

Special Issue on Distance Teaching/Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Challenges and Responses

The global outbreak of COVID-19 has profoundly changed our lives and professional practice. During the rapid switch to fully-online education, both teachers and students faced several challenges as it was a novel situation. This special issue of the Boğaziçi University Journal of Education aims to address this issue by focusing on distance teaching and learning practices during the COVID-19 Pandemic, focusing on challenges encountered and responses of teachers and students. Including research studies conducted in different contexts, the special issue also highlights the worldwide impact of the pandemic in educational processes and how challenges resulting from the pandemic have been resolved in different countries.

This special issue on Distance Teaching/Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic includes 8 articles, each of which focuses on special topics about teaching and learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Altınmakas, for example, investigates how different student and instructor roles emerged in higher education during the pandemic. Looking at a different context, Amijiwl and Satar examine Saudi EFL instructors' interaction patterns in synchronous online classes. Focusing on preschool teachers' experiences during the pandemic, Tsompanaki and Magos explore a module of community dance through distance learning. While Rousoulioti, Thomou and Tegou, focusing on teaching Greek, explore how digital board games can be used for vocabulary teaching and learning in online second language classes during the pandemic, Uyar delves into how peer-peer computer mediated interaction supports lexicon learning of second language learners. Zuo and Ives conduct an extensive literature review about the opportunities and challenges that emerged in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting an auto-ethnographic self-study, Gök Kaça explores the emotional challenges she encountered when teaching online during the Covid-19 outbreak and their impacts on her language teacher identity. Gokgoz-Kurt, on the other hand, examines how second language learners handled the challenges resulting from the pandemic in terms of first language use and learner autonomy during asynchronous classes.

In this issue, we aimed to showcase the distance teaching and learning practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the contributors of this special issue focused on various aspects of distance teaching, as they themselves underline, much more work remains to be done on an array of issues, such as, the features of emergency teaching in special education, face-to-face and virtual classroom instruction in foreign language contexts, and teacher training for distance teaching across the world. We hope that this issue will inspire much more work on distance teaching and learning in diverse contexts.

Duygu Umutlu & Nur Yigitoglu Aptoula
Special Issue Guest Editors