

Reimagining the university curriculum through “thinking-based instruction theory” (TBIT) and a community of inquiry (COI) in a post-pandemic era

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Abstract:

The global pandemic has demonstrated that to thrive in a future globalised world, traditionally valued skills and knowledge will become less important and new capabilities will be required. The abrupt shift in mode of instruction, due to COVID19, highlighted once again how technology and globalisation are sweeping higher education institutions towards a future dependent upon knowing *how* more than knowing *what*. Moreover, given the swiftness of changes it is clear that professions and careers as we used to know it for generations, will be something from the past. Thus, there are almost no knowledge or skills that can be guaranteed to meet the needs of the unknown, uncertain, and constantly changing future. Repetition, pattern-prediction, memorisation, or any skills connected to collecting, storing, and retrieving information were already declining pre-COVID19 because of AI and related technologies. For these reasons (and many others), universities can no longer pre-impose all that is needed for the future before students graduate and enter the world. This implies that the curriculum will need to focus more on developing students’ capabilities instead of focusing only on ‘template’ content and knowledge. It will need to be concerned with promoting students’ social and emotional wellbeing and intelligence. Can we prepare students for jobs that have not been invented yet? If so, what type of skills and knowledge should we advocate in our current courses? How should we rethink existing pedagogy geared towards an unknown future? And what do these changes imply for the university curriculum? In this paper, I explore an integrated theoretical framework underpinned by elements of “thinking-based instruction theory” (TBIT) and the Community of Inquiry (COI) model as a renewed avenue for reimagining curriculum in post-covid times. My argument is based on the premise that this integrated framework provides substantial thinking tools for educators while simultaneously offering pedagogical, intellectual and technological flexibility to promote essential competencies and EQ attributes for an unknown future.

Keywords: Community of inquiry; Pedagogy; Thinking-based instruction theory; University curriculum