

Lessons in Pedagogy from Teaching Neuroethics in Year One of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Crises offer opportunities to examine **core principles and values** around which institutions are organized. Here, we explore what the COVID-19 pandemic has meant for teaching and learning of neuroethics, and for general pedagogical practice.

One year ago, we shared **insights on teaching neuroethics amidst the pandemic** and associated crises [1]. Millions of people worldwide have now died as a result of SARS-CoV2-related illness [2], and untold numbers may suffer from lingering illness (long COVID). Public health experts warned that marginalized populations were bearing the brunt of the pandemic; these warnings are unhappily confirmed in uneven rates of illness and death on a global scale and within wealthy, highly stratified nations like the US.

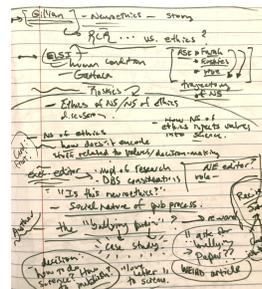
Here, we describe our experiences as **educators who worked collaboratively during this crisis** in order to ask: what important learning took place during this year, and what responsibilities do educators have moving forward?

Neuroethics education and the COVID-19 pandemic

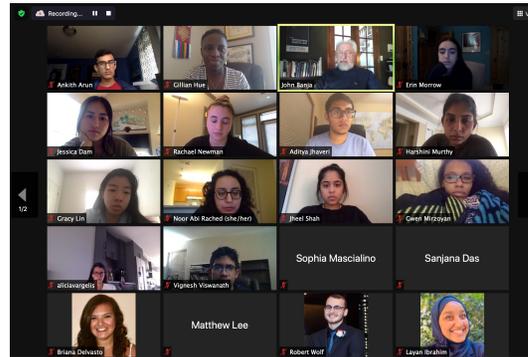


In 2020, the US saw protest movements in **response to extreme inequality** and ongoing racist violence, yet 2021 began with a white supremacist attack on the US capitol and continued with attacks on critical race theory.

In the midst of an **ongoing public health crisis and reactionary pushback to social justice efforts, institutions and educators may struggle to act responsibly.**



First, while **the virtual classroom** was not always ideal, it presented **key learning opportunities**. Most importantly, this modality allowed accessibility for disabled students that is rare within higher education. Next, we were able to **invite guest lecturers remotely, opening the classroom to a wider range of expert voices.**



Students expressed general **appreciation of ethical analysis**, as it helped them to **understand current crises**. Finally, this year cemented **key justice considerations within pedagogical practice**, including universal accessibility as a cornerstone of disability rights and a need for **intersectional analysis** [5] in neuroethics. Teaching during this year highlighted the importance of **grace and compassion** within a **liberatory educational framework**, where sharing of power allows students and teachers to reason together about pressing moral problems.



Further unexpected **insights** included parallels between potential stigma involved in "disease" labeling of mental illnesses [3] or substance dependence [4] and COVID-19 stigma in relation to anti-Asian racial violence. Discussing long COVID and neurological impacts of COVID-19 also facilitated conversations about **disability rights and mental health care accessibility.**



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