

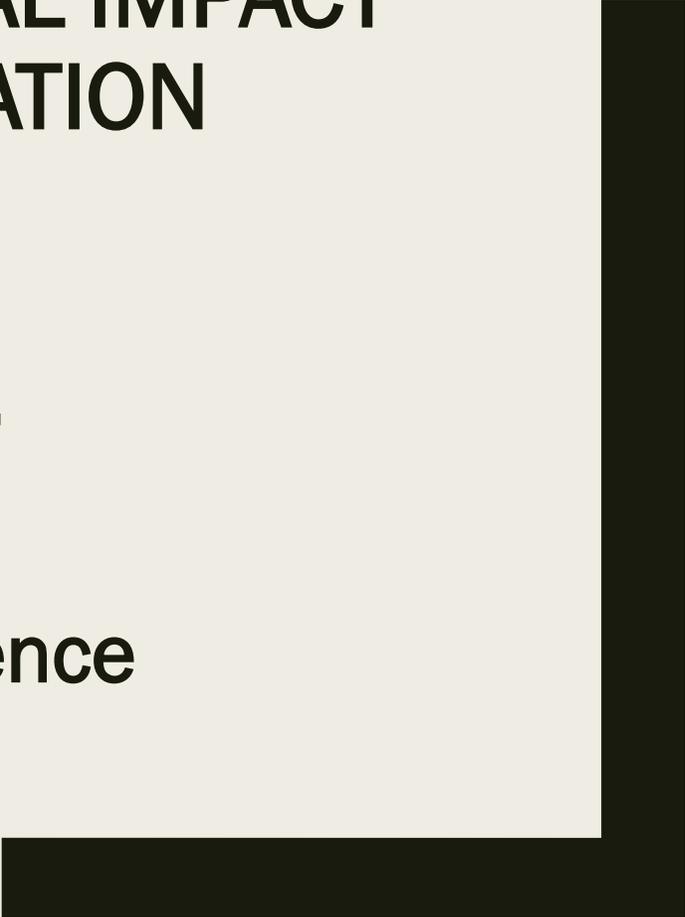


**LEVERAGING COVID-19'S INITIAL IMPACT
TO IMPROVE ADULT EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

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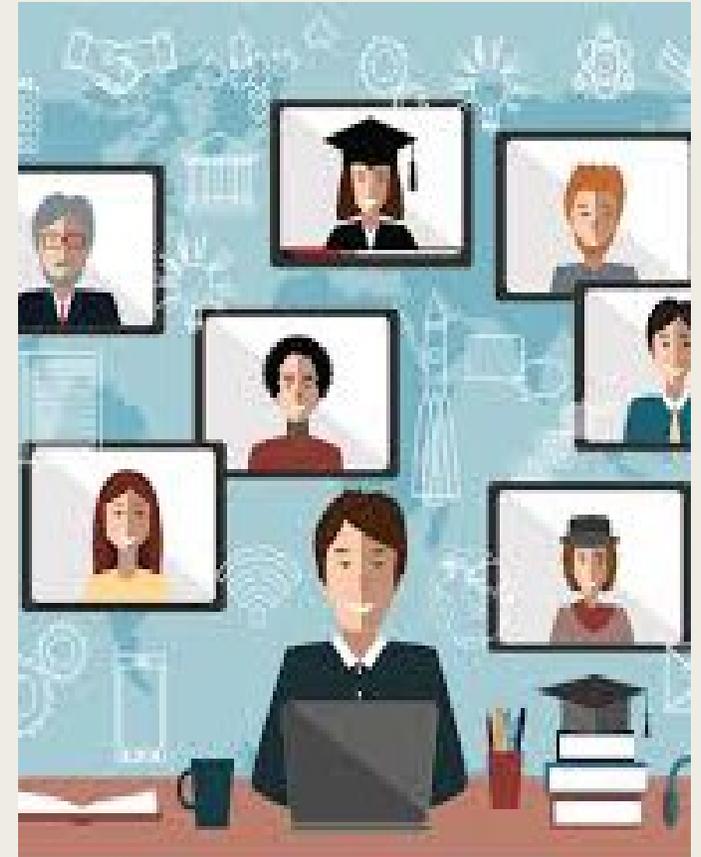
**Scholarship of Teaching
& Learning @ CUNY Conference**

October 14, 2022



Motivation for Study

- Grappling with my own reactions to the pandemic as a program administrator running an adult learning program remotely
- Curious how program administrators, instructors, and students were coping with the abrupt shift to distance teaching, learning, and program administration
- Desire to capture this unique moment and its impact on adult learning programs in the NE United States
- This study and write-up focused on adult students.





Research Questions

- 1) As a student in an adult education program in the United States, what impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on you personally and academically?
- 2) As a student in an adult education program in the United States, how have you adjusted to distance learning?

Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

Literature Review

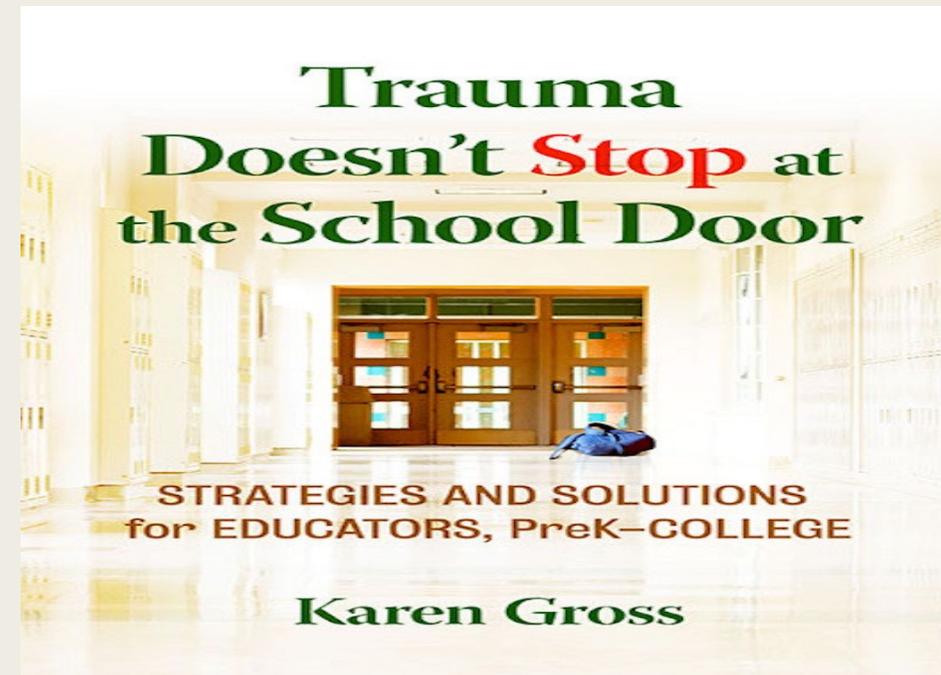
Distance Learning & Digital Literacy



Conceptual Framework

Trauma in Educational Settings

(Gross, 2020)



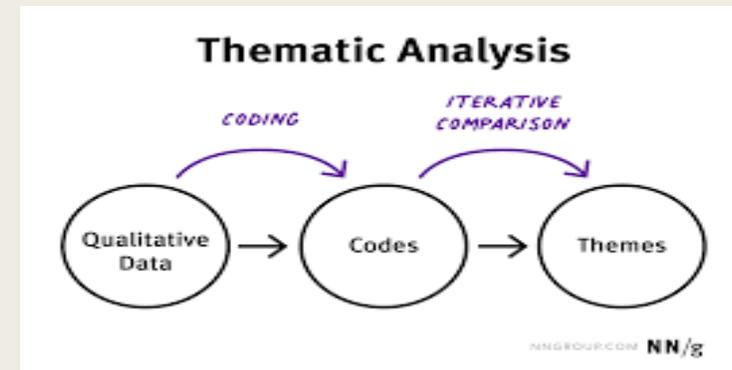
Methodology

Recruitment & Participants

- Adult education programs in NE USA
- Participants (n = 27)
ESOL (64.3%)/Higher Ed (17.9%)/ABE (10.7%)/Other (7.1%)
Female (70.4%)/Male (29.6%)
API (44.4%)/Latinx (33.3%)/AA (7.4%)/White (7.4)/Unspecified (3.7%)
Age: 19-53 (mean=26.3)

Data Collection & Analysis

- Online survey with primarily open-ended questions, with demographic, Y/N, and Likert scale
- July-December 2020
- Basic Statistical & Qualitative Analysis (Hand-coded)



Findings–Themes

■ Anxiety & Loss

Psycho-social-emotional impact of pandemic conflated by distance learning

Loss of personal contact, jobs, & income

Uncertainty about contagion & initial overwhelm of mass deaths

■ Distractions, Adjustment, & Balance

Crowded living conditions, no privacy, “COVID time,” & “Zoom fatigue”

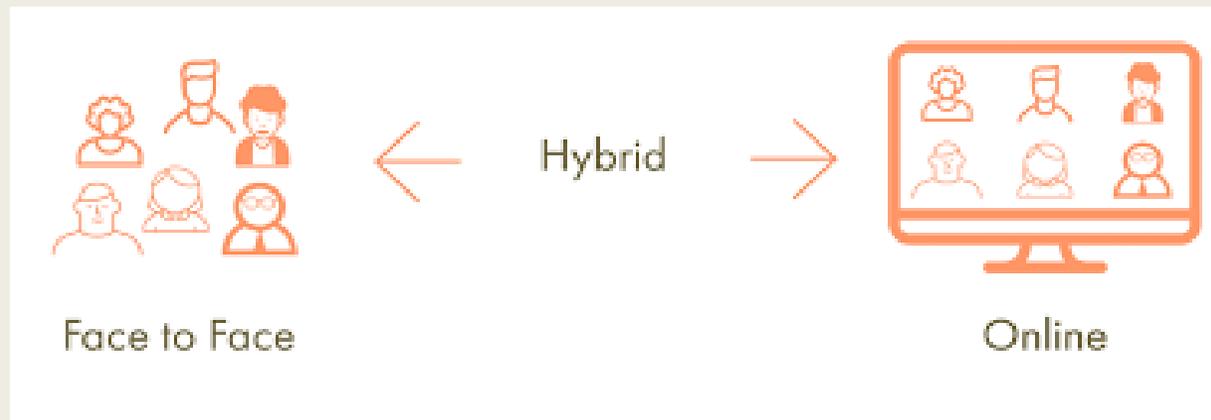
■ Distance Learning and Its Advantages & Disadvantages

Pros: Safety, convenience (no commuting/childcare), more equalitarian participation

Cons: Digital divide, more challenging to “connect” with instructor & classmates, brain fog and screen fatigue

Other Findings

- No appreciable change in digital literacy pre- and during pandemic, which was different from program administrators and instructors.
- 65.4% preferred in-person instruction (easier to concentrate & ask for help)
- 81.5% would do an online class again, primarily citing convenience & flexibility
- 66.7% would do a hybrid class (“best of both worlds”)



Implications

“Teachers could be more compassionate and understanding with their students. Many of us are barely hanging on by a thread.”

Improve online instruction & increase “social presence” (Goeman et al., 2020)

- More tutoring to augment instruction (UDL/support)
- Clearer instructions & more scaffolded assignments (UDL)
- Flexible deadlines (Digital divide)
- More training on Zoom & other online platforms (digital literacy)
- More 1:1 conferencing & remote office hours (engagement and social presence)
- Shorter lectures with more class participation & group work (engagement)
- Enhanced use of LMSs like BlackBoard & Google Classrooms (digital literacy)
- Record online class sessions & use more visual or multimedia presentations (UDL)

Trauma-Responsive Practices (Gross, 2020): Stability, structure, safety, subtlety, & someone(s)

- **Stability**: Support instructors through ongoing PD & support. Fostering peer tutoring programs to enhance student retention. Compensating instructor for online office hours (through wages or compensatory time).
- **Structure**: Flexibility and fluidity in online instruction (e.g., breakout rooms in Zoom or incorporating a variety of activities, including more student-led activities)
- **Safety**: Nurturing student engagement by addressing digital literacy and eradicating any microaggressions that might manifest
- **Subtlety**: Looking beyond the surface to understand student behavior (e.g., inability to focus or respect deadlines; failure to turn on camera during Zoom sessions)
- **Someone(s)**: Enhancing instructor's social presence. Encourage and support by providing timely constructive feedback and 1:1 attention.

Feedback and Questions



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