

# Pandemic Pedagogy – Challenges and Achievements

## Using CANVAS and ZOOM to Teach an Undergraduate Course at Iere University during COVID-19

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LEESHA ROBERTS

### *Abstract*

*Like many Higher Education Learning Institutions around the Caribbean, Iere University's Bachelor of Education Programme catapulted into complete online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Narrative Inquiry reviewed the emergence of an Instructor's "Pandemic Pedagogy" while teaching third-year students an Introduction to Research course during Semester 2 of 2020. The Instructor used her field notes, the LMS analytics and semi-structured interviews with students to discover the emerging themes about pedagogical barriers and achievements encountered with online teaching during COVID-19. The inquiry findings included: the Instructor's reflections on various online pedagogical strategies that contributed to her "Pandemic Pedagogy" and students' reflections regarding the sudden shift of course modalities. This inquiry will add to the emerging body of scholarly work on the impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education and the opportunities for further investigations into using innovative and creative 21<sup>st</sup> century online learning strategies in the Caribbean.*

**Keywords:** pandemic pedagogy, educational technologies, online teaching

## Introduction

Iere University started as a higher education institution in 2004 with a primary focus on the development of Trinidad and Tobago in engineering and technology. Over the years, Iere University expanded its focus to align with the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) in education, the humanities, environmental studies, agriculture, and food security. In 2008 Iere University was locally accredited by the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago (ACTT) and renewed accreditation in 2017 for another seven years. As a fourteen-year-old academic institution, Iere University has a fair amount of the nation's citizens and some Caribbean neighbours seeking tertiary education at the full-time and part-time programmes within the age groups of 15 to over 45 years at nine campuses in Trinidad and Tobago.

This paper is positioned within the Centre for Education Programmes (CEP). The CEP graduates approximately 1500 students yearly and is one of the prominent programmes within Iere University. Younger students within this programme are usually registered full-time, and older students are generally part-time. The programme accepts students desirous of attaining a Bachelor of Education, and there is typically a mixture of teaching and non-teaching students. The academic staff consists of over 40 faculty members ranging from Instructor 1 to Associate Professors.

This Narrative Inquiry focused on one Instructor's experience during the country's COVID-19 pandemic alterations for higher education. The Instructor reflects on the achievements and challenges encountered while teaching during a global outbreak using "Pandemic Pedagogy" over the second semester of 2020. The Instructor considered the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on how she usually conducted her class and how it affected her students who had already begun the semester and had time and space shifts for learning. Narrative Inquiry within this teaching and learning context allowed the Instructor to examine how she could emotionally reconstruct her professional identity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, she also explored the realignment of her pedagogy during the pandemic to accommodate students solely online using Iere University's CANVAS Learning Management System (LMS), the university's quality assurance practices and policies for teaching and learning. After analyzing her field notes and the participants' stories, the Instructor claims that to effectively apply online instruction at the higher education level during Emergency Remote

Teaching (ERT), it is inevitable that some innovative disruption occurs. Educators can use disruptive learning strategies such as Design Thinking, creative student engagement techniques, and Authentic Assessments to ensure continuity of the learning process during the ERT and post-ERT.

Through Narrative Inquiry, the Instructor created a textual source by “re-living and re-telling” stories of her and her students’ experiences using CANVAS during the COVID-19 pandemic physical school closures. The ability to enact and modify her professional identities as well as draw upon various personal identities of her students (such as feelings, moral dispositions, career) and external social conditions (such as the online context and sociocultural environment) allowed her to develop her “Pandemic Pedagogy” which focused on both the university guidelines and students’ instructional needs.

## Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this Narrative Inquiry utilised four continuously discussed themes within the educational discourse, as shown in figure 1. These themes are Teaching in Emergencies, Distance Education, Instructional Design, and Student Engagement. The themes are interconnected to the Instructor’s narrative analysis of her semester experiences.

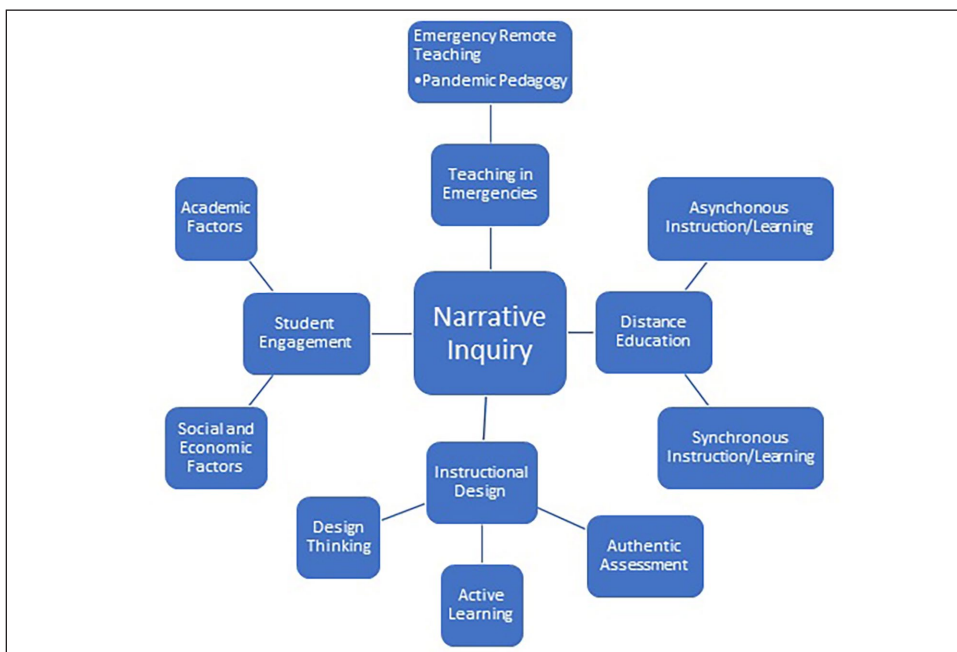


Figure 1. Conceptual framework themes.

Teaching during emergencies is a body of knowledge that emerged during the 1990s. Teaching in emergencies explores continuing education during worldwide crises such as natural disasters, human-made, and silent/chronic emergencies. Mary Joy Pigozzi's "Education in Emergencies and for Reconstruction: A Developmental Approach," from the April 1999 UNICEF Working Paper (cited in Kagawa 2005, 492), posited that silent/chronic emergencies such as pandemics warrant education crises and reconstruction strategies that do not disenfranchise students during the event. Education systems were disrupted when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 pandemic on March 11, 2020. Governments worldwide compelled all schools to adapt to teaching in emergency mode. This disruption within the education system has forced educators to either be reactive or remain unchanged in their instructional and pedagogical approaches to teaching (Mishra, Gupta, and Shree 2020). Hodges et al. (2020) have defined this learning as "Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)" because, unlike online learning, schooling during the pandemic occurred because education systems urgently needed to react to the school closures and the continuity of learning because of the pandemic. This erratic change to ERT further formed the emergence of "Pandemic Pedagogy." Rodgers (2021) defines Pandemic Pedagogy as "the approaches we employ in instructional environments to foster learning in the context of a serious health crisis" (145). Schwartzman (2020) created an online social media group named "Pandemic Pedagogy" and described the use of this online group as a reactive change to teaching for teachers and educators during the initial COVID-19 lockdowns throughout the world. During ERT, many teachers grappled with online teaching pedagogy, and those disruptive and innovative activities formed "Pandemic Pedagogies" for educators worldwide. Information Communication Technologies (ICT) and Instructional Design of student content had to consider online pedagogical strategies (Miller, Sellnow, and Strawser 2021), highlighting the essential elements of Distance Education during ERT. Kalloo, Mitchell, and Kamalodeen (2020) researched the impact of ERT on the School of Education's Programme at UWI St Augustine. The study found that while the institution was an early adopter of online learning, there were some organisational barriers, such as organisational change fatigue.

A contributing factor to organisational change fatigue is the reactive redesign of instruction during ERT. Most Instructional Design scholars agree that instruction design should be systematic and elicit experiences that allow students to gain new knowledge/competencies (Al Mamun, Lawrie, and Wright 2020,

Arghode, Brieger, and Wang 2018). Using Design Thinking and Active Learning promotes problem-solving mindsets (Bajracharya 2019, Baker III and Moukhliiss 2020). Authentic Assessments consider not only the content assessed but also the learning context (i.e. learner, learning environment and the opportunity to implement the content learned). Overall, Instructional Design makes learning effective, efficient, and less complex (Morrison et al. 2019, 4). Unexpectedly, ERT warranted redesigning the F2F instruction to elicit student engagement during online lectures. Student engagement focuses on students' time and effort in their studies and how the resources are deployed and organised within a learning experience that allows students to participate (Owusu-Agyeman 2021, Paulsen and McCormick 2020). This therefore links the concepts of Instructional Design and Distance Education to Student Engagement and Teaching in Emergencies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **An Indigenous Perspective on Teaching During COVID-19**

According to Smith (2021), indigenous research continues to be a contentious discourse when disseminating knowledge from an indigenous perspective, especially if that discourse does not follow the norms of “Western academic concepts.” Expressing and framing an Instructor's experiences from the Caribbean culture position according to the indigenous practices of the country is usually seen as problematic by Western researchers, particularly when the methods are not aligned to what they are accustomed to in the Academy. Indigenous practices are not considered actual knowledge or are seen as irrelevant because they do not follow traditional paradigms and methodologies framed by institutions of academia that have controlled the discourse of research for decades (Windchief et al. 2018). Decolonising Methodologies allow the researcher to engage with cultural and social norms during the research process by using strategies to collect data that “. . . decolonize our minds, our discourses, our understandings, our practices and our institutions” (Smith 2021, xiii). In this instance, the Instructor decided to use a method that retains her cultural knowledge, a Trinbagonian<sup>1</sup> perspective on teaching and learning during COVID-19. The indigenous narrative allows the researcher to document the dialect of Trinidad and Tobago (*see* Appendix 1), Iere University's culture, and higher education academia perspectives.

Smith, Tuck, and Yang (2018) contend that using Indigenous Methodologies such as Narrative Inquiry assists in deconstructing the power of research and

allows a researcher to construct knowledge more aligned to the community in which the inquiry is positioned. Additionally, Graeme (2013) argues that this type of research is active as opposed to the Western research paradigm that treats the participants as passive subjects.

Using Narrative Inquiry in this study allowed the researcher to tell her stories about her experience and discourse with the students while using the CANVAS during COVID-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago. The use of this method also demonstrates inter-connectedness through the exploration of feelings, experiences, and behaviours over the inquiry period (Yuan and Lee 2016)

## The Study

From a pedagogical standpoint, the research question was positioned around the challenges and achievements using the online learning tools – CANVAS and ZOOM. What pedagogical challenges and achievements were encountered by the Instructor using CANVAS and ZOOM eLearning tools at Iere University during the COVID-19 lockdowns?

## Contextual settings

This inquiry utilised the verification strategies Denzin and Lincoln (2018) outlined to ensure Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to qualitative rigour (Denzin and Lincoln 2018). This inquiry used Credibility and Transferability techniques to ensure Trustworthiness. Prolonged observation and engagement of CANVAS and ZOOM for Semester 2, 2020, for the RESH3003 course and Member Checking increased the inquiry's Credibility and the Crystallisation of sources and methods.

The study occurred during COVID-19 lockdowns in Trinidad and Tobago in the middle of the 2020/2021 school year. The Instructor collected primary data from the course analytics, used field notes, observations during CANVAS and ZOOM interactions with students, and semi-structured interviews with students. The field notes were made weekly using the recorded ZOOM classes after each class. The Instructor used CANVAS analytics to determine the frequency of the students' visits to the LMS over the semester to complete required course activities. The Instructor's field notes provided pedagogical lesson reflections and stories related to her online courses. The semi-structured interviews allowed the students to relate their course participation experiences.

## Participants

The participants were third-year students from the north and south campuses of the CEP. Students were enrolled in the RESH3003: Introduction to Research, and the course was in progress when the COVID-19 pandemic began. This course did not require a prerequisite, and all the content was new. The Instructor used the CANVAS announcements feature to ask students from the north and south classes if they were willing to participate in a one-hour interview via the ZOOM application. Six students responded to the request – half from the north and half from the south. Using semi-structured interviews in this part of the study was valuable because it assisted the researcher in understanding and documenting the range of ideas, feelings, and perspectives the students had about how the closure of physical classes started and their transition to online learning using CANVAS and ZOOM. The preparation for the interview sessions followed an interview protocol that included seven open-ended questions based on the initial research question. The Instructor discussed the session's scheduling, permission to record, the transcription, and the member checking process with participants.

Richardson and Adams St. Pierre (2018) posited that triangulation uses different methods (for example, interviews, documents, etc.) to validate findings from the assumption, that there is an object or point to be triangulated, but qualitative researchers do not triangulate – they crystallise. “Crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic” (Richardson and Adams St. Pierre 2018, 1417). Therefore, I used observations, field notes, ZOOM recordings, and semi-structured interviews to ensure Crystallisation in this inquiry.

## Data Analysis and Results

The results are presented and discussed according to each theme that emerged from data collection. There are examples of how the autoethnography method supported each theme (feelings of worry and nervousness etc.) and the reflections of student experiences and insights into how participants adapted to ERT.

Chang (2016) argues that even though chronicling and inventorying can be used to recall personal memory data, researchers can add their unique strategies based on the context of the inquiry. If the researcher wants to use the technique of self-observation to collect data, there are two options: field notes with

self-reflection and self-analysis, or a culture gram. The Instructor used field notes with self-reflection and self-analysis. The interview questions were used in the data analysis process, which led to discovering the emerging themes.

The analysis of the transcription from interview data followed the procedures outlined by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014):

1. **The first cycle of coding:** This utilised in vivo coding. This type of coding uses words or short phrases in the jargon and dialect of the participant (Miles, Huberman, and Saldana 2014). For instance, a term used repeatedly throughout the interview sessions was “stress.”
2. **Operational Definitions of the codes:** The codes’ list was determined based on the first cycle codes. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) posited that properly defining codes removes misconceptions during the analysis and reporting.
3. **Generating themes:** Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) stated that themes allow the researcher to place the data in some order. The data are categorised into themes for easy reference during reporting. Some themes found in the data were feelings of worry and nervousness; CANVAS learning activities.

## Emerging themes

The field notes and the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using in vivo coding (Saldaña 2013). The semi-structured interviews were completed in May 2020, when the semester concluded. The participants are identified using pseudo names to maintain the anonymity of the volunteers for the study. These emerging themes from the analysis were used to answer the research question for the study.

## Analysis of semi-structured interviews

### *First cycle coding*

The keywords and phrases used throughout the discourse with the students were the following, along with explanations:

1. “Plenty content” – the amount of content available via CANVAS;
2. “Moving around” – exploring the CANVAS page whenever it is visited for course content;



3. “Active links” – the ability to access live content when a link is clicked within CANVAS instead of a dead link with an error page;
4. “Home stress” or “worry” – the feelings of stress because of the COVID-19 lockdowns and/or online learning;
5. “Online group frustration” – the dissatisfaction with working online in groups;
6. “Acting normal” – a constant and unchanging situation despite difficulties or disturbances;
7. “Not feeling it” – the ‘vibe’ of something or someone;
8. “COVID-19 pandemic concern” – concern about the pandemic impact on the life they were accustomed to before COVID-19;
9. “Cooped up in the house” – being at home for an extended period because of the government COVID-19 restrictions;
10. “Family issues” – at social and economic issues related to COVID-19, e.g. parents’ job loss; access to computer devices.
11. “Plenty more internet bill”/“increased data” – the increased cost of internet services within a household since COVID-19 restrictions.
12. “No place to study/focus” – lack of a peaceful area to carry out online classes while at home.
13. “Lots of work online”/“too many assignments”/“no consideration” – the considerable amount of work given while attending online classes.
14. “Too much screen time” – the amount of time spent online attending classes and completing assignments.

### ***Second cycle coding themes***

The second coding cycle used the axial coding method (Saldaña 2013). Two main themes with sub-themes emerged and will now be discussed.

1. *Anxiety: worry and nervousness*
  - a. The social and economic impact of COVID-19
    - i. Loss of employment
    - ii. At-home stressors (e.g., schooling at home; family responsibilities; movement restrictions)
    - iii. Digital divide: access to ICTs (devices and internet)
      1. data connectivity at home
      2. device access for education (i.e., sharing, non-functioning)

2. *Online student engagement nuisances*
  - a. Use of CANVAS and ZOOM
    - i. Frequency of usage for accessing learning content
    - ii. Submission of coursework
      1. Deadlines
      2. An excessive amount of coursework
    - iii. Online video conferencing
      1. Classes too long
      2. Lack of engagement
    - iv. The difficulty of group work

### **Theme 1: Anxiety – Worry and nervousness**

This theme emerged from the Instructor’s field notes and the data transcribed from participant interviews. The Instructor began describing her worry and nervousness caused by the COVID-19 mass transition to online learning via CANVAS. This feeling emerged because online classes were usually conducted for only a few courses when time and space logistics were previously problematic within the CEP.

#### ***Social and economic impact of COVID-19***

The Instructor reflected that classes are no longer face-to-face (F2F) but solely online, which meant student engagement and content had to be presented differently on CANVAS and the use of the ZOOM video conferencing for synchronous class sessions. On the other hand, the students’ reflections revealed various social and economic stressors that impacted their online education experience, such as loss of employment, at-home stressors, and a sense of confinement because of COVID-19 cases.

One student stated, “When the lockdown started and limited movements started, I began to worry about how will I finish the semester (interview with Paul, May 8, 2020). Another reflected, “When the government shut down, my job was terminated, the boss say, no customers, no money so take ah unpaid vacation. That was what I had to deal with plus online classes” (interview with Sara, May 8, 2020), and another student stated, “Well I had tuh organise my siblings because they were just at home, Iere University start back real fast, but not MOE, so pressure!” (Mary Doe, interview by author, May 8, 2020).

Paul, Sara, and Mary all shared how the COVID-19 lockdowns impacted their educational studies and socioeconomic status, which became comingled and created a sense of anxiety. This sense of unease was different for the Instructor because her worry stemmed from being able to rearrange her teaching to cater to all students solely online.

### ***Digital divide: Access to ICTS***

The students also indicated worry and nervousness about their digital technologies. These concerns ranged from internet connectivity, sharing a device, and the cost of ISP service charges. All students indicated that before the university's closure, they used their devices and had access to the internet, mainly from campus. Some further reflected that because of connectivity issues and having to share devices at home, they had some apprehension about their ability to complete assignments and access lectures. Mary stated, "My mother had to increase the internet speed because is all ah we had tuh eventually be online from morning till evening" (interview by author, May 8, 2020). However, some students indicated that increasing internet connectivity was a financial constraint. Sara stated, "Well, I would normally use Iere University's internet and my work internet, so all I had was a data plan, so it was a mess for me the first month, especially after a job loss . . ." (interview with author, May 8, 2020).

In the first week of classes, the Instructor indicated a few obstacles with connectivity, audio/microphone, and screen sharing options on ZOOM. The Instructor reflected:

This was my first week of online classes. What a week! Working from home is not so bad; there is no transit time on the roads, but course lesson preparation is challenging. Even though I had my CANVAS page already online and students had access to the ZOOM link within the course page, a few students asked for the ZOOM invitation to be sent via WhatsApp, and I hadn't considered that. During the ZOOM sessions this week, one thing that struck me was the number of blank profiles I had to stare at while teaching. It was very impersonal, but given the number of connectivity issues and technical issues students had to enter the session and even myself with my audio and microphone, I can't help but wonder how they will make it for the rest of the semester.

This connectivity problem with each class took away at least thirty minutes from teaching time. Another observation is that students generally mimicked the classroom environment. There were early students I had to let into the ZOOM room when I logged in that were before me, and I usually log in fifteen minutes before class. (Instructor field notes, 16–20 March 2020).

The students' and the Instructor's concerns regarding internet access highlighted one of Trinidad and Tobago's digital divide challenges and implications for students continuing their education during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

### ***Sociopsychological perspective***

Manco-Chavez et al. (2020) described the 2020 academic year as a year of adjustment and discomfort for students and faculty. One student, Paul, described his COVID-19 pandemic educational experience as unexpected. He stated, "I didn't think we would be affected, honestly! So, when we had to stop classes, I was worried about how I would be affected. Being home with everything shut down was very strange initially, and having classes start back fast wasn't too bad" (interview with author, May 8, 2020). Mary, another student, added, "For me, it was a bit of a shock because we had just finished carnival, and I too didn't think it (sic) would reach here too, so I ignored it. Even when school closed, I was in denial and thought time tuh relax, yuh know, but Iere University started back up right away. I started to see one set ah CANVAS emails in meh inbox for ZOOM classes. I must say when the lockdowns started, I really started to feel confined." (Interview with author, May 8, 2020).

Paul and Mary shared surprise and appreciation for being able to start classes almost immediately after the lockdowns began. While this seems to be an achievement for Iere University, students being mentally ready to resume while still having a sense of worry and nervousness seemed challenging. Overall, this theme revealed the Instructor's and students' experiences during the initial COVID-19 lockdowns. While Iere University temporarily shifted instructional delivery to online, challenges were present for students and the Instructor from a sociopsychological perspective.

## **Theme 2: Online student engagement nuisances**

### ***Use of CANVAS and ZOOM***

During week two of online learning, the connectivity issue continued for students. There was a continuous in and out of students during the ZOOM session. Students did not turn on their cameras unless asked to respond to a question and cited varied reasons (*see figure 2*).

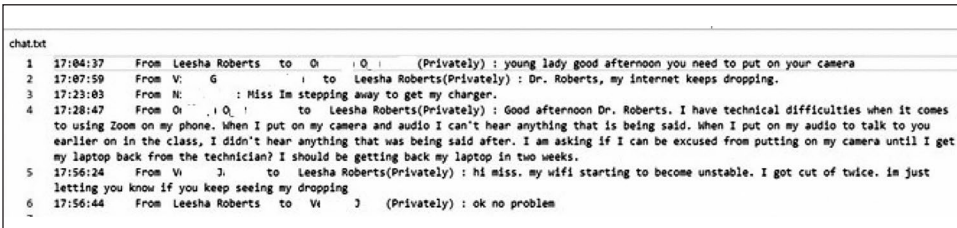


Figure 2. Messages from ZOOM chat area.

The Instructor’s field notes stated:

This week, I updated my course page and reviewed the engagement strategy where I lecture via ZOOM for two hours and place one online contact hour via CANVAS. During the two hours, I also use the ZOOM breakout rooms to promote collaboration and discussion of lecture concepts, facts, etc. For example, there is a final project, after discussing the topic ‘research problem’, students were given an article to do the same. This research course is heavy on theory, and checking for understanding is critical. The discussion activities are meant for the students to work independently. The two-hour lectures can be seen as a compromise for students, given the issues with connectivity and awareness about the adverse effects of screen time. Also, I decided to record the sessions and make them available to the students via CANVAS. I mainly observed this week that students use their phones (more than half the students in both classes). Also, CANVAS analytics show students log on and check unit content, which was part of my engagement strategy (Instructor field notes, 23–27 March 2020) (see figure 3).

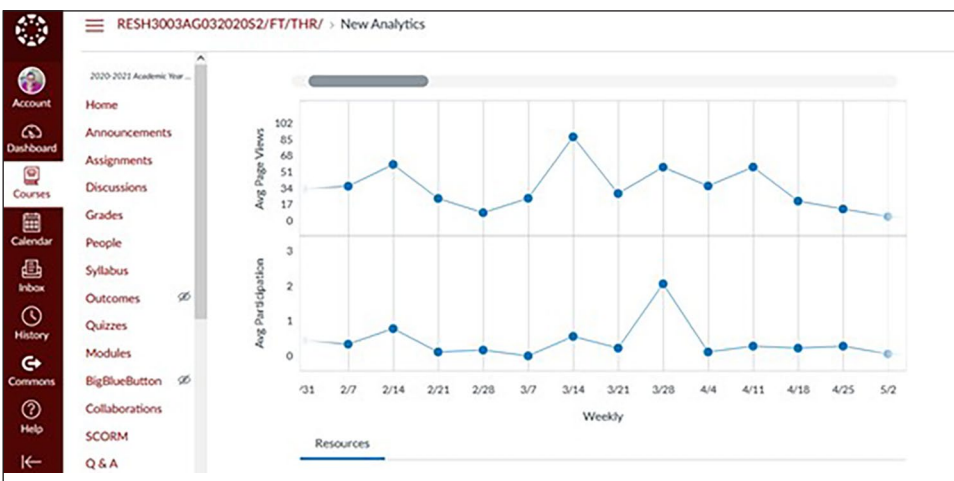


Figure 3. Average student interaction with CANVAS course page analytics.

This move by the Instructor to promote student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions during connectivity challenges are positive engagement strategies employed during ERT.

The transition for students to CANVAS was varied, but generally, students indicated that they could adapt to the course page. Paul, a student from the north campus, stated:

Well, miss leh meh tell yuh, eh, while I think I eh do too bad with this online schooling thing, the best thing fuh me was I didn't have to travel in de night, especially after one of my lecturers went past 8 pm (he stueps<sup>2</sup> before moving on). But! Internet, where I live, was real stress, my one keep going on and off, sometimes I only get about one hour ah ZOOM (he stueps before moving on). This class was one of those that I really appreciated because it gave a breakdown of each module with notes, PowerPoints, and videos, but de best thing was dem ZOOM recordings miss; dem things save meh life yes! (Interview with author, May 8, 2020)

Sintra, a student from the south campus, explained:

For me, I very interactive, so CANVAS was a big shift for me, but I had ah good online experience with the course content, and ZOOM sessions were a bit different from in-person lectures, especially when I had bandwidth problems (stueps before moving on) and had tuh be on and off. But de teaching was good compared to many other classes (stueps before moving on) mainly because, as Andy say, we got to use the breakout rooms, and we didn't have to stay watching dem screens for three or more hours (stueps at the end). (Interview with author, May 8, 2020)

Additionally, Melissa, another student from the north campus, revealed:

I think my transition was smooth because it was flexible working online, especially since this course was a two-hour lecture and one-hour online independent work. For me, I like order, and the CANVAS page was set up really good, better than most, and initially, I was confused because all I would normally do is go to the 'files' and ZOOM tuh access the other lecturers' work and classes, but after a while I realised, wait nah, this thing resembled meh course outline and layout like the modules for de course. I liked the calendar events; it kept meh in line with meh assignment due dates and meh ZOOM meetings man! (Interview with author, May 8, 2020)

***Frequency of LMS usage and ZOOM conferencing participation***

While students had positive experiences, the Instructor's field notes for the third week indicated that the students were getting casual and comfortable with online learning. Students seemed to neglect the seriousness of the ZOOM session as a formal learning environment vis-à-vis the physical classroom space where attention is paid to classroom protocols such as dress code and seating. Many students seemed to multi-task during the ZOOM sessions. While connectivity appeared to be an issue with students during the session, many were unavailable when asked to participate. When asked to turn on their cameras, they were either asleep or disengaged.

During informal discussions, the students were asked why they didn't turn on their cameras. The students stated various reasons for not doing this, such as inappropriate location, physical appearance, and camera not working. The Instructor's field notes reflected:

This week I realised a few things about students' use of CANVAS. After class, they do not review the content as instructed; only when activities are due the pages are visited multiple times. I may need to reflect on my two-hour teaching strategy and see if it is possible to incorporate the CANVAS into the session to get the students to interact with the CANVAS content more purposefully. CANVAS interaction requires changing my online pedagogy. My ZOOM sessions are becoming more focused on student attendance, but the connectivity issues persist, so how can I create equitable quality assurance checks for students? I also noticed that the consistently connected students do not turn on their cameras during the sessions. This inability to see students' nonverbal cues can impact class connection. I have started a pre-class discussion for each class where I ask students how they are going? How do they feel about COVID-19 country restrictions? And anything they want to talk about, social or educational. I started these sessions when I realised students slipped into current affairs and personal stressors during content delivery when asked to give examples or explain a topic discussed. Also, after three weeks, I think they have become somewhat comfortable with online classes. During the pre-class discussion, I asked students why they do not turn on their cameras, and some of them said that they don't feel like putting on their cameras for personal reasons, but if mandated, they will do it. (Instructor field notes, March 30–April 4, 2020).

The students also found that the CANVAS page was easy to use. During the semi-structured interviews, students were asked what they liked and what

obstacles they encountered when using the CANVAS and ZOOM instructional tools. Paul reflected:

I like that all my PowerPoint was available. I really like getting de reminders for due dates (laughs heartily), buh ah ignored some ah dem, ah find it was bothering meh! Aye! one other thing ah really liked too was de announcements, like when we had to work on CANVAS for de class session and had no ZOOM or something like dat. ZOOM was accessible in the same place, so everything was in one place. Ah even get to access meh school One Drive dey too! The break-out rooms in ZOOM wasn't bad either; we geh to do group work and sort out de group project just like in normal classes before COVID-19. (Interview with author, May 8, 2020)

Another student, Mary, stated, "I like dat I got badges when I done ah module. Also, de option fuh de grades and feedback. Fuh ZOOM, I like dat recording and breakout rooms, and it gave meh de feeling of ah real classroom". (Interview with author, May 8, 2020). Sara, a south student who was recently unemployed due to the COVID-19 restrictions, stated:

What I liked is that we actually had access to continuous classes as hectic as it was during the pandemic. I was a bit shaky using it at first because all I ever did before was go on to the files section, but I realise it has so much more, like keeping me on track for timing for assignments and discussions. With ZOOM, I had plenty problems because I was using data at one point, then my device dead out, so it was ah really good thing dem classes was recorded eh know (she smiles). I was able tuh geh CANVAS and see meh recordings, and fuh me, that was a lifesaver for dat course. I agree with Mary; de feedback and the badges was nice, dem kinda rewards was good and ah wondered why dem other lecturers eh doing dat kinda thing." (Interview with author, May 8, 2020)

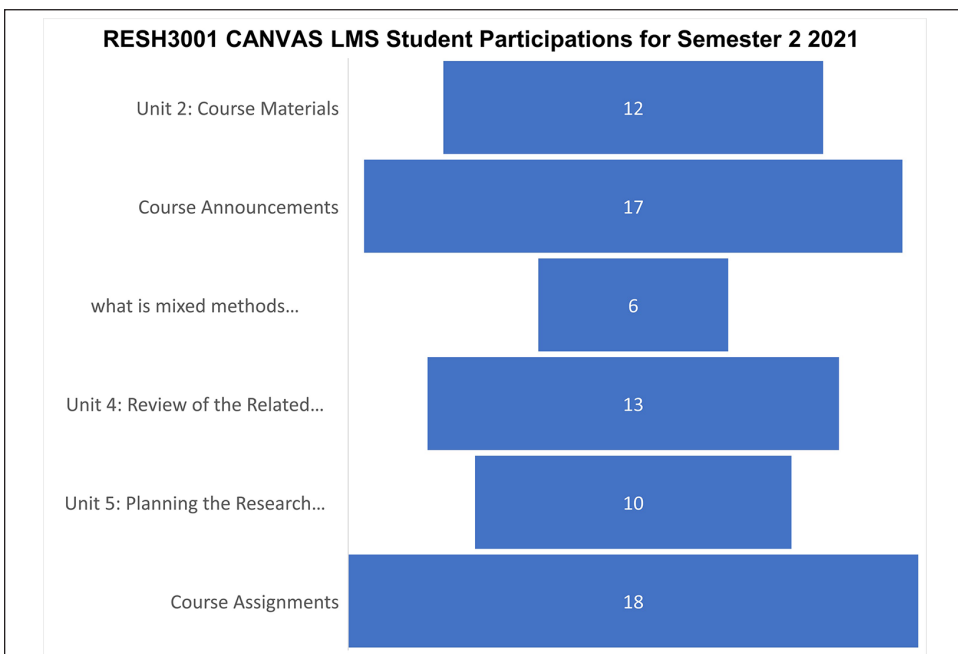
### ***Submission of coursework***

The amount of work online via ZOOM and CANVAS was an issue for some students, and they complained about an increased online work schedule compared to F2F. While CANVAS is an invaluable ICT educational tool, the Instructor pointed out that student involvement suffers if the Instructional Design isn't done correctly. However, there were obstacles with the transitions from F2F to online besides workload, which impacted the way that many students viewed online learning.



The Instructor reflected:

Well, I have made it to the second to last week of the semester, and I have learned a few things about online learning. CANVAS is a powerful learning tool that can be a practical resource for teaching at the higher education level. This week I used the ZOOM room and CANVAS differently. The students used the ZOOM breakout rooms and returned to the main room to present their activity (*see figure 4*). Usually, I visit the breakout rooms and see the group’s interactivity and engagement with the activities given. Once I give feedback, they must visit CANVAS and post via a discussion forum where their peers are required to comment and give feedback from their perspective on the group activity. I asked groups to make presentations in this week’s class, so part of the breakout room activity required students to plan a presentation. I asked students to present using any medium they wanted once they clearly stated their objectives. Many students used tools like PowToon, coordinated skits, and PowerPoint. After presentations, I asked students to reflect on the session. This was the first time I asked students to do the reflection in ZOOM. I did this because many started to complain about the workload. I also noticed that ZOOM attendance increased, but connectivity issues were still evident. I assigned the use of rewards to get CANVAS participation, and it worked well. Using the gamification strategy created more weekly engagement on CANVAS. (Instructor field notes, 6–10 April 2020)



**Figure 4.** Student participation with CANVAS learning resources for one class.

When students compared their online experience with their F2F experiences regarding workload, Paul expressed, “It was more! Ah does cyar take all yuh lecturers (stueps)! All-ah-all-yuh does feel all-yuh course is the only one! But ah must say the way this course was organised, it was manageable because we were allowed to submit work late” (Interview with author, May 8, 2020). Mary agreed with Paul’s exclamation, saying, “Yes, OMG! Some lecturers went over three hrs like it was face-to-face, and I had ah set ah homework (stueps). Now, this course wasn’t so bad, the two-hour lectures were good, along with the content online, but when all the other work was added, it still was plenty” (Interview with author, May 8, 2020). Sara reflected, “Even if the workload was less or more, I didn’t notice because of the anxiety of no job. I just get depressed thinking how I will make out after the semester. I eh really notice. I will say that notes on CANVAS helped, and the ZOOM recordings allowed me to review work, so that was very good” (Interview with author, May 8, 2020).

This theme focused on issues related to online learning, such as student engagement and settling on a pedagogical approach for the classes.

## Discussion

Safonov and Mayakovskaya (2020) contend that the COVID-19 pandemic underscored “technical, financial, health problems of place and time of participation in online classes” (93). The students shared that their online learning was satisfactory and the move to online revealed socioeconomic factors that influenced their education and their dependency on Iere University’s ICT campus resource. Henaku (2020) argued that these connectivity challenges hinder learning because class time is lost. For some students learning becomes fragmented because of the constant connectivity interruption during video conferencing. Connectivity challenges impacted student engagement, requiring the Instructor to make pedagogical adjustments during ERT.

Meyer (2014) indicated that student engagement is critical to the success of an online course. Additionally, student perception of facilitation and instructor presence within the online course contributes to successful asynchronous learning. Similarly, when active facilitation occurs in synchronous learning sessions, there is a feeling of connectedness between the Instructor and students during the course (Martin, Wang, and Sadaf 2020). Isaias, Miranda, and Pifano (2021) concluded that instructors who utilise Active Learning strategies in higher education

engage in activities that enhance group collaboration, adhere to specific design principles, and primarily evaluate their experiences using learning outcomes evaluation tools. In this inquiry, the Instructor utilised ZOOM breakout rooms, class discussions, and gamification pedagogical strategies to maintain engagement during the course. Given the persistent connectivity issues and infrequent use of cameras during ZOOM sessions, these strategies and tools created more significant learning opportunities.

Castelli and Sarvary (2021) discussed the challenges and strategies for facilitating and promoting the use of cameras during online classes and disclosed that students did not turn on their cameras for various reasons, such as connectivity, appearance, and multi-tasking. This inquiry's conclusions revealed similar reasons for students' camera use during ZOOM sessions. Generally, an instructor can revise or develop instructional strategies for future online classes that consider equity and inclusion for online courses to yield the most viable learning outcomes for students and lesson online learning frustrations.

Kochu, Beena, and Sony (2022) contend that student performance in online learning is linked to mental demand, effort, and frustration. If students feel that they are being overwhelmed with coursework assignments, they become frustrated and link that frustration to an unpleasant online experience. Elfirdoussi et al. (2020) revealed that some university faculty and students agree that while online learning is flexible, the need for F2F is inevitable. Teaching in an emergency requires careful adjustments to accommodate online learning and returning to physical school post-COVID-19. Online teaching has obstacles, and students indicated that internet connectivity, computer devices, a place to study, and economic stability need to be sorted out before appreciating CANVAS and joining ZOOM sessions. The students also indicated these factors hindered their optimal online learning experience. Students suggested that assessment practices be reviewed and revisited. The concept that assignments must be high quantity because they are online is unattainable. Instead, students shared that assessments should be rigorous and demonstrate quality learning outcomes during ERT conditions.

## Conclusion

The Instructor was able to comprehend the process of instructional modifications and how her academic identity was developed over time as a faculty member at Iere University through this investigation into her “Pandemic Pedagogy” while

teaching during COVID-19. The field notes focused on her understanding of the importance of educational change, quality assurance, and student concerns. Educators should systematically consider these factors within any changes initiated during ERT. Making field notes allowed the Instructor to identify her core academic values. These educational values include systematic planning for instruction – a critical component of successful learning outcomes; always practise compassion and consider students’ socioeconomic baggage in the learning space. Exploring students’ perceptions about how they felt while studying during the COVID-19 pandemic and how they adapted to the new way of learning was enlightening for the Instructor and can be insightful for Iere University. The university can gain insight into how students coped with studying during the COVID-19 pandemic and an example of how one Instructor adapted her instructional strategies to ensure quality learning outcomes. The Instructor’s experiences demonstrate that a faculty’s capacity to change their pedagogy based on contextual circumstances is possible. However, modifying previous knowledge to new and disruptive innovative ways of teaching requires careful reflection and adjustment, such as in this instance of teaching in an emergency. This study offers an initiation of further inquiry into Caribbean Higher Education Learning, Instructional Design, Pedagogy, and Teaching in Emergencies.

## Appendix

### Glossary of Trinidad and Tobago Creole Terms Used (Mendes 2014)

- Ah: replaces first person singular ‘I; ‘a; ‘of.’
- All yuh: means ‘you all.’
- Cyar: means ‘can’t.’
- Dat: means ‘that.’
- De: means ‘the.’
- Dey: means ‘there.’
- Eh: has multiple meanings. (1) at the end of a plea, e.g. save some for meh, eh; (2) after a threat, e.g. watch yuh self, eh; (3) didn’t, isn’t, not, e.g. he eh come, da eh tru, I eh leaving; (4) to add weight, e.g. yuh feel I doh know, eh?
- Fuh: means ‘for.’
- Leh: means ‘let.’
- Meh: means ‘me’

## Notes

1. Means Trinidad and Tobago – used to express unity and the single statehood of both islands (Mendes 2014).
2. “Suck air through teeth. A sound of annoyance, contempt, Ah Trini trademark” (Mendes 2014, 178).

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