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~ Message From the Executive Director and Founder~



Welcome to the Fall/Winter 2021 Edition of the *Journal of Educational Research and Interdisciplinary Studies*. It is an honor and privilege to share the Journal of Educational Research and Interdisciplinary Studies [JERIS] with you. The aim is to provide quality educational research and refined educational practices that will afford you as the reader to be empowered as a leader/practitioner as well as serve as an active transformational change agent within your higher educational institutions.

Thus, the [JERIS] is published four times throughout the year allowing current educational researchers to conduct thorough research in a number of academic areas. In doing so, JERIS is committed to publishing information that will assist higher educational institutions with the needed tools to improve the overall quality of instruction, leadership, teaching and learning, retention (administration, faculty, and students), student engagement—while providing additional scholarly resources that will aid in supporting diversity and multicultural education. Lastly—I asking you to support [JERIS] by sharing it with your esteem colleagues and encourage them to read it and to submit a scholarly research article for publication.

Educationally yours,

Jà Hon Vance

Jà Hon Vance, Executive Director



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LEADING HIGHER EDUCATION'S EMERGENCE POST COVID19: A CALL TO ACTION

Author: Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D., President/CEO Pittsburg Technical College



Novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) has caused the United States to push the ‘pause’ button on life as we knew it. While corporations and small businesses were forced to cut production, hours, or close entirely, there were those in education who transitioned quickly and emerged more versatile and nimbler than anticipated and were able to adapt to one of the most challenging periods in our nation’s history.

Although the country may have paused, many post-secondary education providers never did. While some have contended that higher education is ‘a change-resistant enterprise,’ Pittsburgh Technical College (PTC) proved that we can – and did—move at the speed of thought. Our higher standard was evidenced through PTC’s planning and upholding the mission of empowering students to succeed, no matter the obstacles.

Pittsburgh Technical College is a regionally accredited leader in private non-profit higher-education and is committed to student-centered learning. PTC consists of nine academic schools and more than 30 career-focused programs awarding certificates and associate and bachelor’s degrees in competitive fields.

All across America, COVID-19 forced colleges and universities to quickly transition all of our brick-and-mortar education to virtual classroom learning. We needed to anticipate every possible scenario and then envision new possibilities.

As COVID-19 continues to spread its effects throughout our country and our lives, campus administrators everywhere are unsure what lies ahead – and when traditional on-the-ground learning will return. Once it resumes, what will be required? What does this mean for fundraising and endowments? How do we build our pipeline of students without our traditional approaches to contact? How will enrollment be impacted?

These are great questions, and the answers will require a re-imagining and an ability to seek out the opportunities hidden within the chaos. It will be our task to decipher the chaos. As Jose’ Saramago wrote, “chaos is order yet undeciphered”.

COVID-19 has created the opportunity for us to think differently about college education. Questions regarding value and cost have persisted for years and COVID19 has, in many ways, forced a reckoning. Our traditional approaches to strategic planning, enrollment management, financial models, instructional modalities, and students services must now be reconsidered through a new lens.

How will higher education respond and lead through this period, keeping our organizations focused and moving forward together? How will we reckon with this demand for immediate change, fewer resources and an even higher level of scrutiny and accountability? How will our structures and missions evolve to better align with the needs of those we serve and gain increased relevance with business and industry as new jobs emerge?

Leadership Matters

In short, it will require bold and competent leadership, comprehensive and integrated communication strategies, increased collaboration, and compassion. During this period, visionary and entrepreneurial leadership will make the difference. As colleges work through this time of uncertainty, there is an opportunity to reimagine and create innovative partnerships, expand research, development, and training for jobs of the future, professional development of faculty and college teams, redistribute the higher education infrastructure, and launch innovative curriculum post COVID19.

What has become abundantly clear is that there is an opportunity through leadership to define our future by design and, redefine our role in the new normal.

As a provider of rigorous education and training for the middle-skilled workforce, colleges like PTC have the unique opportunity – in fact, the responsibility – to own a leadership role in rebuilding our communities, states, and nation, as we emerge from this global pandemic. I contend that through effective leadership and planning, Technical and Applied Educational Institutions will find a welcome home, in the new normal as the preferred curriculum, due to its alignment with business and industry and employment expediency.

We don’t know what long-term effects COVID-19 will have on workforce issues of supply and demand. What we do know is that the needs of employers will be different. We can anticipate that unemployment rates will remain high for some time; different ways of working will emerge, and a differently trained workforce will be required.

To lead, we must move quickly; there is no time for ‘pause’ buttons. Colleges with a focus on technical and applied careers must understand the emerging needs of employers. We cannot prepare students for today’s jobs; we must prepare them for tomorrow’s. To do so requires understanding how workforce needs are changing and gaining that understanding requires listening to employers. It requires elevating public and private discourse and partnerships.

The convergence of academic and applied careers has created hybrid career paths designed to build a modern workforce prepared to fill a growing need for knowledge-based, technology-driven job creation.

At PTC, over 300 prominent employers comprise 17 advisory boards that help to shape curricula that reflect industry demand and ensure that we are preparing our students to be sought-after, contributing members of the workforce.

Working with these employers helps to ensure the academic programs are driven by project-based, hands-on experiential learning with state-of-the-industry technology that mirror workplace scenarios. It is through the input of our advisory boards that we have introduced programs of study, such as Network Security and Forensics, Smart Building Technology, and our curriculum for Licensed Practical Nurses to earn an Associate of Science in Nursing degree.

Our national initiative and the guidance of our advisory boards, combined with PTC's culture of excellence and accountability, makes us an educator of choice, and contributes, in large part, to 96% of our 2019 available graduates working in-field, either full time, part time or on a freelance basis.

By continuing our rich history of experiential learning and by building upon the quality and alignment of our academic and workforce programs, we are serving the needs of the workplace that will fuel the economic redevelopment of our region, while concurrently positioning our students to succeed, no matter the obstacles.

When the current crisis abates, our region, our nation, and our world are going to need to rebuild. New technologies and associated jobs will be emerging, and employers will want the credibility and proven skill set that comes with having the appropriate certification and degree.

Pittsburgh Technical College is ready to educate students with the knowledge and skills to succeed in their careers from day one. If day one is in two years or in 20, schools like ours can – and do – adapt quickly to changing circumstances.

Forging a New Future

So where do we go from here? Today's colleges must collaborate with workforce leaders to understand what they anticipate lies ahead. Armed with this knowledge we can gain from employers; we can create programs and training that will equip our graduates with the skills for the workforce demands of the future.

When we step out onto the other side of COVID-19, we likely will find that what we once regarded as 'normal' is gone. It is up to us – academic administrators – to assume the leadership roles in guiding our communities, our states, and our nation in the emergence from a global pandemic. It will be challenging, but we will anticipate. We will adapt. And we will advance the training and experience needed in the next workforce.

I encourage you, my colleagues, and friends, to carry beyond the classroom the message of the importance of training for middle-skills careers in defining the new normal. Carry the message to congressmen and corporations; to mayors and media; to elected officials and opinion shapers.

To advance our cause, I have initiated a number of actions to include:

- Meeting with local, state, and national elected officials to discuss Higher Education's role in retraining the workforce and supporting economic development post-COVID-19.
- Serving as a champion for equitable access to effective workforce training and career pathways on the Career Ready Pennsylvania Coalition.
- Initiating a Virtual Think Tank for College and University leaders to share creative ideas and strategies as we reimagine Higher Education PostCOVID-19.
- Introducing National Engagement Initiative to build a pipeline to attract, educate and retrain job-ready graduates.

I urge you to heed this Call to Action and consider comparable measures, as appropriate for your mission and community. Join me in ensuring our message of how colleges and universities can lead Higher Education's Emergence Post COVID19. As our world emerges from this Pandemic, colleges and universities must also be ready to reimagine, rebuild and support the economic development of our future redefined.

Lessons History Provides Companies and Managers Coping with COVID-19



Author: Dr. Michelle Thomas Drew, Fort Valley State University

Some emergencies such as COVID-19 require necessary action on behalf of managers and organizations to prepare and implement practical strategies and solutions during a global pandemic. COVID-19 creates an unprecedented challenge while managers take action and navigate through complex issues amidst making vital decisions that could have potential ramifications. Historically, managers have taken various approaches to respond to crisis, but the key solution is exercising prudence, staying prepared, and conducting planned meetings. Establishing a 3-P Crisis Management Protective Plan will build business continuity and establish a crisis management plan for all individuals affected by the crisis.

During troubled times, prudence is required by managers; it is extremely important for managers to perform morally good acts. To overcome setbacks during a crisis, prudence is the one virtue that can be exercised by all. In his book, *The Obstacle Is the Way: The Timeless Art of Turning Trials into Triumphs* (Portfolio and Penguin, 2014). Holiday suggests three steps that can be used to defeat setbacks: (1) A mindset or perception on how to view the situation; (2) The motivated action plan on how to address the specific issues; and (3) An inner drive or will that keep the mindset and action plan going. Managers who possess the correct knowledge about how to get things done, or more importantly, possess the correct knowledge of things that ought to be done and of things that ought to be avoided are successful.

Staying prepared reduces anxiety, fear, and uncertainty. Managers need to analyze the organization's state of readiness and preparedness to instinctively know what to do in the event of an epidemic/pandemic by taking a non-traditional approach to find effective resolutions to different situations. In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, managers are responsible for lessening chaos and confusion. Knowing how to mitigate the economic, social, and individual

impacts are directly in line with preparedness. One-way managers can accomplish this task is to form a crisis management committee. This committee would be responsible minimizing risks and assisting with decision making. For example, new innovative ways were established to protective covering when masks and other essential protective covering began to be in demand.

Lastly, managers need to conduct frequent planned meetings. Planned meetings are the gateway to open communication, and a highly effective way to enhance performance. A constant of the company's goals and objectives are executed through management to maintain operational efficiency and effectiveness. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, managers have planned how to overcome the traditional notion of the day-to-day work. Planned meetings allow management to bring clarity about expectations, address known or unknown problems, and bring awareness to how key decisions need to be made within the organization.

The spread of COVID-19 caused a major shift in the market economy and major disruptions in transportation, health care, education, and other public services. According to historical data, America witnessed three pandemics in the 20th century: the 1918-19 "Spanish Flu" (H1N1) where 20-40% of the population was infected with over 50 million deaths including 750, 000 in the U.S. In comparison to the 1957-1958 "Asian Flu" (H2N2) where 70,000 in the U.S. died with a high mortality rate amongst. Estimated deaths worldwide were between 1 to 2 million. With the mildest pandemic of them all, the 1968-69 "Hong Kong Flu" (H3N2) with reports of less deaths in the U.S. (34,000) than worldwide (700,000).

Currently, the predictions for COVID-19 are unpredictable; however, it is in these moments managers need to employ past strategies to cope with similar crisis such as epidemics, pandemics, as well as wars and natural disasters. Managers understand to be savvy change, delegation, being proactive, and following the letter of the law to protect themselves, work production, customers, suppliers, and the public at large is paramount. Many managers are on the front-line because they are the critical component that drives and motivates employees to perform their job duties and responsibilities whether the job is a nurse, police officer, educator, or sanitation worker. Front-line managers are essential to the day-to-day operations. The reality of being on the front-line to deal with the impact of COVID-19 is to create a culture of trust.

For today's managers, prioritization is the way to address and give special responsibility to stakeholders by managers during a major crisis like COVID-19. Managers may not ignore or shirk their responsibility to stakeholders. It is the manager's responsibility to use best practices to alleviate the strain customer and suppliers may feel during a crisis. Various measures can be used to maintain and build future relations in the future once COVID-19 is under control. Best practices vary from industry to industry; however, managers have embraced the charge to not spread the virus include, but not limited to, curbside for meals, working from home, increase of online learning and educational courses, and an increase to conduct virtual meetings for business and church activities using Zoom, Free Conference Call, or Cisco WebEx.

The new normal is that managers will continue to deal with current state and the aftermath of COVID-19. The strategic approach to give today's managers is to enter into this critical phase with innovative ideas and create new opportunities where managers can act decisively about the spread of the virus.

The main thing is that learning, building, reshaping, and reacting to new ways of business as events unfold, hence, a contingency plan is a definite part of a manager's toolbox to deal with the unexpected. During pandemics and epidemics such as COVID-19, managers can expect unanticipated twists and turns. Nevertheless, exercising prudence, staying prepared, and conducting planned meetings will minimize the risk associated with future crises and help managers apply lessons learned during this critical time in our country. Seemingly, each pandemic, epidemics, war, and natural disaster has been unpredictable and unique in its own right; but, each day we learn more and more about COVID-19. More research and testing are needed to know what is taking place. Managers may find it difficult to make definite plans until they are completely sure and then they are reluctant to change them for fear of looking indecisive or misinformed or of creating confusion in the organization, but managers must use the COVID-19 crisis as a way to learn and adapt in a rapidly changing environment.

Regardless, if the manager is new in his or her role or a seasoned pro; there is always room for improvement. Whatever the case, managers should continuously work to improve their management skills. A manager's day is never dull and never-ending. Therefore, today's managers need to keep these tips in mind when managing during crisis.

The first tip is to keep clear goals and objectives and practice consistency. Following set procedures, policies, and guidelines can yield great benefits. Secondly, make adjustments as needed. Managers have to be flexible and adapt to change. Change can be the catalyst for process improvements. Next, managers need to look for opportunities to use innovation or consider innovative ideas to move the company forward, make a difference in the community, or brand recognition.

Managers can now strengthen their skills on how to handle day-to-day operations to better handle a crisis by using their management styles to help employees grow and perform their jobs during these difficult times. Today's managers have become coaches, mentors, and advisors. Despite fears of the unknown, managers can strengthen the ability of the entire team. A team is as strong as its weakest link; therefore, managers should lay out the expectations. To become that great manager versus the better manager, it requires hard work, problem solving ability, critical thinking skills, and excellent communication to lead during this COVID-19 crisis.

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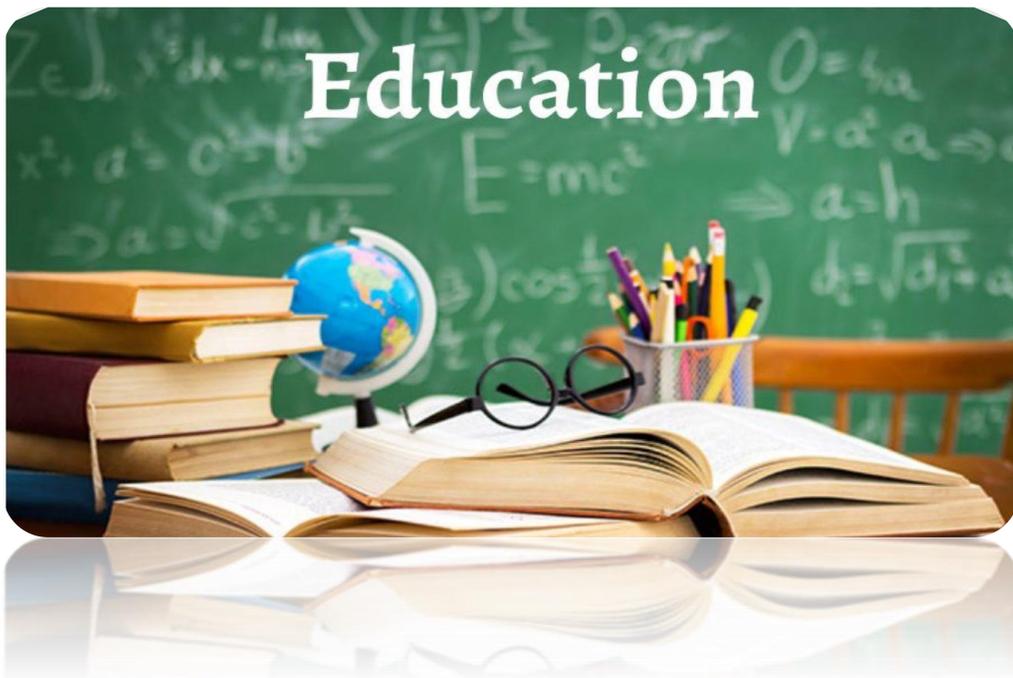
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Re-thinking Educational Landscapes

Authors: Dr. Rinnel Atherton, Young Harris College
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As we continue to live in COVID–19 pandemic conditions, it is still necessary to reflect on and change our approach to living. Correspondingly, due to lockdown and stay-at-home orders, higher education was forced to immediately shift to remote online learning (in some countries due to the upsurge in new variants it remains as such e.g., Malaysia even as other university and college systems return to face- to face contexts, e.g., United States, or offer choices to students to attend in person or through LMS, e.g., Canada). A recent study focused on the impact of COVID–19 on students’ mental health reported an increase of stress and anxiety among university students related to the outbreak of COVID-19 and subsequent measures such as lockdown and stay-at-home orders (Son, Hedge, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar, 2020).

A physical shift from campus to online learning coincides with a mental shift as we challenge our assumptions of higher education and behaviours in learning. For example, the views on whether “learning” can still take place outside of a classroom or if it would still hold the same value as “learning in the classroom”. There has been rigorous debate on this topic from parents, students,

and faculty members whether higher order thinking can be accomplished through blended learning. This offers educators another opportunity to evaluate the term blended learning and redefine learning spaces. Some argue traditional lectures to be moved to a digital platform as a temporary fix as we wait for the pandemic to be over while some argue to experiment with blended learning and adapt to new approaches of teaching and learning. Even prior to pandemic conditions, examination, analyses, and evaluation of online learning practices to substantiate the quality of learning experiences within this type of context have been undertaken (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2009). Additionally, other research has also focused on traditional versus online learning (Stack, 2015).

The traditional classroom is set up with desks, chairs and a black or white board at the front. This structure encourages an “I talk, you listen” approach (Monahan, 2002). The aforementioned perspective is highlighted by Freire’s (2016) description of the nature of the relationship both in and out of the school context between students and teachers. Specifically, the relationship is one that has a narrative quality (Freire, 2016). While he argues that this tradition has the negative impact of promoting memorization without conceptual understanding, the narrative characteristic has been a tradition within higher education. It does have its merits still holding good value in terms of certain needs and benefits to this approach. Some majors including theatre, music, education, nursing, certain areas of expertise within the field of psychology, or biology to identify a few at some point in students’ progress through the respective programs would need to complete labs, clinical practice, or performances. Traditional campus experiences provide opportunities to engage with instructors, professors, and peers in real time, use equipment, tools, and materials that are not available through an online platform, develop students’ communication and social skills, learn established practises from experts in their clinical experiences, gain from listening to their peers’ perspectives as they engage in dialogue in the classroom, and provide structured routines (that promote accountability and reliability). Moreover, within traditional college or university settings, students develop their ability to listen, concentrate, and take notes in lectures which can improve certain cognitive functions (such as thinking, meta-cognition, memory in terms of moving the material from short-term to long-term memory, etc.) facilitating conceptual understanding of the material (Bohay, Blakely, Tamplin, & Radvansky, 2011).

Even so, online resources such as Blackboard, may add value when well executed. For example, engaging with students differently by anonymous polling or sharing thoughts on anonymous whiteboard where students feel safe writing without assessment or judgement (thus, promoting perceptions of emotional security rather than risk; Atherton 2010). This helps to create a sense of vulnerability and safety, making students feel that their contributions are valued and recognised while providing opportunities for instructors to identify gaps in the learning process. Both of which are fundamental in supporting college and university student success. Similarly, when online educational platforms are well structured to engage students in the learning experience, appropriate tools are employed, and diversity is taken into account. The educational implication here is that students who are provided with opportunities to have experiences in well-structured online learning experiences that build in components that motivate students to reflect, think about their thinking, self-assess, redirect their thinking or behaviours, and monitor their progress are more likely to become self-regulated individuals motivated to actively consume, think about, apply, and consider the implications associated with the concepts they are learning and the skills they are developing.

As mentioned earlier another challenge which emerged from the wake of the pandemic is consistent reporting of the increase of stress and mental health issues among university students since the pandemic (Browning, Larson, Sharaievska, Rigolon, McAnirlin et al. 2021). As we move forward to recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and with our new insights to blended learning there are factors to consider. There needs to be more dialogue and consideration given to why there is this visible trend if education is meant to “holistically” shape students into working adults, not just as adults that can contribute to the economy and workforce but also add value to their community and society. From our perspective, next steps may include giving consideration to cultural aspects of learning as promoted by Vygotsky’s theory of cognitive development and helping students develop self-regulation skills providing them with guidelines and strategies (as supported by the research of Sahranavard, Reza Miri, & Salehiniya, 2018). These would facilitate positive outcomes for students. The points highlighted in this paper are consistent with other findings. Students with better cognitive self-regulation (managing their own emotion and emotional influences) perform better in school (Sahranavard, et al. 2018). Higher internal self-regulation positively correlates with self-efficacy and planning. They can internally direct attention, behaviour, and emotion to meet their goals.

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in dealing with various matters. Policies, ground rules, and expectations help the student go from dependent learner to a more independent knowledge seeker.

Experience assumption states, "an adult has a growing bank of experiences that they can reference" (Gagliardi, 2011). Students are encouraged to discuss their life, work, and social work field education experiences to the social work theories and skills taught in class. Assisting the students in identifying the correlation between what they are learning in the classroom and "real life" social work practice. These real-life experiences provide examples of various diverse life experiences. These learning experiences can include the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, and spirituality that our students face daily.

Readiness to Learn assumption found "adults readiness to learn is dependent upon their social role of the developmental task" (Gagliardi, 2011). Using various activities such as role-plays, case studies, current events, hot topics, FlipGrid, Voice-thread, reflection journals, and videos to provide a foundation for learning various skills. Instructors need to provide various learning opportunities that will speak to adult learners' social roles to encourage students to be more engaged in the course content and assignments.

Orientation to Learning assumption states, "the immediate application of learning is expected rather than the application of knowledge is postponed" (Gagliardi, 2011). In-class exercises and assignments allow students to try out new social work skills while providing tools and a context to learn from these classroom experiences. Students should be encouraged to apply what they are learning in the classroom to their internship experiences. Utilizing the classroom as a simulation will allow adult learners to prepare for future jobs by helping them apply their knowledge to real-life situations.

Finally, the Motivation to Learn assumption found "the need to know why this information is important because a key question for adult learners" (Gagliardi, 2011). As an instructor, inform the students why the class covers skills, theories, and evidence-based practices that are important to learn. Provide examples of how this knowledge can be used in the future as an employee or entrepreneur.

Storytelling is imperative to the teaching experience. Both the student and the instructor can learn from one another by sharing their experiences in the field. These tapestries of experiences help bring together Theory and practice and help us learn from our experiences. It is essential as educators that we come from an Andragogy perspective whenever we are educating adult learners. The principles outlined by Knowles can give us guidance on ways to keep our students motivated to learn in person or online.

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Incorporating Technology and Digital Media to Teach Social Work Students Policy, Research, Advocacy and Presentation Skills



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Abstract

Social work students must demonstrate core competencies and behaviors essential for professional social work practice. As an Assistant Professor in a MSW Social Work graduate program it is imperative to incorporate innovative assignments that help students demonstrate skills in the areas of research, policy, advocacy, and presentation. In the graduate level child welfare course, The Video Project Hot- Button Issues assignment is a part of the second-year course curriculum. Using technology and digital media the assignment teaches MSW social work student to engage in research, policy, advocacy, and presentation skills that inform students of current trends in child welfare practice.

Keywords: MSW students, social work, core competencies, policy, advocacy, presentation skills

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a rich history in utilizing innovative ideas and techniques to educate students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This paper was developed after presenting at the COF Teaching and Learning College of the Fenway scholarly conference. The aim of the presentation was to draw attention to the best pedagogical approaches using a creative assignment to teach policy, research, and presentation skills to MSW students. It was structured to educate students on the origins of child welfare, the services provided for children and families, the skills necessary to deliver empirically based services, and the policies that govern service delivery. As part of the asynchronous format students will engage in this form of experiential learning as a practice element of policy, research, and advocacy.

Teaching MSW students research skills are often associated with performance anxiety and educational insecurity for many social work students (Ponnuswami, & Francis 2021). Research and policy curricular content areas add to the greatest level of anxiety and the least sense of confidence among social work students. Social work faculty often struggle with how to incorporate innovation assignments to these competencies especially when most students who are studying to be practitioners are not researchers. To have students demonstrate core CSWE Social Work Competencies and behaviors related to research and policy, students engage in an interactive group assignment, "Video Project Hot- Button Issues in Public Child Welfare."

This graduate level child welfare course emphasizes social work practice with children and families. It is structured to acquaint students with the origins of child welfare, the services that are provided for children and families, and the policies that govern service delivery. Considerable emphasis is placed on enabling the student to work with a socially diverse range of client systems toward the identification and formulation of problems, goal setting, problem-solving, and advocacy (NCCU, 2021). This assignment incorporates course concepts and current research using (video presentation) to engage in one of the following that the student can select, teach and model-specific child welfare techniques, role-play an intervention or prominent child welfare leaders, conduct child welfare interviews around an identified child welfare concept, debate a child welfare issue or prepare a child welfare documentary. This video project's learning outcomes allow students to understand that research informs practice and practice informs research.

Learning Objectives

Learning objectives are important to every course and assignment. The graduate level child welfare learning objectives are to:

1. Engage in Policy Practice

- a. Evaluate the consequences of policies that impact service delivery in practice settings.
- b. Assess, formulate, implement, and advocate for policies that lead to social changes that improve the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

2. II. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Engage in research to inform agencies of best practices that will improve service delivery for children and families or youth, and their families involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system.

3. **Advance Human Rights, and social and economic, and environmental justice**

Analyze and apply understanding of inequalities and injustices for children and families or youth (and their families) involved or at-risk of being involve in the juvenile justice system and advocate for equitable and accessible service.

The learning objectives of the presentation were to have participants engage in creating an innovative assignment that helps students demonstrate social work core competencies and behaviors in research and policy. In addition, participants are able to prepare future social and behavioral practitioners to engage in the use of digital media to inform current social work child welfare practice. In addition to the participant learning objects as the instructor is also important to make sure all the assignments in the Child Welfare course follow appropriate guidelines that enhance the learning platform for students.

The "Video Project Hot- Button Issues in Public Child Welfare" assignment content followed the quality assurance of the assessment system relating to Quality Matters. Quality Matters is the global organization leading quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environment (Shattuck, 2010). Based on the comprehensive framework of Quality matters all assignments should follow the design of learning objectives, purpose & description, step-by- step directions, assessment, and materials and technology needed for the assignment. Based on Winkelmes' (2013; 2016) Transparent Teaching & Learning Transparency has shown that transparency in learning and teaching (TILT) can demonstrably enhanced student success in multiple ways. "Active learning directly engages students in the learning process while transparency involves the instructor's revealing the of logic regarding course organization and activity choice (Serdikoff, 2020). Students engage when they are aware of the course requirements.

Description & Purpose of Assignment

Students will research current topics in child welfare and areas that impact clients' obtaining services. Students will be able to review policy and current trends in the child welfare system. Students will use technology and media delivery to engage in the following:

1. Teach and model specific child welfare techniques.
2. Role-play an intervention or prominent child welfare leader.
3. Conduct child welfare interviews around an identified child welfare concept.
4. Debate a child welfare issue.
5. Prepare a child welfare documentary.
- 6.

Step-by-Step Assignment Directions

1. Students will form groups of five members.
2. Students will submit current child welfare topics to the instructor for approval.
3. Students will use designated classroom time to meet with group members.
4. Students will upload groups' media presentations to blackboard.
5. Appropriate technology/ media platforms, (Zoom, U-tube, Prezi Video, Google Slides, Kaltura)

Assignment Linkage to Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) EPAS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the national association representing social work education in the United States. It is also the accrediting body for educational institutions and professional program for social work education. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) to accredit baccalaureate and master's level social work programs. According to (CSWE 2015) the EPAS standard is a guide that supports academic excellence by formulating guidelines for professional competence (p.1). As for social work educators it is imperative that during the development of curriculum, we adhere to the CSWE EPAS standards that link each assignment to competencies and behaviors. In addition, faculty should also assess the students learning outcomes for each assignment which is essential to competency-based education. Assessment provides evidence that students have demonstrated the level of competence necessary to enter professional practice, which in turn shows programs are successful in achieving their goals (CSWE, 2015). The following table shows the nine competencies for CSWE.

Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards: Social Work Core Competencies

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Engage in Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations and Communities

According to Drisko (2014), competence refers to “the ability of an individual to perform a task,” further adding that “the task must be performed fully and properly” (p. 416). In addition, Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. (Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, 2015) Competency based assessment focuses on the result of the educational process and has a goal of providing

students and learners with appropriate skills enhances their knowledge to prepare them to be the best professional in the future (Maxwell, 2012). It is important for social work students to be able to demonstrate the core competencies and behaviors. Instructor competency based educational goals focus on what students need to know and to be able to perform. In addition, to skills that may need to become effective social work practitioners. The purpose of the “Video Project Hot-Button Issues in Public Child Welfare” assignment is to provide students with a creative and innovative way to engage in research, policy, advocacy presentations skills while learning about the current trends in child welfare practice. The assignment links core competencies and behaviors to the leaning student outcomes.

**Social Work Competencies and Behaviors
Relating to Assignment**

Relating to Assignment

Competency	Behaviors	Leaning Objective / Student Learning outcomes
Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.	<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engage in Policy Practice <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate the consequences of policies that impact service delivery in practice settings. b. Assess, formulate, implement, and advocate for policies that lead to social changes that improve the lives of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.

<p>Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice.</p>	<p>Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Objectives: II. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-Informed Practice <p>Engage in research to inform agencies of best practices that will improve service delivery for children and families or youth, and their families involved or at risk of being involved in the juvenile justice system.</p>
<p>Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice</p>	<p>Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Objectives: III. Advance Human Rights, and social and economic, and environmental justice. <p>Analyze and apply understanding of inequalities and injustices for children and families or youth (and their families) involved or at-risk of being involve in the juvenile justice system and advocate for equitable and accessible service.</p>

Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker’s critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations (CSWE, 2015, p. 6).

**Assessment CSWE Domains
Knowledge, Values, Skills, and Cognitive and Affective Processes**

Assignment	COMPETENCY	RELATED BEHAVIORS	DOMAINS
Video Project Hot-Button Issues in Public Child Welfare	Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.	Knowledge Values
	Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice.	Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.	Cognitive and Affective Processes
	Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.	Knowledge

Social Work Education and Technology

According to Huttar and BrintzenhofeSzoc (2020) Social work educators are in a prime position to decide how technology can be used as instructive methods to enhance and shape the future of social work practice, research, and policy. Technology is also being used to make thoughtful decisions about its implementation in course development. It can also be used to inform

educational competencies such as those developed by the CSWE (2015), and technology standards such as those from the National Association of Social Workers, Association of Social Work Boards, and Clinical Social Work Association (2017). Incorporating technology use into the delivery of an assignment stimulates new ways of thinking about social issues, and it provides a safe practice arena for skill development and creative problem solving (Bergant & Gale, 2020).

Bickle and Rucker (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine student-to student interactions in an asynchronous online course in higher education. The study consisted of students enrolled in an online course. Respondents consisted of 25 men and 198 women who ranged in ages between 18 to 26 years of age. An online survey was used to collect data using the Qualtrics system. The results of the study reported the use of technology within group assignments influence student's ability to learn and enhance a feeling of community among their peers. The use of technology also increased their communication skills and provided students with a more humanizing method of interaction.

An online survey was used to collect data using the Qualtrics system. To help students feel comfortable that responses were confidential to the instructor, (a) no identifiable data regarding each student was collected and (b) the database was not accessed by the author/instructor until after the course ended. Quantitative data were collected on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) to test Research Question 1 (RQ1): "The statements measured include: (a) my level of learning in this course is of the highest quality," (b) students' level of a feeling of a community within your group. Quantitative data regarding students' satisfaction with course attributes were collected on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied) to test Research Question 2 (RQ2): "Is the incorporation of student-to-student group assignments a significant predictor the student's ability to obtain a feeling of community within an asynchronous online course?" Statements measured included: (a) satisfaction of a feeling of community within your group"; (b) introductions enabled me to form a sense of online community; (c) I am able to form distinct individual impressions of some students in the course; and (d) I feel that my point of view is acknowledged by other students in this course. A 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure students' attitudes regarding group assignments (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). RQ2: Students' ability to obtain a feeling of community within an asynchronous course was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Students' satisfaction with their ability to communicate with other students was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale was used to measure students' attitudes regarding group assignments (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied). Students' level of satisfaction with the technology as a significant predictor of learning in an asynchronous course was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = very dissatisfied; 5 = very satisfied). Qualitative statements were also collected. Research shows that the learning environment plays an important role in a course attrition rate, particularly that of online courses. Regardless of the type of instruction (face to face or online) social interaction is an essential part for learning to occur (e.g., Uijl, Filius, & Cate, 2017). Specifically, students thrive in the course when a cohesive online community is built (e.g., Boling et al., 2012). Students who feel committed and connected are more likely to complete the course. Those who experience technology problems, lack interaction with the instructor and other students, and feel isolated from the class are more likely to drop the course (e.g., Liu et al., 2009; Rochester & Pradel, 2008; Willging & Johnson, 2004).

Student evaluation of teaching instruments are commonly administered by universities to presumably provide feedback to faculty for improvement of teaching effectiveness. At NCCU (SIR), student rating instructor/course evaluation student evaluation of faculty are administered at the end of the term. Students are asked questions relating to the course, instructor, and assignments for example,

The instructor uses instructional approaches (for example, discussions, lectures, audio-visuals, field work, demonstrations, computer programs, etc.) which effectively enhance learning in this course.	Mean 4.8	Median 5	Mode 5	Response 17	Class total 23
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KEY	Questions	Statistics				Frequency					Response	
		Mean	Med.	Mode	Std Dev	E	D	C	B	A	Rec.	Exp.
	The stated goals and outcomes for the course are consistent with what was actually taught.	4.9	5	5	.32	-	-	-	2	15	17	23
	The instructor clearly presents his/her subject matter.	4.9	5	5	.24	-	-	-	1	16	17	23
	The subject matter of this course is well organized.	4.9	5	5	.47	-	-	1	-	16	17	23
	The instructor is enthusiastic and arouses interest in this course.	4.8	5	5	.51	-	-	1	1	15	17	23
	My power to think, criticize, and or create have been improved as a result of this course.	4.8	5	5	.51	-	-	1	1	15	17	23
	The texts and other readings assigned for this course have been helpful.	4.8	5	5	.51	-	-	1	1	15	17	23
	The instructor uses instructional approaches (for example, discussions, lectures, audio-visuals, field work, demonstrations, computer programs, etc.) which effectively enhance learning in this course.	4.8	5	5	.51	-	-	1	1	15	17	23
	The examinations are consistent with the course objectives and the instruction.	4.8	5	5	.73	-	1	-	1	15	17	23
	Quizzes, examinations and/or written assignments are provided frequently enough to help me evaluate my progress.	4.9	5	5	.32	-	-	-	2	15	17	23
	The instructor is genuinely concerned with students' progress.	4.8	5	5	.73	-	1	-	1	15	17	23
	I am able to get help from the instructor when I need it.	4.8	5	5	.71	-	1	-	-	16	17	23
	This instructor is effective in promoting learning.	4.9	5	5	.47	-	-	1	-	16	17	23

KEY	Questions	Statistics				Frequency					Response	
		Mean	Med.	Mode	Std Dev	E	D	C	B	A	Rec.	Exp.
	The stated goals and outcomes for the course are consistent with what was actually taught.	4.7	5	5	.44	-	-	-	4	11	15	28
	The instructor clearly presents his/her subject matter.	4.7	5	5	.44	-	-	-	4	11	15	28
	The subject matter of this course is well organized.	4.7	5	5	.79	-	1	-	2	12	15	28
	The instructor is enthusiastic and arouses interest in this course.	4.7	5	5	.44	-	-	-	4	11	15	28
	My power to think, criticize, and or create have been improved as a result of this course.	4.5	5	5	.62	-	-	1	5	9	15	28
	The texts and other readings assigned for this course have been helpful.	4.6	5	5	.49	-	-	-	6	9	15	28
	The instructor uses instructional approaches (for example, discussions, lectures, audio-visuals, field work, demonstrations, computer programs, etc.) which effectively enhance learning in this course.	4.5	5	5	.88	-	1	1	3	10	15	28
	The examinations are consistent with the course objectives and the instruction.	4.5	5	5	.72	-	-	2	4	9	15	28
	Quizzes, examinations and/or written assignments are provided frequently enough to help me evaluate my progress.	4.6	5	5	.49	-	-	-	6	9	15	28
	The instructor is genuinely concerned with students' progress.	4.6	5	5	.61	-	-	1	4	10	15	28
	I am able to get help from the instructor when I need it.	4.5	5	5	.62	-	-	1	5	9	15	28
	This instructor is effective in promoting learning.	4.5	5	5	.62	-	-	1	5	9	15	28

Student Comments

Dr. Holsey-Hyman is exceptional! She is well informed in child welfare and her care for community and social work is worthy to be admired. I learned a lot this semester and enjoyed the Hot button topic video assignment that helped us to lean about current child welfare policies.

Very well-organized course with flexibility in the wake of COVID-19. Assignments were able to be modified yet still provided the ability to demonstrate the understanding of course material in a unique and interesting way.

I really enjoy my learning experience with Dr. Hyman. It is rare you find professors that enjoy what they do and are compassionate about the enrich learning experience of students. Dr. Hyman is one of the greatest faculty members that I have seen advocate for students, she is always available and responds immediately if you need help. This is my first-time having Dr. Hyman and she makes the learning experience so much better, and she has so much knowledge. We are privilege to have someone of her stature as a faculty member at "NCCU".

In conclusion, faculty are engaging in innovative ways to use technology in the classroom in higher education. Technology is also being used to make thoughtful decisions about its implementation in course development. It can also be used to inform educational competencies such as those developed by the CSWE (2015), and technology standards such as those from the National Association of Social Workers, Association of Social Work Boards, and Clinical Social Work Association (2017). Incorporating technology use into the delivery of an assignment stimulate new ways of thinking about social issues, and it provides a safe practice arena for skill development and creative problem solving (Bergant & Gale, 2020). Bickle and Rucker (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine student-to student interactions in an asynchronous online course in higher education.

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