

# **Educational Transmogrification: From panicgogy to pedagogy of compassion**

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## **Abstract**

This qualitative case study set out to explore how the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the educational practice of academics, using this moment as a new perspective to illuminate broader, enduring issues such as how will approaches to university education that have emerged in response to the pandemic lead to lasting changes? What is the likely impact of these changes on the dominant forms of university education that we will see in the future? Findings reveal a transitioning from panicgogy to pedagogy of compassion. There appeared to be a shift to an interest on human suffering and social justice. An ethic of care and pedagogy of compassion seemed to foreground the practice of many academics, which moved education beyond curriculum and educational strategies to cultivate social capital and equal life chances for all. These insights hold valuable implications for changes on the dominant forms of university education in the future.

**Keywords:** Academics; Covid-19 Pandemic; Disorienting Dilemma; Panicgogy; Pedagogy of Compassion; Teaching practice

## **Introduction and background context**

Like every profession, teaching is having to reinvent itself without any notice. The impact of COVID-19 on education in South Africa has been significant. In the short-term, there has been a complete change to the day-to-day realities of academics. The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in a quintessential adaptive and transformative challenge, one for which there is no preconfigured user manual that can guide appropriate responses. The concept of traditional education, with face-to-face lessons in a classroom, has been abruptly displaced by remote online teaching and assessment practices. The uptake of ‘blended learning’ as a teaching – learning approach, by the majority of academics has generally been poor. Virtual learning environments such as Moodle and Blackboard were minimally used as an administrative tool

for managing grades or as a repository for subject matter content, and not for teaching and learning.

The sudden shift to online teaching in South Africa takes place within existing contexts, histories and institutional cultures. The pandemic hit an already unsettled sector, where physical closures of campuses in the form of ‘shutdowns’ due to the #FeesMustFall protests had been widespread. While the move to online teaching impacted the higher education sector, the impacts differed between rural and urban, old and new, higher advantaged institutions and higher disadvantaged institutions, and ‘research-intensive’, comprehensive’ and ‘universities of technology’. Lodged within this context, the pandemic has served to highlight the underbelly of South African society in general and its education system more specifically—it has yet again laid bare the gross inequalities that are the legacies of apartheid and the consequences of neoliberal capitalism (Le Grange 2020). Academics have to swiftly design responses, informed by contextual conditions, as the pandemic unfolds. Most academics are under immense pressure and had to adapt to unfamiliar technology, overnight. Teaching under such duress has proven to be extremely challenging.

However, despite disruptions to daily routines and the accompanying challenges, the Covid-19 pandemic has also offered us moments of hope and inspiration and has given us reason to pause, amidst the chaos, and take stock. The pandemic has provided an unprecedented opportunity to ask big questions about education: How will approaches to university education that have emerged in response to the pandemic lead to lasting changes? What is the likely impact of these changes on the dominant forms of university education that we will see in the future? Will these changes support the ability of university education to transform the life chances of all students or will they lead to the reinforcement of existing inequalities? How might we adapt our teaching practice to new challenges?

As we begin to figure out what a post-lockdown world might look like, the only thing that feels certain is we are facing a long period of disruption to formal education. We need to find new ways to combine online learning, classroom and remote teaching, mentoring, and non-formal learning experiences, to ensure that all young people, whatever their backgrounds, are able to flourish. This is not about making a choice or deciding what is best between online and face-to-face teaching. It is about learning something new and important that would inform our ‘task of renewing a common world’(Arendt 1954,193). Accordingly, this study asks how has the

Covid-19 pandemic influenced the teaching practice of academics? What can we learn from that moment, when the way academics and students were together, changed with online learning?

### **Exploring the terrain**

A review of the emerging literature on the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning reveals that the focus has been more on what insights the shock of Covid-19 might hold for educative learning (Soudien 2020); critiques of unequal education systems that have manifested deep inequalities during the pandemic along lines of race, gender, geography and the digital divide (Sayed and Singh 2020; Black, Spreen and Vally 2020); the institutional and curriculum impact of the pandemic (Allais and Marock 2020; Motala and Menon 2020) and intersection of issues around children's learning experiences during the lockdown (Isaacs 2020; Taylor 2020; Jansen 2020).

A review of the literature on the impact of COVID-19 on teachers and teaching in a pandemic, reveals that the research that has been undertaken is mainly about teachers in schools, rather than university teachers. Furthermore, of the limited research in this field, the focus has been on teachers' practices on how they deal with anxiety due to the COVID-19 outbreak (Talidong and Toquero, 2020); teacher well-being during COVID -19 (Collie and Martin 2020) and on how teachers confront challenges of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fataar 2020; Kraft and Simon 2020). Key findings from a study conducted by Hamilton et.al (2020) revealed that although teachers shifted quickly to distance learning and provided a variety of supports, they still required additional resources such as access to technology and devices for students, teacher training in remote instruction, strategies for motivating students, ways to address loss of students' hands-on learning opportunities, and strategies to support students' social and emotional learning. Johnson (2020) proposes that teaching during school shutdowns should be a team sport, where teachers work together in teams to improve their approaches and better meet their students' needs. In so doing, online platforms can be adapted to rely on a broader range of instructional strategies.

Of the few studies conducted on academics and teaching in a pandemic, findings reveal that classrooms still matter, and that technology is an extremely poor substitute for in-person learning (Walker et.al 2020; Zwaagstra 2020); discussions were not as lively as in a real classroom (Consentein 2020); academics struggled to maintain levels of mental resilience and

energy due to the increase in time pressure associated with teaching, assessment and administration (Walker et. al 2020). Kondo (2020) suggests a thinning of the curriculum that would allow students time and space to go deeper. She claims that almost every memorable or powerful learning experience came when students had the time and space to delve deeper. Kerr and Schwartz (2020) argue that for online instruction to be successful, academics require time and resources to build out a different kind of pedagogy than exists for in-person learning. Little, if any studies have looked at how the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced the teaching practice of academics.

### **Theoretical framings: Care theory and Pedagogy of Compassion**

A combination of Care theory (Noddings 1984, 1997), and Pedagogy of Compassion (Vandeyar and Swart 2019) provided the theoretical moorings of this paper. Care theory explores caring in relation to schooling and learning and provides a useful heuristic to examine the constitution of relationships in caring teaching. An ethic of care is a critical element to the ethics of social justice pedagogies in education (Oliver and Kirk 2015; Tinning 2016). Noddings (1984, 1997) argues that all meetings between student and teacher are relational, that is, they are situational and unique. Caring can thus be defined as a set of relational practices that foster “mutual recognition and realisation, growth, development, protection, empowerment, and human community, culture, and possibility” (Owen and Ennis 2005, 393). Caring occurs within relationships and ‘when teaching for social justice, teachers position themselves as needing to learn from their students, just as students must learn from their teachers’ (Clark 2019, 147). Because both caring and social justice are constituted by context, to act ‘as one-caring, then, is to act with special regard for the particular person in a concrete situation’ (Noddings 1984, 24).

The educational philosophy of care theory is based on the ‘caring meeting’ (Noddings 2002). The ‘caring meeting’ highlights the need to seek knowledge about and understanding of the ‘cared-for’ situation, which leads the nature of the interaction between the caretaker and the cared-for. In relation to education, the caretaker is the teacher, and the cared-for are the students. The ‘caring meeting’ comprises three elements (Noddings 1997) namely: (1) A cares for B; (2) A’s consciousness is characterised by attention and motivational displacement, which leads A to perform some act in accordance with (1); and (3) B recognises that A cares for B.

Central to care theory, is ‘caring-about’ or, perhaps a sense of justice, which must be seen as instrumental in establishing the conditions under which caring-for can flourish (Osknes and Steinsholt 2017). Although the preferred form of caring is cared-for, caring-about can help in establishing, maintaining, and enhancing it. Those who care about others in the justice sense must keep in mind that the objective is to ensure that caring actually occurs. “Caring-about is empty if it does not culminate in caring relations” (Noddings 2002, 23). Noddings (1997) claims that caring-about also contributes to the cultivation of social capital based on informal education that moves our understanding of education beyond curriculum and educational strategies.

Pedagogy of compassion comprises three tenets (Vandeyar and Swart 2019) namely, dismantling polarised thinking and questioning one’s ingrained belief system; Changing mindsets: compassionately engaging with diversity in educational spaces; and instilling hope and sustainable peace. Dismantling polarised thinking and questioning one’s ingrained belief system calls for the disruption of received knowledge. According to Jansen (2009), polite silences and hidden resentments should be exposed, indirect knowledge should be made explicit, and its potential and real harm discussed openly. Dialogue and engagement should be encouraged between ‘opposing parties’ so as to unsettle polarised thinking and challenge ingrained belief systems and in so doing, act as a catalyst for change (Vandeyar and Swart 2019).

Changing mindsets requires a proactive commitment to compassionately engage with diversity in educational spaces (Vandeyar and Swart 2019). According to Vandeyar and Swart (2019) this can be done by ‘fusing a set of different horizons’, namely those of ‘pedagogic dissonance’ (Jansen 2009); ‘ethic of discomfort’ (Foucault 1994; Boler and Zembylas 2003); critical democratic outlook and ‘knowledge of living experience’ (Freire 1992); and ‘educational spaces’ (Postma 2016). Educational spaces have to be opened up to the multitude of student voices. Compassionately responding to students entails not only warmth and care, but also a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another individual, who may be stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering, by taking action.

‘A post-conflict pedagogy is founded on hope’ (Jansen 2009). Freire (1993, 90) claims that hope is "an experience of the entire body, involving emotions, desires, dreams, thought processes, and intuition". Hence, an educator's role is "not only to instil hope, but rather evoke it and provide it with guidance"(Webb 2010, 327). A post-conflict pedagogy “is critical and

recognizes the power and the pain at play in school and society and their effects on young people, and then asks, ‘how things could be better’” (Jansen 2009, 154). ‘The liberation of individuals acquires profound meaning only when the transformation of society is achieved’ (Freire 1992, 85), which holds the promise for sustainable peace (Vandeyar and Swart 2019).

### **Research Strategy**

The meta-theoretical paradigm utilised in this study was social constructivism (Vygotsky 1978). Social constructivism posits that individuals are active participants in the creation of their own knowledge (Schreiber and Valle 2013). Social constructivism highlights the importance of culture and context in understanding happenings in the society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Creswell 2009; Schreiber and Valle 2013). In this study academics reflected on how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced their teaching practice. The methodological paradigm was qualitative inquiry with a particular lens of looking for ‘goodness’ (Lawrence-Lightfoot 1983, 10) and portraying success and positivity. The research design was a bounded case study approach. It links to constructivism and its assertion that the relevance of truth is dependent on the individual's perspective. Flyvberg (2004) emphasises the 'proximity to reality" that the case study necessitates. This is important for the research topic in allowing the case study to focus on the real-life situation of academics.

The research site was a large South African contact university. Participants of this study comprised academics who taught a module to more than 1500 students. The rationale for the choice of these participants was that they had to move to a fully online teaching mode. Some academics who had a small number of students could opt for the hybrid module on condition that they observed all Covid protocols. Key participants situated within the Faculty of Education were identified and invited to submit a 3-4 pager reflexive essay on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their teaching practice. A total of 19 participants positively responded to this invitation, but ultimately only 15 responses were submitted to the online repository. Data collection comprised of a reflexive essay of approximately 3-4 pages in length that was submitted to an online central repository. The aim was to capture ‘real time’ teaching experiences of academics as the pandemic unfolded. Data was analysed utilising the content analysis method. The qualitative data, namely reflections was subjected to an iterative, reflexive and interactive open coding process that yielded categories and emergent themes (Elo and Kyngas 2008). The codes generated from the data were continuously modified by the

researcher's treatment of the data 'to accommodate new data and new insights about the data' (Sandelowski 2000, 338).

To ensure research rigour the following quality measures were observed namely, credibility, dependability, confirmability, authenticity and transferability. Credibility of the research findings included the purposeful sampling of the research participants, the sampling of the research site, and the application of appropriate data-gathering strategies (Butler-Kisber 2010). Dependability was achieved through a process known as auditing. The audit trail procedure can also be valuable when verifying confirmability (Seale 2002). The authenticity of this study rests in the 'faithful reconstruction of the participant's multiple perceptions' (McMillan and Schumacher 2001, 415). Transferability refers to the scope and the restrictions to which findings of this research can be applied.

Ethical approval for this study was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education (Ethics number: EDU066/20). The ethics application was subjected to a rigorous blind peer review process (Campbell 2019). The research site and participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

### **Findings: Transitioning from Panicgogy to Pedagogy of Compassion**

The term 'Panicgogy' emerged in response to the global haste to move teaching and learning from face-to-face to remote online instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic. "Morris and other colleagues have a tongue-in-cheek name for what they're doing right now: 'Panic-gogy' (for panic + pedagogy)"(Baker 2020). Panicgogy can be useful as a shorthand term, but it should be recognised as such with only second-hand mentions in news media. Pedagogy is commonly understood as the method and practice of teaching, while panic is a sudden uncontrollable fear or anxiety (Baker 2020). The term 'Panicgogy' also implies understanding students' practicalities of physical readiness and/or limitations during a crisis (Kamenetz 2020). In the face of this pandemic academics were expected to swiftly move to online instruction in delivering the curriculum, notwithstanding the overwhelming information overload context within which they operated,

During March this year I gained so much information on the mentioned virus - the causes and precautions, that I soon experienced an information overload and information anxiety set in. This happened with information received at an institutional level, governmental level, personal level as well as the accompanying media coverage.

Information overload served to fuel further panic in academics and heightened their feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. A form of paralysis seemed to envelop many academics,

These uncertain times caused a level of uncertainty and stress, as we were all unsure of the duration of the lockdown. Feelings of anticipation in dealing with the unknown, seemed to persist.

Anxiety set in...I was overwhelmed.

The impact on formal education is that we are at a standstill. A standstill that is characterized sometimes by a form of paralysis and not wanting to do anything because whatever you do the effects will be uneven and unequal. And sometimes we are moved by a desire to act, knowing that doing nothing is far worse than doing something- even if its unequal, But I also know that I will have moments of despair and paralysis preventing me from being forward looking and moving forward.

These feelings of panic filtered into their delivery of the curriculum, which seamlessly translated into ‘Panicgogy’. Academics were concerned about how they were they going deliver the curriculum, their level of preparedness for online teaching, modes of interaction, changing assessment practices, changing timelines and above all technology and internet access of their students.

I was so overwhelmed with anxiety, how is this going to work? At first, I was clutching at straws, trying to figure out what I could possibly do, knowing that some of my students do not have access to laptops and internet. The digital divide was only further highlighted by this pandemic.

My main concern was to plan and present online teaching that would be feasible and sustainable, to a large number of students at such short notice. I was in a frenzied hurry to do something. I am not so cued up with technology. How is this going to work? Where do I begin?

We were quarantined so quickly that we did not have time to foresee all the ICT issues that would emerge and impact on our curriculum delivery.

Structuring a lesson to be online with podcasts and slides was very impersonal and felt cold... it was just talking to yourself and listening to yourself. In this impersonal space, I panicked. I kept wondering are my students there. Are they listening? Is this going to work?

Some academics expressed that panic also took the form invasion of personal space and prioritizing duties.

I found it difficult to balance work and home duties because I struggled to make a decision about what to prioritize. WhatsApp work groups became invasive as people chose to use the group to post videos and memes and shirk their responsibilities. I experienced a lot of tension.

Like so many others, I believed that working from home would be seamless. This is far from the truth. I found that I had to be available 24/7 to my students. The boundaries between my personal and professional life became blurred, and I found that I was struggling with both.

Over the past few months, it feels as if I have lived in a daze – always playing catch up.

Others spoke about how panic played out in terms of adapting to change.

One of the key roles of an educator is to adapt to change but the pandemic caused sudden change on an extreme level. It removed us from our comfort zones and forced us to adapt to change.

The pandemic removed me from my office environment. This was not normal, as now I was at home trying to hastily adapt to an online mode of teaching. I had to change almost overnight. This caused immense stress and an increase in workload.

However, it seemed apparent that once academics had overcome the initial phase of panic and embraced the ‘new normal of curriculum delivery’, Panicgogy soon became displaced by a Pedagogy of Compassion. Now, it was much more about the humane element than about rules, regulations and policy guidelines of curriculum delivery. Academics seemed to be acknowledging students' humanity before their academic achievements.

It's not just reflecting on the what, why and how of ones' teaching but also the who is being taught during these extraordinary times of change.

I have learnt that acknowledging a student's humanity before their academic goals, accomplishments or failures is key to the success of online learning. Not all challenges that students or lecturers face come with a medical certificate or affidavit. The only way I felt that was constructive in ensuring that students stay on track was to ensure that they felt worth more than submissions and marks.

Many academics expressed that online education is a minority experience. They were acutely aware of the fact that the majority of their students were bereft of computers for learning and data for connectivity. Such students were positioned in spaces of intense squalor that made physical distancing unlikely. These students' concerns were about basic needs and survival. Institutional support mechanisms took the form of a ‘no student left behind’ policy “no student was left behind due to their disadvantaged situations, for example, poverty”. The university instituted innovative solutions to ensure that no student should suffer as a result of changes imposed by the pandemic and restrictions on teaching, learning and access to materials. The

senior management of university launched a solidarity fund to assist students who did not have access to internet-enabled devices and dispatched over 1 500 devices on loan to students around the country. Furthermore, initiatives such as telephonic tutoring and academic advising services were introduced to assist students who have been unable to continue with their studies online due to connectivity issues.

These initiatives heightened awareness of existing unequal conditions. Such conditions existed in the past but seemed to be ignored by many academics. However, it would seem that the pandemic propelled a sense of compassion and care in academics, which began to inform their pedagogy.

How can we expect our students to learn while many of them don't have basic needs such as food, water and electricity?

I worry about the thousands of students that do not have access to support. Our results I fear would be negatively impacted by this.

We need to take up the role of supporting students more and paying attention to students' unique situations

We need to be generous, forgiving, patient and compassionate with each other.

Online pedagogy of academics seemed to become informed and much more sensitized to addressing inequalities among their students. Issues of support and assistance seemed to filter into their delivery of the curriculum. Some academics claimed that in planning their lessons they thought about things that they otherwise may not have, during face-to-face interactions with students. There seemed to be an awakening to the stark reality of the 'lived experiences' of their students,

In the past, I would set due dates for my assessments and religiously stick to those due dates, demanding a doctor's letter etc. Now I was thinking about how our assessment tasks could be tailored to provide a second attempt for those who open the task and due to connectivity issues fail to complete or the system shuts. I never thought about this in the past.

I found myself being much more sensitive to student inequalities so that as far as possible no student was left behind due to their disadvantage situations, for example, poverty.

I began taking a motivational tone in my communication with students, celebrating each milestone like the completion of a week's activity or a theme.

I became much calmer in my approach to assist students over email, even though it was time consuming and I had to repeat myself over and over, since many students had the same query.

### **Discussion and analysis**

The unexpected, unplanned, and sudden shift to online learning caused by COVID-19 has certainly been an experience that has led to cognitive dissonance as assumptions about education have been challenged and stark inequities in our system, along lines of race, gender, geography and the digital divide have been exacerbated. Similar to findings in the literature academics in this study experienced increased levels of anxiety (Talidong and Toquero 2020) due to unpreparedness and unfamiliarity of online teaching platforms. Academics also struggled to maintain levels of mental resilience and energy due to increasing time pressure associated with online teaching, assessment and administration (Walker et. al 2020). They seemed to experience what Mezirow (1996) terms a ‘disorienting dilemma’. The impact on academic staff in terms of workload and stress and possible longer term effects of this - a shift from research activity to teaching activity was a common response in order to be able to shift teaching wholly online.

Although pastoral support is one of the roles of an academic, the lingering historical legacy of apartheid still informs the institutional and academic culture of this university. Some academics seemed to be of the view that the personal conditions and circumstances of students, especially Black disadvantaged students were not ‘their’ problem. They thus tended to adopt a clinical approach and claimed that they treated all their students ‘the same’. But the question remains, the same from whose racial or cultural lens? At a former historical white Afrikaans-speaking university, where the majority of academics are still white, this poses a problem to many Black students, who feel that after twenty-six years of democracy in South Africa they are still victims of Eurocentrism. Hence, the #FeesMustFall protest of 2016. Although this protest was in some way a wake-up call to academics to propel educational change; attitudes, beliefs and values which inform practice did not really change. Hence, the change in attitudes and beliefs of academics, brought about by the pandemic (as evident in this study) is extremely significant given the South African context.

An ethic of care seemed to foreground the practice of many academics, which prompted social justice pedagogies in education. Many academics revealed lessons that they had learnt such as that ‘acknowledging a student’s humanity before their academic goals,

accomplishments or failures is key to their students' success" and "to ensure that students felt that they are worth more than submissions and marks".

The 'new normal' context witnessed academics 'caring for' and 'caring about' their students' situation (Noddings 1984). The 'caring meeting' (Noddings 2002) between academics and students revealed academics "worrying about the thousands of students that do not have access to support" and pondering on how students are "expected to learn while many of them don't have basic needs such as food, water and electricity". Pre-Covid-19 many academics seemed to only place emphasis on the academic aspect of students' lives and "never really thought about such issues". Now such concerns seemed to be of paramount importance for academics and highlighted their need to seek knowledge about and understanding of their students situation, which informed the nature of their interactions with students.

By caring about their students, academics attempted to establish the conditions under which caring-for their students could flourish (Osknes and Steinsholt 2017). They began thinking "about how our [their] assessment tasks could be tailored to provide a second attempt for those who fail to complete the task, due to connectivity issues or system shutdowns. I never thought about this in the past". Creating a context where students could flourish witnessed academics "take up the role of supporting students more and paying attention to students' unique situations".

In so doing, 'caring-about' culminated in caring relations (Noddings 2002, 23). Academics claimed that they became "much calmer in their approach" and adopted a "motivational tone in their communication with students". The relational practices of many academics seemed to promote "mutual recognition and realisation, growth, development, protection, empowerment, and a human community of possibilities" (Owen and Ennis 2005, 393). Their teaching seemed to be driven by a pedagogy of compassion.

Lodged securely within a former Afrikaans-speaking university, many academics were content to remain in their comfort zones by holding onto their 'received knowledge'. It would seem that the pandemic has stretched the inequality fault-lines in the South African education system to breakpoint levels, leading very much to forms of social triage. However, teaching

online within the Covid context provided the stimulus to dismantle the polarised thinking of some academics. “It removed us from our comfort zones and forced us to adapt to change”. They seemed to question their ingrained belief system, to be more open to the notion of multiple truths and to act as a catalyst for change, as evident from the statement “I found myself being much more sensitive to student inequalities”.

There also seemed to be evidence of a change in mindsets of some academics as they proactively set out to compassionately engage with diversity in educational spaces as evident from, “we need to be generous, forgiving, patient and compassionate with each other” and “not all challenges that students face come with a medical certificate or affidavits”. Some academics experienced pedagogic dissonance (Jansen 2009, 154) and an ethic of discomfort (Zembylas 2010) and began to question ‘sure knowledge’ (Jansen 2009). The proactive and transformative potential of discomfort began the process of erosion of sure knowledge. Driven by a common humanity some academics began to critique their deeply held assumptions about themselves and others by positioning themselves as witnesses to social injustices and structurally-limiting practices such that they acted as ambiguous rather than dualistic subjects (e.g. ‘us’ and ‘them’). (Boler and Zembylas 2003) “It’s not just reflecting on the what, why and how of ones’ teaching but also the who is being taught during these extraordinary times of change”.

‘Caring for’ and ‘caring about’ their students seemed to instil a sense of hope. Academics not only began to empathise with the situation in which their students found themselves but began to compassionately respond by taking action and attempting to make things better. In the past academics demanded that students strictly adhere to assessment due dates, failing which they had to produce a doctor’s letter. Now they were reflecting on “how [their] assessment tasks could be tailored to provide a second attempt due to connectivity issues” and “how they could take up the role of supporting students more”. In caring about their students in this context, academics shifted understandings of education beyond curriculum and educational strategies to cultivate social capital.

## **Conclusion**

Much has been said and written about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that its impact has been harsh, and we have yet to understand its long-lasting effects. It has shifted us into unprecedented modes of uncertainty and insecurity and has forced us to take stock of a collective vulnerability. The common description assigned to the virus is

that of a crisis, which is apt in more ways that we might realize. One of the more neglected aspects of this description is that a crisis, as Arendt (1954) has told us, forces us to remove our facades and move aside our biases,

The opportunity provided by the very fact of crisis—which tears away façades and obliterates prejudices—[is] to explore and inquire into whatever has been laid bare of the essence of the matter.... A crisis forces us back to the questions themselves and requires from us either new or old answers, but in any case direct judgments. A crisis becomes a disaster only when we respond to it with preformed judgments, that is, with prejudices (Arendt 1954, 174).

Approaches to university education that have emerged in response to the pandemic does have the potential to lead to lasting changes. First, these approaches seem to be informed by an ethic of care, compassion and social justice pedagogies that moves education beyond curriculum and educational strategies to cultivate social capital and equal life chances for all. Second, the move to mainly online teaching during the pandemic and its success could become the norm of university education in the future.

The likely impact of these changes on dominant forms of university education that we will see in the future is twofold. First, academics may pay more attention to students' unique situations in an attempt to proactively redress the imbalances of the past by being more inclusive in their approach and to create educational spaces where all can feel a sense of belonging. Pedagogy of compassion advocates for multiple truths and ways of knowing. Second, the dominant face-to-face (on-ground) mode of curriculum delivery may be replaced by a dominant online mode.

These changes will definitely support the ability of university education to transform the life chances of all students as there appears to be a shift to an interest on human suffering and social justice - a shift that I can think has been hugely influenced by our global context. I believe that the crisis presents us with a renewed opportunity to focus our teaching on that which matters most - that unless education leads to the development of people, it cannot be described as an education.

If we're looking at a pedagogy that is going to bridge that gap between the on-ground and the online in the midst of a pandemic, it really has to come back to the human side of things (Baker 2020, 1).

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