

## Forgetting What We Have Learnt: The Digitalized Other and Implications for Students in COVID-19 Classrooms

### Abstract

In a new world of nascent rules, restrictions, and lockdowns, a student's biggest opportunity to connect with other similar individuals beyond their immediate circles is the digital classroom. Even with equipped tools of connection, students under COVID classrooms are ironically feeling the effects of disconnection and face risks for health concerns. As digital classrooms are shown to be prosaic, platformed, and productized, we will come to understand how building relationships with others but more so, of the self, is hugely hindered by faulty methods that do not work under new circumstances, and produce digitalized others which are consequential. It is as much an individual concern of a student's performance as a statement on the public issue of current digital education. Sociological educators are essential in reshaping these pedagogical practices and beliefs, which can otherwise damage both students and their instructors.

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“Honestly, the biggest impacts are not the lectures themselves, but what happens outside. We're missing the study groups, the spontaneous chants in the halls, the moments when you walk by a chalkboard to see a proof of something you forgot to consider. Now everything is painfully deliberate. Nothing happens unless you do it yourself. It's university distilled until it's bone dry, and I think I speak for both of us when I say it's seriously burning us out”

- User ASavageCabbage, *Reddit* Website, Retrieved October 9 2020

Most educators are now met with an unusual situation where the educated becomes seemingly experienced and better equipped. To most current students, technology has always been an integral component of their classroom experience. It may not have been *the* point of most general lessons, but the shift to online platforms for delivery, activity, and more recently community, is notable to its modern-day prevalence (See Shenoy, Mahendra, and Vijay, 2020; Maphalala & Nzama, 2014).

Though undoubtedly these methods offer a more accessible, instant, and inclusive learning tool for both educator and student, its complete form as an exclusive means to teaching have been particularly unclear within pedagogical literature (Emerson & MacKay 2011), instead dedicating its service to “supplementing rather than replacing traditional tools” (Cambridge International 2018, p. 13).

Before full technological teaching has had its scene this past year, the shortcomings of this medium have previously been discussed. Notably, some correlation is stated with screen-time and poorer performance on developmental milestones tasks for young children (Madigan, Browne, & Racine, 2019); conspiring to the pervasive concept of Fear of Missing Out (hereon FoMO) with social media use (Australian Psychological Society, 2015); and locally, social media was the highest factor of stress at 54% for surveyed Canadian students (Jack.org, 2019).

This shift of teaching is apparent within university settings, where under sociology, we can come to understand how to better approach these pedagogical challenges. Lyon et al. (2020) notes sociologists can “(re)tell the story of the discipline” (p. 4) inside less-Western focused and more inclusive introductory textbooks. With the rise of technological domestication, this pedagogical narrative has since become widely accessible and authorable (Waycott et al., 2013; Knochel & Patton, 2014). Physical textbook chapters are scanned as assigned course readings beside its quizzes, discussions, and video links under modules.

Yet truly, the real learning has always occurred – and arguably even more so now *outside* the classroom. Where content is taught, the environment to which it happens is also learnt in order to adapt. So, what is actually learnt inside today’s COVID classrooms? There *is* learning – but a kind as will be proposed, starkly different to the content and the intention of its remotely operated instructors, and in deeper analysis, hindering a kind of learning that exists beyond that of a student.

## Learning as We Know It

Technological platforms have long been embraced by students beyond the classroom, given the adoption of consumers (Apple tops the educational technology market in the 1990s), business firms (first office computers introduced by the 50s), and personal use (Artificial intelligence of iPhone's 'Siri' since the 2010s). As our "structures, daily routines and values" are for Berker, Hartmann, Punie and Ward (2006, p. 2), technologically integrated into a process known as *domestication*.

Picture in this case, a homeschooled child is tasked to refine her number skills on the desktop website *Mathletics*, yet at the same time, she is exchanging her native French with another Japanese based in London via the smartphone app *Duolingo*. With the domestication of technological devices, its use in turn also becomes domestic; local: accessible and instant learning occurs by the operation of a child, contained by the home computer and her palm-sized phone with countless opportunities to connect. Yet, beneath the instant exchange of content on said platforms, the learning is intimate: the user must first and foremost, learn to traverse the actual medium before being able to locate its value. One cannot expect to produce a stable build with tools in which they have not yet been exposed to or experienced in handling. Prior that the user and the content is conjoined, one is a student under the principle of the curious self and the static screen.

Yet, the concern with a teenage population lies where any healthy human cannot expect to develop in a one-dimensional role of a student, but rather they are to grow and express their many personalized *selves*, even if they are to do so from the capacity as student. Connection, as it can be cited to Piaget's *formal operational stage*, Vygotsky's *Knowledgeable Other*, and Erikson's *Identity vs Confusion*; and beyond the psychological literature to more sociological: Cooley's *Looking Glass*, Simmel's *Locus of Reason*, and at macro, Durkheim's *collective consciousness*, is constantly a two-way process that is rendered and internalized within a single self. The formation of a presented self is coupled with the commitment to strengthen the collective belonging to a group of interest, which in turn loans that effortful self a tangibility of

its objectified collective shadow. A self, so to speak, only exists within many similar others: **there are only persons, when there are people.**

Sociologically, this path to connection can be attributed by adopting social capitals, prominent in Symbolic Interactionism literature, but increasingly in modern group and conflict studies (See Calvo et al., 2020 & Alcorta et al., 2020). As will be demonstrated, the organic adoption of these capitals is extremely difficult- some cases impossible-under COVID classrooms as compared to the physical realm which is its originator.

On the macro scale, where growing literature indicates heightened anxiety from COVID-styled news (Gao et al., 2020; Mertens et al. 2020), the regular and exacerbated use of smartphones for news by “three quarters” (Statistics Canada, 2020) of a sampled teenage population can expect no better, given such content is “scattered all over the internet” (Tascano, 2020). With this, the search for social media capitals is plagued by the anxious scene, and more so hindered by digital classrooms promoting *selves* exact to the limited social role of a student. Additionally, students face relative deprivation in the digital form of FoMO as will be discussed. In understanding a COVID classroom student’s struggle, we adopt the canonical *Sociological Imagination* of C. Wright Mills to be contextualized for this illustration.

## **Imagining Connections**

University classes and the learning in it have in many ways turned upside down. Originally, we may see participation in classrooms as a *process* of learning, existing in both the curious self and the acting student to its role.

Per Mills, this rests in the immediate relations of a *private individual* that can co-operate many selves at once, emerging into the collective culture of the classroom while also treating to each personal facet.

Problems that arise here, be it being unconfident, unsure of the material, or a late assignment can be communicated and felt not only via the instructor-student bond, but also to other colleagues, becoming accessible as a *public issue*, even if it is personally labelled per each student number. The open forum of physical space and capacities to exercise multiple roles is taken for granted.

Yet in COVID education, there emerges a new norm of participating as a *product*; one is forced to fulfil, to compete whoever first dings the ‘raise hand’ button and speak over the clashing channels of other equally interested colleagues. Such that now, conversation becomes competition. Meaningful and private discourse becomes an act of distilling the question of day and its marks. This is even more apparent in language courses and the those needing participation as a rigid account to the grade.

This co-existence of curiosity, identity, and inquiry is robbed of its nuanced extralinguistic qualities to be more than a student- but as to Mills: a single number, a ‘profile’ under a name, the student retreats to their most singular function of their social role as a *private individual*.

Troubles that previously arose as a collective one, made possible by the physical realm that eases its connection, now becomes isolated to the linear relationship that is the screen and the student. Troubles and issues, even class-wide connection interruptions, wrongly sent links, or simply the cut-out of the educator’s feed is ultimately experienced, imagined, and burdened by the student across the screen: it becomes a trouble and issue that is both private *and* personal.

Thus far, the COVID classroom is introduced as a conflict of content and medium for both educator and the student. Yet, the essence of such question can be deepened by referring to the most individual level of this imagined and realistic situation. As such, we shall contextualize how a student’s impeded learning and growth beyond the classroom is due to becoming a ‘digitalized other’, in which symbolic interactionist George Herbert Mead (1863 – 1931) can offer.

### **The Self and the Student**

In *The Self* (1934), Mead states one “arises in the social experience” (Calhoun et al. 2012, p. 350) of “first becom[ing] an object to himself just as others are objects to him” (p. 349).

Easily, this is translated to a child’s first day at school: she enters a room of individuals somewhat like her, as she notices many firmly cluttered in cliques, others perhaps a little freer, a few isolated. Yet the only merit she has currently befriended is of the presented selves as fellow classmates, students, learners- even before their own individual personalities and collective presentations are to be later assimilated

as bullies, besties, and so forth. Thus, her first point of commonality is to view and acknowledge herself as a student too. This way, she is immersed into one alike the others, and thus can prepare to engage with the rules and languages of an incoming “social experience” (p. 350).

Becoming an ‘object’, to which it may first sound inhumane, is perhaps essential to becoming human. Before individual persons, there are the ideologies of people. Capturing the meaning behind a group’s beliefs and structure into an object is perhaps less taxing than individually befriending each of its members and plotting a three-dimensional visual of its commonalities.

Naturally, there can exist overlapping dynamics of individuals in the classroom, so it is useful to objectify certain appealing bookmarks by the masses. Later, such tool can perform its utility into small talk or afford a seat at a table under the premise of living under the same “social structure” (p. 350) as fellow classroom inhabitants.

Yet, such process takes considerable time, as noted by the generalized other that one first watches and exists outside before belonging into and within. To elaborate, a student first climatizes to the dynamic of the classroom at hand, as one would by steadying the grip of their trolley upon entering a chilly supermarket of selectable items and its signed isles. The process of integrating into a group exists through the “communication” (p. 350) a newcomer is to emulate as one’s own and present it accordingly. Imitation is simply not enough, where like learning a new language alongside an applied citizenship these practices require a genuine effort to the subtleties of its language, and ideally it is to see and hear it intertwined, live, and in action.

Thus, as one is to emulate, she must also emerge into the activities that declare this bond. Engaging inside its conversations, meetings, and recreations provides the opportunity for the newcomer to exist within the rings of its rules, as Mead notes it is “part of the enjoyment” (p. 354) to such discovery.

Yet to actually communicate, to belong, one must precede observation into objectifying themselves as compatible to the group’s fiber in order to be woven into. Doing so requires “tak[ing] the attitudes of the... group” (p. 355) and its members into thinking like them, and to do so within the framework responsible for having “controlled the response of [each] individuals” (p. 354) that is now this unified group. Once so, they become a *generalized other*: a projected ‘self’ that presents and exists

by taking the “attitude of the whole community” (p. 354) to which it eternally owes its origin. Any activity engaged by the group now becomes accessible and understood by its members with the common language of how others operate, and as such “does [one] develop a complete self” (p. 355).

Though as we will come to see, classrooms under COVID will prove difficult to acquiring these processes that Mead firmly stipulated were the “essential basis and prerequisite[s] of the fullest development of th[e] individual’s self” (p. 355), and thus becoming a *digitalized self*. Here, the analysis is divided into (i) *by nature* and (ii) *by design*.

### **By Nature**

It does not take a sociologist to recognize the impacts that ‘social’ and ‘physical’ distancing measures have established into the various domains of many societies. In part, it is the micro unit of analysis of post-secondary students which bears as much utility as it is substantial in analysis.

Historically, students are experiencing a deprivation no different than most others, in that we are all “ultra-social animals” (Tomasello, 2014). Of its various forms: the perceived status of 1880s working-class proletariats (Geschwender 1967), its multi-versed ‘fraternalistic’ group and ‘egoistic’ individual suffering (Runciman and Runciman, 1966), the concept of relative deprivation has successfully permeated its way into our social lives; online.

Now, in the confines of our homes and online profiles, an interruption to Coser & Coser (1990) is the “...expres[sion] of collective activities [which] assures regularity...” in a way of life, and importantly it is this maintained way of life which groups recruiting individuals can derive such norms, values, and rituals from. As many available sources are stagnated, its outlets are equally troubled. What Mead called the ‘enjoyment’ of understanding the norms and rules a group holds and its established body by how it interacts with its milieu, has increasingly shifted online. And though Desai et al. (2019) notes the way we bond “has advanced” (p. 33) with *domestication*, the need to “feel supported, valued, and loved” has never parted. Today, such statement is never truer.

## **Connections and Consequences**

Recently, mounting literature has shed light on the consequences COVID-19 has on students beyond the classroom: Rehman et al. (2020) saw stress, anxiety, and depression exhibited in Indian students and healthcare workers more than any other populations; on the macro scale, Chinese policy that encouraged social isolation yielded substantial mental illness symptoms for younger populations (Chen, Sun, & Feng, 2020). Similarly, Ye et al. (2020) found COVID-19 stressors as a key indicator to inducing Acute-stress disorder symptoms, as reflected with the economic disadvantage of 7,000 surveyed Chinese students in Cao et al. (2020) for generalized anxiety symptoms. Implications for closer mental health monitoring also translated to American students, where there is an overwhelming demand for grief support groups for “non-death related losses” (Siegel & Hager, 2020).

Connection is ever crucial at this time. As students reach out to their peers with Mead’s ‘significant speech’ via the direct chat of social media platforms and online classrooms, it seems relative deprivation persists with indicated literature. Incoming undergraduates may expect in some form an amiable or extravagant college experience, but simply making new connections and retaining them has always remained integral, as Fernback (2007) notes. Yet, by nature of teenage students, Somerville (2013) observes “heightened emotional intensity” (p. 121) in such samples even under perceived social scrutiny. Such need for connection, or a respite to successfully existing ones under current stressful climates, may explain the inclination of Canadians with sedentary lifestyles to increase internet usage for connecting with immediate circles (Colley, Bushnik, & Langlois, 2020) and Chinese young adults amassing an average of 5.08 hours per day online (Qin et al., 2020) posed with concerning health risks.

This is where the digital classroom has its flaw for accommodating connections at a full-time capacity. As illustrated, the productization of points, buttons, modules, and links embody pure, segmented individualism as much as its cultivated users. As previously *imagined*, students are forced to grow only in path of a social actor. Their actions are more with Gershon’s (2011) comparison to Facebook, derived from “entirely social pressure” (p. 877) to succeed educationally, but also to reflect the attitude of the environment so a self can thus emerge. It is with wisdom that Mead notes, “we talk to

ourselves, but do not see ourselves” (Calhoun et al., 2012, p. 358). Being able to first connect, stick with, or take heed from some members provide the *self* a digestible layout of the entire collective symbol which becomes the “significant speech” (p. 350) of the group member’s attitudes, personal and personalized. In a COVID classroom, those ‘raising their hands’ with their open microphone and camera are *selves* who are entering a realm of dark, prosaic profiles staring right back: it is a climate of unknown norms and rules, void of any attitudinal structure to lay oneself with.

Consequently, by the failed nature of social media and the supposedly diverse hub of a university classroom, students face FoMO, or classically: relative deprivation. At its extreme case prior to COVID classrooms, teenagers under this distress inside groups that bonded with the social capital of smoking cigarettes were noted by Haines et al. (2009) to have learnt “quickly and quietly” (p. 71) from the “dreaded social corrective” and risk of rejection. Though conversely, this anxious relationship travels both ways: once one becomes hooked to equip this social capital, many regular smokers were found with an abundance of “depressive and anxiety symptoms” (Patton et al., 2011, p.1518). In today’s context, the opportunity of group connection now shifts from the physical capacity and its previous alternatives when it is absent (writing letters, reunion, long-distance telephone calls), to now a tireless platform of online communication. The social capital of each group becomes a mixture of confusion that overlaps, overpowers and exaggerates a new user to becoming alienated from their group admission. And as one attempts to learn these new tools both on the front of classrooms and social media, they are left to become a *digitalized other*.

### **The Digitalized Other**

In its formation, the self is able to develop only insofar as they are accepted and defined by the group members as worthy. One’s understanding of the world is experienced through the reality of others, who in turn provide the reaction that shapes our progress and character. The *self* is at its crux: is the motivation to understand. Though when taking the generalized standpoint of a group and its members becomes static, difficult, and daunting, students are left to internalize the capital on social media and online classrooms which are abundant of productized connections. This internalized reality of socialization transforms students under

“unconscious social conditioning” (Haines, Poland, & Johnson, 2009, p. 67) into *digitalized others*. It distorts the individual to always reflect against a blurred reflection; becoming a self of misunderstandings, and to the social media capitals, a constant product of the commons- trends, hashtags, and likes stripping any sense of personality away from a personalized reflection.

And so, where the classroom climate fails to provide, social media becomes the last resort to connect daringly. Its capitals on such platforms are static, seemingly rigid than enabling reflection, and driven by the collective blasé of what *has* happened (trending of the world), rather than what *can* happen in a group’s “evolving process” (p. 49) which Fernback (2007) stress is key to communities, both online and offline. Per Cooley’s *Looking Glass Self*, Instagram can literally serve as its physical adage. Each profile is structured by 9x9 columns, a tab of previously recorded ‘stories’ detailing experiences pre-COVID that can only introduce FoMO, and the only open-forum of communication through a direct chat. Different to what a classroom traditionally offered in its capacity to learn the content and the classmates with its inter-personal liberties, every step to social interaction is static, and productized. Approaching an entire group can become overwhelming, as individuals are not met, but instead it is the interpretation of their blasé, static symbols.

It is also noteworthy here, that the applied definition of *the digitalized other* not only exists in the capacity of Mead in that we now rely on actual digitalized means to socialize, but equally in the sense that this form of learning produces the ‘othering’ of restless individuals digitally; such that relative deprivation is to group belonging, and absurdly as aliens are to humans.

## **Forgetting What We Have Learnt**

In many ways, **the sociology classroom is the simulation of the untested world**. What we produce out of the classroom and into the world, is a duty tantamount to what we have spent years dedicated towards. Sociology- to quote Bourdieu: *is to manage to think in a completely astonished and disconcerted way about things you thought you had always understood*.

As the force to this progressive, interdisciplinary, and contemporary practice, it is our duty to realize the biggest lessons of our current troubles, be it public as

always private, is perhaps not to be derived externally by some hasty revelation, but of our own doings; forgotten and locked in place as common practice, and itself the true teaching, marinated with unrealized time and unapplied experience.

More so than its impact, the research on domestication has long been debated per Boutelier (2019), in which many scholars have “take[n] so long” (46) to dispel the “thinking [of] our toxic, plateaued education system”. And perhaps what is deemed taught can become points of new teachings, in that “[its educators] play a strong role in helping break these cycles”. On the larger scale of the teaching network, Lyon et al. (2020) outlines the inescapable “metropolises of the Global North” (p. 4) and its pushed introductory textbooks and liberal ideology.

Rather than focusing on ‘*making things as normal as they can*’ with past fixtures of what worked for physical or part-time technological teaching, perhaps fusing methods that can accommodate a ‘*new normal*’ may be more appealing and feasible. Breaking this “unquestioned good” (Gershon, 2011, p. 881) is no doubt difficult, as to Spinoza, we like things not because they are inherently good, but they are deemed good, because we had liked them for its applied convenience. So, choosing to operate on the capital of discussion posts as means to justify meaningful, human connections is to blatantly ignore the nurtured context to which groups can operate and accept new willing members, in which mere action becomes acceptance.

## **By Design**

### ***One Lesson, Many Selves***

Where a physical classroom triumphs over the digital, it is the capacity of connecting to a larger group through its individual members, and attempts of an exploring *self* with “all sorts of different selves [we] refe[r]” (Calhoun et al., 2012, p. 351) to as classmates becomes excused under the trivial activities a student actor under the “social structure” (p. 350) of a classroom would perform. Passing notes, catching their name to exchange contacts, or eavesdropping into their conversations; an amiable, romantic, or competitive incentive can be established, and the self can ultimately decide to continue taking the attitudes of these similar others.

The tensions of a deliberate approach to forcing a friendship or connection is mitigated under the physical capacity that there are other individuals of the group of interest to also persuade. Additionally, student bonding is normalized in the setting of a classroom: collaborative quizzes, group work, or ‘explain to your partner why you chose this answer’ scenarios. It fulfills the first half of courting student selves together, and leaves the other half of the more intimate *selves* to be presented and learnt. Applied on the individual level, Coser’s piece on social group conflict may see those latter interactions as “safety valve activities” (Kivisto, 2013, p. 213), mitigating any tension of premature or overwhelming recruitments to a group by guising activities which every student and self can act under roles of collective validation.

### ***Discovering the Process***

Long before our current state of full Zoom lectures and Canvas-structured classrooms, these platforms have operated its successful (financially and of its increasing usage today) delivery on the basis that Osipov et al. (2015) have studied into as *gamification*. Learning instead, becomes a process of consequential reward and planned discovery from completing, fulfilling, or unlocking content-related tasks like an enjoyable quest-driven game.

To its opposite, a dull-fully placed (than presented) load of course information via a click-on-click basis is overwhelming to the learner, as no further incentive arises other than the initial fading curiosity. For instance, one condition in the study saw two stranger participants accomplish language learning under the provided application that rewards currency to both parties’ benefit of the “virtual economy” (p. 72) the longer they had stayed. Interestingly, Osipov et al. (2015) saw more pedagogical achievements than artificial ones, in which learning persisted “regardless of the fact that the average communication time is not very long” (p. 75) and less arbitrary points were thus received. Simply put, learning with applied principles of gamification are not needed at the face of each stepping product, but enough of its presence as a framework can ensure a process to structure and retain inspired learning.

### ***Breaking Room for Thought***

Where a physical classroom offers the retreat of many selves that can cope with its equally diverse class members, today's rendition of this practice may prove less flexible.

Capturing the attitude of the whole requires the exposure of its individually interacting members, which a break-out room cannot provide. From linguistic expressions to their physical positionings, the subtleties of group dynamic, structure, and beliefs are torn into toppled prosaic cubicles; the bricks of today's COVID-classrooms.

The *self* is left as a mere student, stagnant to the confines of a social actor, and presented the only choice to grasp onto the capital which its productized infrastructure provides as 'engagement' buttons, modules, and links. Compared to a physical capacity, Marsh et al. (2008) notes in its literature that groups allow for individual members to evaluate their own self-opinions and abilities, and such trend is additionally observed in physical classroom environments where students can engage in 'upward' and 'downward' ability groupings (Rueman, 1989), all of which allow for organic *self*-growth and assimilation.

Yet, break-out rooms and its video-conferencing medium have interestingly been beneficial in both proposed and practical use for medical students (Chick et al., 2020; Hannon et al., 2020). Notably, its proximal benefit of long-distance teaching (Chandler, 2016) have also extended advantages for the wider student population; the voyeuristic capture of every attending student allows the educator to create and adapt an intimate environment (Riedl, 1995), but also utilize the anonymity of students behind profiles as a means to lessen their stresses of being singled out (Roschelle, Penuel, & Abrahamson, 2004). However, barriers of technical difficulties are surpassed by more concerning points noted by Chandler (2016) as student and tutor confidence.

### ***It's About Time***

As COVID restrictions interrupt the collective activities and routines that maintain a sense of time as Coser & Coser (1990) can be applied, students are faced with the additional burden to keep up with the course alongside their emotional connections via proliferated screen-time (Colley, Bushnik, & Langlois, 2012). Thus, a viable option of combining these two junctions is through the use of office hours. Since its negative views (King, 2002) are surpassed by positive correlations with academic

performance (Guerrero & Rod, 2013) and student appreciation (Li & Pitts, 2009; Lillie & Wygal, 2011; Mcphee et al., 2020), integrating educator-student office hours alongside rooms dedicated just for students to interact freely may be advisable.

Though disconnection is constantly reminded by the remote way we now connect, it is important not to forget that there are selves who still need connection. Where high procrastinators fare poorly in class performance due to a lack of discussion (Michinov et al., 2011), it may be wise to consider communication as a barrier between international students. Asian students who struggled with communication in a Western University were classified as holding an *independent-self concept* and *social-self concept* by Kwon et al. (2010), yet nonetheless benefitted from a discovery of one another, and thus followed by a sense of community despite different learning styles. It is with Lyon & Guppy (2016), that communication between diverse students has shown various significant influences on its students which can tackle the COVID implications for students in all online courses, adaptable and transfixed (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

Course instructors should look less to what more devices can be added as its equipped width, but more so the depth to which we can hone in. As discussed, implications can be taken on a focus of emotional well-being, decreased emphasis on productized social capitals, principles of discovery and gamification, and to nurture a platform for selves to truly connect organically and less so by order. One thing is certain along Moore, Dickson-Deane, & Galyen (2011) in that educators, cross-country and pedagogically diverse, maintain very different views and definitions of online, e-Learning, and distance learning.

As sociological educators it is important to be reminded that definitions and labels *do* matter, and if attempts to dispel these fixtures are at the least bonded with a recalibration in staff understanding and lesson standards, then fewer cases are likely to suffer from its inconsistency across classes. After all, Iivari, Sharma, and Ventä-Olkkonen (2020) concludes that “we should not only consider student recruitment, but also [the] retention” (p. 5) that will fruitfully provide for the work load of educators, the mental well-being of their students, and the realm of COVID pedagogy onwards.

## Conclusion

Notable attempts are made at reframing how sociology is taught, and specifically of Lyon et al. (2020), the ‘what, how, and who’. This paper aimed to show the nature of challenges students can face, albeit the relative deprivation that today’s climate is only exacerbating.

Yet reminding ourselves the way we can disconcertedly reproach these incompatible designs to accommodate a new normal is crucial for more than the *digitalized others*, but to educators, and many future ones we are producing today. Everyone is digitalized; it is crucial here that we try our best to least produce *others* in this process.

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