

We must insert joy back into education in the wake of COVID-19, researcher warns

May 17 2023

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Educating the Covid Generation

How We Can Prevent the
Impending Educational
Catastrophe after Covid

KLAUS ZIERER



Credit: Routledge

Education systems need major reform in the light of lessons learned from COVID, according to a leading education academic.

Klaus Zierer, Professor of Education at the University of Augsburg, Germany, and an associate research fellow at the University of Oxford, U.K., has revealed ways in which the "[collateral damage](#)" from [school closures](#) is still hitting children and young people particularly hard.

He examines the evidence in his new book, "Educating the COVID Generation," published on May 17 by Routledge. The author believes policymakers are turning a blind eye not only to the physical, emotional and educational after-effects on children, but also to deep flaws in educational systems which have been exposed by the pandemic.

Flaws in the system

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken the education system and at the same time exposed known weaknesses in a dramatic way. We are stumbling through this crisis from an educational policy perspective... It is hard to avoid the impression that [educational policy](#) is turning a blind eye to this," Professor Zierer says.

He suggests that three key flaws in [education systems](#) have been highlighted by the pandemic. They are:

- A too-narrow focus on easily-measured mathematical, scientific-technical and linguistic competencies.

- A tendency for schools to think mainly in terms of "effectiveness," which is only one element of a good education.
- A lack of "joy," which should be "the guiding principle for education and teaching."

The book sets out five key elements for a more joyful [education](#):

1. Reasons: Children and [young people](#) need to know why their lessons should matter to them.
2. Feelings: Children's emotions should be taken into account, both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.
3. Activity: Learning that consists only of listening and executing is ultimately inhumane.
4. Success: Children need to be given challenges through which they can gain a sense of achievement.
5. Community: A new balance is needed between individual achievement and the experience of becoming a team player.

Professor Zierer also describes how his own family struggled during COVID—he has three [school-age children](#) who were then aged 6, 9 and 11.

"We have not fallen as a family but we have stumbled many times," he says. "It fills me with concern that they have spent more time at home than at school between 2020 and 2022. How is a young person supposed to develop if they are cut off from the outside world, isolated from friends, quarantined again and again, and not allowed to do all the things that make life worth living?"

More information: Educating the Covid Generation: How We Can Prevent the Impending Educational Catastrophe after Covid.
[www.routledge.com/Educating-th ... p/book/9781032528748](http://www.routledge.com/Educating-the-Covid-Generation/How-We-Can-Prevent-the-Impending-Educational-Catastrophe-after-Covid/book/9781032528748)

Provided by Taylor & Francis

Citation: We must insert joy back into education in the wake of COVID-19, researcher warns (2023, May 17) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-05-insert-joy-covid-.html>

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