



Adjustments to Pandemic Enforced Constraints: Insights from Postgraduate Students' and Educators' Transitions

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Much of higher education (HE) experienced a forced global pilot test of online education with the added dimension of a rapid adoption for both educators and students due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We used Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transition (MMT) and Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) perspectives within a two-time interval research design of postgraduate Master students' and educators' lived experience operationalised during the first three months of the pandemic in Ireland. This article describes the transition journey from shock and loss, to new and unfamiliar, enforced and confined learning environments, to eventual acceptance albeit with major challenges. The findings illustrate a complex narrative for both students and educators as they adjust to a new educational experience. The main finding was that both students and educators transitioned rapidly, but there is a lack of evidence that this "forced" transition repositioned the student and educator roles in a new educational ecosystem. As technological adoption continues with HE, research findings of this nature situated during the early stages of the pandemic can inform and guide the next iteration of educational and technological developments.

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More than 400 million students and thousands of educators faced disruptions unintentionally by the sudden shift to online education (Crawford et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Metcalfe, 2021; Naffi, 2020). Educators raced to ensure that students received their courses online as face-to-face or blended approaches were not feasible. Students pivoted to online education in the midst of the COVID-19 panic as physical campuses shut down. This emergency immersion into online learning has been nothing short of experimentation by many. Education, and management education in particular, was already experiencing profound changes and challenges, but the widespread adoption of technology during the pandemic has added a new level of complexity that demands skill set and mind set changes not previously witnessed (Fellenz et al., 2022).

What occurred and continues to occur during COVID-19 is a massive global technological educational non-choice experiment, with a mandated global rapid deployment and trial of online learning (Crawford et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Naffi, 2020). As with many industries and within society there was immediate move to increased technology use in HE. Many commentators note that several years worth of technological adoption occurred in the first few months of the pandemic and notably within many HE institutions globally (Crawford et al., 2020; Metcalfe, 2021). This massive untested, untried, and worrying educational endeavour could, and most likely will, have major consequences for higher education institutes (HEI) (Crawford et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Naffi, 2020).

It is acknowledged that this global “experiment” has had and continues to have a massive impact on students and educators. Both were forced to make a rapid transition from one form of education (mainly face-to-face) to another (online). In line with Rogoff (2003), this paper defines transition as “movement from one environment or context to another, with a corresponding change in identity; people change their role in their community’s structure.” It is noted within HE that students, in particular international students, go through many complex transitions, as illustrated in the Multiple and Multi-dimensional Transitions model (MMT: Jindal-Snape, 2016; Jindal-Snape & Hannah, 2014; Jindal-Snape & Rienties, 2016). Having to deal with a global pandemic while being cut off from one’s family and support is likely to add several more layers of complexity to the students’ transitions.

Furthermore, educators had to go through a range of other transitions as well during COVID-19. A critical point is that educators were not normally expected to have the skill set to design and deliver education online (Sözmen et al., 2021; van Leeuwen et al., 2015), nor is rapid adoption a norm of adoption behaviour within HE. For educators, designing and implementing intervention changes are usually by trial-and-error, often seen as piecemeal adoption occurring across numerous iterations rather than widespread immediate adoption (Naffi, 2020; van Leeuwen et al., 2015). In a 20 country review of educational reactions to COVID-19, Crawford et al. (2020) found diverse strategies and practical solution by HEIs. Similarly, Naffi (2020) found a renewed interest in pedagogy to transform face-to-face education into online education, but at the same time noted substantial stress and anxiety amongst educators.

While there are now several studies of how students (e.g., Crawford et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Lim et al., 2021; Naffi, 2020; Sözmen et al., 2021) and educators (Crawford et al., 2020; Naffi, 2020; Paudel, 2021) made sense of these challenges, there is limited research into how educators and students together made sense of this situation (Duraku & Hoxha, 2020).

The design of learning activities (Arbaugh, 2014; Rienties & Toetanel, 2016), and the implementation of teaching and assessment strategies (Bennett et al., 2017), is critical to ensure support and motivation for students’ self-regulated learning (SRL). This study used work on MMT (Jindal-Snape, 2016; Jindal-Snape & Rienties, 2016) and SRL (Winne, 1995; Zimmerman, 2000) to investigate the extent to which pedagogy, content, and technology knowledge entwined and supported the transitions of students as they tried to cope with pandemic enforced constraints. From a student perspective, we used the MMT transitional lens (Jindal-Snape, 2016; Jindal-Snape & Hannah, 2014). We also combined MMT with a SRL lens (Winne, 1995). SRL is defined by Zimmerman (2000, p. 14) as “self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal learning goals”.

The research nested at one Irish university was responsive to the opportunity of exploiting this unique situation of an immediate pivot from face-to-face delivery on a MSc in International Management Masters programme to online delivery in March 2020. This ‘forced’ students to complete their respective courses online while in active country lockdown and similarly, it forced educators to react and to (re-)design learning activities in an extremely short time in an online format. This dual aspect lived experience perspective has received limited attention in the emerging COVID-19 literature. Given the unprecedented nature of events, we formulated the following three open explorative research questions:

RQ1 What were the main transitions for students of the rapid pivot to online only education due to COVID-19?

RQ2 What were the main transitions for educators of the rapid pivot to online only education due to COVID-19?

RQ3 What was the shared experience of the rapid pivot to online only education due to COVID-19?

METHODS

CONTEXT AND SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY

The research design utilised a qualitative approach which allowed for a depth of exploration situated within the wider context. Given this study is situated within the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic timeframe, there was limited research and theoretical concepts to guide the study. The context of this research focused on two cohorts: the students and the educators. In March 2020, students had to adjust their SRL to adapt rapidly to a new online learning environment. In practice this meant educators having to convert a range of teaching activities to online delivery. There were approximately three teaching weeks of classes remaining with a multitude of assignments, both group and individual, across the five modules at various stages of completion. While this student cohort had the benefit of familiarity with each other, an understanding of their modules and assignment process, and had met all educators involved, they still had to adjust to these new imposed constraints. The programme delivery mechanism for the remaining weeks was a combination of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and live online classes through Collaborate and Zoom.

The research design adopted a qualitative approach aligned to the need for an explorative, dynamic methodology to allow both educators and students to share and express their experiences. Four methods of data collection were utilised: 1) Qualtrics survey – using open-ended questions relating to their experience of moving to online education was sent to the 93 students in the programme (the first week in May 2020), of which 82 students responded, 2) Follow-up in-depth interviews with 29 students (second-fourth week of May 2020); 3) Qualtrics survey was sent to the five educators (the first week in June 2020) teaching on the programme with mainly open-ended questions relating to their experience of the rapid shift to online course delivery; 4) Follow-up in-depth interviews with the five educators (first week of July 2020).

Qualtrics survey and follow-up semi-structured interview with students

Ethical approval was obtained in April 2020, and a Qualtrics survey was emailed to all 93 students taking an MSc in International Management programme at an Irish University explaining the aim, scope and asking for informed consent. This consent was received from 82 of the 93 students who had completed six months of a ten month in-person programme. All participants were aware that they could opt out of the research at any time. Only one of the researchers had previous contact through the delivery of a module in their pre-COVID-19 semester, but final grades had been issued and confirmed which indicates that a potential power relationship would not be a significant issue due to the lack of current and no further expected contact. The three other authors/researchers had not met with or interacted with students in the sample.

The student survey prompted students to comment on their educational experience during the pandemic. Questions included “What has been your experience of working through the remainder of your MSc since the government closed the campus due to Coronavirus?” and “What has been your experience of working virtually on group assignments since your courses

were taken online due to Coronavirus?” Students were also asked for any additional comments about the impact Covid-19 had on their lives. Students were also asked if they would be interested in participating in in-depth interviews on the topic. Almost a third of the class, 29 students, opted to partake in follow-up interviews which were conducted via Zoom. Two of the researchers conducted the interviews; one researcher had previous contact with the students as outlined above, and the second researcher had no previous contact with students prior to the interviews.

Qualtrics survey and follow-up semi-structured interview with educators

Similarly, informed consent was collected from all five educators teaching on the programme at the start of the pandemic. All participants were aware that they could opt out of the research at any time. The five educators completed their experience of transferring to online teaching via the Qualtrics survey. Questions included: “What was your experience of the online delivery?”, “Do you consider your online delivery was successful/unsuccessful?”, and “What is your opinion of the engagement levels of students during the online delivery?” All five educators agreed to follow-up interviews, and subsequently participated in interviews relating to their experiences of shifting to online teaching due to pandemic enforced constraints.

PARTICIPANTS

52 students were female and 30 were male. 59 of the students were between the ages of 21–23 and 23 were in the age range of 24–29. The majority of students were international students who travelled to experience an international educational environment arriving in August/September 2019. Ten different nationalities were represented, with Chinese, Indian and German dominating. When Covid-19 arrived the majority of the international students interviewed stayed in Ireland (n = 16), two were Irish and were living at home, and eleven students returned to their home country (China, India, Austria, Germany). The five educators were of mixed nationalities, four were male, one was female; two were professors, two were associate professors, and one was an assistant professor.

DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data analysis techniques were used to examine meaningful and symbolic content to identify and investigate the students’ and educators’ experiences (Miles et al., 2014). A rich corpus of data totalling 86,212 words were collected for analysis from the Qualtrics survey and follow-up interviews. Data reduction and pattern identification techniques were used to produce objective analytic conclusions. Inductive analysis was employed which allowed the explanations to emerge from the data (Creswell, 2008) supported by Glaser (1965) constant comparative method. Open coding and pattern developments were enhanced through the use of MAXQDA software which also provided a clear audit trail, to support rigour, validity and reliability. The transcripts were analysed through open coding and a priori theories.

RESULTS

The results give rise to a number of interesting interpretations and implications and show evidence of positive and negative aspects of both the students’ and educators’ transitions experiences.

THEME 1. LIKE A ZOO – LONGING FOR FACE-TO FACE SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

The strongest transition theme that emerged from the students was the criticality of the student-to-student support and the challenge of forced isolated confinement. Like a Zoo arose as a theme as student suggested that they were well-cared for and minded, but confinement meant they had lost access to their normal supports for learning. Students felt that they were trapped within their living environments and often in their childhood bedrooms without access to the supports they were used to. The most common examples mentioned related to students within class, socializing outside the class, and the interactions within and beyond the classroom

with the educator. For many students this lack of face-to-face engagement and socialization was difficult to adjust to, and mental health concerns were raised by many students.

'Psychologically, it has had a major impact. Going from an international environment buzzing of life to an online teaching environment is terribly hard... because of the lack of social interactions and the possibility to "grab a beer and clear your head" at the end of a long day'. (Student 12).

Students also linked this lack of face-to-face contact with reduced motivation to engage and participate in the new learning environment; *'The vast majority of my classmates have zero motivation regarding university matters'* (Student 2). There was clear evidence that students had experienced several difficulties when reassessing and adapting their established SRL to the new learning environment. There was a great sense of loss from the students when they detailed their experiences of reverting to online education: Student 6 *'Continuing online was not a problem, but the social interaction and international experience has been stolen which is very sad for everybody'.*

Overall, the students' main dissatisfaction with turning online was the lack of social interaction with peers and educators. Furthermore, most students noted that online classes were challenging, time consuming, and not as effective as face-to-face classes. For example, students noted that pre-recording of classes and uploading only voice over slides was not beneficial to their learning. Many students contended that their learning had been negatively impacted because of going online.

'The learning curve became clearly flatter and it was harder to have discussions with classmates or educators' (Student 10).

For the five educators, delivering classes online was clearly a new experience. Several well-reported issues in online education (Arbaugh, 2014; Giesbers et al., 2014) existed, but more unique pandemic induced issues arose (see also Paudel, 2021). One major issue was the lack of interactivity and the loss of the social context of the classroom. The issue of class cohesion was impacted by not being "able to see and read students faces" (Educator 1) and was highlighted as something that required action.

The lack of student attention indicators and the limited feedback on their engagement and learning impacted the educators. Something that is quite natural in a classroom is hard to gauge in an online synchronous teaching environment. This is particularly the case when the technology affordance does not allow educators to see all students on one screen. And where students opted to have web cameras off *'...you got a picture or a tombstone, as I call it. You didn't know if they were actually there or not'* (Educator 3). Various solutions to alleviate this were trialled including turning the online class off, so that students had to sign in again. This would eliminate students who had logged into the session, but were not actively participating in the class. The use of deliberating, planned and open-discussion proved successful in providing the space for student voices.

This was illustrated by Educator 2:

'[t]he move online is far more intense than that of the classroom, because you can get the natural breaks in the classroom. You can't read the room. And then, you know, staying quiet was very important to give people the chance to respond. And being very conscious and to a degree where I had a stopwatch in front of me and every kind of 10 or 15 minutes, depending, I would stop and take any questions and then just stay quiet for two minutes. Give people a chance to kind of respond'. (Educator 2)

Educators also noted that the online environment allowed, or even encouraged, quieter students to get involved either by using the chat function or speaking without their camera enabled.

'those who normally speak in the classroom weren't as loud on the chat. And because of that we had more engagement on the chats. And you know that those voices may have been either dampened or you can get the opportunity to ask the questions. But it was something that was very noticeable to me. Very nice'. (Educator 2)

Educators highlighted that they had to be more rigid and organized in their delivery as the lectures were recorded. They suggested that this can challenge the free flow and development of ideas together with the students and lead to more planned classes. Overall, the findings from the study suggests that the lack of social interaction and the social context of education presented challenges for the students to stay engaged and motivated.

THEME 2. DISTRACTED TEAMS: NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR TEAMWORK

For students the second theme that emerged consistently was the feeling of being in a noisy and challenging environment when conducting teamwork. This lowered their ability and motivation to work and focus on their studies. As Student 13 indicated:

'[a] lot of struggle with motivation in group work and time management'. (Student 13)

Common issues cited were students talking over one another online, time differences, connectivity issues, students not having web cameras on, and students continuing their routine at home while participating in the online environment. All of this made the conversation hard to follow causing frustration for some students.

'So just communicating online like it was like a zoo. More Skype, but it was a bit difficult because most times people don't even like turn on the video...It's quite difficult because we aren't too productive for the most time. So people might be cooking or doing their own thing, but it's slowed down the process. It was actually very, very difficult for me'. (Student 20)

This disorganized environment resulted in students getting frustrated and stressed with each other. This naturally influenced students' willingness to participate online with others, as they lacked the much needed online team management and learning skills (Arbaugh, 2014; Giesbers et al., 2014). All students brought this issue up when speaking about working with their teams on projects. For example:

'So it's just it's been extremely difficult to like... It's like people talking over each other. And it's just a mess. So, it's really made things difficult'. (Student 11)

For many they had to rely on the team spirit previously developed. There was evidence of accommodating and working around issues as they arose due to the time pressure to complete the course work. Changing meetings, meeting in smaller groups, and really supporting people with their personal challenges was a key factor here.

For some there was evidence of individualised techniques within the SRL perspective and what could be seen as almost a new creation of the student self as a digital entity, sharing and considering the inputs and viewpoints of a wide range of students and developing their higher order learning, but with online cues only. For others there were frustrations and stresses which demotivated them causing them real challenges and disrupting their studies.

The challenges of online teams and the lack of ability to have physical social interaction within the teams was clear and it had impact on their learning, however this needs further exploration. There was almost a new creation of the student self as sharing and considering the inputs and viewpoints of a wide range of students and developing their higher order learning, but with online cues only. There was also reliance on the team spirit previously developed and working around issues as they arose due to the time pressure to complete tasks.

THEME 3. LIKE GETTING OFF A ROLLERCOASTER

The sudden shift to online learning for students and educators caused a large range of emotions, which fluctuated over time, commencing with initial shock and panic (students leaving campus, locked down and returning home) that waivered and finally levelled off as most students adapted to their situation. There was evidence of on-going changes in the use of space, and time, with a more fluid, online, and immersive experience than traditional education. Many students reflected that study dominated their days, keeping them busy, focused, and active while others struggled with the online and changed learning environment. For many students there was clear evidence of a range of SRL techniques with coping strategies and increased ability and altered learning techniques to fit their current online environment.

For educators, the panic and levelling off occurred in a similar manner once the technology decision was made and work was uploaded onto the VLE successfully: *'Panic around the technology was very real ... the week leading up to my first delivery, you could see, you know, the acceleration to change as to whether you were going to use Teams, the VLE or Zoom'* (Educator 2). Our research indicates that there was a variety of standards and a mix of educational approaches and engagement techniques used with the rapid shift to online education. Some of the educators opted for voice over PowerPoint delivered in an asynchronous manner, while others chose live synchronous sessions. One educator employed a full online simulation (transferred from a face-to-face delivery) for their class. This study found a clear lack of online pedagogy design, instead the design mirrored that of the face-to-face learning style of the educator and their technology knowledge and proficiency. This is not surprising as the rapid shift to online delivery did not allow for upskilling time for educators. It also shows the piecemeal nature of the panic situation and the lack of a common standard or educational skill set. Our findings also indicate that experiential learning pedagogy and a student-centred approach transferred well to online delivery, but more research on this area is warranted.

By the end of term, our research showed that both educators and students completed the programme – feeling like they had stepped off a rollercoaster. Both were pained at losing the authentic face-to-face learning experience, but over time most students were good natured, patient and appreciative of what was delivered rapidly, and educators too felt that students had performed well, appreciating the non-ideal circumstances the students were launched into.

It is not surprising that students did not view online educational delivery and face-to-face delivery as similar. They valued and missed the within class experience and were very aware of what was lost by the rapid move online, suggesting that this *'wasn't the same experience'* (Student 2) as face-to-face classes. However, due to the context there was resigned acceptance: *'but I guess like there's not much you can do about it. Like this is what the situation is. So, I kind of accepted that'* (Student 2). Students articulated clearly the lack of social interaction and class engagement as the core issues. *'Sitting at one base ... No talking with friends and no interacting ... interesting but boring....'* (Student 18).

What the findings show is that the delivery was between the desired and minimal expected standard for a crisis situation. It was clear that some educators delivered only to the minimal accepted standard (e.g., recorded slides and truncated engagement), while other educators lent towards the more exemplary, trying to recreate the experiential, interactive, live class engagement. These differing levels were all accepted, or at least understood, by the students due to their acceptance of the contextual pandemic panic and a belief that this was not an educator skill set.

Students conceded that educators in general had performed well under the circumstances, but of critical importance is that this was not an endorsement or a sense that they did well in general. The social norms or what was expected in this situation were reached, and the educators predominantly delivered below the standard expected of a classroom or face-to-face engagement, but to the standard of what can be provided in a short period of time. For most they were able to match the normative expectations of others (accountabilities) against the personal and distributed resources available to meet them (capacity) aware of this challenging environment. Educators felt that they had performed under intense pressure with only a weekend to turn their modules online and had created if not ideal, at least viable, learning environments.

DISCUSSION

Our research explored how a rapid change in educational delivery impacted 82 students and five educators, offering a unique dual perspective at one Irish University. Using a constant comparative method of both lived experiences, the findings illustrate a complex narrative for both students and educators needing to transition to a 'new normal'.

Similar to other findings (Dunn & Kennedy, 2019) motivation and engagement issues abounded due to the lack of opportunities to engage in face-to-face socialization. While many students experienced multiple and multi-dimensional transitions (Jindal-Snape, 2016; Jindal-Snape & Hannah, 2014), including changes in their self-regulated learning, several students reported

lower motivation and self-efficacy due to the changed and restricted situation. This in part was also influenced by getting used to the online only nature of class delivery. The disorganized environment within online teams caused both frustration and stress for students, which can ultimately influence students' willingness to participate online with others. This has been found in a range of studies on COVID-19 (e.g., [Mihee et al., 2020](#); [Wildman et al., 2021](#); [Zhang et al., 2020](#)) and studies show the critical need for coping and 'netiquette' strategies to work together online ([Arbaugh, 2014](#); [Giesbers et al., 2014](#)).

For educators, the fast shift to online delivery was an extremely tense period that gradually became manageable over time. All educators in this study became comfortable with their new tasks and roles within the timespan of their online delivery. It is clear that both the students and educators were left predominantly to their own devices during this period, which is somewhat understandable due to the early stage of the pandemic. What occurred depended on the level of skill, motivation, confidence, time and technological knowhow of the educator and student. In most cases this meant the delivery was basic and was facilitated through the university's inhouse VLE, which was not designed for large-scale online learning and delivery.

Beyond the unique situation of the pandemic, if business schools and more widely in the HE domain, can control for some of the issues that led to the dissatisfaction during this time period, then online or hybrid modes of delivery could be equally successful. These findings might lean towards support for hybrid learning for this type of committed Master's level student cohort within business and other disciplines.

This work emphasises the need for an understanding that current technology affordance can deliver online and hybrid education at speed in a scaleable manner, but what is missing is the core and critical pedagogical underpinnings. Several studies have found that the ability of educators and students to develop a sense of a learning community is strongly dependent on the affordances of technologies used in synchronous online learning ([Brady et al., 2019](#); [Crawford et al., 2020](#); [Giesbers et al., 2014](#)).

In line with [Jindal-Snape \(2016\)](#), we found evidence that the student experiences during these transitions were not uniform. As for impact on learning, some students found this distributed learning allowed for the sharing of ideas and creation of new innovations without the traditional disruptions and time management issues. However, others found the online delivery challenging and unresponsive to their needs, or their preferred mode of study and learning.

Collectively both cohorts were kind, supportive and understanding of being part of a highly unusual and fear producing situation. In general, our study found that both educators and students were delighted to get to the end of the term. The students completed their programme and generally felt supported, and the educators felt that they had delivered. It is clear from our study that this rapid shift to online learning was not the creation of a shared space and shared learning environment using a range of educationally developed technologies, but rather a hastily formed method to continue their studies under a non-ideal situation.

In line with the emergent literature on COVID-19 in HE ([Lim et al., 2021](#); [Mihee et al., 2020](#); [Naffi, 2020](#); [Sözmen et al., 2021](#)), this paper contributes to the growing debate surrounding online teaching and how technology will be used in HE in the future (see also [Farr, 2021](#); [Ringberg et al., 2019](#)). Thus, our concern is what happens next and we posit a few questions. What is an acceptable view of online learning and how do we really grapple with the pedagogical and technological issues? How do we learn from this "experiment" and how can we redesign and re-develop the next iteration and stage of experimentation?

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

First, the context of the study is nested within one programme in an Irish university. While similar patterns have emerged in different universities globally, as such this study cannot be generalized. Second, our data are solely self-reported data from students and educators at two-time intervals using open- and semi-structured questionnaires and interviews. Beyond obvious self-reporting biases there are concerns that some interviewees might be more forthcoming in their lived experience than others.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This was an opportunistic MMT study which provided a rich environment to research the online versus face-to-face mode of delivery reflecting a massive global trail of forced online education. Our research showed that while the transition to online education worked, both educators and students had challenges and developed diverse coping strategies to continue educational provision and learning under very difficult circumstances. This again highlights the affordances of MMT approaches which are capable of identifying common and unique transitions amongst students and educators. Understanding that this was suboptimal, we suggest that we need to be alert to the dangers of the limited success and challenge ourselves to provide a true student/educator partnership should this ever happen again. This cannot happen without real understanding of the dangers of complacency and true, focused and committed institutional support.

IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

We are in a time of immense change within HE and with limited time to reflect and reimagine, we must step off the rollercoaster with the insights learnt and move forward optimally despite the ongoing pandemic. Technological disruption can lead to a time for transformation and renewal rather than a return to the familiar. We recommend that students and educators need to take a more pronounced degree of ownership in their educational experience.

What is needed within education is an open and critical discussion, searching for pedagogically based use of exemplary technology delivered to a high standard whether online only, hybrid delivery, or face to face delivery. Our concern is that a short-term solution will become embedded and accepted as online learning when what we witnessed was a face-to-face module design translated to a limited technology platform which performed well under the circumstances, but was not exemplary and without the range and depth of supports that both students and educators would need to play these new roles. We have the opportunity two years on to have a live trial and error experiment of working together on continuous development and this could be a period of great innovation and development rather than two more forgotten years in an educational desert.

DATA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Data has not been made accessible for this publication given the sensitive nature of the conversations with the participants during rather stressful times. Participants were not asked to give consent for their data to be made widely available.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The data were collected in one of the courses of EN, whereby the instruments were developed and implemented by EN, YH, and BR. YH conducted all interviews with students, and EN collected data from educators. All four authors worked on the conceptualisation, analysis of data, and write-up of the article.

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