in general, have had very low scores in relation to other students from other countries regarding mathematics, according to the PISA International Test (MINEDU, 2020). Similar results have also been obtained in National Student Census Evaluations (MINEDU, 2020). Therefore, Peruvian students, when they reach university, generally have limited training in mathematics, do not meet the expected grade-level standards, and have rejection and fear attitudes toward the course. This was clearly noticed by a professor of the present research team, who has been in charge of this subject for more than two decades, in the Mathematics remedial course for freshmen in a private university in Lima, Peru. The aforementioned professor had to make an extra effort to motivate students, obtain their commitment, and prevent them from taking a "procrastinator" or "self-fulfilling prophecy" attitude toward mathematics. Although the students were aware of the importance of mathematics in their everyday lives and in their professional training, they brought with them negative experiences, either due to low grades or negative perceptions of mathematics. Therefore, the professor in our team began to apply innovative strategies to teach mathematics, seeking to change the students' attitude and be motivated by mathematics. The faculty team considered it necessary to document and investigate this

process, given that in the context of the pandemic, it was even more complex to motivate students in this subject. It was considered important to know the impact of the sessions using gamification and how it would affect the students' attitudes.

On the other hand, this research is also important with respect to higher education faculty, given the mandate that higher education has had for several decades with the Tuning Plan, such as the transformation of teaching-learning strategies and methodologies. Before the pandemic, remote or virtual education as well as technological tools were not used by all higher education faculty, as there was resistance from the faculty themselves. With the pandemic, virtual education was imposed unexpectedly, but not all faculty had the time to learn new methodological strategies. On the one hand, this research could contribute to the work of higher education faculty to reduce their resistance to technology, since by showing a positive learning experience in mathematics with gamification, it could encourage and be evidence of the possibilities that ICTs and digital tools also provide. On the other hand, it could shorten the pending innovation gaps with respect to improving teachers' teaching-learning methodologies (Cobo, 2016).

Attitudes (Arbayza, 2016) are positive or negative postures toward something and in fact influence people's behavior (Baron & Birne, 2005). According to Robbins (2017), attitudes have three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. In this sense, when students have an attitude of rejection toward mathematics, they have a behavioral or opinional (cognitive) posture toward this subject, but this attitude also has an emotional dimension such as fear or others.

On the other hand, motivation, according to the classic author Herzberg (1959), who is quoted by Ivancevich et al. (2006), states that it can be extrinsic or intrinsic. The former is the result of the activity itself, and the latter is the result of the consequence of an activity. Another interesting theory considered by Locke (1968) and cited by Morris and Maisto (2014) refers to goal setting. It can be seen in them that motivation arises when the person sets concrete goals that represent a challenge for the one who has the motivation and desire to achieve them. This theory could be useful in the present investigation, since the students have the need and goal of passing the mathematics course, although they arrive at the course without sufficient motivation.

The aim of this research is to relate the attitudes of students when they have gamified teaching and learning activities and their relationship with

motivation. Therefore, this chapter will give an account of previous research with similar research questions, analyze the state of the art regarding this topic, and then develop the methodology, the collection of information and its analysis and discussion, to finally provide conclusions, recommendations, and proposals for future research.

BACKGROUND

With the development of digital technologies for the handling of enormous volumes of information with computers and other technological advances such as the Internet, Castells (1997) points out that we have moved from a model of industrial society to a model of knowledge, information, and network society. These innovative developments, driven in part by the economy, have in turn had an impact on the labor field and therefore on higher education. In the latter, a paradigm change has taken place. Such a paradigm was agreed upon and promoted by the Bologna Plan 1999 for Europe (Col, P. cited by IESALC & ESS, 2017) and Tuning Plan 2007 for Latin America. Decades ago, the foundations of the traditional way of teaching in higher education were already being rocked (Pérez-López & García, 2017), which were based on the teacher's expertise. Instead, the new paradigm of the higher education approach focused the learning processes on the student through competencies and in turn with the use of new methodologies and strategies, as well as the use of ICTs.

The change and adaptation to the new paradigm meant a great demand for the work of higher education teachers (Coloma, 2015), and it was not easy. There was also resistance to such change, especially from teachers, but there were also other factors, such as infrastructure conditions (connectivity). Zurita et al. (2020) propose advantages with respect to virtual learning since, according to the authors, it allows students to access information at any time or place, making it easier for them to be the protagonists of their own education. They consider that the new paradigm would also be based on collaborative learning and the flexibility of learning spaces. Similarly, Muñoz-Repiso and Tejedor (2017) consider that technologies can enrich learning processes by modernizing the tools for it, according to Martínez Navarro (2017). The teacher's new role in the current paradigm also has other demands, as pointed out by Quijada Monroy (2014), and it is that he/she has the important task of transforming the resources used in a face-to-face manner to resources suitable for the

network (virtuality)—that is, dynamic and motivating (Guevara et al., 2019). This work implies a strategic approach to education since it implies doing so in terms of learning outcomes. This also implies that the teacher must be clear about how to design evaluations under this approach. Within the framework of this new paradigm are strategies that use digital tools and ICTs, such as gamification. Studies on it have found an increase in student attention and motivation (Kapp, 2012). Even more so, considering that the way students learn has changed due to the introduction of digital technologies in their socialization processes, they use them on a daily basis, and students also use them to communicate and not only to learn.

State of the Art

Homo Ludens is a classic work by Johan Huizinga (2007), where he analyzes what play is; the author emphasizes that play and culture are involved with each other, and he even states that the former came about prior to culture. For this reason, play does not have a biological function, but rather it is something with full meaning: *it gives meaning to the occupation of life*. Play has meaning for the one who plays and that is why it is so attractive (Huizinga, 2007, p.13). He emphasizes that all play is a free activity and is also pleasurable, which is why human beings like to play (Huizinga, 2007, 20). Thus, reflections on play are not new; however, the connotation that the concept of gamification has is. As Martínez Navarro (2017) notes, "gamification" is a term that comes from the English term "game"; however, he states that the principles of game are applied to contexts that are not game-related. Chacón et al. (2019) highlights the fact that gamification is related to the pleasurable nature of games. Similarly, Manzano León et al. (2019) consider that gamification helps to develop creativity, as the student solves various challenges. In this way, the authors point out that gamification generates more meaningful learning.

Additionally, as Hernández-Horta et al. (2018) point out, gamification is a tool that has been positioned since its inclusion in the Google search engine in 2008 and has been applied at various educational levels, obtaining satisfactory results in retention and in the final grades of participants. Teixes (2015) contributes even more to these investigations by specifying the relationship between gamification and motivation, since he considers that applying gamification means using resources such as elements and dynamics of games in nonplayful situations to increase motivation and

change the behavior of individuals. In that same sense, León-Díaz et al. (2019) found that gamification generates motivation in users, an aspect that impacts the result and achievement of the educational objective. Similarly, the authors point out that not only do they achieve greater motivation but also commitment to the achievement of the task and involvement with it.

In the same way, Pérez-López and García (2017) found that the use of role playing in gamified activities generated greater student satisfaction before the object of study.

In addition, Villalobos and Ríos Herrera (2019) used video games in their research with mathematics students; the results were quite favorable since students were quite motivated toward the learning object. Similarly, Rodríguez-Oroz et al., 2019 found that participating students obtained higher academic performance in the geography of Chile using a board game. Furthermore, Zagarra et al. (2016) found that gamification develops cognitive processes. Likewise, Manzano León et al. (2019) found that gamification generates greater creativity and imagination in students who develop it. Similarly, Ferreiro-Gonzáles et al. (2019) conducted research in which the concepts conveyed in gamified form are better assimilated by students than those presented in a theoretical manner.

In turn, Gamboa Caicedo et al. (2020), in their research on gamification and creativity, consider that gamification fosters learners' creativity and imagination. This aspect should be taken into consideration when structuring a class. Likewise, it has been found that structuring the learning process based on a gamification system has a favorable impact on student performance (Zainuddin et al., 2021). Moreover, Martínez Villalobos and Ríos Herrera (2019), in their research on gamification as a learning strategy, found that video games not only develop learning competence but are also more motivating to reach the course learning outcome.

Research Objectives

Given the interesting findings on gamification with respect to the aforementioned studies, the objective of the present research is as follows:

Determining the existing relationship between the attitude toward the use of gamification and its relationship with the motivation perceived by the students of the Mathematics Remedial course of the Business School of a private University of Lima, Peru, in the context of virtual education due to the pandemic.

Hypothesis

Is there a correlation between the attitude of the students of the Mathematics Remedial course of the School of Business of a private university in Lima toward the use of gamification and their motivation within the framework of a virtual environment?

In this hypothesis, there are two variables that are distributed as follows: the *independent variable*, which refers to the students' attitudes toward the use of gamified virtual activities and/or sessions. This variable was correlated with the *dependent variable*, which refers to motivation. The conceptual definition of "attitude" adopted for the purposes of this research is that it is a positive or negative stance toward something. The conceptual definition for "motivation" is that it is a process that drives a person toward the objective or goal in a given activity.

Methodology and Data Collection

The methodology of this research is quantitative correlational, as it relates the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. To measure this, questionnaire-type surveys were applied to a sample of students of the virtual Mathematics Remedial course of the School of Business of a private university in Lima, Peru, using the Likert scale with numerical responses to measure the attitude of these students regarding the use of gamified virtual mathematics teaching and its relationship with motivation.

The survey used included questions to measure the variables attitude, motivation, and gamification. Therefore, of the 25 questions in the questionnaire, 15 questions were distributed for the attitude variable and 10 for the motivation variable. In addition, as each variable had its own dimensions, the questions for each of these variables were also distributed. Hence, there were questions regarding the variable "attitude" and each of its dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral. In the case of the motivation variable, there were also questions for each of its dimensions: autonomy, competence, and relationship. The questionnaire used for this research was based on the questionnaire used in the study by Alvarez Cisneros (2019), although it underwent a validation process. The questionnaire used in the present study was constructed based on the questionnaire used in the latter study. Improvements were made, and in particular, the relevance of each question was evaluated according to our research

objectives. This resulted in a 25-question questionnaire. These questions were then sent to experts for their feedback and validation of the instrument to be applied. (See Appendix: Likert scale-based questionnaire applied to the present study.) The Likert scale is an instrument widely used in studies of this type and was therefore used for the present study. Four numerical values were constructed, corresponding, respectively from 1 to 4 to: "Strongly disagree" (1), "disagree" (2), "agree" (3), and "strongly agree" (4). For each question, students had to mark a numerical value according to their experience.

The data collection was carried out during the pandemic with students of the Mathematics Remedial course of the 2021–2002 semester. The universe of students in this course was 280, distributed in 12 sections, with an average of 25 students per section; however, the research was only carried out on a sample of 171 students. Despite having programmed from the beginning that the research would be carried out with the universe of students, it was not possible because, during the process, in the immersion stage, some students did not answer all the questions of the survey applied, so they were no longer valid, reducing the universe of students to a sample of them. To obtain a meaningful sample, a calculation was made that showed that a minimum of 163 students should respond optimally to the survey. However, more well-answered surveys were obtained—a total of 171—which were valid for the present investigation.

The students who participated in this research were between 16 and 18 years old and had just entered the university (freshmen). The course was given only to those who failed the placement test, which was applied to freshmen in the area of mathematics. Therefore, in general, all the students who take this course have poor performance in this subject, as well as at least some of the following attitudes: rejection, fear, and low motivation.

The students who participated in the research were exposed to gamified sessions during the research. The syllabus of the Mathematics Remedial course was designed for this purpose. This meant that the professor developed activities using game elements through certain applications. For example, for the closing of the sessions, she used quizzes where students competed for medals or to be on the winners' podium using Kahoot and Quizizz. For moments during the class, there were activities with scored challenges, and the groups had to work collaboratively and in a fun way using platforms such as Wildgoose and Genially to obtain their points. Minecraft was also used for the construction of individual student

learning. This encouraged students to solve mathematical challenges through the video game without fear of making mistakes. Moreover, a simulation of the UPC Monterrico campus was made with Minecraft, and as students could not attend in person due to the pandemic, this tool encouraged them to meet challenges so that each challenge they passed allowed them to "visit" the campus, its classrooms, and its social spaces. In addition, all students participated in this activity through their avatars, which allowed them to interact virtually with the other students with whom they were in the video game. Thus, gamification was also used for the evaluations in some sessions for the mid-term but not for the final exam. For the mid-term, students had to answer mathematical challenges using Minecraft.

These challenges were questions on the topics that had been covered during the first part of the course.

Data Analysis

All the data collected from the survey, both the attitude toward gamification (independent variable) and motivation (dependent variable), were processed in the SPSS statistical program to determine the Pearson correlation between both variables.

Correlations Regarding Attitude Toward Gamification

Correlations			
		Attitude score	*Motivation score*
Attitude score	Pearson correlation	1	0.923**
	Sig. (bilateral)		0.000
	N	171	171
Motivation score	Pearson correlation	0.923**	1
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000	
	N	171	171

**The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Dispersion Diagram Regarding Attitude Toward Gamification

Diagrama de Dispersión

Actitud - Motivación
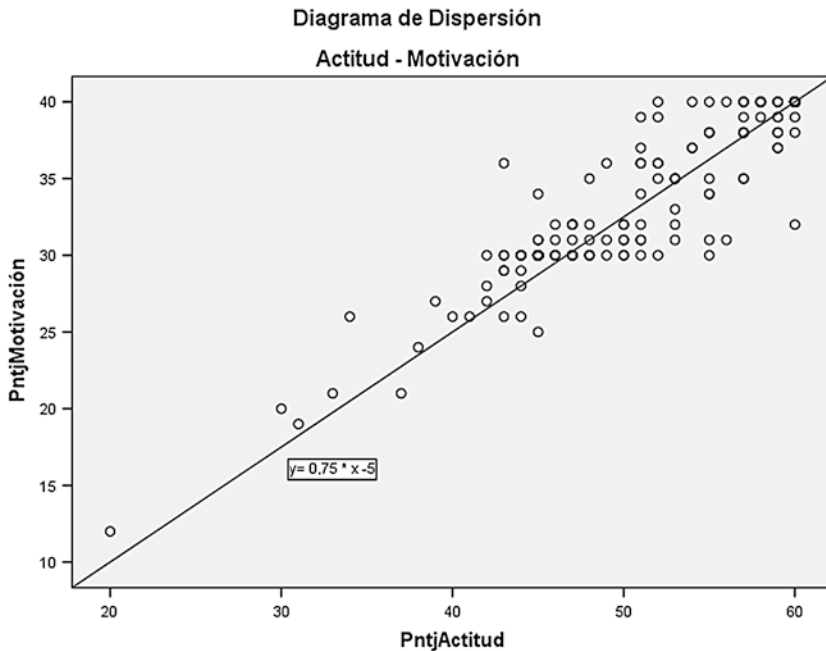
Results Regarding Attitude Toward Gamification
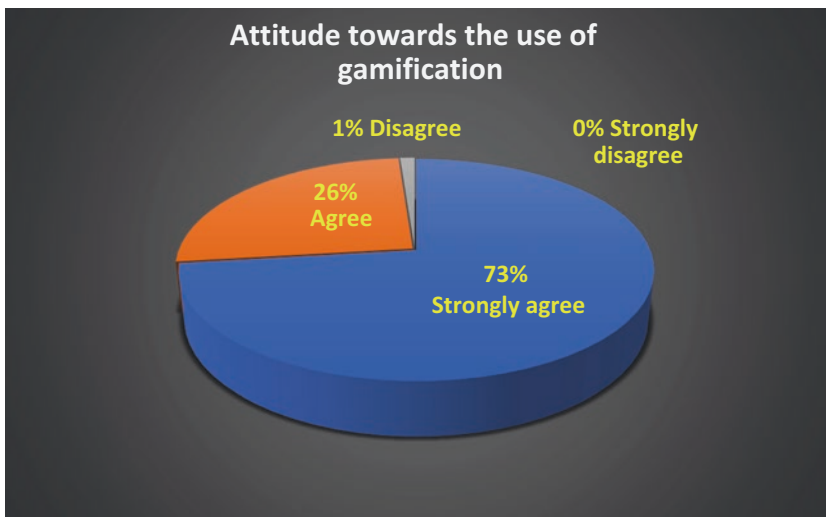
Results Regarding Motivation Produced by Gamification
in Mathematics Learning
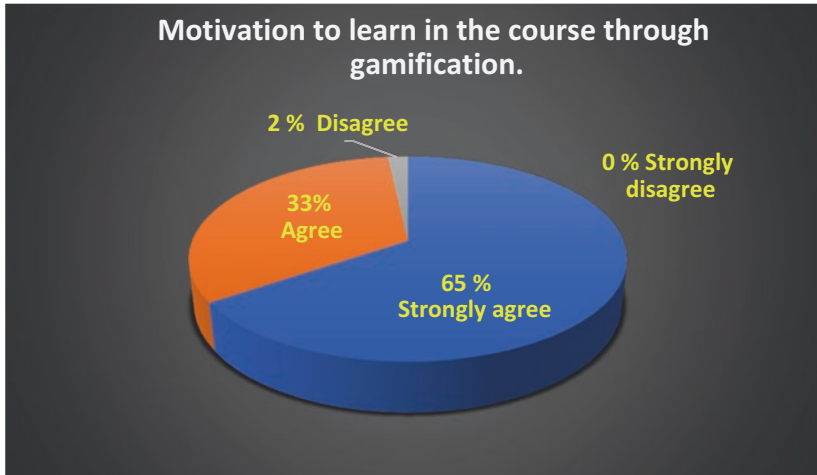
Discussion

The hypothesis was fulfilled, so there is a correlation between students' attitudes toward gamified learning and their motivation. Moreover, not only did it show that there was a correlation, but that it was a high correlation of 0.923. To arrive at this result, the SPSS statistical program was used, and the correlation was determined by means of Pearson's coefficient.

Regarding the dimension of attitude at the cognitive level, 73% of the respondents "strongly agree" that gamification is important to generate motivation. Similarly, 25% "agree" that gamification is important for generating motivation. In other words, at a general level, the percentage of acceptance is 98%. Only 2% "disagree" with this statement.

In relation to the dimension of attitude at the emotional level, similar results were found. Sixty-one percent "strongly agree" that they like gamification to generate motivation for the course. Likewise, 37% "agree" that they like gamification as a means to generate motivation toward the course. On the other hand, only 2% "disagree" that they like gamification as a means to generate motivation toward the course.

In relation to the dimension of attitude at the behavior level, similar results were found. Sixty-five percent of respondents said that they "strongly agree" that they have a positive attitude when participating in gamified learning activities. Likewise, 33% "agreed" that they have a positive attitude toward participating in gamification activities, as these activities motivate them. Only 2% responded "disagree" regarding their willingness to participate in gamified teaching and learning activities.

This is consistent with what Kapp (2012) says in relation to the importance of developing and encouraging technological tools to generate motivation for learning. In addition, as Prieto Andreu (2020) notes, the use of these gamified tools is due to the need for faculty to develop strategies that foster a positive attitude toward the object of study.

Similarly, as Quijada Monroy (2014) states, the creation and use of technological tools to achieve virtual learning is of vital importance. In this way, Quijada Monroy (2014) considers that faculty have to strategically restructure education through virtual formats to achieve a greater positive impact on students.

Finally, Hernández-Horta et al. (2018) find through their research how gamification generates positive attitudes toward the object of study.

Regarding the motivation variable, the following results were obtained according to its dimensions. In terms of the autonomy dimension, 60% of students "strongly agree" that the gamification process allows them to act autonomously, being able to control their own learning. Similarly, 37% of students "agree" with this perception of autonomy provided by gamification. Only 3% "disagree" with this statement.

Likewise, in relation to the competence dimension of motivation, 66% of students "strongly agree" that gamified activities help them to feel more confident when performing academic activities, allowing them a greater sense of competence. In addition, 32% of students "agree" that they consider gamification to help them achieve the objective of study since they perceive reinforcements on the correct execution of the exercises. Only 2% "disagree" with this statement.

Finally, in relation to the relationship dimension, 50% of students "strongly agree" that gamification facilitates interaction among their classmates, generating collaborative learning. In addition, 45% of students "agree" that gamified activities allow them to share with their fellow students. Finally, only 5% "disagree" with these statements.

This is in agreement with Cornellà et al. (2020), who point out that to the extent that gamification uses game elements for teaching purposes, it

generates motivation with respect to activities that seem uninteresting. Gamification can motivate students to perform actions that might seem difficult or complicated to do, generating greater enthusiasm in the student.

Similarly, as Martínez Villalobos and Ríos Herrera (2019) point out, the game allows learning to be incorporated without generating greater stress in the face of error, an aspect that not only involves the student but also generates greater strength in them. This is consistent with the competence dimension of motivation, which refers to the confidence acquired by mastering a task.

Furthermore, Muñoz-Repiso and Tejedor (2017) mention that students value technological tools since these allow them to find meaning for the object of study, thus achieving an impact on the autonomy dimension of motivation. In turn, Elshiekh and Butguerit (2017) consider that students not only achieve greater motivation in relation to gamification but that this technique allows them to share more with their fellow students. This aspect is then linked to the relationship dimension of motivation. Finally, Pegalajar (2021) considers that gamification has an impact on the autonomy dimension and the relationship dimension of motivation, pointing out that gamification favors self-learning and allows the student to be part of a community of learners.

Conclusions

In the present research, the following questions were posed: Is there a correlation between students' attitudes toward the use of gamified activities and students' perceived motivation? The answer was affirmative: there is a high correlation between students' attitudes toward gamified activities and their perceived motivation. Thus, in relation to the components of this attitude, we found that at the cognitive, affective, and emotional levels, students have a positive attitude toward gamification and self-perceived motivation. That is, students consider gamified activities to be appropriate and motivating; they are enthusiastic about the challenges of gamified activities and participate in them because they feel motivated. Additionally, during gamified activities, students are motivated by the autonomy that this allows them, that is, students like to have control of their own learning. Moreover, the gamified activities generated motivation in the students since they felt more self-confident when performing them. Additionally, these gamified activities favored motivation and collaborative learning.

This research shows that, amid remote education, applying strategies with digital tools and obviously with the use of ICTs was encouraging for students' learning process.

Recommendations

1. As a teaching tool, gamification generates students' positive attitude toward it and a perception of adequate motivation. Therefore, it should be considered a valid strategy for faculty to structure their class. Likewise, the use of gamification in higher education makes faculty adapt and meet the new challenges and demands posed by the Tuning Plan for Latin America, such as the use of new methodologies and ICTs.
2. Gamification is a tool that matches students' *learning ecosystems* as they are digital natives, have easy access to and handling of technological tools, and interact naturally with ICTs and virtual learning. They also feel comfortable when using digital devices, so implementing gamified tools through the use of their platforms for their teaching and learning in the Mathematics Remedial course or any other is a highly recommended option.

Future Research

1. Further research is needed on the use of the platforms and their relevance to the subject matter being taught, as some may be themselves better to, or better enable the development of, these courses, whether they are in the arts or science.
2. Given the positive impacts of gamification, higher education institutions should have research teams on gamification and its application in higher education so that syllabi and class sessions can be developed and designed to include gamified activities.
3. It is also relevant to work with platforms that make use of elements linked to the students' context, which is why research linked to this aspect is suggested.
4. Research is needed on faculty resistance to the use of gamification. It is of vital importance to train faculty in digital competencies since only well-trained faculty can correctly structure a class session considering the diversity of digital resources and gamification.

APPENDIX: LIKERT SCALE-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED TO THE PRESENT STUDY

Attitude-gamification relationship

1.	Cognitive	1	Gamification should be used in higher education.
		2	I find that gamification activities in my mathematics class to be interesting.
			I find gamification activities in my mathematics class to be fun.
			I pay more attention with gamified activities in my mathematics class.
			There is value in using gamified activities for mathematics teaching and learning purposes.
			I am looking forward to playing gamified activities in my mathematics class to supplement my learning.
	Emotional		I get excited when I do gamified activities in my mathematics class.
			I enjoy doing gamified activities in my mathematics class.
			I feel optimistic when I do gamified activities in my mathematics class.
			I like competition in gamified activities.
	Behavioral		I focus on the items or questions in each gamified activity in my mathematics class.
			I answer every item or question in every gamified activity in my mathematics class.
			I respond as quickly as I can in every gamified activity in my mathematics class.
			I answer as accurately as I can to each item or question in each gamified activity in my mathematics class.
			I pay more attention during class because I look forward to the gamified activities.

Motivation—Gamification relationship

Autonomy	I feel in control of my learning process with the gamified activities in my mathematics class.
	I am interested in the gamified activities in my mathematics class.
	The gamified activities in my mathematics class were prepared by the course faculty for my learning.
Competence	I had fun using gamified activities in my mathematics class.
	I feel that with gamified activities I learn mathematics faster.
	It was easy to relate the gamified activities to the course topics.
	I feel confident that the gamified activities work in my mathematics class.
Relational	It was easy to access the gamified activities and share feedback with my peers.
	It was easy to share the content of the gamified activities with my peers in my mathematics class.
	It was useful to discuss the gamified activities with my peers in my mathematics class.

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Millennial Teachers' Perspectives on the Graduate Transition to Work in Vietnamese Higher Education

Anh Ngoc Quynh Phan, Ha Hai Nguyen, and Thuy Thanh Nguyen

Introduction

Graduate transition to work (GTW) can be understood as the passage between education and employment, which is often "not direct, not smooth and not a short-term process" (Dhakal et al., 2019, p. 4) for graduates of different fields and across generations. Not only is it an unmistakably important component of labor market success (Bowlus & Wong, 2020), but the GTW process also allows for a "reshaping of

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identity" (Nicholson & Arnold, 1991, p. 414) and exploration of career identity, which is largely avoided or postponed by modern-day graduates, particularly millennials (Boyle, 2022).

Born between 1980 and 2000, millennials, also referred to as Generation Y or Gen Y, are often known for their digital literacy, self-confidence, high expectations, and team orientation (Alsop, 2008). These characteristics are commonly attributed to the uniqueness of their socioeconomic upbringing; for example, the high level of self-esteem and ambition comes from the doting parents who constantly praise and reward them (Spiegel, 2013; Twenge, 2009), whereas the need for a collaborative working environment (Abrams & von Frank, 2014) stems from early enrollment in schools where they learn the importance of pair and group work (Magnuson & Alexander, 2008). However, being raised as the "Trophy Kids" (Alsop, 2008) or "Generation Sunshine" (Huntley, 2006; Twenge, 2009), this cohort often struggled with direct criticism and the dissatisfaction of being "average" (Elam et al., 2007; Walker, 2009). With such strong intrinsic motivation (Queiri et al., 2014), in regard to their job, millennials tend to relentlessly look for enjoyment, hopping between jobs until they find their true calling (Alsop, 2008; Rainer & Rainer, 2011; Abrams & von Frank, 2014).

The portrayal of millennial teachers is generally aligned with this description of Gen Y in general. A significant decrease in work centrality, a heightened emphasis on work-life balance, and more values attached to freedom and leisure are among the characteristics that set millennial teachers apart from previous generations (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Twenge, 2010). With the cumulative influence of coronavirus in 2019 on the education sector, millennial teachers encounter a number of challenges in satisfying the world demand for work (Despinur et al., 2020). The shutdown of schools and institutions resulted in the sudden transition to distance

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learning (Jones et al., 2022), which was described as "emergency remote teaching" (p. 4). Hodges et al. (2020, para. 5) defined the phenomenon as "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances," leading to a series of unplanned teaching and learning practices. This extraordinary situation in light of the pandemic, therefore, hindered all teachers, including millennial teachers, from creating normal transitions in offline classroom settings to online instruction due to a number of challenges of remote teaching, such as accessing limited technological devices and services or maintaining students' motivation during lessons (Marshall & Shannon, 2020; Pham & Phan, 2023; Phan & Pham, 2023).

Policies and support regarding teachers' GTW vary across the world; for instance, in Korea and the Netherlands, new teacher support programs are not provided, whereas in England, Singapore, Australia, and Japan, support programs are made compulsory by the national or state government (Wang et al., 2003). The support programs mostly consist of "in-school tutoring and mentoring, and out-of-school in service workshops and seminars" (Wang et al., 2003, p. 28). Particularly, in England and Australia, in-school mentoring is common, but the programs are usually organized by individual schools and not closely monitored, which is similar to the context of Vietnam. To enter the teaching profession, student teachers in Vietnam must spend four years at a state-authorized higher education institution obtaining "solid knowledge of the subject they are to teach and the pedagogical content knowledge" (Le, 2022, p. 336), which includes the teaching practicum at the end of teacher education programs. Depending on each university, the practicum can last from eight weeks to ten weeks and take up to ten credits (Vo et al., 2018). The teaching practicum is compulsory for any teacher education program, and some institutions even allow their students two chances to practice teaching at schools (Nguyen, 2014). However, in regard to support for beginning teachers and their GTW, there is no specific national-level requirement and guidance, and whether and how to conduct the induction is the choice of each institution that recruits the new teachers.

Research on millennial teachers is not scarce; however, scholars have focused more on millennial preservice teachers, and their studies often look into the work-life balance and the professional learning experiences of this population (Bayer, 2017; Lovely, 2012; Makinen et al., 2018). For example, in their research that examined the experience of preservice millennial teachers in Finland, Makinen et al. (2018) identified three

important themes: (1) the desire for a balance between personal and professional time; (2) the entitlement to take responsibility as well as receive support and guidance; and (3) the sense of usefulness and meaningfulness. Regarding the need for socialization, the findings in Makinen et al. (2018) emphasized the relationships between preservice teachers and faculty and mentors, whereas a previous study by Clark and Byrnes (2015) pointed out that peers were more important than authorities for the professional development of millennial preservice teachers. Kuron et al. (2015) acknowledged the need for more investigation into millennial teachers' experience of GTW using retrospective data. Moreover, the context of studies on millennial teachers specifically is mostly in Western countries, while other non-Western societies are largely absent from this research area. This, in combination with the cruciality and complexity of the transition process from preservice training into the profession of teaching, which is described as "a ritual bridge that beginning teachers have to cross to enter the world of teaching" (Britzman, 1986; Roy et al., 1998 as cited by Wanzare, 2007, p. 343), has been the inspiration for the current study to examine the specific experiences of Vietnamese millennial university teachers (MUTs). This chapter investigates how ten MUTs adjusted their teaching practices, how they mediated their relationships with peers, colleagues, and students, and how they socialized into the field as teachers during their graduate transition to work. The chapter continues by presenting the theoretical framework and methodology of the study, followed by the findings laying out the themes coded from the data and a discussion. The chapter ends with a conclusion and some implications for future inquiry.

Theoretical Framework

This study is theoretically informed by the Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). According to Cole and Engeström (1993), the subject is the individual or groups of individuals involved in the activity, and the object is the motivating influence behind subjects' participation in the activity. In this study, the subject and object mean MUTs and their teaching profession, respectively. According to the framework, a community is the social and cultural group that subjects are a part of, with explicit rules or social norms that regulate and influence behavior (Cole & Engeström,

1993). In this case, community refers to the classroom, institutional and social contexts. Mediating artifacts or tools are symbols, signs, and conceptual understandings that serve as physical and psychological tools, mediating activity between the subject and the object (Cole & Engeström, 1993), such as languages and educational materials and tools. The division of labor defines how tasks and responsibilities are shared among system participants as they engage in the activity (Cole & Engeström, 1993). Meanwhile, the rules, both explicit and implicit, refer to norms and expectations for behavior that afford and constrain behaviors in an institutional setting (Fig. 16.1).

There is a unique sense in CHAT both as given and as constructed, which means that as newcomers enter the sites of the activity, they must negotiate and navigate their way through an already populated field (Edwards, 2009). This is particularly true in the cases of MUTs who first entered the teaching profession. In addition, the three collective elements of rules, community, and division of labor represent an organizational aspect that allows for consideration of activity theory in the workplace.
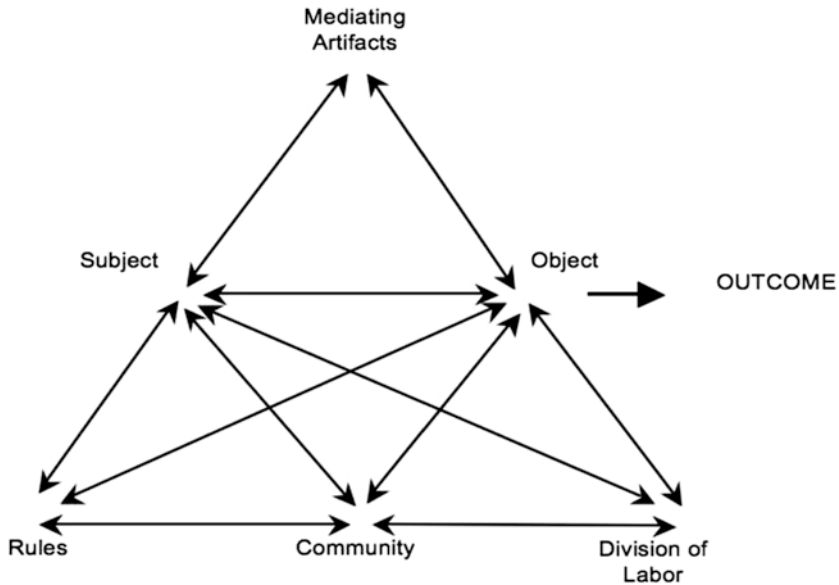
Fig. 16.1   Cultural historical activity theory (Engeström, 1987)

Methodology

Using retrospective data, the study interviewed ten Vietnamese MUTs (born 1980 to 1995) working in a public university in Vietnam. They all obtained a Master's degree in TESOL or English language teaching methodology, and they went through either teacher training programs at their undergraduate level or short courses of teacher training. Table 16.1 provides demographic information on the participants.

The participants were recruited by purposive and snowball sampling methods. The authors first approached potential participants through our own professional networks. We described the objectives of the study and obtained their consent for research participation. We then asked the teachers who agreed to take part in our study to introduce us to other millennial teachers. The research team administered the interview individually with the MUTs. Before each interview, the authors reminded the participants that we would guarantee their confidentiality and anonymity. We encouraged the MUTs to only talk about what they felt comfortable with, and they could stop the interview at any time. The MUTs were asked in

Table 16.1 Participants' demographic information

Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	Highest qualification	Years of teaching experience	Undergraduate major
An (MUT1)	Female	MA	9 years	English language teacher education
Lan (MUT2)	Female	MA	5 years	English language teacher education
Thu (MUT3)	Female	MA	5 years	English language teacher education
Tam (MUT4)	Female	MA	5 years	English language teacher education
Thanh (MUT5)	Female	MA	6 years	English language teacher education
Tuan (MUT6)	Male	MA	6 years	English linguistics
Hong (MUT7)	Male	MA	4 years	English language teacher education
Phuong (MUT8)	Female	MA	5 years	English linguistics
Nga (MUT9)	Female	MA	9 years	English language teacher education
Hoan (MUT10)	Female	MA	9 years	English translation and interpretation

the interview to reflect on their experiences at various points in their teaching career, including some reflection before they entered the labor market, the first few years as early career teachers, and their current and future projection of their career. The questions focused on the participants' career stories, the GTW and beyond to the present time, focusing on sequences of events, challenges, and turning points. In addition, their adaptability, motivation, and professional satisfaction after GTW are explored. The interviews lasted from 30 to 70 minutes.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis demonstrated that participants experienced gaps in GTW in terms of the pedagogical knowledge and skills that they were taught and the reality of the teaching job. They were also confused because of a lack of formal orientation into the work system. They navigated the GTW by seeking support from various sources, including a community of beginning teachers like themselves and other experienced teachers.

The GTW Experiences

Lack of Authentic Classroom Teaching Experiences
Participants reflected on their emotions in the entrance phase into the profession, transitioning from a student to a teacher. Participants often spoke of their past selves as being "naive" and "inexperienced" and how the GTW made them realize differently. MUT1, for instance, said, "when I first graduated, I think I had some unrealistic expectations. I thought as a teacher, I would be very inspirational." The pregraduate teaching experience had not sufficiently prepared MUT1, as well as other participants, for real classroom teaching because the teaching was not authentic in terms of infrastructure, students, and materials (artifacts). Another teacher, MUT7, shared a similar experience. He openly expressed his satisfaction with the first two years of the curriculum in which he had to improve his language skills thanks to the stimulating environment that was created by his teachers and peers; however, for the last two years, which aimed at pedagogical knowledge and skills, he admitted that the excitement wore off because of the lack of practicality.

I prefer something more practical. Those courses prepared us pretty well, but I feel like I gained more from actual teaching experiences. Some of the courses did include a teaching practicum, but there was not much connection between the theory and practice, and I ended up forgetting most of them when I started out teaching.

As a preservice teacher, MUT7 was assigned to work with high school students. Since the beginning of his teaching job, however, he has been teaching university students (division of labor). There are unique characteristics to these groups of students and preferable ways to interact with them, but he was not prepared for the differences. Particularly, during the first week of his preservice experience, he felt confused and uncomfortable, almost as if he was not welcomed there, but he gradually overcame it with the help of some Facebook-mediated communication with the students.

It wasn't my first time teaching, but it was the first real school, not a language center. The class size was also large. It was very different then as a student teacher. I came into the classroom, very unsure of my role and power. (MUT7)

As preservice teachers, the MUTs did not have much chance to construct practical knowledge in authentic situations. MUT1 continued with her reflection:

I prepared the lessons carefully, very carefully. However, in class, the students were not active and not quite engaged in the lesson. They seemed lost…I blamed myself for this failure… To be honest, what I learned from the teacher education program at the BA level was not adequate. I knew the steps, theoretically, but in practice, these steps did not work. I didn't know why…I was so confused…There were days when I skipped lunch and prepared for the lesson. I was very worried.

The interview excerpts of MUT1 and MUT7 showed a range of emotions when the participants first started their teaching career. It was a mixture of disappointment, guilt, confusion, worry, and underperformance. MUT1 explained further that as a preservice teacher, she only taught one or two sessions at a time, but now as an in-service teacher, she had to teach four to five sessions in a row. The gap between the training program and real work context was challenging for MUT1. However, MUT1 was not alone.

As she discussed her issues with her peers, they had similar emotions and experiences. Similar to MUT1, MUT7, as a beginning teacher, struggled with lesson planning. To gain more confidence in the classroom, he even wrote the script for his lectures and did a demo-lesson with his friends "in case there was any failure."

> I spent a lot of time at the beginning thinking about what I should say in class, what questions students would ask and how to answer them, what to do if things didn't go as planned. […] Sometimes, to teach a two-hour lesson, I'd need two days to prepare.

Among the participants, three of them (MUT10, MUT6, and MUT8) did not have teacher education as their major at the undergraduate level. MUT10 reported her lack of methodological knowledge when she first started teaching (artifacts). "I focused on what games or activities to be included in the lessons, but I forgot that lesson objectives were most important. The lessons were fun and interesting, but it came from the games." Even when MUT6 and MUT8 had joined a three-month course for a teaching certificate before taking up the current faculty position, they found that the course was not of much help. For MUT8, the course seemed to aim at teachers of young learners, with whom she knew she would not work. For MUT6, the course took a generic approach, and he needed more instructions used in English language teaching practices. What MUT8 and MUT6 appreciated was the classroom observation and demo-teaching that they did on their own at language centers.

> When I worked part-time for this language center, I went through a three-week training course where I learned about classroom management and English language teaching. I was also allowed to observe other teachers. I spent almost two months (unpaid) for that kind of observation, sitting in the classroom of the most popular teachers there, helping them if needed, but mostly learning from them. (MUT6)

Participant MUT8 admitted that she struggled, for example, to design engaging classroom activities because of her nonpedagogical background. She tried to make up for it by attending relevant workshops organized by the faculty and the university, by asking to observe her senior colleagues or by collecting students' feedback (community). She still felt as if "something is missing" and was determined to sign up for pedagogical courses to bolster her confidence in teaching.

For MUT3, the disoriented feeling was even stronger. Starting her career path as a secondary teacher, she was overwhelmed by the trembling and fear at the beginning since she was given no orientation or introduction to teach students at this level after being recruited. She emphasized:

> Students' characteristics and attitudes were briefly described informally by some senior colleagues during the breaktime. I remembered at that time, I was given teaching materials and syllabus without any explanation of what to teach and how to teach. Professional meetings and training for newly recruited teachers were rarely organized.

This meant that all decisions were left to MUT3's own discretion, from planning lessons and managing classrooms to maintaining orders and disciplines. The teaching practicum at MUT3's fourth year was hoped to provide her hands-on experiences with the real teaching contexts, but it lasted six weeks only. It was not sufficient to either get her familiar with the authentic classroom setting or help her gain a thorough understanding of the high school system. MUT3 thus showed her desire to have more real-classroom observations at different levels of the educational system, from primary, secondary, high school to tertiary levels. These observations should be added as a compulsory activity prior to the official practicum, so preservice teachers may have an overview of what happened in reality and identify their weaknesses in their own teaching practices. In her own words:

> The content of the curriculum at the university level focused more on the theoretical aspects and lacked practicality. I started my career journey as a secondary school teacher, but no orientation or introduction of this level was provided during my school years, not yet to mention the opportunities to teach in authentic situations at this level.

Participant MUT3 admitted that she felt a bit jealous of her friends' freedom at other institutions since they were encouraged to actively participate in authentic classrooms for observation. In agreement, MUT4 confirmed that her fourth year was the only time when she had opportunities to put the learned theory into practice during the six-week practicum. Regarding classroom authenticity, MUT4 further explained that prior to the practicum, she performed microteaching for fourth-year students. Accordingly, her classmates acted as her students while she taught a lesson for 15–20 minutes. During the teacher recruitment process at her current

workplace, she also delivered a 15-minute session teaching unreal students who were, in fact, Faculty Dean, Vice-Dean, and senior teachers of the faculty. In this regard, MUT4 had almost no authentic classroom teaching experiences, which created challenges for her when preparing for an actual lesson.

> Although I prepared carefully for the lesson and I was familiar with lesson planning, I still felt worried, even scared when teaching in front of experienced teachers. Why didn't they ask me to teach a real class with real students and act as observers only? I did not have much time in the real classroom during my school year, and then my teaching performance was not even evaluated in a real context. (MUT4)

Although MUT4 appreciated the knowledge provided in English language teaching subjects at her BA and MA levels, there were almost no workshops about the teaching career, experience sharing from her teachers and lecturers to compensate for the lack of authenticity in the curriculum (artifacts).

As MUT5 mentioned, one factor that contributed to her dissatisfaction between the curriculum and her early teaching career was the absence of authentic teaching situations. She explained:

> The two most important assignments for fourth-year students at my university, namely, microteaching and teaching practicum, were done in groups or at least in pairs. So somehow, we could be dependent on our partners. We had nearly no chances to act as independent teachers in the real classroom, which made me shocked when transferring to the workplace where we did everything on our own, from lesson planning to classroom management. I even felt like being a sole soldier combating enemies.

Disorientation and Workload

The MUTs spoke of disorientation and the feeling of being overwhelmed when they acclimated themselves to the work environment. The lack of formal training and orientation (mediating artifacts) in the work system and mechanism arouse strong emotions among the MUTs. MUT7, for example, had doubts about himself. The lack of orientation sent him on short-term contracts with different higher education institutions, both public and private, which made him feel even more unsure about teaching English as a profession.

Even though I was trained to teach English language skills, I find my teaching uninteresting and ineffective. I don't think I'm good at teaching English language skills and don't want to teach it for the rest of my life.

The MUTs reported their difficulties in reading the implicit rules in their workplace (rules). MUT1 was unsure about how to address other experienced teachers, and MUT6 was unaware of how his clothing left impressions on others.

There was a time when I taught English for communication to a group of working adults. At first, they were very much against my shabby choice of clothing. […] They did not tell me directly, but via the class manager, that I should not wear the same items all the time. I did make adjustments and they also paid less attention to that once we got to know each other better. (MUT6)

Meanwhile, there were multiple tasks (division of labor) that MUTs were assigned, or engaged with, without previous knowledge and experience or formal training and instruction from their faculty or institution, which made them feel overwhelmed. For instance, MUT6 was chosen to be the Secretary of the Faculty's Youth Union, which he believed should be departmentalized instead of adding up to the "young" teachers' responsibilities. Another example is MUT8, who was assigned to be the research assistant of her faculty. She admitted to being overwhelmed by the procedures that came with this position. She had many questions and needed instructions for almost every step.

The paperwork is way too complicated. I'm still figuring it out and getting help from the faculty, but I'm scared whenever I have to go to the administration office. People there seem a bit cold and like to order me around.

Sharing the same opinions with MUT6 and MUT8, MUT4 complained that newly recruited teachers were unaware that the faculty would use a set of criteria to evaluate and then rank their performance.

Most of the new teachers had a strong belief that their main task at that time (apprenticeship) was related to teaching practices, but ridiculously, it accounted for only 30% of the total score. The remaining 70% were for their willingness and enthusiasm to participate in the activities held by the Faculty's Youth Union, administrative works, and relationships with colleagues. (MUT6)

In a similar vein, MUT3 could not anticipate such a high frequency of being observed and given feedback on her teaching performance, not yet to mention the tons of documents and reports she had to fulfill during this time. Therefore, it could be said that little guidance and instruction was provided to fully prepare the new teachers for their teaching duties. Consequently, they had no choice but to participate in those activities regardless of their preferences and characteristics. Being considered young teachers in the faculty, some of the MUTs further complained about unnamed tasks that they were automatically tasked with, especially with administrative duties. They were almost unaware of these responsibilities when they were preservice teachers, and they did not have a formal training or protocol provided for them. "I learned by following others," MUT1 remarked.

In contrast to the extant literature where newcomers such as the MUTs in this study usually start out at the periphery, working on tasks with limited complexity and responsibility while still being relevant and meaningful as a future active participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the MUTs were challenged with multiple complex tasks and were still treated as staying at the periphery. However, this paradox was necessary for the MUTs to achieve the legitimacy that allows them to be acknowledged as full members (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Support Systems

To ease the transition period, the MUTs relied on two main sources of support: their circle of peers and senior teachers, including direct mentors (communities).

Community of Young Teachers

The participants seemed to rely most on the small community of their own during the GTW process. Similar to the study by Clark and Byrnes (2015) showing millennial generation preservice teachers, the participants in this research also considered peers to be more important than senior teachers or faculty members as a mental support resource and socialization in their transition phase. In MUT9's words, as a newly recruited young teacher, she considered herself and her peers "just some kid." Even when the MUTs were engaged in mentoring programs, the mentoring was more about improving MUT's classroom teaching practices, rather than enabling them to form a bonding with colleagues and gain a better

understanding of the work culture. MUT5 commented that while normally, beginning teachers in her faculty were engaged in the mentoring program for the first two years of their teaching career, she had to be a mentee for four years. This is what she referred to as an "unjust decision." The mentoring program, while supposed to provide novice teachers such as MUT5 with professional support, turned into a mechanism against which her teaching performance was assessed. She was uncomfortable because being a mentee, to a certain extent, shook her teacher identity. In other words, it made her feel underqualified for the job she was employed to do. Simultaneously, it lengthened her GTW period, which almost led her to leave the job. The MUTs were not proactive in seeking support from senior colleagues because they were afraid of being judged, of exposing their vulnerabilities and their inexperience. As they were unsure of how to engage with the wider community, the participants found themselves more attached to other beginning teachers. They shared similar teaching issues, emotions during the GTW, and experiences navigating the new work environment. Both MUT3 and MUT4 said that they normally sought help from the group of newly recruited teachers instead of asking senior teachers for their advice. Finding people of the same age in a similar situation, they were willing to share their thoughts, hindrances, or even complaints. A virtual group of young teachers was then created to exchange information and update the schedule and even guidance and solutions to the administrative tasks. However, the MUTs admitted that the community of young teachers acted more like a space for them to let out their emotions rather than a community of practice.

Support from Mentors and Senior Colleagues
Participants MUT3 and MUT4 shared the same opinion that they felt grateful for having cooperative mentors and senior colleagues during their first two years as beginning teachers. They witnessed massive improvement in their teaching experiences as preservice teachers and as in-service teachers, especially during their two-month apprenticeship. However, the support they received seemed to be insufficient when "some other work-related aspects such as organizational culture, maintaining relationships, inhouse communication were not mentioned or supervised at all" (MUT3). Once again, MUT3 and MUT4 both clinged to peers in their own community of young teachers and learned from others' communication breakdown or failure.

> I was the youngest member of the division I was working for, so other teachers treated me as a "small baby" that needed protection and guidance. I was even provided with the core and supplementary materials, slides, and suggested videos that could be used in class. However, as a new teacher, I felt a bit overprotective since I had not been in contact with other members for a long time. Therefore, I needed to be careful with all the words that were uttered. (MUT3)

While some MUTs were totally dependent on their peers as a community of support, others reached out to their mentors and senior colleagues. MUT6, MUT8, and MUT7 all showed contentment with their working environment with a high level of gratitude and trust in the faculty. They shared the sentiment that they would have many questions, but they knew who to ask, from the Dean to the Head of their division, their mentors to other faculty members and felt assured that they would get the help they needed.

> If I have a problem related to teaching, I could ask Ms A; if it's a bureaucracy issue, I could turn to Ms B. Our division has a group chat, so if it's appropriate, I will raise the question there. They make me feel like they're always on my side, giving advice that is the most beneficial for me. Some of them are almost my mum's age, but they often talk with youthful energy, so I feel comfortable communicating. This is very different from my previous workplace, where it was extremely difficult to talk to the older teachers. They did not seem to like young faculty members. There was a lack of trust and open-mindedness to whatever nonconforming to the existing system. (MUT6)
>
> The Dean helps me out with the paperwork. She makes sure I'm never confused or panicked. She is also encouraging, giving out little rewards from time to time. The other teachers in my division are all understanding and helpful, too. Sometimes they are the one reaching out and ask if I have any difficulties, even for things that are not work-related. (MUT7)

Other MUTs reached out to specific individuals for professional advice and consultation. MUT2, MUT10, and MUT1 acknowledged the importance of collaborative and trusting relationships between themselves as beginning teachers/mentees and their mentors who became models for them in a real classroom context. Some of the following statements were exemplary of this point.

> I was impressed with some senior teachers, they were very open and so help-ful. They volunteered to do some class observations for me. My mentor gave me lots of feedback, very constructive, detailed feedback. It helped me to improve a lot. (MUT10)
>
> I asked for Mr. B's permission and audited his courses in teaching meth-odologies, and it was very helpful. It shed light on my own teaching. My mentors were excellent, I learned a lot from them. (MUT2)

The participants found that the complementarity of knowledge sources from other university faculty and the school mentor to their learning was important in GTW.

Discussion

Understanding the experiences that occur during the GTW phase is com-plex. The above data analysis highlighted the gaps between the MUTs' teacher training programs and the reality of being in-service teachers dur-ing the GTW period. These gaps showed that the mediating artifacts such as knowledge and skills that the MUTs gained from their education might not be sufficient for their activity system to work well throughout GTW. Recognizing the gaps or the mismatches between what was taught and what was happening in reality made the MUTs adjust to the new envi-ronment. Millennial university teachers' newfound awareness of gaps shifted their focus from teaching English to students to becoming a teacher, which revealed their wide range of emotions and socialization into the new work environment. This shift also signaled a change in the object of their CHAT or their conceptualization of the teaching career. The findings show that GTW acted as a boundary experience for the MUTs to assess the ideal and imagined image of being a university teacher against the actuality of classroom teaching and the teaching profession. In alignment with prior studies in which it is found that individuals are likely to go through several stages of self-exploration to build up a wider set of life experiences, herein re-evaluating value sets and their outcomes con-tinually (Hansen & Leuty, 2012; Kuron et al., 2015). The GTW was "problematic" (Ecclestone et al., 2010, p. 4) in the sense that it involved an "inevitable shock" (Stokking et al., 2003, p. 331) when the MUTs real-ized that what they were taught was not exactly the same as what was expected from them at work (Phan & Pham, 2022). The findings show that GTW acted as a boundary experience for the MUTs to assess the ideal

and imagined image of being a university teacher against the actuality of classroom teaching and the teaching profession. The GTW was also a self-learning experience for the MUTs (Boyle, 2022; Maitlis et al., 2013), based on which they improved their own teaching practices and taught themselves to adapt to the new work culture. Similar to the millennial preservice teachers in a study by Tang et al. (2020), self-development represents a distinctive type of intrinsic motivation for the millennial generation preservice teachers.

In terms of division of labor, in contrast to the extant literature where newcomers such as the MUTs in this study usually start out at the periphery, working on tasks with limited complexity and responsibility while still being relevant and meaningful as a future active participant (Lave & Wenger, 1991), the MUTs were challenged with multiple complex tasks and were still treated as staying at the periphery. However, this paradox in division of labor was necessary for the MUTs to achieve the legitimacy that allows them to be acknowledged as full members (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Hurst and Good (2009) posit that individuals are heavily influenced by their existing expectations. This is particularly true in the case of millennials (Krahn & Galambos, 2014; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017). In this study, the MUTs all reported that they were willing and attempted to bring their "best selves" to teaching (Craig, 2013), despite initial struggles when entering the job because of unrealistic expectations and anticipations about the job. This point demonstrated how the MUTs, as the subject of the activity system, were proactive in achieving the objective and the outcome. They also learned to seek resources from communities such as other MUTs or senior teachers to achieve the GTW outcome. Similar to previous studies, the MUTs considered their peers, other beginning teachers, as the main source of support (Clark & Byrnes, 2015) or communities to rely on for their activity system to work. However, in this study, they seemed to be proactive in seeking professional support from more experienced teachers, especially their mentors. This finding resonates with what has been found in the extant literature (Makinen et al., 2018; Phan & Pham, 2022). Coconstructing practical knowledge through interaction with experienced teachers functioned as an important aspect of professional learning for the MUTs. In this regard, GTW was the space for the MUTs to explore the constraints of their environment and the actual responsibilities they had to take on to form more realistic expectations (Nicholson & Arnold, 1991). The current study shows that the MUTs' response to the GTW was both to succumb to the constraints of their

environment and to explore themselves to evaluate the fit or misfit. This study suggests that GTW can be understood as a space in which contestation and agency happen so that early-career teachers can explore to conform to, challenge, and be empowered.

Conclusion and Implications

The study unravels the experiences of ten Vietnamese MUTs during their GTW phase, demonstrating how they were challenged by the reality of classroom teaching practices compared with what they were trained during their teacher education and pedagogical training programs. They were also confused because of a lack of formal orientation into the work system. They navigated the GTW by seeking support from various sources, including a community of beginning teachers like themselves and other experienced teachers.

The findings of the study highlight the need for provisions for professional entry and career planning to help millennial teachers be more aware of the teaching profession during their teacher training program. In agreement with previous studies (Makinen et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2020), this chapter calls for the creation and systematic administration of support to develop collaborative relationships between beginning teachers, veteran teachers, mentor teachers, and university leaders. It will be helpful for not only early-career teachers' professional knowledge construction but also their socialization into their work culture.

The findings of the study need to be understood within the limitations of the research. First, the GTW experience of MUTs in Vietnam and worldwide might be further complicated by the outbreak of coronavirus in 2019; however, there was a lack of data about the impacts of the pandemic in this area of scholarship as well as in this study. This can be explained by the fact that most of the participants had been working as teachers for more than five years, so their transition period predated the tumult of the pandemic. Another reason is that for some of the participants, the GTW might be considered an ongoing experience, but given the fairly recent appearance of the coronavirus, the timing of the interviews did not allow for their retrospection. Therefore, the constraints and opportunities provided by the pandemic for the GTW experience of teachers in Vietnam and in the global context, for example, the deprivation of face-to-face teaching practicums, will be a particularly interesting topic for future studies. In addition, the authors acknowledge that the small scale of

this study with a small sample size does not allow for and aim at any claim of generalizability applicable to the GTW of MUTs within the Vietnamese context or beyond. Nevertheless, the findings in this study offer implications for the GTW of millennial teachers in other contexts, both Western and non-Western environments. It is important that preservice teachers are well equipped with pedagogical knowledge and skills to feel less confused and disoriented. In that sense, the mediating artifacts and division of labor should be sufficient and authentic enough for them to navigate the GTW. In addition, rules should be made transparent for teachers during the GTW period so that they are well aware of their responsibilities and duties. The community also acts as a critical component in GTW, as it can either ease or complicate this transition. The findings hopefully shed new light on understanding the work experiences and contemporary challenges and opportunities of MUTs, which facilitate the development of the academic profession in Vietnam and other similar contexts. For future research, more studies with larger and postpandemic samples are recommended to achieve a more comprehensive picture of millennials' GTW. Longitudinal studies can also be conducted to shed more light on the identity development trajectory of millennials in general and MUTs in particular.

Dedication This book chapter is dedicated to the authors' dear friend, Linh Thi Thuy Pham, who was a hero in our hearts.

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Epilogue

Mousumi Mukherjee

The past few years following the COVID-19 pandemic have been a major test in resilience for institutional leadership. Many leaders and higher educational institutions around the world faltered. It led to massive "jobcuts" and "great resignations." The leaders, who anchored higher educational institutions to sail through difficult times with more compassion, flexibility, and adaptability, chose a hybrid remote work model.

Hence, in the post-pandemic world, hybrid remote work is becoming increasingly popular in many professional fields. However, what are the opportunities and challenges of hybrid remote work in academia across the diverse contexts of the world? Can hybrid remote work address the problems related to access, gender equality, mental health, and recruitment in higher education? What kinds of educational and support services can be offered in hybrid or remote mode? Can hybrid and remote work ensure quality and accountability? If so, then how? This timely compilation of articles from scholars in the United States and around the world has provided an answer to these questions. Those interested in learning

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345

about how the academic workplace is evolving post-pandemic will find this edited volume extremely interesting and useful.

There are publications that add to the existing literature in the field and there are those that break new ground. The edited book falls in the latter category as it sought to seek an answer to a critical research question about an emerging topic: Is hybrid and remote work here to Stay? The answer to this critical research question as it unfolds in the chapters of the book of course is not a simple "yes" or "no" answer. The answer to this one question is as complex as the complexity of the diverse contexts of the studies included in the book. Hybrid models offer greater flexibility, accessibility, and affordability. But it requires significant investment in digital infrastructure and quality assurance. Taking into consideration the diversity of the contexts of higher education and existing inequalities of resources, creating successful hybrid and remote work models will not be easy.

Hence, the leading question raised more research questions in every chapter of the book as the volume sought to "illustrate how a hybrid and remote campus is not only necessarily reasonable or feasible for certain campus positions in the United States and abroad but also for institutional commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion" (Chap. 1, p. 2). In the post-pandemic world of the "new normal" of hybrid and remote work, how can we leverage resources to invest in necessary digital infrastructures and also ensure high quality of academic and support services? Reading the chapters in this volume has made me think critically and creatively to look for solutions.

This edited volume is a must read for all those policymakers, practitioners, academics, and researchers, who are seriously interested in issues related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education. While some of the chapters in this book are based on empirical case studies of innovative approaches, others are conceptual in nature. Some of these chapters offer recommendations for "human resource professionals, faculty members, and advanced practitioners to consider when developing hybrid and remote work policies after COVID-19." Hence, this book is a must read for all stakeholders, who are invested in the future of higher education around the world.

Index[1]

[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.