Online Education Weekly Newsletter (Higher Education) Issue 5

Books:
A Window into the World
During COVID-19.

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Editorial Letter

In one famous Chinese saying, *"reading leads us to happiness and wealth, as well as wisdom that enables us to live a better life in our own ways(1)."* Books are lifeless on your shelves or in your ebook reader, however, it is you and your actions that bring knowledge to life.

- *"Now more than ever, at a time when globally most schools are closed and people are having to limit time spent out of their homes, the power of books can be leveraged to combat isolation, to reinforce ties between people, and to expand our horizons, while stimulating our minds and creativity," said on the World Book Day website of UNESCO, which is the organiser for the first World Book Day since 23 April 1995.*

In this short newsletter, we asked our editors to recommend three books related to online education in celebration for World Book Day. Happy Reading! And we also want to use this opportunity to suggest the equivalent of books in the year 2020 — an online course that *suetangX* has recently launched called *"Drug discovery in prevention and treatment of COVID-19"* and webinars that is going to be held between April 27 and May 2, called *"Global University Online Teaching and Learning Webinar Series"*. Enjoy and happy reading!

Finally, we would like to and these open remarks by quoting something Prof. Qiu, President of Tsinghua University, said previously, *"books are important for people to know themselves, understand history, and discover the world. I hope that when you read these books, you will not only gain valuable insights from the content but also develop a broader mindset as you read stories of the past and expand future possibilities as you lead the way towards the future."*

(1) 书中自有黄金屋,书中自有颜如玉

Yours,

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If you haven't already, remember to subscribe to receive weekly updates from us, and to be a part of this awesome higher education community for online learning!

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We asked our editors to recommend books related to online education, hoping to provide us with some insights and inspiration during this difficult time, as well as in celebration for World Book Day (April 23). There were many great ones that the editors would like to recommend to our readers, but many of them are in Chinese, so here are the three books in English that we would like to recommend:

1. a book that is directed related to online education and its future;
2. a book with a *powerful story* about the power of education;
3. a book that was written by a well-respected leader and *innovator* in higher education.

[Book 1] Blended: Using Disruptive Innovation to Improve Schools

Recommended by Xiaoxiao Wang (General Secretary, PRC Ministry of Education Research Center for Online Education)

"Information and communications technology enables us to apply the theory of learning science to teaching and learning, promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of learning, and letting us realize again that learning itself is something we must continuously learn how to do," said Xiaoxiao Wang.

This book is especially insightful as we move back to campus learning. Many leaders of higher education have said that campus learning will be different, but yet we would argue many of us know as much about "blended learning" as we did about emergency remote learning that we are currently in. This research-based book could be good starting blocks.

[Book 2] Educated: A Memoir

Recommended by Shuaiqun Wang (President, xuetangX.com)

Educated gives readers an opportunity to think about one of life's, perhaps most recently one of online education's, most important and difficult questions—***what does it mean to change one's life, and what are the costs of such change?***

There is no doubts that online education has made and will continuously to make a huge impact to students and faculty around the world. Therefore, as one of the biggest online education platform in the world, xuetangX is extremely grateful to have them assisting to think carefully about every decision we make. And this book helps all of us to put a powerful story behind the number of learners whom proudly serve.

During an interview, the author said, "I don't think education is so much a state of certainty but a state of inquiry," and "being educated is less about knowing more about something, but more about knowing more about someone."Since the crisis, xuetangX chose to step up and transformed ourselves from a blended learning in-classroom tool to a synchronous learning platform, xuetangX is fully aware that learning is much more than watching lecture videos and we are excited about some of the past and future innovation that will enable more learners to be "educated".

[Book 3] Leading Matters: Lessons from My Journey

Recommended by Prof. Bin Yang (Vice President and Provost, Tsinghua University; Executive Director, International Center for Engineering Education (ICEE) under the Auspices of UNESCO)

Though this book is not directly related to online education, but this book was written by Prof. John Hennessy (former President of Stanford University, "the godfather of Silicon Valley", and Chairman of Alphabet Inc., Google's parent company) who has been instrumental in promoting and enabling the MOOC and online learning movement, and provides valuable lessons about leadership that brings innovation. For example, in 2012, he made a comparison in an article saying, ***"online learning can be as revolutionary to education as digital downloads were to the music business".***

Here are three takeaways for online education:

1. "It's hard to change the world in 90 days"
2. "A Good crisis is a terrible thing to waste"
3. "Online learning is not about online. It's about learning"

(1) "It's hard to change the world in 90 days"

"Leadership as service" is one of the hardest to achieve: whether as the President of a university, a teaching faculty member, or researcher, we are in a position to serve a lot of learners, staff and our community directly to indirectly. Additionally, it is sometimes very easy to forget that leadership is a service over a period of time, this is particularly important during this period of emergency remote learning. **The book reminded us the importance of thinking long term and about the future.**

Though there are a lot of business books about "shareholder value", but we should not just think about creating shareholder value in the next quarter, instead the author proposed that we should think about creating shareholder value five years from now. This kind of long-term thinking foster a different way of thinking: *"for example, you better make sure you are treating your customers and your users well, and make sure your employees are really committed to the company, otherwise if they walk out the door – you are not going to have a company five years from now,"* Prof. John Hennessy once said during a book tour interview. *"We need to focus on long-term thinking more,"* especially as we are planning the upcoming academic year when considering integrating technology into the programme.

(2) "A Good crisis is a terrible thing to waste"

The book also mentioned that progress and innovation require taking "necessary risk", and of course we should avoid taking "stupid" risk but "smart" necessary risk instead. The current crisis is a great "excuse" to break "smart necessary rules" which would have received a lot of resistant previously.

Hennessy argues that innovation is especially important in higher education. This is because it is very easy for universities to get trapped in the past, after all universities are the preservers of past knowledge and learning. If universities don't go forward and think about what we could do next, then we will be condemned to be like museum that don't do new things or places that are just old and contain information — **though storing knowledge may be one role of higher education, but this doesn't have to be the only future.**

(3) "Online learning is not about online, it's about learning"

The book spoke a lot about increasing access and reaching more students, for example, the potential expansion of a Stanford campus in New York. Additionally, a sector that Stanford enjoyed great success for expanding education to more learners is continuing education, lifelong education — which focus largely on people who already have a degree and they are looking to enhance their skills, thus, they are also careful with the use their time. However, Stanford has struggled more is to see what role online education can play in enhancing or reaching other nontraditional students.

Hennessy suggested one interesting area that he has always wanted to see addressed, "***how do you deal with the number of students that need remedial coursework before they're really ready to go to college. That's something we should be trying to do online.***" Though Hennessy added, *"learning is a much more complicated human-centered process than watching a video, let it work on you, and it will happen, it's about motivation. It's about people, individuals and their ability to focus on something, to try something hard, to get a problem wrong and then go back and fix that and understand the material. And so our learning systems in order to support that are going to have to be a lot more sophisticated than we initially thought."*

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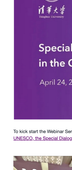
Together with the successful launch of the xuetangX International Version which was held earlier this week on April 20, one of the 109 online courses that was released, free of charge, is called, **"Drug Discovery in Prevention and Treatment of COVID-19"** (*its press release can be found here*) **which covers research into fundamental knowledge of clinical diagnosis, prevention and treatment of COVID-19.**

If you are interested to know more about the virus beyond the soundbites on the news, particularly regarding vaccine and drug development, Tsinghua's School of Pharmaceutical Sciences and Global Health Drug Discovery Institute (*which was co-launched by Bill Gates in 2017*) have the perfect online course for you!



Drug discovery in prevention and treatment of COVID-19

- The beginning of 2020 have witnessed the emergence of COVID-19 escalating to a world pandemic. This virus have claimed more than 100,000 death reported by WHO, 10 times more than the seasonal flu does. Since the severity of the virus is becoming crystal clear, it is essential to grasp related knowledge to prepare us for self-protection and future drug development.
- Faculty in **School of Pharmaceutical Sciences Tsinghua University**, partnering with the **Global Health Drug Discovery Institute (GHDDI)** has been rapidly organizing to set up this curriculum – drug discovery in prevention and treatment of COVID-19 – in order to provide information about virus detection and our ways of fighting against the ongoing outbreak.
- This curriculum includes research into fundamental knowledge of clinical diagnosis, prevention and treatment of COVID-19. Different strategies for drug development targeting this virus, the specific virus-host interaction of COVID-19 and how artificial intelligence (AI) contributes to the drug discovery will also be introduced during our lessons.
- In addition, Tsinghua University now open free access to researchers, clinicians and policymakers, hoping to offer some insights to responders around the world to be better equipped.

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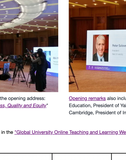
Online Education in the COVID-19 Response and Beyond — Global University Online Teaching and Learning Webinar Series

To kick start the Webinar Series, a Special Dialogue was held online on the evening of April 24th, Beijing time. Co-convened by Tsinghua University and UNESCO, the Special Dialogue explored the extraordinary challenges to ensure higher learning continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

President of Tsinghua University, QIU Yong, gave the opening address: "*Online Education in the Face of COVID-19: Access, Quality and Equity*"



Opening remarks also included the UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, President of Yale University, Vice Chancellor of University of Cambridge, President of Imperial College London, etc.

The conversation and sharing will continue online in the "Global University Online Teaching and Learning Webinar Series" which is being live-streamed here, in English. Here is the schedule:

	Pacific time (UTC -7)	Eastern time (UTC -4)	London time (UTC +1)	Beijing time (UTC +8)
Webinar 1: Showcasing online course designs	5-7:30 AM, April 27 (Monday)	8-10:30 AM, April 27 (Monday)	1-3:30 PM, April 27 (Monday)	8-10:30 PM, April 27 (Monday)
Webinar 2: Assuring online education quality in the COVID-19 period	5-7 AM, April 28 (Tuesday)	8-10 AM, April 28 (Tuesday)	1-3 PM, April 28 (Tuesday)	8-10 PM, April 28 (Tuesday)
Webinar 3: Maximizing the benefits of ICT in education	5-7 AM, April 30 (Thursday)	8-10 AM, April 30 (Thursday)	1-3 PM, April 30 (Thursday)	8-10 PM, April 30 (Thursday)
Webinar 4: SDG4 and universities: looking past and beyond COVID-19	5-7 AM, May 2 (Saturday)	8-10 AM, May 2 (Saturday)	1-3 PM, May 2 (Saturday)	8-10 PM, May 2 (Saturday)

You can also check your local timing for the webinars on timeanddate.com.

Here are some additional information on the first two webinars:

Webinar 1 (April 27):
Showcasing Online Course Designs

- **Organizer:** Tsinghua University
- **Host:** Online Teaching Guidance Expert Group of Tsinghua University, International Center for Engineering Education under the Auspices of UNESCO (ICEE)
- **Live-stream Partner:** xuetangX (live-stream link)
- **Moderator:** Enoch Wong, Schwarzman Scholar, Tsinghua University
- **Format:** Opening + Showcase #1-8 + Discussion + Closing

20:00 - 20:05
Opening Remarks

- **SI YUAN**, Director, PRC Ministry of Education Research Center for Online Education (MOERCOE); Executive Director, International Center for Engineering Education (ICEE) under the Auspices of UNESCO

20:20 -20:35
Showcase #2: Facilitating Student Engagement in Online Teaching with Flain Classroom

- **Jing GIANI**, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Tsinghua University, China

20:50-21:05
Showcase #4: Teaching Now, Facing the Future

- **Xiaoyun LU**, Professor, Department of Biotechnology, Xi'an Jiaotong University, China

21:20-21:35
Showcase #6: Merging Rain Classroom with Zoom for Effective Online Learning

- **Jiabei ZHOU**, Lecturer, School of Chemical Engineering, Sichuan University, China

21:50-22:05
Showcase #8: InVEST: An Intercultural and Remote Learning Journey

- **Elham Marzi**, Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream), the International Virtual Engineering Student Teams (InVEST), Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering, University of Toronto, Canada

21:50-22:05
Closing Remarks

- **Xinjie YU**, Professor, Department of Electrical Engineering; Head of Online Teaching Guidance Expert Group of Tsinghua University, China

20:05-20:20
Showcase #1: Adventures in Online Education

- **Bruce McNair**, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Stevens Institute of Technology, USA

20:35-20:50
Showcase #3: Climbing the Pyramid: Towards Effective Online Teaching in the Time of Pandemic

- **Mohamed Bakr**, Professor, Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering, McMaster University, Canada

21:05-21:20
Showcase #5: Online Education for Foundational Medical Science from Harvard Medical School

- **Michael J. Parker**, MD, Associate Dean for Online Learning, Faculty Director of HMX, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- **Christine DeGennaro**, Ph.D., Lecturer and Associate Director of Teaching and Research, HMX; Office of Online Learning, Harvard Medical School

21:35-21:50
Showcase #7: Managing Group Projects Online - A Selective Case Study of a Capstone Course in Engineering Systems Management

- **Vian Ahmed**, Professor, Department of Industrial Engineering; Director of Alternative Teaching and Learning, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

22:05 - 22:20
Discussion

- Online course design experience
- Main challenges and future prospects of online courses

(live-stream link)

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Webinar 2 (April 28):
Assuring online education quality in the COVID-19 period

- **Guidance:** Office of Lifelong Education Administration of Tsinghua University, Office of International Cooperation and Exchange of Tsinghua University
- **Organizer:** Tsinghua University Online Teaching Quality Assurance Expert Group
- **Live-stream Partner:** xuetangX (live-stream link)
- **Moderator:** Enoch Wong, Schwarzman Scholar, Tsinghua University
- **Format:** Opening + Presentation #1-6 + Discussion + Closing

20:00 - 20:05
Opening Introduction

20:05 - 20:10
Opening Remark

20:20 - 20:30
Presentation #2: Educational Innovation: Balancing Rapid Response with Excellence

- **Ishwar K. Puri**, Dean and Professor, Faculty of Engineering, McMaster University, Canada.

20:40 - 20:50
Presentation #4: Quality Assurance of Learning and Teaching during COVID-19

- **Laura ZHOU**, Ph.D., The Educational Development Officer, Educational Development Centre, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

21:00 - 21:10
Presentation #6: LMS-enhanced Teaching and Learning: A Story from the University of Macau

- **Katrina K. Wong**, Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning Enhancement; Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Macau

21:20 - 21:30
Presentation #8: Quality in Online Education

- **Caroline Levander**, Ph.D., Vice President for Global and Digital Strategy, Rice University

20:10 - 20:20
Presentation #1: Quality Matters in Online Teaching/Learning: Tsinghua's Story in Building the Quality Assurance Structure

- **Jinghuan SHI,** professor and the Chair of the Academic Committee of the Institute of Education; the Director of the Research Center for the Assessment of College and Student, Tsinghua University, China.

20:30 - 20:40
Presentation #3: Rapid Transformation and Supporting Quality Learning: How The University of Queensland has leveraged people, platforms, policy and practices in response to COVID-19

- **Duane Macdonald**, professor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), The University of Queensland
- **Greg Winslett**, Ph.D., Deputy Director (Digital Learning), The Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation, The University of Queensland

20:50 - 21:00
Presentation #5: Scaffolding the transfer: from theory to practice

- **Tatiana Khavenson,** Associate Professor, Director of Department of Educational Programmes, Institute of Education, HSE University
- **Ulyana Zakharova**, Research Fellow, Institute of Education, HSE University
- **Mikhalevsky Dmitry**, Institute of Education, HSE University

21:10 - 21:20
Presentation #7: How challenges for evaluating online teaching at Peking University under COVID-19

- **Jiaolei LIU**, Deputy Director of Office of Educational Administration; Associate Dean of Yuanpei College; and professor of School of Earth and Space Science, Peking University

21:30 - 21:50
Discussion

21:50 - 22: 00
Closing Remarks

Live-stream link for the entire Webinar Series.

See you at the live-stream. Enjoy!

Messages for the community

Call for contribution for future newsletter
One of our aims is to create a community where we can learn from each other. If you have any input, feedback, questions, or success stories that you would like to share, we want to hear from you at office@lose.edu.cn.

Can you think of someone who may find this newsletter useful?
Click the button below and send him or her an email. The content of the email has been pre-written for you already. What are you writing for?

Share this newsletter now

Next week spotlight: Happy 109th Birthday to Tsinghua!

April 26th is the 109th anniversary of the founding of Tsinghua University. In celebration and since Tsinghua University is one of the leading higher education institutions in emergency online education, the next issue will be covering how they have responded to COVID-19 pandemic and closure of their campuses as they continue their teaching fully online. And we cannot wait to share them with you.

Subscribe to the weekly Online Education Newsletter *(Higher Education)*

Each week we will share good practices on "online education policy" and "online teaching & learning" for higher education. We aim to create useable knowledge, for both administrators and teaching staff, that can be applied immediately.
We invite you to build a stronger community together, to learn from each other, and to join us in this digital revolution!

Email Address

First Name

Last Name

Name of Higher Education Institution

Job title

Which of the following best describes you?

- University administrator/ leadership
- University teaching staff
- University researcher
- Student
- Others

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- Online Education Policy (national-level)
- Online Education Policy (city-level)
- Online Education Policy (university-level)
- Online Teaching (pedagogy)
- Online Teaching (platforms or tools)
- Others

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