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Sticking to Service

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This is the first second issue of the year, though its publication bled into January. We plan to pull the annual timeline a bit early, publishing two issues around April-May and November-December from this year. After five years, the journal has gained traction, with rapidly increasing submissions (which we're aware is also partly due to the pandemic). And I am grateful to the dedicated team of editors and many reviewers who are also generous with their time. The editorial team owes much to our advisors and we thank our authors for their patience during this difficult time.

This issue also represents a more diverse group of scholars. The six standard articles, ten peer reviewed essays, and one book review are from scholars in Botswana, Canada, Ecuador, Finland, Nepal, South Africa, Turkey, and the United States. They cover a wide range of issues from curriculum to institutional and global perspectives, from bias to inclusion and justice in higher education, from academic leadership and good governance to international education, from virtual learning and innovation in education. Many others directly focus on issue about or raised by the ongoing pandemic. We hope that you will find a few articles worth browsing and skimming through, with one or more to read closer.

With the global pandemic raging in many countries, the difficulties continue to affect our work, logistically and intellectually. We continue to grapple with difficult questions about Covid-19's impact on higher education, on society, on the planet. The economic impact of this crisis may delay important social action on all kinds of fronts, exacerbating inequality and injustice, as well as draining away resources from social progress. The authors in this issue continue to foreground issues foregrounded by the crisis.

Strangely, the pandemic seems to have increased the quantity of scholarly production around the world—if not quality as well—an issue also touched upon in the previous editorial. Just to share what I encounter as an editor, many manuscripts we receive seem to reflect aggravations of emerging dynamics in the global publication landscape. For instance, an author from India emailed recently to ask how much we charge for publishing an article; he had not considered the name or scope of the journal, indicating that he'd like to publish a computer science article that had nothing to do with higher education. The pressure to publish is rising dramatically around the world. Scholars regularly ask where this journal stands on the impact factor, an important question for sure, but the description of their projects don't reflect any originality, substance, or rigor. The pressure to meet standards is similarly rising, without matching support through time, resource, or reward by their institutions. Looking up titles of some submissions reveal that the manuscript was previously published by some of the coauthors, with slight variations, and so on. Research questions and findings often seem obvious, the engagement with current scholarship patchy, and argument lost in the author's language proficiency. The same authors could have done a far better job if their institutions didn't demand "international" publication, if scholarship was driven more by social impact than by counting citation or the number of publication, if knowledge production was valued in local languages. The rising demands for English-medium, international, prestigious journals are driving scholars around the world desperate.

So, instead of just looking at the quality of the text we receive, we try to focus on what a colleague of mine calls "thought per line" and then on what problem the work seeks to solve, what it seeks to change or challenge in the world, what it adds or clarifies significantly. We provide support on the side of language and writing. Unfortunately, the landscape of publication is likely to make it harder and harder for editors and reviewers who want to contribute their service to the advancement of knowledge to focus on what we believe really matters. Corporate-owned journals seem to be publishing just about anything that helps them make money. So, it is tempting for many scholars to go that route, instead of the more rigorous and time-consuming path of conventional journals like this. That is to say nothing about predatory publishers that financially exploit desperate scholars across the world and contribute to potentially dangerous publications even more.

Universities in the global south aren't investing resource, providing support, or making the effort to maintain standards of research ethics and originality. Their grand visions to be "ranked" globally are often based on technocratic solutions and missions that inadvertently lead to results that stink. From high proportions of scholars publishing with predatory journals to fabricating data to publishing paraphrases of others' ideas, the problems seem to be spreading—and they're likely aggravated by the pandemic, which may be offering more time but not more access to resources, better data, richer experiences, or more reliable process of research.

But it is with the awareness of the challenges I describe above, an increased realization that we must stick to basic principles of academic service, a stronger desire to push the world of publication against the wrong directions, that we contribute our small bit. Thank you for reading the journal.

Peer Reviewed Article

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Policies and Curriculums: Remediation Methods in English Instruction at America's Community Colleges

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ABSTRACT

College and career readiness is a focal area within the United States for student achievement within the context of global competitiveness. Despite recent efforts to focus on the college and career readiness of America's students, national data has proven that many students are not prepared for college and need remedial intervention upon entrance into college. This discussion focuses on efforts at community colleges, specifically in the area of literacy, as they work to increase student retention and student success. Recent methods include developmental courses, co-requisite models, and statewide initiatives to determine how to best meet students' academic needs, while considering faculty voice and cost efficiency. Community colleges can serve as grounds to determine how various models of remediation work to ensure that college students can be served in the best capacity for their academic needs, excel in their programs of choice, and in turn, be competitive global citizens.

Keywords: College and Career Readiness, Remedial Education, Community Colleges, Literacy

College and career readiness has been one of the main focus areas for national educational outcomes in the United States, specifically within the last ten years (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2019). National legislation such as the Every Student Succeeds Act and state efforts such as the Common Core State Standards Initiative detail frameworks to assist states with preparing their students for their next stage of life after high school, whether college or a career. These frameworks focus on a holistic approach to readiness including the development of academic skills, social-emotional learning, as well as employability skills (American Institutes for Research, 2019). Specifically, the Common Core State Standards were created to prepare students in Kindergarten through 12^{th} grade to be more prepared for college and the workforce (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). These efforts stemmed from a need for American competitiveness on a global scale.

Despite recent efforts to focus on the college and career readiness of America's students, national data have demonstrated that only about a third of high school seniors are prepared for coursework in college in the areas of math and reading (Camera, 2016). In 2015, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) published data which showed that the college preparedness gap was widening between the highest and lowest performing students (Camera, 2016). NAEP data also showed a national graduation rate of 82%, which implies that some students are graduating without being ready to perform well in college (Kamenetz, 2016). Due to lower levels of college readiness, colleges across the country are working to provide quality interventional services for students who are behind academically. The focus of this discussion is to explore current research on policies governing methods of alternative course delivery at community colleges for students who need remediation in the area of English, specifically, upon entrance into college. The discussion will also present recommendations to meet the needs of students who need academic interventions.

College Attendance after High School

In recent years, students across the country have chosen to continue their education at community colleges. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) reported in the school year 2013-2014, 42% of undergraduate students in the country enrolled in community colleges, and 46% of all students who completed an undergraduate degree had enrolled in a community college during their educational tenure (Ma & Baum, 2016). These institutions generally offer an open admissions policy and lower tuition costs. Recognizing the cheaper cost alternative and economic convenience for students, many states across the country, such as California, Delaware, and Tennessee are offering community college attendance tuition-free for qualifying students (Farrington, 2020). Although students are attending community colleges, national retention rates demonstrate that many students do not complete their degree or certificate programs (Ma & Baum, 2016). The lack of completion is due to a variety of factors involved in a student's college experience.

Academic Preparedness

One factor which influences college completeness is academic preparedness. For incoming students, many institutions of higher learning rely on placement tests to determine the need for remedial coursework mainly in the areas of English, Reading, and Math. Some incoming freshmen are required to enroll in three or four courses within a developmental area (Jaggers, Edgecombe, & Stacey, 2014). Additionally, about half of all college students and 70% of students who entered community colleges were required to take at least one remedial course at college entry (Scott-Clayton, 2018). Studies have shown that students who complete their remedial coursework are more likely to stay in college and graduate (NCES, 2016). These completion rates are likely a result of remedial courses strengthening students' literacy skills. When students are confident in their academic abilities, they are more likely to complete their coursework thus demonstrating how remedial coursework is effective in providing necessary skills for students once enrolled in mainstream courses.

Developmental Courses

Remedial or developmental courses improve college completion rates for students who are underprepared for college (Kane et al., 2020; Bio & Korey-Smith, 2018). Although remedial education has academic benefits, critics of the courses argue that they are expensive, costing students nearly 1.3 billion dollars annually (Douglas-Gabriel, 2016). With college costs at alarming rates, additional costs for remedial courses can deter students from continuing their coursework. Also, low student attendance and withdrawals have been reported within remedial courses since the courses often do not provide credit toward degree completion. The rate of return on their investment is low due to the lack of credit-bearing remedial courses. The discrepancy between costs and credits causes students to experience debt since often times, federal and state grants do not provide full costs for remedial coursework (Hauptman, 2019).

Specifically, for developmental writing, Barhoum (2017) explained that course pathways are lengthy, students lack individual support, and course curriculums offer non-relevant assignments. Likewise, Relles and Duncheon (2018) found that instructors of developmental writing courses were often pressured by time for quality instruction and had large class sizes which made it difficult to meet the needs of particular students. As a result of these learning conditions, deficit thinking was reinforced with blame on the students in remediation rather than a focus on how to improve the learning environment (Gutiérrez, Hunter, & Arzubiaga, 2009; Relles & Duncheon, 2018). As in mainstream classes, students in developmental writing courses need continuous encouragement to succeed in their studies, meaning that instructors must work to challenge the deficit approach to the learning environment.

Also, some developmental English courses focus heavily on grammar and lower-order sentence concerns rather than critical reading and writing skills that are essential to success in mainstream English courses and courses in other disciplines. This heavy focus on grammar can hinder students from developing their critical thinking skills which are necessary for reading comprehension and writing. Concerning funding of programming, institutional resources serve as a critical component to the experience of remedial students in developmental writing. However, community colleges are the sector of higher education in the U.S. with the least available funding to implement support to assist students in developmental courses (Callahan & Chumney, 2009). Therefore, an increase of funding is essential to effectively meet the academic needs of students who would benefit from developmental courses.

Increasing Retention and Student Success

To improve learning conditions for students who need developmental education, some states have allowed students to bypass developmental courses. California ended its required remedial courses in its community college system in 2018, while Florida made remedial courses option in 2014 (Barshay, 2014). Other states' community college systems have worked to create new approaches to assessment, placement, and coursework. Considering assessment, many community colleges use the national placement test of ACCUPLACER to determine the courses in which students should enroll. ACCUPLACER is administered by the College Board to "help colleges assess student readiness for introductory credit-bearing courses and make reliable placement decisions" (College Board, 2020). The ACCUPLACER exam is an effort to provide an equitable opportunity for students to attend college through placement.

Although the assessment is used at colleges nationwide, a study by the Community College Research Center found that placement tests do not yield strong predictions of how students will perform in college (Community College Research Center, 2012). In contrast, the same study found that a student's high school grade point average was more useful in predicting a student's college performance and their college grade point average (Community College Research Center, 2012). Also, some studies have found that placement exams have measurement error as some students are "underplaced" in developmental courses, meaning they should have been placed in a mainstream course, and others are "overplaced" in a college-level course, meaning they needed to be placed in a developmental course (Belfield & Crosta, 2012; Scott-Clayton, 2012). Due to recent studies on the effectiveness of placement testing, the consideration of high school grade point average, along with factors such as cost and credits, alternative approaches are being initiated. Instead of assigning placement tests as the sole measurement of readiness, other methods are yielding positive outcomes including multiple measures for assessing readiness, accelerated developmental courses, high school partnerships, improved preparation for placement tests, and corequisite courses.

Implementation of Alternative Placement Models

Community colleges across the nation are implementing alternative placement methods for students to improve the efficiency of developmental courses. For example, the University of Hawaii's Community College system scaled developmental English courses to increase the number of students entering into mainstream English courses by using the co-requisite model (Bio & Korey-Smith, 2018). With the co-requisite model, the developmental course is taken at the same time as the mainstream English course. This model saves time and money for students as they simultaneously take the necessary courses. The University of Hawaii's Community College system saw an increase in student achievement in mainstream English course completion rates with an increase in percentage from 37% to 54% (Bio & Korey-Smith, 2018). They also had 1,000 fewer students enrolled in remedial courses in 2016 when they introduced the new placement model than in 2013. Likewise, Schrynemakers et al. (2019) studied policies at three urban community colleges which provided three tracks for students entering into college: replacing traditional, semester-long developmental education courses with immersion programs and co-requisite courses, using high school grade point average instead of standardized examinations, adopting multiple assessment protocols for exit-from-remediation in place of high stakes testing. Furthermore, in the state of Texas, Governor Greg Abbott signed into law in 2017 the corequisite model as a requirement for students enrolled in developmental education courses (Smith, 2017). 54% of the state's students at community colleges take developmental education courses, and students have shown significant increases in passing mainstream courses in math, writing, and reading (Smith, 2017). These models demonstrate that the co-requisite model has proven not only to be efficient, but also yields academic success for students.

Current Statewide Initiatives

As of 2020, a current statewide initiative to increase the gateway momentum is in North Carolina. The state has implemented the RISE program (Reinforced Instruction for Student Excellence) to reduce the number of students in remedial courses (Hui, 2019). The goals of RISE are as follows: "properly place students into gateway level courses with or without mandated corequisite supports, elimination of a placement test, and raising the GPA criteria from 2.6 to 2.8" (North Carolina Community Colleges, 2020). Under the policy, if students have graduated in the last 10 years from high school and have an unweighted grade point average of 2.8

or if they have an associate degree, they can enroll in college level math and English. If the students have a 2.2 or 2.799 GPA and their ACT or SAT score is high enough to meet the criteria, they can enroll in college-level math and English, but if their ACT or SAT score is not high enough, they will be placed in a corequisite course. Lastly, if the student has been out of school for 10 years, homeschooled, or has a General Education Diploma (GED), they will have to take the placement test (Hui, 2019).

The policy was tested in 2019 at 14 community colleges in the state and was shown to save time, money, and frustration for students (Newsom, 2019). Also, fewer newly enrolled students had to sit for placement tests and were expending fewer dollars on courses outside of their program of study. The pilot study also found that the co-requisite courses helped students with academic skills they had forgotten or never learned (Newsom, 2019). In addition, students learned success skills, growth mindset activities, and soft skills. In the 2020-2021 academic school year, the state will implement the policy in 58 of its community colleges to allow students to move quickly to complete their English credentials, finish their English course on their first try, and become less discouraged and therefore, more likely to continue attending college (Hui, 2019). It will be beneficial for this statewide initiative in North Carolina to deliver similar results as those in Texas. As shown by the models, students perform well when they are able to be included within the mainstream learning environment with additional support instead of isolated by their remedial courses.

Concerns for Reform

Although new models of providing developmental education are yielding signs of student success, there are some concerns about the effectiveness of the instruction. Some claim that the reforms are moving too fast and are setting students up for failure (Daugherty, 2018; Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Additionally, the one-size-fits all policy approach that accelerates students into mainstream courses could leave some students without the proper foundation of English and mathematics skills (Daugherty, 2018). Also, top down mandates without sufficient engagement from faculty could create a combative atmosphere (Daugherty, 2018). Therefore, curriculum designers must work to ensure that students are receiving the proper supplemental instruction that developmental coursework delivers through careful selection of course materials and emphasis on instructional methods that meet goals and outcomes which align hand-in-hand with the mainstream English course curriculum.

Furthermore, in the area of costs, gateway courses are more effective, but have caused concern about the extra cost of implementation. A 2013-2014 pilot study in Tennessee was conducted at 13 community colleges which implemented corequisite remediation for math, writing, and reading (Belfield, Davis-Jenkins, & Lahr, 2016). While students did make successful academic gains, the cost for each student in the co-requisite course was subject to be higher than the per-student cost in a mainstream course (Belfield, Davis-Jenkins, & Lahr, 2016). This is due to smaller sections, more counseling, and the use of more faculty under the corequisite model. The efficiency of the new models in the areas of administration and costs are of concern as students are making academic gains.

Faculty Voice

Measuring efficiency also involves the level of input provided by faculty who are in the midst of the implementation of the alternative models of providing developmental education reforms. Research has shown that faculty's voices are often left out of the decision-making process concerning these alternative models. Schrynemakers et al. (2019) sought to gather faculty's voices concerning the implementation of developmental courses in the area of college writing. Faculty at three urban community colleges noted that students were currently less college ready than five years ago thus deeming that college-level reading and writing skills were essential for students to achieve academic success (Schrynemakers et al., 2019). They were also concerned that students were advancing rather quickly to credit-bearing courses without the foundational reading and writing skills needed for those courses. Additionally, faculty expressed three major themes concerning developmental courses: the need for higher academic standards, more classroom-based solutions, and improved support services. They recommended the need for more writing-based tests, reading across the curriculum, and more writing-intensive courses for all students (Schrynemakers et al., 2019). Faculty development is necessary for the delivery of effective instruction in developmental courses for academic gains as well as for an increase in cultural competencies. Professional development can be provided through monthly webinars, access to instructional content, and through collaborative methods for faculty to share ideas concerning pedagogies that have been effective in the classroom both academically and culturally. It is also essential for faculty of developmental courses to continuously communicate with faculty of mainstream courses for an alignment of course instruction.

Student Supports

As students embark into colleges that have various forms of placement, those who may need remediation will need guidance and support when choosing a route, if they have a choice, and when enrolled in the developmental courses. Woods et al. (2018) advocates for college advisors to assist students by reviewing their high school academic performance to determine which courses will facilitate student success once in college. The researchers' findings align with other research in the field which supports the notion that advisors utilize multiple indicators such as course grades and non-cognitive factors to determine if students will be successful in the mainstream college courses (Scott-Clayton et al., 2014; Woods et al., 2018). According to Woods et al. (2018), the most prepared students in high school have an 86.2% likelihood of passing mainstream college English courses which indicates that highly prepared students also struggle with concepts in these courses. Therefore, the researchers suggest that advisors talk with students about on-campus supports such as tutoring, while also suggesting that students take a refresher course or corequisite course for assistance (Woods et al., 2018). This method allows students to still receive the foundational instruction to support them in their mainstream college courses.

Furthermore, students who are enrolled in developmental courses including corequisite supplemental courses should receive additional assistance with their coursework. Bodnar and Petrucelli (2016) found that collaborations between campus writing centers and developmental English courses increased students' self-confidence in their writing. During the course of the study, there was a leap in visits to the writing center as students were making recurring visits during and after the semester in which they were enrolled in the developmental course, correlating to an increase of students' self-confidence in their writing (Bodnar & Pertrucelli, 2016). Tutoring centers, online tutoring, and advising sessions have also proven to help increase student achievement in corequisite courses. Also, some faculty have expressed the need for embedded tutors in corequisite courses (Schrynemakers et al., 2019). Since these academic supports are available for students, instructors of developmental education should advise their students to utilize the resources as a part of the course requirements. Additionally, embedding instructional faculty from tutoring centers, the library, or other academic supports on campus can enable these faculty to work alongside the instructor to tailor the resources to align with the instruction taught in the class. The partnership between academic supports and classroom instruction can assist students with understanding the comprehensive nature as they seek resources from supports across the campus.

Closing the Gap: Student Achievement in College Literacy

Ensuring that America's students receive the best education is an ultimate goal of reforms within conversations surrounding the topic of developmental education. Specifically, for literacy, when students gain the necessary reading, writing, and critical thinking skills they need, they will be able to not only excel in their college courses, but also as they journey throughout life. As demonstrated in the literature, there are ongoing transitions in policy and curriculum to serve the diverse needs of diverse students.

A gap in the literature is how high schools can assist with preparing students for college-level English courses and how dual enrollment courses could be used as a precursor form of co-requisite courses that students can take before entering college. Instead of dual enrollment courses mainly serving students who are prepared for college-level English, they could be used for students who may need extra assistance before entering college. High school students can take dual enrollment developmental courses during their senior year to receive the foundational skillsets they will need when they enroll in mainstream college courses. This method can save time and money, and better prepare students for their transition into college.

As more states determine the best practices for serving students who need remediation, more research will need to be conducted to determine best practices in the areas of academic achievement, student retention, faculty perception, cost efficiency, and the effectiveness of support services. Community colleges can serve as grounds for the nation to determine how various models of remediation can work to ensure that our nation's college students can arrive with needs, be served in the best capacity for those needs, excel in their programs of choice, and in turn, be competitive global citizens.

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Teaching Lessons From COVID-19: One Department's Story of Transformation - An HBCU Narrative

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ABSTRACT

When the coronavirus pandemic hit the nation, colleges and universities in Maryland canceled face-to-face classes and switched to teaching their courses online in mid-March. The following exploratory study examines how the Department of Strategic Communication at Morgan State University (MSU), the largest historically Black university in the state, adapted aspects of its existing departmental culture in order to pivot to an emergency remote teaching environment during the coronavirus crisis. Through the lived-experience narratives of students, faculty, and staff, this study adds to the conversation about the value of compassionate teaching, community-building, co-creative learning, and course structuration. The article offers reflexive strategies and lessons for developing digital approaches to learning for the present and for crisis situations as a sustainable model.

Keywords: e-learning, emergency remote teaching, pandemic, co-creative learning, compassionate teaching, reflexive strategies

Building a Sense of Community through Communication

A supportive community and nurturing environment are foundational to historically Black colleges and universities' contributions to Black student holistic success (Arroyo & Gasman, 2014; Flemings; 1984). McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined community as "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p.9). Thus, a sense of community has four major tenets of actualization - membership, influence, integration/fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. When the coronavirus pandemic hit the nation, colleges and universities in Maryland canceled face-to-face classes and switched to teaching their courses online in mid-March. Educators around the globe were faced with the challenge of maintaining a sense of community during this emergency remote teaching period through various technologies and digital platforms. The following piece is one academic department's response to such a challenge. =Morgan State University (MSU) in Baltimore is the largest historically Black university (HBCU) in the state with approximately 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students. It was founded in 1867, after the Civil War, when America was a segregated society and entrance to most of the nation's universities was denied to African Americans. Approximately 80 percent of MSU's current enrollment is African American, but pre-pandemic MSU had a growing number of international and Latino students. MSU is located in a residential area of East Baltimore on a campus of 152 acres. Like other HBCUs, the university has a reputation for providing a nurturing environment for students, many of whom come from urban communities and are in the first generation of their family to attend college. A Carnegie-classified doctoral research institution, MSU offers more than 125 academic programs leading to degrees from the baccalaureate to the doctorate and acknowledges a diverse faculty. MSU comprises 10 academic units, and the School of Global Journalism & Communication (SGJC) is the youngest of Morgan State University's 10 academic units. It was formally established in July 2013 and began operations in the fall semester of that year. In the spring semester of 2020, there were 414 students in three undergraduate programs. In April 2020, the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) granted SGJC initial accreditation having achieved all nine accreditation standards successfully.

The Department of Strategic Communication, affectionately known as "SCOM," is one of three academic units of SGJC, the other two departments being Multiplatform Production and Multimedia Journalism. SCOM provides eight courses each semester, such as strategic communication writing, strategic communication campaigns, event planning, social media, practicum, crisis communication, political communication, and strategic communication for leadership. The department prepares students for careers in public relations, social media, media relations, entertainment communication, and digital-related jobs. SCOM has one full professor and one associate professor, both tenured. There are three tenure-track professors. Four of the five faculty members hold a Ph.D. in the field. The fifth faculty member expects to complete the doctorate by December 2020. Two of the five faculty members have earned the Accreditation in Public Relations (APR). The department has one administrative assistant who contributed to this study. There were 108 registered students during the spring semester of 2020.

SCOM has accepted its characterization as nimble, a word that others have used to describe its response to the pandemic teaching period from March 10 to May 6, 2020. However, predisposed flexibility might be a better term. The size of the department, the previously established academic routines, the push to evolve into a “kinder” department, and the reorganization to high-touch active learning approaches were the pieces that formed the framework of practices during the pandemic. The department’s nimbleness, however, did not begin with the pandemic but with the new SCOM department Chair appointed in 2018. At that time, a departmental-wide survey was conducted in order to get feedback from students about their ideas about the future direction of the department. While most students expressed overall satisfaction with the quality of instruction, there were some recommended areas of improvement. Seventy-eight percent of students voiced that the department could do more to be more welcoming. They reported that grading and other classroom practices were too inflexible.

Immediately, departmental faculty began meeting to find ways to be more flexible in classroom policies and departmental practices. Among the reforms were reducing the number of high stakes assignments, allowing students to submit major projects in stages giving ample opportunity for feedback and revision before final submission, and using rubrics in all classes with clear links to desired learning outcomes. The department has been working on refining its processes since then. As part of being more welcoming, the department’s administrative assistant started doing frequent welfare checks on students to gauge feedback on the departmental reforms. Over time, the administrative assistant emerged as the department’s chief retention officer. She routinely called students who were reported absent from class to see about their welfare. She ensures that all students have made appointments to be advised each semester. She tends to be the first triage stop for majors who may encounter challenges during the semester.

The survey also revealed that students wanted more emphasis on social and digital instruction. Eighty-two percent of students noted that the department's teaching approaches were too traditional and did not fully embrace social/digital media. Students also wanted more opportunities in entertainment and technical hands-on skills. Based on these results, the faculty conducted a curriculum review to find ways to include social and digital skills in all SCOM classes. The curriculum review also resulted in a favorable recommendation to the SGJC Dean to hire a professor with specific skills in social media, digital communication, and analytics. This is key. From that point, the department's curriculum emphasis was being developed to have students work in social media and digital spaces. Therefore, it was no surprise that students were predisposed to completing work in online platforms and producing digital products during the pandemic learning experience. The department already had an emphasis on retention, active learning, online collaboration, and "compassionate academics." Thus, the pandemic presented the department with an opportunity to apply these practices to an emergency learning situation.

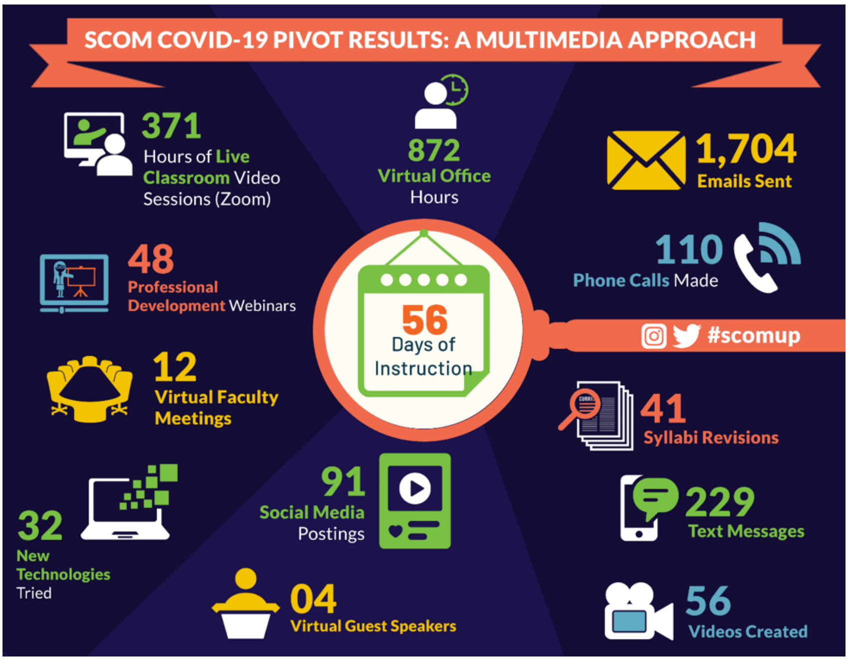

Figure 1 SCOM COVID-19 Pivot Results

Figure 1 provides a quantitative representation of our engagement with SCOM students as well as *visuall*y underscores the lengths we were willing to go as a coordinated department to make sure our students succeeded in an incredibly crucial moment in their academic careers.

The department's impact during the 56-day pandemic teaching period becomes more apparent when examining the outcomes of SCOM's implemented strategies for student success. Figure 1 shows specific multimedia activities faculty employed and the totals of those action items. It is important to note these approaches were not haphazardly developed but were designed in the first SCOM faculty departmental planning meeting in

March 2020 when the university decided to switch from face-to-face to remote instruction.

As we worked in the many ways that are illustrated, important questions emerged in our first daily and then weekly faculty meetings that ultimately guided the framing of this study. Questions such as: How were we going to codify the process that we were experiencing as it related to student achievements? What modalities appeared to engage students? What were the challenges and disruptions? What were the lessons learned that could be incorporated in remote as well as face-to-face instruction? These questions are worthy of interdisciplinary examination in higher education and place our work squarely within the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) where course design, student learning, and content delivery are central (Becker & Andrews, 2004).

What we learned through our self-reflexive work is significant as it opened up an important set of considerations for our department to take up both during and *after* the global pandemic lifts and invites other academic units from a variety of higher education disciplines to do the same. With this, our study addresses each of the aforementioned questions. The terms remote learning and online learning are used interchangeably.

In Figure1, there are 12 multimedia strategies ranging from the creation of motivational and instructional videos to the implementation of nontraditional classroom tools like text messages. The most frequent mode of multimedia action was email, with over 1,700 email exchanges. The most telling element of Figure 1 is the 41 syllabi revisions. The rapid execution of adjusting teaching approaches demonstrates the commitment of the department to making changes based on observations and feedback about student and faculty real-time experiences. Thus, the purpose of this exploratory qualitative, phenomenological study is to provide a focal lens on to those direct lived experiences of students, faculty, and staff in SCOM during the COVID-19 pandemic to advance teaching and learning, thus demonstrating how this type of multimodal communication was used to assist students with the transition into an emergency remote learning environment to advance teaching and learning.

Literature and The Theory That Informed: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

HBCUs emerged more prominently during the Reconstruction Era and were established by supportive networks of Black churches, the Freedman's Bureau, missionaries, and philanthropists. The nation's first and oldest HBCU, Cheyney University, was established as an institute for higher learning in 1837 (Lovett, 2015). Education, from the beginning, was viewed as a community supported effort to encourage equality and social mobility for African descendants.

In today's society, HBCUs are doing more than maintaining and surviving. They continue to produce a disproportionate number of Black undergraduates in the United States compared to predominantly white institutions (PWIs). According to a 2017 report from the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), HBCUs awarded 17 percent of all bachelor's degrees to African Americans although they make up only three percent of all institutions of higher learning (p. 3).

During this era of technology, however, HBCUs have been slow to move toward online learning. Data in the Riggs study (2019) from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics in 2018 showed that approximately three quarters of students who attended public and private PWIs took online courses. Yet, Riggs found that while the number of online programs at HBCUs has increased, "it can be concluded that roughly only one third of 102 HBCUs" offer online courses (p. 15).

This then begs the question why as online education has steadily grown since the 1980s, HBCUs have not developed significant enough online courses to stay on pace with their counterpart PWIs. Riggs contended that the slow growth of online courses by HBCUs inhibits their competitiveness for students in a marketplace that clamors for growth in numbers. Outlining five threats to the surviving of HBCUs, she stated:

> The second threat references staying competitive with newer and innovative technology driven institutions, specifically referencing large for-profit institutions such as the University of Phoenix. This university targets a similar minority population through their use of state-of-the art technology. This threat exemplifies the struggles HBCUs have keeping up with the implementation of current technology infrastructure, training, equipment and support. For-profit institutions pour many resources into this area and consequently, gain access to a minority population that would normally attend an HBCU. (p. 3)

There appear to be two key reasons for the lag in developing online courses by HBCUs. Mitchell (2013, p. 26) argued that the current status of HBCUs' slow development of online courses lies in mission and money. First regarding financing, on a macro scale, HBCUs continue to be underfunded and understaffed. Despite efforts to counter a historical legacy of inequitable funding, HBCUs receive inadequate funding especially from state governments and private donations.

Second, in terms of the role that mission plays in their reception to online courses, traditionally HBCUs tout their personal and nurturing touch with students. Williams (2017) conducted a study on why students chose to attend an HBCU. Her results showed that the contributing factors were alumni, cost, cultural identity, legacy, and location. An example of the nature of HBCUs is evident in an observation by Williams who wrote about a sign posted at MSU in 2015 that read: “Welcome to Morgan State University, where Black lives have always mattered! (p.85).”

In Fleming’s (1984) often cited work administered to 1,529 HBCU undergraduates and 1,062 undergraduates, she found that HBCUs promoted greater development and interpersonal outcomes due to providing a supportive, encouraging, and nurturing environment. The concept of a supportive environment is seen throughout the literature as a key characteristic of the HBCU experience (Patton, 2011; Allen, 1992; Seifert, Drummond, & Pascarella, 2006). Hence, the HBCU supportive environment experience develops at the institutional level and is adopted and implemented and practiced throughout the administrative and classroom levels.

Arroyo and Gasman (2014) proposed an institution-focused HBCU-based conceptual framework specifically for advancing an educational approach committed to student success. Within the proposed framework, the authors posit that the foundation of HBCUs’ contribution to Black student success is a supportive environment stating that “the environment moderates all other components and processes in the model” (p.64). A supportive environment is critical in the positive moderation of accessibility, affordability, identity formation, value cultivation, and achievement. Hembree et. al (2014) propose another institutional conceptual model with six constructs: spirituality, diversity, professionalism, inquiry, and technology. The first concept of spirituality pertains to one’s “individual ability to form meaningful relationships, explore personal values, and find meaning in the world” (p.25). Arroyo and Gasman (2014) concluded that faculty members are the most crucial component of implementing this model effectively at the micro-level, which is the classroom. Faculty must be both dedicated and engaged in order to enact “holistic institutional conditions that facilitate student success” (p.75). Meaningful communities, the relationships that make up those communities, and a supportive environment that nurtures them are vital to the long-term sustainability of student success.

Learning is connected to a learner’s participation within a community (Oliver & Carr, 2009; Sanders & Melton, 2010). In the context of remote learning, the supportive environment might exist in an immersive learning community, virtual community, or remote learning environment. With regards to online learning, a sense of community is often cited in the literature as a common theme. Sadera, Robertson, Song, and Midon (2009) described a community as “a group of participants in a distance-based environment with a shared purpose and the relationship among them including their sense of belonging, trust, and interaction” (p. 278). In the context of this study, the research is interested in exploring how the tenets of HBCU culture, namely community building and nurturing, are rendered in a remote learning environment through the lived experiences and responses from students.

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative, phenomenological study is to provide a focal lens onto the everyday lived experiences of students, faculty, and staff in SCOM during the COVID-19 pandemic to advance teaching and learning. A phenomenological perspective enables the researcher to take a pragmatic approach to explore the meaning-making processes of participating subjects. A phenomenological strategy provides deeper insight into the social meanings and everyday lived experiences related to this social group as "a phenomenological concern always has this twofold character: a preoccupation with both the concreteness (the ontic) as well as the essential nature (the ontological) of a lived experience" (Van Manen, 1990, p.40). Thus, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is an appropriate method for this study as it focuses on the subjective experiences and first-hand interpretations of those directly impacted by the 2020 pandemic in SCOM.

Communication and the use of the interpretive phenomenological analysis framework invited a socially cohesive and collaborative learning environment to be formed during this emergency period of transitional learning. A multimodal approach to communication initiated by the department through surveys and questionnaires invited students to voice concerns and questions allowing faculty to adjust and respond in real time. In this way we acknowledged learners as experts of their own experience. The interpretive phenomenological analysis approach helped our team to learn most efficiently how participants were making sense of their social world and experiences by inviting their input very early and often throughout the emergency remote instruction transitional learning period. As IPA is concerned with the subjective account and meaning made by individuals, this approach speaks to the importance of using qualitative inquiry to gain insight into learners' experiences as a way for faculty to synthesize learner input in order to adapt the virtual learning environment.

Smith and Osborn (2007) postulated the "main currency for an IPA study [are] the meanings particular experiences, events, [and] states hold for participants" (p.53). By applying the systems to language and "at the same time relating language to social organization, role relationships, values and beliefs, and other shared patterns of knowledge," the researcher can detect important clues of shared meaning within groups by examining participant narratives (Misra, 2000, p.118). To better understand this shared system of meaning, the research team distributed a series of open-ended questions to participants. From there, a qualitative exploration of emerging themes among SCOM participants' experiences helped reveal their "certain way of being in the world" as it pertains to living and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Van Manen, 1990, p.41). Essentially, all of the qualitative inquiry is based on grounded theory. This approach suggests the theoretical framework emerges through the process of analysis and is grounded in and "derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.12). This theory works well with the interpretative phenomenological analysis approach as both an emphasis and inductive process which involves seeking patterns and engaging in an on-going comparison processes between individual cases analyzing for both similarity and difference, convergence, and divergence.

Method

Smith (2017) contended IPA researchers maintain an idiographic commitment of the phenomenon under investigation. Idiography examines individual cases highlighting the details of a given phenomenon through the lens of participants' perspectives. Therefore, IPA researchers provide detailed analysis for participant-specific transcripts, in this case, open-ended essay question responses, offering an idiographic perspective. To understand the challenges and lessons learned during emergency remote teaching during a pandemic, the research team analyzed each response from open-ended reflective questions from faculty, students, and staff to make specific statements about individuals' experiences and discover patterns of meaning embedded within the narratives explored. Through a content review of faculty reflections, emails, virtual meetings (with recordings), and surveys, four themes emerged about disruptions and challenges for our engagement with and instruction of students during the pandemic. In some instances, these challenges have also been confirmed by student comments from surveys. The challenges below are not listed in any order of prominence.

Overcoming Disruptions and Challenges

Challenge 1: Building the Ship as It's Moving. This challenge could be summarized as responding to fear with creativity and a willingness to make real-time (iterative) changes to the course to ensure student success. Literally, we as a staff left campus a day before the advent of spring break. Immediately that next week we took crash courses in remote learning – learning about apps and platforms like Canvas' Big Blue Button (Morgan's instructional platform), Panopto (video), Google Hangouts (now Meet), Zoom, and other services that could be of value to us in teaching our students. Students would be returning the next week for an adventure in this changed reality.

The department Chair notes that for the week of March 23 - the return of the students - we met every day to ask the basic questions: How are classes going? What feedback are students giving you? What is not working? What changes need to be made? How quickly can those changes be made? Each week became its semester of sorts. We looked at student data weekly: Canvas log-in rates, student work products, technology access, work schedules of students, and family health and wellness information. The combined factors changed week-to-week. This meant that the teaching and learning strategies had to change weekly as well after we looked at student feedback, work products, and faculty evaluations of assignments.

Digital platforms that we originally thought would work well for the virtual meeting space for classes were rethought. Was Zoom going to be our go-to platform or Google Meet? It turned out this decision would have to be aligned with students' access to technology for the various classes. For example, one faculty member states that she was in love with Canvas' Big Blue Button, but her students not so much because they had problems accessing it on their phones. According to another faculty member, the decision to abruptly move to a remote teaching modality required a flight response by faculty to transform.

> *We had to redesign the course in a way that would allow students to continue to engage and feel like the course they were familiar with before the pandemic was still accessible… As it pertains to the course redesign, this proved to be a process that would have to be optimized in real-time, requiring compassionate flexibility that allowed for changes and adjustments to be made as we learned from our students' experiences.*

Faculty scaled down weekly tasks into modules, extending deadlines to accommodate different student home and work-life challenges, creating safe spaces for discussion during Zoom calls, and allowing students the space to articulate what was working and what adjustments could be made to improve the learning. As a department, we all adopted the value of compassionate flexibility and determination, responding and adjusting to improve the process. The various iterations were not all perfect, but it was a learning experience for everyone, allowing us to grow together. This building the ship as it was moving also required an asynchronous approach. Another faculty member recognized this when he states:

> *Some students were living in different time zones, so I had to manage working hours to help them. Since I had to check and grade around 70 students every week, I needed strong time management skills.*

This co-creative approach required regular communication throughout the semester and developing strategies to connect with students with varying levels of accessibility.

Challenge 2: Need for Multimodal Communication to Traverse Different Degrees of Student Accessibility. The emergency remote teaching space meant there was a need for faculty to develop and execute a multimodal approach to student communication in order to meet the demand of various levels of student accessibility. Consistent among faculty reflections was the use of various communication technologies from the telephone to Google Hangouts meetings. The department Chair highlights one of the first academic institutional challenges that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis -- the need for student communication and departmental availability:

> *I felt very burdened to be available to students at most hours of the day…this meant that I was always 'on' as Chair. In retrospect, I should have built-in more self-care time. However, again, I felt not being available to students would send the wrong signal, so I made myself available at all times.*

To balance the desire to ease student anxieties about the rapid changes, the department launched a website dedicated to student questions and concerns. In this way, through this online community, the department was communicating empathy, value, presence, and support. The Chair continues (Your GPS for Online Learning, 2020):

> *The site became a rallying point for SCOM majors to get information about how their SCOM classes would be conducted and what type of support they could expect from their faculty members. This site has been viewed over 800 times… [highlighting how successful] digital and social tools [are]to connect with students about important information that was vital to their success during the online learning period.*

The initiation of this space helped to create a social presence for the department allowing students to establish themselves within the new virtual community (Garrison, 2016).

Faculty narratives show consistent patterns of exploiting the affordances of networked spaces in order to reach students where they were during the pandemic and to simulate a more connected experience virtually. Two faculty members concurred that social media served as another communicative entry point for students, one stating:

> *All students were able to communicate with me through Instagram and Twitter chat simultaneously. I also hosted weekly online live meetings, and was able to help them without any difficulty.*

The ubiquitous nature of the internet and mobile accessibility provide several simultaneous interconnected pathways to interact across occupational, social, and educational spheres. The Director of Instruction recalls using text messaging as a way to drive synchronous class communication.

> *All of my students moved in and out of communication during our time online for a myriad of valid reasons. It was challenging to keep everyone on pace with the weekly class materials and discussions because of these gaps in communication, but I discovered that a group text chain worked best to get the majority of students to our Thursday synchronous class session and by the end of the semester, all were present - which I considered a big WIN!*

This approach, integrating asynchronous and synchronous tools, is tied to increasing student engagement and a sense of community (Abdelmalak, 2015, Pinsk et al., 2014).

In any social environment, a key part of communication is listening and responding to messages received. A faculty member's response reflects this common thread throughout faculty narratives - compassionate flexibility. This attribute worked in concert with communication as faculty made adjustments understanding that COVID-19 and the university closing did not just disrupt students' academic reality, but also their personal lives. Noted one professor:

> *With the economic challenges, one student lost his job and desperately worked to find another. A second student had to take on more hours for his employer. For these students, my work with them resulted in persistent individual follow-up and telephone meetings. For these two students, I was almost teaching an independent study class.*

Another faculty member recounts how this individualized approach impacted his course.

> *Many students were not able to play Panopto video lectures due to incompatible PC and cell phone specifications. Moreover, they were not able to access online live meetings due to poor internet connection. Therefore, I provided very detailed PowerPoint lecture slides three days before class.*

The multimodal communication approach allowed students to access learning through different modalities and helped to foster a sense of community and connection during the emergency remote instruction period.

Challenge 3: Sustaining Student Motivation. In the days leading up to remote learning, faculty heard from students the concerns that would lead them to believe that motivation would be challenging, but we were determined to push back hard against their feelings of being overwhelmed. Here is what students said in their own words as contained in quotes from responses to a survey conducted by the department near the end of the semester (SCOMUPMSU, 2020).

> *Once the pandemic started, I lost one job but became an 'essential worker' at the other one. It's honestly been very tiring having to work every day in order to make money.*

> *I have family that has died and also are sick along with friends that have been sick.*

> *The biggest challenge was overcoming my depression.*

[It was] Adjusting to working from home while caring for my two small children, one school-aged.

I just want to finish my last four classes and call it a day. I don't care about walking for graduation.

The Chair's insights saw this challenge before it was manifested, spurring him to outline and implement strategies to mitigate student concerns and facilitate engagement.

Pandemic or not, at the end of the day, my job was still to ensure successful student outcomes at the end of the semester. Since it seemed that reassurance was the most important job, based on the available student data, I launched a student-oriented campaign, 'No worries. We got you covered.' Before we could focus on learning - we had to focus on student welfare and reassure them.

One of the first things I learned when it was announced that the university would be going online back in early March was that there was a lot of genuine fear and anxiety expressed by our majors. I must have received about 20 calls and texts asking about how online learning would work when the university announced that classes were canceled starting the Wednesday of spring break and that students would not be returning to campus after spring break. The questions: How would classes be conducted? What would happen to grading? Would students be able to graduate on time? Students were concerned that they had not taken an online class before. But beyond that, there was a general sense that the world as they knew it was falling apart.

The Director of Instruction reported that her students struggled with feeling fully engaged with the class as they missed the interactions they had grown accustomed to before the emergency move online as well as felt overwhelmed with the new type of workload and schedule that ERT (emergency remote teaching) that Morgan required.

I met this challenge by allowing the first 10 minutes of our weekly synchronous class session to be solely about 'checking in.' Students could converse about their lives, the course, what they were doing to cope with being mandated to stay in their homes, or anything else that was on their mind. This predictable time was very helpful and I think we all looked forward to it. I remember that one day students just took the time to show each other what their 'view' looked like from the rooms where their computers were. That was a great deal of fun!

One faculty member recounts that on a number of occasions students requested Zoom or Google Meet sessions with her purportedly to talk about their work. She said she readily agreed; however, once the meetings began, she realized that their concerns were not so much about their work but rather that they just wanted to have someone to talk with about what was going on in their life – an adult or real grown-up, meaning not someone their age. Once we had "the talk," they moved forward to regroup and complete assignments. This speaks to the way in which multimodal communication was used to transition the high touch HBCU culture into an online environment.

Challenge 4: Overcoming Hurdles to Learn New Technologies and Ways to Promote Learning. The global educational crisis, brought on by COVID-19, presented faculty with an opportunity to accelerate growth in using technology to enhance learning environments. Common among faculty was a shared sentiment in the value of life-long learning. The Director of Instruction explains how asynchronously available digital resources helped her create technology-enriched learning environments quickly.

> *I was a student again once we moved online! I must have attended nearly 10 different webinars to learn online/remote teaching innovations. And I have a long list of apps (Loom, Panopto, PlayFactile - Virtual Jeopardy) and websites (ACUE, Perusall, OpenSource) to continue to use moving forward…I grew as a professor. I feel better, think I will teach better, and cannot wait to meet my next group of students this summer (online) and in the fall!*

Another faculty member articulates a group-supported belief that technologies are only as valuable as their ability to foster the learning experience for students.

> *I employed Panopto video and Canvas video but they were not as engaging as I had hoped. Webinars and video reflections with attached rubrics worked better, especially with my practicum class.*

A third professor mentioned how this experience has allowed him to access more resources and will shape the direction of future courses.

> *Remote teaching has taught me how to manage online courses fluently. Before the pandemic, I did not know that there are so many ways to collect useful teaching materials. I have always struggled to find updated teaching resources, but all SCOM faculty members have helped me to use free online resources for students. During the semester, I have collected free teaching resources from the internet and was able to update all lecture slides before each class session. Now, I am familiar with using different types of online meeting tools, such as Google Hangouts and Zoom, and can manage Canvas without any problems.*

The emergency remote learning environment provided a space for both students and faculty to learn and explore new ways of education beyond the traditional constraints of space and time. By conducting an interpretive phenomenological analysis, we were able to see how iterative communication through various modes helped us adjust in informed ways during a pivotal transitional learning period.

Lessons for Living and Learning in a Pandemic

Our exploratory study has various implications for educators at all levels who face a sudden shift into emergency remote teaching from traditional teaching due to situations like the outbreak of coronavirus. After reviewing and synthesizing the lived experiences of students, staff, and faculty, four preliminary lessons for living and learning in a global pandemic emerged.

Lesson 1: Establish community early. As an academic department, the results illustrated the importance of creating an online identity and presence that enabled seamless student communication and department accessibility. A sense of community in both online and on-campus settings has academic and social benefits for students which include deeper learning and enhanced emotional well-being. (Kwapy, 2014, Rovai, 2003, Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010). We leveraged the digital sphere by transferring our community early and providing a space for students to foster virtual connectedness with faculty, staff, and each other.

> *The professors were with us every step of the way. Quick email response time, impromptu Zooms to help me understand questions and regular conversations with professors.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)
>
> *I now have a different outlook on my role as the administrative assistant for SCOM. My outlook is just not an administrative assistant. The pandemic has made me look at my position as a leader and role model.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

Lesson 2: Show Compassion. As a historically black university, the high-touch approach involved in teaching the "whole person" and investing in our students was already an enculturated value. Thus, we learned how to translate teaching holistically in this way within the emergency remote teaching space. Teaching must always be connected to what students are experiencing. It was important not to bombard students with only lecture material and uploaded educational content but to also exercise empathy and understanding toward the various experiences with trauma a global pandemic might present.

> *I truly enjoyed how we all came together; my professors were very understanding and they often checked in on us.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

> *It occurred to me at that moment, that while academic concerns were the impetus for the questions, students really wanted some reassurances that we would be looking out for them in this new experience and that we would be with them every step of the way. Because we are an HBCU known for high-touch practices, I knew it was important to replicate some of our high-touch practices during remote learning.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

Lesson 3: Empower Learners. Community engagement and community-based participation are key. There must be a continuum of co-creation during the course giving learners agency, flexibility, and responsibility to impact the learning ecology (Bovill, 2020). Faculty have to be agile in order to organize the learning for students in a way that is responsive and reflexive to learner input. The process for collegiate instruction going forward will be collaborative and iterative as faculty engage in a dialogic exchange with students in order to bring about human-centered learning solutions that enable them to immerse in the learning material and connect with each other.

> *My professors (actually) listened to what we wanted and needed and accommodated accordingly.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

> *I used the Growth Mindset™ model for my general communications course, which incorporates a commitment to exploring new ways to learn. The video was essential for this class and the Kanopy™ website was invaluable for content that allowed students to critically think.* (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

Lesson 4: Keep Growing Digitally. A teaching and learning focus prepared SCOM faculty to pivot quickly and drove continual growth throughout the pandemic as faculty regularly attended webinars, virtual workshops, and conferences to enhance their skills in real-time. They anticipate continuing to explore new technologies and embrace the affordances of collaborative knowledge exchange, co-creation, and co-innovation made accessible through various digital applications and platforms.

> *"I became quite comfortable with filming myself through this teaching experience...I realized that through video, I was stepping into the daily world of my students where the video is their language and really well-done ones had currency in their world. I understand this has pedagogical value now."*

"I used social media as a tool for real-time communication. All students were able to communicate with me through Instagram and Twitter chat simultaneously! Wow!" (Voices of SCOM, 2020)

Conclusion

As this article has illustrated, the culture of the Department of Strategic Communication is one that includes a healthy combination of risk and reward, innovation and reflection, teaching, and learning for all of its organizational members. There could be no more challenging context to put these best practices to a stress (and strength) test, than what the COVID-19 global pandemic and emergency remote instruction presented. From our roles as department Chair to Director of Instruction (both tenured senior faculty in the department) to junior tenure-track faculty, the department administrative assistant and the students, the heart of the department, this article brings all of our voices together and focuses on what we collectively found valuable and considered a success during this unique experience. This is the culminating departmental report of our work along with examples of student-faculty interactions and digital strategies mentioned above showing high value results (SCOMUP, 2020).

This is an exploratory research study and thus the findings of this research have to be seen in the light of some limitations. As mentioned earlier, this is the narrative of one department's experience and due to this, we caution the propensity to overgeneralize these findings across the educational landscape. This study leaves the room, however, to explore how this phenomenon was experienced in other higher education institutions in the Maryland area, perhaps across other disciplines. These results may also encourage more avenues of research in support of finding ways to advance historically black colleges and universities toward more aggressively pursuing online course instruction and finding new ways to translate the high touch factor in the virtual learning environment. Also, investigating the data from a quantitative angle may provide more insight into the different ways educators can quickly and effectively enter into the emergency remote teaching space. Additionally, there are implications from the study that could be helpful, especially to other communications programs as they are pivoting to remote learning during emergencies. The findings endorse the theory of interpretative phenomenological analysis of a pragmatic approach to learning through lived experiences. We as a department will adopt co-creative learning and continue to explore the evidence for instruction in all of our courses, face-to-face, and online.

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Translating Global into Local/Local to Global Learning into Teaching Practices

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ABSTRACT

During an eight month period in 2019 the researchers conducted case study classroom-based observations and pursued conversations with ten study abroad participants from four Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs (India, South Korea, Israel, SeneGambia). Observing, documenting and reflecting on the translation of global to local and local to global academic, cultural and pedagogical insights in the work of the preservice and in-service teachers is the focus of the grounded theory qualitative research study. Global experiential learning for college students is repeatedly described as transformative, while research studies have indicated the difficulty in identifying specific outcomes of short term study abroad experiences. By working with preservice and in-service teachers, this qualitative case study researches new conceptual perspectives and quotidian meaning-making practices in actual classrooms. The coded grounded theory case study research details turn-key classroom activities and reflections on four select themes of multilingualism, gender/racial diversity, holocaust/genocide education/social and emotional learning, and the universal language of technology and the arts framed by conceptual understandings *of cosmopolitanism and critical consciousness.*

Keywords: study abroad, critical consciousness, cosmopolitanism, turn-key, meaning-making

Academic, cultural/aesthetic, and affective meaning-making after a short-term study abroad experience by preservice and in-service teachers provides insights into the pedagogical translation of global to local/local to global teaching and learning practices. During an eight-month period in 2019, the researchers conducted classroom observations and pursued conversations with ten study abroad participants from four Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs (India, South Korea, Israel, SeneGambia). Through observations, documentation and reflections of classroom practices, the case study grounded-theory research revealed two overarching concepts –critical consciousness and cosmopolitanism, and four curricula thematic currents-multilingualism, gender/racial diversity, holocaust/genocide education/social and emotional learning, and the universal language of technology and the arts. The identified concepts and thematic currents extend the findings of study abroad experiences illuminating insightful pedagogical practices with new educational understandings in translating the global to local and local to global in public school classrooms.

The goals and the objectives of the Fulbright-Hays short term study abroad program, established in 1965, part of the United States Department of Education, embraces educational initiatives that advance global competencies for undergraduate students who will become K-12 teachers and for in-service teachers who were already working in diverse content areas in urban, suburban and rural schools. This study is particularly noteworthy for the future of interdisciplinary global education since only 4% of all students who study abroad are education majors out of a quarter of a million students who study abroad every year (Moss and Marcus, 2015). Each of the Fulbright-Hays programs– India, South Korea, Israel, SeneGambia 2012-2019 – had leaders fluent in the native languages of the country, past experiences in the country, knowledgeable about the political climate of the country, and the environmental and cultural history of the country. The study abroad experiences for the preservice and in-service teachers culminated in the generation of lesson plans, reflective blogs on daily experiences posted on the study abroad websites, enhanced resources for in-depth academic teaching, new aesthetic perspectives and affective reflections for use in present and future classrooms.

Evidence of the global influence from participation in the study abroad experience became visible through the turn-key teaching practices of the observed teachers and through conversations with participants. The researcher coded key components from preservice and in-service teachers' observed classroom practices and from reflective discussions to best understand their global experience. The observations of two high school visual art teachers, one high school and one middle school social studies teacher, and two elementary school language arts teachers revealed quotidian practices affected by global educational experiences. Discussions on past teaching practices influenced by the study abroad experience were conducted with a middle school science teacher, a secondary art teacher, a bilingual elementary school teacher, and a high school social studies teacher.

Review of Literature

Two recent research studies focus on models of assessments of study abroad programs offering a conceptual framework of attributes of experiential learning (Schenker, 2019; Byker & Zu, 2019). These studies discuss how short-term study abroad programs for university students' assessments frequently rely on survey data. The global competence survey aptitude assessment examines aspects of global citizenship personal growth, promotion of world peace and cultural and academic enhancement. Intercultural awareness and readiness were evaluated on the survey through individual attributes of self-awareness, risk taking, open-mindedness and attentiveness to diversity. External readiness was evaluated on an individual's attainment of historical perspectives, global awareness, intercultural capability, and collaboration across cultures. The study found there were mixed results with significant improvements in global aptitude but not in global awareness which is difficult to differentiate in actual behaviors of students. The length of time of short versus long-term study abroad programs were debated in the findings. In addition, the qualifying attributes on the surveys have potential overlap and do not clearly distinguish specific behaviors and attitudes.

Critical competence theory (Byker & Zu, 2019) states the need for participants in study abroad programs to conceptualize the ideas of cosmopolitanism and critical consciousness to benefit from the overseas experience. Enhanced academic and cultural perspectives, self-awareness, open-mindedness, and intercultural understandings define a type of cosmopolitanism. It is a global culturally enlightened awareness that is essential for affective and academic meaning-making in teaching and learning. Critical consciousness requires participants to have culturally responsive reactions towards human and social inequities, a part of the human condition. For example, critical consciousness recognizes that human migration has diverse causes such as poverty, war, famine, climate change, gender prejudice, and racism. Critical competence theory requires individuals to understand vexing global problems through theoretical academic frames and pragmatic approaches to social injustice.

Related literature in young children's global education has extended to well-illustrated children's books. For generations global understanding was depicted through textual and pictorial descriptive settings and characters underscoring concepts of racial, spiritual and aesthetic diversity reflecting a cosmopolitanism. Ingrained in American school children's pictorial consciousness are the royal outings, clothes/crowns and leisurely strolls in well-appointed Parisian parks and apartments in the Babar (elephant) stories by Jean and Lauren de Brunhoff. The sophisticated family of well-to-do elephants dine in beautiful cafes, visit museums and attend concerts with attention to different family members' wardrobes and cultural and intellectual individual interests.

More recently there has been a serious interest by authors and illustrators to develop children's critical consciousness throughout the world by describing interrupted childhoods in order to more fully acknowledge the unjust disparity in children's education and opportunities. In the story *Azad's Camel* (2010) set in the Mid-East, a young orphan boy is sold by his uncle to camel racers and sleeps in the stalls with the camels. He communes with his camel after winning several races and they escape past the finish line to start a different life in the desert away from the hunger and labor of being a jockey. He is then adopted by a Bedouin family who nurtures him in a loving home.

Erandi's Braids (1999) hones in on one Mexican family, a mother and daughter who make a living by fishing. The mother's fishing net has a hole in it that she needs to repair in order to catch fish for her to sell. Once a year a man comes to the town to cut and buy the long black hair of the indigenous townspeople. The story turns with the mother willing to sell her own hair but the man wants the daughter's long straight hair instead. The daughter, who does not go to school, but works with her mother fishing, recognizes the need to fix the fishing net. The daughter agrees to sell her hair knowing it will grow back. The narrative and conflict in the stories informs a critical consciousness of inequities in childhood and society. The application of critical competence theory utilizes a dual aesthetic of imagery and text in children's books to narrate global stories of injustice. Reimer (2016) speaks to the volatility and uncertainty in this era of globalization. He addresses 21st century competencies (https://www.un.org/development) to further develop skills but most importantly children's imagination to contribute to sustainable development. The expanding global settings, plots, and characteristics in contemporary children's books aim to build aspects of intercultural capacity.

The Fulbright-Hays study abroad participants in the four programs 2012-2019 were given historical and cultural readings in preparation for their trips to India, South Korea, Israel, and SeneGambia. The academic information was in anticipation to address the perspectives of cosmopolitanism and critical consciousness. The participants were made aware of the challenges to adapt pedagogical practices as evidence of the outcomes of the overseas experience. Research on global education has evolved with greater attention to data-driven outcomes (Kahn & Agnew, 2015) than solely theoretical frameworks.

Future study aboard participants can gain insights from the special issue of *Arts Education Policy Review/AEPR* 2019-2020 on globalism and the arts where the authors reveal the impactful reach of the practice of the arts across the globe in the following essays: cultural legacy of the African American singer-songwriter Jane Sapp as cultural activist locally and globally; how dance equips global participants to be expressive, collaborative and to expand cultural perspectives; ideas around binary thinking of center/periphery in investigating our creative economy; music as a gateway to cultural understanding building music education on established canons of music as well as community music; culturally diverse museum artifacts digitally extends the communicative power of the arts. The *AEPR* perspective moves the research towards communities of practice within interdisciplinary teaching and learning.

The current academic climate on study abroad programs has moved towards data-driven outcomes of the reciprocity of the effects of global experiences due to the paucity of assessments of short and long-term study abroad programs (Thomas & Kerestetter, 2020). Additionally, Allen (2020) comments that study abroad experiences and language learning trajectories have been understood as emergent and variable. Further exploration exposes the need of an incubation period after a study abroad experience to incorporate an analysis of content area disciplines into teaching practices (Savicki, 2015). Kortegast and Boisfontaine (2015) state that to enhance student learning and development of the overseas experience, it should be accompanied by structured opportunities to assist in explaining, articulating and negotiating the meaning of the post-study abroad experience. These findings underscore the continued search for more tactical and pragmatic outcomes. With this in mind, the Fulbright-Hays researchers' findings contribute to the evidence/data-driven evaluation outcomes initiative.

Methodology

The researchers employed case study methodology with inductive research techniques to collect, analyze and synthesize outcomes. The researchers identified and located participants from the home institution sponsoring the study abroad experiences from 2012 to 2019. The identification of and communication with the participants established an interpersonal connection enabling the study of the outcomes of teachers' evolving pedagogies in a range of academic content based on their global experience over-time. The selected case studies of ten participants in the four Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs have generated rich, meaning-making insights into the impact of global awareness in our increasingly interconnected world. Mark Salisbury (2015) suggests that study abroad may help students become more invested in learning… and move students along the trajectory toward lifelong learning. The case study research on the outcomes of the four Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs distills authentic academic learning and interpersonal dialogue on the practical implications of the overseas programs. Data collection from the four study abroad experiences is documented in the observations of daily turn-key teaching practices of the teachers and through in-depth conversations with the participants.

The researchers coded key components from preservice and in-service teachers' observed classroom practices and from reflective discussions to best understand the global experience. The observed quotidian practices included two high school visual art classes, one high school and one middle school social studies class, and two elementary school language arts classrooms. Discussion on past teaching practices influenced by the study abroad experience involved a middle school science teacher, a secondary art teacher, a bilingual elementary school teacher, and a high school social studies teacher. The researchers' analysis of the qualitative case studies explicated the concepts of critical consciousness and cosmopolitanism interwoven into the themes of multilingualism, gender/racial diversity, holocaust/genocide education/social and emotional learning, and the universal language of technology and the arts in classroom practices. The qualitative data reflects and expands on critical academic cultural/aesthetic pedagogical issues in global education.

Findings and Discussion

The home institution of the researchers has administered four Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs in India, South Korea, Israel, SeneGambia and an anticipated program to south India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in 2021. Based on classroom observations and conversations from spring and fall 2019, the researchers chronicle the multifaceted syntheses of global experiential learning into teaching practices implemented by the study abroad participants who are now all practicing teachers. The case study research is conceptually framed by an understanding of cosmopolitanism and critical consciousness supported by grounded theory of coded thematic categories of multilingualism, gender/racial diversity, holocaust/genocide education/social and emotional learning and the universality of technology and the arts.

Multilingualism

An overriding sentiment found in the teachers' attitude is a recognition of the pragmatic benefits of multilingualism which is evident in most global settings outside of the United States. Study abroad participants felt a sense of isolation by not being able to converse with people on the street, in hotels or historic sites and/or to read Hindi, Hebrew or Korean script, though often translated on street signs or in restaurants. This heightened the participants' global awareness of the needs of students in all grade levels coming to the United States who do not speak English fluently.

The study abroad participants felt the need to enhance their bilingual pedagogies with more human interactions and written resources. The social media platform of Facebook has usurped the use of pen-pals, a previous cross-cultural pedagogy, to converse in more than one language. One high school social studies teacher whose parents are bilingual was keenly aware how important it is to share an oral and written language. This teacher's social studies curriculum focuses on Asia, Africa and the Middle East; however, her high school has many South Korean students which allows her to reference her experience in South Korea with special attention to the layers of decision-making in designing school curricula. She looks back to her study abroad in South Korea with lectures and discussions from the ministry of education and the overarching educational goals for a nation as critical in her cosmopolitan understanding in the workings of schools. In South Korea there was a governmental initiative to improve students' use of the English language to be global competitors in the world economy.

An understanding of multilingualism extends beyond content-driven teaching and learning. An early elementary bilingual teacher is challenged by the interrupted schooling of her young children who have little understanding of the importance of formal education. In her suburban school district, there are two schools with high proportions of new Americans from Latin America. The children have been on an arduous journey to the United States with their fathers while their mothers often stay back in Latin America. The children's daily routine has them board a bus to go home in the afternoon; the teacher learned the children return to school since no one was present at the bus stop to pick them up because the fathers are working several jobs. The children are living with trauma and do not sleep well at night coming to school feeling tired. The teacher addresses her students in Spanish and is doing her best to improve their language skills in both Spanish and English that will be evaluated by passing the standardized test, ACCESS. Cummins (2001) attends to the importance of human relationships and the positive use of translanguaging, the use of a native language and English, in interactive communication for bilingual student success in the classroom. The study abroad participant utilizes translanguaging with both her students and when speaking with their parents.

The teacher empathizes with the children relaying to them how difficult it was for her in South Korea not to speak the language of the people around her. She shows the children pictures from her travels abroad and the children imagine they are there with her; this meaning-making imagining may be a way to transplant their journey to the United States with a special bonding they have with their teacher. The turn-key teaching and learning by the bilingual elementary school teacher is embedded with aspects of critical consciousness in her essential work to advance a multilingualism in her students.

Gender/Racial Diversity

Gender and racial diversity are inherent components of intercultural awareness. Two of the Fulbright-Hays participants from the India program perceived, with an initial discomfort, an unfamiliar separation of men and women. The nature of gender relationships within same sex groupings of men and women in public and private spaces was markedly different than in the United States. When in Hindi temples or Islamic mosques, the study abroad participants quickly learned appropriate attire and demeanors that they have carried over to discussions in their own teaching experiences. A teacher, who is now pursuing her doctoral degree in education, feels her global experience in India allows her to feel a sense of ease when collaborating with her peers from India who are also pursuing degrees in higher education.

A participant in the India study abroad program is not teaching in his chosen field of visual arts but working with technology in schools. His expertise in technology, however, includes elements of the visual arts. His discontent of not being a full time art teacher is tempered by realizing the conditions that teachers in global locations are working under and the potential availability of other teaching positions. Both of the participants in the India study abroad program developed a nuanced view of American capitalism when they learned that Indian farms were taken over by the Coca-Cola Corporation with a can of soda being less expensive than a bottle of water. The low cost and deleterious effects of sugary drinks that destroys children's teeth by an American business for the profit of a corporation was observed first-hand altering the assumed beneficial role of American products in the global marketplace. The critical consciousness of recognizing the global reach of the United States based capitalism extends to cultural and racial prejudices (Schwarzer & Bridglall, 2015).

The interviewed study abroad participants in the India program were African Americans who discerned by the facial expressions of the local Indian population a sense of surprise that all Americans were not White. The study abroad participants also saw the stereotype extending to the cultural hipness or coolness associated with American music and dance. When invited to a dance club, the dance steps of the Americans were mimicked in appreciation. This positive reaction to the American students in their early 20s studying abroad speaks to the pivotal role of age of the students in the study abroad program. The American students will not forget this interaction with their Indian peers who were themselves gaining global competence.

Holocaust/Genocide Education

Holocaust and genocide education is a mandated part of teaching and learning in K-12 classrooms in New Jersey. It is often taught within the social studies curriculum beginning in early childhood grades with social and emotional learning and developing into an understanding of diversity, laws and government, world history and global education. At the middle school level, holocaust/genocide education has been an integral part of the social studies curriculum for over a generation in New Jersey. The social studies teacher who visited Holocaust museums in Israel and met relatives of survivors from concentration camps carefully integrated visual imagery, political documents and dialogue to best teach the social studies unit on genocide and in particular the Holocaust. The social studies teacher propelled by personal experience instructed students to select global genocides to study, research and work in small groups, collect supporting data, and present their findings to the class. The differentiation of abilities within each small group and the ability to have teams select global genocides empowered otherwise reticent learners to participate in class instruction. The social studies teacher acknowledged the gravity of her subject matter by employing a meaning-making synergy between curriculum and pedagogy. The middle school social studies teacher built upon historical perspectives to enlarge her internal cultural awareness and critical consciousness strengthened through her experiential overseas learning in Israel.

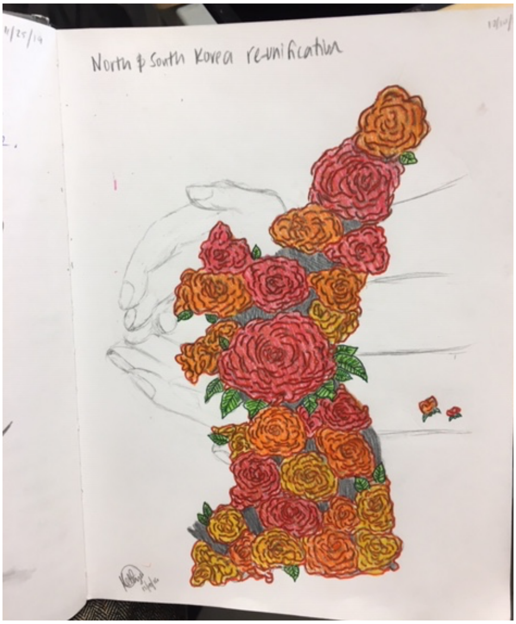
The social studies curriculum in the early elementary school grades centers on social and emotional learning under the aegis of rules and laws to protect people's rights, security, and welfare. Visiting an urban elementary teacher's classroom provided an opportunity to see a hands-on lesson on sensory awareness and vocabulary enhancement. The second graders were highly engaged in discovering and naming an everyday object hidden in a big box. Their job was to describe the object they were touching and draw conclusions on what the object must be, thereby developing their language arts skills. The psychological outcome advanced social and emotional learning with the students holding onto their new descriptive vocabulary. The sensory turn-key lesson was directly inspired by the teacher's study abroad experience observing a gifted and talented sensory lesson and its relevance for transfer to her classroom.

Zero hunger, no poverty, good health and well-being are three of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals to transform the world (https://www.un.org/development) to ensure the social and emotional development of children. An early elementary school teacher, who has a personal interest in global food scarcity, taught a lesson on uncommon foods to her urban students. The teacher and study abroad participant was born in Nigeria and raised in the United States. She is well acquainted with a diversity of types of food, enjoys discovering new foods, and has great compassion for students experiencing hunger. In her lesson she shared pictures of fruits and vegetables not readily found in the diet of North Americans, though possibly familiar to her students since many of their families are from the Caribbean. She depicted a balanced diet of global foods on a large poster board noting different food groups. The students had paired visual activities for meaning-making instruction on the geographies and nutrition of different food groups. The source and availability of food from plants and animals was a topic that was immersed with learning different global geographies. The social and emotional component of this class focused on the need for nourishment and how family traditions can support the health and well-being of children while bringing in the larger curricula issue of the origin of food on the planet.

Universal Language of Technology and the Arts

An academically selective high school class utilized a professional Israeli artist's painting as a prompt to discuss aesthetics, idealism, and cultural politics in a social studies class. The teacher, a study abroad participant, asked the students to use their Chrome Books to research an artist's portfolio of paintings and to critique social and cultural messages and symbols in the artist's paintings. The students orally critiqued the work speaking to emerging issues of nation-building and cultural identity, and geographic and political borders. The interdisciplinary social studies lesson developed the students' cultural capital, an element of cosmopolitanism that evolved from the lived experience of the teacher (Caruana, 2014). The growing sophistication of the students was evidenced by their ability to verbalize the alignment of the aesthetic understanding and political messaging. Technology, like the visual arts, is a borderless universal language, and when paired together, links curricula and pedagogy, disseminating text and images.

In a high school visual arts class, a teacher who participated in two Fulbright-Hays study abroad programs in India (2012) and South Korea (2014) focused on current events in North and South Korea and the search for political reconciliation. With colored pencils, the students drew icons, in their sketchbooks, such as flags of North and South Korea and images from a video shown in class of the DMZ/demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. The high school art class expanded on aspects of their developing cosmopolitanism, an expression of agency and cultural and social capital (Weenick, 2008). Their global competence could be ascertained by the class discussion on the devastating dietary conditions in North Korea and the economic wealth in South Korea. One student's depiction of a unified Korea speaks to an optimistic future of prosperity for the peninsula. The student benefitted from the teacher's personal lived experiences in South Korea as well as the current newspaper accounts augmenting her critical consciousness. (See student artwork – Kelly Bevelorio)



Students were nurtured by first-hand observations of ancient mosaics in numerous locales in Israel in a high school visual arts class. by a participant on the Fulbright-hays trip to Israel. The teacher, a life-long learner, provided an image-filled lecture on the use of tiles, shells, and stones the media of mosaics found in the animal, bird and architectural imagery in Israeli mosaics. The students were then required to create their own mosaics with ceramic tiles designing original or hybrid images based on the teacher's presentation. The turn-key art activity rooted the teacher's study abroad experience with the American students' curiosity creating an intrinsic cosmopolitanism in the students' imagery and mosaic technique shown in skillfully produced colorful works of mosaic art. Sharing media across historical time periods enlivens learning reinforcing the media's aesthetic currency. (Delacruz, Arnold, Kuo, Parsons, 2009). (See student artwork – Kiera McGinty)

Implications

Professional development programs provide opportunities for the mentoring of educators to further an understanding of global competence framed by the overarching issues of critical consciousness and cosmopolitanism., the researchers developed and organized professional development teaching opportunities in global education in diverse school districts, augmenting the thematically coded empirical case study data from observations and discussions with individual teachers, who participated in the study abroad experience. Exemplar titles of the professional development workshops were: The Garden State Meets the Coastal Winds of SeneGambia: Globalizing the Social Studies and English Language Arts Curriculum; Social and Emotional Learning in the Classroom: Language Arts and Literacy Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in South Korea and the United States; and Understanding South Asia from a Gendered Perspective.

One of the workshops had particular resonance for teacher leadership in a high school that had already created an elective course on global citizenship and human rights for 9-12th grade students. The scope and sequence of the high school course began with a focus on the individual and society, followed by history, then judgement, to memory and legacy, and finally contemporary human rights. The professional development workshop was a model for further exploration of communicative and meaning-making strategies between universities and public schools in the development of global education in K-12 classrooms.

How to build upon the standards movement benchmarking content and grade level assessments to a more interdisciplinary and flexible dynamic of teaching and learning in global education is one of the challenges in K-12 classrooms. Advanced Placement examinations, the sharing of community college and secondary school course offerings, and summer school course electives for secondary school students are alternative practices to introduce students to aspects of global education. This need is underlined by the uneven global economy that creates new forms of interdependence fostering a critical consciousness. In our contemporary world, cosmopolitanism has a human rights edge, where many international students in our public school classrooms are both refugees and corporate executives' and diplomats' children.

The educator Julie Marshall (2009) understands global education as a conceptualization of the intertwining of technological advancements and their economic, political and cultural impacts. Her shorthand for this global phenomena is glocalization, where localized adaptations selectively fuse and alter global and local traditions. Concluding thoughts forward the need for a rethinking of standards-based instruction towards interdisciplinary coordination within and between grade levels and content areas in schools to address the complexity of urgent global issues.

Conclusion

The Fulbright-Hays researchers' analysis of the qualitative case studies explicates the concepts of critical consciousness and cosmopolitanism interwoven into the themes of multilingualism, gender/racial diversity, holocaust/genocide education/social and emotional learning, and the universal language of technology and the arts in classroom practices. The inductive research methods of case studies reflects and expands on critical academic, cultural/aesthetic and pedagogical issues in global education. Extending the teaching and learning outcomes of study abroad experiential learning informs requisite meaning-making and turn-key approaches for a sustainable global future. The visible classroom results can be seen in students' inventive responses to questions, attention to new content information, willingness to participate in new hands-on methods to learn, in-depth small group research on ethical social issues, engagement in museum research and demanding aesthetic critiques, integration of visual arts practices, and teachers' double-edged understanding of the United States' political and economic policies that affect new Americans' global diets, wardrobes and cultural tastes as well as our dominant monolingual society. The 21st century classroom envisages global education experiences to be part of an integrated curriculum. The diverse global locations of the teachers' Fulbright-Hays study abroad experiences strengthens the academic and affective expectations and possibilities of classroom practice to advance democratic thinking in our global community.

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Students as Knowledge Mediators in Transnational Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of knowledge transfer as an outcome of transnational education. Based on the case of a Finnish–Vietnamese transnational education program, this paper analyzes the role of students as knowledge mediators between the study program, students' personal development and work life. Although students should play a critical part in learning and transferring knowledge between study and work life in theory, it seems that in practice, their role might be rather limited and passive. While multiple external factors affect learning and knowledge transfer, students' prior knowledge, skills and experience were found to be more significant factors, which teachers and program designers should carefully consider while promoting stronger participation. This paper contributes to the discussion on transnational higher education by elaborating students' changing role as knowledge transferors and transferees and by bringing the students' voice to the debate on the outcomes and impacts of transnational higher education.

Keywords: transnational education; knowledge transfer; transfer of learning; work life

Transnational education (TNE) programs are those in which learners are located in a country other than the one in which the awarding institution is based (e.g., McBurnie & Ziguras, 2011). The number of TNE programs has increased significantly over the last two decades (ibid.), which implies this form of higher education has achieved certain success in terms of scale. The focus of this study is the emerging markets in the East – where several Western educational programs have been exported to, for example, Hongkong, China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam (Bannier, 2016; Knight, 2016; Kosmutzky & Putty, 2016). Various stakeholders have different motivations and interests in participating in TNE (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lönnqvist et al., 2018). However, at the heart of higher education, the ultimate goal is that students acquire new knowledge and skills benefitting them personally and professionally and, at large, that is advantageous to society (Altbach, 1998; Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). Whether and how this goal is achieved through TNE and what impacts TNE has on the development of the receiving countries is still not evident. In this article, the impacts of transnational higher education are studied from the viewpoint of students.

Ideally, it is assumed that in TNE, knowledge is transferred across countries and cultures via academic mobility and modern information and communication technology (ICT) (Waters & Leung, 2017). However, research on knowledge transfer recognizes various factors constraining the transfer process. For example, the locally sticky characteristic of knowledge makes it difficult to transfer knowledge across cultures (Albino et al., 1998; Oddou et al., 2009; Polanyi, 1966; Szulanski, 1996). Moreover, different cultural and institutional contexts add to the complexity of knowledge transfer in TNE programs, and students as knowledge mediators are at the center of this complexity. To gain more understanding of the knowledge transfer in TNE and the outcomes of TNE programs from the students' viewpoint, this article aims to answer the following research questions: 1) How do students perceive the outcomes of a TNE program? 2) What determinants affect the transfer from the students' viewpoint? and 3) How can students use the acquired knowledge in their work life?

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 includes the definition of the key concepts of knowledge transfer and learning in the context of transnational higher education. Section 3 describes our research design, and section 4 introduces the key findings from our interview data. Finally, section 5 concludes the discussion.

Knowledge transfer and learning in transnational higher education

Knowledge transfer and learning

Over the last few decades, several empirical studies on learning and knowledge transfer in the context of TNE and training have been performed (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Cannon, 2001; D'Annunzio-Green & Barron, 2019;

Hoare, 2012; Kanu, 2005; Napier, 2005; O'Donoghue, 1994; Pimpa, 2009; Sutrisno & Pillay, 2015). It has been established that knowledge transfer takes place when knowledge and skills add values that improve job performance (Broucker, 2010) or otherwise affect the behavior of the recipient (Argote & Ingram, 2000; Marton, 2006, as cited in Lobato, 2006). Similarly, the transfer of learning happens when learning is transferred from one context to another (Leberman et al., 2006). 'Added value' can refer to 'concrete actions', 'cognitive reflection necessary to the performance' (Broucker, 2010, 237) or the way 'new knowledge and skills are learnt and performed' (Leberman et al., 2006, 2). Accordingly, this definition enables a broad spectrum of transfer outcomes at different levels and of various types. Nevertheless, it does not help in figuring out how to enhance knowledge transfer, as it only considers whether transfer happens and what impacts it has.

Contrary to defining transfer as 'replicating', 'carrying over' or 'extending' knowledge from one context to another (Szulanski, 1996), transfer can be depicted as a process involving different actors and actions (Szulanski, 2000). Thus, instead of simplifying transfer, Napier et al. (2008) described transfer as a process with different starts and stops and with knowledge jamming between both sides of transfer over a long-term period. Moreover, according to Volet (1999), transfer cannot be detached from the learners' emotions, beliefs and attitudes, which are requisites to make sense of the new learning.

Accordingly, transfer and learning can be understood as intertwined. When utilizing the learnt knowledge in a new context, one must reflect, seek for the relevance of the knowledge to specific context and interpret knowledge accordingly. Bormann (2007) called this process 'interpretative adaptation', in which knowledge is not just simply reproduced but also actively adapted and embedded into individual and local knowledge systems. Kilbrink et al. (2018) defined learning as a complex 'interplay' between previous experience, previous learning and new experience and new learning. While learners and their ability to learn play a key role in knowledge transfer, teachers are needed in providing learning assistance to make transfer happen (Tennant, 2000).

To move the conceptual discussion forward, knowledge transfer could also be approached from a learning perspective. Accordingly, Bransford and Schwartz (1999, 84) discussed transfer as 'preparation for future learning'. They shifted the traditional way of assessing knowledge transfer based on whether people can apply knowledge in new settings to assessing people's ability to learn in new situations. This forward-looking approach enables the identification of outcomes of knowledge transfer in education, as it is not strictly about what people have learnt and how they apply new knowledge. Even though this approach focuses on internal learning while excluding the knowledge transfer between different actors (e.g., between teachers and students or between graduates and colleagues at work), it provides a noteworthy view, adopted in this study, that to foster knowledge transfer, it is important to understand how people learn.

Factors affecting knowledge transfer in TNE

Given that transfer happens in both learning and work contexts, students can be depicted as both the recipient and the source of knowledge. Thus, students' *motivation* to learn and transfer knowledge as well as their actions and emotions while studying and at work affect the success of the transfer. Many studies on TNE students' motivation to learn show students' motivation is mainly affected by external factors, rather than self-driven factors (Brewer, 2008; Leung & Waters, 2013; Testers et al., 2015). For instance, motivation is affected by opportunities to be promoted, length of a program and the perception of teachers or influence from other students. Moreover, Brewer (2008, 141) discovered an 'anomaly of knowledge transfer' in multicultural contexts where students' willingness to receive knowledge has increased due to their 'favor' of Western teachers. Furthermore, networking as an outcome of a study program has been found to be motivating for students (D'Annunzio-Green & Barron, 2019). Indeed, being part of a learning group can create a sense of belonging, encourage learning and knowledge transfer within and outside a group (Bransford et al., 2000; D'Annunzio-Green & Barron, 2019).

In addition to motivation, students' *background* plays an important role in knowledge transfer – as it defines students' ability to understand, value and use the acquired knowledge (Albino et al., 1998; Napier, 2005). Prior knowledge and skills can either facilitate or impede learning. For instance, inadequate English skills and a lack of essential academic skills prior to entering study programs have been identified as critical reasons leading to a lower level of learning in TNE programs (Kanu, 2005; Pimpa, 2009; Waters & Leung, 2017).

Sometimes the background is transferred into students' new learning unconsciously. Volet (1999) discovered students of Confucian heritage culture often transferred familiar learning tactics, habits and beliefs such as memorization strategies, rote learning or the copying of text without references to cope with learning in Australia. Similarly, Pimpa's (2009) case study showed that due to accustomed hierarchy and a seniority culture, it was problematic for Thai students to understand the value of critical thinking and participate in classroom debates. Meanwhile, with proper guidance, contextualizing the learning content and using intercultural and transnational comparisons in lectures, students were able to make use of their previous experience to understand and apply new theories and foreign ideas to a local context (Hoare, 2012).

Recognizing the central role of students in learning and knowledge transfer, many international educators have increasingly considered students' background as well as *knowledge needs* in course design

(Bransford et al., 2000; Bransford & Schwartz, 1999). However, it has also been pointed out that it is important not to overly contextualize the content. This would lead to losing the whole idea of TNE and the opportunity to learn from different situations, interpret phenomena from intercultural and transnational perspectives and generate abstract knowledge. Hence, the literature shows that students being exposed to variation in content and context report clarity and confidence in what they have learnt and recognize possibilities to apply their knowledge in the future (Hoare, 2012; Kilbrink et al., 2018; Leberman et al., 2006).

Students' learning and the success of knowledge transfer cannot be considered without recognizing the role of *assessment* (Biggs, 1999, 2003; Gibbs & Simpson, 2005; Tennant et al., 2010). The focus has shifted from assessment of learning to assessment for learning and assessment as learning to consider assessment as a tool for engaging students in current and future learning, shifting the role of teachers to students as co-assessors and self-assessors. Central to these types of assessment is the important role of feedback and guidance, not just numeric grades at the end of courses, students receive to improve their learning. (Tennant et al., 2010)

Additionally, the *organization of the program* is seen as affecting students' learning and transfer. Most studies have shown that students only play a passive role in this aspect. For example, programs are often scheduled considering the availability of flying academics. Students also have little time and opportunity to bond with each other and with teachers to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to their learning community found necessary for facilitating knowledge sharing and transfer (Berrell et al., 2001; Cannon, 2001; D'Annunzio-Green & Barron, 2019; Hoare, 2012). A tight schedule often leads to a situation in which teachers are required to cover as many topics as possible (Bransford et al., 2000; Waters & Leung, 2017).

Besides the motivation and background of students as well as program related factors discussed above, moving onto work life from the training, students' motivation to transfer knowledge is inevitably dependent on many *outside factors* – such as opportunities to use new knowledge, openness to change in their work environment, peers' and supervisors' support and restrictions (Tester et al., 2015). In a study of Vietnamese academic returnees, Truong (2017) discovered that when the work environment is discouraging, little knowledge is transferred regardless of the high motivation and confidence graduates have when returning to their organizations. Moreover, graduates' 'know with' is proven important not just for their academic success but also for the success of knowledge transfer at work. It is because their motivation to transfer could also be related to their beliefs and expectations (Holton et al., 2000) – which, in turn, are developed by their 'know with' about their organization or system of working, culture and practices. Accordingly, if they want to achieve successful knowledge transfer, students need to associate new knowledge with their 'know with' about organizational culture, regulations and routines instead of transferring straight from one context to another (Lawson & Potter, 2012; Leberman et al., 2006; Napier, 2005; Szulanski, 1996). At the same time, they need to learn what, when and to whom to transfer their knowledge (Albino et al., 1998; Liyanage et al., 2009; Szulanski, 1996). In addition to graduates' active role, it is requisite that organizations provide a facilitating and motivating environment for transfer to happen.

Methods and data

Following qualitative research design, the data were collected by interviewing graduates from a two-year-long Finnish–Vietnamese TNE master's degree program during March 2019 and May 2019. The master's degree program in the field of administrative sciences was organized as a commissioned degree program between a Vietnamese higher education institution and a Finnish higher education institution (HEI). The collaboration between the partners is fairly recent, as Finnish HEIs only entered into the global TNE markets lately (e.g., Juusola 2020; Hasanen 2020). As a commissioned program, it was planned and executed by both HEIs, but the degree was issued only by the Finnish university. The contact teaching was held in Vietnam by the Finnish and Vietnamese teachers.

Out of 42 graduates, 13 were interviewed, of which 10 identified as women and 3 as men. All students in the program had 5-20 years of work experience in various positions in provincial- and central-level public organizations. Before entering the program, students took part in English language training organized by the Vietnamese HE partner. However, all interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to enable the participants to fully express themselves. Based on a pilot interview, the core questions and questioning style was revised to suit the Vietnamese way of communication. As the interviewees live and work in different cities in Vietnam and the researchers mainly work in Finland, most of the interviews (10) were conducted via Skype or Facebook's messenger.com and 3 interviews were arranged face to face. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated into English and anonymized.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data to enable interviewees to share their opinions and recall their experiences before, during and after the program. Despite being influenced by previous studies on knowledge transfer and the transfer of learning, the interview questions were designed to leave room for the views and interpretations of the interviewed. The transcribed data were analyzed by applying the methods used in content analysis in social sciences (e.g., Neuendorf, 2017; Schreier, 2014) by focusing on the selected aspects of meaning. The analysis began with pre-reading the data to get an overall view of the data by focusing on the content and meanings the interviewed wished to bring forward. While being guided by the research questions, which had structured the interview questions, the repeating themes were pointed out and abstracted from the data. The purpose of the analysis was to condense the graduates' views and experiences on knowledge transfer in this particular context to bring forward their voice and perspective in a flexible, but structured, manner.

Findings

Transferred knowledge, skills and attitudes as outcomes of the TNE program

The interview data show more complex outcomes of TNE than just knowledge being transferred from education to work. Based on our analysis, these outcomes can be thematized into visible and invisible, with immediate or long-term effects. Specifically, all the interviewees asserted that they were able to apply certain knowledge learnt from the program in their work and improve their performance. These demonstrate visible outcomes, which can be recognized and measured by both the employing organizations and the graduates themselves. The usefulness and applicability of this knowledge varies from the ability to make more valuable comments in organizational meetings to playing a more active role in policy advising and evaluation. Explicit knowledge such as tools or standard processes were mentioned as being transferred in only a few cases.

According to the interviews, transferred knowledge is mainly characterized as tacit – including problem solving, critical thinking, research experience and self-study skills. While explicit knowledge can be put to immediate use depending on the tasks or positions of graduates at work; the portrayed tacit knowledge and generic skills can be applied in various situations regardless of tasks or job positions. For example, regardless of not directly working in the subject area, many interviewees reported that research, problem solving, and critical thinking skills helped them to improve their job performance and learning in future training sessions.

> The valuable thing I got from the program is not a straightforward application of knowledge but the ability to think and learn. There's so much more knowledge; one area connects with others, and there are plenty of ways of looking at things. It's not black and white, right and wrong, but it depends on what approach one takes. I think that's the biggest gain for me. (Interviewee 07)

Besides knowledge and skills being transferred, according to the data, studying in the program also affected the graduates' attitude towards learning, research, knowledge sharing and ways of working. These could be considered as invisible outcomes of knowledge transfer, probably with long-term effects. Some interviewees expressed that learning in the program motivates them to continue learning, self-learn and do research to improve their knowledge and their work. The rigidity of the program also promoted students' independent learning and integrity, which they appreciated and wanted to pass on others and their children.

Many of the interviewees expressed that they gained much confidence after the program, which affected their attitude at work. For example, the achieved confidence enabled them to speak out their opinions, go forward with new ideas or step out of their comfort zones to work on new tasks.

> The skills and knowledge gained from the program made me feel more confident, so I sent that research proposal. At my organization, this kind of work is often made by researchers. Each year, we get funding for only three to four proposals, and this year, mine was one of the three funded proposals. Now I'm confident that I can do research – the type of work that was the domain of the research staff. This is beyond my expectation. (Interviewee 07)

Contrary to the knowledge being transferred from teachers to students, the reverse way of transfer from students to teachers is not so evident. According to the data, some teachers, more than others, were reported to show interest in students' knowledge, considered the students as experts in their home country and were willing to learn from the students. However, in some interviews, students who were not aware of the collaboration done between the partner universities prior to the program suggested it would be better if teachers would learn more about Vietnam and students' backgrounds and learning needs or discuss with Vietnamese colleagues before coming to teach. Thus, it seems that although the program was transnational, it is still questionable whether knowledge transfer in this program was transnational or not.

The affecting determinants for knowledge transfer: Expectations, applicability of knowledge and issues relating to pedagogics and program organization

When starting the program, some students enrolled in the program mainly because they were assigned by the government as resource staff in need of capacity enhancement, while others applied to the program to realize their dream of getting quality international education in Vietnam as an alternative for studying abroad. Most of the interviewed students expected to learn professional knowledge useful for their career development. They wanted to learn practical and hands-on knowledge that could help them deal with specific problems or tasks at work. However, as mentioned, the most useful gain for them from the program was the generic skills that could be applied in different situations regardless of their work positions – such as research skills, problem solving skills, broader approaches, critical thinking and independent learning. Thus, it turned out that the professional knowledge was not the most valuable for them as they expected at the beginning.

Interviewees also brought their professional and educational background with them to the program, which both facilitated and impeded learning and knowledge transfer. During lectures, students used their extensive work experience and practical knowledge about the Vietnamese context and public administration system to help them learn faster and better. According to the data, the most popular tactic to learn was to make comparisons between the foreign countries and Vietnam, theories and practices, and reflect on what is useful and relevant for the students. As can be seen, their learning process was selective – as they tried to make sense of the taught knowledge (the 'what' and 'why'), then decided on what is useful and important for them (the 'how') and absorbed that knowledge instead of all the knowledge that was being conveyed to them.

> In my previous education, it was fully theoretical. The teachers taught whatever they like to talk about, and students just listen, even though I wouldn't understand. But now, in this program, I listened to the teachers, and I could reflect on my experience and background knowledge. (Interviewee 03)

When making comparisons, students got 'so much interested' in the new knowledge, as it appeared different from what they were accustomed to in Vietnam. However, it became apparent that if the difference between the previously learnt and what they learnt from the program became too significant, it could become an obstacle for transferring knowledge into practice. Thus, it appears that the process of learning – making sense of knowledge, its relevance and its applicability to their work context – can happen while students receive and process new information, or it can happen later.

While the students actively used their professional backgrounds to support learning, their learning was affected by their Vietnamese educational background. While some new learning and teaching methods were considered interesting and effective, too contrasting educational experience was reported to have caused difficulties. For example, the freedom to choose topics for essays and written assignments was found confusing. Moreover, the requirements for doing research differed from what the students were used to – which caused the students to feel 'lots of stress' and 'disappointment' and get to the point of 'almost giving up', as it was described as a 'very tough, tiring and time-consuming' and an 'overwhelming' task.

One contrasting educational experience – which, nonetheless, supported students' learning – was the students' positive perception of foreign teachers in comparison with the Vietnamese teachers from their prior educational experiences. They repeatedly described the foreign teachers as 'enthusiastic', 'caring' and 'friendly'. They looked at teachers with admiration of their teaching styles – their 'pool of knowledge' and 'confidence' and their way of 'generously sharing' their knowledge and experience from teaching, doing research, and consulting for governments and other practitioners. Accordingly, a positive image of teachers can have a strong effect on students' motivation to learn and make it easier for students to accept and absorb new knowledge. On the other end, even though the students actively made use of their knowledge while learning, they rarely gave feedback to make the courses more useful for them and neither questioned nor expressed their concerns with teachers if they struggled with understanding and doing tasks.

In addition, the interviewees pointed out certain aspects related to the organization of the program affecting their learning. For example, due to the geographical distance between Finland and Vietnam, the students studied intensively for a week under contact teaching, followed by a long break until the next course was taught, resulting in 'knowledge popping out and fading away' and 'forgetting what was learnt in the previous course when starting a new one'. Also, the role of feedback from teachers was found important for their learning. Instead of just receiving grades, the students wished for more feedback to 'know how well I perform, how well I understand and apply the knowledge and what I need to pay more attention to'. Although the students thought these aspects mattered to their learning, it comes across from the data that the students felt they did not have much say on these matters because they considered themselves as lucky enough to have the opportunity to study in the foreign program and did not want to complain or ask too much.

Additionally, the interview data indicated the importance of peer support and sharing to motivation. A vibrant learning environment was created by 'texting each other days before the class and waiting for meeting classmates coming from other provinces'. Also, noticing that their peers came from different public organizations, positions and locations, with various practical experiences to share, they found that 'there are so many talents to learn from' and 'materials to share'. On the other hand, different learning paces among students slowed down the progress of the group.

The possibilities to use the acquired knowledge in work life

At work, when having the support from colleagues and being given the right tasks, some graduates reported being able to transfer knowledge to their work and share it with others inside and even outside their organization. The data clearly show that there was strong organizational support in terms of finance, workload and time allocated for studies, but often, the support ended there.

> They send me to training about strategic management, but in the end, someone else is taking part in the strategic development. They don't use my knowledge or put me in a position where I can use my knowledge … they don't care what I've learnt and what I can bring to work. (Interviewee 08)

Whilst not having the support needed from their managers or organization, many of the interviewed considered that the working culture and the wider system are resistant to change, which can demotivate and reduce willingness to make initiatives for improvements in their organizations. Thus, to make changes and get them approved, they accounted for the need to 'know some authorities; otherwise, there's no use in trying to effect changes no matter how talented you are' because 'only those in high positions and power can make changes'. Another reason for taking this passive and minor role in knowledge sharing is that the students did not feel safe enough to share. There was a reported concern of jealousy and 'showing off'. The attempts to share were reported as receiving 'silence', 'neglection' and a 'just-pass-on-it' reaction.

In summary, based on the analysis, it appears that more tacit knowledge has been transferred than explicit knowledge. In addition to knowledge, skills and attitudes also contribute as the major gains for graduates of the analyzed program – unexpected outcomes, compared to their initial expectations. Students' backgrounds play a critical role in learning and knowledge transfer. It seems the students were actively utilizing their prior knowledge and experience to support their learning, but too contrasting educational approaches between the prior and current program caused difficulties for learning, especially in challenging tasks. Finally, the ability to share knowledge and transfer knowledge to the workplace was rather limited due to the organizational and cultural features. Consequently, most transfer and sharing activities happened ad hoc and on an individual basis.

Discussion and conclusions – who learns what and how in transnational higher education?

This article studied knowledge transfer in the TNE context and found out that while the general literature on knowledge transfer emphasizes the high transferability of explicit knowledge compared to tacit knowledge (Gertler, 2003; Oddou et al., 2009; Polanyi, 1966; Williams, 2006) in transnational higher education, the situation may be more complex. One explanation for this could be that compared to task-specific training in higher education the degree programs aim to develop more general knowledge, capabilities and expertise that are not as tightly connected to certain tasks. Indeed, generic skills and tacit knowledge such as research capabilities, critical thinking, problem solving, and proposal-writing skills could be used across fields. Another possible explanation for the finding may relate to the nature of TNE. The cultural differences and the background characteristics of students may explain why students may not find the explicit knowledge as useful as the more tacit aspects of the programs.

In addition to the different types of knowledge being transferred, previous studies have extensively focused on the measurable impacts of knowledge transfer – especially on its impact on work performance (Broucker, 2010) and less on the transfer of motivation, attitude and other more tacit aspects and drivers of individual learning highlighted in this study. In the studied TNE program, explicit knowledge and skills, as well as a learning mind-set, were transferred. Increased confidence, motivation for continuous learning and even a transfer of the passion for learning and academic integrity to the next generation were mentioned as valuable impacts of TNE. The positive attitude towards self-learning and doing research can be connected to knowledge transfer, as the most successful transfer cases described in this study were attributed to the graduates' ability to continue learning and adapt new knowledge, while direct and straightforward knowledge transfer did not take place. This is supported by previous research arguing learning and transfer cannot be separately considered (Bormann, 2007; Kilbrink et al., 2018).

This study also showed how the students' motivation evolved during the program. Instead of depicting motivation as externally driven and as a static variable (e.g. Holton et al., 2000), in this study, students' initial motivation was to gain expertise, 'correct' and standard knowledge, as they formulated their expectations. According to the data, they started to realize the nature of higher education during the program and reported more nuanced knowledge, beneficial for their work and personal lives, being transferred. After the program, they were even more motivated to learn because they saw, in practice, the relevance and usefulness of what they had learnt. In the end, what they expected at the beginning turned out to be least transferable. The unexpected gains from generic skills and personal development show how initial motivation and expectations may not be determining factors of knowledge transfer after all, especially when considering a two-year educational program.

Whilst previous studies show that transferees' favorable perception of transferors is an essential factor for successful transfer (Albino et al., 1998; Oddou et al., 2009; Pimpa, 2009), this study found that this is not necessarily the case. Based on the data the students were not aware of their central role in learning but rather put it in the hands of teachers, of other students, and of the program organizers. This finding is particularly crucial for the success of knowledge transfer – as it is not just about receiving and reproducing knowledge but also about becoming the owner of the learning process and the knowledge to be able to monitor it, assess one's understanding and use knowledge for various purposes (Bransford et al., 2000).

When considering the knowledge transfer to students' workplaces, it is important to note that most of the work organizations did not have any plans for utilizing and leveraging the new knowledge. It is also worth noticing that not only external forces but also their ‘know with’ (background) affects students’ motivation to transfer knowledge. Another explanation for the limited knowledge transfer at the workplace may relate to the type of knowledge being transferred. When sharing knowledge with colleagues, it is more about sharing the ‘knowing’ but not the ‘doing’. For example, the graduates expressed sharing knowledge about how things are done in Finland and elsewhere. Nevertheless, there were very few cases where the students had made things together with their colleagues using new knowledge. This has important implications not only for graduates’ work organizations but also for TNE programs generally. Generic skills have been proven to be widely useful and transferable and should be paid special attention in all programs. Whilst expert knowledge is often absorbed in the ‘knowing’ form and thus needs to be taught in the way that encourages its applicability, the ‘doing’ form is more or less ready to be transferred to work in any context.

As mentioned, the study highlighted the importance of students’ background knowledge which they facilitated to support their learning. Based on this study, there are two important aspects relating to ‘know with’ in learning and knowledge transfer in the TNE context. First, the conscious use of ‘know with’ had a positive effect on knowledge transfer and learning. However, when the new knowledge and student’s ‘know with’ conflict, the transfer process seems to stop. Instead, students switch to whatever way convenient for them and do not assimilate new skills or knowledge. This was more common to students with rich work experiences because their ‘know with’ had laid a strong foundation for getting things done long before their studies introduced them to new ways of working. Similar situations have been observed in previous studies (cf. Hoare, 2012; Pimpa, 2009; Volet, 1999). Second, as an implication of the former point, it is important that teachers acknowledge and are aware of conflicts between ‘know with’ and what they teach because this entails a struggle for students, and they need support in handling the situation (Tennant, 2000). Appropriate support may even strengthen the positive effects on learning; as was shown in this study, students learnt the most from the most difficult tasks.

This study contributes to the transnational higher education literature by showing that knowledge transfer as an outcome of TNE programs has wide and long-term effects that reach beyond individuals and their work. In addition to the field-related expertise, the students also gained generic skills and a positive attitude towards continuous learning and personal development – which, in turn, may have a large impact on society. The study, however, showed that as knowledge mediators, students might have quite a limited, passive role both in learning and knowledge transfer during their studies and later at their workplace. This study illustrates how students’ learning and knowledge transfer processes happen simultaneously and is constantly influenced by multiple external forces. Meanwhile, the data highlight the importance of an internal factor – students' 'know with' – background knowledge, skills and experience, which play critical roles and should be efficiently facilitated and embedded into the learning and knowledge transfer processes.

As expected, there are some limitations to our approach. A limited number of students in one TNE program were interviewed, which provides an incomplete view of the knowledge transfer since other informants might have raised different aspects of the knowledge transfer. However, a certain level of data saturation was attained, as no new issues were raised in the last interviews. This indicates that at least the most meaningful aspects of knowledge transfer related to this particular program were recognized. Later, it would be interesting to carry out a follow-up study with the same graduates to evaluate the impacts of the program after a few years. Accordingly, paying special attention to student's perceptions of the contents, the outcomes and the impacts of TNE as well as portraying their role as knowledge mediators in the learning process provides relevant insight and information in developing future programs in the field of transnational higher education.

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Is Openness to Diversity the Path to Multiculturalism? A Case Study Testing an Updated ODC Scale and the Influence of Social Desirability Bias

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we describe a case study conducted with graduate students in a major diverse university and suggest the addition of a more contemporary facet to the Openness to Diversity and Challenge (ODC) scale created by Pascarella and colleagues in 1996 which rests on sharing and symmetry. The intriguing behavior of students relating an assignment about multiculturalism, led us to review and update the ODC scale by integrating a self-oriented symmetric side to the scale previously based exclusively on others-oriented measure. Our research was composed of two phases. The first one was based on a case study using the direct-observation approach as the data collection method. The second one was testing the symmetric ODC scale through a 5-point Likert scale on a sample of 56 graduate business students in order to identify the relevance of the suggested update of the 25 year-old ODC scale. Results demonstrated that the main factor intervening in the use of scales remains the Social Desirability Bias (SDB) which comforted us in the accuracy of the direct observation method as an appropriate approach to study Openness to Diversity. Our findings also confirmed that the widespread use of the ODC scale created in 1996 does not reflect the contemporary young mindsets and reality.

Keywords: openness to diversity, community, symmetry, multiculturalism, education, culture, curiosity

Openness to Diversity has never been this timely and critical. Curiosity about others and acceptance of race, cultural and ethnic differences are a pivotal issue in our societies. At a time when Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) is ruling companies and the world, openness to diversity is a requirement for professionals from all industries worldwide. In order to reflect such evolution in mindsets and practices, universities should ensure students' preparation to take positions in a multicultural world.

So far, research about openness to diversity has been mostly conducted with undergraduate students. We argue that graduate students should also be integrated in such studies because they are active professionals at the same time as they are students in our universities. Graduate students are already working in this D&I environment and should be well prepared to face challenges relating to multiculturalism.

Indeed, graduate students are currently performing in companies and should also be well prepared to interact in multicultural settings. Some of them might and some might not have benefitted from multicultural exposure in college and yet are already working in companies and experiencing multiculturalism at a professional level. Interactions, both internal and external, with colleagues, clients, partners, and suppliers are dragging them into a multicultural environment at this very moment and one would wonder if they are well prepared to face such challenges. Professionals are confronted with multiculturalism in teamwork, communication and negotiation (Karsaklian, 2014, 2017, 2019).

The motivation for the research presented here emerged from an assignment conducted with two groups of graduate students in a Multicultural Marketing course. Students could freely choose one specific ethnic community to study and most of them chose the community they belong to rather than seizing the opportunity to explore an alien community. Such decisions were intriguing considering the multicultural background of the students and the topic at hand. As stated by Alt (2017), students' experiences in the classroom might be related to their Openness to Diversity and Challenge (ODC) perceptions. This prompted the urge to explore students' real perception of openness to diversity.

Even more intriguing was the fact that prior research has asserted that students immersed in multicultural campuses sported higher levels of openness to diversity. Admittedly, most previous studies had been conducted with surveys whereby openness to diversity was measured with a 5-point Likert scale based on the pioneer works of Pascarella and colleagues in 1996. Despite the knowledge and needed academic contribution provided by previous research, the use of those scales could easily introduce the Social Desirability Bias (SDB) in the responses. We believe that we avoided such bias in our study because there were no questions or scales involved in the assignments used in the research presented here.

In this paper, we seek to fill in important gaps left open by previous research. Our first contribution relies on our work with graduate students. Their input is very valuable because they are able to relate to ODC both in the classroom and in real life thanks to their professional experience in companies, most of them integrating D&I as a norm. Our second contribution is methodological, based on direct observation and narratives rather than the use of scales in order to avoid SDB. Our third contribution is providing a contemporary vision to the widespread ODC scale created by Pascarella and colleagues 25 years ago. Indeed, the ODC scale measures the openness to others in contemplating the willingness students have to interact with unknown people coming from alien cultures. By not integrating the symmetrical side of openness to diversity which is the interaction through sharing one's culture with others, the ODC scale is missing one unavoidable aspect of contemporary openness to diversity. In other words, we argue that the others-oriented scale should integrate the symmetrical self-oriented side of openness to diversity.

As a matter of fact, students' environment has dramatically changed ever since the ODC scale was created and so did their understanding of multiculturalism. Students having been raised in the sharing economy learned to give and take at the same time. The growth of the consumer-to-consumer market is a perfect example of this sharing economy. Platforms such as Mercari, Poshmark and ThreadUP, just to name a few, are places where any consumer can buy and sell their belongings from and to other consumers just like them.

Sharing emotions and information on social media is as straightforward as sharing cultural practices to contemporary students. Another factor enabling easy contact with foreign cultures is the proliferation of affordable services such as low-priced restaurants offering ethnic food as well as low cost airlines and companies such as AirBnB and Uber which have immensely helped in creating invaluable opportunities for students to experience new cultures.

In addition, students who witnessed the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic materialized by countries closing their borders and study abroad programs turning into online courses experienced cultural isolation and could better appreciate the value of multiculturalism. Another cultural consequence of the pandemic was the stigmatization of the Asian community across continents which, along with the Black Lives Matter international movement, brought the discussion about racial discrimination back to the spotlight. All these factors have contributed to giving a new perspective of multiculturalism to current students setting them apart from those who attended college decades ago.

This turn of events along with the findings of our research led us to believe that it is time to revisit the ODC scale. An update will foster the longevity of this essential tool to all multicultural researchers and will better suit the perspective contemporary students give to cultural diversity.

To do so, we first suggest a symmetrical update to the existing ODC scale by integrating the self-oriented side to it. Second, we test the symmetrical ODC scale with 56 graduate business students.

Theoretical Framework

Higher education institutions have a role in cultivating students' openness to diverse perspectives, regardless of whether they are grounded in racial, ethnic, economic, religious, political, or other such differences.

Research has indicated that college attendance itself engenders positive changes in tolerance and openness toward others (Pascarella & Terenzini,1991). Accordingly, Cassandra and Yeung (2013), stated that incorporating engagement in cross-racial or diverse interactions into the college setting enhances students' development and prepares them to address future challenges brought forth by an increasingly diverse society. Further research is needed to know if such exposure results in students seizing the opportunity to know more about others. As a matter of fact, other than being exposed to multiculturalism, students need to want to open up to others, and this willingness to know more about cultures has been defined as cultural curiosity (Karsaklian, 2020). Cultural curiosity is a two-way path. Culturally curious people are both self-oriented and others oriented. They like to get to know, explain and understand cultures in general.

Additional studies found that exposure to cultural diversity in the curriculum, racial diversity in the student body and among faculty, and social, cultural, and political diversity in race dialogues and cultural workshops contribute to greater openness to diversity, higher levels of intellectual engagement, increases in complex thinking, and increased motivation (Smith et al.,1997 and Milem & Hakuta, 2000). Some studies have specifically addressed the impact of interracial interaction and its role in developing cultural awareness and racial understanding (Antonio, 2001). Astin (1993), found that socializing with someone of a different race was associated with increases in cultural awareness, commitment to racial understanding, and commitment to the environment.

Fowers and Davidov (2006) argued that the primary virtue necessary for multiculturalism is openness to the other. The authors state that this multicultural focus on openness to the other is closely related to the concept of humility. Definitions of humility generally include both intrapersonal and interpersonal components. On the interpersonal dimension, humble individuals are able to maintain an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented rather than self-focused, characterized by respect for others and a lack of superiority (Davis et al., 2011).

Accordingly and building on recent theory stressing multicultural orientation, as well as the development of virtues and dispositions associated with multicultural values, Hook and colleagues (2013)defined cultural humility as having an interpersonal stance that is other-oriented rather than self-focused, characterized by respect and lack of superiority toward an individual's cultural background and experience. Cultural humility can be seen as a requirement for developing cultural curiosity by the fact of being other-oriented rather than self-oriented. When people are interested in knowing more about other people, they are curious and when they are curious about people from other cultures, they are culturally curious. However accurate, the above statements support the asymmetrical approach to multiculturalism applied to the ODC scale whereas contemporary trends are symmetrical, that is, both self and others oriented.

The educational benefits of a racially diverse student body and engagement in cross-racial interactions, such as enhanced self-confidence, motivation, intellectual and civic development, and development of pluralistic orientations, have been well documented (Antonio, 2001a, 2001b, 2004a, 2004b; Chang, 1999; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Jayakumar, 2008). Chang (1999) also found that interracial interactions in college enhanced student retention, college satisfaction, and intellectual and social self-concept; they also positively influenced students' knowledge of and ability to accept different races and cultures. Chang, Astin, and Kim (2004) added that it is not only important to consider the quantity of students' diverse interactions, but it is also important to consider the nature of students' engagement in diverse friendships and exploration.

Exploration relates to curiosity (Lowenstein, 1994) and students' engagement with diverse friends stimulates cultural curiosity. As a matter of fact, Chang (1999), found that students who socialized with diverse peers reported higher levels of satisfaction with college and their own social self-concept. While structural diversity is certainly an essential component of campus climate and is a predictor of racially heterogeneous friendships (Fischer, 2008), it is not the only component of climate worthy of examination. Therefore, studying in a multicultural environment does not preclude the development of cultural curiosity.

Cates and Schaefle (2009) found that students who had multicultural training infused into practicum coursework had greater increases in perceived multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills throughout the duration of the course than students who did not have a multicultural component in their practicum course. Dickson and Jepsen's (2007) inquiry of the breadth and depth of multicultural curricula lead to a conclusion that the current conceptualization of multicultural competencies may oversimplify the complexities of actual multicultural interactions, followed by a suggestion that further examination of multicultural training implementation is needed.

Indeed, having students surrounded by people from other cultures is not enough to stimulate their cultural curiosity and understanding of cultures because they tend to aggregate in groups with students from their own culture what has been called balkanization. The phenomenon of balkanization (Duster, 1991) is defined as the tendency for students to group themselves racially on campus. Accordingly, D'Souza (1991) concluded that the multicultural campus experience is marked by self-segregation and leads to increased ethnocentrism and racial intolerance.

In order to avoid balkanization and to enable students to thoroughly benefit from a multicultural environment, students should be taught about cultural diversity and the impact of multiculturalism in their private and professional lives. As openness to diversity has been defined as an attitude of awareness and acceptance of both similarities and differences that exist among people (Sawyerr et al., 2005; Shrivastava &Gregory, 2009), both awareness and acceptance don't happen on campus without the help of guidance.

Over the past decades, there has been a general shift in sociological theory towards conceptualizing the self, culture, and society as multiple, fluid, and fragmented in contrast to a past pictured as unitary, stable, and coherent (Ollivier, 2008). An organizational climate open to diversity is an environment in which individuals respect the views of those who are different and where activities are not organized on basis of demographic similarities among group members (Hobman et al., 2004) provided that they had learned to do so.

The main issue is how to convey the importance of valuing what is different if we assume that openness to cognitive diversity (a) relates to the way in which individuals approach the different perspectives and knowledge of other group members and (b) incorporates the view that others should be allowed to freely express their differing views, the belief that there is value in others' knowledge and objectives and the perception that there is merit in using the best of others' ideas (Anderson & West, 1998; Hobman et al., 2004; Tjosvold & Poon, 1998). This last point is fundamental in developing cultural curiosity. People will only be curious about others if they see merit in their ideas and if they perceive some degree of reciprocity from the same people being curious about them.

We understand the role of universities as being an eye-opening guide to all students. To undergraduates, understanding openness to diversity is a way of experiencing it on campus and further propagating it in their personal and professional lives. To graduate students, it means providing them the tools to comply with professional multicultural settings.. Independent on the industry, company and position they will take, the likelihood of working in multicultural settings is at its highest. Universities should ensure students' preparation for such a professional life, not only technically but also culturally. Understanding how to integrate openness to diversity in contemporary curricula is a fundamental step in helping students to include themselves in the openness to diversity process in which they are required to be active actors. In order to more accurately mirror current students' realities, the ODC scale should integrate the self-oriented statements to the already existing others-oriented statements.

Research Method

Most research conducted on the topic of openness to diversity use or is inspired by the ODC scale. The Openness to Diversity and Challenge (ODC) scale was created by Pascarella and colleagues in 1996 for the National Survey of Student Learning. The scale included eight items concerned with students' openness to diverse cultures, races, ethnicities, and values as well as individuals' willingness and enjoyment of having their ideas challenged by different values and perspectives. Enrollment in diversity related courses, discussing controversial topics that challenged students' perspectives, interactions with diverse peers, a positive campus climate, climate for diversity, and living on campus were all associated with students' increased ODC at the end of the first year of college (Pascarella et al., 1996).

As such, openness to diversity is often measured using a 5-point Likert scale including statements such as: (a) I believe contact with individuals whose backgrounds (race, national origin, sexual orientation) differ from my own is an essential part of my college education; (b) I enjoy taking courses that challenge my beliefs and values; (c) I most enjoy the courses that make me think about things from a different perspective; (d) I believe that learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of my college education; (e) I enjoy having discussions with people whose ideas and values are different from my own; (f) I enjoy talking with people who have values different from mine because it helps me better understand myself and values; and (g) I agree that the real value of a college education lies in being introduced to different values. (Bowman, 2014; Pascarella et al., 1996).

Admittedly, the use of scales through structured questionnaires has several advantages such as quantifying responses, designing trends, comparing results and creating databases. Nevertheless, students might tend to positively rate statements that relate more closely to what is socially accepted mainly when it comes to openness to others and tolerance.

Consequently, and in order to avoid SDB, the method chosen for this research was a case study based on direct observation and narratives. Direct observation is one of the six major sources of evidence described by Yin (1994). This method is deemed appropriate to be applied to the phenomenon we aimed at analyzing because the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding a phenomenon within its natural setting. In addition, it is argued that students' habits of learning are still overwhelmingly skewed towards passive acquisition of knowledge from authority sources rather than from collaborative inquiry activities (Stahl, 2011).In order to counter this state of facts, our teaching method was an invitation to freely speak about any culture.

Sciame-Giesecke et al. (2009), investigated how faculty members implement multicultural course transformation in their classrooms to prepare college students to live and work in a diverse world. Adding diversity course content was raised by the vast majority of faculty as a tool for implementing multicultural course transformation. Our case study describes a teaching method that engages students in the learning process and obtains genuine responses from them.

Although case studies have been criticized by some as lacking scientific rigor, reliability and generalizability, they provide a holistic view of certain events and capture life in organizations (Noor, 2008). They facilitate exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. The case study presented here contributes to the field research needed on openness to diversity. As defined by Yin (2003), the research method employed in this case study was qualitative and descriptive and drew on direct observation and narratives. It is recognized that one case study "cannot provide a test of the propositions but it can serve to provide vivid examples of the theoretical constructs included in the propositions" (Shamir et al., 1994, p. 26). Therefore, using a case study approach enables to explore a new perspective of openness to diversity.

The case study presented here was conducted in two phases. The first phase was purely observational. We observed students' behavior when asked to choose any ethnic community they would like to study. This phase led us to the evidence that the vast majority of students chose their own communities rather than explore an alien culture. The second phase of our research was the analysis of students' narratives contained in their assignments. This phase enabled us to understand the reasons why such choices were made and enlightened our understanding of how contemporary students' experience openness to diversity.

The use of narratives was fundamental in helping to understand the importance of symmetry to contemporary students. By being the mainstream forum for storytelling, social media constitutes an essential part of students' lives. It is the forum where they can freely share stories about themselves and become real stars thanks to "likers" and followers. The vast majority of posts on social media are from people talking about themselves, their pets, their children, their job search, their graduations, their frustrations, and their selfies.

It is people, not events that attract the attention of contemporary students. This is also why reality shows are successful. There is no plot in these shows (Walker &Lombrozo, 2016); only people living their "normal lives" are portrayed so that the audience feels like being part of them from the inside.

By being immersed in this environment, students tend to exist thanks to this mirror effect: they post (share) and those posts are liked and reshared; they see a post and immediately like and reshare it too. If it is not a two-way conversation it is a failure. Their "celebrity" is measured by the number of likes, reshares and followers immediately after they post. They constantly check their social media accounts in order to track their own celebrity and acceptance by their virtual community.

The virtual community is the one without boundaries, shared by people from around the world brought together by the simple recency of stories (Wexler, 2006) and the immediacy of others' reactions to those stories. Contemporary students don't understand one-way communication. They need to be actors in the stories thanks to what they share with others.

The case study

Situating learning in a real-world task ensures that learning is personally interesting and provides students with opportunities to think at the level of sophistication that they are likely to encounter in the real world (Erstad, 2011). This was the main goal of the assignments described here.

Unlike previous studies, our study started with an intriguing situation. In a required International Marketing course, students were asked to choose a country as a target market for a new product. As the class was composed of graduate students with different cultural backgrounds it was assumed that thanks to their natural openness to diversity, they would seize the opportunity to explore countries they were unfamiliar with. However, the opposite outcome was obtained and the vast majority of students chose their home country to work on, what could be seen as a lack of openness to diversity. This evidence made us wonder if being immersed in a multicultural environment was enough for students to be open to diversity as stated in most of previous publications.

Intrigued by this evidence, we decided to proceed with a research based on direct observation and narratives aiming at creating a case study to be later used for pedagogical purposes. This observation prompted our research question: how do contemporary students actually experience openness to diversity?

To do so, we proceeded with the observation of two other graduate courses in a major university in the United States. The Business School ranked in the top 5% of all schools for ethnic diversity in the country because not only are many races represented at the school, but there is a significant number of students in each group. As a matter of fact, the ethnic breakdown is Hispanic: 32.6%, White: 29.6%, Asian: 21.4%, African American: 7.9%, and Non-Resident Alien: 4.8%.

Our first observation involved a group of 24 graduate students enrolled in an elective Multicultural Marketing course in 2019. Students belonged to different ethnic communities - White: 40,2%, Hispanic: 21,7%, Asian: 17,4%, African American: 8,7% , and other: 12%. These students were given an individual assignment which was to select an ethnic community and study the marketing strategy for an existing product addressing the chosen community in order to come up with marketing recommendations for how to increase penetration of that product in that same community. Any chosen community was welcome as they were not chosen out of a list. We expected that motivated by openness to diversity and cultural curiosity, most students would seize the opportunity to explore an alien community.

The second observation was conducted with the same course in 2020and counted 22 graduate students. Students belonged to different ethnic communities - Asian: 33,4 %, Hispanic: 23,1%, African American: 14,5%, White: 14,3%, and other: 14,7%. Their assignment required to choose a product sold in two different ethnic communities and advise if the company should design a specific marketing strategy for each community or if one same marketing strategy could bring both communities together. As an individual assignment, each student was free to choose any two communities they would like to study and here again no lists of communities were suggested.

With a one year gap, the two groups of students having accomplished similar assignments for the same course were studied and the outcomes proved to be very similar. The 46 students having attended the elective Multicultural Marketing course in 2019 and 2020 were all multicultural or at least bicultural and more than 10 different cultures were represented in the classroom each year. Moreover, as MBA students, they were engaged in active professional lives either working for companies or running their own businesses. Therefore, they were exposed to cultural diversity in their professional settings as well. Some had already constituted families and among those some with partners from cultures other than their own.

In addition to the teaching of theoretical concepts in this course, multiculturalism was taught and illustrated through intensive interactions and discussions about topics linked to multicultural marketing such as the use of diversity in advertising, product adaptations to specific communities, diversity and inclusion in events, and so forth, throughout the semester. Thus, students' critical thinking and reflection about the importance and pertinence of openness to diversity was highly stimulated.

Findings

Taking into account the multicultural features involved in this research thanks to the students' background, the high level of multiculturalism not only on campus but also in the classroom, and keeping in mind the ODC scale statements, one would have expected higher rates of exploration of alien cultures from the graduate students in their individual assignments. Another factor contributing to these expectations was that those students willingly enrolled in the elective Multicultural Marketing course which could preclude a genuine interest in learning about other cultures. In addition, as these were individual assignments, each student was totally free to choose to study any community without being under the pressure of compromising with team members' choices. Surprisingly and opposed to our expectations, most students chose to work with the communities they belonged to.

In the 2019 group, 78% of the students choose their own community to analyze. In the 2020 group of students, 71% of them chose their own community to compare to an alien one while bicultural students chose the two communities they belonged to. Students having chosen only alien ethnicities in both classes were represented by five white students out of a class of 24 in 2019 and two students out of a class of 22 in 2020; one from Asia and one from the Middle East.

It is indeed intriguing that students with such a multicultural background, evolving in highly multicultural settings, and attending an elective Multicultural Marketing course are still so strongly tied to their own communities when it comes to a course assignment. Even more intriguing was the fact that these results contradicted findings from previous research having used the ODC scale.

Atfirst glance and based on observation only, students' choices led us to assume that being immersed in a multicultural campus is not enough to develop openness to diversity and that openness to diversity is a needed however not sufficient condition to acquire cultural curiosity.

We knew that thanks to their multicultural background, students took cultural differences for granted. In other words, to them it was obvious that all cultures are different and that we can't know about all of them which, by the way, is not a hampering block to working together.

We also considered the fact that because this was a course assignment and that a grade was at stake, students would feel safer when working with a culture they are well familiar with, without taking the risk of venturing in unknown waters. As a matter of fact, it is easier to speak about what is well known.

It was only at the second phase of our study that we realized that, although plausible, our assumptions were observer-relative, that is, our expectations were influenced by previous research where openness to diversity was defined only as openness to people from other cultures. Indeed, when reading the narratives contained in the students' assignments we gathered that their understanding of openness to diversity and ours were misaligned because they were not rooted in the same beliefs. While previous research and the ODC scale were exclusively others-oriented, our students showed that openness to diversity is also about sharing, and thus, self-oriented as well. By explaining their own cultural background, they were opening the door to a conversation about other cultures and their own.

As a matter of fact, in both cases, students were more focused on sharing about their own respective cultures with their classmates rather than exploring new cultures. They would willingly share, teach and explain their cultural history, rituals and examples with pride of their community during the sessions. Their way of opening to diversity was sharing their knowledge and belonging to their respective communities aimed at having others understand and appreciate them as well. These results were opposed to our preliminary expectations as we assumed that the main motivation for students enrolling in an elective course about multiculturalism would be cultural curiosity, that is, the willingness to learn about other cultures and thus seize the opportunity to explore the unknown.

Symmetry between self and others orientation

Seizing the opportunity they were given to choose any culture they would like to study, students explained, in their reports, the reasons having led them to choose the cultures they would describe in their assignments.

We took, out of their narratives, a symmetry that stems from an apparent paradoxical behavior which is simultaneously self-centered and communitarian. Social media has reinforced such symmetry in the sense that contributors post about themselves to share their feelings and routines aiming at finding others who feel like them so that they will follow up with comments, likes and reshares. When opening themselves to others, they are looking for a mirror effect whereby symmetry will make them feel as part of a (virtual) community. Contemporary students build themselves and create their own realities (Arntz& al., 2005) in relation to others they know virtually thanks to the proliferation of narratives in social media and reality shows.

This group identification leads to an increase of curiosity about others at the same time as students remain self-oriented. Thus, sharing becomes a key aspect of their lives and subsequently of their learning process. As explained by Hood (2012), self is the product of relationships and interactions with others. By being dependent on each other, the social bonds and relationships that used to take time and effort to form are now undergoing a revolution as people put themselves online; technology shapes society. The speed and ease at which alliances and relationships can be formed is resulting in the new self in the online social world.

Towards a contemporary ODC scale

Our findings led us to see the definition of ODC as well as its scale from a refreshing perspective: the students' symmetrical perspective. Clearly, the ODC scale is oriented to others, what prompts the following question: does the ODC scale measure openness to diversity or openness to others?

Because the concept and its subsequent scale were created a long time ago, they don't integrate the pivotal role of diversity and inclusion both in companies and in universities today.

We argue that, under the influence of social media, by sharing their own culture with classmates from other cultures, students were engaging in openness to diversity by enticing others to better understand their own cultures and thus increase awareness about cultural differences. This approach to multiculturalism would contribute to fighting stereotyping by the fact that now those students would have met peers from different ethnicities and heard straight from the source about other cultures.

Students with immigrant ascendants are proud of their cultural roots and want to share them with their classmates. This trend became a mainstream topic in current multicultural conversations for having been reinforced by companies providing genealogy with much success and acceptance, such as Ancestry. In doing so, people realize that everyone has multiple cultural roots what helps them to feel closer to people who otherwise were seen as totally strangers and unrelated to them.

The following verbatims from students illustrate the importance of sharing in openness to diversity:

> "It is important to me to explain my culture so that others can better understand me"
> "I want to be able to speak freely about my culture"
> "I want people to know about my culture without stereotypes"
> "I want to introduce my family's culture to others"
> "Sharing about my culture is my way of making new friends "
> "When I tell people about my culture, we realize that we have plenty of things in common that we didn't know before"
> "Sharing the food of my home country with my classmates helps them understand when I am homesick"

Based on our findings, we suggest the updated ODC scale in Table 1.

Table 1 – Symmetrical ODC Scale

Symmetrical ODC Scale	
Others-oriented	**Self-oriented**
I believe contact with individuals whose backgrounds (race, national origin, sexual orientation) differ from my own is an essential part of my college education	I believe contact with individuals whose backgrounds (race, national origin, sexual orientation) differ from my own is an essential part of college education because I can share my culture with them

I enjoy taking courses that challenge my beliefs and values	I enjoy taking courses that challenge my classmates beliefs about my cultural values
I most enjoy the courses that make me think about things from a different perspective	I most enjoy the courses that make me think and freely share about things from my own perspective
I believe that learning about people from different cultures is a very important part of my college education	I believe that learning about people from different cultures and sharing about my own culture are very important parts of my college education
I enjoy having discussions with people whose ideas and values are different from my own	I enjoy explaining to others why my ideas and values are different from theirs
I enjoy talking with people who have values different from mine because it helps me better understand myself and values	I enjoy talking with people who have values different from mine because it gives me the opportunity to explain myself and my values
I agree that the real value of a college education lies in being introduced to different values	I agree that the real value of a college education lies in being introduced to and sharing different values

Testing the symmetric ODC scale

We started the present article critiquing the use of scales in the measurement of Openness to Diversity because we assumed that it led to SDB. However, in an attempt to comply with Pascharella & Colleagues' (1996) mainstream measurement method still prevailing today, we suggested an update based on our case study's findings, which integrates the self-oriented side to the others-oriented scale.

Next, we decided to test our own symmetric scale aiming at verifying its relevance. The purpose of such empirical application was twofold: contribute to the longevity of the original ODC scale thanks to the update if our findings would prove it reliable, and verify its potential SDB influence.

To do so, the symmetric ODC scale was presented as a 5-point Likert scale composed of 14 questions: 7 of them from the original ODC scale created by Pascharella and Colleagues in 1996 and the symmetric 7 questions integrating the sharing and self-oriented side of openness to diversity. The sample for testing the symmetric scale was composed of 56 graduate business students.

Findings

Although 75% of the respondents Strongly Agree (SA) that contact with people from different backgrounds is an essential part of their education, only 25% Agree (A) that they enjoy taking courses that challenge their beliefs and values. These figures go down to 50% (SA) and 25% (A) in the symmetric scale while the rate of Neither Agree nor Disagree (NAOD) inexistent in the traditional scale goes up to 25% on the symmetric side. The answers to the first symmetric question preclude the impact of SDB when using such a scale. Students were reluctant to admit that they would take the opportunity of being among people from different backgrounds to share about their own cultures.

All respondents agreed that they enjoy taking courses that make them think from a different perspective or different from their own perspective, while 75% (SA) and 25% (A) that learning from different cultures as well as sharing their own culture is a very important part of their education.

In the other-oriented side of the scale, 75% of the respondents strongly agree and 25% agree that they enjoy talking with people with different values because it helps them to better understand themselves and their own values, but only 25% (SA) that they enjoy explaining to others why their ideas and values are different from theirs. The remaining 75% neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

Finally, 50% (NAOD) that the real value of their education lies in being introduced to different values, while 25% (SA) and 25% (A). On the self-oriented side of the scale, 50% (SA) that the real value of their education is being introduced to and sharing different values, while 50% neither agree nor disagree with that statement.

Analysis

One of the main outcomes taken away from the set of answers obtained in this study is that figures of NAOD went up in questions relating to students' sharing about their own cultures. Once the survey was completed, students were asked about how they had experienced the survey. Some students said that some questions were intrusive and some others said that it would sound pretentious to speak about their own cultures. These findings confirm our assumption that using scales with direct questions does introduce the SDB, as stated in the first part of this paper. As a matter of fact, when left free to choose any culture to study, students lean towards their own cultures and share their values and beliefs very spontaneously during the sessions. However, when questioned about their willingness to speak about themselves and share about their own cultures, they seem to feel uncomfortable and tend to answer neither agree nor disagree with the statement.

The NAOD option in the scale is relevant in this case, because people can NAOD with statements coming from others but not when it comes to their own statements. In other words, how can anyone not know if they want to share about their culture? Thus, the high response rates to this option disclose a politically correct answer to what would sound too self-oriented.

Discussion and Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study was to observe the impact of multiculturalism in the classroom on graduate students' openness to diversity. Our method was consistent with prior research outcomes, namely with the one conducted by the Wabash National Study involving the analysis of 207 intercultural experiences from 161 college students on six campuses which described how students experience intercultural learning: (a) intercultural learning occurred when students directly encountered others' experiences; (b) feeling safe enough to explore cultural differences was a key dimension of intercultural learning; and (c) students used a variety of approaches that led to intercultural learning (from simply listening or watching to exploring how one's personal identity related to intercultural understanding). All three factors were represented in the Multicultural Marketing course in both years.

Previous research conducted with students to measure openness to diversity was of critical importance to the understanding and development of multiculturalism in higher education. However, most of the previous studies were conducted with undergraduate students and used structured questionnaires with scales leading to increased likelihood of SDB. We believe that it is safe to state that SDB did not play a role in our results because students were not asked to give or rate their opinion about openness to diversity. They worked on one among several assignments required for the same course enabling an analysis based on direct observation and narratives.

This study underscores the importance of going beyond creating multicultural environments for having students open to diversity. One of our main conclusions is that a multicultural environment is a required yet not sufficient condition for students to be open to diversity and that the definition of the concept itself should be revisited and updated in order to fit in the contemporary trends and needs of D&I both in educational and professional settings.

More specifically, our findings lead us to understand that ODC would be better defined as a two-way path to others. It can be both self and others' oriented the main goal being sharing knowledge and explanations about different cultures. The research presented here was ignited by an unexpected and intriguing situation having emerged in a classroom. Although no external variables were controlled, the results are relevant in the sense that they lay down the path for further research to explore the reasons why this phenomenon exists. Further research should test the symmetrical ODC scale in adding the self-oriented side to the others-oriented openness to diversity.

Our main contribution to the field consisted of proposing an update of the mainstream ODC scale created by Pascharella and colleagues in 1996. We hope that the symmetry of the scale in integrating self-oriented statements is a fundamental step in the search for accuracy when measuring openness to diversity among contemporary students.

By suggesting a symmetric scale we aimed at integrating the new trends about multiculturalism and thus of openness to diversity to the existing ODC scale. We compared these results to those obtained with the direct observation phase of our research and confirmed that the use of scales about this topic leads to SBD. Today, it is important to show that we are open to others rather than being self-oriented, while the observation of behaviors in the classroom and on social media provides evidence of the opposite mindset. A very good example would be the current rise of cancel culture. More and more people allow themselves to "cancel" people whose opinions differ from theirs. This is the opposite of openness to others and to the acceptance of diversity in backgrounds and opinions.

Our research was limited to a sample of graduate students in the same business school. We believe that our findings can lead the way to more robust analysis of the most appropriate methods not only to measure but also to integrate openness to diversity in curricula in order to have students better prepared to perform in multicultural settings.

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Virtual Learning: The Lacuna for Improved Access, Openness and Flexibility in an Open and Distance Learning University

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores ways in which virtual learning can facilitate improved access to information, promote openness, and encourage flexibility in an open and distance learning university. It reports on experiences and perceptions of students at an open and distance learning university, who study through virtual learning. The study considered two groups studying the same programme, under different conditions. One group had facilitators during face-to-face sessions while the other used a virtual classroom, using smartboard technology. The sample consisted of thirty-two (32) students from Botswana Open University (BOU). An exploratory mixed methods approach was used. Students were purposively sampled. A questionnaire was administered to establish the extent to which virtual learning delivery mode provided improved access, openness and flexibility. For data analysis, themes of students' responses were identified and tallied according to the different issues and trends that emerged. The findings suggest that students view virtual learning not as significantly different from the face-to-face session in terms of quality of content. However, students reported low levels of satisfaction regarding interactivity and poor video quality.

Keywords: affordance theory, autonomous study, self-directed study, technology acceptance model, virtual learning

The introduction of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has been embraced by many open and distance learning (ODL) institutions of higher learning. ICTs uptake is being used to improve access, promote openness and encourage flexibility in the ODL space.

This paper reports on a study that explored perceptions and experiences of virtual learning students enrolled in the Master of Educational Leadership (MEdEL) programme with Botswana Open University (BOU). Virtual classes were started in July 2016 at BOU to address issues of access, openness and flexibility. Access would provide equal and equitable opportunities to education to all people irrespective of race, gender, religion and sexual orientation, among other factors. As such, using virtual learning was seen as a way that would possibly facilitate all these. Virtual learning is also perceived to eliminate barriers to choice of where and when to study. Jeong and Hmelo-Silver (2016, p. 247) observe that "Technology has made it possible for students to interact with other learners located in geographically distant areas across the globe." It provides more options of knowledge sharing, which promotes openness. Students are not constrained to go through their work. As such, virtual learning has a potential to encourage flexibility. These are some of the key factors that can contribute to success in an open and distance learning space. Other key issues that are addressed by this paper include online learning by students, quality of both content and student support, satisfaction of virtual learning students in terms of available resources as well as simultaneous delivery of the programme.

This paper is guided by the following research questions:

(i) How do MEdEL students at BOU perceive the virtual delivery of the programme?
(ii) What are the lived experiences the MEdEL virtual learning students?

Structure of the paper

This paper is divided into five sections. The *first section* foregrounds and provides the purpose and argument of the paper. It explains the key issues discussed, as well as to introduce the research questions guiding the discussion. The *second section* discusses perspectives on the virtual learning mode of delivery at BOU. It defines the key terms that pertain to the paper, namely: *virtual learning, autonomous study*, *self-directed study, Technology Acceptance Model* and the *Affordance Theory* as used in the context of the study. This paper draws on the Technology Acceptance Model propounded by Davis (1989), as well as the Affordance Theory of Gibson (1979). These two provide the theoretical framework for the paper. The *third section* reviews the literature informing virtual delivery. The *fourth section* considers the research design and methodology. It describes the design and methodology used to obtain the necessary data for the study. The *fifth* *section* is on the findings and discussion of perceptions and experiences of virtual learning. The section presents and discusses results from the data gathered. It also considers the challenges of virtual learning, from the viewpoint of the participants. The *sixth and final section* offers some concluding remarks. As a disclaimer, it should be mentioned that this paper is also informed by the lived experiences of the two authors. The first author coordinates two post graduate programmes, one of which uses virtual learning for teaching a masters' degree cohort at BOU.

Perspectives on the virtual learning mode of delivery at BOU

Virtual learning is one of the many possible modes of delivery that has the potential to contribute to increased access to high quality education, as espoused by the sustainable development goal (SDG) 4. At BOU, students reading for Masters in Educational Leadership (MEdEL) programme are exposed to different multimodal contexts during support sessions. One group has facilitators or tutors on site, taking them through the content during face-to-face sessions, while the other group use white board technology to follow the tutorial sessions. Through this technology, students follow proceedings of the face-to-face session through white board technology, where content is shared electronically.

The success of the virtual learning mode of delivery at BOU is a joint effort bringing together expertise from multiple departments such as multimedia, information technology (IT), the library, academic support services and student administration and support. All these sections of the university work collaboratively to respond to, and address the needs of both the students and the programme delivered through the virtual mode. The main aim of the virtual learning mode of delivery is to encourage independent learning, with a view of developing autonomous students. However, it is important to note that "virtual aspect of learning needs to facilitate learning, and not to dictate the instructional approach," (Garcia, 2018, p.4).

Virtual learning allows for online interaction between both students and their facilitators, and helps produce 21st century educators. It also creates a self-directed learning environment which allows students to take full charge of their learning. This involves students who, on their volition, create learning communities and syndicates to support each other with their studies. Self-directed students are usually more independent and take much more control of their studies (Knowles, 1975). These are unlike the normal distance learning students who depend entirely on institutions and their facilitators for support. Self-directed students take initiative for their own success. This, they do by creating more conducive learning environments such as WhatsApp groups and other learning platforms. Virtual learning further facilitates multimodal learning, which involves a combination of different modes of delivery in an educational environment. Students interact and engage through discussion forums and chats, which are platforms in their learning space. Joo and Lim (2018) contend that virtual learning can be used to teach more challenging tasks. Zheng, Xie and Liu (2018) made an observation that virtual learning has the potential to create collaborative learning experiences, which can help enhance students' critical thinking.

A major drawback to embracing virtual learning is the resistance to technology especially by adult learners, and rural students with less experience with technology, (Domingo & Bradley, 2018). In most African countries, leaders have typing and other computer-based tasks done by their secretaries and personal assistants. For this reason, they are not able to learn basic computing skills required for the MEdEL programme. Once they are admitted in the programme they struggle with technology.

Technology integration in teaching and learning at BOU saw the introduction of the MOODLE platform, which the students use as their learning space. This learning space facilitates creation of online learning communities that can be used to support "different teaching modes such as blended learning, ubiquitous learning, and flipped classroom," (Teo, Zhou, Fan, & Huang, 2019, p. 750). The platform is able to provide varied student-centred services in form of chats, forums, quizzes etc. It further facilitates interaction, both synchronous and asynchronous. Teo et. al., (2019) further point out that virtual learning facilitates innovative teaching practices.

Virtual learning creates better opportunities for accessibility and improved learning experiences. For the purpose of this study, virtual learning students accessed the same content by attending support sessions through smartboard technology. The virtual class students followed live presentations of the face-to-face class. The face-to-face sessions took place at the Gaborone Campus, with facilitators on site and physically interacting with the students. Domingo and Bradley (2018, p. 330) observe that "instructors can assimilate virtual classrooms to have content-specific information and resources continuously available in the virtual environment". However, effective virtual learning environments need sufficient hardware and reliable internet connections. This remains the main barrier to offering virtual learning at BOU.

Defining key words as used in the paper

Autonomous study

Thanasoulas (2000) defines autonomous study as a system that allows students to take charge of their own learning. As such, autonomous learners are able to identify their needs and look for possible solutions. Autonomous learners are empowered about what to learn, even how to learn. They remain more focused, more motivated and always eager to learn than face-to-face learners. In autonomous learning environments the role of the teacher is more of an advisor and facilitator – a complete deviation from the traditional setting where the teacher is the "knower" and "source and foundation" of knowledge. One common, yet unique feature of autonomous learners is to learn as a team, by so doing learning from each other.

Self-directed study

Self-directed study is a learning approach which involves students taking responsibility of their learning (Knowles, 1975). In this kind of initiative, learners identify their needs and aim towards addressing these needs. Learners can, either as individuals or as a collective, identify the resources they may need to address their identified needs. They will then choose relevant strategies to address their needs. Self-directed study, which is very similar to autonomous study, can also be viewed as a learner-centred approach of learning.

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how users of technology ultimately get to accept and use technology. It suggests that first, people need to consider the usefulness of technology as well as its user friendliness. Normally people will embrace technology that is easy for them to use. Davis (1989) argues that for a person to accept certain technology they should see and appreciate its usefulness and how it will help improve her/his job performance. Davis (1989) argues that for people to finally embrace specific form of technology, they need to display a positive attitude towards it. The attitude they portray will be a reflection of the general impression they have regarding the technology. This model further suggests that when users are first presented with a new form of technology, they consider a lot of factors around it, before ultimately accepting it. These factors, according to Davis (1989), are perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use.

Perceived usefulness is explained as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance … and perceived ease-of-use is the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort," (Davis, 1989, p. 320). Davis (1989) further explains that if technology is easy to use, then a lot of challenges will be overcome, and people will have a positive attitude towards it. In the same vein Joo and Lim (2018) observe that the model's underpinning explanation is that it perceives ease of use as the degree to which users believe they will use new technology without particular difficulty. This view is further corroborated by Masrom (2007).

Although MEdEL students showed technophobic tendencies at the start of the programme, in the end they embraced technology. This was further confirmed by participants of this study who shared the view that they started using technology for their record keeping. Participants explained that before then they did manual filing for their records, which more often than not, went missing. Teo et. al., (2019, p.752) postulates that the Technology

Acceptance Model (TAM) has been “validated in diverse contexts to predict and explain users’ behavioural intentions in using technologies”. Research has also shown that a mismatch exists between benefits that technologies bring to education, and the limited usage.

Affordance Theory

The Affordance Theory was made prominent by Gibson in 1979. The central argument of the theory is that there is a direct correlation between people and their environment, and the extent to which human beings can use what they have at their disposal to improve their lives. It is crucial for technology users to ascertain how best they can utilise the available technology to their own benefit. Gibson (1979) argues that the world we live in is not only perceived in terms of objects and spatial relations, but also by objective possibilities for action. In other words, it is Gibson’s (1979) view that whatever the environment provides or affords can be used to achieve different things. It therefore, follows that in terms of technology, users need to appreciate the available technology, identify their need(s) for that particular technology, and use the technology to improve their material conditions of existence. In the sphere of education, learners and teachers can interact with technology for the sole purpose of improving teaching and learning. In essence, they can determine what they can do best with the technology or technologies at their disposal.

Blin (2016) concurs with Gibson. He argues that the term ‘affordance’ is often used to denote “possibilities offered by the technologies,” (p. 41). For instance, MEdEL students at BOU had to embrace the available technology in order to ascertain how it can help them achieve their teaching and learning goals. They also needed to decide how they might use the technology to leverage their own personal and professional development. It is therefore necessary for ODL practitioners and institutions to explore the available technologies, and see those that can best be used to facilitate teaching, learning and general improvement of ODL institutions.

Research Design and Methodology

The study on which this paper reports lends itself to the exploratory mixed methods design. Thirty-two participants were purposively sampled and an online survey questionnaire administered to establish the extent to which virtual learning delivery provided improved access, promoted openness and encouraged flexibility in an ODL university. There were twelve questions for participants, excluding those requesting their demographic data. Data were analysed by studying the computer generated report from the online survey responses. The emerging themes were then identified from this report. First, statements pertaining students’ experiences and perceptions on virtual learning, and how virtual learning could lead to improved access, openness and flexibility were highlighted. The statements were then classified into common themes. Other than information from students, the search scope extended to books, conference papers and journal articles.

Participants

The questionnaire was sent out to participants with a self-explanatory consent letter explaining the purpose of the study. Thirty-two (32) students, 19 females and 13 males, were invited using the second year, second semester tutorial register. This was the last of the scheduled tutorials for the group which was due for completion that same year (2018). The last tutorials are scheduled for February of every year. Of the 32, a total of 27 students (16 females and 11 males) responded to the questionnaire. This represented an 84.3% response rate. The participants' age ranged between 34 and 55+ years. Participants were given a consent letter seeking their permission to participate in the study. They were also informed about their right to participate; that they could withdraw their participation anytime they wished to.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of the study were mainly informed by the perceptions that students held, as well as their experiences of the virtual learning delivery mode. This study yielded useful findings as discussed in the section that follows.

Good effects of virtual learning

Participants in this study stated that the virtual class was not significantly different in terms of quality of content offered to the two groups of students. They indicated that everything remained the same in terms of content, including assessment. Students provided responses on what they perceived as good effects of virtual learning that might contribute to improved access, promote openness and encourage flexibility in an ODL institution that uses technology to facilitate teaching and learning. The strength that the students displayed as a result of interacting through virtual learning cannot be overemphasised. They mentioned that virtual learning generally helped improve their progression rate and performance. Virtual learning also facilitated knowledge construction and sharing of ideas by students, thus constructing and sharing knowledge during the process. They praised virtual learning for allowing them to work anywhere, anytime. Above all, students explained that they experienced effective communication through virtual learning.

Creation of autonomous learners

The virtual students used virtual learning as an opportunity to work closer together and support each other in their studies. The students explained that they devised support mechanisms by creating learning platforms to engage even outside the scheduled face-to-face support sessions. This encouraged more flexible learning as students could access their circle of support anytime they wished. This has also resulted in improved access and retention, leading to increased progression and completion rates.

The virtual learning created a much more autonomous group of students. From the study, it became apparent that virtual learning created more autonomous, self-directed learners who devised means to support each other (Knowles, 1975). In their responses, students further mentioned that virtual learning helped them create social platforms, which in turn helped reduce their feeling of isolation. From the study it became evident that virtual learning encouraged high retention rate due to high interaction that characterised it. The students' experiences of interaction demonstrate the strength of virtual learning in helping facilitate interaction. In the separate studies they conducted, Jeong & Hmelo-Silver (2016), and Shin (2017) reached a similar conclusion that virtual learning encouraged collaborative learning as students studied together, leading to improved progression and performance.

The MEdEL results for the past 3 cohorts that graduated in 2017, 2018 and 2019 also showed that the virtual class out-performed the face-to-face class. During the study it became apparent that virtual class students developed to be better managers. They could manage both their time and study much better, compared to the face-to-face group. Virtual students motivated each other, which in turn helped break the isolation, which is very common in the normal ODL delivery where technology is not used to support teaching and learning. Virtual students also proved to be more disciplined than the face-to-face cohort, who tend to procrastinate. The students indicated that they monitored each other's progress to ensure they all completed, and submitted their assignments on time. However, it is important to note that younger students enrolled in the MEdEL programme, aged forty years and below, found it easier to use technology and "perceived using technology as a helpful learning tool" (Joo & Lim, 2018, p. 56). They also showed more interest in using technology than the older students.

The majority of students confirmed Garcia's (2018, p. 6) view that "In a traditional classroom, teachers can gauge students' level of engagement and understanding through simple observation of their body language and interaction with peers and contributions to group discussion ….". They asserted that they struggled on their own with little support from facilitators during tutorials while the face-to-face group benefitted since the facilitators could adjust or change the teaching strategy as necessary, when they realise that the students were not following.

The technology here was initially introduced to improve "dialogue" through improved interaction. In the end this did not succeed through smartboard but students used other available platforms such as chats and discussion forums to interact with each other. Evidence from the students learning space (Moodle) further indicated strong positive student attitudes towards the virtual space, largely to do with improved delivery, i.e., improved interaction. As such, virtual learners turned what could have been their main source of frustration into their greatest opportunity.

Improved practice

Virtual learning has led to increased opportunities and there was evidence that it helped promote innovative teaching methods amongst the learners. Other participants indicated that it promoted successful outcomes and created unique learning experiences. They indicated that they adopted some of the technology that they were using in the programme for their own use at their own work places. Technology has, as such, positively influenced the learners (Shin, 2013). Furthermore, virtual delivery helped reduce transactional distance. Research by among others, Chen (2010) has shown that virtual learning allows individuals to interact and collaborate with each other in virtual classes, which are otherwise not available due to distance.

Research further shows that students feel free as virtual class provides a greater sense of empowerment (Wang, Minku, & Yao, 2018). Wang et. al., (2018) further contend that virtual class motivates learners since it provides “flexibility for repetition and self-pacing,” (p. 75). They further argue that “a learner who navigates through a virtual environment can gain valuable virtual experience, thus enabling discovery or experiential learning,” (p. 75). On the other hand, Dieker, Hynes, Stapleton, and Hughes (2007, p.4) point out that virtual learning “… provide physical, environmental and social interaction….” All these came out vividly from learners’ responses.

For a developing context such as Botswana power cuts are a routine occurrence which interrupt delivery of content. From the study it was evident that constant power-cuts led to poor internet connectivity in other places. This challenge instilled efficiency and developed leadership skills in virtual learners who took the initiative to act as leaders in their different learning communities, encouraging others to participate in activities at hand. This was evident in students’ discussion forum trails on which they were also assessed.

Factors that hindered access, openness and flexibility of virtual learning

The students also shared their experiences of factors that hindered access, openness and flexibility. The findings from the study are that the virtual class was not significantly different from the face-to-face mode, in terms of quality of content. The students appreciated that the quality of content was not in any way compromised for the virtual learning class. However, they decried the low-levels of interaction and poor quality of videos, the very aspect that has been brought in to facilitate and reduce human absence in the teaching and learning process. The students stated that only the audio component was clear during the presentations while they rated the video very poorly.

Technological challenges of a virtual Class room

Though technology was introduced to make teaching and learning more conducive for the virtual learning students, the smartboard used required internet to function, and most of the time the internet was down especially during working hours. Poor internet connection and persistent power cuts that interrupt teaching and learning are a common occurrence affecting virtual learning at BOU. They are a phenomenon that frustrates the students and affect the students' abilities to appreciate IT mediated learning.

Students who participated in the study indicated that there were generally low levels of satisfaction regarding the delivery of the programme. They further expressed the view that it was not easy to follow instruction during the support sessions, for instance, they could not fully participate when given group work due to poor internet connection. As such, they missed a lot from discussions that were led by the facilitator. Participants further intimated that communication was generally poor between facilitators at the face-to-face region and the virtual class. They further highlighted the fact that there was limited interaction with facilitators compared to the face-to-face group. The poor picture quality of the facilitators on the smartboard did not help bridge the missing human element. Facilitators were also reportedly not visible, but students only heard their voices. They shared that it was necessary to also see the facilitator on the screen as well since it would help bridge the human absence that characterises the ODL mode of delivery. Technological glitches that affected delivery most of the time were also cited as serious challenges by the participants. They cited the high prices for data and bandwidth as other challenges facing the virtual delivery of the programme. Over and above the technical challenges, participants reached a consensus on lack of technical skills for both students and facilitators that hindered smooth virtual delivery of the programme.

Conclusion

Virtual learning can be effective in this advent of the fourth industrial revolution. However, institutions need to be ready before they can embark on virtual learning. At BOU, for instance, at the time of this study, the institution was still grappling with issues of low bandwidth which negatively impacted on virtual learning. It therefore, remains a challenge for BOU to invest on infrastructure to ensure smooth implementation of the virtual learning programmes. There is a need for adequate resources to facilitate effective implementation of the virtual delivery mode by institutions. If well prepared for, the virtual learning mode can potentially contribute to improved access, promote openness and encourage flexibility of education in ODL institutions. Institutions need to consider the usefulness of technology, as well as ease of use of the technology before introducing technology mediated programmes. Usefulness in this context speaks to the value the technology will add to the teaching and learning processes, while ease of use refers to how well users adapt to the technology used.

From this study, it is evident that there is a need to introduce multiple modes of presenting content to facilitate learning in the ODL space. This will be even helpful during times of crises such as COVID-19 which is being experienced in the 2020s. Presentation of content needs to be varied to engage virtual students. In the last instance, participants agreed in principle that virtual learning can be the lacuna for improved access, promotion of openness, and that it can encourage flexibility in an open and distance learning institution. One shortcoming of this study, however, is the small number of participants. Thus, the findings cannot therefore, be generalised. However, they can assist researchers interested in virtual learning to appreciate what other people have experienced, and thus help improve their practice. There is, therefore, a need for a longitudinal study to be carried out with the more cohorts to facilitate generalisation of findings.

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Appendix

Botswana Open University

The purpose of this survey questionnaire is to establish the extent to which virtual learning delivery mode has provided access, openness and flexibility during your study. Please note that your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any point you so wish. Further note that your decision, whether to participate or not will disadvantage you in any way. Your responses will remain completely anonymous and no names or personal identifiers will be recorded or reported. We, therefore, request you to honestly and freely answer these questions. We encourage you to tick the option and write statements, where applicable, that best describe you, your experiences and perceptions of virtual learning.
We thank you for the anticipated cooperation and the time you will devote to this important exercise.

SECTION A: Participant Information

(1) Year of study
(a) Year 1
(b) Year 2
(c) Completing student
(2) Gender
(a) Male
(b) Female
(c) Other
(3) Age:
(a) Less than 30 years
(b) 30 – 35 years
(c) 36 – 40 years
(d) 41 – 45 years
(e) 46 – 50 years
(f) Over 50 years
(4) Marital status
(a) Married
(b) Single
(c) Divorced
(d) Separated
(e) Cohabiting
(f) Other

(5) Occupation
(a) Teacher
(b) Senior Teacher
(c) Head of Department
(d) Deputy School Head
(e) School Head
(f) Lecturer (Tertiary)
(h) Other

SECTION B: Open Questions on Virtual Learning

(6) How is virtual learning different from face-to-face mode of delivery?
(7) Provide two (2) ways through which virtual learning may contribute to improved access?
(8) Provide two (2) ways through which virtual learning that may promote openness?
(9) Provide two (2) ways through which virtual learning that may possibly encourage flexibility in learning?
(10) Provide two (2) factors that may hinder access, openness and flexibility of virtual learning.
(11) What did you like the most about virtual learning?
(12) What did you like the least most about virtual learning?
(13) What challenges did you experience as a virtual learner?
(14) How did you, as a virtual learning student, overcome the challenges you experienced?
(15) How did you benefit from the virtual learning mode of delivery?
(16) How has virtual learning influenced your practice/improved how you do your work?
(17) Write down 2 things you would wish to share regarding how virtual learning has impacted on access, openness and flexibility of your learning as a virtual student?

Thank you for your time and participation

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Pandemic Pedagogy: Anonymous Peer Workshop for Increased Effectiveness and Inclusivity

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ABSTRACT

Peer review workshops are common practices in many writing and composition classrooms, and their benefits have been well-documented. However, complications arise when students arrive to workshops with their own baggage—unconscious biases, enculturated prejudices, and general anxiety about critiquing another's work. These impediments can negatively affect the classroom atmosphere in general and the value and effectiveness of peer review activities in particular. With COVID-19 causing many universities to move to online-only instruction, an opportunity arose to incorporate anonymity into the writing workshop. This article reviews the drawbacks of traditional, face-to-face writing workshops and the benefits of anonymity for peer review, and shares the nuts and bolts of one successful online, anonymous peer review activity. This article concludes by offering both student-participant feedback and suggestions for activity adoption and improvement of peer reviews.

Keywords: peer assessment, peer review, peer feedback, anonymity, inclusivity

Sometimes something so simple can yield extraordinary results. Sometimes obstacles, when looked at askance or through hard-squinted eyes, can reveal themselves to instead be opportunities. This past spring, when COVID-19 struck and we migrated to online-only instruction, I quickly crafted a new activity for my narrative nonfiction class that—physical distance be damned!—created a closer, more encouraging and inclusive (and less anxious) writing classroom. My simple idea: maximize both author and assessor anonymity in the peer review workshop process using two common digital platforms. The result: a more effective peer review workshop filled with students more energized to write, revise, and provide constructive criticism than I had ever experienced or facilitated before.

Nearly all of my favorite writers are people whom I have never met. Such is the case with nearly every reader; we feel a conviviality with and closeness to Ta-Nehisi Coates or Joan Didion or David Foster Wallace or Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie or whomever, based on their work and words and not any personal interactions. However, peer review workshops—from freshman composition to upper-division memoir, to thesis writing—are often fraught with impediments based more on interpersonal communication complications and prejudices than confusion about the activity's objectives. According to Latané (1981), things like implicit bias, social influence/peer pressure, power process struggles, and simple social discomfort about being critical are often inescapable features of group work. Regardless of genre, writing classrooms in general and peer review workshops in particular are often uncomfortable places for budding writers (Topping, Smith, Swanson, & Elliot, 2000); these spaces can become especially "chilly" for female students (Sullivan, 2002, p. 129). However, there is still so much to be gained from collaborative peer assessment learning activities like peer review workshops, which is why we need to get it right.

Peer review (i.e. peer critique, peer evaluation, peer response), as we know it today, is a product of the collaborative learning movement of the 1980s (see Ching, 2007) and is designed for students to consider the quality and value of another student/learner's draft and provide both interpretations of that work and suggestions for improvement using written and/or oral feedback (Topping, 2009). Peer critique has been shown to not only improve student drafts, but to also help students better understand assignment criteria and course learning objectives (Wood & Kurzel, 2008) as well as promote lifetime learning skills like critical thinking and self-evaluation (Boase-Jelinek, Parker, & Herrington, 2013). However, time and time again I have watched as peer review workshops create division and increase social loafing in my writing classrooms, lessening overall accountability and productivity among students and undermining the effectiveness, accuracy, and reliability of the peer review activity. And sure, good things—good writing especially—can come from discomfort and contention, but to expect students to produce their best work while feeling anxious, embarrassed or uncomfortable, or to expect them to offer their most clearheaded constructive criticism without falling prey to social ills like unconscious bias or enculturated prejudice is to set your classroom up for disappointment and your activity up for failure. Research continues to demonstrate that variables such as gender, race, age and relationship to group members influence the peer review process in consequential ways (Thondhlana & Belluigi, 2017; Wolfe, 2000). I saw an ongoing need to revise the peer review workshop and the sudden pivot to online instruction presented the opportunity: anonymous peer review.

This activity had three components: first, students anonymously crafted a feature article that adhered to the assignment criteria and its strict formatting rules, and uploaded their draft using "PeerMark," a peer review tool on Turnitin that allows reviewers to edit and respond anonymously. I stressed to students that before uploading they were to make sure their name and/or any obvious identifying attributes had been excluded from their draft. I also emphasized that drafts must follow the strict formatting guidelines (centered titles and page numbers, 1-inch margins, 13-point Times New Roman font, for instance) to ensure they all looked, superficially-speaking, nearly identical. PeerMark alerted me when drafts had been uploaded, but did not connect the draft to a student.

Second, students were asked to read their classmates' drafts and then craft and upload anonymous and highly-structured written responses. I asked students to not include any sentence-level edits in their anonymous letters to the author (that would be handled later in the process) and instead focus on more "global" feedback (e.g. What did you interpret the draft to be about/arguing and why? What did you admire or find successful about the draft? What constructive criticism/suggestions for improvement can you offer?). Here I reminded students that this "letter," with greetings and salutations, was to further encourage conviviality and camaraderie among this small writing community. I also reminded students to be direct in their assessment, but also gentle (as full-on attacks, anonymous or otherwise, are rarely heard), and focus their letter on *why* they were offering this feedback, instead of simply identifying issues or successes they found in the draft. Once complete, students uploaded their letters using PeerMark (again making sure the review was set to "anonymous"), and then attended to their anonymous, sentence-level (grammar, spelling, typing, syntax or sentence-structure) edits via Turnitin.

Last came the virtual peer review workshop itself, facilitated by Zoom. For this component, I asked students to switch off their cameras and eliminate their screen names using the "Rename" feature. Soon we were all looking at a grid of black rectangles. We were now ready for discussion. Over the course of four virtual class periods, using a predetermined schedule organized by essay titles only, we used our anonymous response letters as "jumping off points" to have constructive conversations about how we understood the drafts, what we liked, and how each anonymous author could improve their draft. Of course, student voices could not be altered or disguised through Zoom, but in talking with students later, many of them reported wasting no time (or didn't even think about) trying to figure out who was saying what and instead focused on the content of the feedback. Unlike many in-person workshops I have previously facilitated, the conversation for each draft began quickly, flowed easily, and invited a wide variety of voices and opinions (instead of being dominated by a handful of extroverts). Thus, the obstacle of the hasty switch to online instruction presented an opportunity to host an anonymous conversation, a peer review addition that remains impossible in a traditional classroom/workshop setting.

It was the student response—both during and after, both publicly and in private—that really let me know I was onto something special. Of course, I could see—or hear, rather—for myself the improvement. The notable difference was that students no longer emphasized what they "didn't like" or what was "missing" or "confusing"; instead, they addressed those same concerns but framed their suggestions in positive ways, saying things like, "you know what would make this piece even better… ." The atmosphere for all four workshop sessions was genial, warm and—gasp!—fun (where earlier in the semester the peer review workshops were more of the teeth-pulling variety). A few students even offered me written feedback about the activity. One reported that this was their "first positive peer workshop," and that it was a "very comfortable…accepting space…free of judgement." This particular student also said the anonymous activity allowed her to write "deeper, rawer" work and "not be afraid to share something…personal." Another student reported that it gave her "confidence…to give more feedback" and even "speak up about my own work." Another student reported that he never felt "uncomfortable" and that both writing and speaking up "would have been a lot harder" if the activity was not anonymous. Many students encouraged me to include this anonymous activity in future classes; I will definitely take their advice and may even up the ante and try to establish anonymity from day one in my future online-only classes. However, given its clear benefits, I will also likely continue to include this activity when we return to traditional, face-to-face instruction by scheduling some virtual, synchronous online anonymous workshops.

There are plenty of great reasons to utilize an "actual" audience in your writing classrooms; the way they help students understand, analyze and thus make quality rhetorical decisions is probably the greatest. And for decades I have had students publish blogs, tweets, Amazon reviews and e-zines, and write articles for local weeklies and food/lifestyle magazines. My students have also uploaded podcasts, posted micro-documentaries to YouTube and even told digital stories via Snapchat. Throughout all this, I often talked to my students about the impact, responsibility, and blowback that come when you attach your name to something published in an effort to encourage them to think more seriously about what they say and share. However, the anonymity woven into this activity offered relief from such responsibility and, similar to more comprehensive studies, led to increased participation (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2011). It also allowed them to live outside the ego-centric digital world, if only for a moment.

With our cameras and names turned off, my virtual classroom became something of a digital void; we were all no one, we were all nowhere. This freedom—this near total removal from the new, digital world where we share our bylined and time-stamped thoughts, opinions and lives ad infinitum—created a less anxious and more productive learning laboratory where we were all welcome to fail. These results that have been affirmed by other scholars invested in understanding how and why anonymous reviewing works (Lu & Bol, 2007; Miyazoe & Anderson, 2011). Similar to the conclusion drawn by Lu and Bol (2007), I witnessed both the "immediate and long-term values" of this anonymous approach (p. 112). As such, I am encouraged to recommend its adoption across classrooms and disciplines.

While this example activity and much of its supporting scholarship focuses directly on anonymity in the *writing* classroom, with many universities online for at least another semester—not to mention the general rise in popularity of online and hybrid instruction—I could see this type of work being introduced across disciplines as a way to encourage peer interaction and honest reflection. Reviewing lab notes, critiquing speech outlines, assessing visual art, could be improved by integrating peer-to-peer feedback absent of social anxiety/embarrassment, prejudice and unconscious bias. As many fields and professions move more toward collaborative working environments (e.g. medicine), preparing students to workshop ideas, communicate criticism constructively, and receive and integrate feedback becomes paramount to preparing our students for their futures. Learning to depersonalize critique in service of improving a final product is a valuable skill that can be taught, modeled, and practiced through highly structured, anonymous peer review activities, like the one I describe.

The setup of this assignment does require above average organizational skills from both instructors and students alike, so a "practice" workshop may help address any execution snafus or student confusion. One thing I will do differently in the future is "practice" this anonymous workshop on a smaller, low-stakes assignment before utilizing it on a feature-length piece of narrative nonfiction, and I would encourage others to do the same. Additionally, I would encourage other instructors to host a transparent conversation with their students about the pitfalls of traditional face-to-face peer review workshops and the demonstrated benefits of anonymous peer review prior to this activity. I have found that doing so helps to affirm and alleviate many students' existing concerns about peer review, while also setting up some shared goals and expectations for the activity ahead.

What I noticed in my students, maybe for the first time, was that during this activity they were truly relaxed, blithe even. And the work they created and the suggestions they offered seemed more authentic and created a comfort I had not before seen and work that was some of the most honest and thought-provoking yet. Of course, there are problems with anonymity. Anyone who has read an online comments section can attest to this, and I was worried that class could turn into a callous gripe session. What I experienced, however, was the opposite: a collective and communal and downright inspiring cacophony of encouraging and helpful disembodied voices.

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Groping Through a Grim Spring: Teaching and Learning During a Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This autoethnographic essay discusses the author's experiences and reflections on teaching and learning in a college town in the southern US in Spring 2020. What happens to faculty and students and the work of teaching and learning during an unprecedented event such as a pandemic? How do we work alongside the disruptions of everyday routines and suddenly navigate massive social change? The author describes some of the issues that a teacher and her students navigated personally and professionally during a semester of crisis precipitated by a global pandemic.

Keywords: higher education, teaching during social change, teaching online

February 25, 2020. I heard Dr. Nancy Messonnier of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) telling reporters that she had let her family know that the coronavirus would cause significant disruption to daily life. Yet, accounts of the virus seemed distant — there were not yet reported coronavirus cases in the US. But soon, cruise liners were locked down or unable to berth in ports around the world. Days later on March 1, the US reported 88 cases[1]. My students and I met on Friday March 6 at the Special

[1] Numbers of cases and deaths included were drawn from the *New York Times*, the CDCs and the Johns Hopkins COVID-19 tracker. Published numbers did not always align across sources.

Collections library. After class, I told the archivists with whom we had been working, "If something happens with COVID[2], we'll be able to work on-line after Spring Break."

And then it was Spring Break. Glorious days with the fragrance of blooming trees and vividly-hued shrubs. By March 9, 2020, there were 221 cases of COVID-19 reported in the country. Worldwide, health departments tallied 110,588 cases of COVID-19 and 3,841 deaths. The state university system announced that all classes would move on-line for the remainder of the semester. I was fortunate, since my class already mixed online and face-to-face activities. Rather than develop new materials, I re-arranged the schedule for the rest of the semester, taking in the two weeks' transition time that the university had allowed to move classes online. And suddenly we were all interacting online, working from home, and absorbing an influx of messages from university administrators, the Centers for Disease Control (CDCs), the COVID-19 Taskforce, and colleagues, family, and friends near and far.

College administrators encouraged faculty to assist students as much as possible. Students from across state institutions petitioned to move to a Pass/Fail grading system for the semester. The University System for the state outlined their position in a media statement that read: "In times of adversity, we should reach higher, not lower," and denied the students' request. I stopped deducting points for late submission of students' work and let them know to take whatever time they needed to complete tasks.

Six months later in mid-September, the case count for the US had risen to more than 6.6 million with over 197,000 deaths. In the intervening time, identified cases across the globe exploded to over 30 million, with more than 946,000 deaths. Predictions for eradicating the virus were bleak and reports of vaccine development mixed. Humans everywhere learned to live through a pandemic, to live in uncertainty. And still we kept learning. But what?

Learning extinguished, expedited, online

> There is danger everywhere, and it remains unspecified, so that we live in expectation of the catastrophe: a virus, of the organic or of the technological kind, or just the next computer crash (Braidotti, 2019, p. 13).

We quickly became familiar with a new language. Overnight we learned the difference between an "epidemic" and a "pandemic," how to "shelter-in-place", "social distance", and "flatten the curve." We learned how the coronavirus impacts the body, how to avoid contracting and spreading the virus, and an ever-growing list of symptoms of which to be vigilant. A

[2] The Centers for Disease Control uses the term SARS-CoV-2. I use COVID-19 throughout since this is the recognizable lay term

steady stream of emails arrived, notifying us of conference cancellations and opportunities denied. The day on which my students and I had planned a visit to the State and National Archives, we began observing shelter-in-place ordinances from local government instead.

My students attended newly scheduled synchronous online meetings. Several shared their feelings of isolation while living alone. One let me know that they had been diagnosed with COVID-19. I telephoned students who had not checked in. One wept. I posted resources assembled by the university's Counseling and Psychiatric Services to the whole class. And somehow we all finished the semester and I submitted grades. In our final class, a student asked if we could reschedule our missed field trip when the archives re-opened. I promised, "Of course!" — not knowing when.

My summer class preparation had begun early. I hesitated to schedule synchronous meetings for all. Students had told me about supervising their children's schoolwork, teaching their own classes online, and the challenges of managing everyday activities. I decided to meet students online individually and posted daily screencasts and comments for the class. In meetings, students and I shared shelter-in-place stories and discussed course topics and projects. Some students arranged synchronous meet-ups of their own and all participated in lively asynchronous discussions. There were jokes, explorations of misunderstandings, and generous feedback on others' work. It took the best part of two days each week to meet individually with my students. By the third meeting, we enjoyed off-topic conversations along with more serious business. Some meetings ran out of time. And it worked. I hoped that the bonds that students had developed with their peers would outlive the course and that they had drawn skills from the course to apply to their research projects.

Over the summer, administrators and a vast group of sub-committees across the state had weighed the options for re-opening the university. Media reported job losses at other institutions. Deans and department heads submitted plans for budget cuts. The university president expounded on the need to return to on-campus life, reporting that the university would follow the state guidelines. By September, two factions had solidified — those striving for business as usual versus those advocating for further steps to open campuses safely. Petitions circulated and people posted disparate views on social media. Newspapers posted daily tallies of the latest COVID hotspots – college campuses. Emails encouraged students to follow the university guidelines while rumors circulated that students were not. My lack of planning for travel to Europe for my research leave in the Fall emerged as foresight. I read reports that COVID-19 might be with us always, like measles.

Online teaching and learning during a pandemic

> What is positive in the ethics of affirmation is the belief that negative relations and passions can be transformed through an engagement in the collective practices of change. This implies a dynamic view of passions and affects, even those that freeze us in pain, horror or mourning. The ethical subject is the one with the force to grasp the freedom to depersonalize the event and transform its negative charge. (Braidotti, 2018, p. 222)

I started learning how to teach online 10 years ago. As I developed online resources for my classes, I experimented with online learning using a hybrid format. I read books, took workshops, and gained technical and practical expertise. By 2014, I was delivering fully online coursework. This Summer, my students gained more time and attention from me than they would have if we had met face-to-face. I learned more about each individual and their work than I could have had we met in person. This approach is not a recipe for others, nor should it necessarily be repeated. Spending a good part of six days by a standing desk meeting individually with my students emerged as the right thing to do when I began teaching through a pandemic. By the end of class, I was happy and exhausted with no regrets – although my writing schedule for submission of a book manuscript was thrown off schedule. My students and I shared our cares, concerns and anxieties. I learned that teaching and learning through a pandemic with daily reminders of our mortality can trigger acts of kindness, sharing and moments of hilarity, alongside fear and anxiety.

Karen Barad (2007) proposes the idea of *ethico-onto-epistem-ology,* or "an appreciation of the intertwining of ethics, knowing and being" as an approach to "knowing in being" (p. 185). As teachers, we might think about how our knowledge of how to teach and what matters is always entangled with our being, that of our students, and the non-human aspects of the world around us. We clearly need technical and practical expertise along with content knowledge in our disciplinary areas to teach in any context. Teaching through the COVID-19 pandemic, however, has required that teachers adapt to the circumstances in ways that reflect how, as relational beings, we are "defined by the capacity to affect and be affected" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 43). The COVID-19 pandemic is one event that will change each of our lives in ways that we have yet to understand. Many other events — including economic and environmental calamities —provide contexts in which we need to meet our students as humans in ways that intertwine ethics, knowing, and being. For example, this past Spring, my students and I were all exhausted: coping with work, school, home, family, and the realities of living through a pandemic with no end in sight, amidst disparate conflicting viewpoints concerning how to live going forward. Yet out of the conglomeration of content that included links and screencasts in the Learning Management System, the daily writing prompts and online discussions, the shared exchanges, peer feedback and conversations in Zoom, squeezed in among a myriad of other daily tasks, there was a posthuman convergence that was "productive, dynamic and inter-relational" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 46).

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided teachers in higher education with a vivid reminder of the importance of reflecting on how teaching involves ethical decision making that flexibly orients to what we know, who we are as humans, and how non-human forces impact our everyday lives. Braidotti (2018) offers an ethics of joy in which self-interest and negativity are displaced by a collective process of "becoming-ethical" (p. 222). Although the work of teaching is constrained by institutional requirements for what gets taught as laid out in course syllabi and program plans, the acts of teaching and learning are always re-negotiated in the here-and-now, and must always orient to what matters in specific contexts. For me, teaching through a pandemic has highlighted the ethical work of teaching that inspires creative decision-making for the collective good. For teachers elsewhere, other events taking place provide points of focus for reflection to inspire actions that matter in classrooms with students.

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The Two Cultures of Academic Leadership

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ABSTRACT
This essay explores faculty and administrative leadership culture in the context of the pandemic health crisis. Differences and opportunities for leadership collaboration are identified that can help American higher education adapt to and prosper from the intense pressures for change.

Keywords: academic leadership; academic culture, organizational change

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The classic essay by C.P. Snow (1959) on the two cultures of science and the humanities has direct bearing on how higher education in the United States, and indeed in other countries as well, will fare in the pandemic reality that is uprooting so much in society. Snow’s premise, though contested in many ways in relation to academic disciplines, survives in its appropriate focus on the power of different pursuits, languages, and ways of knowing to block broad collaborative efforts for social innovation and change.

Instead of applying the two-cultures idea to academic disciplines, it is worth considering how it applies to academic leadership and the often contentious relationship between faculty and administrative worlds in American colleges and universities. Given the certain impact of the pandemic-driven public health and economic crises, there is an urgent need to bridge these two cultures of faculty and administrative leadership to create change that strengthens academia and its positive impact on society (McClintock, 2001; Bolman & Gallos, 2011).

The two-culture conflict

The two-culture conflict applies to leadership in higher education, often centers around feelings of besiegement, and spawns polemical communications aimed at a convenient enemy. A good example of this is Ginsberg's (2011) jeremiad that the growth in academic administration is the source of all problems in higher education. Ginsberg's argument conjures an idyllic past on college campuses when faculty handled important institutional leadership tasks, beyond their leadership of curricula and scholarship. In actuality, the modern American university system derived much of its governance structure from European models in which administrative and academic responsibilities were mostly distinctive spheres (Chou & Chan, 2017; Synder, 1998).

Yes, Ginsberg has observed the growth of administrative positions over his multi-decade career. But he neglected to observe the multitude of factors that higher education has had to respond to over these years. A short list of items that increase administrative work for American higher education include affirmative action, Title IX, federal financial aid (Title IV), FERPA, reduced state government support, campus crime and safety (the CLERY Act), international students, sponsored programs, labor relations, human resources/benefits, information technology and internet requirements, and accreditation (all of which come with legal and financial risk). These, and many similar demands, cannot and should not be located in the faculty bailiwick. This sphere of academic leadership requires considerable administrative expertise and specialization to manage, just as many administrators cannot pretend to have the scholarly expertise to manage the teaching and research enterprise.

The institutional and societal need to work collaboratively is intense (Wolshok, 1995). Never has so much change happened so fast in the change-resistant institution of higher education. The faculty has been besieged by the need to rapidly shift to virtual instruction (and in many cases research too). In addition, faculty members are pressed to incorporate decolonizing ideas into their teaching and research in order to illuminate systemic racism and sexism and their manifestations in societal problems such as health disparities, wealth and income gaps, and reparations related to Black slavery and Native American genocide. Especially at upper-tier institutions, the tenured professoriate needs to grapple with its complicit participation in such inequities by re-thinking its social and economic privilege in relation to low-wage employees in their institutions. Where one group enjoys six-figure salaries and paid sabbaticals, the other cannot afford childcare.

Administrators too are up against the biggest challenges ever to face higher education. They must make difficult decisions, albeit with significant collaboration with faculty and other groups, for example, about how to reopen campuses, based on data and multiple guidelines and advisories that change by the day. Legal and financial risks will abound from students, staff, and faculty who become ill on re-opened campuses. Academic planning must cope with bleak financial scenarios from enrollment and tuition uncertainties due to online instead of in-person education, along with reduced state and federal financial support. Senior leaders need to be closely engaged with faculty to ensure that academic quality is maintained in this mix of unknowns. Given the ever increasing regulatory and risk management landscape, leaders will have more intense 24/7 work lives that will make it harder to interact with students, alumni, and trustees on a personal basis. It might end up being lonelier at the top than ever before.

Considering their respective worlds of besiegement, what are some of the issues that would benefit from collaboration between the two cultures of faculty and administrative leadership? The following list could easily be expanded.

> Re-dedication to shared governance, a foundation for healthy leadership and campus resilience, has never been more challenging given the rapid pace and scope of changes in how teaching and research are conducted.
>
> Showcasing faculty expertise through virtual events for alumni engagement and public service to re-build societal confidence in higher education.
>
> Taking meaningful action against systemic forms of discrimination that go beyond stating principles and that compensate for structural inequities.
>
> Redesigning the academic calendar to a year-round cycle that would allow undergraduate students who choose to graduate in three years and reduce their financial burdens.
>
> Managing a physical campus to minimize the health risks to those staff, faculty, and students who are in close proximity to one another.
>
> Rethinking what a sustainable campus should look like with fewer large gatherings for sports and other purposes.

These tasks will require considerable time and energy from standing committees and governance processes as well as special task forces. These groups will need to draw upon input from students, staff, and the larger public to ensure that stakeholder concerns emerging from the pandemic are carefully addressed.

Conclusion

The cry for transparency is a familiar touchstone in the contest between the two cultures of academic leadership. Administration is criticized for not sharing information and engaging faculty about plans and decisions, while the faculty is accused of not paying attention to the information and calls for engagement that are offered. Reflecting on C. P. Snow's analysis in the face of current challenges, faculty and administrative leaders must move toward recognizing their cultural differences and give deference to their respective cultural and professional strengths in service of newly shaped higher education and the society it creates.

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Elucidating Engineering Ethics Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

Considering the significance and impact of COVID-19 global pandemic to the global economy and education, ethics should be highlighted as a fundamental facet of technology related disciplines, and professional responsibilities need to be taught in higher education. Introducing ethics to undergraduate engineering students is critical in order to develop professionals who will make important and consequential decisions and perform the best practices in the technology field. Therefore, undergraduate institutions should provide opportunities to students to acquire knowledge and skills about ethical principles that affect engineering practices. This essay addresses the history of engineering ethics education and some challenges in higher education institutions in the United States.

Keywords: COVID-19, engineering education, engineering ethics, ethics education

The COVID-19 global pandemic required unprecedented lockdowns and quarantines that changed the daily lives of individuals. Technology has contributed to sustaining everyday life during the pandemic through remote work/learning necessitated by an always-at-home culture (Taddeo, 2020). Moreover, technology has helped control COVID-19 disease by contributing to such practices as using digital technology for contact tracing and quarantine monitoring (Whitelaw et al., 2020).

Although the impact of technology to address COVID-19 is remarkable, concerns are rising about ethics of the creation and use of technology have been considered sufficiently. By “ethics” we mean the behavior of individuals to make decisions and take actions that are consistent with widely-shared communal or societal norms about right and wrong. The formation and deployment of technologies often provoke ethical dilemmas. For instance, several countries use government surveillance systems to detect and trace possible COVID-19 cases in ways that surprised citizens how easily they can be monitored by government or technology companies without knowing how gathered monitored information is used (Drew et al., 2020; Gasser, et al., 2020).

In another current example, the use of Zoom, a widely popular software tool for online teleconferencing, raised privacy concerns among users (Mohanty & Yaqub, 2020). Highly publicized incidents were reported about unauthorized, interloping individuals hacking into Zoom meetings and disrupting proceedings sometimes by playing inappropriate videos with sexual content. Of course, this action highly disturbed many users and meeting originators. These incidents, often described as “Zoom bombing” (Aiken, 2020), caused a panic about further Zoom meeting use and attendance. Also, Zoom hackers were reported to have recorded confidential meetings, hacked into cloud storage of recorded meetings , and sold in a black market sensitive information, further increasing worries about Zoom use (Parker et al., 2020). Moreover, such Zoom privacy breaches raised serious technical and ethical concerns about remote meetings in general (Gasser, et al., 2020).

In sum, because of COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the notion that new technologies often are more complex than ever, and that the ethical, social, and cultural effects of technologies in increasingly more globally-connected and integrated economies require more attention and consideration than when economies were simpler. Considering the significance and impact of technology practices for this COVID-19 global pandemic, we believe that ethics is at the core of learning and practice in technology-related disciplines and should be emphasized more strongly in professional engineering education and practice, even though we acknowledge that the field of engineering certainly has identified and advanced ethical guidelines for various technology developments. Next, then, we consider ethical practices in engineering and engineering education that seem appropriate for the current- and post-COVID-19 pandemic era.

Engineering ethics and engineering ethics education

Learning from issues and mistakes can help secure the safety and welfare of the public. Drawing from various disasters that occurred by unethical decision-making in the past and potential threats related to rapid technological advancement, professional engineering associations and societies have developed their own codes of ethics to provide a framework for engineering ethics education (Colby & Sullivan, 2008). Engineering ethics education is rooted strongly in reactions to willful ethical breaches that in a significant number of national and international disasters were caused apparently by individuals' a lack of morality, violation codes of ethics, and lack of professionalism. As a result, professional codes of engineering ethics were established in the 1900s, but statements of codes of ethics, themselves, were not infused into ethics education and do not necessarily promote problem-solving abilities necessary to resolve ethical dilemmas (Spier & Bird, 2007).

Although ethics education was much needed in engineering higher education, nearly 80% of engineering programs did not include ethics-related courses in their curriculum before new accreditation was introduced (Herkert, 2000). In accordance with the establishment of engineering professional organizations' codes of ethics, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) Engineering Criteria 2000 (EC 2000) emphasized professional and ethical responsibility in engineering disciplines. Training students in accredited engineering programs and ethics education has become a core requirement in engineering education programs across the United States (Hess & Fore, 2018).

Ever since, engineering educators strove to design effective ethics education into engineering education curriculum by defining core elements of engineering ethics which resulted in engineering programs embodying engineering ethics education within core courses or some established stand-alone ethics courses. As an example, Li and Fu (2012) asserted as a result of a Delphi study that an expert panel, including engineering ethics experts, faculty, current engineers, and students, is suitable to develop engineering ethics education curriculum. However, recently, there have been other compelling suggestions for ethics education contents.

Harris (2008) provided a view of the humanistic ethical view while asserting that engineering students should be socialized to think of their discipline as legitimately having both technical and humanistic ethical elements. Bairaktarova and Woodcock (2017) warned that merely teaching ethical awareness was insufficient, that ethical behavior does not necessarily flow from ethical awareness, and that ethical behavior itself should also be taught in conjunction with ethical awareness.

In addition to diversity of what to teach, disparate approaches have been suggested for effective teaching of engineering ethics. Haws (2001) suggested several pillars for engineering ethics education based on the review of previously published papers: professional engineering codes of ethics, conceptual development of ethical reasoning and theories, ethical intelligence through humanist book readings, ethical heuristics for ethical inclusion, case studies practice, and field-based learning. He asserted that integration of theoretical foundation, field-based learning, and case studies can generate the most effective outcomes in engineering ethics education through the complementary effects of the three. Harris et al. (1996) emphasized past ethical violation cases to engineering students, which can happen to any engineer, instead of the more obvious catastrophic examples. It is important for students to recognize the difference between high-profile cases and a case that one is more likely to experience in the profession, because such catastrophes are infrequent in engineering (Bairaktarova & Evangelou, 2011).

For effective ethics education, some researchers stressed the role of faculty who teach engineering ethics. Lynch and Kline (2000) argued that it is essential for engineering educators to have students consider the socio-ethical aspects of engineering practice that demonstrate pairing practical education with ethics education. Dyrud (2005) claimed that engineering faculty should have some level of expertise in the area of ethics in order to effectively teach this subject to students. This involves the engineering educator adequately preparing themselves to be an authority for students in this domain. Because the concept of ethics is socio-culturally-bound, it is important to introduce non-technical aspects as well as technical professionalism in engineering ethics education in higher education.

How to effectively and efficiently deliver ethics education and training in higher education should be assessed. Engineering educators reported challenges in adding extra credits to the degree requirements and supplying additional teaching resources (Cummings & Lo, 2004). Further, due to the ambiguous nature of ethical training, it has been challenging to decide how much to cover each ethical feature due to the absence of explicit ethical standards in engineering ethics education. Further, due to the interdisciplinary aspects and cultural differences in engineering education, development of a generalized ethics education has been challenging (Davis, 2006).

Conclusions/ implications

In order to mitigate ethical concerns about technology during and even after the global pandemic, investigation is critical to determine the nature of engineering ethics education and to ensure a sound ethical foundation before joining the field. However, due to the diversity in teaching engineering ethics and the constraints on how much curriculum content can be devoted to ethics training, embedding ethics into the engineering curriculum to address rapid industry changes posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, because the concept of ethics is highly socio-culturally bound, professional engineers and engineering educators need to accept and embrace the non-technical aspects of engineering curricula, which naturally includes the topic of professional ethics. Although pedagogical techniques for teaching ethics to students vary widely, the well-worn technique of utilizing ethics case studies remains popular within limits.

Nevertheless, higher education administrators and professors, industry leaders, and policy makers should discuss and develop the diverse ethics content and guidelines internationally.

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Faculty Mindsets in the Era of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

With the disruption caused by COVID-19, the higher education community has begun to share resources and ideas for successfully transitioning to the "new normal" of teaching. While many conversations focus on concrete strategies for adapting teaching, I focus here on ways to address the psychological burden these changes have brought. Specifically, I provide suggestions for shifting our teaching mindsets to be growth oriented so that we can successfully provide instruction to students despite the challenges imposed by COVID-19.

Keywords: adversity; adjusting to change; COVID-19; mindset; theories of intelligence

COVID-19 has created disruptions in every part of life and higher education is no exception. Faculty find themselves scrambling to adjust to this "new norm"--rapidly transitioning face to face courses to an online format, rearranging to a hybrid/flex schedule, and preparing to lecture in masks. The list goes on and on. This special issue is an example of one way that the higher education community has rallied to provide ideas, resources and support to help faculty make adjustments to this new reality. However, the discussion among faculty regarding the *emotional toll* that this change has had on them, and will continue to have, is short of concrete suggestions for addressing it. In some ways, it seems that hope for improving the negative emotional impact lies in finding the best 'fix' for adjusting to whatever the newly required teaching dynamic is without completely consuming the faculty member's time and energy. I suggest that this is a faulty approach that only sets faculty up for failure. COVID-19 is here. Changes to our teaching are here. And it will be extra work. Faculty were already overworked before COVID-19 (Flaherty, 2019); there is no escaping the reality that it will be harder now.

While it is absolutely necessary for us to be sharing ideas and planning the best ways to adapt to change of behavior so as to adapt to this new time, it is our thoughts that will drive how we feel about making those changes. My research focuses on identifying the thoughts that students have which negatively impact their ability to perform well in college. Specifically, my and others' research has shown that students' beliefs about their ability to succeed at a task are related to their level of anxiety around that task (Blackwell et al., 2007; Boaler, 2013; Paunesku et al., 2015; Ramirez, Gunderson, Levine, & Beilock, 2013; Smith & Capuzzi, 2019), and this anxiety in turn impairs their cognitive capacity to perform well (Beilock, 2008; Park, et al., 2014). Below, I outline how to apply this to ourselves as faculty in this time of overwhelm where the ask seems impossible.

Background

The main premise on which my suggestions are based is the theory of mindset in the tradition of Carol Dweck (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988;). Dweck defines mindset as the beliefs one holds about the nature of intelligence as being either fixed or growth. A fixed mindset refers to the belief that individuals are born with a specific amount of intelligence that cannot be changed. A growth mindset, however, is the belief that intelligence is not fixed and with the right guidance and practice intelligence can grow. Mindsets are domain-specific. For example, an individual may believe that they are not a math person (a fixed mindset) and be less inclined to hire a tutor to help them with math as it seems a hopeless cause; however, they may simultaneously hire a tennis coach to teach them to play believing they are capable of growth in that sport (a growth mindset).

Students' mindsets about academic ability are related to a host of factors such as goal orientation, motivation to learn, and even hopelessness (Dai & Cromley, 2014). Several large scale randomized studies (Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015; Yeager et al., 2019; Yeager, Romero et al., 2016; Yeager, Walton, et al., 2016) have shown a positive effect of growth mindsets on student achievement.

While the discussion of how growth mindsets lead to improved academic outcomes is beyond the scope of this article (Dweck, 2000), understanding the role of mindsets on anxiety is important here. Research shows that when a student has a fixed mindset they are more likely to feel anxious (Cury et al., 2008; King et al., 2012). When placing this into context it is not difficult to see. For example, if a student feels incapable of achieving a task but is then required to do that task they will likely feel anxiety about the task. This anxiety would only be heightened if the task was part of a larger goal, such as a course that needs to be passed to complete their degree. The anxiety created due to this fixed mindset can serve as a direct barrier to success at the given task. Research has shown that when individuals are anxious their ability to perform well on a task suffers (Ashcroft, 2002; Ashcraft & Krause, 2007; Beilock, 2008) as the anxiety is cognitively manifested as an interruption to our working memory. Working memory is responsible for allowing us to retain the information needed in the short term to do a task (Baddeley, 1986; Engle, 2002; MacDonald et al., 1992). For example, we store steps to complete a task in our working memory and retrieve them as we move through the task. This allows us to be organized in our actions and ensure that we complete the necessary steps. However, when feeling anxious it is often difficult to focus, and the thoughts generated by anxiety in essence "take up space" in our working memory. This limits the "space" available in our working memory to allow us to remember what needs to be done (Ashcroft, 2002; Ashcraft & Krause, 2007; Beilock, 2008). Take a math exam as an example. If a student is anxious, the tasks being held in working memory will be jeopardized by the anxiety they are experiencing and they will be more likely to make simple errors by forgetting these tasks.

Recommendations

Having a growth mindset has been shown to be successful in helping individuals overcome a variety of challenging circumstances (Dweck, 200). As such, it is reasonable to believe it can help instructors overcome the challenges of teaching during COVID-19. Reflecting on what we believe can start the process of using a growth mindset to this end. Do we believe that we are capable of teaching effectively in this era, or are we set in the belief that it is not possible? The latter may be reflected in statements such as "this type of content can't be taught online" or "there is no way to make the same connection with students online and without that I can't help them." Perhaps you have heard, or said yourself, something to the effect of online learning being a watered-down experience that is incapable of providing the same level of learning as face-to-face instruction. These statements are all examples of a fixed mindset around the idea of teaching online. The last statement even uses the word "incapable", which is a key indicator of a fixed mindset.

We can shift our beliefs to be growth-oriented in these situations by following the same advice given in mindset interventions designed for students (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2007; Paunesku et al., 2015; Smith, 2017; Smith & Capuzzi, 2019; Yeager et al., 2019; Yeager, Romero et al., 2016; Yeager, Walton, et al., 2016). The first step is to carefully examine beliefs such as those reflected in the statements above. It is not that teaching online is not effective in providing quality learning and engagement for all contexts; in fact, research suggests that it is just as effective if not more effective than face-to-face instruction (Nguyen, 2015); but it is different. This suggests that the task is not impossible and that we may need to adjust our thinking. Given the plethora of resources that has emerged from the higher education community in just a few short months since the onset of COVID-19, it seems that many people do have successful strategies for accomplishing quality online education that is engaging and effective. Knowing this, we can be open to the challenge that teaching in the COVID-19 era brings rather than believing it is an impossible task. Second, we can practice being mindful of fixed mindset thoughts and anxiety. When we hear ourselves doubting our ability to meet the changes asked of us, or when we begin to feel unfocused and overwhelmed, it is a sign that we need to check in with our thoughts. Are we thinking in a fixed or growth mindset way? What strategies or resources are there to help us overcome the current challenge? Finally, we should take note of our accomplishments. When we do something well, we need to acknowledge that and reflect on how we moved through the challenge. This allows us to build a stronger sense of ability and be more comfortable taking on future challenges. By adjusting our current beliefs to be growth mindset oriented, addressing fixed thoughts and anxiety, and reflecting our successes, we can utilize the power of growth mindset to become strong instructors in the face of COVID-19.

Conclusion

Just as we would comfort a student by telling them that we have seen many students who believe they couldn't do well in a class rise to the occasion and succeed, we as instructors can comfort ourselves with this knowledge. We can teach in the COVID-19 era. This is not the first difficult task we have faced in our professions; in fact, it's probably nowhere near the most difficult. It is different; it is a challenge; and, yes it will be more work. But we are capable. Our success will lie in our willingness to embrace that belief. By believing in our ability we can rest our anxieties and be more focused on utilizing the bounty of resources before us to make this the best learning experience possible for our students. Rather than staying fixed in our traditional ways, we can grow into a new success for ourselves and our students.

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The Necessity for Good Governance and Effective Leadership at Public State-Funded Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the Midst of COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has forever changed the trajectory of higher education and the delivery of services, particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Therefore, how HBCUs strategically transform their campus operations with limited resources and remain competitive is vital to their survival. Considering these challenges, examining the role of governance and leadership and their decision-making processes in order to transition every aspect of their instructional services will be critical to the sustainability of these institutions. This essay examines a gap in the body of knowledge related to HBCU governance and leadership during COVID-19 and the considerations encompassing effective leadership during times of crisis.

Keywords: good governance, effective leadership, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), decision-making, COVID-19

During this unprecedented time of chaos and complexity associated with COVID-19, public state-funded colleges and university leaders across the country are looking for ways to stabilize their campuses to create a sense of normalcy for students, faculty, and staff, particularly at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Given that state funding for public HBCUs has been historically diminished in comparison to their higher education counterparts (Commodore & Owens, 2018), the upcoming financial challenges HBCUs will face due to COVID-19 will be monumental. Considering these unique challenges, governing boards and leadership have been placed in a difficult role to make effective, expeditious, and consequential decisions regarding the transformation of their campus operations. Therefore, examining the role of effective leadership and good governance at HBCUs in the midst of COVID-19 is crucial to sustainability of these institutions.

According to many HBCU Presidents across the country, although all colleges and universities have been disrupted due to the COVID-19 closures, and face uncertainties for reopening, the impact is particularly critical for HBCUs due to underfunded operations and small shoestring budgets (Charles & Dobson, 2020). Consequently, with the unique challenges presented from COVID-19, HBCUs' governing board members and leadership must work together collectively, focus their attention on crisis management solutions, and strategically recalibrate models of delivery for teaching, fiscal planning, and administrative operations.

The body of literature in higher education research suggests that there is a distinct difference between good governance and effective leadership. Leadership is defined as the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal (Ward, 2020). For the purpose of this essay, the authors view effective leadership in higher education as: 1) the creation and execution of organizational vision and mission, 2) timely, effective, and collaborative decision making, 3) incentivizing stakeholders to achieve organizational goals, and 4) the utilization and implementation of effective crisis management strategies. According to the Association of American Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities(AGB), (2018) there are three key essential elements for good governance: "1) ensuring that boards have the best people serving on them, 2) boards address the right issues, and 3) board members engage in the right manner to add value"(p.1). Additionally, many studies dissect the interconnection between leadership and governance (Lord et al., (2009). Essentially, ineffective leadership results in poor clarity about processes, and limits accountability that is required for good governance (Lord et al., (2009). Therefore, in order to have good governance you need effective leadership.

During this pandemic HBCUs were forced to address key questions such as: 1) How will the institutions be able to afford the essential personal protective equipment (PPE) to reopen? and 2) How will the inevitable costs associated with academic and infrastructural changes going to be managed? Unfortunately, while other institutions were able to be proactive in their preparation and response to COVID-19, many HBCUs were unable to make timely transitions due to a lack of financial resources (Charles & Dobson, 2020). When Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in March that provided over $1 billion in support to HBCUs (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), many HBCUs were lagging in the implementation of essential crisis management strategies in response to the pandemic. Realistically, without the funding assistance from the CARES Act, many HBCUs would not have been able to successfully reopen, provide essential services such as personal protective equipment (PPE), critical on campus testing, and purchase necessary technology for COVID-19 screenings (Charles & Dobson, 2020).

To make strategic decisions related to the challenges of COVID-19 and prepare for crises in the future, several activities should be put into practice to provide HBCUs with effective leadership and good governance including: 1) Transparency, 2)Effective communication 3) Shared governance, and; 4) Crisis response planning and implementation. According to the MacTaggart (2020), governing boards must be prepared to lead in a crisis with confidence when they emerge. Therefore, during these unprecedented times, university leaders must be transparent with their decision making, as well as consistently and clearly communicate the day-to-day challenges facing the universities to governing board members. These conversations are critical to ensure that governing board members make good decisions to effectively govern these institutions. Additionally, all stakeholders, including governing board members, senior administration, faculty, staff, and students should have some level of involvement with the decision-making related to university policies and procedures (Association of Governing Boards, 2017). Furthermore, a clear path of direction and crisis response plan with timelines should be developed to ensure that HBCUs have the financial resources to implement the crisis management plans to ensure their institutions' sustainability.

HBCUs have always embraced their unique mission and played a major role in educating the world's best and brightest talent among African Americans and minority populations. HBCUs have withstood the test of time and are resilient, however, for them to survive post-COVID-19 crises, good governance and effective leadership are critical. Therefore, governing boards and higher education institutions' leadership need to make sound decisions to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its students, faculty, and staff, which includes the implementation of crisis management strategies at HBCUs.

This essay examines a gap in the body of knowledge related to HBCU governance and leadership in times of crisis. This crisis has elucidated the urgent need for HBCU governing board members and their university leaders to work together collectively to ensure they sustain the institutions they serve during the COVID-19 crisis. Implications for future research should embrace which governing boards were able to make strategic decisions and successfully implement crisis management resources and reforms at their institutions. Additionally, research to examine HBCUs' governing boards and leadership decision-making should be evaluated to determine which colleges and universities utilized the best practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, while providing students with the high-quality academic instruction, uninterrupted student services, and support.

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Developing an Academic Identity Using the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model: A Kaleidoscopic Metaphor

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, we describe how the cognitive apprenticeship model serves as a framework for mentoring early-career women faculty into the professoriate. We illuminate our ideas using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to inspire and support women faculty as they grow as academic writers and build their academic identities.

Keywords: academic identity, academic writing, cognitive apprenticeship, early-career faculty, kaleidoscope, mentoring

Completing a doctoral degree and launching into one's first academic job is both exciting and intimidating, all at the same time. New faculty quickly learn that juggling the demands of a teaching load, sustaining a research agenda, and participating in service activities is tricky to manage. One approach to manage the demands of teaching, research, and service is to build a multifaceted and integrated academic career. In this essay, we illustrate that choosing to hold a complex perspective of academic life can provide a truer representation of the work. According to Berger (2015), "Complexity is about getting our heads around what is possible (because anything could happen) rather than what is probably going to happen (which is determined by what has happened before (p. 11). Approaching the professoriate with intentionality allows for a more fluid approach and manageable way of meeting academic demands.

Women professors often have heavy teaching loads, unrealistic committee work, and lower pay than their male counterparts (Pettit, 2020); yet, they must also balance the demands for scholarly productivity and personal commitments. Therefore, our focus is on mentoring women faculty. We look at academic identity through a kaleidoscopic metaphor. Kanter's (2001) often-cited quote anchors our essay: "Creativity is a lot like looking at the world through a kaleidoscope. You look at a set of elements, the same ones everyone else sees, but then reassemble those floating bits and pieces into an enticing new possibility" (p. 261).

We use a kaleidoscope as a metaphor because it contrasts a categorical approach to academic demands with the complexity of an integrated academic identity. The multiple bits and pieces of glass that tumble in our metaphor include the transition from doctoral student to faculty scholar through engagement with academic writing. We believe the outcome of an academic writing practice is beautiful, evolving, and full of possibilities. Interestingly, the word kaleidoscope comes from the Greek words *kalos* (beautiful) and *eidos* (shape), and an English word *-scope* (an instrument for seeing) that means the "observation of beautiful forms" (Kaleidoscope USA, 2020). We see the process of developing a writing practice and academic identity as having multiple bits of glass that spin and swirl in real time.

We acknowledge our own positionality and privilege (i.e., White women in higher education and former directors of doctoral programs) influences our ideas about mentoring new faculty; we sense that other women may find purpose and beauty in our kaleidoscope metaphor. Through mentoring, we encourage ourselves and new faculty to recognize that the view from inside (academic identity) the kaleidoscope is more beautiful than the outside (institutional job requirements). The beautiful design created in a kaleidoscope is a mandala, an ever-changing image that starts and stops, and can be dull or vibrant. It all depends on the continuous motion of the kaleidoscope. Our goal in mentoring new faculty is to encourage a habit of turning the capsule to experience the many possibilities of an amalgamated academic identity.

The mentoring process that we employ is the cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins, 2006) because its design makes explicit the implicit workings of academic writing. According to Collins and Kapur (2014), cognitive apprenticeship includes two parts: (a) the apprentice portion is the building of knowledge that interconnects expert processing and contextualized learning, and (b) cognitive training that moves the responsibility of learning gradually from the expert to the novice as skills are developed through iterative experiences. Much like a kaleidoscope, the outside does not represent the beauty of what is happening on the inside. In

Figure 1, we represent the connections between cognitive apprenticeship, mentoring, and developing an academic identity.

Figure 1
Building an Academic Identity through the Cognitive Apprenticeship Model

Cognitive apprenticeship for mentoring new women faculty in academic writing

We believe the cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins, 2006) offers a framework for mentoring women as they navigate the uneven pathway to productive scholarship. Given the effective use of the model with doctoral students (Austin, 2009; Caskey & Stevens, 2019; Gabrys & Beltechi, 2012; Swanson et al., 2019), we think the cognitive apprenticeship model holds tremendous potential for mentoring early-career academics, specifically women faculty.

In the broadest sense, the cognitive apprenticeship model focuses on learning—apprenticing—complex cognitive tasks. To support the learning of complex cognitive skills and processes, the teachers in the learning environment need to make visible their internal thought processes (Collins et al., 1991)). Apprenticeship parallels the research on writing transfer (Yancey et al., 2018) and transformational experiences (Tarabochia & Heddy, 2019), in which instructors prompt writers' development through behavioral, cognitive, and affective engagement in writing. In the case of cognitive apprenticeship,, the mentors reveal and model their own thinking processes to new faculty and arrange conditions for engaging in academic writing.

According to Collins (2006), the cognitive apprenticeship model attends to multiple dimensions of learning environments. Drawing on Collins' work, we apply three of these dimensions—content, method, and sociology—to the mentorship of new women faculty to become successful academic writers and build an academic identity.

First, we acknowledge that early-career faculty bring disciplinary knowledge to the academy; nevertheless, they may need more experience with the transition from writing a dissertation to writing for publication. How can universities help faculty make this transition from student to scholar? Starting with *content*, we suggest women use their disciplinary knowledge to anchor their academic writing by using a kaleidoscopic view.

Second, we recognize these novice scholars possess the expertise and abilities to complete their doctoral programs. Yet, what methods are well-suited for supporting the academic writing demands of the academy? *Methods* begin with the mentor modeling, coaching, and scaffolding, and then, transition to the writer taking the lead by articulating, reflecting, and exploring. We encourage mentors to prompt women faculty to focus on articulation, reflection, and exploration. *Articulation* entails encouraging new faculty to verbalize their thinking. When grasping a kaleidoscope, women faculty can see and articulate the beauty, possibility, and power of their thinking. *Reflection* involves empowering the new faculty to ponder their own work and compare it to experts' work. In the process of turning a kaleidoscope, faculty reflect on the tumbling draped glass and find themselves drawn to certain mandalas. *Exploration* calls on the new faculty to pursue their ideas, identify problems, and resolve those problems. Continuing the turning of a kaleidoscope, faculty explore arrays of mandalas until they find a beautiful, possible, and compelling solution. Using a kaleidoscope inspires women to move through the processes of articulation, reflection, and exploration in a more fluid, yet individualized way.

Third, we embrace the *sociology* of interactions within the learning environment, specifically *situated learning* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and a *community of practice* (Wenger, 1998). In our case, situated learning refers to the new faculty completing tasks such as academic writing in an authentic context (e.g., workspace). Whereas, in a community of practice, new faculty with mutual interests learn by engaging actively and regularly with one another. When interacting with others, women faculty may revel in beautiful possibilities of their kaleidoscopic thinking.

When tapping into the dimensions of the cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins, 2006)—*content*, *method,* and *sociology*—mentors must foster the conditions for faculty to apply the model to their practice. Thus, using this model also requires a shift in power from the mentor to the new faculty member. Mentors must be mindful of their role is to support new women faculty, who in turn, use the model to guide their own development as academic writers and build their own unique academic identities.

Implications for the academy

Certainly, universities need to address the numerous inequalities women face as they transition into their higher education careers (Pettit, 2020). Issues such as teaching loads, committee work, and compensation deserve and require action; however, we suggest an immediate investment in women is possible through mentorship—an extension and elaboration of the type of support received in their doctoral program. To this end, we advance the idea of using the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to inspire and support women as they grow as academic writers and build their academic identities. A kaleidoscope encourages women to not only articulate and reflect on their ideas, but it also emboldens them to explore their individual scholarly passions.

To gain a fuller experience in the academy, mentors and early-career faculty can use the cognitive apprenticeship model (Collins, 2006). Not only can they convey confidence in their *content*, but they can also use strategies or *methods* (i.e., articulation, reflection, exploration). They can also draw on the *sociology* of interactions (e.g., communities of practice) to make their academic position stronger. We suggest that this model offers practical application across women's academic trajectory. Like a kaleidoscope, the model can be adapted to fit the often-transitory demands of an academic life.

We recognize that the power of a kaleidoscope lies in the hands of the user (both the mentor and writer), in this case women faculty. With this optical instrument in hand, women faculty can explore the nuanced and evolving nature of being an academic. As they engage with a kaleidoscope, we believe that mentors can promote the enduring value of using a kaleidoscope to *reflect* throughout their careers—to *articulate* and *explore* the beautiful mandalas they want to pursue through their scholarship. In doing so, mentors can enhance the transformative experiences (Tarabochia & Heddy, 2019) of women as scholarly writers.

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Towards a Border-Free Education

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, the author posits the need for education to take a leading role in the wake of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. It is noted, in particular, how the disruptions to education caused by the pandemic exposed the fragility of education while also exacerbating inequalities as instruction went online. Because international education relies upon physical mobility the pandemic not only disrupted the education of millions of far-flung students but put their health, safety, and security at risk as borders closed and transportation was halted or became severely limited. The concept of "border-free" education is offered here as a way to minimize risks to internationally-mobile students (and scholars), while also removing barriers and expanding knowledge, diversity, and opportunities, particularly for the marginalized and vulnerable.

Keywords: COVID-19, disruption, international education, internet access, mobility, online learning, pandemic

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a multitude of things. First, the genuine fragility of the modern world was exposed in ways – and to a degree - unimaginable. Seemingly overnight, the planet closed.

Second, the fragility of education at all levels was laid bare, including the author's area, international education, where the number of internationally-mobile university students affected is unknown but may be five million (Schulmann & Trines, 2020). In terms of all learners, worldwide, UNESCO estimates that over 1.5 *billion* learners in more than 190 nations – over 90% of all students – had their educations disrupted by the pandemic (UNESCO, 2020a). This does not include the 20% of all children, adolescents, and youth – globally - excluded entirely from education before that (UNESCO, 2020b).

Charles Sanders Peirce wrote of life as "a train of thought," and, therefore, unbounded and border-less (Peirce, 1958, 7.583). Conceiving of the leveraging of online and electronic environments for the betterment of all as being "border-free" - "border" understood here not only in the sense of a boundary separating geographical entities, but also in the sense of a barrier to be surpassed or, ideally, eliminated – is a way to respond responsibly not only to the needs of international education in a post-COVID 19 world but also to better meet the needs of the world in general. To achieve this, however, means making better use of technologies; using them to both reduce disruptions and mitigate risks related to mobility, while also expanding opportunity to all, notably under-represented, at-risk, and disadvantaged populations, including individuals with disabilities. With such a large percentage of learners impacted, the possible permanent loss to learning of even a small percentage of students whose educations were disrupted and do not return represents a massive loss of human potential, innovation, discovery, and positive change.

Quantitatively, the World Bank has estimated that potential impacts from the disruptions could result in a loss of between 0.3 and 0.9 years of schooling, increase by as much as 25% the share of lower secondary school children below the minimum level of proficiency, and "likely create a substantial setback to the goal of halving the percentage of learning poor by 2030" (World Bank, 2020). Simulations performed upon developing countries participating in PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) suggest that, without substantial interventions, the loss of learning for just three months in the third grade could result in 72% of students becoming at risk of falling so far behind by the tenth grade that they will either have dropped-out or be unable to learn anything in school (Kaffenberger, 2020, pp. 5-7). These are deficits "likely to ripple through a generation" (Tawil, 2020, 1). As evidence of that, the World Bank further notes that resulting losses in earnings, on average, over a student's working lifetime could amount to a collective loss of $10 trillion in earnings across the cohort - if school shutdowns last only five months.

As even developed countries have experienced, school closures have revealed how much education has been relied upon to permit other essential activities like employment to occur. Parents and care-givers were increasingly compelled to stay home to tend to children and their education – a task borne substantially by women resulting in both disproportionately lost wages and lost opportunities (Krentz et al., 2020) while increasing their exposure to domestic violence. The latter has also severely impacted girls and young women (World Vision, 2020, 1). Additionally, school closures interrupt the provision of essential services to children – and by extension, to families and communities – such as nutrition, health services, and harbors of inclusion and personal safety. In total, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has estimated that the reduction in working hours due to COVID-19 could amount to the equivalent loss of 400 million full-time jobs – an economic loss of US$3.5 trillion, or 5.5 percent of global gross domestic product for the first three quarters of 2019. (International Labour Organization, 2020, p. 1).

As education went online, the pandemic threw a spotlight upon the many long-standing inequalities in education, and also exacerbated those very same inequalities (International Commission on Futures of Education, 2020, pp. 3 and 11). Access to the internet, and the possession of even the most basic of skills needed to successfully use electronic resources, added to those inequalities. Organizations such UN/UNESCO, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and many others (See references for some examples, including an overview in UNESCO, 2020c, pp. 26-28) have responded to the disruptions and have also acted towards the elimination of the inherent inequalities. The International Association of Universities argues the need to "consider the opportunities to be explored and … advocate and raise awareness of the … global challenges and risks … in order to close gaps … and ensure an inclusive, fair, ethical, and human-centered approach to digitalization." (Van't Land & Pricopie, 2019, p. 5). We must never forget this digital divide that the pandemic has vividly exposed and must continue to work towards its elimination.

While (on the one hand) it is surely "an illusion to think online learning is the way forward for all," (International Commission on Futures of Education, 2020, p. 8) we can and should leverage appropriate electronic resources - including "old school" technologies such as TV and radio used effectively during current disruptions (See World Vision, 2020, p. 3 and UNESCO, 2020c, p. 26) and electronically-delivered resources and skills opportunities for teachers and parents that produce important ripple effects – for both the common good and to spotlight inequalities - while at the very same time lifting others up.

Leveraging electronic resources in a border-free manner can help education in achieving the following:

1) Help mitigate against future disruptions by reducing the need for mobility
    - At Georgia College, for example, my international unit early-on saw the contours of the pandemic developing and assisted study abroad faculty to begin to think about how to achieve their planned (in-country) outcomes in an electronic environment. Fully two-thirds of grounded summer faculty-led programs were re-designed – many quite innovatively - went online, were successfully delivered, and preserved students' academic progress. Georgia College is now pursuing border-free

opportunities of many sorts with collaborating partners on five continents.

2) Expand education and exchange, particularly – and in support of UNESCO SDG 4 (See UNESCO, 2017) - to those excluded (variously) from traditional modes of education, both international and otherwise.
3) Bring greater diversity and inclusion to the enterprise(s).
4) Provide opportunities for greater focus, depth of study, and especially the greater integration of diverse voices and viewpoints.
5) Spotlight inequalities of many types, and
6) Promote in many ways the closing of digital - of knowledge - divides (Jensen, 2019, p. 53), and provide a "level playing field for all." (United Nations General Assembly, 2020, p. 20).

The concept of border-free education, thus, is not only a way to respond responsibly to international education needs post-COVID 19, but a way to better meet the needs of humanity, and to recognize, engage with, and respond fully to the aspirations of the world and all its people (Observatory Magna Charta Universitatum, 2020).

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Inquiry on the Role of International Education in Future Diplomacy after Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The international higher education sector has been witnessing an economic and soft power competition by the nation-states and has become a part of global power competition. It is worth inquiring about the role of international education in future diplomacy after the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak as there are likely to be substantial changes in the forms of deliveries, operations and policies in the international higher education activities and global politics. This brief essay highlights the possible effects of Covid-19 pandemic on the relationship of international higher education with diplomacy and international relations. It provides food for thoughts for the researches in the area.

Keywords: future diplomacy, international higher education, international relations, internationalization, political science, post-Covid19 period, public diplomacy, soft power

There has been an increasing trend in the number of international students travelling to other countries for getting a higher education. Besides, there have been major emerging non-Western actors assuming different patterns of international student mobility. In a South-South mobility scheme, the motivations of those non-Western national states differ from the traditional Western hosting countries remarkably. They actively involved in the creation of educational hub regions along with other public diplomacy channels such as cultural institutes abroad, worldwide TV broadcasting and, hosting mega-events. China and Russia, and in some regards Turkey and Qatar, can be examples of the countries that are heavily investing in public diplomacy including international higher education and other soft power assets for becoming major actors in international politics. These heavy investment and new international mobility patterns in international higher education has an effect on the new global power structure. This may also merely be a reflection of the new reality of the world order as the world phases from a unipolar power structure to a multipolar one, as many International Relations theorists suggest.

The international higher education sector has been witnessing an economic and soft power competition by the nation-states and it was a part of global power competition before the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, it is worth inquiring about the role of international education in future diplomacy after Covid-19 pandemic outbreak as there will be substantial changes in the forms of deliveries, operations and policies in the international higher education activities. The prevalent trends of digitalization of teaching and (re)discovery of online and distance education are accompanied by the considerations on reimagining the international education and virtual internationalization. Regarding the learning experience, where digital fatigue is very common across all stakeholders, in the student experience level, stress disorders and mood instability are typical psychological problems the students face.

Conceptual background

Traditionally, there have been three main scholarly perspectives to analyze the concept of international education: philosophical, pedagogical, and practical (Francois et al, 2016). In the last decades, the political science aspect has been added to the scholarly studies on international education as the indispensability of the very multi-faceted concept of 'education' in studies of political science domains such as democratization (Perry, 2015), economic growth (Barro and Sala-i Martin, 1995; OECD, 2001; Hanushek and Woessman, 2010), development, public diplomacy, foreign policymaking, international politics, and political power are very prevalent. Education indeed has a great 'constructivist' role in international development projects and humanitarian actions in the conflict and post-conflict zones (Davies, 2005; World Bank, 2005; Davies and Talbot, 2008; UNICEF 2011; Paulson and Shields, 2015; Gross and Davies, 2015). Education in emergencies, peace education (Tinker, 2016), and development education are important concepts in state-building or reconstruction periods.

Educational policy-making, specifically of international education, has always been a topic on the agenda of national governments for various motivations (Froumin and Lisyutkin, 2015; British Council, 2016). National educational policies (Apple, 1995) and international organizations or NGOs in international development projects exert their values, norms, cultural influence, and hegemony (Monaghan, 2015; Portnoi, 2016) on the recipient societies. In the same manner, in regard to cross-border education, the countries would like to host more international students for they would like to create or ‘construct’ a nicer image of their country and culture on the minds of visitor students, who can later be potentially sympathizers of their country in a soft power framework, which would benefit the host countries in any global power competition. In power considerations, education, rather than being solely a pedagogical approach or discipline, has been utilized to exert influence on the foreign audience and never let be free from the realm of international relations and world order.

International education indeed can be considered as both reflection of and affecting agent on the world power structure. For many decades, cultural imperialism was relevant in a Western-dominated unipolar world (Carnoy, 1974). The North-South student movement was a reflection of the world order and international politics (Guruz 2011; Malete, 2016). Currently, the world is in a potential phase of going from unipolar to a multipolar system (Jules, 2016) and ‘regionalization' resembles the new focal aspect in the new South-South student mobility reality (Kondakci, Bedenlier and Zawacki-Richter, 2018). Mercantilism over international education by national governments (Asteris, 2006; Trilokekar, 2010; Walker, 2014) turned into soft power competition (Stetar et al, 2010) among world powers and more interestingly, 'sharp powers’ (Walker, 2016; Walker and Ludwig, 2017; Walker, 2018) manipulate it, just as they do in other instruments of public diplomacy such as worldwide media broadcasting, cultural diplomacy institutions, and nation branding activities. Sharp powers’ involvement (Nye, 2018) in international education both in international student mobility and humanitarian assistance poses an interesting case to be explored as ‘idealistic and normative’ nature of education has been exploited and replaced with ‘realist and power competition’ notions by some countries. According to Nye, soft power is neither realist nor a liberal concept, but it is just a form of power. Although, looking at the situation as another realm of power struggle would make more sense and be realistic for further analysis, calling it in a more normative framework of ‘knowledge diplomacy’ (Knight, 2018) may also take place in future diplomacy.

Nevertheless, what is important is to focus on the international students’ learning and cultural living experiences, and what happens in the classroom and on the campus for the sake of genuine internationalization (Knight, 2014). This point seems to be failed by some emerging educational hub countries. As they don't prioritize the satisfaction (Wiers-Jenssen et al, 2002) and experiences of international students (Williams, 2005; Appleton-Knapp and Krentler, 2006; Bartram, 2007; Kondakci, 2011; Root and Ngampornchai, 2012; Soria and Troisi, 2013; Wright and Schartner, 2013;

Ozoglu et al, 2015; Ding, 2016; Kawamura, 2016; Watanabe, 2016; Streitwieser and Light, 2018) and the quality of teaching, they instrumentalize international education in a global power struggle. They set ambitious target numbers to reach, form initiatives to create world-class universities to be included in world ranking tables to attract more students. However, lacking the intercultural competence and genuine internationalization aspects, this trend may potentially end up the exploitation of incoming international students financially and politically. Student-centered internationalization and cultural experience-focused international education activities, rather than quantity, will gain importance in the future diplomacy. It is very worth to investigate how this trend will be shaped in the post-pandemic globally.

Considerations after the covid-19 pandemic

After the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, there assume to be substantial changes in the mobility patterns as there will be possibilities on new delivery methods such as online education as a form of transnational education. The new situation may alter the internationalization plans of higher education institutions to a great extent. The health and safety regulations will be of utmost importance which may indeed limit the volume of international educational exchanges and mobility in the future. The employment forms and operations may shift to digital mediums and the provision of labor from universities to industries can affect to a great extent. All those developments will serve an interesting situation for the interplay between international higher education and soft power and public diplomacy visions of the nation-states, as they traditionally see international education and physical movement of students from one country to another, as an essential element in their foreign policy and diplomacy. The role of international education in future diplomacy after the Covid-19 pandemic will deserve a great deal of research in both perspectives of Western and non-Western.

Particularly, the scholarship of international education- and also in international relations, will have to investigate the place of international education in future diplomacy by asking very essential questions below:

i) What are the implications of international education in international relations and future diplomacy, especially in the post-Covid19 period?

ii) What are and will be the determinants, modalities, trends, and issues in the global student mobility before and after the post-Covid19 period?

iii) How are the national government strategies for international higher education and internationalization being shaped in the world in the post-Covid19 period?

iv) What will be the nexus between the international education and global power structure in the future?

v) What insights can be drawn from the cases of traditional Western destinations and newly emerged non-Western destinations in regard to international education's influence in global power influence and future diplomacy in the post-Covid19 period?

Conclusion

In summary, the main questions to explore in the post-Covid19 period would be on i) how international educational policies and activities are going to be operated by the hosting states over the foreign visitor citizens ii) how the genuine aspects of internationalization in higher education such as intercultural learning and intercultural competence development will be taking into account by the national governments of emerging education hub countries and iii) how international education will be handled in international relations and global politics during the post-Covid19 period in the future.

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Short Essay

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COVID-19 and the Need for Innovation in International Education: Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The value of international education lies in facilitating meaningful cultural immersion as a catalyst for intercultural learning and the creation of global citizens. As the current pandemic poses a threat to the survival of international education offices across the globe, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) are facing not only unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities to strengthen students' capacity to address the issues of the 21st century. This essay will include a brief case study and address the importance of innovation in international education given the current pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, Ecuador, global citizenship, intercultural learning, international education

There has always been a need to make international experiences more accessible, and COVID-19 has pushed IHEs to shift approaches more urgently. The current pandemic is a disruptive challenge which could seriously threaten the stability of international education offices across the globe, but it also provides new opportunities for innovation in the field of internationalization. Decisions made today regarding how to connect with international partners, how to virtually immerse students, and engage them with other social contexts will be the foundation for developing citizens with the cultural competencies necessary to address the challenges of a post COVID-19 world.

This essay emphasizes the need for long term innovation in international education given the challenges and opportunities resulting from the current pandemic. As such, it presents the case of Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ and its virtual international initiatives created in the wake of COVID-19.

In order to comprehend the implications of the current crisis on international education, it is important to understand how the pandemic has changed international education and its implications for cultural immersion, intercultural learning, and global citizenship. We can define cultural immersion as more than simply being physically present in a host culture. Rather, cultural immersion involves "challenging one's cultural and individual assumptions and identity" ("What is cultural immersion?," n.d.). While traditional perceptions of cultural immersion often imply the physical presence of a student in their host culture, other avenues such as virtual exchanges and online forums may provide opportunities to cultivate the most valuable aspects of cultural immersion such as active engagement with another culture, which can give way to intercultural learning.

In 2006, the European Federation of Intercultural Learning defined intercultural learning as "acquiring increased awareness of subjective cultural context (world view), including one's own, and developing greater ability to interact sensitively and competently across cultural contexts as both an immediate and long-term effect of exchange" (Bennett, 2009, p.2). In examining the link between this definition and that of cultural immersion, one can see that the ability to challenge one's own perspective through active engagement is a necessary precursor to refining one's ability to interact with sensitivity across various contexts. A third necessary definition is that of a global citizen. Oxfam defines a global citizen as "someone who is aware of and understands the wider world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make our planet more equal, fair and sustainable" ("Oxfam Education," 2018).

Before entering into possible strategies for Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) to more effectively facilitate intercultural learning and global citizenship, it is important to consider the challenges to achieving this, both pre and post COVID-19. It must be noted that, while study abroad is often a channel for the development of cross-cultural competencies, the former does not necessarily imply the latter. Studies have shown that it is possible for students to physically attend programs in another culture and leave with little to no change in their world view and or cultural biases, showing that intercultural learning doesn't necessarily happen through osmosis (Otten, 2003, p. 15). Student openness to actively engage with the host culture and analyze their worldview are necessary for this shift to happen. However, institutions and professionals who are in a position to guide students in their learning should see themselves as facilitators for cultural exchange. This mindset as well as adequate preparation to accomplish these goals in person or online is key. While these challenges are not new, they must now be approached in a different way and take into account potential new barriers such as access to technology and connectivity.

Let's take a closer look at higher education in Ecuador and briefly analyze the case of Universidad San Francisco de Quito USFQ. Ecuador is a country with a population of over 17 million people (INEC, 2020). There are close to 60 universities (public and private) that provide education to 600,000 students (Senescyt, 2018). Unfortunately, not all Ecuadorian universities have established study abroad programs due to students' financial limitations and lack of institutional capacity. Many institutions do not have a dedicated office to support incoming and outgoing students, offer introductory Spanish language courses or, or provide courses in English.

USFQ, a private liberal arts university, is the exception. Since its establishment in 1988, USFQ has worked with international partners to develop exchange programs, dual degrees, short-term programs, and research. USFQ has over 100 international partnerships and in the last 5 years has received on average 80 international visitors per year. For instance in 2019, the university received approximately 1000 international students, more than 100 campus visits, and sent close to 200 local students to study abroad.

In 2020, in response to the challenges associated with in-person study abroad programs due to the current pandemic, the university reinvented its international program offerings in a virtual format, which has elicited broader conversations surrounding the facilitation of cultural immersion experiences in a distanced setting. USFQ has initiated the creation of virtual programs alongside universities in Latin America and the United States. In Fall 2020, these initiatives focused on Collaborative International Learning (COIL) with 30 programs executed, Online Virtual Research Opportunities with neary 20 different research projects, and Virtual Exchanges with a variety of courses taught in English and Spanish. As a result, there was a 600% increase in the number of local USFQ students engaging in international education opportunities in Fall 2020 compared to Spring 2020.

In addition to academic opportunities and research offerings, USFQ has developed a series of activities with the goal of facilitating cultural immersion and intercultural learning. To give students an understanding of the local context, the university has provided a series of Latitude Zero Talks that give students a unique perspective on research and the local context in Ecuador. In an effort to build upon students' academic work and cultural immersion experiences, the international programs office has also created "Stories from Around the World" a virtual meeting space for local and international students to share stories about their lives and cultures. This activity is guided by facilitators, but led by students, and each session focuses on a specific aspect of the students' lives such as culinary traditions, media, or gender and equality. Additionally, the university led and took part in an international series of dialogues centering around the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and involving students from 12 different universities across the western hemisphere.

In a post event evaluation of the dialogues on SDGs, 95% of students surveyed reported that they would recommend the event in the future, and many cited the exchange of ideas and interaction with international peers as the highlight of their experience. These various virtual spaces are all consciously created to promote meaningful cultural exchange by engaging students in a voluntary discourse including a pre-meeting reflection activity, utilizing technology such as Padlet and TikTok, and a group reflection activity to share experiences and lessons learned. These online spaces require intentional planning and participation on the part of administrators and students in order to be successful thus mitigating the risk of creating international interaction without promoting intercultural learning. Whereas traditional study abroad students may find a perceived value in physically being in another country, believing that intercultural learning may happen through osmosis, students and administrators in a voluntary online forum must push themselves to create value through their willingness to share their experiences and learn from others.

Cultural immersion, intercultural learning, and global citizenship are widely used as buzzwords in the field of global higher education, and with good reason: they make up the "why" for study abroad. Effective intercultural learning results in long term cross cultural competencies that benefit students on an individual level academically and professionally. In a broader sense, it has the potential to create a generation of global citizens dedicated to a more just world. Worldwide organizations such as the United Nations point out the ways in which the current pandemic will disproportionately affect different populations and parts of the world. This could result in the widening of inequality gaps that have been closing over the past decade(s) (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020, p.2). While we cannot ignore the effects of the digital divide on accessibility, IHEs can elect to take an innovative approach to study abroad education and use virtual channels to facilitate conscious cultural immersion and intercultural learning experiences. This may ultimately reach students who typically would not or could not go abroad, as was the case at USFQ in Fall 2020.

For USFQ, the pandemic has brought about an unexpected opportunity to strengthen internationalization at home and provide students who would not otherwise have the resources to study abroad with a chance to take part in intercultural learning. During the execution of virtual initiatives at USFQ, the student experience was not limited by technological gaps or connectivity barriers, which might not be the case in other institutions. Additionally, a factor of success has been the institutional support for the international programs office. A future area of development for USFQ programs is related to the evaluation of the activities. It will be important to continue to evaluate the execution of the program, but a more refined analysis of the impact on cultural immersion, intercultural learning, and global citizenship would be beneficial.

The development of new virtual initiatives provides an opportunity for future research across the industry. For instance, further analysis could be done on the intercultural competence students develop through virtual interactions. There is limited data on intercultural competences gained through in-person exchanges, and therefore it is likely that there will be a gap regarding virtual initiatives as well. Furthermore, scholars could explore the correlation between students' participation in virtual initiatives and a future interest in pursuing graduate degrees outside of their home country. Also, new studies could focus on IHEs offering virtual initiatives to measure the impact on the number of students taking part in international experiences and what this might mean for post COVID-19 education. Finally, additional research regarding the digital divide, connectivity, and strategies for making virtual international exchange more accessible will be key to promoting meaningful intercultural learning initiatives. If we do not take this time as a breaking point to adjust traditional ways of learning and focus on research and innovation in virtual international education to promote global citizenship, we have lost the chance to shape students to the needs of the 21st century.

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An Ethnographic Review of Saubhagya Shah's *A Project of Memoreality*

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This review paper scrutinizes a critical ethnographic methodology and its implication in the research Saubhagya Shah, a renowned anthropologist, conducted in a rural village in Nepal. The book, entitled *A Project of Memoreality: Transactional Development and Local Activism*, was published in 2018, nine years after his sudden cardiac death. As a field site for his doctoral research at Harvard University, Shah chose a rural village called Viman, located in the mid-central part of Nepal. Since the village was linguistically diverse, the author experienced complex challenges in the research process for his ethnographic study in this community. This book investigates how women in Viman were involved in the social activism and development process to fight collectively against domestic violence, gambling and alcoholism, and political repression. It also uncovers how crucial were the national and international agencies in promoting and transforming women's socio-political life through women's activism.

In this review, we critically examine the overall research methodology that shah (2018) utilizes, including theoretical framework, methodological implementation, and reflexivity and objectivity in its entirety of the research process. To help readers understand the methodological implementation, we divided this paper into seven sections in terms of the author's excursion from an ordinary person into becoming a well-known anthropologist contributing to the lacuna of Nepali academic knowledge and research. Following the introduction, the second section discusses the ideas used for and the activities performed in his fieldwork. Methods implemented in the research and the challenges the author encountered during his fieldwork are discussed in the third section. We delve into the author's theoretical stance in section four, followed by an exploration of the notion of reflectivity and objectivity manifested on this project. We critically examine the author's positionality and our final remark in sections six and seven, respectively.

Ethnographic Method and Implication

As a social research method, ethnography has been used widely for exploring society, culture, language, beliefs, practices, categories, and rules, with its development and expansion during different phases of history (Van Maanen, 2011). According to Gupta and Ferguson (1997), early ethnographers concentrated mainly on cultural descriptions instead of interpreting a social group using broader theoretical parameters. Gupta and Ferguson (1997) explain the functions of armchair ethnographers and amateur data collectors, as well as the strategies of theorization, data collection, and interpretation. Jones and Watt (2010) argue that some social scientists today may use the traditional account to investigate the ideas of "otherness," "ethnicity," and "racism," but this kind of work cannot be counted as a true methodology. However, Shah conducted his research without the traditional ethnographic imposition of much theoretical jargon. He avoided the notion of armchair ethnography, which denies having the truth, the lived reality, and the experiences of Indigenous peoples. Shah grappled with many obstacles while exploring the fieldwork, observing the people and their activities relentlessly. He rigorously explored the fieldwork and closely participated with the people and their activities to collect the actual data on the ground.

Shah deconstructs the traditional concept of ethnography, as it was considered a research method until its evolution as a methodological approach in the late nineteenth century. Jones and Watt (2010) define "method [as] a tool to collect data whereas a methodology is the theoretical, ethical, political, and philosophical orientations of the researcher to the research" (14). Eventually, ethnographic research became the most popular method of investigation because of some fundamental components, including "positivism," "imperialism," and "evolutionism" (Jones & Watt, 2010). Shah delved into the diverse sociocultural and socio-political realities of the people to challenge the traditional ethnographic method of gathering and transcribing data. As he articulated in the book, he had nothing occupying his mind before he explored his fieldwork; he wanted to excavate the truth associated with the people in Viman. Notably, he challenged the monolithic tendencies of Nepali ethnographic study, which was influenced by the concepts of traditional armchair anthropologists. Shah avoided the ideas that traditional anthropologists interpreted and formulated the discourses on objectivity and fieldwork.

Shah explored ethnographic research, being aware of the output of the philosophical concepts of traditional ethnographers and the emergence of a new methodological approach in ethnography today. He ethnographically examined the issues of women's activism in Viman, where caste practices were, and still are highly influential. However, a major drawback of his study, however, is the aggregation of all women belonging to different ethnic groups as a homogenous group. Such homogenization limits our understanding of women of a specific ethnic group to their socio-political life. For this reason, he was criticized for highlighting the privileged groups of women in Nepali societies. Moreover, he failed to appreciate the social movements of other disadvantaged groups in the Nepalese society (Lawoti, 2010). Regardless of the content and bias in terms of appropriating the disadvantaged in society, this review has informed the ethnographic elements employed in Shah's research conducted in the geopolitical and sociocultural settings in Nepal, in terms of the core concepts of fieldwork as its method of observation.

Methods and Challenges

Shah used an ethnographic research method that studied people's expressions associated with culture, ethnicity, women's identity, and activism. People's expressions in terms of their cultural and ethnic practices are always meaningful and prominent in ethnographic research. Shah's ethnographic investigation contributes to sharing the knowledge to the world coming out of the interaction, engagement, communication, and symbolic expression. Shah extensively used intensive personal involvement alongside theoretical and methodological knowledge to expand the scientific research (Geertz, 1984, 1973). Shah employed an ethnographic method as a tool of social research to conduct knowledge-provoking methodological application in an intensive and communicative engagement with the people and communities that reflected the activities during his fieldwork. Most importantly, ethnographic research he conducted revered the complexities, obscurities, and objections of the human condition while bringing the unheard voices of the women in rural communities, and their lived experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and disempowerment in a society that carries a centuries-old male chauvinism. Nonetheless, Shah, in lieu of raising the oppressed voice of the women in the marginal class, he fundamentally explored how the women organized their executive committee for their own liberation and how they conceptualized their present situation in a so-called male-dominated society. It means that Shah observed and evaluated combining all the women of different classes and castes together.

Shah, as an ethnographer, engaged with imperative questions based on discourses, social practices, and people's experiences. Relating to all these methodological approaches, he integrated epistemological knowledge into research exploration in his fieldwork. His write-up suggests that the application of participant observation as an essential tool of ethnographic investigation strengthened the interview process. As suggested by Musante and DeWalt (2010), Shah strongly used the participant observation method to specify interview questions. He jotted down the information during his fieldwork and interview, but he was very aware while taking notes, since there was a possibility for participants to be distracted. He grappled with many difficulties and hurdles that real ethnographers face during their field research. Secret experiences and thoughts emerged as methodological knowledge from the fieldwork experiences based on his encounter with various challenges during participant observation. Shah (2018) indicated that "the ethnographer is a marginal figure, almost queer and strange . . . he does not belong there to the local flows of life" (p.30).

Theoretical Ground and Ethnography

Shah conceptualized the implication of the theoretical framework in ethnographic research, which is a controversial issue in academia today, yet it was important for him to validating his findings. Shah seems to have been aware that the debate concerning the theoretical implication in ethnography is ongoing, but he acknowledged the theoretical framework in his ethnographic study. His research broadly incorporates theoretical frameworks to validate the empirical evidence for analyzing the data critically by addressing the public discourses and the actual findings.

During the development of ethnographic research practices, European sociologists adopted different methodological orientations. While Britain and France adopted positivism as their central methodological orientations, German sociologists took up an alternative methodological practice. The University of Chicago, on the other hand, synthesized the ethnographic practices of Malinowski (his method is known as functionalism) and the German tradition of philosophical and theoretical perspectives. However, Shah acquired extensive knowledge of the aforementioned theoretical emergence and application, but he neither used the notion of functionalism nor did he emphasize the theory of relativism in his research project.

Shah conceptualized a post-structural theoretical framework to help him deal with issues of human experiences, as well as the grand narratives and discourses. It allowed him to break issues into parts and analyze these parts at a micro level for finding problems associated with social lives. Shah debunked the traditional discourses made by patriarchal normativity in Nepali society; therefore, he did not avoid the poststructuralist theoretical application in his ethnographic research. This theoretical framework provided him with knowledge and insights as he investigated people's experiences in terms of gender, race, language, and ethnicity.

Shah also employed the theoretical framework of Fox (1985) and Ortner (1992), which connected the cultural background of the activities of his participants and identified subjective intentions by creating a ground of association between the local habitus and the structural process of the research he designed. Shah argues with Bourdieu's model of habitus as "unable to take into account consequences of dramatic shifts in the larger equation concerning the reproduction and transformation of social life" (Shah, 2018, 23). The theoretical ideas of Fox (1985) and Ortner (1992) provided him insights into transcribing the data, which is the implicit usage of poststructuralist theoretical perspectives.

Objectivity and Reflectivity

Shah does not search for objectivity within core theoretical perspectives, which means that he did not go to the field with a theoretical idea for investigating and observing the people. In this sense, he was closer to Fabian's ideas that "in an anthropological investigation, objectivity lies neither in the logical consistency of theory, nor in the givenness of the data, but in the foundation of human intersubjectivity" (Fabian, 2001, 25). Shah tried to produce knowledge intersubjectively by grounding the communicative interaction approach. He focused much on the communicative strategies for an in-depth observation to produce objective knowledge based on intersubjectivity.

In terms of reflexivity, Shah, in the text, became an objective of the provocative. To produce an objective knowledge from the subjective experience of the people in the rural areas, Shah critically reflected upon theoretical frameworks when he analyzed the data. As an ethnographer, it was difficult for him to avoid the authorship throughout his investigation. His reflectivity is transparent in the transcription of the data and the reflection of authorship is apparent in most parts of the impressionist tale and his avoidance of the issues of disadvantaged women so far.

Author's Positionality

The positionality of the author in ethnographic research impacts data collection, as well as dissemination of knowledge coming out of it. The positionality of the author in anthropological research is important, even in the post-positivist approaches of distancing oneself from the participants. However, poststructuralist and postmodernist thinkers argue that, due to concerns of objectivity, the foundational reality of Indigenous life and experiences fell under the shadow of the colonial system of power of evaluation. The development and discourses of ethnographic research today have moved in the direction in which they debunk the objective stance, impersonality, and rational ideas by reconstructing the essence of subjectivity, participation, and personality. Shah also avoided the traditional ethnographic notions of objectivity and rationality. Rather, he fully engaged the participants to investigate truth embedded with intersubjectivity. However, he maintained closeness with his participants and simultaneously was aware of ethical concerns in terms of their cultural and ethnic values. During his fieldwork, he stayed in one of the teachers' houses, but he would eat meals at the inn nearby.

The author's positionality in this ethnographic research can be reflected in both emic and etic approaches. It was emic because he shared the same languages and culture as his participants. Most importantly, he was a Nepali citizen conducting research within a Nepali community. On the other hand, it was etic because he was not from the local community, nor was he a female. As a male, he observed the world of the female by exploring a new community located in the rural valley of Nepal. In this sense, learning (or having the capacity to speak) the language of their participants is crucial for ethnographic researchers. Shah benefited from his capacity to speak the same language as his participants in terms of gathering the original data and getting into the precise meaning of what participants articulated.

Conclusion

The women's organization the author worked with was a women's executive committee of different ethnic groups and castes. Shah mainly focused on the consciousness of women in establishing their organization and their motivations in this effort. What roles did the women of the lower castes hold in this organization? How many women from the lower caste participated in the committee? Were there representatives from the lower caste in this organization? If so, why did the author not mention this in his write-up? Does he mean that there are no more caste hierarchies in Nepal? These questions are not explicitly explored in his research. Thus, these knowledge gaps warrant other scholars to further investigate using a robust methodology.

However, this book provides much information regarding conducting ethnographic research successfully by using participant observations and interviews as methods of data collection. In a sense, this book has deconstructed a monolithic and traditional concept of ethnographic studies in Nepal. It highlighted that fieldwork is the crux of ethnographic research, with the message of innovating new knowledge from the grassroots of fieldwork. The chapter division of the book is also remarkable in terms of the flow of ideas it presents. Many anthropologists argue that breaking the information from fieldwork into different chapters is a challenging job. Shah has done an excellent job in analyzing the data with proper chapter divisions. As maintained by Van Maanen (2011), Shah most interestingly and skillfully merged the realist and impressionist tales together in his research. However, he did not explicitly incorporate the ideas of confessional tale, despite the obstacles he encountered during his fieldwork.

Shah worked and participated with the people in such a way that he was well-trained in fieldwork. He collected details randomly, as in the realist tale. However, he did not leave the data for participants to interpret. At the same time, he was inspired by the impressionist tale in terms of the use of the language. Shah narrates, “the growing influx of land-hungry peasants since the 1960s precipitated a serious ecological and economic crisis all along the Kamala valley” (45). The colourful language the author used and the story he narrated beautifully impresses the reader. While reading the book, we sometimes felt that we were reading fiction and that the writer was drawing us into his own world of fantasies. He characterized the scene and the people in such a way that the characters seem to have a colloquial conversation. His skills as an ethnographer to draw the attention of his readers is praiseworthy. This work, therefore, is a blend of realist and impressionist tales with substantive use of ethnographic elements in terms of fieldwork and interview.

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