

Antistasis 10(3)
Education in the Time of Covid 19: Storying the Crisis

Foreword

When we created a call for papers for an issue devoted to *Education in the Time of Covid 19: Storying the Crisis*, we believed it was a safe assumption that our current pandemic would be the primary challenge facing us as educators and as part of the global community. Little did we suspect that political chaos and challenges to liberty, justice, equality and inclusion would, even temporarily, supplant Covid 19 in our collective consciousness. When the pandemic began in March, many of us believed that the abbreviated 2019-20 academic year would “take care” of the risks faced by our teachers, students and families, and that the Fall 2020 term would see a return to business as usual. As we now know, the virus has an agenda of its own, and we will be required to adapt to this reality for some time to come.

Antistasis exists to give voice to novel ideas and innovations regarding education, teaching and learning. While these are challenging days, it’s possible that, as educators, we may never have a better opportunity to apply our collective knowledge, wisdom and creativity to solving problems – those brought about by the pandemic and those that pre-existed. When we’re forced to enact sweeping change – when everything is “on the table” – we have a precious opportunity to rebuild teaching and learning environments that draw on what is valuable in our past, but also to adopt new, meaningful and learner-centric approaches. Our efforts may result not only in stop-gap measures taken during the pandemic, but in promising practices that evolve and become part of the “next normal”.

The twelve authors chosen for this special edition have generously shared their stories of resilience, accommodation and innovation as we all seek to cope and flourish during these unprecedented times. In the spirit of storytelling, we did not require submissions to follow the more structured style of traditional journal articles. Thus, the essays span the spectrum of informal reflections to more formally-structured articles. Brief descriptions of each article follow.

Mourning our Losses: Finding Response(-ability) Within COVID-19 by Adrian Downey, Mount Saint Vincent University, delves into the tension between *accountability* and *freedom* in Western models of education. During the current pandemic, systems have been challenged by the need to hasten ongoing adaptations to address modern realities, with the author stating that “education must be prepared to respond not with the doxas of the past, but with new possibilities for the future” (p. 2). Downey also makes a case for embracing the spirit of mourning, as well as the spirit of the affirmative ethics in forging progressive pathways toward the essential education systems of the future.

Carusi, Di Paolantonio, Hodgson and Ramaekers collaborate as academics from four international universities to explore *Doing Academia in “COVID-19 Times.”* These authors note that academic journals (including this one!) are publishing at breakneck speed in order to share Covid 19 perspectives and insights that are, clearly, still developing as the implications of the pandemic

become more and more apparent. Readers will appreciate the opportunity to “eavesdrop” on discussions among these colleagues as they tackle difficult questions about “*doing academia*” during a pandemic.

In *Adventures in Teaching at Home: “Mr. Knuckles” Becomes “Mr. Knucklehead”*, Trent Davis from St. Mary’s University (Calgary) shares an amusing and resonant story regarding the homeschooling of his 8-year-old twins during the shutdown. As an Associate Professor of Education with 20 years of experience working with school systems, Davis speaks to the essential difference between “schooling” and “education,” sharing insights and learnings from his daughters, and from his journey of adaptation and transition.

In *Becoming a Teacher in the Time of COVID-19: Reflections on Active Learning in an Isolated and Online Environment*, the University of New Brunswick’s Paula Kristmanson collaborates with four pre-service teachers to explore the notion of *active learning* and the implications of pandemic-necessitated adaptations. Kristmanson and her students also comment on the experiences, frustrations and successes of completing a Bachelor of Education program during an unexpected period of lockdown and the loss of face-to-face relationship-building opportunities. The article concludes with powerful reflections on lessons learned during the pandemic that will inform and enhance educational practice in the years to come.

In *Grocery Shopping in the Time of COVID-19: A Metaphor for the Development of Research*, doctoral student Christina Flemming shares her experiences adapting to grocery shopping protocols during a pandemic as a metaphor for the development of a research project. Flemming’s amusing forays into provisioning in the time of Covid 19 draw analogies to undertaking discovery – assuming, learning, adapting and accepting what emerges.

Confronting the Pandemic Ahead of the West at a Junior High School in Rural Japan by Michael Kuziw, University of Fukui, addresses lessons learned in the early days of the pandemic. This article discusses Kuziw’s journey to understand better the importance of remote learning aptitude, facilitating students’ capacity to “learn to learn”, and the flexibility of both administrators and teachers in adapting methods to meet student needs.

The United Kingdom’s Steven Lambert of the University of Chester offers a commentary on *Conflict and Trust during Covid-19*. The pandemic has altered the way we work, blurred the boundaries between work and home life, and altered in various ways our workplace relationships and the way we relate to one another. Lambert explores emerging challenges related to team leadership and supervision as educational institutions shift their expectations and teaching modalities.

In *Caring for the emotions of learners: Teaching practices to support student learning during and following the transition to alternative delivery*, the University of New Brunswick’s Charlene Shannon considers the importance of access, equity and emotion when restructuring courses for her Kinesiology students. Shannon’s careful attention to these components of learner well-being

resulted in opportunities for her students to see connections between course concepts and their personal experiences of coping with the challenges of daily life during the pandemic.

Novice teacher Daphne Tai shares the *Musings of a new teacher navigating a world unknown, learning in uncertainty, and trusting in the capability of children to do the same*. In her essay, Tai recognizes the learning opportunities inherent in open discussions with students about Covid 19 and changes to traditional classroom structures. Modelling mindfulness techniques and practicing a growth mindset led to opportunities for Tai to share in the emotions, hopes and dreams expressed by her students.

Nelson, Boechler, and Hubbard Murdoch of Saskatchewan Polytechnic reflect on *Researching at High-Speed: Recording the Story of the COVID-19 Experience*. From a patient-oriented researcher perspective, these authors share how they collaborated to explore lived experiences of people during the Covid-19 pandemic, including the experiences of seniors coping with extended social isolation. This team also provides readers with a glimpse of real-time experiences of frontline health and safety professionals during the pandemic.

In *Balancing Early Days of Motherhood and Academia During COVID-19: Creative Writing Communities of Practice*, Christine Arnold of Memorial University explores the negative impact of the pandemic on female academics, and the efforts being made by post-secondary institutions to mitigate risks to academic and scholarly progress. In addition, Arnold discusses unexpected benefits that have emerged, such as the strengthening of mentorship relationships and the value of cathartic writing endeavours.

Finally, Banack, Berger, Elliot, Hirsche, and Stone-Cole share their stories on *Finding Movement in Stillness: Storying Our Collective Journey of Advocating for Outdoor Early Childhood Programs in British Columbia During a Global Pandemic*. This piece describes the applicability and inherent lessons in practicing outdoor learning approaches through the lens of early childhood education in Coastal British Columbia.

We're pleased with the scope and breadth of the stories submitted for this special publication. We thank all of the authors who shared their experiences and learnings, and hope that readers enjoy connecting with the many emerging tales of education in the time of Covid 19. This special issue was in development during a crucial and sometimes chaotic time for educators, and we express our gratitude to contributing authors, and to this edition's guest co-editor, Dr. Elizabeth Sloat of the University of New Brunswick.

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