ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Reenvisioning the Architecture of Schooling in an Online Era

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• Abstract (300 words):
The architecture of schools and physical classrooms can provide various constraints and affordances for different kinds of learning experiences. For example, in the 1960s and 70s, researchers and educators experimented with new architectural models for schooling, such as the open space school. Eberle (1969) argued that such a school could foster individuality and flexibility, and support a shift from the teacher being a “sage on the stage” to being “a guide on the side.” With the COVID-19 pandemic, teaching and learning had to rapidly transition online, where many of the affordances provided by physical learning environments were no longer present. While videoconferencing tools like Zoom may be convenient for lectures and certain kinds of discussion, they do not provide the affordances that many physical spaces can provide. However, I explore the use of Gather—a videoconferencing tool combined with spatial co-location in a game-like environment—to reimagine the architecture of schooling online. I first discuss my own experiences with using Gather to teach both an undergraduate and graduate level course. I describe different classroom environments that I created on Gather, and students overall reactions to learning using Gather. I then discuss how, ironically, tools like Gather can allow for rapid experimentation with the architecture of schooling that would
otherwise not be feasible in the physical world. While digital platforms are often seen as necessary alternatives to the ideal of physical schools, I contend that digital alternatives can possibly provide new opportunities for reenvisioning schooling, even in the physical space.


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

Shayan Doroudi is an assistant professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Education and (by courtesy) Department of Informatics. He works at the intersection of educational data science, educational technology, and the learning sciences, and his work draws inspiration from the histories of these fields.