

Chapter 28

Classroom Management, Lesson Planning, and Technology Integration . . . Oh My!

Ways to Cope With Online Pedagogical Practices

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to share the results of a study of faculty in teacher preparation programs across the state of Texas to identify ways educator preparation has shifted its instruction as a result of COVID-19. Both quantitative and qualitative data results are shared, along with implications. The research provides some clarity regarding how future educator preparation programs and K-12 classroom teachers can adjust instructional practices as the shift to a virtual learning environment continues. The authors offer suggestions for best practices in virtual instruction for lesson planning, classroom management, and technology integration for K-12 teachers, as well as recommendations for teacher preparation programs to prepare pre-service teachers for successful implementation in those three areas while teaching in a virtual environment.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7222-1.ch028

INTRODUCTION

While online learning has shown significant growth over the last decade (Koksal, 2020), the impact was primarily seen in higher education prior to COVID-19. However, since March 2020, school districts and post-secondary programs alike have had to rethink how they “do school,” including the need for additional learning platforms, the most effective ways to facilitate learning in a virtual environment, and an awareness of the economic disparities between students and the technology gaps that come with them. How could learners best be served? And in the world of education, what does this do to our ability to prepare future educators for this brave new world?

This chapter aims to provide best practices based on the foundations of transforming online pedagogical reasoning. The authors conducted a research study of faculty of education in the area of teacher preparation within the state of Texas. The study surveyed practices and ideas pertaining to online pedagogical reasoning for future K-12 teachers. Respondents were asked about the changes in their teaching content, format, and strategies as they worked to prepare teaching candidates. Specifically, the study addressed preparation practices in the areas of Classroom Management, Lesson Planning, and Technology Integration.

The goal of the study was to identify ways in which educator preparation has shifted its instruction as a result of COVID-19 and the need for virtual instruction, including flexible planning, classroom management strategies, and technology integration. Research from literature reviews and data obtained through the authors’ study is presented as a foundational background of best practices. The research and theoretical framework provides some clarity regarding the way educator preparation programs have chosen to adapt to the recent pandemic and its effects on current and future K-12 classrooms.

As teachers have had to grapple with their own learning curve of new technologies, it has become incumbent upon teacher educators to get up to speed, as well, and quickly. While we continue to hope that COVID-19 will soon be only a memory, many school districts will likely choose to adopt some of their newfound virtual learning practices moving forward. As a result, the speed at which educator preparation programs have been able to learn about these technologies and prepare future teachers for these abrupt changes in K-12 learning environments is crucial. This chapter and research discuss what those first steps have looked like for some preparation programs.

BACKGROUND

Moving instruction online is a massive undertaking that involves the use of many new digital tools (Castelo, 2020). There has long been a debate about teacher preparation programs’ ability to provide any type of instruction for its future teachers in a virtual or online environment. The latest requisite shifts to virtual formats due to the pandemic have required university education programs to consider the most efficient and effective ways to teach concepts – like classroom management, lesson design, and technology integration – in new ways.

K-12 teachers who are now teaching remotely worry about managing this type of classroom for an extended length of time. Lesson planning and engagement strategies are typically a struggle for learners with a range of issues; however, doing so in a virtual environment is even more challenging. The missing component may be adequate professional development for K-12 teachers; professional development is necessary now more than ever. For faculty preparing pre-service teachers to enter a unique classroom

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