Enacted Hope in Times of COVID-19

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At the time of writing this editorial, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that, "there have been 490,853,129 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the world, including 6,155,344 deaths" (April 5, 2022). There is no doubt that COVID-19, with its widescale illness and death toll locally and across the globe, has profoundly affected every aspect of social, academic, and personal life, blurring the boundaries of these areas, even while calling for working and living at the intersection of these realities (McGrail et al., 2022).

Fear and anxiety about being infected, dying, losing a job or a family member and feeling isolated or even depressed have been experienced by many during this uncertain time (Faraci et al., 2022). The health crises created disruption in work organization, especially in small businesses and their communities (Engidaw, 2022). They contributed to shortages in jobs and certain products (OECD, 2021), the so-called supply chain crisis. Affected populations during the pandemic have been in all communities—especially those in urban and rural areas— deepening already wide-ranging economic, social, and health vulnerabilities in these communities (Goudeau et al., 2021; OECD, 2021).

Students, educators, and researchers have also been forced to pivot and change how they work and live out their professional and personal life today (McGrail et al., 2022). They too have had their share of emotional distress, worry, and juggling learning and teaching in virtual and in-person fast-changing environments that have demanded alternative approaches during the pandemic (Moran & Marlatt, 2022). It is in times like this that educators, teachers, and researchers are called to inspire, instill hope, and create opportunities for "a reimagined place at the hyphen of technology, private spaces, and the changing cultural demands in our respective personal, institutional, and national contexts" (McGrail et al., 2022, p. 162).

What is "hope," and why should we invoke it, especially in times of crisis? A perusal of inspirational quotes available on the Internet will offer some suggestions. Aristotle defined hope as "the dream of a waking man" (Laërtius, 2018), and Martin Luther King, Jr. discovered that, "Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars." While John Green reminds us that, "We need never be hopeless, because we can never be irreparably broken" (2008), Charles Dickens pleads that we should "hope, hope to the last!" (2016). Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman clarifies that such hope is possible "if only we're brave enough to see it, if only we're brave enough to be it" (2021).

Hope that does not become action, however, is a mere "fantasy, idle desire, or escapism," and "is hardly a force for change" (Davoudi et al., 2021, p. 219). This last kind of hope is the hardest to enact, yet it is most needed in order to transform the ongoing reality of the current pandemic and to create the "reimagined" places that we seek for ourselves, our students and their communities. The call for submissions to Ubiquity, *COVID-19: Finding Hope Amidst Uncertainty, Loss, and Brokenness*, invited authors to share the "accounts of hope and possibility in academia, schools, classrooms, communities and beyond" (McGrail et al., 2021, p. 1) that they enacted at the time of darkness and despair surrounding the pandemic-infused reality and its adverse consequences.

The submission by Buchholz and Rust that we feature in this issue of *Ubiquity* is a great example of educators finding hope and bringing brightness and joy in daily work with children in the kindergarten classroom during the dark days of the pandemic. As reported in the article, "Sustaining Hope in Lockdown: Reinventing Kindergarten Classroom Rituals through Teachercreated Digital Stories," the teachers in this research used digital art-based storytelling to continue the classroom morning ritual established previously in the face-to-face classroom,

enabling the children to develop resilience, to make new memories, and to reconnect with teachers and peers. As such, this study underscores the relevance of human connectedness, compassion, and community belonging as sources of hope and affirmation at the time of school lockdown and social isolation. It also suggests implications from applying the framework of Imber-Black and Roberts (1992) for understanding the role of rituals and digital storytelling in bringing healing, hope, and restoration of safety and community collectively, for children and teachers together, during the pandemic. The digital stories woven into the narrative within the article illustrate the enactment of embodied and lived experience of hope by children and educators in the times of trauma and loss; as such, these stories enable the reader to connect to these experiences—if only symbolically and vicariously.

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