ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Building Social Capital through Online Teaching in the Age of COVID-19

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• Abstract (300 words):
The COVID-19 disaster has come to college with astonishing speed. Within weeks of reopening, many universities in the U.S. had reported clusters of cases, forcing schools to frantically backtrack on their plans of reopening face-to-face and suspend in-person classes this fall. The shift online has also accelerated fundamental questions about the future of higher education in light of globalization and the emergence of a 'global education policy field'. While online courses have been increasingly gaining credibility, many argue that with online classes, learning outcomes often disappoint, and that virtual instruction runs counter to the most important asset at a major university: personal interaction with faculty and their peers.

We bring social capital theory and Bourdieu’s work on the sociology of education in the often-misunderstood, one-sided narrative of online learning, which is seen as both an isolated and deeply isolating experience. Our contribution is threefold. First, we will introduce the idea of building social capital in an online environment. Second, we will look at praxis – informed, committed action, to address socially differentiated educational attainment, which is perceived to be more pronounced in online learning. Lastly, we will draw on the online training course that we developed for internationally
based instructors at our college, who are now teaching online for the first time. Based on their input this far and our combined twenty-five years of experience in online teaching, we will suggest strategies that can be implemented to build community in online courses, increase satisfaction, student success and retention.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

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