

QTMUN



UNESCO

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Content Disclaimer

At its core, Model United Nations (MUN) is a simulatory exercise of diplomatically embodying, presenting, hearing, dissecting, and negotiating various perspectives in debate. Such an exercise offers opportunities for delegates to meaningfully explore possibilities for conflict resolution on various issues and their complex, even controversial dimensions—which, we recognize, may be emotionally and intellectually challenging to engage with.

As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the real-world implications of issues, our committees' contents may necessarily involve sensitive or controversial subject matter strictly for academic purposes. We ask for delegates to be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

The below content warning is meant to warn you of potentially sensitive or triggering topics that are present in the formal content of this background guide, as well as content that may appear in other aspects of committee (e.g., debate, crisis updates, directives), so that you can either prepare yourself before reading this background guide or opt-out of reading it entirely

In UNESCO this year, many of the topics discussed may resonate personally with delegates and revive potentially harmful memories. In discussions surrounding Topic A as well, there may be discussion on topics about and surrounding medical topics like death and dying, blood, pregnancy/childbirth, and miscarriages/abortion. Furthermore, the application of both Topics A and B to COVID-19 may raise these subjects further. Topic B may also raise discussions surrounding inequity, mental illness, self-harm and suicide, and classism.

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- b) an individual delegate, please email our Director of Academics at academics@utmun.org with a brief explanation of your concerns based on this committee's content warning and your request to switch. You will be contacted shortly regarding your request.

UTMUN Policies

We ask for your cooperation in maintaining order, both inside and outside of committee session, so that we may provide a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational conference.

Throughout the conference, please note that delegates shall only:

1. Wear Western Business Attire (i.e., no costumes, no casual wear)
2. Embody their assigned country's/character's position, not their mannerisms (e.g., no accents, no props)
3. Opt for diplomatic, respectful, and tactful speech and phrasing of ideas, including notes (e.g., no foul language, suggestive remarks, or obscene body language)
4. Make decisions that contribute to a professional, safe, inclusive, and educational space for debate

The rest of our conference policies can be found on our website.

By attending all or part of a UTMUN conference, attendees agree to abide by all of our conference policies.

Furthermore, delegates' efforts to contribute to a culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and equity at our conference, both inside and outside of committee session, will be considered by the dais and Secretariat when determining conference scholarships and committee awards.

In cases of failing to adhere to any of UTMUN's policies, the Secretariat reserves the right to take any action it deems necessary, including rendering delegates ineligible for awards, taking disciplinary action, and prohibiting delegates from participating further in the conference.

Equity Concerns and Accessibility Needs

UTMUN 2021's Secretariat and Staff are committed to ensuring every attendee has an enjoyable, comfortable, and safe experience and is able to participate fully and positively at our conference.

If you have any equity concerns (e.g., concerns about barriers to participation) or accessibility needs now or during the conference, please do not hesitate to contact your committees' dais and/or our Director of Academics at academics@utmun.org.

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)! My name is Fiona Reuter, and I'm so excited to meet all of you at UTMUN 2021! I am currently in my second year at UofT, majoring in Economics and International Relations, with a minor in History, and this will be my seventh year of Model UN. I got involved with UTMUN last year as a Moderator, and I'm so excited to be back this year as the Director for UNESCO!

This year, UNESCO will consider three topics: medical misinformation and dissemination, policies and issues surrounding online learning, and a unique collaboration with the Conference challenges surrounding tourism and heritage sites. While these topics have a strong connection to the COVID-19 pandemic, my hope is that delegates are able to see the impact and importance of these topics and their impact beyond the ongoing health crisis.

To help guide your research and give you an overview of the topics, the dais has prepared the following background guide. Each topic is given an introduction, as well as several sub-topics which delve into more specific issues and areas about the topic. It is, however, recommended that you go beyond the information provided in this guide! Delegates are strongly encouraged to research their country's stance on particular issues related to this topic, and what solutions they might propose in committee.

Joining me on the dais team are Soban Atique, as your Moderator, and Mihir Vittalam, as your Vice Director. Soban is a first-year student at UofT and is planning on specializing in Criminology, while Mihir is also in first-year and planning on majoring in Cognitive Science. They, along with myself, are extremely excited for the conference, and wish you the best of luck in preparing for the conference.

Finally, if you have any questions about anything - research, the conference, MUN - please don't hesitate to send me an email - I am more than happy to help!

Best of luck,

Fiona Reuter
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Introduction to UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was largely the product of two major conferences: the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME), which took place during World War One, and the subsequent United Nations Conference proposed by CAME to create an organization devoted to education and culture.¹ Created with the goal of war prevention through “intellectual and moral solidarity,” UNESCO was not the first iteration of such a body.² The International Committee of Intellectual Co-Operation and the International Bureau of Education are considered to be predecessors to the organization.³

Today, UNESCO largely focuses on creating channels for communication and dialogue among nations worldwide, with a particular focus on education and science.⁴ It holds two main priorities - Africa and gender equality - as well as a list of overall objectives.⁵ These objectives include, but are not limited to: the utilization of policy and knowledge from the sciences for the purpose of sustainable development, effective usage of information and communication, and ensuring high quality education worldwide.⁶ Again, this is not an exhaustive list, and further details can be found in the Key Resources section.⁷ Especially at a time such as now, the role of UNESCO is crucial for its work in promoting communication and education.⁸

Topic A: Medical Misinformation and Dissemination

Introduction to Topic A

With COVID-19 raging around the globe, the importance of spreading and obtaining accurate, fact-based medical information has never been greater. While falsehoods and conspiracies have always been spread, the worldwide lockdowns as a result of the global pandemic have increased the dissemination of medical misinformation.⁹ It seems like the problem has grown even larger: it is virtually impossible to visit the ‘Explore’ page on Instagram without seeing at least one COVID-19 infographic. We’re even seeing false information being spread by governments and elected officials, and the consequences of misinformation being spread cannot be overstated. With self-serving, easily accessible medical information at times coming from

1 “The Organization’s history,” UNESCO, accessed November 10, 2020, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/%20unesco/about-us/who-we-are/history/>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 “Introducing UNESCO: what we are,” UNESCO, accessed November 10, 2020, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/united-nations-educational-scientific-and-cultural-organization/about-us/who-we-are/introducing-unesco/#:~:text=UNESCO%27s%20mission%20is%20to%20contribute,Gender%20equality>.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Peter Suci, “The Danger of Medical Misinformation On Social Media,” Forbes, last modified June 1, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuci/2020/06/01/the-danger-of-medical-misinformation-on-social-media/?sh=1bb6cf8d4f4b>.

authoritative, powerful figures, it is easier than ever to self-diagnose or take unsafe measures in the name of health.¹⁰

As such, delegates of UNESCO should address two major points: 1) the ways in which false medical information is spread, and 2) how UNESCO can work to stop the spread of false medical information, as well as simultaneously promoting the usage of correct, fact-based information. Regarding point one, delegates should consider the ways in which information is spread in their country, and identify their faults and any commonalities between them. They should compare these sources to resources we consider trustworthy, and notice any differences. From there, delegates are encouraged to move forward to point two and consider a multi-faceted resolution that focuses on delegitimizing false information sources and making accurate information easier to access.

Please note that while this topic will be guided by the COVID-19 pandemic, delegates are strongly encouraged to go beyond the current pandemic in their research and resolution creation. Delegates should consider the staying power of resolutions, and how they apply to the subject at hand beyond the coronavirus pandemic.

Misleading Information Spread & Their Commonalities

We can generally name two main ways in which false information is spread: social media (including online articles, video platforms, and traditional social platforms like Instagram), and political figures, who often misstate facts in public settings. In this section, we will explore these two methods of dissemination and their commonalities.

Quoted in a Forbes article, Sam Gill, the chief program officer and senior vice-president at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, notes that “The pandemic has seen people increasingly turn to social media for information”.¹¹ As the article further articulates, this becomes an even more serious issue when that information becomes medical advice, and it is easier than ever for that information to be spread with social media sites and platforms like YouTube.¹² Everything from conspiracy theories to fake prevention methods and cures can be broadcasted.¹³

Further, political leaders around the globe are increasingly, whether intentionally or not, spreading medical falsehoods. Consider the United States, where many of President Donald Trump’s comments about COVID-19 were proven to be false by scientists and doctors.¹⁴ Particularly concerning were Trump’s comments about the resistance of children to COVID-19,¹⁵ as well as his famous suggestion to inject disinfectant as a

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Suciu, “The Danger”.

¹³ “How to tackle medical misinformation during COVID-19,” Simon Fraser University, last modified April 14, 2020, <https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2020/04/how-to-tackle-medical-misinformation-during-covid-19.html>;

Jillian Kestler-D’Amours, “COVID-19 conspiracy theories creating a ‘public health crisis’ in Canada, experts say,” CBC News, last modified August 3, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52407177>.

¹⁴ Christian Paz, “All the President’s Lies About the Coronavirus,” The Atlantic, last modified November 2, 2020, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2020/11/trumps-lies-about-coronavirus/608647/>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

way to fight COVID-19.¹⁶ While Trump certainly is not the only political leader to mislead their citizens about COVID-19, his examples are certainly some of the most noteworthy and reactionary. The immense power and hold these leaders have over their nations means that this method of information spread is perhaps one of the most dangerous.

However, the question then comes to what commonalities these dissemination methods have, or rather, we could ask: why do people trust these sources? In a piece by Simon Fraser University, health sciences professor Jeremy Snyder was interviewed and stated that “Research shows that personal messages that come from someone you know or trust can be effective at spreading misinformation”.¹⁷ This, in fact, seems to be the major commonality we see: trust and ‘someone we know.’ Social media posts are shared by friends and family, and we view our political leaders as authoritative, trustworthy figures we recognize. It is also worth noting that this information is often easily accessible or largely broadcasted, social media posts can easily go viral, while a leader’s address is often watched by large populations at a time. These two features, ease of access and trust/recognition, are the two main common features we see in the dissemination of false medical information.

Impact of False Information

When assessing the impacts of false medical information, there are two angles from which we can approach the subject, which both build off of the other. Indeed, it is important to also note that these impacts can differ from person to person and country to country, and as such, delegates are encouraged to spend time researching the particulars to their state.

Primarily, an excess of information can make it harder to identify “reliable guidance”.¹⁸ Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, we already see an overload of information coming towards us, the World Health Organization has named this an ‘infodemic’.¹⁹ In the case of COVID-19, the hoards of misinformation are causing “confusion and distrust among people”.²⁰ Further, because children often have difficulty distinguishing between what is real and what is false, they are also reportedly at further risk of impact by false information.²¹ Quite simply, false information makes it take more time to find what is true, and can even make it harder to identify what is fake.²²

However, perhaps more importantly, false information can have detrimental impacts on public health. When incorrect information about cures, solutions, remedies, etc., are followed, there are detrimental medical impacts. In the current COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization has reported that the ‘infodemic’ has made them fearful of impacts on the response to COVID-19.²³ Delegates should remember the costs of

16 “Coronavirus: Outcry after Trump suggests injecting disinfectant as treatment.” BBC News, last modified April 24, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52407177>.

17 Simon Fraser University, “How to tackle medical misinformation”.

18 “Fake news: a threat to public health,” UICC, last modified April 1, 2020, <https://www.uicc.org/news/fake-news-threat-public-health>.

19 Department of Global Communications, “UN tackles ‘infodemic’ of misinformation and cybercrime in COVID-19 crisis,” United Nations, last modified March 31, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19>.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

public health crises, and the ways in which the pandemic has already impacted their lives.

Trustworthy Sources & Their Commonalities

Finding sources of honest, unbiased, and accurate medical news and research is often difficult due to conflicting opinions. Further, because medicine is such a broad and complex field, it is impractical for citizens to develop their own opinions as we are entirely dependent on medical sources. As a result, we must take into account the trustworthiness of all sources and be able to track patterns within all of them. A blatant give-away of untrustworthy resources are open platforms to edit, revise, and change the work at hand. While sources such as Wikipedia, for example, may seem credible, the fact that an individual can manipulate articles without any mediating actor renders it invalid for any medical information.

Trustworthy sources must be based solely off of medical research. If any institution is to make a statement of a health issue, there must be facts and empirical research done to prove their claims. Further, if the source provides resolutions towards the issue at hand, there must be valid proof that these solutions work. This is often shown through experiments, trials, data, etc. Additionally, any information present should be verified as well by a third-party. This second step, while tedious, guarantees that all information is based off of evidence and is unbiased. Any factor other than medical research should not be an influence on the source, as the absence of such opens up grey areas for political agendas, social norms, etc. As “medicine is the application of [...] science”,²⁴ sources should stay within the sphere as well.

Trustworthy sources must also be works primarily contributed to by doctors, scientists, and other medical practitioners. Individuals of other fields, such as marketers, politicians, businesses, etc., should not be present in medical sources as they can swing the data or manipulate information to fit their own narrative. While this is rare, it is certainly common. For example, Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States “played down the viruses” that struck the US at the time, most prominently the influenza pandemic. This had detrimental impacts on the population, but Wilson’s motive was maintaining the US’ war effort for WW1. While attitudes of supporting the war effort were achieved, it came at the expense of thousands of innocent lives.²⁵ As such, restricting work to medical professionals ensures that all information is presented in an academic way with the purpose to inform and not to promote, attack, or embrace other goals.

Trustworthy sources must also have a clean track record from any deliberate attempts at misreporting. Note that such attempts must be deliberate, as trivial mistakes are practical and common in all types of news outlets, not just medicinal. Some sources may have been bribed, swayed or otherwise manipulated to promote false facts or misinformation, which renders them untrustworthy in the long-term. While changes in management, editors and authors are more than realistic, it is best to stay away from such sources as their historical record maintains their unreliability.

24 Henderon, Jan. “Is medicine a science?” KevinMD.com. April 2, 2012. <https://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2012/04/medicine-science.html>

25 “Presidents have often concealed or lied about health problems throughout U.S. history” MarketWatch. October 3, 2020. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/presidents-have-often-concealed-or-lied-about-health-problems-throughout-us-history-2020-10-03>

An example of trustworthy sources are local medical boards. These organizations, such as the Ontario Medical Association, often have factsheets, blogs, and other mediums that provide articles, statistics, and other information regarding domestic and global medical concerns²⁶. They are revised by local doctors, scientists and medical practitioners to ensure that all information provided is valid and accurate. More examples of trustworthy sources include the World Health Organization, which is an international organization that informs and suggests calls to action on global issues²⁷. These are not influenced by any particular government or country, and only seek to intervene when absolutely necessary. Hospital reports, health related NGO evaluations, articles from medicinal non-profit organizations are all additional examples of trustworthy resources. All of the aforementioned act independent from government influence, and are primarily contributed to by medical professionals.

UN Involvement

The UN has put in incredible efforts to be able to avoid the propagation of false information. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) had said “We are not just fighting an epidemic; we’re fighting an infodemic.”²⁸ during one of his speeches during the initial stages of the pandemic.

The propagation of false information seemed very harmful especially during the initial stages of the virus and was negatively impacting the UN’s ability to contain the virus as far as possible. Therefore, in response to this, WHO set up a group of “mythbusters” who were working along with large corporations such as Facebook and Google to counter the false information that was being spread about the virus. These companies have since started filtering out information that could be considered as a ‘hoax’ or unfound medical advice to avoid risking public health.²⁹ In addition to this, the UN has also been urging the public to consume information only from trusted sources.

Possible Solutions

When looking at possible solutions surrounding the spread of false medical information, one of the most useful considerations to make is how the COVID-19 infodemic has been addressed. There are a couple main possible solutions we can pull from this for discussion, although delegates are always encouraged to consider how their own countries have uniquely addressed false information dissemination.

1. Social Media ‘Mythbusters’ Teams

Colloquially named by the World Health Organization, ‘mythbusters’ is a solution that is currently in place in response to COVID-19.³⁰ This solution seeks to stop the problem once the information is already ‘out

26 OMA Factsheet | Ontario Medical Association
<https://content.oma.org/sections/news-events/news-room/oma-factsheet/>

27 “The World Health Organization (WHO) - Purposes” Nations Encyclopedia. Date Accessed November 11, 2020
<https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/United-Nations-Related-Agencies/The-World-Health-Organization-WHO-PURPOSES.html>

28 “UN Tackles ‘Infodemic’ Of Misinformation And Cybercrime In COVID-19 Crisis | United Nations”, United Nations, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/un-tackling-%E2%80%98infodemic%E2%80%99-misinformation-and-cybercrime-covid-19>.

29 Ibid

30 Department of Global Communication, “UN tackles ‘infodemic’”.

there' and disrupt its validity. Quite simply, this would involve employing teams of people to sort through any and all information being disseminated online and identify what is false and what is true.³¹ This effort could be undertaken by the UN itself, or through collaboration with media companies, as is the case right now with COVID-19.³² While this is perhaps the most intuitive and simple solution, there are a number of challenges delegates should be aware of. Primarily, there is the issue of human capital and resources. Unlike COVID-19, the general dissemination of false medical information can span farther than just one individual virus and pandemic - asking a team to have knowledge on such a vast array of medical issues is simply impossible. Further, this solution is one that requires constant upkeep: there can be no anticipated time of when the teams would no longer be needed, and thus this could quickly become a costly expenditure. Delegates could consider automation as a possible alternative.

2. Accessibility to Medical Education

One of the identified reasons why false information is believed is that people trust the source, given that they may not know much about the subject themselves. This is highly understandable - simply consider the amount of schooling medical professionals have to go through before they can practice. If we could, however, increase the accessibility of medical education, this may change, and people may find themselves better able to assess the validity of something better themselves. How this would be done is up to the delegates - currently in the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen a rise in the 'infographic' posted to social media, using simple visuals and text. Somewhat related to the idea of education is the the Singaporean response model to COVID-19, where strategies to assessing information validity

3. Punishment for the Posting of False Information

Perhaps a more drastic measure, one way to counter the initial posting of information is to increase the penalty for doing so.³³ This is a model that has been broadly followed in both China and Singapore in the case of COVID-19.³⁴ China made sure its citizens were aware of the penalty and laws forbidding the posting of false COVID-19 information, with many being prosecuted for such crimes.³⁵ Singapore experienced a similar situation.³⁶ Of course, the consideration here for delegates is the necessity of the UN to respect individual country sovereignty and law.

4. Complete Ban of Posting Online

Delegates could consider banning all posting of medical information online. While this would certainly make accurate information less accessible, it would put an end to the spread of all inaccurate information - at least through the internet, that is. Nobody could stop word-of-mouth spread, and especially without easy accessible resources online, this might make it even harder to assess what is true and what is false. Potentially,

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Elmie Nekmat and Audrey Yue, "How to fight the COVID-19 infodemic: lessons from 3 Asian countries," World Economic Forum, last modified May 1, 2020. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/how-to-fight-the-covid-19-infodemic-lessons-from-3-asian-countries/>

34 Nekmat and Yue, "How to fight the COVID-19 infodemic".

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

this solution could be altered to limit posting to only come from registered medical, reputable bodies, like the World Health Organization or a country's body devoted to healthcare matters.

All in all, one thing for delegates to note in particular is how to limit the spread of false information coming from politicians. Questions of sovereignty, as well as the UN's role within state politics, would be raised the second UNESCO tried to limit the speech of political figures. Perhaps then delegates should focus on people-facing solutions that give the civilian body the tools to properly assess what their politicians are saying instead.

Topics of Discussion

1. How can we effectively balance freedom of speech, viewpoint, and belief with the protection of public health and safety?
2. What constitutes 'false' or 'fake' information?
3. Why does fake information spread? Is there malintent in spreading it, or is it unintentionally done?
4. What is the most effective verification system for false information?

Topic B: Policies For & Issues with Online Education and Remoting Learning

Introduction to Topic B

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced students around the globe to shift to new methods of learning, with many classes being moved entirely online. With this move has come a heightened focus on the unique set challenges surrounding online education. Although most certainly not an exhaustive list, some of these include:

1. Protecting students' privacy;
2. Ensuring equitable access to education, both within classrooms and across the globe;
3. Preserving the quality of education necessary to call one's education successful;
4. Adapting online educational solutions for students of different levels, grades, and familial/residential circumstances;
5. Barriers to accessing education, including learning and physical disabilities; and
6. The mental health challenges that can come with not being in a classroom and lowered social interaction.

It should be further noted as well that these challenges are highly personal and dependent on the individual student, and reflect themselves differently across the globe.

However, it is for that exact reason that delegates in UNESCO are being presented with this topic. UNESCO aims to promote the standardization and accessibility of quality education, meaning that issues of online education should be at the forefront of the body's work. Delegates should consider each of these challenges individually - as well as any that are unique to their country - with a particular focus on analyzing the different delivery methods being used during the COVID-19 pandemic and how their features create and perpetuate these problems. Ultimately, delegates should come together to create a resolution that acts as a set of guidelines for how online learning should be implemented - the 'ideal' form of online learning, per se. These guidelines should include measures to deal with the challenges listed above, and - while indeed guided by the COVID-19 pandemic - should also be applicable for online learning in a non-pandemic time. Important considerations must also be made as to how to protect and respect individual country sovereignty, and the ways in which different nations around the globe approach education.

Common Methods of Online Learning & Their Issues

There are an extensive number of methods of online learning that schools all around the world are getting accustomed to currently due to the on-going pandemic. What once seemed like a temporary arrangement, is now possibly the way forward for us to be led into a technology-driven world. Today, we are coming up with new and innovative ways to revolutionize the eLearning sector and bridge the gap between in-person classes and online learning.

All methods of online learning are classified under two main types of online learning that take place:

Synchronous and Asynchronous.³⁷ Each of these types helps define the limitations of each method and how engaged students are when using them as seen below.³⁸

1. Synchronous Learning

Synchronous Learning is real-time learning that takes place among a group of students.³⁹ It closely replicates a classroom setting in how communication is possible among peers and with instructors as well. This kind of learning has been easily facilitated due to the rapid evolution of digital media and technology.

An issue with synchronous learning is that it does not take the different learning paces of students into consideration. Having real-time online classes, causes instructors to get through content at a much faster pace. This could seem overwhelming for many students because it will not provide them with the opportunity to digest and understand the information from class. As a result, this increases the time they spend on each class in order to gain a good understanding of the content.

A. Interactive Learning

Interactive Learning involves the use of media and games that stimulates a reaction from the users. This method of eLearning follows a more kinesthetic approach which helps retain information easily. The use of applications such as Quizziz, Kahoot, online simulations and various other educational game applications incorporates interactive learning. These applications allow students to get a sense of how the concept is applied to the real-world which serves as a window beyond the online world for the students.

An issue with Interactive Learning is that there is a very thin line that distinguishes learning and leisure in these applications. This makes it very easy for students to get distracted while trying to learn concepts and often causes them to lose focus.

2. Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous Learning is a type of learning in which learning takes place in a much more flexible way.⁴⁰ A group of students study independently from a given set of resources according to their convenience. This means that students can study and learn content whenever they find suitable according to their schedules. It also means that students can learn at their own pace without having the constraint of not being able to keep up with the rest of their peers.

However, this also means that this type of learning is independent for the most part and limits the communication between students and instructors. Although it might seem to be more flexible, it limits the opportunities for students to clarify doubts and curbs their opportunities to extend their learning through

37 Sander Tamm, "All 10 Types Of E-Learning Explained | E-Student", E-Student.Org, 2019, <https://e-student.org/types-of-e-learning/>.

38 Amit G Soni, "Choosing The Right Elearning Methods: Factors And Elements - Elearning Industry", Elearning Industry, 2015, <https://elearningindustry.com/choosing-right-elearning-methods-factors-elements>.

39 Sander Tamm, "All 10 Types Of E-Learning Explained | E-Student", E-Student.Org, 2019, <https://e-student.org/types-of-e-learning/>.

40 Ibid.

applications to the real-world. Moreover, it has a major impact on students with learning disabilities. Very often, students with learning disabilities find it comforting to have a support system to rely on. Through asynchronous learning, these students won't have easy access to additional support from teachers or mentors which might affect their learning.

A. Individual Learning

Individual Learning is when a person is given a certain set of goals to achieve and they accumulate their own resources and work towards achieving those goals with those resources. This type of learning is predominantly an asynchronous form of learning. It often seems as an effective method in how it urges students to take responsibility and having students become responsible for their own research has proved to have boosted retention of information and the learning that takes place. While homeschooling is one example of individual learning, the COVID-19 pandemic has urged many public and private schools and universities to follow similar methods in order to ensure that students are productive even while working from home.

However, the issue with Individual learning is that it is mostly a one-sided view and could prompt students to meet the bare minimum requirements rather than actually taking responsibility for their own learning. This may not be as helpful as other methods because of how it doesn't measure the depth of the learning taking place and there is a significant amount of ambiguity among students with respect to how detailed their learning has to be.

B. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning is when a group of students come together and often learn together by sharing resources or using common resources. In an online setting, this process is mostly done asynchronously with minimal supervision from teachers. It serves the same purpose as Individual learning, however, this kind of learning adds different perspectives to the learning as well as encourages communication among peers. In addition to this, it simultaneously helps students take responsibility for their own learning.

A drawback to this kind of learning is that because collaborative learning is student-led for the most part, it is very easy for students to lose focus and discuss irrelevant matters instead. This could also lead to procrastination which will affect the depth of the learning as well as cause the students to work only to meet the bare requirements.

COVID-19 and Online Learning

At the peak of the pandemic, around mid-March, students, parents and teachers were informed of the "shut down [of] publicly funded schools."⁴¹ This left many wondering what the future of their learning looked like. Not long after, local governments, such as Toronto, "cancelled events,"⁴² extra-curriculars, and activities. As a

41 "Ontario to shut down publicly funded schools for 2 weeks after March Break over COVID-19 concerns" CBC News, last modified March 12, 2020.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-government-closing-schools-1.5495736>

42 Rocca, Ryan. "Coronavirus: City of Toronto cancels events through June 30, including Pride Parade" Global News, last modified March 31, 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6758350/coronavirus-toronto-cancels-events-pride-parade/>

result, all schools had to adapt quickly and transition into online learning for the rest of the year. This proved to be a difficult experience for everyone; teachers had to rapidly familiarize themselves with online platforms, students had to adapt their learning styles to fit the new, online teaching methods, parents had increased responsibilities on their children, etc.

While many school boards proved to be lenient and understanding in terms of the needs of students, many still failed to provide an equal, if not better level of education. Both teachers and students “faced a steep learning curve.”⁴³ With common problems such as internet connection, technological resources, punctuality in online attendance all acting mutually, it became nearly impossible for both teachers and students to maintain the same level of merit as in-person classes. Further, when considering specific issues, such as mental health issues, familial job losses, lack of social networks, etc., the school system was rendered meaningless in encompassing all aspects that the virus truly entailed.

Consideration of different types of students and learning is of great importance, such as students with disabilities. It is crucial to understand that “students with [a] disability face more obstacles amid [the] coronavirus.”⁴⁴ Students who are impaired cannot be expected to receive their education virtually. It goes without saying that students who suffer from autism, ADHD, amongst other conditions that impact mental development, are dependent on a social environment to learn how to interact, develop and grow. As a result, an equivalent environment must be discovered to ensure that such a group of students do not get lost amongst other learners. Is there a heavily interactive platform wherein special education teachers and students can collaborate? Should one be created? Or is it far more effective to rely on the supposed temporariness of online learning, and put their education at a pause? Is it worth the risk? Consider long-term effects as well. Students with learning disabilities may be behind their peers in standardized markers of development, making them a priority of quality education.

This raises many questions towards our school systems and how capable they are of adapting to spontaneous changes. Whether we look at post-secondary institutions or elementary schools, all of them struggled with adapting to the ‘new normal,’ as it was commonly referred to. Are our school systems based on such traditional practices that they are rendered unfit to our dynamic, ever-changing world? Or rather, does the fault fall upon teachers or students for lacking the ability to navigate themselves through the challenges of the pandemic? Is the virus ultimately to blame, or ourselves for not having any standard operating procedures to fall back on?

UN Involvement

The United Nations has not taken extensive action related to online education. Most of the UN’s thoughts around online education are contained within campaigns about universal education, which delegates are encouraged to research if they are interested.

43 Wong, Jessica. “*Virtual schools have faced a steep learning curve, but parents still want in as COVID-19 cases rise.*” CBC News, last modified October 1, 2020.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/virtual-schools-confusion-parents-1.5744361>

44 Waberi, Osobe. “*Students with disability face more obstacles amid coronavirus: advocates*” Global News, last modified August 22, 2020.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7292447/students-disability-coronavirus-school/>

In the context of COVID-19, however, the United Nations has continued to monitor the situation regarding equitable access to education around the globe.⁴⁵ A task force created by UNESCO called the Teacher Task Force found “startling divides in digitally-based distance learning”.⁴⁶ These findings have pushed UNESCO to develop the Global Education Coalition, which is described as a “platform for collaboration and exchange to protect the right to education during [COVID-19]”.⁴⁷ Three main pillars of the Coalition exist; that being connectivity, teachers, and gender.⁴⁸

Further in the context of COVID-19, assistance in advising teachers and students on ideas for online learning has been provided by the UN Information Service.⁴⁹ UNESCO has also been keeping data records on the impact on education from COVID-19.⁵⁰ UNESCO also filed reports almost monthly detailing advancements and notes on their response, also available at the previous link.⁵¹ More broadly, the UN has also set up an e-learning program during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵² Certainly a valuable and important action, this program was created to promote education and ‘self-improvement’ during the pandemic.⁵³ What is interesting to consider though is that the existence of this program implies the United Nations has experience in running online educational platforms and technology.

Possible Solutions

When considering solutions, understanding the nuanced side of all the problems is fundamental. The issues rooted in COVID-19 pandemic are anything but restricted to physical health, rather, we must consider the tolls on the mental health of students, the compromised education they receive, the technological resources they have, etc. It is critical that the education of students stays as the forefront of any solution, as online learning’s main focus is providing all students with the same, if not greater quality of education.

1. Developing Learning Platforms

When it comes to instructional delivery, governments and school boards may consider working together to develop a new learning platform best fit to accommodate learning for their respective schools. This allows them to add features that are of common use to them, and be able to control any technological issues that may stem from the platform. All students will be granted access to said platform without any additional cost, and it will be managed by the school board itself. In terms of teachers, all educators will be trained on the use and management of the platform before being able to teach in the geographic area of said school board. This will

45 “Startling disparities in digital learning emerge as COVID-19 spreads: UN education agency,” United Nations, last modified April 21, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/04/1062232>.

46 Ibid.

47 “Global Education Coalition,” UNESCO, accessed November 10, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>.

48 Ibid.

49 UNIS Vienna, “UN helps children learn online during COVID-19,” United Nations, accessed November 10, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/coronavirus/un-helps-children-learn-online-during-covid-19>.

50 “Education: From disruption to recovery,” UNESCO, accessed November 10, 2020, <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/>.

51 Ibid.

52 “Sharpen your skills during lockdown with UN e-learning courses,” United Nations, last modified October 12, 2020, <https://unric.org/en/sharpen-your-skills-during-lockdown-with-united-nations-e-learning-courses/>.

53 Ibid.

make sure that every teacher is highly knowledgeable in the platform and will be able to teach to their best ability without being worried about any issues regarding usage. The development of new platforms have been “deployed in China and Singapore”⁵⁴ with promising results. Is it possible we can achieve the same?

2. Increasing Technology Access

Technological access is of considerable importance. While technology is becoming increasingly widespread in all households, we cannot assume that every family has sufficient access. This means that family members may have to share one resource, or they have outdated resources, or are incapable of supporting the latest versions of learning platforms. A solution, then, can be providing a means of technological access for all students. This can take form in a variety of ways. One method could be renting laptops, iPads, tablets, Chromebooks, etc., at significantly reduced costs for students. This was done particularly in Ontario, when the province supplied “iPads with free wireless data plans” to students who were facing economic hardship amidst the COVID-19 pandemic⁵⁵. This would alleviate some investment for families who could potentially be facing economic hardship, while also ensuring the school board gets some level of compensation for their assisted funding. Another solution is school boards buying technology for students, and having them returned at the end of the school year. This puts significant financial burdens on schools without any economic returns, but it guarantees that all students will have their own technological resource to exercise their learning on.

3. Post-Secondary Solutions

The hardest solutions arise when considering post-secondary institutions. These are schools of students in great populations, all participating in drastically varying disciplines which all demand a vast array of resources. Such schools already charge students immensely for tuition, housing, online learning programs, food, academic and health resources, extracurriculars, networking opportunities, and more. As such, careful consideration must be undertaken to understand that financial support for students is slightly impractical. Rather, delegates should consider other types of support that post-secondary institutions can provide. These include extended deadlines, increased cooperation between professors and students, greater proportions of final grades dedicated to engagement rather than academic work, and more. Small acts of empathy are key. For example, the University of New York had a professor that made their own hand sanitizer and distributed it to students⁵⁶. This was not an act by the institution, but by members of the community cooperating to help one another out throughout the pandemic. These patterns are quite common when considering Post-Secondary schools. All in all, while these solutions do not combat online learning directly, they enhance the ability to learn digitally by easing off some of the typical pressures associated with learning in general.

54 “Education responses to COVID-19: Embracing digital learning and online collaboration,” OECD, last modified March 23, 2020.

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/education-responses-to-covid-19-embracing-digital-learning-and-online-collaboration-d75eb0e8/>

55 Katherine DeClerq, “Ontario distributing free iPads to kids who cannot access province’s online learning tools”, CTV News, last modified April 17, 2020.

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-distributing-free-ipads-to-kids-who-cannot-access-province-s-online-learning-tools-1.4900317>

56 Elizabeth Redden, “Stepping Up and Helping Out,” Inside Higher Ed, last modified April 7, 2020.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/07/universities-and-their-students-are-helping-coronavirus-response-myriad-ways>

Topics of Discussion

1. As the online learning experience differs drastically from country to country and person to person, how can we effectively create a solution that services everyone?
2. What role does respecting country sovereignty play in this situation?
3. How will the proposed solutions differ depending on educational level?
4. In what way does accessible technology impact the online learning experience?



Topic C: Challenges Surrounding Tourism & Heritage Sites

Introduction

At UTMUN 2021, UNESCO delegates will have the opportunity to engage with another UTMUN committee - the Conference on the Yale Peruvian Expeditions, 2005 - in a unique way. While typically committees at Model UN conferences are limited in scope to what occurs within their own committee room, we will be collaborating with this Specialized Agency to provide a 'cross-over' MUN experience. The following section of the Background Guide seeks to provide an explanation for what will occur during this part of the conference, and how delegates can be best prepared for this new and exciting experience.

To briefly summarize the debate and topics of the Yale-Peruvian Expedition, they will be looking at two major topics. First, they will have a broad discussion of neo-colonialism in museums and cultural property's repatriation. Secondly, delegates will look at a case study of the Yale-Peruvian Expedition, hence the committee title. In the early 1900s, a Yale professor made three expeditions to Peru, during which he excavated and retrieved several artefacts from Machu Picchu, which were put on display in the Yale Peabody Museum.⁵⁷ These artefacts were only supposed to be at the museum for eighteen months - but they are still there today.⁵⁸ As such, the Conferences on the Yale-Peruvian Expedition, 2005 committee will be looking at how to return these artefacts to Peru.⁵⁹ For more information and background on specific details on these topics, please refer to the Conference on the Yale-Peruvian Expedition, 2005's background guide, available on the UTMUN website.

As you may have picked up on, both of these topics fit under UNESCO's mandate on the preservation and protection of tourism and heritage sites. To that extent, once the Yale-Peruvian Expedition reaches a resolution on either the subject of neo-colonialism and heritage sites or the case study itself (whichever first occurs), UNESCO will receive the resolution, and proceed to debate its merits and whether or not to approve it. This topic will be addressed on the final day of the conference, after UNESCO's other debate is completed. Below, the dais has provided an overview of some points to look out for when reviewing these resolutions and what to watch for, as well as some broader resources on the topic itself.

This collaboration is certainly something new, and the dais is incredibly excited to see what happens! That being said, the 'newness' sometimes can lend itself to confusion. If you have any questions at all about how Topic C will work, please contact the Director at fiona.reuter@mail.utoronto.ca.

Background: Tourism & Heritage Sites

Heritage sites tend to be topics of sensitivity, as they entail clauses that clash with values of minorities, impose on sovereignty, conflict with historical norms, etc. As a result, a vast amount of consideration and speculation is necessary to evaluate the sufficiency and effectiveness of solutions.

⁵⁷ Christy-Anna Chung, "Background Guide for the Conference on the Yale Peruvian Expeditions, 2005," UTMUN, last modified November 2020.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

First and foremost, nuanced, specific and accurate definitions in all aspects are crucial. Any approach to a resolution needs to have specific contexts as those are what build the framework for all ideas and solutions. Be deliberate in clearly defining prominent concepts in all resolutions, such as: What are artefacts? Whose interests must be considered in determining where they belong? Who is responsible for maintenance of heritage sites? Who monitors tourism to ensure inequitable practices do not recur? Who is held accountable for historical acts of injustice - if there are any. Having absolute and comprehensive definitions allows all delegates to view the resolution in a consistent and fair manner. Further, it prevents any misunderstanding regarding motives and biases within the resolution.

When designing resolutions, delegates should be aware of country sovereignty. While the UN is an international body, it serves primarily to suggest calls to action and encourage international engagement from countries. As such, it has no right to impose on country sovereignty. All resolutions must be within the abilities of the UN, while still being ambitious to craft a practical and comprehensive resolution. Failure to do so results in greater international tension and the growth of conflict between countries, which further deepens the issue at hand. Bear in mind that countries with veto power will very likely exercise their abilities to reject certain resolutions almost immediately. It is ideal to maintain support from the prominent nations, while also considering the interests of the heritage site and its country of origin.

Delegates must also consider the shortcomings within their resolutions. No solution to any international conflict is ever perfect; this must be acknowledged. This does not necessarily mean that blatant flaws should be downright ignored, rather, it promotes a balanced and rounded resolution. A resolution that considers its flaws ultimately is more creative and specific, as delegates will hone in on miniscule influences that may sway the entirety of the issue. In doing so, there is leeway for other resolutions to potentially supplement existing resolutions, which result in a strong, focused solution for the problem at hand.

It is highly encouraged that delegates consider both short-term and long-term effects of a resolution. Resolutions must be timely, meaning that they include minor achievements that can be accomplished in a relatively short period of time, but also long-term solutions that, after constant work and effort, can be attained. This compels delegates to think more broadly and critically about the plausibility of their resolutions. Short-term effects are generally easy to predict, such as immediate civil upheaval, varying responses from public and private institutions, and more. Long-term effects tend to be more complicated, ranging from maintenance of heritage sites, the ever-changing dynamic of international relations, diplomatic support or opposition against resolutions, etc. In no way can all of the preceding be thoroughly explored, but the more factors the resolution encompass, the stronger it will be.

Background: Yale Peruvian Expedition

When looking at the resolution on Yale Peruvian Expedition, delegates should note whether it focuses on who has the title to the artifacts that were in possession of the Yale Peabody Museum. Furthermore, it should give context to the situation from both sides of the argument, and detail the code of ethics and existing civil codes that come into play. These codes of ethics and civil codes are incredibly important, as they help to build context to the Yale Peruvian Expedition case study itself and evaluate the strength of each side's arguments.

One thing to consider is the relevant precautions the resolution includes to ensure the safety of the

artefacts during travel. There are six main hazards to keep in mind to ensure that artefacts are preserved well during travel and still maintain their value.⁶⁰

- Light: Sunlight and fluorescent lights can cause certain artefacts to deteriorate faster and thereby lose their value. A solution to this would be to package artefacts well-enough to allow little to no light to affect these artefacts.
- Temperature and Humidity: Extreme temperatures and humidity can also damage artefacts. This is why artefacts need to be in a temperature-controlled setting where the temperature can easily be manipulated and kept constant and humidity is low.
- Human-beings: Human contact in the form of oil and sweat can also be another reason for the deterioration of artefacts. This is why artefacts need to be in spaces where human contact is limited.
- Chemical reactions and air pollutants: Certain artefacts are prone to oxidation or other chemical processes that lead to a decline in the value of the artefact. This can be avoided by preserving artefacts in closed containers to avoid contact with air pollutants and other substances that trigger chemical reactions.

Further, delegates should also consider whether the resolution includes measures to ensure that similar events do not occur in the future, including the ideas below:

- One method to prevent future disputes is to ensure that a contract is set and signed by both parties. This way there is tangible evidence that both the parties have agreed on a certain deal and cannot back out unless there are unforeseeable circumstances.
- Another method would be to agree on a system where both parties have access to the artefacts and Yale Peabody Museum holds these artefacts with consent while sharing it with Peru simultaneously.

Resources for Topic C

Conference on the Yale-Peruvian Expeditions, 2005 Background Guide
<https://www.utmun.org/committees/2021>.

AAM Code of Ethics for Museums
<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>.

Hiram Bingham - Encyclopedia Britannica
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Hiram-Bingham-American-archaeologist-and-United-States-senator>.

UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of

60 “Preservation Of Artifacts | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans”, The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, 2020, <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/preservation-artifacts>.

Ownership of Cultural Property 1970

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

International Council of Museums- Code of Ethics for Museums

<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>

"Preservation Of Artifacts | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans". The National WWII Museum | New Orleans, 2020. <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/preservation-artifacts>.

Key Resources

Introduction to UNESCO

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/united-nations-educational-scientific-and-cultural-organization/about-us/who-we-are/introducing-unesco/#:~:text=UNESCO's%20mission%20is%20to%20contribute,Gender%20equality>

UNESCO Global Education Coalition

<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

World Economic Forum - Fighting the COVID-19 Infodemic

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/how-to-fight-the-covid-19-infodemic-lessons-from-3-asian-countries/>

Simon Fraser University - Tackling Medical Misinformation

<https://www.sfu.ca/sfunews/stories/2020/04/how-to-tackle-medical-misinformation-during-covid-19.html>

Forbes - Dangers of Medical Misinformation

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/petersuciu/2020/06/01/the-danger-of-medical-misinformation-on-social-media/?sh=f58fd1e4f4bb>

UNESCO Educational Response to COVID-19

<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/>

AAM Code of Ethics for Museums

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/code-of-ethics-for-museums/>.

Hiram Bingham - Encyclopedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/>

Hiram-Bingham-American-archaeologist-and-United-States-senator.

UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970

http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

International Council of Museums- Code of Ethics for Museums

<https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/code-of-ethics/>

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"The World Health Organization (WHO) - Purposes." Nations Encyclopedia. Date Accessed November 11, 2020. <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/United-Nations-Related-Agencies/The-World-Health-Organization-WHO-PURPOSES.html>.

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