Reimagining the unimaginable: Moving an on-campus health course online during COVID-19

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Abstract

In early 2020 the world experienced the one in 100-year COVID-19 pandemic, causing major disruption to higher education in Australia. In Victoria, Australia, this necessitated a rapid shift of university teaching and placements to the online environment. For health programs in particular, which are typically taught with significant on-campus and face-to-face components, this shift online created major changes in both teaching and learning. This study sought to explore the lived experience of teaching and learning for Australian occupational therapy students and academics at one Australian university during COVID-19. More specifically, this study aimed to explore the impacts that occupational therapy online teaching and learning had on student/academic roles, professional identity, motivation, and wellbeing. A qualitative phenomenological approach was adopted, with semi-structured interviews conducted with students (n=10) and academics (n=6). Inductive, thematic analysis of data was utilised. Five key themes were identified from the analysis of data: impact on professional identity, disruption of roles, feeling pressure, mutual respect and gratitude, and the importance of social connection at university. Whilst online learning may be more flexible for students and more cost effective for universities, the findings of this study suggest that there is a need to provide continued opportunities for health students to engage with academics and each other on-campus.

Introduction

Early 2020 saw the advent of the one in 100-year COVID-19 pandemic (Murdoch, 2020), significantly impacting life for many. As of November 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that

there had been more than 770 million cases of COVID-19 and in excess of six million, eight hundred lives lost (World Health Organisation, 2023). In Australia, the response to COVID-19 included widespread shutdowns of many services and community activities (Australian Government, 2021). In Victorian higher education settings this resulted in the cessation of all on-campus university activities from the middle of March 2020 to early 2022 (ABC News, March 2020), creating massive disruption to higher education (Borba et al., 2020). The closing of university campuses created an immediate need for campus-based courses to adapt their teaching to online environments. This was especially challenging for health courses which are traditionally taught face-to-face in Australia (Cook et al., 2008; Regmi and Jones, 2020) and require students to attend clinical placements.

Like many other health disciplines, the Occupational Therapy (OT) program at the centre of this research project was significantly impacted by the shift to online learning necessitated by COVID-19. Teaching and learning activities required adaption as modes of delivery were disrupted. Learning that was typically delivered on-campus, with students and academics face-to-face, required redesign on very short notice. The program this research project relates to is a four-year undergraduate Bachelor degree with an embedded honours stream. It is accredited by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists and accepts approximately 130 students per year. The program includes theoretical, hands-on, experiential, and clinical placement activities. Hands-on and experiential learning activities include but are not limited to: manual handling, upper limb assessments and functional assessments of persons with varying levels of ability. These, and many other hands-on activities, typically involve close interaction and collaboration with clinicians, other students, consumers of services, and academic staff. Placements occur in a variety of settings outside the university including hospitals, clinics, schools, and community services. The placements are integrated across the four years of the degree. During their degree, students complete more than 1000 hours of placement, the minimum requirement determined by the World Federation of OT (Holmes et al., 2010). Placement provides opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviours learnt in academic work to people in real life settings (Maidment, 2010). Management of COVID-19 required significant changes to these activities for both students and academics. Given these changes, this study sought to answer the following research question:

What is the lived experience of Australian occupational therapy students and academics in the context of COVID-19?

More specifically, this study aimed to explore the following sub-questions:

- What were the impacts of online teaching and learning on the student/academic roles and professional identity?
- What were the impacts of online teaching and learning on student/academic motivation and wellbeing?

Background

Prior to commencing this research, the literature relating to face-to-face and online teaching and learning within the health professions was reviewed. Exploration of other research published in response to COVID-19 was also undertaken. A summary of this literature is provided below.

Face-to-face learning for students has long been valued in health education as it is believed to support enculturation into the disciplines (Schaber et al., 2012). This enculturation occurs via both classroom and placement learning (Schaber et al., 2012). Face-to-face learning opportunities are also considered important for the development of professional identity in health students (Edwards and Dirette, 2010), with identities formed through socialisation (Rees and Monrouxe, 2018). Professional identity is defined as the "attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs and skills that are shared with others within a professional group and relate to the professional role being undertaken by the individual" (Adams et al., 2006, p. 56). As Snell et al. (2020, p.30) described, as individual professional identity develops, a student's own culture merges with the disciplinary culture. Researchers have expressed concern that development of professional identity in health students is often weak yet critical to profession formation and practice (Snell et al., 2020). Belonging is also considered an important component of health education, forming the basis of relationships, the development of communities, and contributing to professional identity

development (Tang et al., 2023). However, research suggests that belonging can be difficult to achieve when teaching online (Keptner and McCarthy, 2023; Tang et al., 2023). Alongside professional identity and belonging, the development of clinical skills in real-world environments is also highly valued by the occupational therapy profession (Krishnagiri et al., 2019). This is evidenced by the aforementioned 1000 hours of clinical placement required in accredited occupational therapy courses and the significant contributions placement makes to the curriculum. With the advent of COVID-19, the subsequent shift to online learning environments and disruption to student placements, the development of professional identity and belonging, and the opportunity to practice clinical skills in real-world environments were all potentially impacted.

However, the research literature also describes the advantages of online learning. These include improved access for students, higher rates of degree completion, and appeal to a broader market including "non-traditional students" (Bolliger and Wasilik, 2009, p. 103). Yet effective online learning requires organised change for both students and educators (Kumar et al., 2021) and the teaching approaches used in online environments should encourage active learning alongside the effective use of technology (Kumar et al., 2021). Regmi and Jones (2020) described the resource-intensive nature of developing online learning materials and activities, reporting that the process is labour and time intensive. However, the transition to online learning in Australia, for courses that were traditionally taught face-to-face, as a result of COVID-19, allowed for minimal planning and organisation, raising the question of whether academics were prepared for the sudden shift and able to adapt their teaching accordingly.

Recent research has explored the readiness and experience of academics to teach online during COVID-19. The Australia and New Zealand Association of Clinical Anatomists explored the experiences of anatomy teachers and the impact of COVID-19 on anatomy education (Pather et al., 2020). They recruited 18 teachers from 10 universities and asked questions relating to the disruptions and changes made to anatomy education in Australia and New Zealand during the pandemic. The findings of this study were mixed, with some participants finding online teaching and learning exciting and others finding it daunting. The experience of transitioning to online learning during COVID-19 was also explored by Watermeyer and colleagues via a survey of 1148 academics teaching across a broad range of disciplines in the United Kingdom (Watermeyer et al., 2020). Participants reported significant dysfunction and disturbance to their pedagogical roles and their personal lives with the move to teaching online. Whilst a small number of academics completing the survey were optimistic about teaching online, the majority were not. The COVID-19 research literature also described a range of other teaching-related challenges identified by academic staff. These included increased workload, and concern about being able to accurately assess student competence (Pather et al., 2020). Non-teaching related challenges included the negative impact of working from home on other life roles (Alqabbani et al., 2021), loss of connection with colleagues due to working from home and the challenges of virtual communication (Barnett et al., 2021).

Research investigating the shift to online learning during COVID-19 suggested that students were also significantly impacted. Dodd et al. (2021) undertook an Australian-based study of 787 students studying across a broad range of disciplines and found that 86.6% of participants felt that their studies had been impacted by COVID-19 (Dodd et al., 2021). Loss of connection with peers and teachers was cited by participants as negatively impacting their learning experiences. Negative impacts caused by loss of personal connections with academics and peers were also observed by Li and colleagues (2021). In a survey of 4355 students in Wuhan, China, Li et al. (2021) found that 16.3% of participants reported feeling symptoms similar to traumatic stress disorder. In a study of 435 American university students, Garris and Fleck (2020) found that students believed online classes were less enjoyable, that they learnt less and were less motivated. However, they also found that increased flexibility and efforts made by teachers were positives for students (Garris and Fleck, 2020).

Given the importance of professional identity formation, belonging and clinical skills development, and the recent literature outlining potential challenges of online learning during COVID-19, this study sought to investigate the lived experience of occupational therapy students and academics during COVID-19 and the impact of this on professional identity and roles. The methods used to conduct this study are described

below.

Methods

Research Design

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the experiences of OT students and academics, of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Phenomenology was considered ideal for this study as it sought to understand the meaning and lived experience of COVID-19. Phenomenology aims to gain "a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences", offering "the possibility of plausible insights that can provide us with more direct contact with the world" (van Manen, 2016, p.9). Furthermore, and in line with the research questions, researchers used phenomenology to develop a composite picture of 'what' and 'how' participants have experienced the phenomenon under research (Creswell, 2013). Ethical approval was granted by the university's Human Ethics Advisory Group (Project 130_2020).

Participants

Two groups of participants took part in the study: OT students (n=10) and OT academic staff (n=6). All participants were recruited within a single Victorian undergraduate OT course. To participate in the study, students had to be enrolled in the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy or the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy Honours in 2020. Academics needed to be teaching within the OT program or performing teaching administration or research activities in 2020. The project was introduced to potential participants via an introductory email with a plain language statement and consent form attached. Students and academics were encouraged to read the plain language statement and to sign and return the consent form if they agreed to participate. Those who returned the consent form were then contacted by a research assistant who verified that they met inclusion criteria and organised a time for interview.

Data collection

A research assistant conducted semi-structured interviews with each consenting participant. Prior to the interviews, an interview schedule was developed and pre-tested. This was necessary, as no pre-existing tool was available for use in the study. During the pre-testing, modifications were made to the questions to improve clarity and brevity. Appendix 1 outlines the questions asked during the student interviews, interview questions asked of staff are detailed in Appendix 2. Interviews were between 45-60 minutes duration and were conducted and recorded online. To improve objectivity and limit bias (given that the researchers were colleagues or teachers of participants) the research assistant was not known to any of the participants. Following the completion of the interviews, data were transcribed verbatim by the research assistant and sent to participants for members checking.

Data analysis

To ensure anonymity, participant transcripts were de-identified and allocated a code. Data analysis was inductive and based on the process described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This six-step approach to thematic analysis involved: researchers familiarising themselves with the data, coding the data by identifying recurring ideas, generating initial themes, and reviewing and verifying themes. Themes were named, defined and described.

First, all researchers familiarised themselves with the data by reading two student and two academic transcripts twice. They then met to review and discuss these transcripts identifying similarities and differences in their interpretations of meaning. Following this, all remaining transcripts were read by two researchers. Researchers met again to discuss codes and recurring ideas in relation to each research question and initial themes were developed. Themes were then reviewed and verified against the data to ensure that they accurately represented participant experiences; some sub-themes also emerged. Finally,

themes were named and described, and quotes that supported them were identified. The themes and quotes were then used to build a narrative (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Rigour and trustworthiness

Rigour and trustworthiness are essential in qualitative research (Morse et al., 2002). In this study, phenomenology was identified as the most appropriate research design to explore the experiences of participants during COVID-19. Rigour was assured in the study by monitoring coherence between the research design, data collection and analysis methods, and the ability to answer the research questions. The trustworthiness of this study was addressed by triangulation of data, member checking and researcher peer debriefing. A detailed description of the context of the study also added to the trustworthiness of the study.

Findings

When the interview data were analysed, five key themes emerged. These included: impact on professional identity, disruption of academic and student roles, feeling pressure, mutual respect, and gratitude, and the importance of social connection at university.

Impact on professional Identity

Both academics and students described impacts on professional identity following the shift of teaching and learning online. Academics reported that their identity as a teacher had been affected as they had less opportunity to get to know students and fewer informal interactions with students before and after classes. These were reported to be closely linked with their job satisfaction and their identity as a teacher as identified by Academic1: "I always felt that like, you know, in teaching it's the relationships with students." Academics also reported that the shift online resulted in them missing the face-to-face interaction with students:

> I really enjoy the interaction with the student and the energy that they bring and [the] kind of
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> free flowing nature of being in a classroom and having a discussion about something you didn't
>
> think you were gonna be talking about. (Academic1)

Students also identified potential impacts on professional identity. They reported that changes to placements (with many placements moving online) and studying at home impacted their confidence in their performance as an OT student and their belief that they were ready to graduate. Student4-1 stated: "I guess my level of confidence as a student, because I'm not being reassured on ideas constantly… it's harder to do that online. And so I think my confidence has dropped."

Students commented on the decreased level of engagement that could result during online learning, reinforcing the concerns of academics that professional identity and the quality of learning might be impacted. Student2-3 illustrated this with the following quote: "The cameras don't have to be on, your mics don't have to be on… through the screen your commitment is totally different. Like you can sign on for the class but not actually be actively participating?"

Disruption of academic and student roles

Both academics and students reported significant disruption in roles when teaching moved online. Academics reported that there was increased pressure on their role due to a dramatically increased workload. Whether academics were involved in placements (many placements were cancelled up to three times) or in moving face-to-face teaching to online, the impact of extra workload on their role was perceived as substantial as evidenced by Academic4: "We all had to work above and beyond our hours".

The academics interviewed also reported that their changed relationship with students impacted their role as they were unable to build relationships as they ordinarily would. Academic1 described this in their interview: "I've just had to think about well, how do I create those opportunities to build those relationships with students in an online way rather than a face-to-face way."

Following the shift to online teaching and learning, academics reported that some content in the OT course was best taught face-to-face, articulating that accepting that the quality of teaching and learning may be impacted by this changed environment, had impacted on the student role. 'I really feel like students have really wanted that backwards and forth in engagement. [It's] something we require our graduates to be good at. I personally feel that students really enjoy and learn more when they're face-to-face" (Academic6)

Students reported that the student role gave them purpose during the pandemic. However, changes in the student role were described with online learning requiring students to learn more independently. Many students reported difficulties in adapting to this role change and in maintaining motivation during online learning, as described by Student4-0:

> I still maintain and identify that I am a student but it's a lot different. I don't feel as though I'm as involved as I was. I don't feel like I'm contributing in class as much as I was before.

Whilst both academics and students also identified disruption or changes to their roles at home, for many participants these appeared to be more resolved, with participants clearly articulating both positives and negatives of the shift. Both groups were able to identify benefits that came with more time spent at home, which included increased time with loved-ones, increased time for leisure and for many an appreciation for how busy they had been pre-COVID-19, as described by Academic2: "In terms of the amount of time I've spent with my children, it's been the most ever". Some students echoed this sentiment, as evidenced by Student3-0:

> It actually worked better for me that I could just stay home, not traveling that long. I will say I have more time to reflect and think about stuff, including like me becoming an OT, that I feel like I, it's like I'm taking a gap year, but not really.

However, for other participants, the shift to working from home was a challenge, particularly when trying to establish boundaries between roles at work and home and home-schooling children. "We definitely had our stressed times… home-schooling was a huge factor, we were both working, trying to teach and having two kids at home. That was full-on". (Academic2)

Feeling pressure

As previously mentioned, the academic participant group reported increased demands on their time. They described needing to work longer hours due to moving teaching online, at short notice. This resulted in a feeling of increased pressure as described by Academic4:

> Everyone's had so much work pressure on them, some things you've just had to sort of put your head down and just go. I think we've put some extra pressure on ourselves because we haven't wanted to take the easy way out.

The academic participant group also reported that at times they experienced "blur[ing] of the lines of when you work" (Academic4) and difficulty in switching off from work outside of work hours. Academic3 articulated this in the following quote: "Sometimes [it was] hard to switch off. Really just trying to be mindful about switching off and having some distance between the office and home."

Mutual respect and gratitude

Both academics and students reported having great respect for their peers and each other, as they tackled the challenges of COVID-19. Academics described strong support provided within the teaching team and stated that they valued the ability to work together to come up with solutions to the on-going challenges. "I want to make sure that I do my bit as well. So there's something about the team that makes me want to work hard, so I'm pulling my weight" (Academic6).

Academics also reported that this commitment to the team assisted in maintaining motivation during the prolonged lockdowns. Academic6 discussed the motivation provided by working with both students and colleagues:

> I think if you weren't motivated by your student cohort or your colleagues then it would
>
> have been really tough to keep going… It's about team, being part of a team… [supporting]
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> students to have the best experience they can, is something that I reckon every single one of
>
> us is really proud of.

Students reported that COVID-19 reminded them that the academics are real people and gave them an appreciation of what their teachers were doing to support them. They praised the work of academics, particularly in the area of student placement and demonstrated an understanding of the uncertainty and the extra workload that COVID-19 created. Student4-4 provided evidence of this: "And I hope that the Academic staff feel they're being supported by students, because I know that we feel so supported by the staff...Staff and students I think have really come together."

Academics reported that they admired students' resilience; they felt that students had coped well with the uncertainty of COVID-19. They also valued the flexibility that students demonstrated as things seemingly changed by the minute. Academic3 illustrates this with the following quote: "The students resilience surprised [me], not that I had thought they would fall in a heap... [But I had not] expected that they would be just so reasonable and understanding."

Whilst it was harder to build relationships with students when teaching online, academics also reported that there was a stronger sense of working together as a team with students, as Academic6 described: "I do think the impact of everyone in it together, even though it's different roles of staff and students."

Students and academics both described a sense of gratitude, reporting that they were grateful to be safe compared to others in Australia and overseas: "We had lots to be thankful for and we just needed to embrace the chaos of the year" (Academic4). Students also expressed gratitude that they were studying for a degree that they believed very relevant to society: "When I see my friends, they're losing their jobs, I feel like it's really important to appreciate that I got an opportunity to study in this area... to do things that help other people" (Student4-2). Academics also reported being grateful for their on-going job security.

The importance of social connection at university

Both groups identified the important social connections that an on-campus university experience can offer. Students described a loss of social connection that impacted motivation. For example, Student2-0 stated: "Like, there's no motivation for me to study… there wasn't really an incentive…social incentive because you got to see everyone. I'm like a bit of a, maybe like a social learner you know". Academics missed the informal conversation that occurs when working together in a shared space. Academic6 reflected on this: "Yeah, I have really missed the informal information sharing [with other academics]. I didn't really realise how much...you do that in the office and you miss it."

Students reported increased use of social media and other platforms to communicate and stay connected with friends: "Midway through trimester we made like a chat, just a Facebook chat group and that

definitely helped" (Student2-2). Some students, such as Student4-3, also reported changes in friendships and increased isolation as they were not seeing peers at university and therefore missed opportunities for incidental socialising and social connection: "Doing it all from distance, you don't really feel like you're part of that community as much."

Discussion

In recent years, moves to learning online have been widespread in higher education, with many institutions investing significantly in the development of online courses (Usher et al., 2021). According to its supporters, online learning is said to offer students flexibility and convenience (Bolliger and Wasilik, 2009), making higher education more accessible. COVID-19 strengthened this discourse with many researchers exploring the value of online learning during a pandemic (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020; Jiang et al., 2022). Whilst support for online learning may be strong within the broader higher education sector, its applicability has been questioned in the health disciplines (Regmi and Jones, 2020). The findings of our study support the view of Regmi and Jones (2020) and suggest that it is important to include some on-campus learning experiences for students studying health disciplines. In this study, students expressed a strong desire to return to learning on-campus, reporting that the shift online had negatively impacted their motivation, opportunities to socialise, role as a student, and confidence. Negative impacts on the development of professional identity were also identified.

Reduced professional identity, as observed in this study, has the potential to impact students' perceived graduate employability and their preparation for practice (Snell et al., 2020). Engagement in pre-professional socialisation learning opportunities is important in the development of professional identity (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021). Collaboration and interaction that occurs student to student and student to academic, both formally and informally is considered pivotal (Regmi & Jones, 2020). This socialisation, when undertaken by students, is believed to support their understanding of, and connection with, the ideology, culture, skills, qualities, and conduct of their intended profession (Jackson, 2016; Snell et al., 2020). However, pre-professional socialisation opportunities may be limited when the university experience occurs online (Barbarà-i-Molinero et al., 2017). Our study supports these findings and suggests that attending university on-campus is about much more than just formal learning. Social connections with peers and opportunities to socialise were considered important for many students. Additionally, whilst some participants found other ways to connect (such as social media), the shift to online learning experienced by students dramatically reduced their opportunities for professional socialisation, and their professional identity development.

In this study, students reported reduced motivation in some instances, indicating that completion of university studies had become less of a priority for them with the loss of on-campus learning. A lack of professional identity (as described above) is considered to negatively impact student motivation (Regmi and Jones, 2020). While it was not clear in this study whether reduced motivation led to reduced professional identity or vice versa, the detrimental effects of online learning for both were evident, supporting the importance of a return to on-campus learning post-COVID-19.

Confidence is described as a core component of professional identity (Tomlinson & Jackson, 2021) and may also impact student academic and clinical competence. Given the reduction of student confidence observed in this study as a result of shifting to wholly online learning, there is further evidence for a return to on-campus teaching and learning.

Both students and academics who participated in this study identified negative impacts on their roles that were brought about by the move to online teaching and learning. Students reported a shift in the student role and a reduction in the perceived importance or value of this role. This aligns with the reduction in prioritisation of university studies mentioned above. This finding suggests that in the online environment, these students needed more support to perform the OT student role. Devlin and McKay (2018) suggest that learning online can exacerbate the challenges that some students have in mastering the student role, and addressing tacit expectations and the hidden curriculum, so that they can perform effectively as a university student. They suggest that interactivity between academics and students online is key to the success of students who are learning off-campus. Reduced interactivity with peers and feeling less

connected to other students may also have impacted the student role in this study. This finding regarding loss of connection is echoed in the work of Dodd et al. (2021), who found that medical and health students reported decreased interaction with peers and a subsequent negative impact on their learning during COVID-19.

Academics reported a reduction in job satisfaction as a result of their changing role during COVID-19. Many academics identified that the quality relationships that they developed with students and colleagues were pivotal to their choice of a career in academia. This finding has also been described by Barnett et al. (2021), who reported negative impacts for academics due to a loss of connection between colleagues in the workplace. Whilst the flexibility that online learning offers students is important, Bolliger and Wasilik (2009) have previously reported a positive correlation between academic satisfaction and student performance. They also proposed that a continued focus on academic satisfaction is required in order to ensure that our academics are motivated, citing student and academic satisfaction as "critical pillars of quality" (Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009, p. 114). Ali et al. (2021) reported reduced job satisfaction in academics, a negative effect on psychological state, and distress during the COVID-19 shift to online teaching. They found that academics faced many challenges in switching to online teaching, including dealing with technology. With this in mind, the findings of this study suggest that the academics included in this study may teach more effectively in face-to-face modes and experience higher job satisfaction as a result.

Whilst this study provides useful findings relating to teaching and learning online during the COVID-19 pandemic and the value of teaching face-to-face at least some of the time, there are a number of limitations. Students and academics were sampled from one university, limiting the application of these findings to other education settings. All participants were interviewed on only one occasion at a time when COVID-19 was still significantly impacting life in Victoria, Australia, and as such perceptions of online teaching may have since changed. Future research could focus on exploring the challenges and affordances of online teaching in health courses across institutions and disciplines.

The COVID-19 pandemic provided insight into the merits and limitations of delivering campus-based programs wholly online. The findings of this study suggest that there is a case for providing continued opportunities for health students to engage with academics and each other on-campus. Whilst this position may be assumed solely based on the need to teach practical skills to health students, the findings of this study highlight other benefits. These benefits included: enhanced student and academic roles, stronger student professional identity and increased social connection. Given these findings we suggest that a hybrid approach to teaching and learning in health, that makes the most of the affordances offered by both online and on-campus teaching and learning may be most effective.

Conclusion

This study investigated the lived experience of online teaching and learning in occupational therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with academics and students from a single Victorian university program. Key themes identified included: impact on professional identity, disruption of roles, feeling pressure, mutual respect and gratitude, and the importance of social connection at university. As the world emerges from the critical early stages of COVID-19, it is suggested that whilst online learning may be flexible for students and more cost effective for universities, a hybrid approach to learning that offers students regular opportunities to mix with academics and peers on-campus may more effectively develop occupational therapy students who are ready for graduate practice.

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Appendix 1

Student Interview Questions

Student Participants
Can you tell me in what year level you are?   Tell me how things have been for you since all learning activities have been moved online.   •   Impacts on classes and seminars   •   Impacts on placements   •   Impacts on relationships with your peers? Your lecturers?   •   Impacts on daily life (routines, etc.)   COVID-19 has changed our lives. Can you tell me about how it impacted your role as a student?   •   What about your other roles (partner, parent, friend, sibling, worker, etc.)   How would you say COVID-19 impacted your overall health/wellbeing?   •   What has been tough and how do you manage those things?   •   What are the things that have been easier, and what made those things easier?   •   Has anything surprised you?   What do you think you need or has helped you to carry on and keep motivated? What would help in the future?   •   From a student's [perspective in your learning journey at Deakin   •   To stay connected and engaged with the course/your peers/ your lecturers?   •   Generally speaking   What do you do to look after yourself (your health and wellbeing)?   What has COVID-19 taught you?   Considering that the aim of this study is to better understand the experience of Deakin occupational therapy students and staff in the context of COVID-19, is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Appendix 2

Staff Interview Questions

Staff Participants
Can you tell me in what year level you teach in and your roles in the course?   Tell me how things have been for you since all learning activities have been moved online.   •   Impacts on classes and seminars   •   Impacts on placements   •   Impacts on relationships with your colleagues? Your students?   •   Impacts on daily life (routines, etc.)   COVID-19 have changed our lives. Can you tell me about how it has impacted your role as an educator/lecturer?   •   What about your other roles (partner, parent, friend, sibling, worker, etc.)   How would you say COVID-19 has impacted your overall health/wellbeing?   •   What has been tough and how do you manage those things?   •   What are the things that have been easier, and what made those things easier?   •   Has anything surprised you?   What do you think you need or has helped you to carry on and keep motivated? What would help in the future?   •   From an educator's perspective in your work at Deakin   •   To stay connected and engaged with the course/your colleagues/ your students?   •   Generally speaking   What do you do to look after yourself (your health and wellbeing)?   What has COVID-19 taught you?   Considering that the aim of this study is to better understand the experience of Deakin occupational therapy students and staff in the context of COVID-19, is there anything else you would like to talk about?