Technology use in education during emergencies

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Finding a Silver Lining in the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case of a Teachers’ Online Community in Georgia

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented shift towards educational technology around the world. Teachers began exploring digital tools, which contributed to their professional development. This ethnographic research studied a teacher online Facebook community in Georgia from a participant-observer perspective to understand its social interactions and discussions, using both qualitative insights collected through observation, and quantitative data using various digital tools. The chapter attempts to find a silver lining in the middle of the pandemic: it argues that the adaptation to educational technology during the pandemic gave teachers new opportunities to explore teaching online. Peer-led teaching and learning, sharing experiences, and best practices appeared to be productive. This chapter contributes understanding the Georgian context during the early waves of the pandemic, and can serve as a unit comparison with similar online communities elsewhere.

Change in post category frequencies over a period of 4 months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>Article/blog/opinions</th>
<th>Courses/webinars/trainings</th>
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<td>March</td>
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<td>67</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Johnson et al., 2022)
If school teachers have to teach the pupils online, how can they make it possible?

(Johnson et al., 2022)
The war
Where is everyone? School: NO Parent: are they going to have school today? 24 February
chilling silence
Safe?

8:35 am
27 February and onwards

- Latest announcements
- Which “news” are fake and how to distinguish them
- Locations of nearby bomb shelters
- Volunteering activities:
  - Which roads are safe
  - Which border crossing is the quickest
- Emotional support
- Asking / offering help to each other
Children meanwhile

- Process their worries
- Minecraft and Scratch
- Lots of TV and devices
- WhatsApp group chats
3 March

Online school started

Check-in
(we are here)

Just talk
(use of “forbidden words”)

Share
(grandma, teacher in a bunker)

See each other safe
(Alexandra)

Routine, feeling of normal life

Learn
(countries, geography, currency)

Presentations
Thank you!

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