

Working through stress and fatigue to reach a mindset change. What Higher Education teachers learnt from teaching and learning online in COVID-19 times.

Chris Campbell¹

Melissa Cain² and Kathryn Coleman³

¹ Griffith University

² Australian Catholic University

³ University of Melbourne

The higher education (HE) data tells a story of care with examples including pedagogical, technological, and personal. This is found in several pandemic pedagogy (Smith & Hornsby, 2020; Williamson, Eynon & Potter, 2020) stories across HE globally as the sector continues to reel within radical shifts in times of supercomplexity (Barnett, 2000). As lockdowns, remote and dual delivery and financial constraints (Croucher & Locke, 2020) continue, this data is significant as it archives 40 Australian participants who story the sudden shift to remote online learning challenges, as well as the ways they encounter technological and pedagogical obstacles. Their voices were heard through their completion of the [Teaching and Learning in COVID-19 Times](#) survey study. Their illuminating data revealed that concerns fell into two broad categories: technologies and relationships. Whilst educators found the sudden shift to remote online learning challenging and stressful for many reasons, the majority of our participants told us about their agility to remain flexible, adaptable, and resilient. Significantly, however, it was not a loss of content or changes to assessment design that prompted the greatest anxiety about online delivery, but teachers' concerns for their students: mental health issues, cultural and societal inequities, and challenges with communicating and connecting on a personal level. Our respondents indicated that they value a pedagogy of care and kindness (Denial, 2019) and that with experience, can be delivered effectively in the online space (Burke et al., 2021). The stories indicate Australian academics are creative, adaptable and resilient, finding innovation within their new teaching spaces. They can and have made teaching online 'work' to deliver quality educational outcomes and essential emotional support for their students during anxious times.

References

Barnett, R. (2000). *Realizing the university in an age of supercomplexity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Burke, K., Fanshawe, M., & Tualalelei, E. (2021). We can't always measure what matters: Revealing opportunities to enhance online student engagement through pedagogical care. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2021.1909712>

Croucher, G., & Locke, W. (2020). A post-coronavirus pandemic world: Some possible trends and their implications for Australian higher education. Discussion paper. Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education.

Education. phttps://melbourne-cshe.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3371941/a-post-coronavirus-world-for-higher-education_final.pdf.

Denial, C. (2019). A Pedagogy of Kindness. *Hybrid Pedagogy*. Blog. <https://hybridpedagogy.org/pedagogy-of-kindness/>

Smith, H. & Hornsby, D. (2020). *Towards a pandemic pedagogy: Power and politics in learning and teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.29280.64005>

Williamson, B., Eynon, R., & Potter, J. (2020) Pandemic politics, pedagogies and practices: digital technologies and distance education during the coronavirus emergency, *Learning, Media and Technology*, 45(2), 107-114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2020.1761641>