



Title	Preface / Proceedings of International Seminar 2020 : With Corona or Post Corona
Author(s)	Moinuddin, Mohammad
Citation	With Corona or Post Corona : The Opportunities and The Challenges for Virtual Learning and International Exchange. 2021, p. 5-7
Version Type	VoR
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/84830">https://doi.org/10.18910/84830</a>
rights	
Note	

*The University of Osaka Institutional Knowledge Archive : OUKA*

<https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/>

The University of Osaka

## Preface

During the initial days after World Health Organization (WHO) declared Covid-19 as a pandemic, a mixture of confusion and panic could be seen in the world community. After the outbreak of the Covid-19, even the WHO was not sure about the extent of harm that the new coronavirus would bring. The world's leading media portals report states that the first known case of Covid-19 infection was found on December 1, 2019, in Wuhan (China). A man in his 70s had fallen ill with a high fever and pneumonia. However, according to the doctors, it was not regular pneumonia. Within a month several people had been admitted to the hospitals in the city of Wuhan with similar symptoms. On January 31, 2020, the WHO declared the coronavirus as a global health emergency and on March 11, a pandemic. Subsequently, many countries declared Covid-19 a National Emergency. A travel ban was imposed and international travel was restricted.

No one knew what to do and how to respond to this new challenge. In a state of confusion, many universities issued an advisory for their students who were on Study Abroad Program to return to their home universities. The School of Letters/Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University, too, recommended its students who were in foreign countries under exchange programs, to come back. Most of the students decided to return before completing their term. On the other hand, there were also some students waiting to fly but could not move due to the travel ban.

The International Affairs Office of School of Letters/Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University, came with an idea to provide a platform where such students may interact with other students & researchers and discuss their studies freely. We decided to organize an International Seminar, which would be semi-academic with a special lecture by a foreign university educator and presentations by students. But a condition was placed that the whole session would be in the English language, including the students' presentation and subsequent discussion. The International Affairs Office extended all possible support to the students to prepare them for giving a presentation in English in front of (virtually) English-speaking International audiences. The session was so successful, that the members of the International Affairs Office decided to publish their works in the form of Proceedings.

This Proceedings contains the written versions of most of the contributions presented in the International Seminar "With Corona or Post Corona: The Opportunities and The Challenges for Virtual Learning and International

Exchange” organized by the International Affairs Office, School of Letters/ Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University, Osaka (Japan) on March 15, 2021. The keynote was delivered by Professor. Dr. Taro Mochizuki, director of the International Affairs Office on the topic “Virtual Learning and Cross-Cultural Experience”. Professor Taro emphasized hidden curriculum and cross-cultural experiences. He further discussed creating the third kind of place for International Student Exchange as the need of the hour.

A special lecture was given by Professor Dr. Priyanka Tripathi of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Patna, Patna (India) on the topic “Blurring Boundaries: Impact of COVID-19 on Higher Education”. Building her arguments upon existing online teaching and the online teaching tools. While reserving her apprehensions about virtual learning as a substitute to face-to-face learning, she emphasized the inclusion and flexibility that one may find in virtual learning. She argued that the pandemic has blurred the boundaries and build a new kind of expectation in terms of learning. Due to an unavoidable situation that took place because of the Covid-19 impact, our guest speaker could not submit her paper.

To fill the vacuum, though partially, I have decided to include my paper “The Changing Dynamics in International Exchange During the Time of Halted Physical Mobility”. The major part of this paper was presented at AAS-in-Asia 2020 Conference “Asia at the Crossroads: Solidarity through Scholarship (August 31 – September 04, 2020) under a special panel "Reimagining Transnational Student Mobility in the Post-COVID-19 Era”. This paper discusses challenges and opportunities that have come up due to restrictions in physical mobility. The paper argues that the expected outcome of the higher education and mobility programs has been set by taking account of face-to-face education and physical mobility, hence, this yardstick shall not be used while measuring the outcome of virtual education and virtual mobility programs. Thereupon, a different yardstick taking account of virtual learning shall be prepared and the outcome shall be analyzed accordingly.

We had presentations by six students out of which five were in Europe on their Study Abroad Programs. The presenters shared their experiences and thoughts about virtual learning possibilities as a tool of the Study Abroad Program. They attempted to examine ways to improve virtual learning, to create a virtual space where students may interact freely while recognizing each other even without meeting face to face. Some of the presenters talked about the impact of the Covid restrictions on the fieldwork, which was necessary as a part of their study.

The seminar provided a setting for discussing recent developments that have come up due to the Covid-19 outbreak. Different arguments related to virtual learning and face-to-face learning were shared and discussed. The audience too gave their valuable inputs from their own experiences. We highly appreciate the speakers and all the participants for their support and encouraging comments. We also thank our foreign participants and everyone for their direct and indirect support. We cannot forget thanking Mr. Minekura Yutaka (Special Appointed Researcher) for designing a nice poster and extending technical support. It is our pleasant duty to acknowledge the financial support from the International Affairs Office, School of Letters/Graduate School of Letters, Osaka University.

Mohammad Moinuddin  
August, 2021

