

Post Covid-19 Special Issue Editorial

Interdisciplinary Perspectives to Sustain Effective Post-COVID-19 Classrooms



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ABSTRACT

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, teaching and learning have experienced various challenges and shifts from normal classroom dimensions to what several scholars regard as the "new normal." This situation disrupted teaching and learning systems, with various institutions trying to find alternative ways to ensure effective curriculum implementation. In the event that COVID-19 seems to be a thing of the past, there is a need to understand how best education actors could navigate the new shift. Therefore, researchers need to continue to work on improving educators' understanding of how best to teach and learn and how students and educational institutions respond to the shift in the post-pandemic classrooms. Based on this, a special issue was initiated to galvanize findings, views, approaches, and strategies to enhance sustainable post-COVID-19 pedagogical needs. Therefore, this special issue plays an essential role in helping students, scholars, educators, policymakers and educational agencies understand the present pedagogical shift and prepare for the future.

Keywords: *Post COVID-19 Classrooms, teaching and learning, new normal, pedagogical needs.*

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INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, teaching and learning have experienced various challenges and shifts. The pandemic has forced institutions to move away from traditional classroom dimensions and adopt new methods of instruction.¹ Several scholars have argued that this shift or new normal is likely to remain as it is where teaching and learning are dependent on the internet and the internet of things.²

¹ Petar Jandrić et al., "Teaching in the Age of Covid-19—The New Normal," *Postdigital Science and Education* 4, no. 3 (October 14, 2022): 877–1015, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-022-00332-1>; Sharyn Livy et al., "Creative Approaches to Teaching Mathematics Education with Online Tools during COVID-19," *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology* 53, no. 3 (March 16, 2022): 573–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0020739X.2021.1988742>.

² Sally Baker et al., "Equitable Teaching for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Exploring the Possibilities for Engaged Pedagogy in Post-COVID-19 Higher Education," *Educational Review* 74, no. 3 (April 16, 2022): 444–59, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.2015293>; Deepsuhra Guha Roy, "A Comprehensive Analysis of Sustainable IoT Infrastructure in the Post-COVID-19 Era," in *Intelligent Internet of Things for Healthcare and Industry*, ed. Uttam Ghosh et al. (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 219–37, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81473-1_11; Adamkolo Mohammed Ibrahim, Salisu Uba, and Abdulkadir Musa Abubakar, "COVID-19 Pandemic and Lockdown on Education: Proposing an 'e-Pedagogy on the Go' System as an Alternative e-Teaching and Learning Platform

Considering these changes, researchers have had to adapt their research methods, focus on new areas of inquiry, and provide new approaches to the new normal. For example, scholars are expected to explore how best to support online learning, how to design effective virtual classrooms, and how to assess student learning in digital environments. The pandemic has also led to a renewed focus on the importance of equity and inclusion in education.³ In sum, while the COVID-19 pandemic created numerous challenges for students, educators and scholars, it has also opened up new ways of doing things and create opportunities for research and teaching innovations.⁴

In education, researchers are busy finding new ways to improve teaching and learning methods under the hypotenuse of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). SoTL is a form of inquiry that uses evidence-based methods to study how best to teach and learn in a given context.⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has forced education practitioners to rapidly implement new technologies and pedagogies to continue providing the needed support for students. However, due to the chaotic nature of the pandemic, many researchers, including SoTL scholars, seem to have been affected and limited in engaging in research enquiry which could enhance or promote pedagogical updates needed to combat the leftover of COVID-19 pandemic in classrooms. This is unfortunate, as SoTL can provide valuable insights into how students learn in an online or hybrid environment.⁶ In addition, this endeavour can help in understanding how best to use new technologies to facilitate learning; therefore, it becomes important to continue investing in SoTL projects that could ensure that students receive an optimal curriculum disposition.

Since the pandemic has forced educators to rapidly shift to online instruction, with many institutions still struggling to catch up,⁷ students, including other classroom stakeholders, have been left to fend for themselves, often without the resources or support they need to be successful.⁸ This has led to a growing body of research on the impact of the pandemic on education, with a particular focus on the efficacy of online instruction.⁹ Researchers have been at the forefront of this research, investigating both the positive and negative effects of the shift to online instruction. All these studies indicate that online instruction can be effective, but it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Some students

During and in the Post-Pandemic Era,” *Media Education (Mediaobrazovanie)* 18, no. 1 (March 15, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.13187/me.2022.1.63>.

- ³ Paul Cairney and Sean Kippin, “The Future of Education Equity Policy in a COVID-19 World: A Qualitative Systematic Review of Lessons from Education Policymaking,” *Open Research Europe* 1 (January 13, 2022): 78, <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.13834.2>; Rivi Frei-Landau and Orit Avidov-Ungar, “Educational Equity amidst COVID-19: Exploring the Online Learning Challenges of Bedouin and Jewish Female Preservice Teachers in Israel,” *Teaching and Teacher Education* 111 (March 2022): 103623, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103623>.
- ⁴ Akinyinka Tosin Akindele et al., “The Impact of COVID-19 and FAIR Data Innovation on Distance Education in Africa,” *Data Intelligence*, August 18, 2022, 1–34, https://doi.org/10.1162/dint_a_00184; Miltiadis D. Lytras et al., “Translating Knowledge into Innovation Capability: An Exploratory Study Investigating the Perceptions on Distance Learning in Higher Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic - the Case of Mexico,” *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge* 7, no. 4 (October 2022): 100258, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2022.100258>.
- ⁵ Heather L. Henderson and Marguerite C. Sendall, “Positioning the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Firmly in the Center of Health Promotion Pedagogy,” *Pedagogy in Health Promotion* 8, no. 1 (March 2, 2022): 6–8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/23733799211061281>.
- ⁶ Melanie Hamilton and Karla Wolsky, “The Barriers to Faculty Reporting Incidences of Academic Misconduct at Community Colleges,” in *Academic Integrity in Canada: An Enduring and Essential Challenge*, ed. Sarah Elaine Eaton and Julia Christensen Hughes (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 467–85, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83255-1_24.
- ⁷ Leiv Opstad and Ivar Pettersen, “The Impact of Take-Home Open-Book Examinations Due to COVID-19 among Business Students. Do Gender, Age, and Academic Skills Matter?,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research* 4 (May 18, 2022): 28–43, <https://doi.org/10.51986/ijer-2022.vol4.03>.
- ⁸ Aloysius Rukundo and David Ayebare Santson, “COVID-19 Anxiety and Associated Factors among Finalist Undergraduate Science Teachers,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Studies* 1 (December 15, 2021): 37–46, <https://doi.org/10.51986/ijss-2021.vol1.05>.
- ⁹ Oluwaseyi Emmanuel Alasoluyi, “Teachers’ Awareness and Competence in the Switch from Classroom-Based to Online Teaching During COVID-19 Pandemic in Lagos, Nigeria,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research* 3, no. 2 (May 6, 2021): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.51986/ijer-2021.vol3.02.03>.

flourish in an online environment, while others struggle. Therefore, researchers must continue to research and adapt their instructional methods to meet the needs of all students. Scholars, therefore, play an important role in this effort, and their work will continue to be essential in the post-pandemic classroom. It is believed that this is significant in helping scholars, educators, and educational agencies understand the present and prepare for the future, which forms the basis upon which this special issue was called to address. That is, the special issue engaged scholars across various teaching and learning spaces to share their findings, approaches, strategies, views, and arguments, among others, that could enhance sustainable post-COVID-19 pedagogical needs in classrooms. Therefore, the special issue provides pedagogical approaches in post-COVID-19 classrooms.

METHODOLOGY

In order to answer the research question, the guest editor, alongside the journal management, made a call for a paper on how to best respond by finding new approaches that could assist educators in coping well with the post-COVID-19 new normal. The *call for papers* was titled “Sustaining Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Post-COVID-19 Classrooms” and accommodates inter/multi-disciplinary approach to the post-COVID-19 classroom. That is, the call was not limited to scholars in the field of education; instead, it was made open to accommodate other fields of study that deal with teaching and learning. Authors were asked to submit proposals in the form of a 300-word abstract. Out of 41 abstracts, only 35 were accepted with a mandate to develop their full articles. Among 33 articles submitted, only 23 were accepted and published. The acceptance process includes the adoption of a double peer review process where each article was subjected to anonymous peer review. This review process involved two different reviewers who are anonymous to the authors, and the authors are also anonymous to the reviewers. This was done to ensure a quality production process as indicated and practised by the journal and its publisher. The decision to accept and/or reject any article was informed by the reviewers’ recommendations and the satisfactory revisions made by the authors where necessary.

The Issues in the Special Issue

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the education sector, with schools and universities around the world having to adapt rapidly to a new reality. In this special issue, various authors from different disciplines, including education, management, social and health sciences, offer their insights into coping with and adapting to the COVID-19 shift. Though most of the contributors are from South African institutions, their findings can be adopted and used globally in educational institutions. Several different approaches and strategies are put forward, along with recommendations for solutions that can be implemented by students, teachers, lecturers and other education actors. Strategies that integrate religious education in Post-COVID-19 against school violence, strategies that improve instruction of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, School-Based Teacher Professional Development, promote mathematics teaching among undergraduates, and enhance general teaching and learning of various classrooms, including social media pedagogies. Strategies to promote online supervision and Fourth Industrial Revolution 4.0 (4IR) towards digital transformation were presented. Some of the articles also provide a comprehensive overview of the latest thinking on how to prepare young people for the challenges of the 21st century and outline a range of practical measures that can be taken at all levels to support this process.

It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a major challenge to the education sector, but it is also clear that there are ways to overcome these challenges and emerge stronger than ever before. One can then argue that this special issue provides a comprehensive overview of the latest research on the post-COVID-19 pedagogical need to enhance scholarship and effective and efficient curriculum implementation across the board.

CONCLUSION AND KNOWLEDGE IMPLICATION

This special issue considers some of the challenges educators have faced during the pandemic and attempts to provide some practical solutions. The topics covered in this special issue are not limited to online learning, distance education, curriculum design and implementation, and assessment. These areas have been affected by the pandemic and will continue to be relevant in the post-COVID-19 world. The authors of this special issue provide a valuable resource for anyone who is interested in staying up to date with the latest thinking on post-COVID-19 pedagogy. This issue is also useful for educators and provides a meaningful update to COVID-19 and educational-related literature more generally. As such, it is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the implications of the pandemic for education.

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