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"This Wasn't Pedagogy, It Was Panicgogy": Perspectives of the Challenges Faced by Students and Instructors during the Emergency Transition to Remote Learning Due to COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explores the impact of the emergency transition to remote education (ETRE) during the COVID-19 pandemic on instructors and students through the lens of self-determination theory (SDT). A modified thematic analysis of narratives from a cross-sectional survey revealed eight themes: Sense of loss/grief, Role conflict, Helplessness, I had no choice, This felt impossible, Lost connections, Am I safe, and They don't care about me. Sub-themes expound on their associated themes. Participant narratives shared feelings of trauma and crisis as they related experiences of higher education during the mandated global shutdown. The stories of these experiences are indicative of loss of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, tenets of self-determination. These experiences, for the majority of students, led to a loss of motivation to learn, participate, or produce meaningful work. For most instructors, the experiences led to a similar lassitude and frustration. The authors conclude that the experience of the ETRE negatively impacted both teaching and learning in the higher education setting. Recommendations include further development in higher education to support both instructors' and students' self-determination during catastrophic change.

Introduction

Despite the recognized value of online education to institutions of higher education, instructors, and students, no one was prepared for the emergency transition to remote education (ETRE) following a national shutdown in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic (Wotto 2020, p. 263). A United States (US) national study conducted between April 6 and April 19, 2020 confirms this statement with data collected from over 600 instructors at more than 800 institutes of higher education (Ralph 2020). According to the study findings, by Ralph (2020), 97% of the instructors polled had no online teaching experience, and 56% were using teaching methods they had never used before. Additionally, 48% of the participants stated that they reduced the assignment load for students while 32% stated that their expectations of work quality from students was lowered after the transition (Ralph 2020).

Significant disruption occurred as instructors and students were forced to deviate from the traditional face to face (F2F) format to remote instruction, impacting teaching and learning in unprecedented ways. As institutions continue to navigate the changes that have occurred since the COVID-19 global pandemic began, it is critical to investigate the experience from both the instructor and student perspectives. In the state of Georgia, the response to the pandemic involved input from a variety of administrative

entities, including the University System of Georgia (USG), the Georgia Governor's Office, the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). In March 2020, all USG institutions were instructed to "move to online instruction for all courses for the remainder of the semester" (University System of Georgia 2020, para. 1). While intended as a supportive response to the CDC's calls for social distancing to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus, the emergency transition to remote teaching and learning had an enormous impact on every facet of life for those individuals working and living on college campuses in Georgia.

To fully assess the impact of this rapid and dramatic shift on students and instructor's teaching and learning practices, key stakeholders in Centers for Teaching and Learning across the state were invited to join a research consortium for the purpose of studying the impact of the emergency transition to teaching and learning in Georgia. Led by the Associate Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at a large USG institution, the consortium evolved to consist of 14 regularly participating members from five USG institutions and the single Technical College. The current study chronicles the written responses of instructors and students concerning their experiences in the emergency transition to all-remote teaching and learning during the Spring semester of 2020.

Background

In order to understand this study in its proper context, it is important to differentiate between *ETRE* and *online education*. The ETRE is described as the quickly improvised solutions for teaching that instructors and institutions created in response to the pandemic (Kluge, 2020, private communication). Online education, on the other hand, has no universally accepted definition. From a literature review spanning 1988 to 2018, Singh and Thurman (2019) discovered 47 different definitions of online education with 18 synonymous terms. From these findings, their synthesized definition of online education is education that is delivered, either synchronously or asynchronously, through the use of the internet irrespective of a students' physical or virtual co-location.

Not only is there no consensus on the true definition of online education but there is also confusion on what constitutes its quality (Morris 2018). Hodges et al. (2020) found that "online learning carries a stigma of being lower quality than F2F learning,

despite research showing otherwise" (para. 4). Due to existing negative perspectives of online learning, it is essential to avoid equating the typical online learning environment with the unique experience of ETRE (Baroud and Dharamshi 2020; Gunter and Reeves 2017; Lederman 2018; Ruth 2018; Wingo, Ivankova, and Moss 2017). Additionally, the application of technology in education has been found to require a pedagogical shift in knowledge, skills, and attitudes plus an understanding of the challenges, time, and energy necessary to create effective online courses (Baroud and Dharamshi 2020; Kenny and Fluck 2017). This kind of preparation was not an option during the ETRE. For instance, Freeman (2015) has found that an effective online course requires at least "70 hours" of preparation (p. 3). Due to variations across Georgia's higher education academic calendars, the length of time that each campus had to prepare for the required transition from F2F to all-remote learning was woefully inadequate ranging from four to 13 days (University System of Georgia 2020).

Further, while the impact of ETRE on teaching and learning can inform future decision-making and prioritization in institutional planning, assessment, and instructor development, the perspectives of instructor and students on ETRE should not be confused with instructor and student perspectives on online learning. "Well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster" (Hodges et al. 2020, para. 1). In addition to a complete lack of student and instructor preparation for this shift, the rapidity of the transition led to a loss of basic psychological needs and an increase in barriers for teaching and learning. Similarly, along with this perceived lower quality of educational offering, loss of basic needs attainment, and an increase in the barriers to effective teaching and learning, the literature reports higher levels of reported mental health concerns that were more pronounced in student populations (Kecojevic et al. 2020; Al-Rabiaah et al. 2020). With these factors in mind, this study was conducted using the Self Determination Theory as a framework.

Theoretical framework

Grounded in their own experiences of the transition, the researchers sought to grasp the depth and breadth of the impact of the ETRE experience from their peers and students. Recognizing the changes in motivation evident across all of their experiences, the researchers relied on the tenets of self-determination theory (SDT) to better understand the experiences of students and

instructors through the experience of the ETRE (Ryan and Deci 2000). The theoretical framework for SDT manifested itself in the creation of the survey items and was anticipated, yet bracketed by the researchers, during analysis. The process of bracketing, as described by Moustakas (1994), is a "disciplined and systematic effort" on the part of the researcher to maintain an "open, receptive, and naïve posture" when exposed to the research data (p. 22). Nelms (2015) states that this intentionality facilitates objectivity. Self-determination theory posits that the motivation to engage in activities is dependent on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs and the development of identity as a learner over time. Within the education domain, the basic psychological needs of both instructors and students include autonomy (a sense of choice), competence (a sense of ability to complete activities successfully), and relatedness (a sense of belonging) (Jang, Reeve, and Deci 2010). When these needs are satisfied, individuals tend to endorse more autonomous forms of motivation, including valuing an activity or pursuing it out of pure enjoyment. Conversely, when these needs are thwarted, as identified by the instructors creating this study, individuals tend to endorse more controlled forms of motivation, which include participating in an activity for an external reward, out of guilt, or to avoid disappointing someone. The type and level of motivation endorsed can have lasting effects on engagement in activities as well as overall well-being.

In typical teaching situations, instructors' abilities to provide proper support of students' basic psychological needs can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the pressure from administration and students alike (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, and Legault 2002). Yasué, Jeno, and Langdon (2019) support this finding and also found that instructors' own basic need satisfaction is likely to influence their motivation to teach. Further, pressures experienced by instructors can impact individual mentoring of students in addition to classroom teaching. Although there are no direct links currently established between a crisis event such as the ETRE to the thwarting of basic needs, the presence of additional acute stressors could exacerbate the lack of need satisfaction experienced by instructors and students. Weinstein and Ryan (2011) findings suggest that motivation is impacted by stress and implicates the relationship between motivation and stress as dependent on needs attainment. Considering the factors of crisis, stress, and thwarted psychological needs, the researchers selected SDT as the guiding framework for this study.

Additionally, Strong (1990), author of the term *epidemic psychology*, states that epidemics create their own emotional vortex of fear and panic and are inherently stressful. It is, therefore, logical to assume that pandemics have this same capability (p. 249). Initial findings indicate that the stress and fears associated with the pandemic triggered trauma and grief responses for instructor and students (Akat and Karataş 2020; Arpaci, Karataş, and Baloğlu 2020; ASPA 2021; Imad 2020). Other literature on the psychological response to the experience of the COVID pandemic has identified not only anger, sadness, and bitterness but also blame or judgment of others (Al-Rabiaah et al. 2020; Gover, Harper, and Langton 2020; Shaw 2020). Some of the predicted stressors of the emergency transition include loss of work-life balance; displacement from campus accommodation and resources; increased responsibilities alongside teaching and learning such as child-care, increased work hours, or both; and stress and anxiety resulting from the uncertainty of this new normal.

Further, self-determination theory posits that social support networks influence identity development and feelings of belonging. College students, who are typically developing new and complex social networks as young adults, are likely experiencing ongoing maturation in both of these areas. Hence, students who are struggling to develop their identity as defined by SDT and satisfy the factor of relatedness may find it more difficult to cope and process the trauma and grief associated with the rapid shifts away from normality such as those caused by the ETRE (Apostol and Netedu 2020; Lumb, Beaudry, and Blanchard 2017).

Due to the identified connection of the COVID experience to trauma, a trauma-informed approach was added to the theoretical framework of SDT for this study (United States Department of Health and Human Services 2014). Harrison, Burke, and Clarke (2020) emphasize that a trauma-informed approach in the university setting is the awareness of the existence of trauma, knowledge of its signs and symptoms, and fully integrated policies to ensure the physical, emotional, and psychic well-being of university students. The precedent for this combination of theories exists in research of the science of teaching and learning across disciplines and inclusive of multiple types of trauma (Davidson 2020). Therefore, this research examined first whether the factors of autonomy, competence, and relatedness were apparent and second, if trauma had occurred.

Purpose statement

Considering the circumstances of the unplanned emergency transition from traditional, F2F learning to emergency remote teaching across all content areas and levels, the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of instructors and students during the ETRE. For this purpose the researchers adopted Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Trauma-Informed Pedagogy (TIP) as guiding frameworks for this study, leading to two primary research questions: (a) What were the instructors' perceptions on the emergency transition to online teaching and learning?, and (b) what were the students' perceptions on the emergency transition to online teaching and learning?

Materials and methods

Setting

The setting for this study was a state system of colleges and universities in the southeastern United States. Descriptions of the six participating institutions ranged from three medium-sized, primarily nonresidential colleges with varying 2020 Spring semester enrollment to a large, residential institution with doctoral programs and high research activity with an enrollment of 50,006 (Board of Regents, University System of Georgia 2020). Two other high-research activity, nonresidential institutions participated in the study.

Participant eligibility and protections

To be eligible, participants had to have been teaching as an instructor or registered as a student in at least one F2F class which then transitioned to completely online during the spring 2020 semester. The recruitment and survey distribution process were determined within each institution and approved via each Institutional Review Board (IRB). While this process varied somewhat across the USG, the primary distribution method was via email invitation to instructors and students. Participant protections were ensured via the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process at each institution. The surveys opened with an Informed Consent Document that included participation eligibility criteria, the purpose of the study, an estimation of time needed to complete the survey, potential for harm, and contact information for questions or concerns. Participants were informed that their responses were anonymous as no personal identifiers or IP addresses were collected, and they were welcomed to leave the study at any time by exiting the survey platform. Consent was obtained by selecting a response option indicating willingness to continue to the actual survey. When consent was denied, the participant selected a response option that closed the consent and exited the survey platform.

Participants

Of the study participants, 737 instructors and 608 students included free-text responses to the items selected for qualitative analysis. Age ranges for the instructors and students are provided in Figures 1 and 2, respectively with additional demographic information in Tables 1 and 2.

Procedure

Item selection for qualitative analysis

Data for the current study were collected as part of a larger research project. This project included the development and distribution of a survey specific to the COVID-19 situation within the USG, which was validated by external reviewers. While both surveys contained empirical data, there were also items that included an additional option for free text response. The survey for instructors contained 18 free text response items. Of these 18 items, three were selected for qualitative analysis based on the question and the emphasis of the responses on the human experience of the transition. The selected items for qualitative analysis included the areas of (1) Challenges and Successes, (2) General Comments, and (3) What Would You Do Differently? Additional items on the instructor survey collected information on instructor expertise in online learning targeting the experience and formal knowledge of the participants. These items requested a list of certifications held and instructional methods used in current teaching. The student survey contained 10 items which allowed for a free text response. Of these 10 items, only one, Challenges, was included in this study. The excluded text response items were reviewed for narratives related to the impact of the ETRE experience and the few identified texts were coded along with the Challenges item.

Analysis

The analysis process for this project was an examination of the free-text responses by participants using an adaptation of thematic coding (Abraham et al. 2020). Assumptions identified in this method include
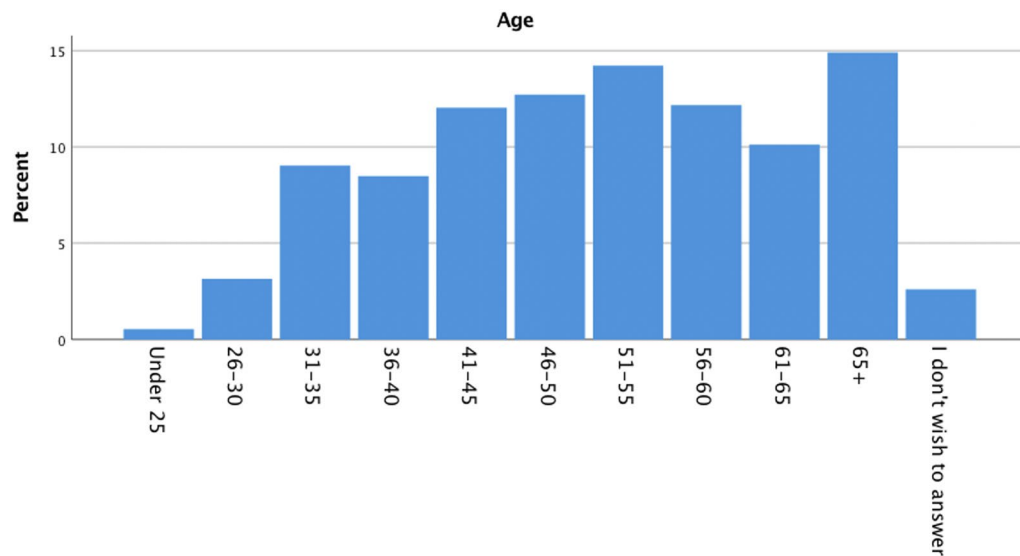
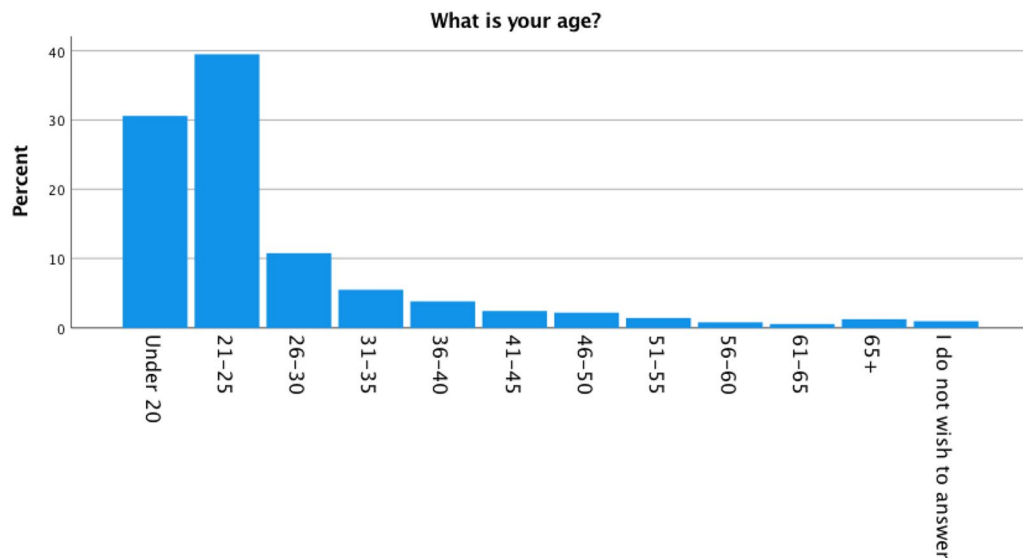**Figure 1.** Demographics: Instructor - Age.

Figure 2. Demographics: Student Age.

the attribution of reality to individual's perspectives and the recognition of this reality as valuable and contributory to an understanding of the impact of the emergency transition to remote teaching and learning. After isolating questions and responses that were explanatory, descriptive, or expressive, the free text responses were uploaded into the NVivo version 27 software program for management and to create an audit trail to share among the five qualitative researchers. Initial review of the data was assigned to two two-person teams of researchers, one team for the student data and one team for the instructor data. The fifth analyst was removed from engagement with the data at this point to facilitate the bracketing

process and preserve their objectivity for validation of the eventual decision tree and resulting coding scheme.

Each two-person team reviewed the data individually and created codes which were then shared, compared and discussed to reach consensus for their dataset. The teams then switched data sets and reviewed the dataset coding of the other team. After initial coding was completed, the primary analyst created a coding scheme and decision tree as discussed by Karamshuk et al. (2017) and used these items to review the individual free text responses from both surveys. The coding scheme and decision tree were reviewed by team members using a standardized

Table 1 Instructor demographic information from qualitative dataset.

Gender	Male	306
	Female	404
	Transgender	1
	Non-Binary/Genderfluid/Genderqueer	4
	Not sure	1
	Do not wish to answer	19
Age	Under 25	4
	26-30	23
	31-35	66
	36-40	62
	41-45	88
	46-50	93
	51-55	104
	56-60	89
	61-65	74
	65+	109
	I do not wish to answer	19
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	27/3.7
	Asian	39/5.3
	Black or African American	64/8.7
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1/.14
	White, non-Hispanic	548/74.4
	I do not wish to answer	37/5.0
	Other	14/2.0
Online Teaching Expertise	How many years ago did you teach a fully online course?	Never - this is the first time (n = 485)
	How many times have you taught a fully online course prior to Spring 2020?	Never (n = 489)

Instructor Demographics (n = 737).

Table 2 Student demographic information from qualitative dataset.

Gender	Male	137/22.5%
	Female	440/72.4
	Transgender	6/1%
	Non-binary/Genderfluid/Genderqueer	11/1.8%
	Not sure	1/0.1%
	I do not wish to answer	13/2.1%
Age	Under 20	138
	21 - 25	229
	26 - 30	78
	31 - 35	38
	36 - 40	30
	41 - 45	20
	46 - 50	19
	51 - 55	16
	56 - 60	9
	61 - 65	5
	65+	19
	I do not wish to answer	12
Ethnicity	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	55
	American Indian or Alaska Native	2
	Asian	47
	Black or African American	166
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1
	White, non-Hispanic	279
	I do not wish to answer	34
	Other	29

Student Demographics (n = 608).

interval inspection method to confirm the coding scheme for accuracy and applicability. The final step in analysis was performed by the fifth researcher using thematic coding to verify the themes. Using these multiple layers of analysis provided a strategy that utilized each team member's expertise in a flexible format since all researchers were also concurrently teaching remote and online courses during the state-wide shelter-in-place. These strategies also improved rigor because they maximized exposure to the large dataset and confirmatory consensus of the identified codes and eventual themes.

Results

The results of this study yielded the themes of Sense of loss and grief, Role conflict, Helplessness, I had no choice, This felt impossible, Lost connections, Am I safe?, and They don't care about me. The theme of Role conflict included a sub-theme of Unmet role

expectations as well as the sub-theme of I don't have what I need identified in the theme, I had no choice. Throughout the data, there were similarities across instructors and student responses. The eight themes and associated sub-themes all fall into what one instructor termed as "panicgogy" in that both student and instructors were asked to make a major shift in the way they learn and teach. This shift was unexpected with little time to prepare thus creating an environment of crisis and eventual trauma. The root term most commonly associated with the experience of the ETRE was "stress" while the second most common term was "challenging." The themes generated by these similarities echoed the concepts of collective trauma and crisis while unveiling the tenets of SDT within. Self-determination, impacted by the loss of autonomy, competence, and relatedness during the emergency remote transition as shared by the participants, provides the backdrop for the resulting narratives. Participants' statements of barriers, unmet needs, and challenging work and life situations leading to feelings of uncertainty express the stress and anxiety they were enduring. These narratives of the ETRE experiences illustrate how people think and feel when the psychological needs of SDT are unattainable.

Sense of loss/grief

The sense of loss and grief heard in the data evolved from statements concerning events in their personal lives: evictions from student housing, movement restrictions due to local shelter-in-place orders, work closures, and personal losses (See Table 3). For many students, the loss of a stable place to live was mentioned. "I moved four times during the pandemic"; "Moving from Savannah to Chicago was extremely hard for me while keeping up with my classes. I had to move specifically because of the pandemic"; "Having to vacate on-campus housing and find off-campus housing on a short notice impacted my transition to teleworking for 2-3 weeks"; and "I was displaced during the COVID-19 outbreak. Had to find a new home and move." For other students, the loss of a mandated, structured schedule with a social context negatively impacted motivation, engagement, and consequently, academic success. Stated one student, "Disruption of schedule, sudden removal of physical environments associated with courses, and isolation from other students significantly (negatively) impacted [my] ability to engage in course content and successfully manage time and workload/completion." Another student wrote, "A transition to online learning entirely wrecked my academic performance. I have never in my life failed a class but the transition to online caused my gpa to drop to a 2.12 (lost my scholarship lol)." Additionally, job loss led to financial chaos for one student who wrote, "I was really stressed after losing my job. I struggled to eat and was so worried it was difficult to concentrate." And lastly, the deaths of loved ones due to COVID impacted students and instructors alike. Multiple students referenced family deaths while one instructor stated, "I was not prepared for the number of students who came down with Covid19, or deaths…"

For instructors, professional losses largely focused on components of teaching and learning. Labs, field trips, practicum experiences all require elements that were prohibited by both the shelter-in-place order and the virtual classroom. For other instructors, loss also meant the lack or absence of direct communication with students. One instructor wrote, "Both students and instructor report a sense of loss from the interpersonal interaction, and online formats simply cannot provide sufficient social context to address this shortfall." Other instructors included the loss of "synchronous discussions," "connection," "oral arguments," and "time" that forced the elimination of or modifications to learning activities and impacted student attainment of learning objectives and goals.

For some instructors, the move to remote teaching was uniquely challenging. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020) recognizes

Table 3. Theme: loss and a sense of grief.

Theme	Free text responses from participants	Emotions identified by participants
Things that were lost:	Time, time awareness, 2 weeks, time in class,	Disconnected
	F2F, F2F class time,	Laziness
	Seeing/ positive interaction with professors and like-minded classmates	Threatened
	In-class discussions	Unmotivated
	Close family members, deaths	
	Financial	
	IT help	
	Convenience and an increase in time-consuming inconvenient activities (bleach wipes, cooking, looking for PPE) that made it even more difficult to continue a previously busy schedule of work/school/etc	
	Thousands of people dying that should still be alive	

Free Text Responses for Theme of Loss and Sense of Grief.

COVID-19 as a source of grief beyond that of the loss or death of someone you know. "Grief can happen in response to loss of life, as well as to drastic changes to daily routines and ways of life that usually bring us comfort and a feeling of stability" (para. 1). Not only did instructors' responses include grief over the loss of a common understanding of work, their role as a support and resource to their students in their experience of grief was an unexpected outcome of the pandemic. One instructor wrote, "It was a challenge to best orient the students to the new paradigm. However, much of the difficulty was affective rather than procedural; students resented HAVING to take an online course when they had specifically chosen a F2F format." Other instructors described challenges including: "Addressing students' personal traumas due to the pandemic–deaths/illness of family members, stress from being essential workers"; "I spent double the time I would have typically spent dealing with student issues (related to class content as well as mental health and financial aid issues"; and "Many of the students became angry, confused, disgruntled, and rebellious…even resentful." Said another instructor, "I did not expect students to be as angry and frustrated about an unforeseeable situation as they were. I would have expected students to have more department/college/university resources to address their personal challenges."

Role conflict

Role conflict is defined as "the difficulties encountered by a person when one or more of his or her roles make conflicting demands" (Role conflict, 2020). As students and instructors moved out of dorms and offices, the various roles between academia and life merged leading to role conflict. Instructors and students were challenged to work at home while fulfilling the roles of spouse, parent, child, or sibling. One student commented, "I had to balance working from home, caring and homeschooling my children, and finding the time to dedicate to my studies. It just made for a long day." Likewise, experiences of being a student and a parent were described as, "I got easily distracted with my kids and found it harder to retain the info that was being taught."

The situation of everyone in the family being at home resonated with instructors as well. Stated one instructor, "My ability to do work related to teaching was greatly diminished due to having three children at home and not being allowed into my office for multiple weeks." Other instructors' comments included,

"I had to take care of my one-year-old son full time on top of teaching full-time" and

> Well, my wife and I are both educators. She teaches at a local high school. We have two young children at home. We had to teach at the same time and parent at the same time as well. It was awful. We have not had a break from things since mid-March. Our mental health is compromised. Our stress is very high as is our anxiety.

Sub-theme: Unmet role expectations. An aspect of role conflict that is often forgotten is the impact of role conflict on role expectations. As mentioned by Imad (2020), when a person experiences increased psychological demands such as those created by the ETRE and pandemic, their trauma response inhibits decisions, learning, and remembering. While instructors were traumatized with an overload of work along with their other role responsibilities "teaching virtually was exhausting," and "massively increased workload" they were expecting students to be self-motivated, self-regulated, and self-reliant. Instructors indicated "Almost half of the students…lacked self-discipline," "I had to repeat simple instructions that were outlined in the syllabus time and time again," and "Students do not follow instructions; do not turn in assignments on time."

Alternatively, as students dealt with their own issues like "working full time from home while also caring for my child and teaching him homeschool, while trying to maintain my studies" they expected their instructors to be more helpful, empathetic, lenient, and understanding than they were perceived to be. One student stated, "I was beyond overwhelmed at the amount of self-teaching I had to do for myself." Additionally, a student voiced frustration by writing, "My instructors basically just went from engaging with us to 'This is what is due and get it done by the due date.'" Lastly, one student shared their perception of the instructors' unexpected behavior by writing,

> It would be almost as if a student walked into a F2F class where the professor hands the class a syllabus and their only instruction is to say, 'Read the syllabus, follow the assignments, let me know if you have any questions,' and then sits there quietly each class without engaging the students.

Helplessness - I can't teach; I can't teach myself

The term *helpless* was not used by participants but the definition of helpless as "unable to do anything to help yourself or anyone else" (Cambridge English

Dictionary 2020) reverberated across the data. Participants experienced helplessness in both work, school, and family. Many instructor responses explicitly stated that they could not teach effectively in the remote environment during this rapid transition:

> This aspect could not be done virtually
>
> The laboratory assignments could not be delivered
>
> Heavily discussion-focused courses lost their 'heart'.
>
> You can't teach/learn a foreign language on-line effectively
>
> Observing students teaching reading with manipulatives and providing immediate feedback was nearly impossible in this format.
>
> It is much more difficult to give useful feedback without seeing the students working
>
> Dentistry can't be taught by computer.

For students, the experience of helplessness also stemmed from changes in how they engaged with life and school. When classes were moved to the remote format, the need to self-regulate was critical. However, with minimal guidance and lack of support, students were overwhelmed and felt they had nowhere to turn. The highest number of student responses related to this idea of an inability to help themselves. Student responses under the *Challenges* survey item support the theme of helplessness as they identified scenarios they were unable to overcome:

> Not having the professor to interact with
>
> Disruption of schedule, sudden removal of physical environments associated with courses, and isolation from other students significantly (negatively) impacted ability to engage in course content and successfully manage time and workload/completion
>
> I didn't feel like I was getting the full college experience
>
> Attending online lessons in my environment made learning feel so painful.
>
> I needed more help from professors.
>
> I was not prepared mentally to 'go it alone', to transition habits from both work from Home AND learning in same physical space.
>
> Online classes to me = teach yourself.
> Upper level coursework is not something you can teach yourself like a 1000 level class.

I Had no choice

The basic psychological need of autonomy was clearly unmet for many of the participants. Statements from both instructors and students indicated a sense of subjugation and a lack of personal decision making. These responses for students were primarily found in relation to their living situations. One participant stated, "I was forced to move back home which is in a different time zone and had a hard time keeping [up] with the time difference." Another participant explained, "without the library, I had to study in my car or wear ear-plugs and uncomfortable noise-reducing ear protection. All this caused me a higher degree of stress than a normal semester…" And yet another student stated, "My home proved to not be a good study environment with many distractions and loud family members. However, with no where else to go with all of the closures, I had no other environment to go to."

Instructor statements indicated that the ETRE disabled their sense of autonomy as well. One instructor wrote, "The most challenging part was not being allowed to fully exercise my right to teach in the way that I felt best met the needs of my students combined with the content of material to be learned." Other statements illustrated frustration with the challenging expectations and fluid situation. They state, "Administration was … forcing faculty to accept blatant violations of our syllabi policies" and "The constant pivoting of requirements, which made it difficult to land at a finalized process."

This felt impossible

Competence is defined as "a condition or quality of effectiveness, ability, sufficiency, or success" (Elliot, Dweck, and Yeager 2017, p. 3). During the ETRE, unsupported and unattained competence for either instructors or students revealed the theme of "This felt impossible." The unstable environment created by the novelty and speed of the ETRE, lack of familiarity with teaching and learning using only remote formats, and the precarious nature of life facilitated feelings of incompetence. Narratives resonated with bewilderment ranging from questioning how to be a student during the initial days of the pandemic to academic inadequacy. One student stated, "The challenge wasn't just that I wasn't giving enough attention to my coursework, it was also that my coursework suddenly felt impossible and almost irrelevant due to my situations caused by the pandemic. I felt immense amounts of anxiety, grief, exhaustion, etc." A healthcare worker/student stated, "Because of covid19 I had to put more hours in my healthcare job and did not have time nor energy to deal with anything outside of work." Another student wrote, "I simply could not keep up with coursework

without a classroom setting. I do not intend to return to the fall semester if learning continues to be online."

Sub-theme: I don't have what I need. Over 140 comments were completed by students cataloging the resources they were missing during ETRE. Everything from campus wi-fi to quiet spaces to study were listed as vital components of their academic success. "Not only is it harder to learn without sitting through physical lectures where you can take notes, remember better, and ask questions, but it is also harder to stay motivated…" Another student wrote, "Online systems did not compensate for in-class discussion between instructor, students, and students. Idea & information transfer was limited to the minimum." And yet another student's perspective, shared in similar statements, highlights the assumptions of technology capability that are often and incorrectly associated with college students: "My family is poor, we don't pay internet bills on time, and I share my laptop with my sister"; "had no access to laptop to do work or wifi"; "At times my home internet was not strong enough to upload assignments so I had to find areas with stronger WiFi hotspots"; "my laptop was broken, I finished the semester (last month) on my cell phone"; "I have no where quiet or excluded to do the work."

Lost connections

Another foundational factor in SDT is that of relatedness. Relatedness refers to the connection one has to a role, a social network, or even a place (Moore et al. 2020). Terms that are commonly used to refer to experiences of relatedness include camaraderie, attachment, and companions (Rodgers et al. 2014). The basic need of relatedness was not supported according to students, with one writing three paragraphs on the lack of connection including, "Instructors stopped teaching…just seemed to take off…for those of us needing interactive Q/A, only the instructor provided when we asked him to. The others disappeared… there were no personal touches, just reminders of work due…" Another student wrote, "Tried to reach [my] counselor due to my hardship. My car was taken with my laptop. She never responded." Instructor comments directed at a lack of relatedness highlighted the concern many instructors shared as students seemed to "disappear" and the subsequent "lack of a sense of community & support from other faculty." "I felt like I was teaching into a void…Not seeing colleagues was really tough, too." Additionally, an instructor declared, "The entire thing was challenging! But mostly having

no sense of the well-being or lack thereof of my students, their families, my colleagues, etc."

Am I safe?

Many of the free-text comments about the ETRE experience included perceptions of the safety and security of life during a pandemic. While some students felt safer at home, other students indicated that their homes were places where they felt the most unsafe. Safety/security was identified by five students as the rationale for preferring online versus F2F instruction because it made them feel "safe." Another student mentioned that the "instructor asked students to sign a pledge to complete a service learning project when it was safe to do so," indicating the presence of the concept of unsafe in the world around them. Other students referred to their homes as a source of insecurity specifically due to the shelter-in-place orders. "My house was flooded in January and covid-19 stopped repairs on my home. We are still displaced because our home is not in livable condition." Alternately, one student wrote of their unsafe home environment stating, "Being at home with my parents poses some physical challenges (chores, etc) but also some psychological challenges to online class work. At this point, I typically only live with my parents during breaks, so there's some executive dysfunction, a real challenge to getting myself to remember I had school. I would've stayed in my apartment downtown, but the timing of the shutdowns (around spring break) meant it was best for me to stay where I was, with my parents."

They don't care about me

Statements by both students and instructors included perceptions of feeling undervalued and disrespected. One student stated, "My teachers treated me like garbage, two males accomplished in their career." Another stated, "Professors weren't compassionate nor understanding of student's concerns…sheer lack of care to any questions." Included in the students' perceptions of disregard was a desire for something that conveyed a sense of concern. Wrote one student, "I felt that some of my professors were not sensitive to the world wide pandemic." Institutional disregard was mentioned by one student who wrote, "The general stress of the pandemic didn't seem factored into the planning for continued learning. Hearing about people I personally knew having to deal with this nightmare, not being

able to sleep, being sick myself and worrying that it was COVID put undue stress on me. It was hard to concentrate in the new environment and there didn't seem to be any resources from –– to show solidarity or how best to work through it."

Conversely, instructors' comments were replete with text on the overabundance of student emails, questions, and requests and extra hours spent trying to teach in the new format. While students may have seen their instructors' lack of attention or response as a personal lack of concern, the instructors tell their side of the story as being overwhelmed with trying to meet their students' needs. "The amount of communication with students was really high and the emotional labor of managing their stress and challenging circumstances was really tough on me" stated one instructor. Another instructor highlighted their reality by writing, "Students were frazzled and with large classes, what is often misunderstood is that the course now becomes 1-1 for EVERYONE. That means, everyone communicates separately to the instructor and it is a lot of time to invest." As far as the amount of work involved, one instructor stated, "There was no time for learning. We had to jump right in and grade hours and hours of alternate clinical assignments. The due dates were within a few days of each other and it was difficult to get all of our students' papers graded before the next batch was submitted. Many extra hours worked on weekends and evenings."

An additional area of disregard noted by instructors and students was the systemic indifference to a lack of accessibility on multiple levels that was not addressed and that drastically impacted student outcomes. Noted by De Bie and Brown (2020), accessibility isn't just about disability but the intentional endeavors to reduce barriers to learning for all students. Not only were barriers to learning created by the shift to remote teaching and learning, but a sense of abandonment of the ideals of accessibility was extracted from the participants' narratives. Stated one instructor, "The biggest issue was student disparity. In one class, I had half the class all got A's and B's, and half the class failed. I believe this is because students with access to better technology really thrived in the online environment. However, students without access to decent technology really struggled. Other factors may have also been at play - students have to work longer hours due to being an essential worker during covid19, etc." A student stated, "I have a learning disability (dyslexia) that was accommodated by the university before this transition into online classes. After the transition I was still not given assistance (unable to afford additional testing demanded by the institution) and the course work became all self-driven reading assignments. An estimated 8 hours of uninterrupted reading for someone without a learning disability was assigned every week for the rest of the semester to stay on track. Instructors shrugged and wished me luck."

Throughout the comments found in the free-text responses, the failure for both instructors and students to have their basic psychological needs met due to the trauma and grief experienced during the ETRE because of the COVID-19 pandemic is clear. However, every challenge, such as those identified in this study, can also be viewed as an opportunity. This opportunity, for the world of higher education and beyond, allows for a reflective pause and a review of not only the processes and procedures of teaching and learning, but also provides a platform to share insight for informing how higher education can improve.

Discussion

As stated throughout the examination of individual themes, each of the basic psychological needs were unsupported for both instructors and students, fueled by the trauma experienced during the rapid transition. Specifically, within the themes of role conflict, having no choice, feeling impossible, and lost connections, it is clear that the circumstances of the ETRE gave students the feeling that they were not able to complete their coursework, that they had little control over the process, and that they were disconnected from their peers and instructors. Other influential stressors and thus barriers to needs attainment during the ETRE were the mandated isolation and separation that challenged the stability of social networks for most. In relation to Apostol and Netedu (2020), these stressors and lack of support for basic needs could have contributed to students' feelings of stress and trauma.

Regardless of the learning environment, instructors have the ability to engage students in a variety of ways through enhancing motivation. To do this, an instructor can rely on specific need-supportive behaviors (Reeve and Jang 2006). In addition, the presence of structure in a learning environment has an impact (Oga-Baldwin et al. 2017). Structure, in this case, refers to openly communicating clear expectations and explicit instructions, which can also be delivered in a need-supportive way. However, if an instructor is not able to provide this structure or have an awareness of how these types of engagement can be manifested in such environments, a disconnect between the instructor and student can occur. In this study, instructors' basic needs were not supported as they

perceived having very little support from administration, little choice in how to best present the content of their courses, and an overwhelming responsibility to individually keep in contact with a large number of students. In turn, they were unable to consistently provide a structured learning environment, as suggested by Oga-Baldwin and Nakata (2017). The impact of this lack of support of basic needs for instructors echoes those reported in previous studies (Yasué, Jeno, and Langdon 2019; Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, and Legault 2002). When instructors' basic needs are met, they are better able to meet the basic needs of their students. In the case of the ETRE, the opposite was observed.

When considering the ETRE experience of most instructors and students who were expecting F2F courses, the lack of expertise, technology access, and familiarity with the hardware and software needed to effectively teach and learn in an online course were influential factors in the perceptions of the impact of the ETRE. Previous exposure to online teaching and learning is an established factor in online education efficacy and course satisfaction (Landrum 2020). From the perspective of course design and experience, the ETRE was a novel situation during a period of intense stress which was far different than typical timelines for online course delivery (Baker and Unni 2018; Hodges et al. 2020; Kecojevic et al. 2020). Notably, instructors' comfort level with teaching in an online course tends to improve by the second or third iteration of its offering, while students persistently categorize F2F courses as a preferred learning environment over online delivery methods (Baker and Unni 2018; Blau et al. 2017; Hodges et al. 2020).

Instructors and students both missed out on the benefits of intentional design and development associated with online education best practices. These best-practice factors have been developed to facilitate teaching and learning online which allow for the integration of learner-to-content, learner-to-learner, and learner-to-instructor interactions that support the intended learning outcomes (Moore 1989). For students, the gaps in quality of content delivery, knowledge construction through interaction, and social networking failed to support their needs for learning. The absence of intentional online interactions, often supported by instructional developers, designers, and technologists, became a barrier to implementing and utilizing the complex and multifaceted dimensions of online learning such as "modality, pacing, student-instructor ratio, pedagogy, instructor role online, student role online, online communication synchrony, role of online assessments, and source of feedback" (Hodges et al. 2020, para. 9).

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, the experience of the ETRE provides a unique opportunity to learn the strengths and weaknesses of the existing systems in place for teaching and learning. For a minority of students, the ETRE was viewed as a positive experience with some going so far as to say they preferred the remote/online format. Additionally, a small number of students were highly complementary of the empathy and support extended to them by their instructor and graduate teaching assistants. It would appear that instructors with a high level of readiness to teach online (proficiency with technology and principles of course design and delivery) and those whose teaching demonstrated high levels of empathy were the most successful in making a smooth transition to remote instruction and creating a positive environment for learning to take place. Similarly, students who had experience in taking an online course, or had earned additional certifications via an online platform, rated the ETRE experience more highly and reported higher levels of satisfaction and success with remote instruction.

Alternatively, the negativity, doubt, and disappointment identified in the instructor and student responses revealed several weaknesses which have created a space for change. Now that instructors have been forced to teach online and experiment with instructional strategies that they normally would have avoided, they are more ready and able to meaningfully engage in professional development and have high level conversations about what it means to teach online. Similarly, students who had verbalized fears and hesitancy toward enrolling in online offerings may be more likely to consider taking a course or program of study online. The transition to all remote instruction served as proof of concept that most if not all of the curriculum could be offered online. With this realization, there is reason to hope that this will result in a trend of more flexible learning spaces and instructor support to bridge the gap between emergency remote instruction and online teaching and learning. This evolution of higher education is possible with the following recommendations that aim to refine instructor proficiency with online course design and delivery. The following recommendations are intended to fill the existing knowledge gaps for all instructors and stimulate such development.

Traditional professional development

Professional development for online and blended teaching has been available for a long time, but, as this study showed, many instructors had not yet availed themselves of these opportunities. Training to create intermediate to advanced level proficiency with instructional technologies, course design principles, and online teaching best practices would be sufficient to solve the identified gaps in student learning and engagement. While these traditional forms of professional development are both impactful and scalable to many courses, they are not sufficient to address several important concerns raised by the study.

SoTL and signature pedagogies

One such area is the signature pedagogies that do not easily translate to the online modality. Signature pedagogies are "the types of teaching that organize the fundamental ways in which new practitioners are educated for their new professions." (Shulman 2005, p. 52). Disciplines cited as challenging, if not impossible, to teach online included studio art, music, theater, clinicals, and various experiential learning experiences. These areas are ripe for both formal and informal SoTL, where disciplinary experts, instructional designers, and information technology professionals can join in communities of inquiry to solve technology barriers as well as open up new online pedagogical techniques and instructional strategies to tackle these teaching problems.

Teaching with empathy/trauma informed pedagogy

While many students experienced a lack of motivation due to the unmet needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, trauma and crisis also emerged as a significant factor in the lack of student engagement in ETRE courses. Viewing student behavior through the lens of the trauma-informed approach not only helps us to better understand what occurred but leads us to the trauma-informed pedagogy (TIP) developed to meaningfully respond to persons with experiences of trauma. The guidelines/principles of TIP should be included in professional development programs and instructors should be encouraged to develop concrete strategies for implementing within their teaching context. Teaching with empathy through TIP practice is a significant means by which an instructor can rise to meet the call to teach in a socially responsible manner. While issues of diversity, equity and inclusion have been important to honor in our teaching practice, the ETRE revealed the many gaps that had heretofore remained hidden.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

Student responses indicated numerous challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion during the ETRE. Failures in accessibility included access to technology, financial support and resources, assumptions made around class and socioeconomic capabilities, challenges for speakers of other first languages, disabilities, especially hidden disabilities such as ADHD and dyslexia. If the ETRE is any indication of future performance, it is clear that the current academic system in Georgia is not prepared to comply with the expectations of the legislative requirements of diversity, inclusion, and equity in online education. The need for more teaching strategies and institutional strategies to address these concerns could not be clearer.

ADA compliance and accessibility

Federal law dictates that online courses and digital instructional materials be accessible to students with disabilities (United States Department of Health Education and Welfare Office for Civil Rights, 1978). Institutions are charged with taking a proactive stance and to ensure that all course materials are accessible at the start of the semester even if no students have identified as disabled or requested accommodation. Many institutions are still responding in a reactive manner and on a case-by-case basis, only taking the necessary steps once an accommodation request has been made. Student comments highlighting inaccessible course materials and inadequate support from disability services during ETRE reveal the gap between what is mandated by law and the support that learners are experiencing. The identification of this existing need calls for more resources such as personnel, software, and professional development to bridge the gap.

Taking all of these ideas generated from within the results, where do we go from here? Employing the principles of trauma informed pedagogy such as teaching with empathy, providing flexible

deadlines, positive incentives, more choice, prioritizing other elements such as student well-being over academic outcomes might be helpful. In addition, a move to collaborations outside of the silos of disciplines, individual institutions, and organizations would support the concept of diversity of thought and promote a stronger initiative for meeting the needs of all.

Professional development for online proficiency

The low level of instructor readiness to teach online suggests that the three pillars of online teaching: course design, course delivery, and technology proficiency are still relevant areas for professional growth and development (Baroud and Dharamshi 2020). However, ETRE has forced instructors and students to learn technology and teaching/learning pedagogies quickly. Instructors and students are in a different place now. This changes the starting point for how instructor developers and instructional designers engage with the instructor. The implication is that instructor developers can now focus on higher-level conversations about teaching and learning pedagogies for blended and online teaching.

Instructors have crossed a threshold of learning to use campus instructional systems and have more delivery options for class sessions, assignments, various course components as well as entire courses. There is now a broad awareness of institutional level course design and development templates that follow best practices and to build out primary course components in the LMS such as lectures, assignments, discussions, quizzes and gradebook to allow for more flexibility, efficiency and smoother transition to remote instruction on demand.

Instructors are also more ready to deliver their courses in a flexible format and to adopt instructional strategies and teaching techniques that leverage the best aspects of F2F and online components. These facts welcome a paradigm shift in that the goal is not to replicate F2F online, but to understand that online learning has a unique way of doing things with its respective weaknesses and advantages.

Flexible teaching and learning spaces

We can now see a movement toward blended and flexible teaching and learning spaces that leverage the advantages of F2F and online into one course. While instructors have mentioned the challenges of teaching from home, there is also the possibility that, under different circumstances, a home office may be more valuable to both instructors and institution. For students, flexible learning space includes the possibility

of an emergence of HyFlex courses as seen in some of the upcoming academic plans. In HyFlex, students can do any and every part of a course F2F and online at any point during the semester based on preference, convenience, or necessity.

Engagement and interactivity

Instructors and students alike reported missing the engagement and interactivity among students, the instructor and the course content so easily afforded by physical presence in a classroom. When instructors are not familiar with online engagement strategies and how to employ them, online systems do not compensate for student to instructor, student to student interactions. While instructors complained about lack of engagement, students reported that many instructors did not build engagement (student-to-student, student-to-instructor, and student-to-content interactions into the course or these opportunities were poorly designed. Many instructors relied on student consumption of online content, i.e. information transfer, and the courses had no common denominator, information transfer, no spontaneity, and no flexibility/adaptive ability.

Meta-cognitive strategies and self-directed learning

Students reported difficulty managing time and establishing a routine apart from the structure provided by F2F courses and quiet places to study on campus. Students also rated their motivation for studying and learning to be higher when they are supported by structures, processes such as note-taking, dialogue, and discussion rather than simply grades. This externally supported motivation also validates students' needs for guidance in time management, goal setting, and creating learning and study spaces. Additional components to support student motivation for learning include flexibility, self-regulation, and self-directed learning. More guided opportunities to experiment with time management and goal setting may support these activities in the future.

In conclusion, despite the good intentions of higher education stakeholders to preserve the health and safety of instructors and students, the experience of the ETRE was traumatic. The ETRE will be remembered for its chaos, its harsh inflexibility, and its emotional impact rather than as a time when everyone on the local college campus tried their very best to endure a catastrophic illness that caused loss of life

while creating fear and panic for everyone. This experience, for many, is the first of its kind. Let's learn from it and make it our last emergency transition to remote learning.

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Data availability

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