ESCargot

April 2020

◎ **From the Editor's Desk** ◎

Here we are! We made it! It's the end of the academic year here at Althouse. We sure didn't expect it to pan out the way it did (because if we did, maybe we would have added a couple more mementos into our hypothetical time capsule from two ESCargots ago), but all in all, we have hopefully grown as resilient teachers and made the most of it.

This is the final issue of the ESCargot for this year. If you're into exploring new music or reading new books/articles, there's something for you. If you're looking for advice and pointers from the Class of 2019, we've reached out to them too. Looking to relive memories from Grad Formal? Scroll on down! Opting for something on the interactive side? Surprise; we got you! And did we include some good-old fashioned articles? You bet we did!

To the Year 1s: I hope this year at Althouse has been an amazing experience for you that transformed you, and will continue to transform you, in all the best ways possible. I'm sure that next year's ESC will be eagerly awaiting your return. To the Class of 2020, I am so excited to be part of close-knit community of future leaders, and I hope that the connections and friendships you've made during your time here will continue in high spirits as we diverge again into new stories awaiting to be written.

From the Editor's desk, thank you to everyone who has contributed content and to everyone who has interacted with surveys and polls! The ESCargot is a student publication made by students for students, so your efforts go a long way. Come September, consider running for ESCargot Editor in the Fall elections, or write an article over the summer to send in. Finally, thank you for all the feedback and support along the way.

On behalf of the ESC, I hope you've enjoyed our programming and had good faith in the projects we pursued.

Have a fantastic summer!

Sincerely,
Dilpreet Moti
ESCargot Editor
escargotnewsletter.esc@gmail.com

OTCC 101

You may have heard about the Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council. Who are they and what do they do? Read on to get the scoop.

The Ontario Teacher Candidates' Council is an organization created last fall to speak for the voices of teacher candidates across the province, primarily in regards to the Math Proficiency Test. Executive members on the council come from Western, Queens, Brock, Ottawa, and Trent's faculties of education.

Collectively, they have held press conferences, invited teacher candidate feedback and concern, spoken directly with MPPs, and have written/contributed to articles and media available to the general public. Through fundraising, they have been able to secure a lawyer willing to assist in the fight against the Math Proficiency Test, and remain in communication with the provincial government. Currently, they have filed for an injunction, based on the climate of the situation that has now been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic, and are scheduled for a court hearing in November.

For more information, please refer to the OTCC's communication platforms:
- otcc.ca
- admin@otcc.ca
- @OTCC19 on Twitter and Instagram

Quarantine Jams

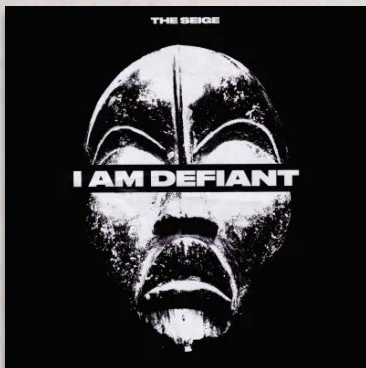A.F. recommends the album:

After Hours

The Weeknd

B.J.W. recommends the album:

Wasteland, Baby!

Hozier

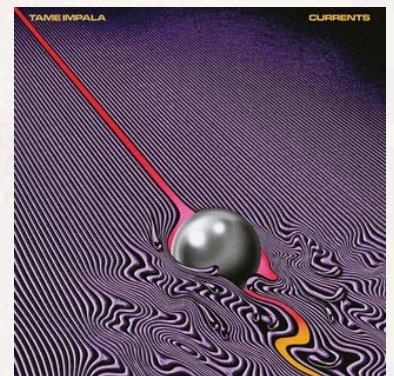K.S. recommends the album:

Future Nostalgia

Dua Lipa

Anon. recommends the single:

I Am Defiant

The Siege

Anon. recommends the single:

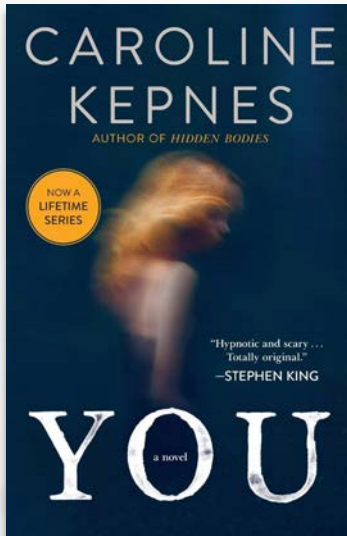**Years in the Making**

Arkells
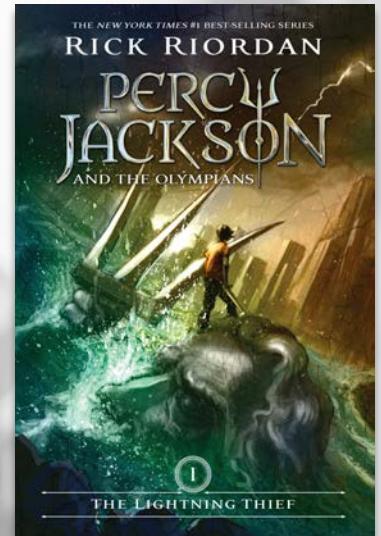
"Such a jam!"

Anon. recommends the single:

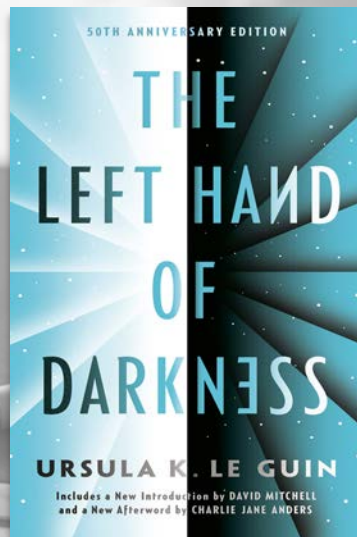**The Less I Know
The Better**

Tame Impala

What We're Reading

Anon. is reading:

CAROLINE KEPNES
AUTHOR OF *HIDDEN BODIES*

NOW A LIFETIME SERIES

"Hypnotic and scary . . . Totally original."
—STEPHEN KING

YOU
a novel

Anon. is reading:

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* #1 BEST-SELLING SERIES
RICK RIORDAN
PERCY JACKSON
AND THE OLYMPIANS

1
THE LIGHTNING THIEF

B.J.W. is reading:

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS
URSULA K. LE GUIN

Includes a New Introduction by DAVID MITCHELL
and a New Afterword by CHARLIE JANE ANDERS

K.S. is reading:

THE MAGNIFICENT #1 GLOBE AND MAIL BESTSELLER
"What a delight! This novel has exquisite writing and a wonderfully suspenseful story. A book you'll tell your friends about...." —*Frances Itani, author of Deafening*

ALL THE LIGHT WE CANNOT SEE

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

A NOVEL

"Intertwines secret radio broadcasts, a cursed diamond, a soldier's deepest doubts into a richly compelling package ... Irresistible." *—People*

ANTHONY DOERR

A.F. is reading:

ALISTAIR MACLEOD
WINNER OF THE TRILLIUM AWARD

NO GREAT MISCHIEF

A NOVEL

Water Fountain Chatter

A Person-Centred Analysis of Teacher Candidates' Approaches to Assessment – Coombs, A., DeLuca, C., MacGregor, S. (2020)

An Evaluation of Secondary School Nutrition Policy Compliance Using Vending Machine Data From the COMPASS Study in Ontario and Alberta, Canada – Vine, M., Butler, A., Harrington, D., *et al.* (2020)

Enhancing university practicum students' roles in implementing the Ontario Daily Physical Activity (DPA) policy – Coppola, A., Hancock, D., Allan, V., *et al.* (2018)

Realistic Mathematics Education – Van den Heuvel-Panhuizen, M., Drijvers, P. (2020)

Looking for hardcopies of the Ontario Curricula?

You can order a hardcopy version of the Ontario curriculum for a variety of subjects in English and French from the Publications Ontario website for **free**!

Simply type in the name of the curriculum you are looking for in the search box and narrow your search by selecting format (book) and author (Ministry of Education) on the side panel. Add it to your cart and have it shipped directly to your home!

Bonus: with some sleuthing, you can also find other resources on the site.
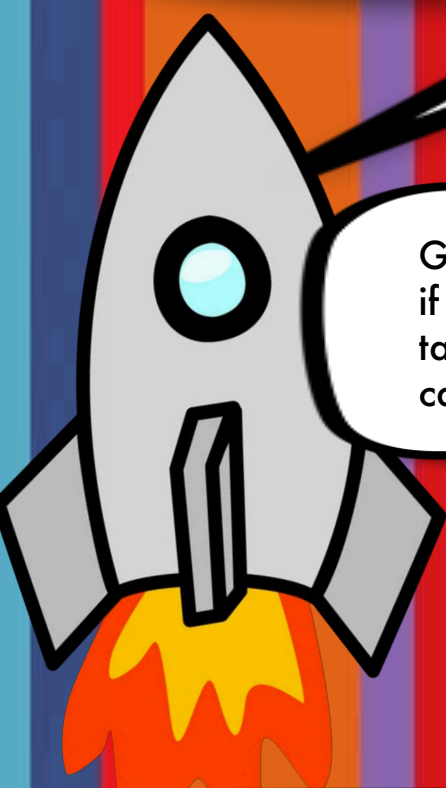
Hop over to ➔ publications.gov.on.ca

Alumni Advice

Before my first day of supply teaching I was beyond nervous! However I was pleasantly surprised with how quickly that went away. It won't take long for you to feel comfortable and confident in your new role. I found I felt much more at ease than I was as a Teacher Candidate, not having to navigate and balance that partnership. Or feeling like I had to do things the same way my Associate Teacher did. It's a whole new world, friends! And it is great!!

If you're struggling to find work, consider reaching out to colleagues and asking if you can volunteer in their classroom once or twice a week. This helps keep you fresh, and is also a great way of networking with fellow teachers and principals at the school. Might even turn into a job opportunity for you down the road!

These are unprecedented times right now. Please be easy on yourself and take care of your physical and mental being. School and teaching culture has suddenly shifted overnight. Rest assured, Althouse has taught you skills and given you amazing resources to become resilient educators. This is an amazing lesson for not online the new graduates, but also for us alumni. No matter what the classroom environment looks like, students are always the focus. I am excited that you chose this vocation! It is a beautiful experience! It was this time last year I was hired on as a supply teacher for my school board, and today I am in my second LTO contract. Opportunities will come your way! Enjoy the adventure. :)

Get your foot in the door anywhere you can! Even if it's far or in a bad neighbour hood. All principals talk and having a principal that sees your potential can go a long way.

Be professional. Act professionally.

The best thing you can do is self-advocate and be confident. Print out resumes in bulk. Apply to even things that you think you are underqualified for. Visit schools and drop off business cards. But most importantly, interact with staff and admin. It doesn't matter what you know and how many AQs you have if no one knows you. I walked into a full-time LTO (Sept to June) right off the bat.
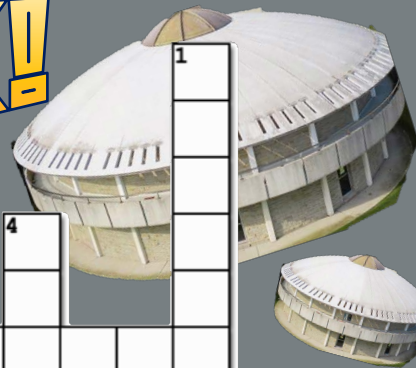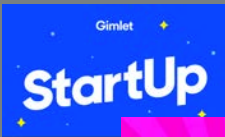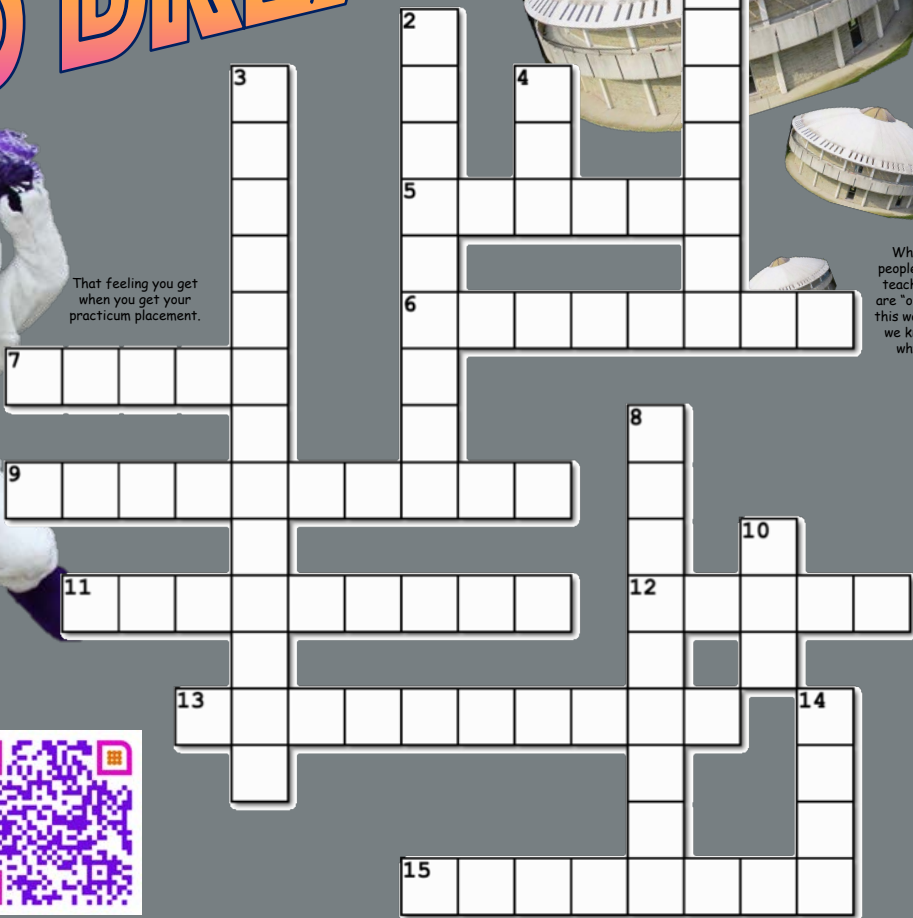
RECESS BREAK!

That feeling you get when you get your practicum placement.

A big chair for big responsibilities!

Podcasts we're digging!

Gimlet
StartUp

BINGE MODE

Scan the code for a blast to the past!

When people say teachers are "out of this world", we know why!

Across:
5. Talk to them about AQs
6. _____ Recreation and Athletic Centre
7. Has (arguably) the best bagels on campus. ["the" omitted]
9. For, Of, and As
11. What you can teach
12. The number of levels at the Education Library
13. A popular type of assessment at Althouse
15. The name of our Teachers' College
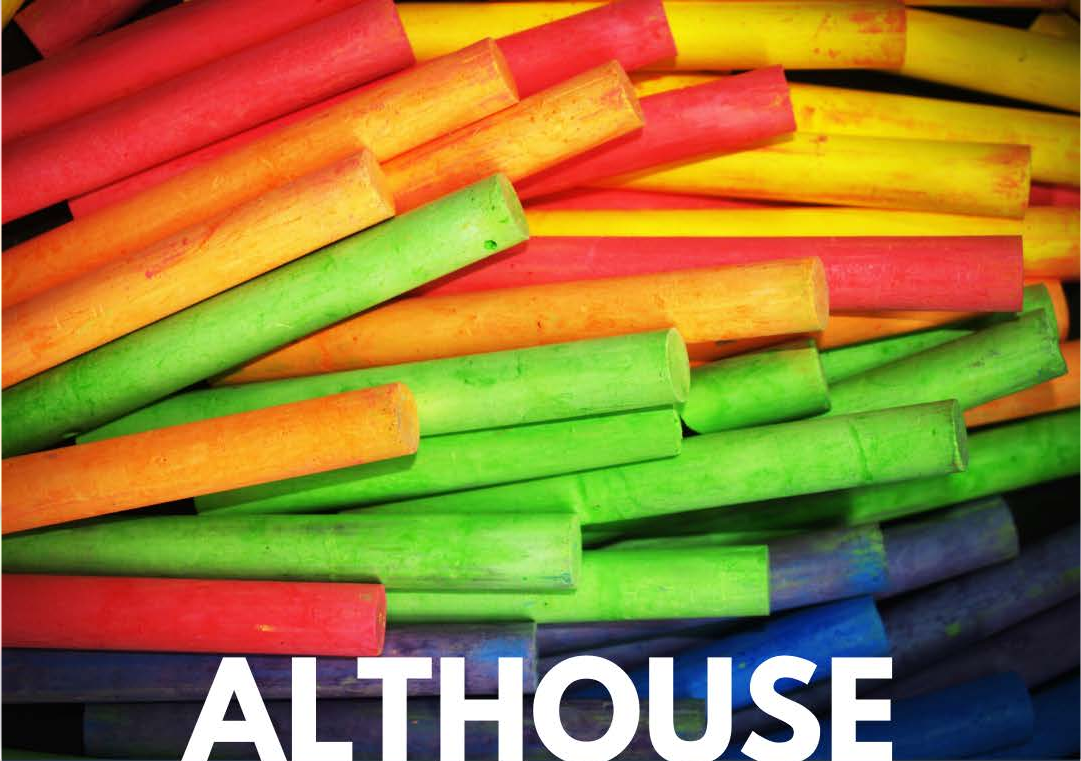
Down:
1. ESC's weekly event: _____ Wednesdays
2. The name of the 'perks' card given to incoming TCs (Year 2s, think back to Year 1)
3. A charity tradition at Althouse
4. Tuesday afternoons, you know what to do
8.. Something you should be building during practicum
10. The most colourful room at Althouse is the _____ room.
14. True/False: anyone can attend ESC meetings.

STEM⇒

Jon Bates

ALTHOUSE BINGO

Had an amazing time at Grad Formal	Went to a movie night	Participated in a Wellness event	Dropped in for Sports	Borrowed a book from the EduLibrary
Played board/card games in the caf.	Got lost searching for the ESC office	Dressed up for Halloween	Calculated time needed to grab lunch b/w classes.	Rejoiced when the parking gates were already opened
Caught offguard by 'tappable' whiteboards	Built a snow sculpture onsite	Dum, Dum, Dum, Dum, Dum... ____ ____!	Carried extra bags to class with demo lesson materials.	Had class somewhere other than your regular classroom
Proudly wore Western merch.	Showed up at 8 a.m. for an 8:30 class	Voted in an ESC election	Took part in an ESCargot survey	Twinned with another teacher candidate
Attended an ESC townhall	Dropped by for ESC office hours	Donated blood or to the Anova drive	Attended a social event by the ESC	Have a 'teacher' social media account

#AlthouseLetsTalk

Mental illness is not a personal failure ♡ Going to therapy was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Getting professional help can give you back control over your wellbeing. Everyone has mental health- please take care of yourself; you deserve to be the best, healthiest version of you.

#AlthouseLetsTalk

"After losing someone close to me, my mental health took a huge hit. I felt depressed, alone, and angry. I still feel like that sometimes. At the end of the day, I know I am in control and have the power to overcome those obstacles and strive to be a successful teacher. Don't be afraid to talk to someone. Therapy helps! Just know that you are loved and not alone! :)"

-Anonymous

From Athletic Directors, Katie and Dana, and VP Events, Cheryl

This year in Athletics, we are thankful to see many teacher candidates participating in our programming and getting active. Here's a summary of what we've accomplished:
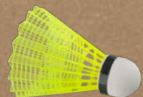
Basketball

Drop-in Sports

Charity Tournament
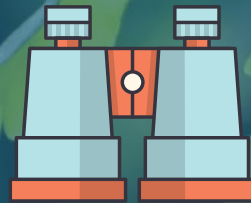
Dodgeball

European Handball

...and many more!

Bubble Soccer for **Kids Help Phone**

A (SOON-TO-BE) BIOLOGY TEACHER'S FIELD BAG

Jon Bates

Basic First-Aid Kit:

The importance of adequate preparation cannot be overstated. This sentiment holds true for classroom activities and field adventures. Health and safety should always be your top priority, and this kit will mitigate any complications you encounter while adventuring.

Small Trowel:

I always pack a small trowel or shovel to move leaf litter or shift soil when I'm looking for items that I can use to enhance the classroom experience (e.g. fossils, bones, seeds, plants, and insects).

Gardening Gloves:

A sturdy pair of gardening gloves can help you avoid several hazards: bacterial infections through cuts and scrapes, needle-sharp barbs and thorns, and zoonotic diseases (particularly relevant considering the global pandemic we're experiencing).

Ziploc Bags:

These aren't the most sustainable form of specimen storage, but they're excellent at preventing leaks and they get the job done. Ziploc bags are surprisingly sturdy, so I reuse them until they're holey and no longer viable.

Fig. 1: A co-constructed Natural Science Museum

Reusable Water Bottle:

Staying hydrated is important, and so is modelling the importance of sustainable living for your students. Chuck (recycle) your one-use plastic water bottles and invest in something more permanent if you haven't done so already! This will save you money in the long run and cut down on plastic waste.

Compact multi-tool:

This portable device combines an assortment of specialized functions in a single unit, some of which include: pliers for gripping and bending and blades for cutting or shearing. I use this primarily for collecting plant and fungi samples.

Camera + Lenses:

I've recently started to document my 'nature finds' and I'm now sharing them over social media channels. This can add an extra layer of depth to your educational portfolio and help you connect with students. Instagram is the platform I'm currently using, and I've shared it with all my students to great success.

*White-tail Deer Skeleton:

This obviously isn't a mainstay of my field bag, but this exceptional find speaks to the importance of a much larger educational topic: 'realia' (i.e. objects you can use – and should be using – as teaching aids). On May 3rd, 2020 I found a largely complete deer skeleton on the bank of the Credit River in Mississauga, ON and I'm planning on using it to supplement my future science and social science lessons. How and/or why, you ask? Let me explain, briefly.

Having something tangible in your bag that students can manipulate transforms the learning experience into something far more memorable and authentic. I've witnessed the power of 'realia' firsthand and I've had incredible success co-creating 'natural science museums' in my previous practica. Now I bring in anything and everything from plants, fungi, fossils, shells, rocks, minerals, feathers, insects, and BONES to supplement my lessons. The stories behind your 'realia' and their real-world connections help to ground the learning experience of students and engage them in ways that textbooks and virtual experiences simply cannot.

So, do you need a deer skeleton to hook your students? Probably not. But the fact of the matter is this: anything concrete and based in the natural world will grab the attention of your students and open up new, shared learning opportunities.

I should also mention that everything I find is sourced ethically and with great care, so as not to disturb the environments from which they are gathered.

A NOTE ON USING SOCIAL MEDIA...

For those of you who are concerned with maintaining professional boundaries, I follow several strict rules.

1. I only post educational content,
2. I don't follow my students (nor anyone for that matter), and
3. I don't respond to direct messages. My Instagram page is only used to upload educational images and videos and I only respond to questions that are posted publicly.

The teachers and principals I've spoken to regarding my Instagram page have always been supportive of the idea!

Fig. 2: A White-Tailed Deer Skeleton in my Field Bag

Throwback to

WELCOME TO AN EVENING AT
THE ROARING 20'S GRAD FORMAL

Grad Formal

table
5

A LITTLE
PARTY
NEVER KILLED
NOBODY!

EDUCATION
GRAD FORMAL
2020

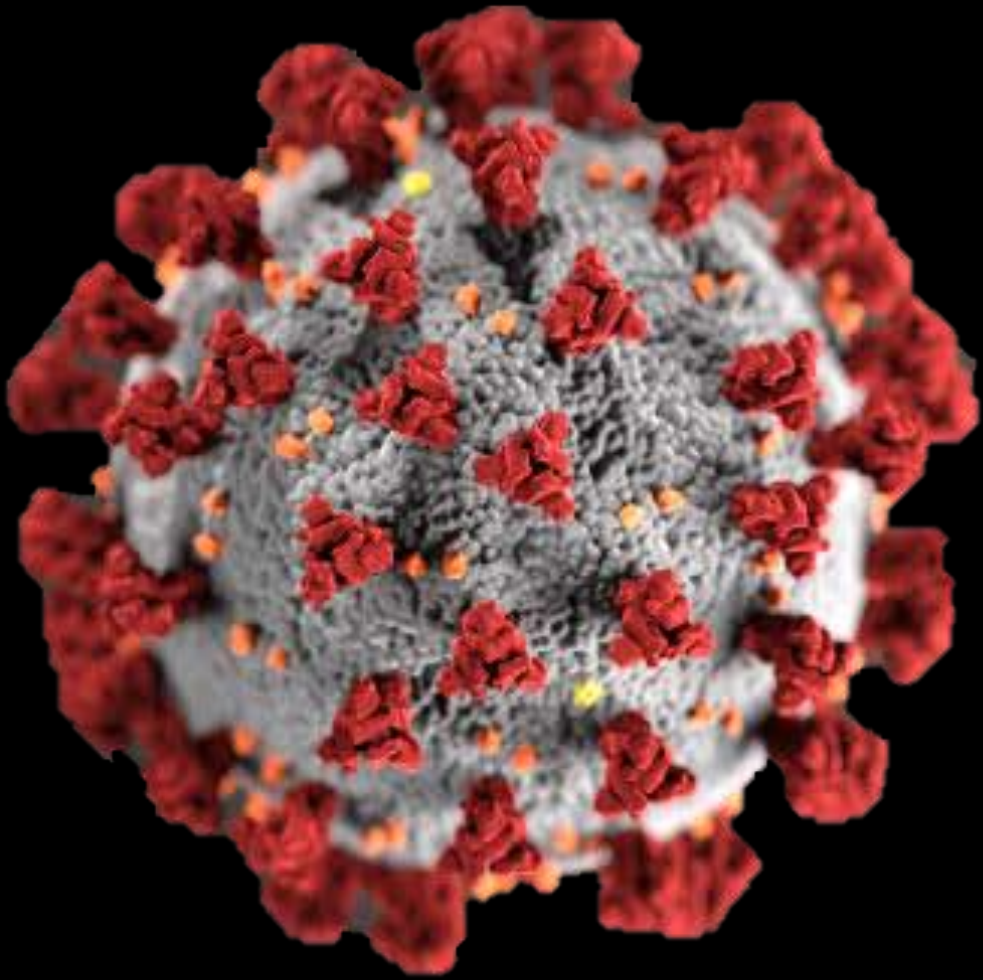*Special thanks to our Grad Formal Commissioner, Sam G., and to our Year 1 Monitors*

2020

Congrats!

TO THE NEWLY-MINTED B.ED GRADUATES

The Education Students' Council is rooting for your future professional success as rockstars of education. Thanks for the memories!

EDUCATION
IN A PANDEMIC

Dilpreet Moti

Everyone knew that 2020 would be the start of a new decade. It was not, however, expected that it would also be the beginning of an era in which everything changes. 'Unprecedented' is a word that has been floating around in abundance lately: unprecedented circumstances, unprecedented situation, unprecedented events, etc. While certainty is something that does not come by easily, neither is the cumulative uncertainty that has gripped the globe. What we're talking about here is none other than COVID-19; a disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Worldwide, governments, organizations, and individuals are doing their best to tame the storm. Self-isolation, quarantines, social distancing, and lockdowns are but a few ways that the global health community have been mobilizing. It is no exaggeration to say that the world has come to a stand-still. Notwithstanding, formalized education has also been taken hold by solitary solidarity; a pause button has been pressed, but undoing the action will not necessarily cause things to resume to the way things were before.

As teacher candidates, we have seen the events of school closures pan out in Ontario. For those that were on practicum, you may have noticed new health initiatives enacted by school boards to mitigate potential spread of infection prior to school closures, such as allotted time for handwashing. For those that were not on practicum yet, you may have been anticipating the reopening of schools, only for the Ministry of Education-proposed date to be pushed further and still further again. For those that are working alongside teachers remotely for the Alternative Field Experience as they adapt to distance learning, you may have direct insight and perspective into the challenges and affordances provided by our 'contingency plan' for education. Whatever your experiences may be, part of practicing as a teacher is to (dare I say it) reflect on what's happening in the realm of education. Through pensive pondering, routine research, and creative contemplation, esteemed educators are able to zoom in and out of various aspects of the *system(s)* of education they interact with. Through collaboration with others, the cogs and chains of the *system*-model can be outfitted with updates that are more efficient, wider-reaching, and more intentional.

From a global scale, 191 countries (at the time of writing) have closed their schools at either a national or localized level, amounting to nearly 1.6 billion affected school-aged learners (UNESCO, 2020a). To accommodate and support students through these trying times, researchers Doepke and Zilibotti pose that the fundamental difference between the best-case and the worst-case scenario, in terms of education, is that while the best-case scenario is dependent on several factors, the worst-case scenario may be realized if any one of those factors is lacking (2020). Through our curriculum in the Teacher's Education Program, we encounter this very notion when we consider equity and meeting the needs of all students. From technology to teams and clubs, from meals to mentorship, the idea of a school is much more than just a place to 'become' educated; it is a *community* that instills a sense of belonging as students, teachers, parents, staff, and the wider community interact with. School closures, though necessary, affect every facet of what schools offer and have become to represent. Through this article, we'll explore the implications of what's happened, what's happening, and what needs to happen for the sphere of education to emerge from this pandemic stronger than it did when entering it.

The Terminology and Semantics of Distance Learning and Emergency Teaching

Formal education and schooling have had to readapt in order to continue in a 'remote' setting. This mobilization and transition in various jurisdictions were done at an astonishing rate, albeit for many due to necessity, to ensure a seamless curricular continuity. *Distance learning* is an umbrella term under which different variations exist, each of which leads to a certain path of pedagogical outcomes. For instance, *distance* can imply distance in terms of place as well as time, or even both (consider the differences between synchronous and asynchronous learning platforms). Distance learning has been traditionally characterized as "teaching by telling", however modern advances in technology have widened the capacity for distance learning to be 'augmented' in a variety of ways (Moore *et al.*, 2010). More abstractly, some educational researchers caution between the intermingling of the terms *distance learning* and *distance education*, to further distinguish between different degrees of pedagogical influence (King *et al.,* 2001).

The terms *e-learning* and *online learning* are terms under the umbrella of distance learning that are often used interchangeably, despite their distinct, original origins. Of the two terms, *e-learning* was established slightly earlier in the 1980s, and has come to refer to a method of distance learning that uses *learning objects* (i.e. any digital or digitized learning resource) that are web-based/web-developed or incorporate other media (ex: interactive television, CD-ROMS, audio/video cassettes or tapes, Internet, or satellite broadcast) (Moore *et al.*, 2010). Taking it a step further, Tavangarian *et al.* proclaim that e-learning must have the added element of interactivity that heightens the learning *experience* for the learner by allowing for learning via constructivism frameworks (2004). While e-learning focuses primarily on the tools for distance learning, online learning, though more nuanced to define, is the *access* to which learning experiences can be shared. Online learning is hallmarked by its ability to bridge connectivity, flexibility, and accessibility into learning experiences that caters all students, including those that are non-traditional or disenfranchised (Conrad, 2002). Given that the learning environment is the 'third teacher' in the classroom, it has the capacity to either "enhance the kind of learning that optimizes our student's potential to respond creatively and meaningfully to future challenges or detract from it" (Ontario Student Achievement Division, 2012). The online learning environment gives educators a chance to leverage new pedagogical methodologies, such as self-pacing, self-directed, and/or instructor-led strategies (Moore *et al.*, 2010).

So why do the specifications of these terms matter? As will be further explored, distance learning, even through technology-mediated platforms, takes on different approaches as needed to best serve a particular school community. This distinction additionally adds structure to the categorization of the wealth of resources, tools, and websites that can be found online, that which not only teachers but also parents and students may desire to tread through. Furthermore, pre-pandemic pushes by Ontario's Ministry of Education for mandatory e-learning strikes an inflicting chord to students, parents, and the general populace in terms of the future of education. When South Africa implemented 'blended learning' in universities nationwide during shutdowns in 2015-2017, subsequent analysis found that the lack of definition provided to the

term led to it taking on a range of forms (Czerniewicz, 2020). The presence of these inconsistencies clashed with the political agenda at the time; likewise, *online learning*

ONLINE LEARNING DESIGN OPTIONS

MODIFIABLE VARIABLES

INFOGRAPHIC BY DILPREET MOTI
"Not all options are equally effective"

MODALITY
- Fully online
- Blended (over 50% online)
- Blended (25-50% online)
- Web-enabled face-to-face

INSTRUCTOR ROLE ONLINE
- Active instruction online
- Small presence online
- None

PACING
- Self-paced (open entry/exit)
- Class-paced
- Class-paced with some self-paced

STUDENT ROLE ONLINE
- Listen or read
- Complete problems or answers questions
- Explore simulation and resources
- Collaborate with peers

STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RATIO
- <35 to 1
- 36-99 to 1
- 100-999 to 1
- >1000 to 1

ONLINE COMMUNICATION SYNCHRONY
- Asynchronous only
- Synchronous only
- Some blend of both

PEDAGOGY
- Expository
- Practice
- Exploratory
- Collaborative

ROLE OF ONLINE ASSESSMENTS
- Determine if student is ready for new content
- Tell system how to support the student (adaptive instruction)
- Provide student or teacher with information about learning state
- Input to grade
- Identify students at risk of failure

SOURCE OF FEEDBACK
- Automated
- Teacher
- Peers

SOURCES:
Text Adapted from Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., Bond, A. (2020). The Difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. EDucause Review.
Original content adapted from Means,B., Bakia, M., Murphy, R.(2014).Learning online: What research tells us about Whether, When, and How. New York. Routledge.

(and *e-learning*) are terms that are likely to be subjected to being "politicized" for which a common understanding must be established to understand its parameters and intent (Hodges *et al.*, 2020).

The field of educational technology within the last decade has seen an explosive expansion; it is a challenge to summarize its extent adequately in the span of a single sentence. What *can* be conveyed in one sentence, however, is that formalized online learning that is optimal in nature requires extensive planning and designing to reach a standard of innovation, often on the scale of months.

In unprecedented situations, the turnaround from in-class learning to distance learning happens rapidly, limiting the time needed for detailed planning that makes use of all the affordances and technicalities offered by online platforms and/or other remote learning options. Unfortunately in such circumstances, "it is this careful design process that will be absent in most cases in these emergency shifts" (Hodges et al., 2020). Combined with general uncertainty and emotions that educators may be feeling during such stressful situations and comfortability with online/offline remote tools, the cognitive pressure can potentially hinder the design process. For this reason, it would be semantically unjust to categorize this sudden pedagogical switch into the category of regular distance learning; Hodges et al. calls for the term *emergency remote teaching* to be used instead. Under this definition, "emergency remote teaching (ERT) is a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode [where the] primary objective in these circumstances is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis. When we understand ERT in this manner, we can start to divorce it from "online learning"" (Hodges et al., 2020). Teachers are not alone in this endeavor; educators, parents, and students alike are feeling the mounting load of "panic-gogy".

Nonetheless, a widespread dependence of distance learning in the ERT capacity will be an eye-opening

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[1] According to Hodges, they can be never fully compared.

"Panic-gogy"

What advice do experts in digital learning have during these challenging times? Don't sweat it, and recognize the competing priorities that yourself and students may be experiencing at the moment.

"Panic-gogy means understanding students' practicalities", says Sean Michael Morris, and due to the variance in those practicalities that take an assortment of different priority levels, instructors should heed caution with what their expectations should be so that it matches up with reality.

"The idea of just being able to port what you're doing into an online environment has its own problems. But trying to do that in the midst of a pandemic is another problem altogether."

Sean Michael Morris is from the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado, and is also the Director of Digital Learning Labs.

Source: Kamenetz, A. (2020, March 19). 'Panic-gogy': teaching online classes during the coronavirus pandemic.

experience that can at least partially be used to evaluate some aspects of online learning and e-learning[1]. Veterans in the online teaching world share a similar sentiment; Dr. Marina Milner-Bolotin is an associate professor of education at the University of British Columbia who optimistically remarks, "though the coronavirus pandemic has forced this unprecedented moment of change, it could lead to higher quality e-learning in Canada. Education is such a huge field and it has a huge inertia. Now we can see things are changing in front of our eyes." (Wong, 2020).

Ontario's Directions

Since education in Canada is governed by individual provinces and territories, different measures of action were taken in different parts of the country, collectively comprising localized responses. On the penultimate day before the start of Ontario's March Break, the provincial government announced that March Break would be extended by two weeks to curtail the spread of the coronavirus; classes were expected to resume on April 5. As April approached, the certainty of resuming class on April 5 was wavering, leaning ever-increasingly unlikely. In a press briefing, Minister of Education Stephen Lecce assured the general public that if school were not able to open, coursework, credit accumulation and learning will continue. To aid with this, the Government of Ontario launched a provincewide "online learning portal" that will be regularly updated as course materials are produced. Furthermore, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

and the Grade 3, 6, 9 standardized testing (administered by the Education Quality and Accountability Office) were cancelled, however Lecce assured that students on track to graduate will not be affected. The long-term sustainability and durability of the online learning portal has been called to question, as not all courses are available online, as is the impersonal feel of the platform. Annie Kidder, Executive Director of the advocacy and research group, Peoples for Education, cautions that parent support for students cannot be depended upon in lieu of teachers, nor should e-Learning be viewed as 'simple'; "[E-learning] has to involve actual human beings who are teachers. There is a relationship component to teaching" (CBC News, 2020a).

Ontario teachers have stepped up to the challenge with their own initiative by arranging 'virtual lessons' for their students, often with elements of creativity and liveliness, however the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation advised a high degree of caution against the programming, rather, encouraging teachers to redirect students to the aforementioned online learning portal created in-part by the Ministry of Education (Kalata, 2020).

Nine days later, an updated system rolled out of the office of the Ministry of Education. In this revamped model, Lecce championed "teacher-led" learning, as well as the issuing of report cards and final grades. The government had yet to comment whether school would proceed into the summer, but distance learning in the meantime would be conducted ideally through online platforms, and where not available, through telephone calls and mailed out

packages (CBC News, 2020b). The timeline for the potential reopening of school was also postponed a month further to May 31. To address student mental health, Lecce also informed the press of connecting students with mental health workers in addition to teaching staff (CBC News, 2020b).

Meanwhile, other provinces have cancelled in-person schooling indefinitely for the school year, however learn-at-home programs, similar to Ontario's teacher-led virtual instruction, are still being conducted.

Dipping Toes Into the Water - A Critique of Adapting to Online Learning Platforms

Ontario's online learning portal has been met with scrutiny by parents and students. One parent calls it a "non-plan" full of links, devoid of any advice for how parents at home can support their children's learning (Wong, 2020). Over two weeks into the teacher-led instruction, some students and parents in York Region are also sounding concern over the lack of new material being delivered online as older content is being "recycled" (Al-Shibeeb, 2020a). Additionally, both the York Region District School Board and the York Region Catholic District School Board have not yet approved the web-based video-conferencing tool, Zoom (Al-Shibeeb, 2020b). That is not to say that it might not be a foreseeable option in the future; the main concern with the Zoom platform cites security concerns, such as 'zoombombing' attacks by non-students. YRDSB has indicated that they would be taking a phased approach to ensure equity and security in their distance learning programming. Robin DeRosa, Director of the Open Learning and Teaching Collaborative at Plymouth State University emphasizes the human connection element crucial to learning: "I think the first thing is we are not building online courses or converting your face to face courses to online learning. Really, what we're doing is we are trying to extend a sense of care to our students and trying to build a community that's going to be able to work together to get through the learning challenges that we have" (Kamenetz, 2020a).

In terms of academics, students and parents are scattered between both sides of online learning platforms. In response to Alberta's online learning platform, one parent praises that their child is finally able to proceed along the

learning at their own pace, while another parent questions the logistics of distance learning considering the large number of hours of schooling missed for the remainder of the year (CBC News, 2020c). Further still, some parents have either noticed directly or by secondhand the differences between public and private schools in response to distance learning, such as the permissibility of Zoom in some private schools (Al-Shibeeb, 2020b). Milner-Bolton sees the capacity of effective e-learning as more than just links and websites, but acknowledges that "it requires real support, with provincial education ministers giving teachers specific online education training and bringing in experts for further development" (Wong, 2020). There is some trepidation whether the online learning platform may encourage students and parents to "shop" for the program that feel will reduce learning gaps 'the best', as the short-term and long-term consequences of these actions are unknown. The shift to online learning platforms has been a double-edged sword in the perspective of students as well. As one student describes their high school's learning experience, "you see a lot of straight-A students who are now having a hard time accomplishing any work, or the motivation to get anything done at all. Students are slowly trying to get the hang of it" (Cotnam, 2020).

The Vehicle of Technology

A screen being the primary interface of learning between student, peers, and teachers? Decades ago, this may have come across as science fiction, yet we can safely say that the digital landscape has infiltrated every aspect of society in the current age (including the strollers of infants!). With the capabilities and wealth of resources dispersed across the Internet, and with devices such as smartphones and tablets becoming more popular, teachers and school boards have some

support and flexibility to continue teaching, and for students to continue learning, while staying at home. As Dr. Stephen Harris, the Chief Learning Officer of LearnLife, describes what this means for education, it is as though the global education community is traversing through *The Wood Between the Worlds* in the C.S. Lewis novel series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*. While online learning provides bountiful potential for interactivity, engagement, and pools of resources, this potential cannot be assumed to be accessible by all. In fact, both accessibility and dependency on technology in education has carried a high degree of concern during this pandemic - a concern borne from pre-existing inequities in the 'experience of education' and the 'achievement gap'.

1 The Wood Between the Worlds as illustrated by C.S. Lewis in The Magician's Nephew

Inclusion in an online learning environment, where the digitized platform becomes the primary substitute for the in-class experience, can help students spring off towards new directions of, and perhaps *for*, learning. However, to be included into the online learning environment, in a physical sense, requires two things: a device capable of presenting the learning environment in a user-friendly manner, and a reliable source by which to connect to the internet. As will be further explored, these two accessibility components are necessary, but not sufficient, items to consider when evaluating the engagement by which a group of students may have with the online learning environment, however they do present as the initial barriers that must first be surpassed.

Upon the announcement of Ontario's Ministry of Education to implement the continuity plan for education through their online learning platform, which was subsequently updated to reflect the Learn at Home programming done by students' own teachers, school

boards began scrambling to ensure that the rollout of the plan would be equitable for all students. This accessibility endeavor is known as *tackling the digital divide*, which also includes teacher preparedness with online teaching and the maintenance of school-parent communications (Giannini, 2020). School boards across the province began online questionnaire campaigns to survey students' needs regarding access to online programming so that technological devices can be distributed to students in need. Some boards have also been issuing *internet sticks* that provide access to the internet by plugging into a USB port, while other boards are partnering with telecommunications providers to arrange for ameliorated internet connectivity for families (Al-Shibeeb, 2020c). In York Region alone, 18 000 Chromebooks were loaned out to students (Al-Shibeeb, 2020c). In a letter penned on April 28, Education Minister, Stephen Lecce, formally outlined the steps taken to manage online learning as school boards, government, and corporations form partnerships. Notably, 21 000 iPads connected to Rogers Communications LTE data will be delivered to students across the province, funded by a $75 million Grant for Special Needs; and will join over 200 000 computers and tablets that have already been acquired by school boards (Lecce, 2020).

The mobilization to equip students with technology is felt across other provinces as well. In Manitoba, non-profit organizations are stepping up to the plate to assist with device loans and internet accessibility (Froese, 2020). Even within the Winnipeg School Division, Manitoba's largest school district of 33 000 students, it is estimated that 40% of students lack access to a computer (Froese, 2020). Further west, Alberta faces a similar predicament, especially in rural schools where students lack either internet access, computers, or both. Creative solutions that have popped up include providing USB-drives to students who may not have internet access, but do have computers, with educational materials from the student's teacher(s) (Cummings, 2020). School divisions have also asked neighbours with unlimited internet data plans to act as hotspots for students with devices within the vicinity, with the hopes that once more favourable weather returns, schools can act as 'WiFi hotspots' whereby families can drive into the school parking lot and access the internet. (Cummings, 2020).

In situations where solid internet connection and access to technology are not feasible, schools are providing an opportunity for students to pick up worksheet packages

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> As necessity is the mother of invention, this situation may become an opportunity for teachers and learners to become more empowered, creative, and innovative.
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> YUMIKO YOKOZEKI
> DIRECTOR OF THE UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR
> CAPACITY BUILDING IN AFRICA

from the school and to drop off completed work (while following social distancing rules). While this option does accommodate students with limited to zero access to online lessons, the educational experience is by no means equivalent; worksheets are hard-pressed to act as accurate substitutes for the richness enveloped in interactive modules (Froese, 2020). Although the shift to reorganize education online, in the big picture, has been a proportionately large focus for wealthier countries, the effort required to distribute such options in many middle- and lower-income countries would be too great to handle, and the inability to recuperate from an important, and expensive, investment will only cause the educational divide to deepen, according to Jamie Saavedra, former Education Minister of Peru and current Senior Director at the World Bank. For this reason, he firmly asserts that "the appropriate [educational] strategy in most countries is to use all possible delivery modes with the infrastructure that exists today" (Saavedra, 2020). In other words, the middle-ground between high-tech. and no-tech. distance learning strategies, is low-tech, which should also be explored as a viable means for educating students globally, based on what is regionally available. Looking across the varying levels of technology incorporation into distance learning, there are pros and cons to each option that exists, yet a key understanding of the present educational crisis is that regardless of the proactive extent of preparations a jurisdiction may or may

not have taken for distance learning, the fact that this is a period of *emergency* remote teaching makes it clear that a "forced opportunity" still begets for all possible solutions to be explored (The Economist, 2020).

As school boards and ministries of education around the globe are trying to forecast what education may look like in the 'mid-term' and the potential for such events to repeat in the long-term, localities are looking towards each other for experiences, advice, and leadership to support one another. A united force like this can be an unparalleled moment for education reform. On speaking of movement building during this particular time of hardship, author and activist, Naomi Klein, inspires others by expressing, "crisis blows open what's possible" (Klein, 2020). In fact, many non-profit organizations and individuals have supported the notion that society is in an opportune policy window in which government, citizens, and many private firms/corporations are all on the same page; incidents like these in the past have led to sweeping policy solutions passing abundantly, and that such opportunity has never been seen as robustly since the Great Depression (Gammad Lockerby & Sultana, 2020; Klein, 2020). For example, countless subscription-based online educational tools, websites, and games have either temporarily or permanently become free-of-charge for either families or educators in order to assist with distance learning and learning continuity. Another example comes from China as they grappled with school closures early on; a guide to flexible learning and incorporation of technology, themed on the motto *Disrupted Classes, Undisrupted Learning*, was developed with the intentions to provide exemplars and frameworks that other school systems can follow (Huang *et al*., 2020). Regionally, many Latin American countries are sharing resources and strategies in efforts to define a systematic response to the current and future pandemics, overseen by the UNESCO body, *Sistema de Información de Tendencias Educativas en América Latina*. This sentiment is echoed by Raul Figueroa, Minister of Education of Chile, who sees this as a "time for us to come together, not only to guarantee learning continuity, but to invest in the transformative power that education gives to people, communities, and societies. Good ideas and practices need to be replicated. We are completely available for collaboration with other countries to strengthen educational systems to mutually enrich ourselves to improve pedagogical tools that we make

available to educational communities" (UNESCO, 2020d).

An important point to note is that accessibility is not just a matter of *having* a device or *having* internet connectivity. While families are trying to manage the best that they can, making ends meet for education is not as simple as it seems. Consider a family with parents working from home and multiple children participating in online learning; should this family only have one computer in their possession yet all require it, the ability to use the computer becomes a limited luxury. Consider a secondary student that is also an essential worker and is being scheduled more often during daytime shifts, thus depending on asynchronous learning more heavily than synchronous options. Consider a student who is working from a mobile device and receives a link to an educational resource, only to find out that the website or tool is not optimized for their device. Consider a household that has internet connectivity, but is limited by bandwidth; audio-based learning would be better handled by the system than excessive video-based material (Cummings, 2020). Consider a student who has their own device, adequate internet connectivity, and a study area that is well-lit, quiet, and learning-centric, only to find out that their device is malfunctioning, eventually stops responding, and requires repairs or needs to be replaced outright; in both scenarios, the student may be temporarily absent from the learning platform and may struggle to find a technician for repairs due to self-isolation/industry restrictions or a consultant to guide them with the purchasing of a new device (Cotnam, 2020). Though these situations are not necessarily unique to the current school closures, they are certainly heightened by it overall. Like Matryoshka dolls, it is an important reminder for teachers and administrators to recognize that within the umbrella concept of access to technology, there are multiple factors that must synergistically work together in order to enact effect. Universal design for learning, as well as differentiated instruction, in a primarily online format as it currently stands will be a test for how the school system needs to change in both online and in-class formats in order to diminish current weaknesses and further successful measures.

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> This is the moment to share our data and our solutions, to exchange knowledge, capacities, and talents in accordance with the principles of inclusion and equity.
>
> STEFANIA GIANNINI
> ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNESCO

A Range of High-Tech, Low-Tech, and No-Tech Distance Learning Options

Alberta

Since school buses are no longer in operation, they have been used to deliver homework to and from students. Bus drivers and educational assistants have recently been laid-off, however, and it has been difficult to cover the large, geographical areas of rural school districts.

Mongolia

16 television channels have been allocated for delivering curriculum "tele-lessons" to students in their homes. This is in addition to the conversion and upload of 480 courses to the centralized learning website, as well as access to over 200 digital textbooks.

Portugal

The majority of students in Portugal lack internet access at home. The country paired up with its postal service to ensure that educational materials are still being made accessible to/from teachers and students.

U.A.E.

Both teachers and students can call into a support hotline for professional development or academic help as the country switches to online medium. The regular schedule of the school day continues to retain a sense of normalcy and consistency.

Peru, Columbia, Cameroon

For both urban, rural, and remote communities, radio-based education has been an effective option in these countries for continuity of learning.

Given that 35% of teachers also lack internet access at home in Peru, low-tech alternatives becomes a dually-important medium.

Chile

Chile's Ministry of Education prepared for the possibility of extended school closures in January, and thus have an extensive ecosystem prepared for emergency remote teaching.

The government has partnered with the Mobile Telephone Association of Chile so that textbooks and study guides can be downloaded without data, and Google to provide access and support for G Suite and Google Classrooms applications. The "I Learn at Home" program bridges the digital divide by ensuring that the same online content and material can be distributed to students in a print format when needed.

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Hurricane Katrina

Students displaced by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 enrolled in schools outside of New Orleans, many of which offered a higher quality of education than what they were receiving when attending school in New Orleans. Still, it took two years for displaced students to catch up to their counterparts to 'recover from lost learning'. The trauma that came with adapting to their newfound situation left emotional and economic scars upon these "refugee" students. It has now been 15 years since Hurricane Katrina and secondary school graduation rates, plus post-secondary school enrolment rates, have yet to even reach pre-Katrina levels.
"The social and economic situation always bleeds into the school" – Doug Harris, Tulane University.

Source: Kamenetz, A.(2020, April 2). 9 out of 10 children are out of school worldwide. What now? *National Public Radio.*

Holistic Supports

Prior to school closures and the fluidity of the spread of the virus, life was quote-on-quote "normal"; for the large part, the hum of the day was just about as consistent and regular as any other day. Even if certain privileges bestowed upon as give an illusion of normalcy, frankly, things are far from the previous standard of "normal". Though school closures may be a temporary measure, among other social distancing practices, the pandemic will have long-lasting effects on every aspect of life, from design to policy to business and beyond. The media frames the hypotheticals of the present and post-pandemic future as the "new normal", and it is understandable for the choice of moniker. According to cognitive behaviour counsellor Leanne Matlow, using the term "new normal" must be exercised with a high degree of caution, especially as the term can be "very anxiety-provoking because it makes it sound like a state of permeance that we're never going to get out of" (Roumeliotis, 2020). Schools provide so much more than just education; schools act as social safety nets and possess their own culture. Of the myriad of things that schooling can offer, social connection and social support is a major focus. Needless to say, social distancing measures can add to feelings of isolation during an already stressful time. As schooling continues in an online learning environment, it must also be brought with the lens of seeing students more than just academics but as individuals with needs that need to be met holistically, especially in terms of mental well-being.

The typical school day is full of interactions: student-teacher, student-student, student-parent, etc. These interactions are also of various 'sizes' (one-on-one, small group, larger group, etc.) and learning mirrors these interaction structures too (individual, partner, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, etc.). As teachers design their distance learning lessons, it is highly valued to devise a system to retain the integrity of these social organizations and connections (Huang *et al.,* 2020). Teachers are also being creative in the ways by which they check-in on their students from a socioemotional context; many students *need* the structure, especially those with pre-existing mental health concerns. As one teacher describes the priority of communication, by "just having regular interaction with their teachers - sometimes that's the only regular thing that they have every day […] it's this time to really check-in with our kids and not ask 'Hey, how's your homework going?' but just ask 'Hey how are you doing? Are you functioning? Are you talking to people or are you holed up in your house with nobody to talk to?" (Wong, 2020). The mental well-being of every individual is in a precarious position as the toll of pandemic-induced stress and anxiety begins to mount. Students heading off to post-secondary school may have the additional concern of having enough knowledge-base and minimal gaps in certain subject areas to help ease their transition academically, and some students are faced with fear and pressures of being able to afford a post-secondary education, which is compounded further still if their desired program/school means moving away from home and paying for accommodations (Cotnam, 2020).

Again, academics and schooling are not the only sources for potential stressors or triggers; the personal life of a student at home is equally, if not more at times, influential in terms of stressors and/or the capacity to build resilience. Some students may find themselves reflecting on this period of their life as an adverse childhood experience (ACE) due to an accumulation of toxic stress (Kamenetz, 2020b). Not only do ACEs risk impacting the physical, mental, and possibly fiscal wellbeing of an individual in the long-term, it is having a considerable impact as it happens presently. Kids Help Phone, a national service providing 24/7 counselling, referrals, and support to youth, has seen the impact of the pandemic in the recent statistics collected since social distancing protocols were undertaken. Just prior to school closures
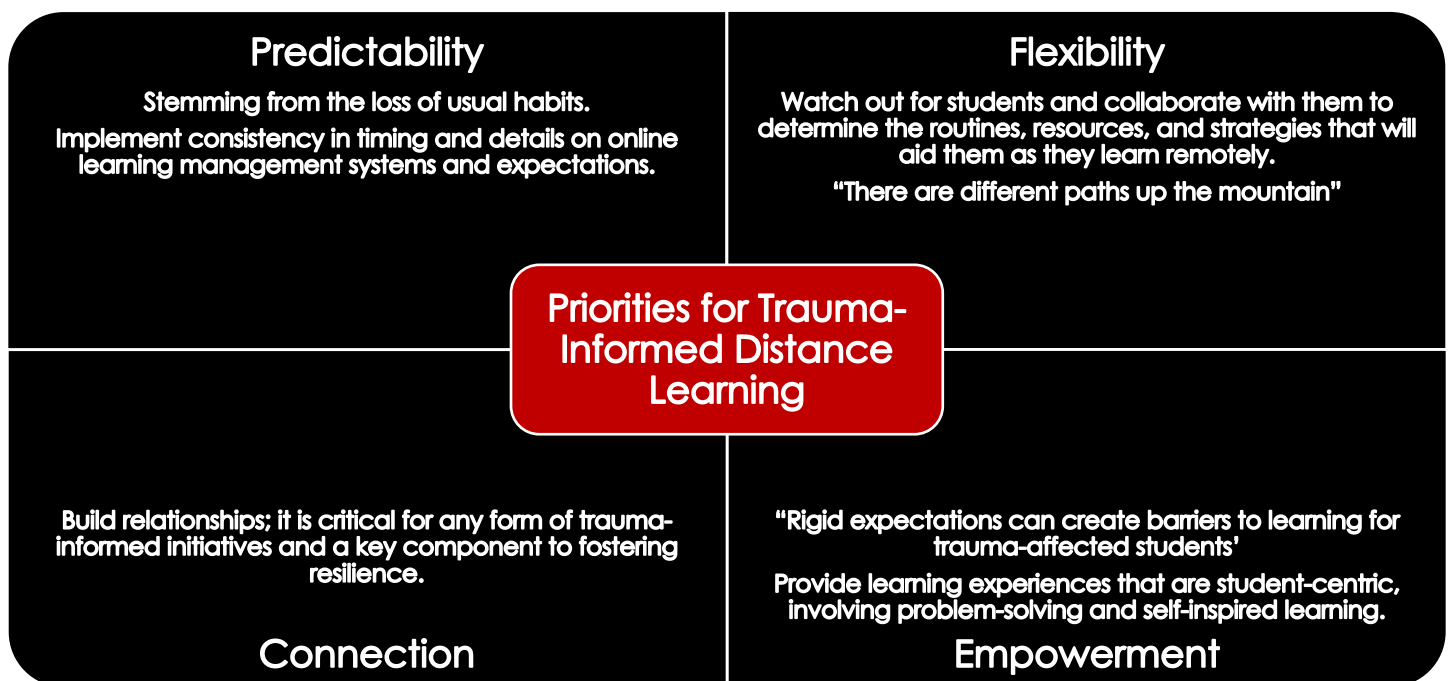
in Ontario, calls to Kids Help Phone related to COVID-19 spiked by 350 percent over a two-week period relative to two-week periods in the past; this number is likely to be much higher since then, and does not fully encompass those in need of support but did not reach out to Kids Help Phone (Naccarato, 2020). At an astonishing figure of nearly 2000 calls a day well into April, Kids Help Phone is finding that callers as young as five years of age, and even parents/caregivers, are dialing in for advice and support; even more disheartening is that about one in five youth callers are contemplating suicide within this fragile time-frame as well (Roumeliotis, 2020). Some students become de facto caregivers of younger siblings when parents are working on the frontlines/essential services or are unemployed and looking for opportunities to provide a steady income, or even become sick. Strenuous situations like these are difficult circumstances in which education gets placed, understandably, on the 'back-burner'.

In order to combat mental health struggles, feelings of isolation or loneliness, or a potential ACE, Alex Shervin Venet, a college professor who specializes in trauma-informed practices, outlines four core priorities that teachers need to be aware of when practicing trauma-informed teaching from a distance: predictability, flexibility, connection, and empowerment (Newhouse, 2020). Predictability can take the form of posting an announcement video to the learning management system for students at the same time on a daily basis, or by preparing 'calming activities' or transitions as you normally would when moving from a high-activity period (such as lunch or recess) in order to connect with students before proceeding forth into instruction (Newhouse, 2020). Flexibility comes from understanding UDL and DI from a distance learning mindset, where learning may be happening independently, asynchronously, or synchronously. Flexibility also comes from knowing your students and your professional judgment; for some students, if arriving to school is a success, then understanding what success will look like for that child online needs to be revisited and acknowledged. Overlapping with connection and empowerment, teachers can play a role in supporting the mental wellbeing of their students by highlighting the importance of mental health and by communicating a pertinent list of supports available to their students directly (as opposed to just the administration) (Kamenetz, 2020a).

Permeating effects due to educational emergencies are worth studying. It is disingenuous to believe that outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics will not occur in future, and it is narrow-sighted to believe that infectious diseases are the only type of threat to education. Natural disasters, war, civil unrest, and famine are but some of the ways that can challenge quality education. Our current

Predictability
Stemming from the loss of usual habits.
Implement consistency in timing and details on online learning management systems and expectations.

Flexibility
Watch out for students and collaborate with them to determine the routines, resources, and strategies that will aid them as they learn remotely.
"There are different paths up the mountain"

Priorities for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning

Build relationships; it is critical for any form of trauma-informed initiatives and a key component to fostering resilience.

Connection

"Rigid expectations can create barriers to learning for trauma-affected students'
Provide learning experiences that are student-centric, involving problem-solving and self-inspired learning.

Empowerment

Source: Newhouse, K. (2020, April 6). Four core priorities for trauma-informed distance learning. *Mindshift- KQED*.

handling of the coronavirus pandemic will dictate education policy to come, however it should be noted that this pandemic is not the singular occurrence of widespread school closures to have happened within the past ten years. The Ebola epidemic from 2014-2016 saw many schools shuttering their doors in order to contain the outbreak. Within the past fifteen years, Hurricane Katrina devasted New Orleans. "Crises often entrench inequities" says Gammard Lockerby and Sultana (2020), and both of these case studies provide poignant examples of how privilege, mental wellbeing, trauma, and economics are all affected threads within the social fabric; which is troublesome when considering that schooling is an investment, hence "going to school is the best public policy tool to raise skills" is a reciprocal benefit (Burgess and Sievertsen, 2020). Lesson from the Ebola epidemic circulate around the theme of gender-responsive emergency remote teaching. Educational communities are to support and advocate for the importance of educating girls, offer a variety of low-tech. mediums by which girls can continue learning, be mindful of the digital gender divide (girls may have not received the privilege to develop digital skills), and offer learning experiences that can be adaptable for students who may have other priorities to attend to during the day (UNESCO, 2020e). As the global community plans to reopen their economies and schools in the future, it is crucial to consider what lies below the surface of the symbolic icebergs of privilege, accessibility, and marginalization.

Past Emergencies in Education

Ebola Epidemic

It is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic can exacerbate the hardships of educating girls in countries previously hit by the Ebola epidemic. Precautionary school closures due to Ebola outbreaks saw the interruption of 5 million children's education. Though some students resumed their studies, many girls did not return, almost reversing twenty years of gains in educating girls in those nations. Girls that dropped out took on caregiving and domestic responsibilities at home, as the financial opportunities and costs of educating daughters presented a 'wicked problem' for parents.
Schools were often a safe haven for girls, and their closing has left girls vulnerable to abuse (teen pregnancies increased by 65% during this period); in Sierra Leone, pregnant students were not permitted a right to education. As breadwinners succumbed to the disease, girls were being married off in false hopes of a better life.

Source: UNESCO, (2020, March 30). Covid-19 school closures around the world will hit girls the hardest. UNESCO.

The Bare Necessities

Abraham Harold Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a ubiquitous diagram in teacher education programs; from it, it can be contended that in order for learning to occur, the categorical tiers of needs must be met first. The bottom-most tiers, physiological needs and safety needs, demonstrate the bare necessities for survival and good health, and include food, shelter, and security. School meal programs that addressed issues of food insecurity cannot run as they normally do due to school closures, and with spending per capita airing on the conservative side, food banks and related service facilities are struggling to keep up with the demands of not only their pre-pandemic clients, but also those who find themselves in need of help due to pandemic-driven causes, such as unemployment. Truly, schools are hubs for a variety of supports and services, and to keep these efforts up and running, school boards and organizations are striving for innovative solutions that deliver the service needed while also maintaining social distancing protocols.

To place things into perspective, access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown food may be limited overall by supply-and-demand; sourcing skilled labourers has been difficult for farmers this year as migrant and domestic workers heed social distancing protocols; many families have one or members of their household temporarily laid-off; and people living in food deserts may not feel comfortable utilizing public transportation to go shopping for groceries; etc. As toilet paper rolls and cans of soup fly off store shelves and into the stockpiles of peoples homes, the availability, or lack thereof, of certain food products is a relatable experience for many as they endure life in a pandemic. Due to supply shortages, prices often increase accordingly. Food banks are flooded with requests, and even food banks are unable to keep up with the demand, with nearly 40% of food banks in Toronto closing doors (Macdonell, 2020). Salvation Army's Major Robb Kerr remarked that when food banks end up closing, it only adds to the pressures of those that are still open; "We're seeing new people coming. People who either went to other food banks that have been shut down because they can't into their facility, they don't have staff, they don't have the resources keep in running" (Macdonell, 2020) Though restaurants and organizations have stepped up to the plate by offering free or discounted

meals, the prevailing system within which food insecurity stems from will need a radical redesign using an equity-informed framework to enact long-lasting and far-reaching change. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, 4.4 million Canadians lived with food insecurity (Harris, 2020).

Some school and school-affiliated meal programs have stretched their efforts in order to fill in the gaping gaps in the meantime, but without funding, it can be an arduous task to manage and distribute inventory/meals to those in need. Financially, the federal government is investing $100 million into helping food banks and breakfast clubs, with new food distribution centres being opened up in libraries, community centres, and multi-dwelling buildings, offering food, meals, and/or grocery gift cards. In Catalonia (Spain), schools are distributing gift cards in lieu of meal programs, redeemable at any food establishment; in California, meals programs continue to run, but on a pick-up system, while in Japan, families have the option to receive a refund for school meals or have them delivered to their homes (Chang and Yano, 2020). Similarly, Britain and New York (where 50% of students rely on free or heavily-discounted lunches) are continuing to offer school-based meal programming in a pick-up and/or delivery fashion (*The Economist,* 2020). In Chile, school meals have been translated into school feeding

benefits for over 1 600 000 students which consists of a basket of nutritious goods that will sustain children for 15 days (UNESCO, 2020d).

Another need in the bottom tiers of Maslow's Hierarchy is that of shelter. Shelters are finding themselves in unprecedented situations when trying to incorporate precautionary social distancing measures. In Toronto, hotels and community centres are being repurposed as shelters and 24-hour respite centres, respectively, and a dedicated hotel has been reserved to house citizens experiencing homelessness who also test positive for COVID-19 (Gray and Bula, 2020). Similar to long-term care homes and rehabilitation centres, an outbreak can spread like wildfire through the shelter system and the population experiencing homelessness if an abundance of safety precautions is not exercised. Compounding concerns about beds is that of staffing; volunteers have been turned away, and for safety reasons, many drop-in group programs have been temporarily suspended, as have communal, sit-down meals (though meals are still provided when possible) (Zarzour, 2020). The Ontario government will be supplementing shelters, food banks, and associated charities and non-profit organizations with $200 million to fight the battle against COVID-19 on this end, but it has been noted by the board members of some of these institutions that costs associated with cleaning

and hygiene will be an increasing expenditure (Zarzour, 2020). During this time, teachers attempting to reach students living in shelters may have some difficultly, due to competing priorities, connectivity/accessibility, and stress that students may be experiencing. Children may also feel anxiety and insecurity when living in a rental property due to harassment by landlords towards them and/or their families. Student homelessness may have been a pre-existing or recent turn of events for a child, which may be the result of all sorts of different reasons. Unfortunately for some students, it is a choice that some make to escape from a disheartening domestic abuse situation.

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> I think what COVID-19 is really doing is exposing how threadbare our social safety net is and the fact that we need to actually work to fix the inequalities that cause people to be food insecure. It's about poverty, racism, employment.
>
> PAUL TAYLOR
> EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FOODSHARE TORONTO

When the Alarm Bells Ring Silently

Around traditional media and social media, the call to "stay home" to stop the spread of the virus can become a living nightmare for a person who are experiencing domestic abuse or violence at home. Though the rate of crime incidents has lowered due to stay-at-home orders, regional reports of domestic violence has risen in some parts of the province; what is particularly worrisome, however, is that the child abuse reports are dropping big time - nearly 30-40% (Lamberink, 2020). According to pediatrician Dr. Michelle Ward, patterns in child abuse reports follow patterns in an area's economic health: "We know, even from the past, that when there's a downturn in the economy we do see a spike in child abuse cases afterwards. Even just with financial stress we know it gets worse" (Lamberink, 2020). Distance learning may add an

additional layer of challenge for teachers to connect with students and notice differences in moods and behaviours that warrant a closer look. Being vigilant for signs of concerns or distress that may lead to a duty to report is an ongoing commitment teachers must continue to make to the best of their abilities, perhaps even more so now than ever. In Europe, the 'perfect storm' of conditions has led to a surge in reported, and presumably unreported cases experienced primarily by women and children, which is one reason that testifies that a feminist lens is warranted when examining the pandemic to understand power and oppression dynamics (Davis, 2020). During the Ebola crisis, a similar rise in physical and sexual abuse was seen in jurisdictions with school closures (UNESCO, 2020e). Dr. Ward's advice to the public is to check-in on neighbours and to call family and friends to keep tabs on them.

Alarm bells have also been sounding off in the arena of online child exploitation. Disturbingly, online sexual predators are rejoicing stay-at-home orders and discussing strategies amongst themselves to improve their exploitation strategies of children in their homes, given that children are spending a greater amount of time online, making themselves vulnerable to such encounters (Fitzpatrick, 2020). As police and concerned children's groups endeavor to empower parents to teach their children responsible online skills, predators have been dually mocking advocacy advice and discussed ways to circumvent 'obstacles' (Fitzpatrick, 2020). As multiliteracies advances as an area of professional pedagogical development for teachers, it would be timely for the subcategory of digital literacies (in which digital consumption and digital content creation are key foci) to receive particular emphasis, not only due to online distance learning, but also to combat cyberattacks of escalating levels of abuse and manipulation.
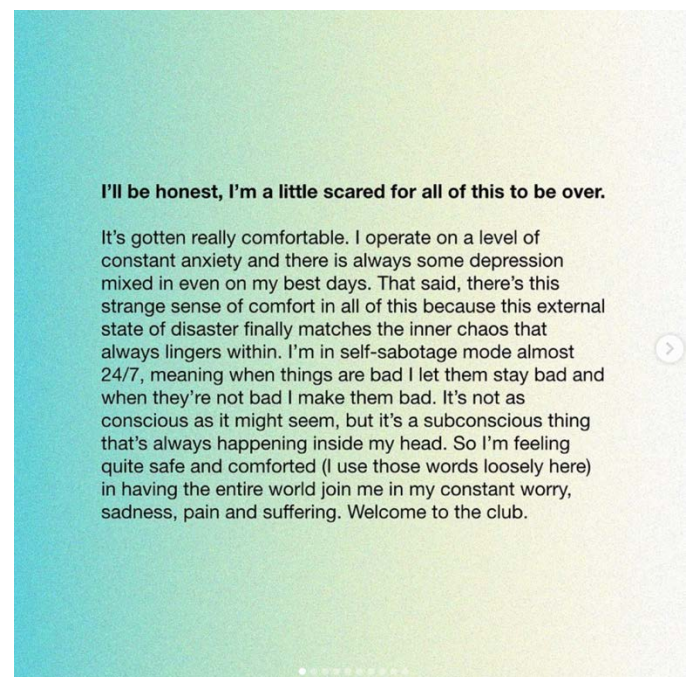
Moving Forward

It almost feels as if the world is standing still. In a collective breath, everyone is waiting for the hustle and bustle of society to return. It is can be presumed that the transition back to the classroom, like many other facets of society, will be met with tremendous caution. Knowing that the time students spend at school coincides with rapid neurodevelopment and constitute one's formative years, providing support and guidance can be a critical factor in the success of a transition. Likewise, it

should also be recognized that each student's transition back to school will look different, whether it be from an academic, social, emotional, or behavioural lens. For instance, it can be expected that there will be a large number of students for which an individualized education plan (IEP) would be best suited for their needs based on their experiences over the school closures (Gosner, 2020).

As mentioned earlier, the landscape of UDL and DI is expected to transform after evaluation of trauma-informed pedagogical practices, distance learning tools and implementation, and reconceptualization of the curriculum take place. In an online webinar on online learning, astrophysicist and education leader, Dr. Becky Parker, illustrates the possibilities that open up when the curriculum is juiced down into its core, whereby the curriculum touches on the basics and from there forth, passion and curiosity precede over the direction and outcomes of learning (Parker, 2020). Teacher education programs hammer in the concept of constant self-reflection; both distance-learning and the transition period will be a constant experiment that begets reflection that lead to actionable outcomes. These outcomes can address three key stages of transitioning *away* from normal and *towards* innovation: contingency, continuity, and transcendence (Missy, 2020).

Social skills and mental health supports will also take a forefront position in the return to in-person schooling. Students of all ages may be feeling a mixed bag of emotions: excitement to see friends, happy to be back at school, scared about getting sick, paranoid about contact, etc. Furthermore, students, and staff too, may have experienced the loss of a loved one due to COVID-19, and as such, it is important to instill a collective understanding of respect for one another and the situation, the seriousness of the situation regardless of whether or not a classmate is personally affected by a loss, and to be mindful of how the stay-at-home self-isolation experience can be framed. The latter point especially rings true for students who may have detested being at home due to a turbulent homelife, so discussion of people's experiences needs to be conducted in a way that minutes the assumptions of a positive, idealized experience for all. Moreover, some students may feel nervous about society pedaling towards being 'back in business' and the expectation of 'everything is now fine or will be fine' once

the pandemic is 'over' (Your Mind Matters [@yourmindmatters], 2020). For primary students, depending on how social distancing and safety precautions were explained to them earlier (for example, at home), typical social conventions, such as interacting in groups, can be a trigger for hesitation, fear, and/or anxiety; we do not want children to become afraid of people. In addition, schools will need to be vigilant in enforcing safety and inclusivity of all students in the rise of xenophobia. It is with sobering disappointment to report that almost 50 percent of participants in a poll of three metropolitan cities in Canada, had reservations about sitting next to people presenting as Asian on public transit (Li, 2020). In addition to anti-Asian sentiments, stigma can also surround students who may have recovered from the viral infection. Even simple recess games, such as 'Tag', can have some people feel uncomfortable and left out when the term "coronavirus" doubles as a taunt (Wilson, 2020).

I'll be honest, I'm a little scared for all of this to be over.

It's gotten really comfortable. I operate on a level of constant anxiety and there is always some depression mixed in even on my best days. That said, there's this strange sense of comfort in all of this because this external state of disaster finally matches the inner chaos that always lingers within. I'm in self-sabotage mode almost 24/7, meaning when things are bad I let them stay bad and when they're not bad I make them bad. It's not as conscious as it might seem, but it's a subconscious thing that's always happening inside my head. So I'm feeling quite safe and comforted (I use those words loosely here) in having the entire world join me in my constant worry, sadness, pain and suffering. Welcome to the club.

2 The first slide in a series of social media posts by Your Mind Matters. The complete series is also included at the end of this article.

The only province to have a confirmed re-opening plan at the moment is Quebec, despite having been the hardest province with cases continuing to climb. The scheduled date for opening schools (unless deemed unsafe by the Ministry of Health) is May 11 and May 19, for schools outside of Montreal and Laval and within those cities, respectively. The return to school is not a mandatory

requirement, leaving the decision up to families, and only elementary students will be returning to classrooms of no more than 15 students. Extra space for classes will be supplemented by vacant high schools (*CBC News,* 2020d). Schools will need to ensure that: two-metres of physical distancing is maintained between students, only one child may sit on a school bus seat, and to stagger recesses to limit overall crowdedness and by also limiting play to between one or two students only (*CBC News,* 2020d). Interestingly, teachers will not be provided with personal protective equipment, unless they have a pre-existing health condition or are otherwise vulnerable (*CBC News*, 2020d).

Distancing at Schools -- Possibilities
- Staggered start time
- Staggered recess/lunch
- Lunch at students' desks
- Gym closures
- Efforts to reduce busy hallways
- Modified rotary (teachers come to students)
- Fewer shared tangibles
- Extension of school year into the summer months
- Temperature screening upon entry
- Face masks as a requirement for entry

Source:
Rushowy, K. (2020, April 23). Ontario schools could look a lot different when COVID-19 shutdowns end. Toronto Star.
Gosner, S. (2020, April 22). School leaders debate solutions for an uncertain 2020-2021. Edutopia

Skepticism is a common feeling among educators and healthcare professionals alike; the rationale provided by Quebec's Minister of Education is that learning, food programs, and socialization amongst children must continue (*CBC News,* 2020d). With the new year approaching, schools around the world are trying to develop a long-term plan for what operations may look like come September, considering that a vaccine may need more than a year to develop and even longer to be distributed. Some schools are planning for a 'blended' learning format that mixes both online and in-class components (which would seem to be what teachers in Quebec may be doing if parents decide not to allow their children to return to class). The blended learning format may also bridge for new social distancing measures to take place, such as alternating days of class or half-days. As the future pans out and the pandemic subsides, relaxation of social distancing protocols will occur in phases. It is likely however, that some changes may become permanent, such as dedicated handwashing time after recess or before food consumption.

One idea that has been proposed is for elementary classes to keep the same teacher that they had in the previous grade come September to ease the transition of students back to school, as well as having an educator available to them that already knows them best and can thus connect and support them through the transition back (Gosner, 2020). As the economy reopens, parents will be depending on childcare and schools to take care of younger children which thickens the challenge of rolling out future plans. Nonetheless, some schools around the world that have reopened are implementing some of the proposed adjustments: Taiwan schools regularly perform temperature checks and have dividers between desks, and schools in Denmark are spaced out 2 metres from each other (Gosner, 2020). Still, questions linger on the minds of teachers that dictate their pedagogical approach; how can collaborative work and small-group discussions be promoted, how will desk arrangements impact teaching and classroom space, how will limitations on close-contact be enforced at recess, how often will shared items need to be disinfected if they are even used at all, by whom and when? Charles Pascal, of The University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, is a professor who believes that as new policies and rules come into the foreground, decisions must consider a "whole student approach that recognizes and supports students of varying backgrounds/conditions and diverse identities" which must not be at the expense of practicalities (Rushowy, 2020). Admittedly, it often may feel like these decisions are part of a 'wicked problem', which is described as problem in which there are no right nor wrong options, only 'better' or 'worse' (Henderson, 2020). In terms of overall design thinking and the future of spaces, the Principal of the design and architecture firm Gensler, Janet Pogue-McLaurin, forecasts that "social distance thinking may be a part of our DNA moving forward" (Thruster Media [@whoisthruster], 2020).

Conclusion

There is a lot of literature in circulation about the 'best' ways to proceed, as well as critiques on those very ways. In the process of compiling the above review, the amount of information has been
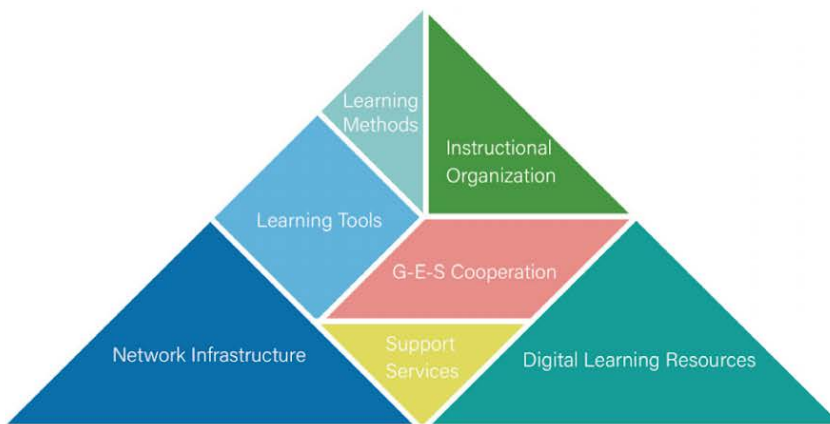
overwhelming, so much so that it could not all be included. A whole other report of equal length could be written about each of the topics included in this review. Omitted from this review is extensive coverage regarding advice, tips, and tools of the trade on specific pedagogical practices for online/distance learning. A wealth of information on that front is readily accessible in blogs, journals, and social media (such as 'Education' Twitter). Rather, this review focused on the omnipresent nature of schools, highlighting that even though school closures are a rocky road, recovering from long-lasting implications will not be simple either. There is a lot of uncertainty clouding the air, but what needs to be made certain is that returning to classrooms must not be dismissed to being 'business as usual' with only surface-level modifications. This is a chance to restructure and innovate solutions that put students, and the communities that they live in, first. Author and educator Will Richardson poses the "unpleasant truth" about education prior to the crisis: "schooling does not equal learning…the only reason we learn is because we have to". In order to figure out what the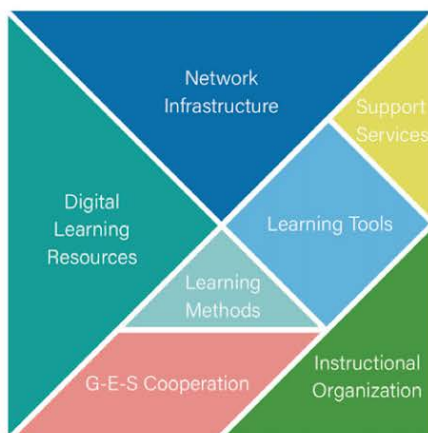re is *to do*, he encourages educators to instead think of what needs to *un-do* (Richardson, 2020). To close off this review, metaphorical tangrams, created by the Smart Learning Institute of Beijing Normal University, are included below to demonstrate how education may need to be supported and how decisions will need to be made moving forwards (G-E-S stands for governments, enterprises, schools) (Huang *et al.,* 2020). System change requires system thinking. Stay safe and stay well!

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Social-service type

Government-led type

School-based type

https://www.yorkregion.com/news-story/9937910-york-school-board-to-distribute-chromebooks-to-18k-students-for-online-learning/
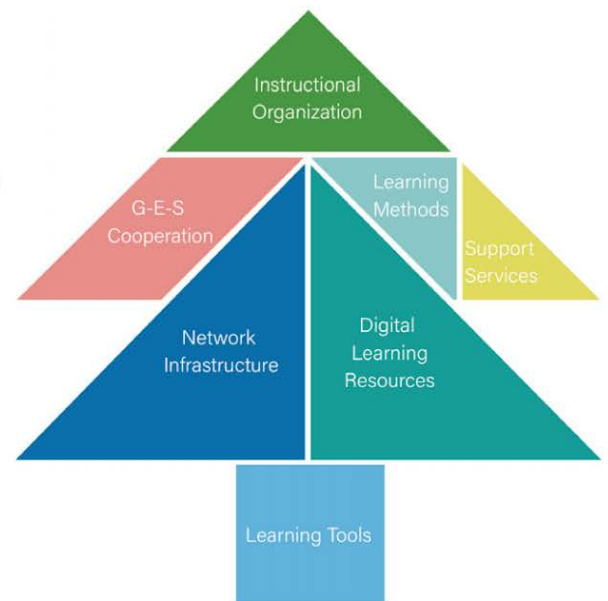
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I'm scared for when this ends because of the expectation of how it's 'supposed' to be. All these "when this is over" plans that are being made and promises that people are all going to appreciate life more, smile bigger and hug people tighter. Yes it seems beautiful, however it's not entirely realistic.

I'm scared because right now, I have a reason for my unhappiness and pain. I have an "excuse". I have something to cite for my unhappiness when I tell someone I'm not doing well. In fact, it's expected that I'm not doing well and I don't have to feel sorry for it. Additionally, we're all going through something together and so we feel less alone.

I'm scared for when this ends because I am still going to be sad and anxious and struggling, but this time it doesn't make as much sense to everyone else. This time it won't be expected or anticipated. This time, the rest of the world won't be joining me, but I'll be feeling this way on my own. Or we'll all be feeling it alone, together. Which doesn't matter because it still feels lonely regardless.

I'm scared for when this ends because there will be so many repercussions, so many residual mental health issues, so many problems that will follow us into the post-pandemic world, except it'll be harder to cope because we're all running on empty. We just put so much into surviving this thing and then there won't be much left to push through the second wave. The aftershock. The inevitable mental health pandemic that will follow this one. I'm scared for that. I'm scared that too many people have gone through too much pain, adversity, hardship and trauma and that moving forward and bouncing back will take far more resources than they have.

I am scared that we will not be equipped to handle life after all this and that we'll feel depleted. It is going to be difficult and that's something that needs to be understood now so that we're fully equipped to handle what's to come. But it's also important we know this because the expectation of what life is supposed to be like afterwards and the expectations of how we're supposed to feel and what we're supposed to do will haunt us and cause us more pain and grief than anything else. Expectations will do that to you.

So let's agree that this is going to be hard even when it's over, and that the work and survival tactics don't end once the government says everything can go back to normal. We don't have that kind of off switch in our brains and this will be much more complex to navigate. But let's have some hope, I guess, and trust that eventually we'll figure it out. We'll learn what we need to learn and move forward however we can. Most of all, we'll do all of this on our own schedule. At our own pace. On our own time. There is no rush.

It's okay to still struggle when this is all over and I wanted to write this to remind you of that and to remind myself of that. There's a lot of work that lies ahead of us, but we are not alone and we don't have to be. While yes, I am indeed scared for when this is all over, I am also hopeful. I know we are resilient. I know that I am resilient. And we will all rise above this all eventually and we will move on, because life goes on and there's no other choice. Right now, it's okay if you're not resilient. You will be. You'll get there soon. Stay on your own schedule and don't worry about anyone else's.

I don't know much, but what I do know is that everyday the sun comes up. Tomorrow will not be any different. Every storm ends.

- vb

The above sequence of Instagram posts was written by Vanessa Bancheri of *Your Mind Matters*.
Your Mind Matters is a Canadian non-profit organization that advocates for youth mental wellbeing and the reduction of stigma surrounding mental health.
Resources, blog posts, and creative tools can be found across their social media and website to keep the conversation going.
Interested in learning more? Check them out at yourmindmatters.ca and their social media on Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook.
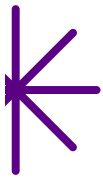*Permission was granted by the organization to share this post*

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