

Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the Time of **COVID-19**

Editors:

Nhlanhla Mkhize, Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa,
Labby Ramrathan, Johannes A. Smit



Alternation African Scholarship Book Series, Volume #03

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Manik, S. (ed.). *Sports amidst a Global Pandemic: Crisis, Capitulation and Creativity during COVID-19. Volume #07.*

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Preface

Emerging first in Wuhan, China, followed by its spread to other parts of the world, COVID-19 has had governments globally, systematically initiate a variety of forms of intervention, to curb its spread. These include lockdowns, the restriction of movement, forms of social distancing and sanitizing practices, as well as the requirement that citizens wear face-masks. Since the responses took place according to regional exigencies and directives, and were not uniform and equally comprehensive, internationally, they have also had diverse effects. Ranging from shortcomings in medical and health care provisioning, through economic downturns and fears of the increase in practices of governance surveillance, to the disrupting of schooling and tertiary education systems, sports, and cultural and religious events and practices, COVID-19 bodily, mentally, materially and socially, destructively affected the whole world. Apart from its continued deadly impacts, and barring the arrival of universally effective vaccines, the spectre of COVID-19's expected second surge with the arrival of winter in the northern hemisphere, also have populations across the world readying themselves to learn to live with the presence of infection on a continuous basis.

Given this very brief and though limited scenario, this Preface provides the context for the first seven volumes of the *Alternation* African Scholarship Book Series (AASBS).

Focused on the impacts of COVID-19 on the Higher Education sector, especially from curriculum perspectives, at all levels and a sample of disciplines and subjects, the first four volumes were in principle conceptualised by the *Alternation* Editorial Committee (AEC), on 31 March 2020.

This initial project problematisation has grown into twelve research groups with seven AASBS volumes, and five *Alternation* Journal issues in production. Indications are that even if the world is rid of COVID-19 through vaccination – which might not happen in the near future – its impacts will be lasting. In the short to medium term we may also have to learn to live with the reality of the presence of the pandemic, and possibilities of infection and potential resultant death. These dynamics are being traced in the research, in, as well as outside academe, as we learn to transform and adapt to new realities, possibilities, risks, and drawbacks, of digital education and media.

In many ways COVID-19 brought communities of teaching and learning closer together across the usual social and professional divides. The hope is to ensure the optimal wellbeing for the greatest possible number of our fellow human beings (*Ubuntu*), and for staff and students to benefit from available existing and (digitally-) constructed resources. This outcome motivates each moment of our collective research-led teaching and learning, even though distance and disease threaten all.

The research produced by the *Alternation* research groups constitute a small part of how academia attempts to both engage the conundrums and provide academic leadership amidst the effects and opportunities of COVID-19. And for this we want to thank the lead-editors and their teams, as well as all the colleagues from across southern Africa who have responded positively, and affirmatively to our call.

And for their endeavor, and sleepless days and nights of rescuing our sick and caring for those passing away, we want to dedicate these, the first number of volumes of our *Alternation* African Scholarship Book Series, to our courageous medical staff, those who provide comfort, relief and succor to our sick and those passing away, as well as the singular worker, mostly unrecognized, that kept the wheels of life and optimal wellbeing turning. Thank you, colleagues. And go well. *Siyabonga, hamba kahle!*

Prof Johannes A. Smit
Editor-in-Chief: AASBS

Contents

Johannes A. Smit

Preface	v
Contents	vii
Contributors	ix

*Nhlanhla Mkhize, Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa, Labby Ramrathan,
and Johannes A. Smit*

Editorial: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in the Time of COVID-19	1
---	---

*Zinhle P. Nkosi, Nokukhanya Y. Ngcobo, Ayub Sheik and
Nellie N. Ngcongco-James*

Confronting the COVID-19 Challenge at a University in South Africa	16
---	----

Langa Khumalo

Using Corpora in Online isiZulu Language Teaching	37
---	----

Busisiwe P. Ncama and Sinegugu E. Duma

Delivery of Clinical Teaching and Learning for Health Sciences Students during the National Lockdown in Response to Covid-19: A Pragmatic Approach at the University of KwaZulu-Natal	54
---	----

Christina Kgari-Masondo and Zoleka Mkhabela

Implications of the Minister of Higher Education's 'no child left behind' on African Child during the Coronavirus Pandemic in South Africa	68
---	----

Jayaluxmi Naidoo

Flipped Learning within Mathematics Teacher Education in KwaZulu-Natal: Embracing Connectivism in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemi	85
--	----

Vasanthrie Naidoo and Maureen Nokuthula Sibiya

COVID-19: Raising the Bar on Education Technology to 'Flatten the Curve'	106
---	-----

Aruna Ankiah-Gangadeen, Yesha Mahadeo-Doorgakant, and A. Goburdhun
Covid-19: A Liability or Serendipity for Teacher education? Exploring
Lockdown as an Opportunity for ‘Innovative Disruption’ in TEPs 124

Vino Paideya
Understanding Remote Teaching and Learning Challenges amidst the
COVID-19 Pandemic to Enhance Professional Development:
A Systematic Review of Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles, 2012 - 2020 ... 142

Lungi Sosibo
Redressing Inequalities while Envisioning University Student Teaching
during the COVID-19 Lockdown: Lessons from #RhodesMustFall and
#FeesMustFall 162

Kasturi Behari-Leak and Suren Behari
Leadership amidst the COVID-19 Crisis: Exploring a Curriculum for Servant
Leadership in Higher Education and Beyond 187

Acknowledgment of Reviewers 210



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