This handbook showcases how educators and practitioners around the world adapted their routine media pedagogies to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, which often led to significant social, economic, and cultural hardships.

Combining an innovative mix of traditional chapters, autoethnography, case studies, and dialogue within an intercultural framework, the handbook focuses on the future of media education and provides a deeper understanding of the challenges and affordances of media education as we move forward. Topics range from fighting disinformation, how vulnerable communities coped with disadvantages using media, transforming educational TV or YouTube to reach larger audiences, supporting students’ wellbeing through various online strategies, examining early childhood, parents, and media mentoring using digital tools, reflecting on educators’ intersectionality on video platforms, youth-produced media to fight injustice, teaching remotely and providing low-tech solutions to address the digital divide, search for solutions collaboratively using social media, and many more.

Offering a unique and broad multicultural perspective on how we can learn from the challenges of addressing varied pedagogical issues that have arisen in the context of the pandemic, this handbook will allow researchers, educators, practitioners, institution leaders, and graduate students to explore how media education evolved during 2020 and 2021, and how these experiences can shape the future direction of media education.

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Media literacy is now established by UNESCO as a human right, and the field of media literacy education is both growing and diverse. The series speaks to two recurring concerns in this field: What difference does media make to literacy and how should education respond to this? Research and practice have aimed to protect against negative media messages and deconstruct ideology through critical thinking, developing media literacy through creative production and a social participatory approach that focuses on developing active citizens to play a constructive role in media democracy.

This series is dedicated to a more extensive exploration of the known territories of media literacy and education, while also seeking out ‘other’ cartographies. As such, it encompasses a diverse, international range of contexts that share a conceptual framework at the intersection of Cultural Studies/Critical Theories, (New) Social Literacies and Critical Pedagogy. The series is especially interested in how media literacy and education relates to feminism, critical race theory, social class, and post-colonial and intersectional approaches and how these perspectives, political objectives and international contexts can ‘decenter’ the field of media literacy education.

THE USES OF MEDIA LITERACY
Pete Bennett, Julian McDougall and John Potter

ECOMEDIA LITERACY
Integrating Ecology into Media Education
Antonio López

CRITICAL RACE MEDIA LITERACY
Themes and Strategies for Media Education
Edited by Jayne Cubbage

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF MEDIA EDUCATION
FUTURES POST-PANDEMIC
Edited by Yonty Friesem, Usha Raman, Igor Kanižaj and Grace Y. Choi

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Charles Dickens was right, of course, but his priorities were somewhat out of order. The coronavirus pandemic was, above all, the worst of times, with the suffering and death of millions of people around the world, the impossible challenges faced by health care providers, and the waves of grief experienced by family members who could not be physically present with their loved ones during their final moments of life.

Still, quite unexpectedly, the crisis was also the best of times, with small moments of joyfulness standing alongside daily uncertainties as we found new ways to work and live together in our diverse social realities. The pandemic created a rich opportunity for educators to come together to share knowledge about digital literacy, online learning, and the critical analysis of news and information, even as it exposed the wide and deep disparities and inequalities of access, knowledge, and competencies both within communities and across national boundaries.

All around the world, in ways large and small, educators, librarians, journalists, scholars, and media and information professionals adapted to meet the new needs that emerged in their local contexts, demonstrating creativity, flexibility, and innovation.

Of course, the COVID-19 global public health crisis arrived at a time when crisis was already in the air. Climate-related disasters affected the lives of more than 139 million people, who were forced to cope with extreme weather events of all sorts. Day after day, journalists reported on crisis and conflict. Violent extremism, populism, and nationalisms of all stripes were on the rise in almost all democracies, and authoritarian leaders trampled on human rights in countries around the world. Under the aegis of racism, conservativism, or an interest in restoring ‘traditional values,’ political and cultural tensions intensified as minority groups faced increased threats.

The troubling consequences of the dark side of participatory culture were becoming evident as echo chambers and filter bubbles made life online a place that accelerated polarization and conflict. We watched as trolls wreaked havoc on the lives of ordinary people, using a variety of forms of harassment and violence that did not involve physical contact. Wave after wave of conspiracy theories infected the hearts and minds of people who took solace in the comfort of having a clear villain or a malevolent force to blame. Protests broke out in countless cities as people demonstrated their frustration with the failures and corruption of political and social institutions.
Along came the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an epistemic crisis and a public health tragedy on top of an already-roiling world. As businesses closed and the death toll surged in country after country, the advice offered by public health and government officials changed frequently, based on research evidence and the limits of professional authority and expertise. In some countries, politicians seemed oblivious to the brutal severity and scope of the virus transmission. In other places, they actively stoked public anxiety or reassured people with false information, increasing public mistrust. Unemployed, bored, and lonely people found themselves scrolling endlessly on social media, searching for social connection, and finding an array of dubious prophylactics being hawked by people wearing white lab coats, using their charismatic authority to reassure people’s anxiety, which had blossomed in the fertile ground cultivated by isolation, uncertainty, and fear. All over the world, people discovered how to game engagement algorithms for fun and profit, and disinformation became a growth industry that could be very profitable.

When schools closed, teachers were forced to find ways to teach, and students needed to find new ways to learn. School leaders who tried to plan for the unknowable future found themselves trapped or sidelined by their own uncertain predictions or wobbly decisions. Many educators found themselves challenged by having to take care of their own children at home at the same time they were learning how to use digital platforms and protocols.

And yet, as the contributors to this volume amply illustrate, scholars and educators found numerous ways to apply their knowledge and skills to solve the education and communication problems created by lockdowns and stay-at-home orders. Media educators thrived as they adapted to new practices of teaching and learning online. Public broadcasters developed creative ways to support learning at home, and librarians and information professionals supported patrons and helped them understand the scientific evidence and reasoning behind masks, social distancing, and vaccinations. Public awareness of the value of news literacy, media literacy, and information literacy rose dramatically, and people advanced digital literacy competencies. All over the world, innovation in media education flourished because educators were committed to finding new ways to do it, embodying the indefatigable human spirit that is manifest at its highest level only when crisis strikes.

Renee Hobbs
Newport RI USA
December 17, 2021
As media educators from around the world came together for this handbook, we celebrated the expanded usage of media and encouraged critical perspectives on media use on both personal and societal levels, including an examination of individual learners and power structures. The introductory chapter serves as an overview that will guide readers through the differences and similarities of media education across 26 countries on five continents, represented by over 80 media educators (Figure 0.1). While this global perspective does not encapsulate every media education practice around the world and the handbook is limited to the English language, the diversity of voices and contexts represents a wide range of practices that all media educators can learn from and possibly emulate in the future. In addition, the contributions come from multiple levels and stages of experience, from early career to experienced scholars who bring new voices to create an intercultural dialogue.

Figure 0.1 World map of authors and case studies
We would like to acknowledge the support and help of the international members of the Media Education Lab and our growing global community, including: Renee Hobbs, Samantha Stanley, Elizaveta Friesem, Frank Romanelli, Michelle Ciccone, Salome Apkhazishvili, Devina Sarwatay, and Tamara Kaldor. We are also grateful to our editors at Routledge: Julian McDougall, Peter Bennett, Suzanne Richardson, and Tanushree Baijal. And of course, each of us is deeply appreciative of the foundational support we received from our families through this period.

Building an Intercultural Community

The goal of this ambitious project is to create a deeper intercultural dialogue among media educators by forming a community of learners. We began to explore this opportunity in summer 2020 after a series of daily online meetings with global participants in the Media Education Lab who are interested in furthering their work in media education as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Friesem & Friesem, 2021; Hobbs, 2021). At the beginning of our handbook project, we created three brainstorming online meetings of an hour and a half with interested participants. As we experienced the value of these intercultural dialogues, we recognized that this unique perspective could further the understanding of what we had already discerned early in the pandemic and our growing sense of what needs to change in media education post pandemic. With a call for chapter abstracts due by late August 2020, we launched the project first at the Northeast Media Literacy Conference, as our authors participated in online presentations and discussions. We then implemented a double peer review process as a part of gathering case studies for the volume.

From the outset, it was clear that this intercultural dialogue among media educators around the world could not be contained within a set of chapters in a handbook. We hope to see this edited volume as the beginning of a growing global community of intercultural learners who will explore, showcase, discuss, exchange, and contribute to the discourse on the affordances and challenges of media education that can also help to increase empathy and understanding among international media users and educators. We are grateful for the opportunity to launch an assembly of case studies to better inform our knowledge of not only what happened during the first waves of the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to media
education, but also and most importantly, how this documentation can help us improve media education in the future. To the best of our knowledge, there is no other similar project that brings such a huge variety of researchers and practitioners on a global scale.

Recognizing the value of sharing experiences across contexts, each section of this handbook concludes with an intercultural dialogue of authors representing that section. These dialogues were conducted in both synchronous and asynchronous modes. Where possible, authors engaged in synchronous conversations on Zoom, which were transcribed and edited for length. Where such conversations were difficult to arrange, we used Google Docs to build the dialogue. Our editorial process was in many ways an ongoing intercultural dialogue spanning three continents and time zones, in addition to the chapters we contributed as authors and the Zoom sessions in which we engaged with other authors.

We offer this handbook as an intercultural experience of diverse voices, opinions and experiences, which allows our authors to freely navigate these chapters based on their interests, keywords, and topics. Most importantly, we complement the handbook with the website MediaEducationLab.com/future to provide more resources and invite our authors and readers to continue the dialogue with various activities and materials that can be shared and interacted with on the site. In the end, we developed a new model of the media education ecosystem based on these chapters that could be applied to strengthen media education for all in the future. As media educators, we know how challenging it is to keep current and track all the information we need for our practice. Therefore, we would wish to develop this site as a resource that can support this community of intercultural learners and benefit the field of media education.

Yonty Friesem, Usha Raman, Igor Kanižaj, Grace Y. Choi
Editors, Routledge Handbook on Media Education Futures Post-Pandemic
May 2022
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INTRODUCTION TO THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF MEDIA EDUCATION FUTURES POST-PANDEMIC

Yonty Friesem, Usha Raman, Igor Kanižaj and Grace Y. Choi

Overview

The term “new normal” was quickly adopted by many people across the globe to express how they adapted to the new reality of lockdowns and their impact on social, cultural, academic, and professional life. Workarounds included the large-scale use of digital tools to engage in remote environments which then raised various equity issues, bringing to the fore such concerns as digital divide (Nguyen, Hargittai, & Marler, 2021). Online learning, as an immediate response to the “new normal” in most countries and societies, was not planned or prepared as a sustainable process and had many unforeseen side effects on our educational systems. As we conclude the work on this handbook two years after the first recorded instance of COVID-19, the new normal keeps changing with every new variant or rising tide of cases. Nevertheless, what we have learned from these 2 years is that mediated communication had and will continue to have a large impact on our lives. Recalling Marshall McLuhan’s (1964) concept of the global village, during this time, media brought us together and created the sense of a shared goal. Many people, even those outside the formal fields of media, or indeed education, took on the role of media educator and used media technologies as they sought to overcome the challenges of lockdowns. However, there are still obstacles and improvements that remain to be resolved in the wake of this sudden switch to mediated communication, particularly since the lockdown and the resulting restrictions unfolded and were experienced very differently in different regions of the globe. But one thing was clear: media education played a major role in pandemic times—what varied was the form, scale, and nature of interventions.

Defining Media Education

Synthesizing all case studies and building upon previous definitions, we define media education as any learning process about mediated communication (in formal, informal, connected learning, or the third space) that involves either analyzing media or/and producing media with critical engagement, reflection, and social responsibility of the learner and educator alike.

From a global perspective, UNESCO has been working on gatherings to discuss what media education is starting in 1982 with the Grünwald Declaration on Media Education. In
June 2007, the Paris Agenda (a gathering sponsored by UNESCO) called for 12 recommendations to advance media education. The first was to have a unified and inclusive definition to follow these three objectives:

1. to give access to all kinds of media that are potential tools to understand society and to participate in democratic life;
2. to develop skills for the critical analysis of messages, whether in news or entertainment, in order to strengthen the capacities of autonomous individuals and active users; and
3. to encourage production, creativity, and interactivity in the different fields of media communication (p.2).

The participants of the February 2002 Seville seminar on youth media education sponsored by UNESCO identified the benefits of media education, especially for youth as “knowledge-acquisition, reality/fiction distinction, identity-building, citizen-consciousness development” (UNESCO, 2002, p.5). Buckingham (2013[2003]) emphasized the need to apply the interests of the learner and not use the traditional protectionist approach of indoctrinating learners into one way of reading messages. He called for a shift in the paradigm of education using the process of media education by encouraging the capacity of the learner to critically analyze and interpret the messages they receive so as to be better informed.

While media education describes the learning process and instructional strategies, media literacy, a term that gained more popularity since the end of the 20th century, describes the

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**Figure 1.1** Media education ecosystem model
outcomes of teaching about media. As Renee Hobbs (2019) stated, media literacy is part of the expansion of literacy as a semiotic meaning-making from spoken and written language within a situational context with an increasing range of media. At the core of media education is the belief that being media literate is the ability to deconstruct media messages and become more aware of how power affects production, how hegemony is being manufactured, and how each media user can create their own messages and take a stand and be socially responsible. Media then become a tool to examine values, ideologies, social contexts, and their impact.

The three elements of media education, production, text, and audience, are parts of the media education triangle describing the relationship between them as portrayed by Eddie Dick (1989), media education officer for the Scottish Media Council. However, this model omits the role of the educators and solely focuses on the critical questions about the producers, text, and audiences, leaving out other elements of the media ecosystem. To further clarify this and apply a humanistic perspective considering all parts of the educational ecosystems, we offer this modified version of Dick’s triangle, drawing on the Canadian Association for Media Literacy’s (AML, 2019) addition of context, creation, and analysis with the roles of learners, educators, and supporting actors (see Figure 1.1).

**Media Education Ecosystem**

At the core of the media education process are media literacy outcomes with emphasis on access that is still the biggest barrier to digital inequalities as we see it today. The COVID-19 pandemic only further highlighted the fact that we are far from bridging the gap and the term digital divide might need to be replaced by digital inequalities as Hargittai (2021) states. We cannot consider any of the other interconnected media literacy competencies if the issue of accessibility is not addressed. Therefore, the core issue of the media education ecosystem is still accessibility.

We acknowledge the complexity of differentiating authors, audience, and learners. Therefore, we place them as an inner triangle to explain that while their roles might be different, they may overlap to different degrees and even might at times be the same person. While the audience can be passive or active, we see the authors as active creators of media and learners as both audience and authors who engage in practicing media literacy skills. In this model, the educators are a distinct group, even as they can also be authors, audience, and learners. However, as the multiple case studies in this handbook show, the role of the educators as facilitators of media literacy practices was distinctive. It is worth mentioning also that educators is a broad term that includes not only teachers, librarians, professors, and trainers but also media practitioners such as journalists, producers, and artists.

This model of the media education ecosystem prioritizes the human participants and therefore puts them inside the triangle. And yet, it is important to acknowledge three factors that contribute or hinder the process of media education: media, contexts, and support. By media, we look into the content of the media texts as well as their channels and delivery. Context is a broad term to include the various external factors such as culture, history, socioeconomics, politics, and environment, all of which depend on the particular settings within which the various actors exist. Last, support refers to policy or institutional structures that can provide financial incentives or restrictions, as well as professional development and socio-emotional support.

Around the world, we can see an increase in adoption of media education with accessibility to the Internet and more affordable equipment (Abu-Fadil, Torrent & Grizzle, 2016).
In UNESCO’s *Media education: a kit for teachers, students, parents and professionals*, Divina Frau-Meigs (2006) offered a framework and practices to various audiences who need a comprehensive and practical guide. The celebration of media and information literacy as an annual global event starting in 2011 followed a series of seminars, symposiums, and gatherings calling for action to implement media education and media and information literacy around the world (Toulouse Colloquy on new direction for media education 1990; Vienna conference on educating for the media and the digital age, 1999; Seville Seminar on youth media education, 2002; and Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning, 2005). By providing more visibility with gatherings and publications, UNESCO’s promotion of media education focuses on standardizing media and information literacy outcomes, allowing each community and region in the world to practice media education following their own context of educational systems, policy, and media industry (Wilson et al., 2014).

This edited volume of case studies from a global perspective provides a unique glimpse into the 2020–2021 COVID-19 pandemic practices of media education as we try to learn from this experience to teach us about the future. Apart from the historical value of gathering this wide range of cases, we hope to provide the beginnings of an intercultural discourse on the value and premise of media education. The structure of the book builds upon the diversity of voices, practices, and aspects of media education to delve into its impact and significant change during the COVID-19 pandemic. The next section provides an overview of the 57 chapters from 26 countries across five continents to help readers navigate the handbook.

**Handbook Structure**

The handbook consists of seven sections of media education practice. Each section has an introductory essay from a leading scholar of media education, followed by a set of chapters from different countries, representing a range of methodological and stylistic approaches. These include reflective essays, ethnographies, and data-driven case studies that seek to offer insights into how pandemic-era media education was experienced by individuals and communities. Each section concludes with an intercultural dialogue about the path forward as we learn from each other. As editors of this vast volume, we offer here an overview and end the handbook with a concluding chapter that summarizes the insights and speculates on the future. The seven sections of this handbook reflect different areas of media education that were particularly brought into relief during the pandemic: inclusive practice, fighting infodemic, professional development, media practice education, educational media, policy, and civic media and participatory culture.

**Section 1: Inclusive Practice**

It was of great importance for all of us to make sure we overcame language and location barriers to showcase various issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The pandemic shed light on known inequalities such as lack of access to health care, structural racism, financial hardship, and citizenship and immigration both within and across countries (Addo, 2020; UNHCR, 2020; Unit for the Protection of Civilians, 2021). As a result, more people started to pay attention and seek solutions. One prominent—and perhaps familiar—source of inequality mentioned throughout our chapters is the digital divide, a complex term that does not only describe physical access but also includes the gaps in motivations, usage, and benefits (van Dijk, 2020). While most of the world’s population was under quarantine and facing the risk of COVID-19 infection, many experienced the pandemic differently, especially in terms
of accessibility to resources ranging from health care (vaccinations, proper medical care, nutritious food) to reliable information and digital communication (Maxmen, 2021; World Bank, 2020). The first section in the handbook thus brings together chapters that describe various inclusive practices by which media educators can overcome such digital and other disparities.

In her introduction, Srividya Ramasubramanian explains how the pandemic offered a new frame to practice inclusivity within media education. Following this, Gerard Goggin and Katie Ellis discuss how media education can become more mindful of disability concerns by focusing on design and experience. Luke Lawrence and Yuzuko Nagashima describe their use of inclusive practices as a pedagogy in their online English Language Teaching class in Japan for students to explore their multiple identities. Denise Chapman and Guido O. Andrade de Melo share their experience of being on Zoom as Black people through a personal essay that uses poetry and prose to reflect on Black esthetic and counter hegemonic discourse in a digital age. Sushmita Pandit highlights the grounded experience of the digital divide in India and offers practical guidance to address it. Lastly, Susana Beltran-Grimm, Cindy Beckett, and Tarana Khan examine how U.S. public television, PBS, in southern California supported children and families from Latine communities including immigrants.

Section 2: Fighting Infodemic

The COVID-19 pandemic was (and continues to be) of course fundamentally a health phenomenon that threatened the lives of many, which also led to the lock downs and severe restrictions on gathering, movement, and freedom of assembly. However, the World Health Organization (WHO) (2020, February 2) also pointed out that the pandemic has also created conditions for the circulation of misinformation, coining the term infodemic, which UNESCO called disinfodemic (Posetti & Bontcheva, 2020, April). Addressing information disorder (Warhall & Derakhshan, 2017) is not new to media education. Media educators have been practicing news literacy, media, and information literacy for decades alongside scholars who studied the impact of fighting information disorder (e.g., Alvarado & Boyd-Barrett, 1992; RobbGrieco, 2018). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the affordances of social media were exploited for profit by corporate and political interest groups to spread misinformation around the world with serious implications for people’s lives. One of the efforts to fight it was taken by enacting the European Commission’s (2021) Code of Practice on Disinformation signed by major tech companies and social media platforms to fight misinformation in general and with the COVID-19 pandemic outbreaks, “fight false and misleading information around coronavirus and vaccines” (para 9). Thus, the second section provides a broad overview of various case studies and practices related to diverse levels of news, media, and information literacy to address issues of misinformation and information disorders within the pandemic context.

Paul Mihailidis introduces this section by explaining how media literacy interventions have been used to fight misinformation during COVID-19 pandemic. Jonah S. Rubin analyzes the implications of the “infodemic” for news literacy education in the U.S. by investigating the role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in mapping strategies to fight misinformation. Alice Y. L. Lee describes the Collaborative Network of Media Literacy Education amid the COVID-19 pandemic and protests in Hong Kong, China. Michael Stöpel, Aziz El Hassani, and Livia Piotto share their work experience as librarians and information literacy instructors in France, Morocco, and Italy during the pandemic. Ismar de Oliveira Soares lays out programs in San Paolo, Brazil, that made use of Educommunication as a practical
framework to fight the infodemic. Kanchan Kaur highlights how issues of both technology adaptation and trust helped to cope with the “new normal” for undergraduate students in India. Michael A. Spikes explains news media literacy training for librarians in the U.S. where he defines the role of librarians as information navigators who provide support to staff and students as they deal with issues of media literacy and misinformation.

**Section 3: Professional Development**

In spring 2020, as many educators were locked in their homes, they were forced to teach remotely during the pandemic. Consequently, their main resource for remote teaching and learning were online tools that were used to seek practical advice and share their own frustrations with their current situation. With many opportunities to connect online, educators could join the pre-existing or newly formed communities of learners. Despite the effects of burnout, Zoom fatigue, and one’s wish to work in person, which has persisted to this day (Walker, 2020), many professional development initiatives have changed and have acknowledged both the use of asynchronous and synchronous online practice for educators to learn in flexible ways and create real-time engagement. In addition to in-person, hybrid or hyflex, communities of learners are utilizing media education practices to broaden their knowledge and practice more than ever before. The third section of the handbook offers case studies varying from Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC) to online training to make space for new professional developments arising from the pandemic.

Stephanie Flores-Koulish sets up this section by discussing the need for a critical media literacy focus within the community of learning and professional development. M. L. White describes the benefits and challenges of teacher education at the graduate level and the application of critical digital literacy during times of crisis. Grace Y. Choi analyzes how Facebook became a platform to support teachers’ professional development during the lockdown as it was used for sharing and discussing best practices in overcoming the pandemic-related challenges within a teachers’ private group. Igor Kanižaj, Maria José Brites, and Luis Pereira compare a professional development initiative with librarians in Croatia, Portugal, and the U.K., as they reflect on their media and information literacy work during the pandemic. Carla Viana Coscarelli and Ana Elisa Ribeiro investigate the widening digital divide due to COVID-19 in Brazil through the lens of school educators’ professional development in digital literacy and critical pedagogy. Orly Melamed and Rivka Wadmany provide insights into how online one-on-one consultation meetings can support higher engagement of MOOC participants in Israel and new media educators who were isolating at home. Vitor Tomé, Sofia Branco, Isabel Nery, and Miguel Crespo examine the impact of training courses provided by Portuguese journalists to teachers in the new media education landscape during COVID-19 as a way to broaden the community of learners and bridge the gap between educators and practitioners.

**Section 4: Media Practice Education**

At the core of media education, educators and learners practice a range of mediated communication by exploring how to access information, analyze and evaluate media messages, convey and communicate one’s own message, being reflective of one’s own media use, and apply social responsibility and democratic practices to better our world. Even before the pandemic, educators who were engaged in training students in media practice had been shifting to a more critical approach that challenged the existing power structures and called
for responsible engagement. The shift to remote teaching made this even more urgent, as students and teachers were confronted with new experiences of power inequities within the classroom and in the media landscape. As media education moved into homes, new equations had to be built, involving a wider range of actors. Furthermore, this required us to redefine the distinctions between media practice education and educating with and through media and, most importantly, educating to use media. The fourth section of the handbook is devoted to both early childhood media and higher education practices to create age-appropriate and personal learning to be media literate in times of crisis and being isolated using remote engagement.

In the introduction chapter, Cary Bazalgette shares a brief history of media practice from a U.K. perspective and shows how the COVID-19 pandemic can be an opportunity to further the mission of media education. Chip Donohue provides a look into the affordances of technology integration and media literacy for early childhood in the U.S. in order for media mentors to apply what one has learnt during the pandemic in the future. Susan Edwards, Karen McLean, and Victoria Minson analyze the learning process during the COVID-19 lockdown with digitally mediated contexts in early childhood education in Australia as a process of care beyond technology integration. Kathleen A. Paciga and Jennifer Garrette Lisy investigate how parents and young children used media as they were forced to do it together during the shelter-in-place order in the United States. Marco Pellitteri shares his experience of teaching media practice both online and by employing hyflex methods for undergraduates in China. Usha Raman and Devina Sarwatay describe the experience of both teaching and learning media practice in higher education in India as issues of students’ engagement became challenging during the pandemic. Natasha Casey examines her pedagogy of care with media literacy teaching for undergraduates in a U.S. college as the state of emergency continued and impacted students and educators’ motivations and media practice.

Section 5: Educational Media

Educational media is an industry that creates learning texts for educators to use in their classrooms. In this section, we distinguish it from educational technology which focuses on the tool and digital capitalism, from media education that centers on critical analysis of the social constructs (Niesyto, 2021). Historically, national broadcast channels provided educational programs, and now in the age of the Internet, many companies and individuals are able to provide high-quality programming for diverse and specific audiences. As the pandemic grew, the advances of educational media and technology supported learners and educators who were connected to the Internet and were able to utilize the tools. However, the digital divide and the lack of proper professional development in the area of using the tools hindered some of this progress. This is in fact a theme that emerges in many of the sections of this handbook. The fifth section of the handbook offers various case studies on how educational media were used and address issues of the digital divide and, most importantly, how stakeholders, designers, and educators should address educational media to ensure inclusivity, equity, diversity of perspectives, and a place for examining social constructs.

In the introductory chapter, Tena Perišin reviews how educational media adapted to the ‘new normal’ and how we should learn from this experience. Amy De Friese and Sandhya Nankani report on their collaboration during the pandemic and their perspectives on how an educational podcast can be used in a U.S. classroom to grow creativity. Kansu Ekin Tanca describes her company’s platform as an open access tool for Turkish educators to practice critical digital literacy. Amanda LaTasha Armstrong analyzes various educational technologies and
applications for early childhood in the U.S. during the pandemic as she navigates through the bias and systemic marginalization in digital spaces and online searches for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. David González Hernandez, Juan S. Larrosa-Fuentes, and Magdalena Sofia Palau Cardona explain how Mexico’s educational TV show Aprende en casa II bridged the digital divide and Internet access providing an entertaining platform for teachers to teach the young learners locked at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Jiwon Yoon, Amie Kim, and Hyeon-Seon Jeong provide an overview of opportunities and challenges to teach remotely using media such as YouTube and applications in South Korea as the most wired country in the world. Evanna Ratner and Baha Makhool highlight the benefits and drawbacks of the newly established Israeli National Broadcasting System as a media literacy agent for Hebrew and Arabic-speaking children to address remote instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 6: Policy

The issue of safety has taken center stage in regulations, legislation, and government actions during the pandemic. What started as a clear physical health danger spread toward other health areas such as mental health, reliable information, self-efficacy, and learning among others. Media education and policy in the context of this handbook may be seen as spanning media regulations; Internet safety; educational policy; state standards; and rules for children, adolescents, young adults, adults, and seniors. With the health crisis, many emergency guidelines and policies addressed the need for isolation to protect against the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, the issues of privacy, surveillance, engagement, age-appropriate content, and any needs of the specific community were included in policy statements from global organizations (OECD, 2020; UNHCR, 2020; Urban Institute, 2021; WHO, 2020; World Bank, 2020). The sixth section addresses the need to investigate how policy in different countries created a multifaceted context and construct of media texts and educational practices using media.

In the introduction chapter, Sonia Livingstone highlights the challenges of media literacy policy amidst the debates between various stakeholders on the educational purpose and process. Victoria Grace Walden applies a theory of meta-media studies to look into the surveillance culture in the U.K. higher education using tools such as Canvas and Zoom. Mukhtar Ahmad and Aysha Ashfaq examine educational policy in Pakistan in relation to higher education post-pandemic. Irene Andriopoulou and Nikos Panagiotou describe a media literacy approach in Greece during the pandemic as a guideline for media education in the future. Kristina Juraitė and Aukšė Balčytienė report on the application of news media within a media and information literacy framework to higher education amidst the pandemic in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Hopeton Dunn analyzes the impact of a media symposium on digital literacy and cyber security for journalists in Botswana and discusses the potential of knowledge gained during the pandemic into their future work. Andzongo Menyeng Blaise Pascal, Paul Alain Zibi Fama, and Marie Noëlle Oli Bilias explain how a media and information literacy initiative through a civil society organization in Cameroon supported the educational system during the pandemic.

Section 7: Civic Media and Participatory Culture

Media have always been part of civic discourse and have provided channels across contexts that encourage participation or found ways to strategically prevent certain groups from participating. With mass media and digital tools, audience participation impacted the way we look at civic
engagement and how individuals can not only participate in creating cultural texts but also influence others. As people were forced to physically isolate, digital media became their only means of socialization and participation in the emerging culture of a global pandemic. However, the nature and level of participation were undeniably uneven, yet new modes of insertion into the global dialogue were discovered, in often surprising ways. Historically oppressed audiences found ways to protest, voice their perspective and opinion, and demand to be heard by governments and other stakeholders as the chapters in this section showcase. The seventh chapter offers case studies from China, Russia, India, France, the U.S. and global perspectives on the ways civic media evolved during the pandemic to address the issues of the digital divide, political oppression, structural racism, ecology, civic education, and misinformation.

Henry Jenkins and Sangita Shresthova go back to the definition of civic media from the early 2000s and offer a fresh look within the context of the pandemic. Divina Frau-Meigs examines the case of the murder of the civic teacher, Samuel Paty in Paris, France as a consequence of a media panic during the disinfodemic by applying a media and information literacy lens. Antonio López, Jeff Share, and Theresa Redmond discuss how a global perspective of ecomedia literacy, ecojustice, and media education is needed to address sustainability and equity in a post-pandemic world. Vinod Pavarala and Kanchan K. Malik draw on their experience with community media during the pandemic to argue for the inclusion of grassroots media in broader policy discussions. Sergei Glotov analyzes the context of political participation through TikTok videos in reaction to the arrest of Alexey A. Navalny, the Russian opposition leader. Carlos Jimenez Jr. and Lynn Schofield Clark investigate the usage of Instagram and TikTok by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color youth to create productive disruptions in the U.S. as a result of the unrest after George Floyd murder. Jackie J. Xu and David Jeong evaluate the civic engagement of Chinese audience against misinformation using Danmu, a video-based social media platform during the initial COVID-19 outbreak.

**Media Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The health and economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced people around the globe to experience physical and mental isolation. As a result, there was a surge in the use of the already ubiquitous digital media. Issues of mental health, misinformation, online etiquette, and digital citizenship have required media educators to support not only their students but also their communities and the broader society. For media educators and media literacy scholars, this poses an opportunity and challenge to efficiently communicate what media education is, why it is important, and what the best practices in this rapidly shifting “new normal” are. As if this were not enough, each society has its own culture and context that complicates the task of sharing best practices or understanding how to adopt them. The concluding chapter of the handbook synthesizes the seven sections with the focus on thinking through how we might imagine the future of media education. We first summarize the history of media education and describe the practice of media education during the pandemic, followed by a suggested framework to move forward with a humanistic focus on media use.

With a two-year perspective that draws from our initial eager adaptation of online engagement to burnout and what now is called the great resignation, we recognize that our lives in the last years have been turned upside down and inside out. For many of us, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant personal, local, and global force in shaping this second decade of the 21st century, which, arguably, is comparable to the social, economic, cultural, and political impacts of other major world events. Undoubtedly, there is still much more to unpack and learn with historical, political, social, and cultural research to come.
Nevertheless, as media education practitioners and scholars, we felt the urge to respond to the changes of our field and attempt to start a dialogue that could shape the future of our profession and inform the whole educational discipline, which now uses media ubiquitously.

There is no way to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize media education during the COVID-19 pandemic without looking into human actions. Following the idea of media as the extension of human capacity (McLuhan, 1964), during the pandemic, we saw how various tensions between humans were augmented in media that required educators to de-mystify and deconstruct the complexity of media messages. These included racial tension and the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA; religious tension and the murder of Samuel Patty, the civic teacher in Paris, France; and political protests in Russia, Hong Kong, Nigeria, India, Poland, and Belarus. Adding to these tensions was the struggle to defend rights and freedoms as various political and social groups clashed over vaccination mandates and mask requirements. Furthermore, the digital divide in physical access, motivations, uses, and benefits became even more apparent by the fact that people were locked at home, thus being able to communicate with family, friends, and work colleagues only through digital media. With all the global events of 2020 and 2021, media have been playing a significant part, due to the physical isolation and especially with the economic model of social media, the Internet, and the design of algorithms that manage many parts of our lives. For this reason, it is important to provide diverse voices and offer multiple perspectives on what media education is, how to implement it effectively, and why we need it.

This handbook offers multiple perspectives engaged in a dialogue on media education and invites readers to also engage in this dialogue, as it applies to various communities around the world. This global intercultural dialogue can offer a better understanding of differences and similarities of best practices of media education and the different contextualized challenges. As we look forward with hope to the winding down of the pandemic, multicultural societies in different communities would benefit from learning how to use media education to be better informed and engaged with their public, as well as self-reflective of their media use. This handbook goes beyond a historical reflection, and it identifies new ways and practices of media education that can create more inclusive and multicultural learning and teaching. As our authors demonstrate with their various global case studies, media education can play a vital role in recovering from the global crisis and building a better future for educators and learners.

References


PART I

Inclusive Practice
INTRODUCTION TO INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Srividya Ramasubramanian

Introduction

It was early March 2020. It was an “in-person” meeting. My last official meeting of the year. But I did not know it then. The topic was inclusive leadership training for senior campus administrators. All plans were finalized for my workshop. As I was leaving the office, the Provost said: “But of course, everything depends on this novel coronavirus. We are holding an emergency meeting to discuss it.” It was the beginning of many such emergency meetings, urgent calls, and brave efforts to tackle this contagious virus that we knew little about.

COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic soon after. Keeping everyone safe and healthy was the top priority. Entire nations were under lockdowns, quarantine orders, and restricted movement. Most universities and schools started “pivoting” to online classes. There was no roadmap on how to deal with the pandemic. Boundaries between home and school, private and public spaces, formal and informal learning, and mediated and nonmediated worlds became blurred.

When COVID-19 started spreading, supposedly from Wuhan in China, so did anti-Asian violence and hate crimes around the world (Tessler, Choi, & Kao, 2020). With student activism against fascism and authoritarianism and the #BlackLivesMatter uprising around the world, there was renewed interest in addressing issues of embedded whiteness and dominant cultures that shape educational systems (Ramasubramanian & Miles, 2018). As schools and colleges moved to online teaching, educators had to address issues of student safety due to online trolling and zoom-bombing incidents.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolved, it became clear that it would widen social inequalities, making inclusive practice an important consideration. The inequalities were not only due to “pre-existing conditions” in health but were also intertwined with pre-existing systematic differences based on social class, gender, race, age, citizenship, religion, and other identities that have implications for how any crisis is experienced in vastly different ways by individuals within the same society, community, and even household. The widening divides in media access, information literacy, educational resources, and health disparities have become a glaring reality.
COVID-19 Inequalities, Intersectionality, and the Importance of Context

The meanings of “inclusion” and “equity” have been questioned, challenged, and refined during the COVID-19 pandemic. In pre-pandemic times, inclusion was often misunderstood as integration and assimilation with the dominant group. Learners from marginalized groups were framed as “weak” students who needed special accommodations; for instance, providing closed captioning for students with hearing challenges or to assist nonnative speakers with understanding course materials.

The critical media effects framework (Ramusubramanian & Banjo, 2020) goes in depth into why power, intersectionality, context, and agency must be considered within media scholarship and education. Intersectionality as an approach helps us understand that intersecting systems of oppression can lead to being stigmatized and marginalized in multiple and complex ways (Crenshaw, 1989). Simply using a single lens such as race or disability within inclusive practice does not reveal the complexity and nuance of how biases, exclusions, and marginalizations are experienced within media education. COVID-19 has widened inequalities in healthcare, social support, community resources, education, employment, and housing access within communities and across nations. The steep gaps and deep divides demonstrate how identities, systems, and cultures shape how we experience the pandemic. It is more apparent than ever that systemic inequalities in teaching and learning are embedded within complex and intersecting systems of domination and oppression. In other words, COVID-19 inequalities in education are influenced by race, gender, disability, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship status, and so on.

The context matters. Inclusive media practices cannot be generalized universally. Instead, they should be examined within the contexts in which they emerge. In other words, what works for one group at a given time might not work for another group at another time. For instance, one might ask if a “live” session or a prerecorded session is better as an inclusive practice. The answer to this is not an easy one. Perhaps asynchronous discussions allow for learners with care responsibilities to participate at a time when they can get breaks from their care routine. They may also be the preferred choice for learners with disabilities who need additional support and time to process materials. On the other hand, “live” sessions might allow for a greater sense of immersive learning, presence, and community, which might be crucial for those learners feeling lonely and lacking social support during the pandemic.

Trauma-Informed, Equity-Minded, Asset-Based Model (TEAM) for Education

We are living through a pandemic that has taken away millions of lives, left many of those living with the virus with long-term health issues, and destroyed the livelihood of innumerable people. The scope and scale of the impact of these types of large-scale losses cannot yet be measured or understood fully. But what is clear is that this is a time for educators to recognize that there is an urgent need to center issues of radical care, compassion, empathy, and honest dialogues within and outside their classrooms to help all of us cope with the grief, loss, and instability all around us.

The Trauma-Informed Equity-Minded Asset-Based Model (TEAM) elaborates on the key principles and practices as we work toward inclusive media education (Ramusubramanian, Riewestahl, & Landmark, 2021). A trauma-informed approach recognizes the importance of not retraumatizing learners. It recognizes that systemic inequalities, biases, and dominant perspectives are embedded into educational design, processes, materials, and practices. Therefore, educators need to prioritize issues such as safety, confidentiality, trust, collaboration, stability,
and agency. Sometimes, the learning environment is the only “safe space” to share one’s feelings and thoughts openly without judgment. Perhaps the classroom is a place that provides a sense of stability and routine, giving a semblance of “normalcy.” Yet, we all know that this “new normal” is going to forever change how we approach our lives, selves, and the world around us.

Decision-making processes that center on equality rather than equity often miss the point. Equality is egalitarianism that is rooted in notions of erasing pre-existing conditions of discrimination and oppression. Equity-mindedness is about removing barriers in the path of flourishing by considering historic, generational, and cultural trauma that is systemic, institutional, and taken for granted.

It is also crucial to not frame learners (or educators) from marginalized groups as “victims” of oppression. This is deficit-based framing of learners. People are much more than their traumas. “Difference” has to be valued as an asset to the learning environment rather than as a deficit that needs to be overcome. Media educators should allow learners to have agency in making informed choices about their learning process. They should be given the opportunity and freedom to enmesh their lived experiences into their learning in culturally meaningful ways. This is an asset-based approach to education.

**Toward Inclusion as an Action-Oriented Continuous Practice**

The role of media and communication is crucial in taking a trauma-informed, equity-minded, asset-based approach. Diversity and inclusion cannot simply be policies that are based on a mission statement but need to be acted and practiced. Communication, media, and educational spaces can serve as spaces where inclusion is actively enacted. For instance, storytelling and art have helped immigrants and other marginalized communities cope with social isolation, loneliness, and mental health (Ramasubramanian, Durham, & Cruz, 2020; Ramasubramanian & Ramirez, in press).

Inclusion, unlike the term “diversity,” is an action verb. It requires intentionality and effort. Inclusive practice goes one step further, placing the emphasis on long-term efforts. “Practice” is inherently indicative of temporality. Practice is what we do repeatedly to get closer to perfection. Inclusive practice is an ongoing commitment to excellence in our educational systems, policies, and procedures. Social justice is the vision that guides inclusive practices (Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Educators are often unaware of biases and exclusions in their practices. This is why those in authoritative positions of power should listen actively to others with less power within the family, school, organization, and community. Some guiding questions that could help educators become more aware of exclusions are as follows: How can our educational processes and practices be more inclusive to serve those most impacted by them? Whose voices and experiences are likely to be invisible, silenced, erased, and unheard by these processes and policies? How do we include their experiences within the decision-making process? What are our responsibilities and roles in addressing inequalities in learning? What types of support and resources do we need to work together to help all of our learners flourish and thrive? Are there multiple feedback channels in place to share honestly about exclusions and marginalizations without retaliation?

**Concluding Remarks**

We are in the midst of a paradigmatic shift in our lives that has fundamentally changed how we live, work, learn, and communicate. May we have the collective wisdom to use the power of knowledge, communication, and media for healing, peace, and sustainable growth as we move into this new era of postpandemic futures.
Acknowledgments

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References


Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2019 onwards has brought untold and, in many ways, unrepresentable death, illness, impairment, dislocation, abridgment of freedoms, loss of livelihoods, and disruption to lives around the world. The full dimensions of the disease’s health, social, economic, political, and cultural tolls are yet to be fully registered; not least as the pandemic still unfolds, especially in many parts of the majority world, which have inferior access to the necessary health, social, and public infrastructures and resources. It is fair to say, the pandemic has deepened inequality, exclusion, and injustice for particular groups—especially those with disabilities (Goggin & Ellis, 2020; McKinney et al., 2020; Scully, 2020).

Early on in the pandemic, between March and April 2020, it emerged that people with disabilities were being left out of the plans and approaches to public health and medicine, and also being marginalized in a wide range of ways when it came to the pandemic’s global social, economic, educational, policy, and political responses (Sabatello et al., 2020). At the same time, people with disabilities were used in various stages of the pandemic to offer commentary on who was most vulnerable (Goggin & Ellis, 2020, 2021). This reporting drew on many stereotypes of disability as not like the majority of the population or that people with disabilities are expendable (Scully, 2020; Solomon et al., 2020). However, as the pandemic continued and it became clear that everyone was vulnerable to acquiring the virus, the impacts of a lack of social support for the disability community became clearer (Qi & Hu, 2020; UN, 2020).

In the face of this crisis for people with disabilities, what emerged was a major intervention in media. There was an international reaction from the disability movement, community and allies, journalists, media organizations, social media communicators, and others—a remarkable ensemble of voices, narratives, analyses, and interventions via a range of media (Goggin & Ellis, 2020; White, 2020). The global response to COVID-19 was underpinned by communication and media, featuring many noteworthy innovations and adaptations (Goggin & Ellis, in press). These responses included many efforts to articulate concerns, make media, and ensure information and communication were accessible and inclusive to all public and communities, including people with disabilities (Wong, 2020; Yap et al., 2020).
Nevertheless, despite the terror, fear, and suffering that COVID-19 has wrought, it also brings a valuable and necessary opportunity to advance disability as integral to media and social progress (Couldry et al., 2018). Accordingly, in this chapter, we argue that the pandemic has provided an overdue opportunity to put disability on the agenda for media education adequately and has underscored the high stakes and urgency in doing so.

Disability is an area often overlooked in media education and literacy, though there have long been important acknowledgment and conceptualization efforts underway (e.g., Buckingham, 2005; Livingstone et al., 2005; Sourbati, 2009, 2012) and there has been important recent work (e.g., Aguirre-Martínez et al., 2018; Cubbage, 2017; Ellis & Kao, 2019; Friesem & Probst, 2020; Kasap et al., 2018, Leu, 2020). In particular, we note the work of Yonty Friesem, a co-editor of this volume, in his 2017 paper, laying out a theoretical and practical framework for media literacy educators that marries key principles of the U.S.-based National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) with “in- and out-of-school practices of media literacy for students with disabilities” (Friesem, 2017a, p. 2).

Our chapter will discuss two key, interlinked areas that came to the fore during the pandemic: inclusive design for media and education and media representation. We then offer a plan for advancing disability as the core to media education, and in the process contribute to necessary transformation in this area.

**Inclusive Design**

Under various names and guises, inclusive design has been gathering momentum for many years, yet progress has been relatively slow, and its implications are often not widely acknowledged. The COVID-19 pandemic was a watershed moment, so hopefully will garner greater attention to inclusive design.

For school and university students with disabilities, marginalization came in the form of a pervasive ableist assumption that students learning from home were nondisabled and neurotypical. Ellis et al. (2020) observed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the main cohort of students was assumed to be studying full time, had access to the latest technology, and had the time and capacity to resolve technology issues independently. Although these assumptions created a disconnect between students with disabilities and their learning institutions, the online learning environment prompted by the pandemic illustrated the untapped potential of universal and inclusive design in technology and education and the importance of multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression for all students, who like their disabled peers were struggling in the pandemic.

In particular, the outpouring of user-generated content and social media activism by the disability community revealed both scenes of concern and celebration. Let us consider two indicative examples of student-led disability activism across social media platforms TikTok and Twitter, which we will briefly discuss. As both moments gained traction online, they were picked up by more mainstream media outlets and prompted a discussion of the importance of flexible learning environments.

**Disability and Social Justice—TikTok**

The first case is described as a “viral TikTok incident” of a zoom recording of a professor at Oxnard College (a Californian community college) berating a student with hard of hearing for not answering him. In the video, the professor is shown humiliating and criticizing the student for “not trying hard enough”, despite her and her peers’ protests that she had to wait
Disability and Media Education in the COVID-19 Pandemic

for translation before responding. In an outburst akin to a classroom teacher humiliating a blind student for not being able to read a written word, the professor suggested the student ask her translator to teach her instead. Young people on TikTok posted the zoom video and invited others to send complaints, and the incident received coverage on international media, especially after it was reported on CNN (CNN, 2021). The professor in question was placed on administrative leave (Ebrahimji, 2021). As the incident received further media attention, the legacies of teaching practices such as audism, or the assumption that intelligence is tied to the ability to hear, were brought to the attention of a new audience (Patel, 2021).

This particular case illustrates both a continuation of discriminatory learning environments and recognition that they are no longer acceptable. Indeed, a shift is clear because it was the students who were demanding a more accessible learning environment by reposting the video on various social networking sites, most notably TikTok. TikTok played an important role here, not least due to its unique features in the broader context of internet celebrity, as discussed by Crystal Abidin (2021). In addition, we could see the student disability activism in the pandemic as an under-recognized stream of what Abidin identifies as a social justice moment on TikTok occurring between 2019 and 2020, whereby:

many young people have used TikTok to mobilise social action, galvanise social change, and institute new peer cultures of learning, with networks of young TikTok creators who were progressively or suddenly accumulating visibility and public recognition for their advocacy and activist content.

(Abidin, 2021, p. 85)

The controversy over the treatment of the student with hearing impairment at Oxnard College is but one flashpoint in a much broader response to digital exclusion and inaccessibility in the pandemic. Our second example is the use of Twitter as an important moment in media education for disability.

#myaccessiblepandemic

On Twitter, an initially UK-based conversation emerged around the hashtag #myaccessiblepandemic to highlight the ways the pandemic had improved accessibility for many disabled people (Jones, 2021). Students tweeted about the ways digital accessibility during the pandemic allowed them to attend university because they were able to set up a completely accessible environment in their own homes unique to their needs. Students with autism tweeted about decreasing sensory overload, and students with anxiety contributed reflections about feeling more comfortable in social interactions.

In an interview with the BBC, Ruby Jones, the student disability activist who started the hashtag, explained that working from home during the pandemic allowed her to better manage a full-time job and avoid exhaustion and hospitalization. However, she also warned that working from home in digital environments did not suit everyone and that workplaces, governments, and universities take a flexible and hybrid approach post pandemic (Bramwell, 2021). The #myaccessiblepandemic hashtag and other similar online discourse illustrate the arguments made by Katie Ellis and Mike Kent in 2011 that just as making content accessible is a choice, making it inaccessible is also a choice (Ellis & Kent, 2011). This is especially interesting as universities and schools make plans for their post-pandemic modes of delivery and participation—and consider where the digital media and tools will fit in. If they pull back from providing online participation without appreciating how flexible digital arrangements
Gerard Goggin and Katie Ellis

have supported many students previously excluded or experiencing poor quality of learning, the lessons learnt during the pandemic stand to be lost.

The pandemic, then, offers us an opportunity to tackle and reframe this crucial topic, which was already on the agenda before the pandemic: the potential of inclusive design in education for both students with disabilities and media education more generally, often approached via the concept of universal design for learning (UDL). In his important paper, Friesem recounts the experience of teaching students with a number of impairments at an after-school media production program, explaining the experience prompted reflection “about the diversity of habits and strengths” among this cohort (Friesem, 2017b, p. 125).

In recognition of the multiple ways people learn, UDL foregrounds an approach to teaching and learning that emphasizes the importance of creating learning environments that offer multiple ways of engaging with content, and of accessing and representing information. UDL offers an excellent opportunity for students with and without disabilities who comprehend information in different ways (Rose, Harbour, Johnston, Daley, & Abarbanell, 2006, p. 3). Throughout the pandemic, the importance of UDL and other inclusive design approaches (Goggin, 2016) to the entire student population became apparent. Research also underscored the benefits of a broader inclusive design approach for the whole population of people with disabilities and the wider society (Dobransky & Hargittai, 2021). Yet, in many cases for students with disabilities, widespread disabling social practices continued to exacerbate pre-existing exclusions.

These examples of social media activism by students with disabilities are but two cases of many during the pandemic. Characteristically, the protagonists combine expression and assertion of the right of people with disabilities to participate fully in education and all other spheres of social life and the crucial role that inclusive digital technology plays in enacting this.

Disability Representation

The centrality of inclusive design and the broader digital inclusion is linked with another longstanding, perhaps even older, concern in disability: representation. Disability representation has been a rich area of innovation and experimentation in recent years, and the pandemic deepened this process—also taking diverse disability representations to wider audiences.

As a starting point, consider UNESCO’s recommendations in response to the disproportionate impact on students with disabilities during COVID-19 school closures. The eighth and final of its recommendations noted:

It is the collective responsibility of governments, teachers, parents and caregivers to help reduce educational inequality for students with disabilities, especially during a time of crisis like the COVID-19 virus. In order to ensure that systematic, long-term solutions are provided, all factors that affect access to education, including policy, legislation, financing, human resources and data, must be explored.

(UNESCO, 2020)

We would add cultural understandings of disability to this list and the media becomes important here because media representations of disability influence how disability is understood and incorporated into education and society.

Disability representation is a core area of more comprehensive media education. It has wider social application and significance because understanding the attitudes, stereotypes,
and profound cultural meanings and social relations of disability underpin broader social change and, in turn, media reforms (Ellis & Goggin, 2015). A key issue is how to make resources on disability representation ideas, approaches, and alternatives widely available. This work of popularizing and expanding the universe of disability representations occurs across many areas, well beyond media, arts, and culture, to all kinds of areas of information, communication, and social life. One apparent and relatively easily discoverable area here is websites aimed at parents, an important resource during the pandemic as parents were tasked with educating their children at home.

A useful example can be found in the U.S. Scholastic website, which is widely used in other countries. A social studies lesson plan titled *Nothing Can Stop Her* targeting children under 8 Scholastic focuses on Jordan Reeves, a girl born with what is described throughout the lesson as a limb difference (Culligan, 2019). The lesson begins with a story of Jordan attending a new dance class where the other children stared at her and whispered to each other. This anecdote reinforces Rosemarie Garland-Thomson’s argument that staring creates a power imbalance between people with disabilities and those without (Garland-Thomson, 2002). A video tagged “social studies” at the end of the lesson features Jordan sitting in a tree wearing a T-shirt that says “the future is accessible,” discussing the limited career options available to girls with limb differences—modeling and Paralympian. Reflecting on her experience with disability and doing things differently to achieve the same goal, Jordan then urges girls to take up STEM and design their own solutions to problems they see in their own lives. The lesson acknowledges the stereotypes and prejudices surrounding disability as a social oppression playing out through negative attitudes and inaccessible environments. It then redefines disability as a source of innovation, not a deficit.

This kind of resource for school education in areas outside media draws on a longstanding body of surprisingly underutilized work on disability and representation. It is not clear what resources are available in different countries, but it would be a major priority area for development by educators, schools, and media education actors alike. Thus, there is a major new opportunity for such efforts on disability representation to build on emerging areas of disability experience (especially intersectionalities) and their conceptualizations. This area became salient in the pandemic, where literacy in critical accounts of disabilities and media representation can make a major contribution (Aho & Alter, 2018; Ellers, 2020; Friesem & Probst, 2020; Powers & Haller, 2017).

As disability scholars have suggested, there are also a range of new or liminal disability subjects evident in the pandemic (Anand, 2021) such as migrant and foreign workers, workers in precarious employment and careers (including care workers and domestic workers), and others (Anand, 2021; Zhuang, 2021). These are people whose experiences are not well captured or who are left out of the frame of the social model, human rights, and other accounts of disability, especially those customary or centered in “global North” disability studies and theory (Anand, 2016; Gilroy et al., 2021; Zhuang, 2020).

These economies of visibilities and representation concerning disability (Mantilla & Goggin, 2020) are also evident in two perhaps more obvious areas in the pandemic. First, the representation of those with impairments, chronic illness, and other potential “invisible disabilities” living in the aftermath of contracting the virus—evident in the public and media fascination with untangling and telling the stories of those with so-called “long COVID.” Second, the area of mental health, illness, and more broadly psychosocial disabilities, where we can observe much discourse and media representation of a range of aspects including madness and psychosis, as symptoms or sequelae of COVID-19; anxiety and depression, occasioned from experiences of the virus—but also much more widespread about the public
health, social, political, and spatial responses to the virus, such as lockdown, quarantine, and social distancing. These two areas of emerging disability representations do figure in media education but under the guise of work on health, medicine, media, and mental health and media, respectively. Thus the opportunity is twofold to broaden people’s understanding of disability and connect work on disability and media education with more developed efforts on health. This will be challenging to existing conceptualizations precisely because work on disability challenges the dominance of biomedical models of human life—directing attention to social, cultural, and biopolitical dimensions instead, especially when it comes to the shaping and role of media.

**Conclusion: Disability Directions for Rethinking Media Education**

In this chapter, we have sought to explain why disability is a vital and integral part of media education. We have also suggested why disability can be a rich resource for the broader project of transforming media education. Given the profound things that have occurred regarding disability in the COVID-19 pandemic, especially media experimentation and innovation, we can heed these lessons to recast our approaches to media education. Accordingly, we conclude by offering some direction for rethinking media education more inclusively—not just conceptually but also in practice.

**Rethinking Media and Digital Citizenship in Light of Disability**

At a fundamental level, there is a need to bring together recent advances in disability rights at the international level, such as the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the 2013 Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or otherwise Print Disabled, to acknowledge and elaborate an enlarged and robust concept of media and digital citizenship that fully incorporates people with disabilities.

**Inclusive Design and Technologies**

Given the reliance of the world’s population on digital technologies during the pandemic, it is high time to put inclusive design and technologies at the heart of media education—rather than remaining specialized or narrowly technical considerations. Inclusive technology is very much a social, political, and rights concern as it is technical.

**Curriculum and Resources**

There is a need for international efforts in this area; for example, bodies like UNESCO with a track record of supporting resources for media education in areas such as gender to develop toolkits, resources, and guides regarding disability.

**Resources for Disability Media Literacy**

A related issue then is the need to make available resources for disability media literacy. As discussed above, social media facilitated the widening of activist, self-representational, and other contexts. These had broad implications. In Australia, no communication plan was developed for people with disabilities until one month after the pandemic was declared. In the
interim and continuing, disability leaders used social media to educate the community about social distancing, mask-wearing, and vaccines. These were also picked up by the mainstream media, again addressing the issue of disability representation.

**Expanding Work on Disability Representations**

It is increasingly clear that disability is indeed a diverse experience. It is important to provide recognition of the complexity, diversity, and intersectionality of disability—and how an expanded account of disability opens up a more expansive vista and palette of media possibilities.

**Role of Disability Arts and Culture in Disability Media Education**

Critical, creative, and artistic uses of media by people with disabilities constitute a major resource for education about multi-sensorial, multi-modal, multi-media, and multiple body nature of media. Contemporary disability can teach us that media is much bigger, more profound, and deeply embedded in people’s bodies, identities, and lives than educators, students, and learners have been able to convey thus far.

**Internationalizing Disability Media Education**

Work is underway in many different countries on disabilities as part of media education. However, available research, visibility, and availability of materials are skewed toward relatively well-resourced and powerful countries and institutions. This is part of a transformation in disciplines of disability research, media and communication research, and education research, as well as the institutions and actors of media education (Ellis et al., 2020; Soldatic & Grech, 2018).

In conclusion, there is a historical opportunity for doing justice to disability when it comes to media education. This would be a terrible pandemic’s fitting, restorative, and transformative legacy. The experiences, practices, social changes, and shock to ideas COVID times have witnessed also provide a spur for a general rethinking of media education, as this volume shows. Disability offers a great deal for such an urgently needed reconsideration. To take such action forward, we see many pathways open and solidarities to be forged across media educators, scholars, disability sector, civil society, and all those who do and care about media in its deepest cultural, social, and political senses.

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MAINTAINING INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY IN ONLINE ELT CLASSROOMS DURING AND BEYOND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN JAPAN

Luke Lawrence and Yuzuko Nagashima

Introduction

As COVID-19 spread around the world in the first half of 2020, and schools and workplaces moved online, many educators struggled to adjust to the new normal. In Japan, a decision to close primary and secondary schools was taken as early as late February, and as the Japanese academic year began again the following April, universities were left to set their own policies, resulting in an ad hoc amalgam of live online classes, on-demand online lessons, regular face-to-face classes, and hybrid classes composed of on-site and off-site students. This confusion often left teachers scrambling to simply get through the class as best they could, leaving pedagogical ideals and the needs of a diverse student body to be pushed into the background.

Inclusive pedagogy is an approach to teaching that recognizes the diverse identities that students bring to the classroom and operates proactively to help students to perform these identities without fear of discrimination or marginalization. At the same time, it aims to provide a learning experience that advocates equity and social justice and sees teaching as a political act. One aspect of inclusive pedagogy in second language teaching is queer inquiry, or LGBTQ+ pedagogy (Lawrence & Nagashima, 2021; Nelson, 2009; Paiz, 2020), which imbues language teaching with a commitment to critically examining and dismantling dominant heteronormative discourses. This is achieved by embedding gender and sexually diverse characters and scenarios into classroom activities and, more importantly for the purposes of this chapter, providing a safe space for all students to negotiate and perform their preferred identities. Other aspects of inclusive pedagogy may be recognition of and accommodation toward economic and social class diversity in the classroom, as well as a zero-tolerance approach toward all forms of discrimination and oppression. The intimate setting of a communicative second language classroom that relies heavily on pair and small-group work and often requires students to draw on their own lives and personal experiences and opinions is seen as particularly suited to enacting inclusive and queer pedagogy.

Although on the surface, Japan may be seen as a free and open society, in terms of legal rights and societal acceptance of sexual and racial minorities, it is severely lagging behind. This is reflected in low rates of coming out for sexual minorities, as shown by a global online
survey, which found that only 5% of Japanese respondents reported having an LGBTQ+ friend, relative, or colleague compared to 46% worldwide (IPSOS, 2013) and little legal protection for non-Japanese residents facing discrimination. Therefore, even in the best of times, it is often difficult for students to express their identities in the classroom and be aware of potential internalized biases. With the advent of the pandemic and the shift to the more physically and psychologically distant realm of online learning, this difficulty was seen to be exacerbated.

As with inclusive pedagogy, the aim of promoting media literacy is to “empower and protect” (Hobbs, 2010, p. ix) ourselves and others. Hobbs (2010) outlines five core competencies of media literacy: access, analysis, creation, reflection, and social action. Providing space for ourselves and our students to develop and perform these competencies can allow us to facilitate inclusiveness and negotiate identities in the classroom.

In this chapter, we reflect on our experiences teaching through the pandemic and our efforts to foster and maintain an inclusive pedagogical approach in higher education, as we struggle to develop media literacy in the unfamiliar teaching environment of online English language communication classes. By taking stock of our experiences in this way, we help ourselves (and hopefully others) to look toward the postpandemic future.

**Media and Education in English Language Teaching in Japan**

Despite its international reputation as a high-tech, future-focused country, the teaching sector in Japan has been reluctant to embrace new technologies and modern forms of media communication. It is still common for most classrooms to be equipped with a blackboard and chalk and little else, and despite the prevalence of web-based Learning Management Systems (LMS) around the world, the take-up of these in Japan has been relatively low (Moritz, 2017). This made the sudden switch to online learning in April 2020 (although this usual start date was delayed until May for many universities due to confusion and uncertainty surrounding the pandemic) especially difficult as there were few existing structures in place to facilitate a high number of students learning online, and few teachers with experience of online teaching. This meant that developing media literacy was a steep learning curve for ourselves as well as our students.

Unlike lecture-based subjects, which can be taught asynchronously using a variety of media, English language learning requires communication with peers at all stages of the learning process, which meant that live online lessons were the only option for the majority of language teachers. This immediately brought to light issues related to media literacy: access (not all students had equal access to online resources), creation (a number of skills were needed to create and upload content), reflection (as teachers we were required to apply our ethical values to a new kind of social interaction through digital media), and social action (our responsibility as teachers to provide support and care during a time of heightened anxiety and stress).

**Media Literacy and Inclusive Practice**

In terms of media literacy, the critical reflections that we engage in below can be seen to encompass both the creation and analysis of media forms. As Friesem (2017) indicates, by allowing students to create and initiate engagement with various forms of media, they are able to express themselves as well as enhance their social and emotional skills. Similarly, by giving space and guidance for analysis of media content, students are able to use the perspectives