Chapter 11
Educational Transformation in the Post–COVID Era:
Parent–School Collaboration and School Networking

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a window into how the coronavirus pandemic has suddenly transformed instructional classes, family-school communication, and parent-teacher interaction at planetary scale. The authors propose strategies to deal with digital interaction, privacy concerns, and protocol agreements inspired by an ongoing process of digital transformation in local primary schools in Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain), based on inter-level support, teacher networking, and parent-school collaboration. In 2020, some schools started to develop their protocols for digital instruction and communication, but in 2021, they were suddenly forced by the pandemic to tailor them to improve digital family-school interaction, emotional support, and remote educational existence. The authors also provide a theoretical basis from agile education, gamification theory, and inquiring knowledge building or the spiral of inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

When a Sudden Crisis Accelerates Changes

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused every educational system in the world to experience lockdowns, quarantines and various degrees of remote teaching and learning. In many countries, schools have moved into a mainly remote communication mode. Nearly 85% of PISA-participant countries organized online educational programs during the COVID-19 pandemic (UNESCO 2020a). On the other hand, only 36% of residents of lower-middle income countries have internet access (Vegas, 2020) and, in order to provide instructional content or educational support, many countries used both traditional media for distance teaching and learning – such as radio, TV and regular mail – combined with more modern virtual platforms to include video conferencing tools, such as Twitch, Meet, Teams, Zoom or others In April of 2020, close to 90% of high-income countries were providing remote learning opportunities, close to 60% were using online platforms, and almost 35% distributed educational videos online (TWB, 2020).

In this environment of change, forced on them at dizzying speed, schools need a great degree of confidence from families and vice-versa. The mismatch in understanding of the different communication acts that take place in schools leads to conflicts that could and should be overcome with written protocols (a *Digital Decalogue*) to benefit both remote teaching and learning and online relational digital interaction between teachers, families and children-students, and in a wider view, with all educational agents.

The study in this chapter pursues an awakening to the importance of developing a communications framework for digital interaction as a collaborative strategy to reach better quality of family-school relationships in post-pandemic times. In it, the authors reflect on the digital interaction skills needed to collaborate in such a project, and how effective guided negotiation can help families and schools reach virtual agreements on educational subjects, especially when emotions, vulnerability and uncertainty are amplified by a pandemic.

Therefore, the goal of this chapter is to describe the process of participation of teachers and families in the school's digital transformation, an ongoing project in Barcelona (Catalonia), during and after the COVID-19 lockdown. It seeks to demonstrate that gamification categories can help identify different informational content, and points at some mismatches between teachers and parents when talking about and negotiating on explicit communication tools or strategies (components), implicit processes and habits when interacting in remote mode (mechanics) and meta-reflection on principles and values (dynamics) occurring in the process of communication online.

Educational Context

During the COVID-19 pandemic, educational systems have tried to adapt and apply their existing online resources and networks, which were mainly focused on secondary or post-obligatory levels, to primary education. The emerging call for adaptability and agile approaches in education (Briggs, 2014) is now a requirement all over the world. In many cases, schools and families are faced with challenges of poor national infrastructures, lack of internet access at home, and teachers who lack digital skills (Onyema et al., 2020). In less than a year, more than 40% of students worldwide have participated in some remote teaching and learning interaction (UNESCO, 2020b). This sudden and critical digital transformation has resulted in the widening of issues once seen as the province of adults, to now include young children. Alternative instructional techniques and distance teaching and learning that had already been explored at

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