



## **The COVID-19 Pandemic and Workload: Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Questions**

Two-Year College English Association

Workload Task Force

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## **Abstract**

In spring of 2021, the Two-Year College English Association distributed a 23-question survey to two-year college English faculty to learn about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their workload. Responses to the quantitative questions have previously been distributed in “[The COVID-19 Pandemic and Workload: Results from a National TYCA Survey](#)” (February 2022). This report summarizes the key findings from the 438 two-year college English faculty responses to the open-ended questions of the survey. Specifically, the report discusses effects of the pandemic on workload, such as teaching, support for students, and emotional labor.

## **Introduction**

In 2019, the Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) Workload Issues Committee conducted a survey to examine the workload of English faculty at two-year colleges (Suh et al. 2021). During the analysis phase of the study, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically altered the labor conditions and workload of educators across the country, which prompted us to create and distribute a follow-up survey in spring of 2021 to explore the impact of the pandemic on workload for faculty at two-year colleges. In this report, we present findings to the open-ended survey questions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on English faculty at two-year colleges.

## **TYCA Pandemic Survey**

As a follow-up to the 2019 Two-Year College English Association (TYCA) survey on faculty workload (Suh et al. 2021), the TYCA Workload Issues Committee disseminated a 23-question survey in spring of 2021 through the TYCA national listserv and via regional chapter listservs. The survey included 23 questions, 5 of which were open-ended, that asked faculty to describe their professional experiences during the pandemic.

## Survey Participant Demographics

Self-reported demographic data from the 438 two-year college English faculty respondents are included in Table 1. These demographics include things such as type of employment contract, gender, race, and TYCA region. Participants were not required to answer every question, so the total number of responses for each demographic category varied.

Participant Demographics	Count	Percentage
Type of Employment Contract		
Tenure-line (tenure-track or tenured)	222	51.9%
Non-tenure line (long term contract)	61	14.29%
Non-tenure line (renewable contract)	72	16.86%
Short term (limited contract)	66	15.46%
Other	6	1.41%
Gender		
Female	292	74.87%
Male	80	20.51%
Non-binary	3	0.77%
Another Identity	0	0%
Prefer not to say	15	3.85%
Race		
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1.79%
Black or African American	15	3.83%
Latinx	9	2.30%
Multiracial	6	1.53%
Native American or American Indian	2	0.51%
White	326	83.16%
Other	9	2.30%
Prefer not to say	18	4.59%
Two-Year College English Association Region		
TYCA Northeast	39	9.9%
TYCA Pacific Coast	35	8.88%
TYCA Midwest	126	31.98%
TYCA Pacific Northwest	45	11.42%
TYCA Southeast	36	9.14%
TYCA Southwest	71	18.02%
TYCA West	42	10.66%

Table 1: Participant Demographics<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Table 1 appears in Griffiths, Brett, et al. "Community College English Faculty Pandemic Teaching: Adjustments in the Time of COVID-19." *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*.

## Survey Findings

To gain a better understanding of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the teaching of the two-year college English faculty, this working paper provides a qualitative analysis of the themes that emerged from participant responses. The TYCA Workload Committee applied iterative thematic analyses of open-ended responses to survey questions using Dedoose (a web-based platform for analyzing qualitative and mixed methods research) to code each response (see Braun and Clarke 2016). The survey findings below report the effects of the pandemic on workload, such as teaching, support for students, and emotional labor. Since participants were able to opt out of answering any question, the number of responses varies for each question.

### Early months of the global pandemic and workload

The first open-ended question of the survey asked participants the following: *How did the early months of the global pandemic affect your workload?* Overall, there were 313 responses to this question with 149 of the responses noting their workload increased. One respondent described “Work [seeping] into all parts of my life. It has been challenging to know when I am ‘at’ work and when I am ‘at’ rest.” Many respondents noted the increase in workload due to the switch of modalities: “Massive amount of workload switching instruction to online platform,” and, “My workload definitely increased because of all the new technologies I needed to learn and effectively deploy with almost no time to prepare. As the department Chair I had to guide my faculty through the transition to online and create new placement tools for first-year composition again with nearly no time to think or research best practices.”

Additionally, 89 responses were coded for their workload having intensified during the early months of the pandemic. One respondent stated, “It felt heavier—we had very little time to transition, so I was building the plane while I was flying it,” while another wrote, “Having never taught online before, the change was abrupt and totally overwhelming.” Furthermore, another respondent shared, “It was enormously stressful, not because my work changed but because the world was completely altered. My students were suffering. And, to be honest, I was terrified. It was really hard.”

Many participants described a “different type of workload.” This code was applied 85 times. Survey respondents mentioned “[far] more ‘behind-the-scenes’ work existed. This included writing ‘lectures,’ creating new resources, recording videos, and responding to far more student emails.” Many respondents described the additional support they needed to provide for students: “students needed far more emotional support,” and, “I had to support students who were not well-equipped to work remotely and find ways to manage my own time to separate work from on-work (that is still a struggle).”

On the other hand, we applied the “did not effect” code 33 times to responses that described the pandemic not affecting their workload. Some instructors described no impact to their workload because they were already teaching online. For example, one respondent shared, “I was already teaching online, so I was able to convert my face-to-face classes pretty easily,” and another wrote, “It had no effect on my workload; I have had a full-time fully online schedule since 2017.” Similarly, a few respondents said the pandemic didn’t have much impact on their teaching because they were easily able to make the transition to online teaching. One participant’s response is representative of this: “Since I already used an LMS with face-to-face classes, it was easy to transition, and students were already comfortable using the LMS.”

Twelve responses were coded for decreased workload. Many of these responses discussed a decrease in service: “less time on my institutional responsibilities,” and, “honestly, it was reduced because I did not have committee work and some other obligations that were suspended during the early months of the pandemic.”

## Effects of the Pandemic on Two-Year College English Faculty Workload

Before answering an open-ended question about their overall workload, survey participants answered two closed-ended questions ([Tinoco et al. 2022](#)):

- *Question 14: How has the global pandemic changed the number of your work responsibilities as a two-year college English professional? Did you take on more responsibilities?* Over half of respondents (58.42%) indicated that their work responsibilities increased during the pandemic while less than 5% indicated a decrease.
- *Question 15: How has the global pandemic changed the types of tasks that you do as a two-year college English professional?* More than half (52.04%) indicated a change with 28.06% noting a significant change in types of work tasks.

Participants then elaborated on their responses by answering the following question: *Think about how you responded to the previous two questions on overall workload. How has the pandemic affected your current workload as a two-year college English professional?* Seventy-eight respondents mentioned an increased workload. This result was also reflected in the closed-ended survey question, *How has the global pandemic changed the time that you spend on work for your job as a two-year college English professional?* Three hundred and eight (78.5%) respondents indicated that they spent more time on work because of the pandemic. Many respondents described specific aspects of their workloads that increased, including adapting teaching to an online environment (28), more non-teaching responsibilities (27), class prep time (24), communication with students (24), and administrative responsibilities (14). Answers to this question were so varied that more specific patterns didn't emerge from their responses, and answers to this question also overlapped with other parts of the survey (especially in relation to teaching workload). Some comments about workload changes were specific to pandemic related tasks (e.g., cleaning classrooms, learning new technology, and moving to a new modality of instruction). A few respondents who had a reduced workload stated that it was because they received fewer courses (i.e., they had less work only because of a reduction in employment and compensation).

In addition to the above themes that emerged across the open-ended responses to this question, one distinct response pattern in question 16 not addressed in other parts of the survey was the blurring of boundaries between personal and professional activities during the pandemic as a more specific component of increased workload. Eighteen respondents provided detailed information about how pandemic conditions created problems with a separation between work and their private lives. For example, one participant stated that, “Meetings occur more frequently since all meetings are virtual.” Another wrote that, “Working from home has made it harder to stop working.” Another gave a similar response about work taking over personal time: “I feel like I work all the time/not enough because I am working from my home and am unable to differentiate the different aspects of my life (work life, home life, PhD life, rest,

my own writing, etc.).” One respondent indicated that work responsibilities taking over time away from work became an employment expectation during the pandemic: “Without the structure of office hours and delineated office time, my office is my home. I have no separation of work and private life and I am basically on-call 24/7 with no ability to temper expectations of students that I will not be. This is becoming the new normal, as any deviance from this results in a mass exodus from my courses and performance review reprisal.” Another instructor reported that “one student accurately said it was ‘creepy’ how much time I spend doing my job, adding that clearly I have ‘no life’ outside of my job.”

Some respondents framed work-life boundaries in terms of complicated choices. For example, a participant stated that “due to children at home during the pandemic, I have less time to devote to my job. A lot of corners have to be cut/hard decisions made about how much time I give to my students. There’s some ‘faking it’ that goes on where I can only give the bare minimum attention to some online classes just to balance life/work responsibilities.” Another indicated that “we get suggestions to take time for ourselves even though none of our contractual obligations were lightened.” One instructor described what seems like a permanent increase in workload: “The pandemic has increased my current workload, but I expect that workload will continue after the pandemic is over. Some of the impact to my workload is due to how I am reaching out to the students and now that I am available, it would not be good to become unavailable.” Another framed work-life balance issues in terms of making strategic choices based on workload compensation: “I have had to set up boundaries; if my work isn’t done when the weekend arrives, it waits until the work week again. I am choosing to do less of some of the things I used to do because the institution has made it clear that it will not honor that extra labor.”

These open-ended responses suggest that two-year college English departments and programs may need to monitor whether post-pandemic workload issues continue to take over time previously reserved for personal responsibilities and activities away from work, especially without compensation. Participants’ comments also highlight how the workload challenges that many two-year college English instructors have always experienced with teaching-intensive schedules intensified during the pandemic in ways that required instructors to make individual, complex choices about their pandemic lives.

## Changes to Teaching Caused by the Pandemic

The survey asked participants to share responses to the question, *How has the pandemic affected or changed how you teach English?* Of the 246 respondents for this survey question, 194 survey respondents identified changes to their teaching approaches and 122 respondents specifically described changes to their teaching due to their use of technology. Of the 194 respondents who identified changes to their teaching approaches, the major subthemes were making adjustments to group work among students (40), changes to grading, assessment, feedback practices (34), and flexibility (33).

Overall, when respondents shared changes to their teaching approaches, the responses were both positive and negative. Some respondents shared, “Communicating on Zoom has allowed a kind of close-up interaction and follow-up with individual students not previously as manageable with in-person classes,” and, “It has made me focus more on course design clarity, video production, and staying in closer contact with students.” However, there were also various respondents who had difficulty adjusting to teaching online during the pandemic. One respondent shared, “I have struggled to adapt, with not a lot of success. I am an in-person,

hands-on instructor and found that hard when teaching virtually or online.” Another respondent noted, “It’s been really hard not to feel like I’m failing all the time because some of my adaptations have not worked out well.”

Forty respondents described making adjustments to group work among students. One respondent shared, “Actually teaching synchronously online has allowed me to continue assigning group work, which I could not do if we were in person due to social distancing.” Another respondent wrote, “It has changed my approach to group work—I have to be creative about incorporating engaging activities, and that part can be frustrating at times.” In contrast, several respondents shared that they assigned less group work, as one shared they assigned “less small group work because of tech limitations.” These findings present some of the challenges faculty faced when learning to engage students in group work in new modalities.

Additionally, 34 participants indicated changes to their grading, assessment, and feedback practices. Several respondents noted changes to their approach to feedback. Some respondents in particular highlight this point: “I’m spending a lot more time responding to rough drafts,” and, “In our f2f writing process, I would conference with students verbally on their second or third drafts, now I make screen capture videos talking to them about their second or third drafts.” Additionally, some respondents also described changes to their grading, such as, “It has also pushed me even more fully toward a grading model that directly and explicitly rewards student labor,” and, “I switched to a grading contract to better accommodate students’ challenges.” Some respondents, however, described feeling like they were nothing but graders for online courses, as one respondent noted, “I am no longer a teacher but a grader of materials taught by a ‘Master Course’ or module that is mass-produced to be as simple as possible. However, it was hastily constructed and confusingly thrown together last minute and is incredibly problematic.” Furthermore, respondents also shared being a lot more “flexible” and “lenient” when describing their grading and assessment policies. As one respondent wrote, “I have stopped applying penalties for late work,” and another shared, “I am much more explicitly flexible.” These findings therefore illustrate some of the benefits and challenges to changes in grading and feedback practices during the pandemic.

Furthermore, 33 respondents also indicated being more flexible with their teaching approaches. For example, one respondent shared, “I also strive to have multiple ways students can participate and to be more flexible with deadlines without losing accountability.” Another respondent described, “I am more flexible in a lot of my courses. Due dates are looser, expectations are more flexible, and I present very little of my materials in physical paper form. I’m probably less rigid with regard to some deadlines.”

Of the 122 respondents who identified changes to their use of technology, the major subthemes were use of new tools and applications (48), increased use of technology (44), and creating digital content (39). Many respondents describe how their use of technology affected their teaching practices. For example, respondents describe their increased use of technology: “My use of technology has definitely increased,” and, “I do believe I have become more conscious of Zoom engagement practices.” Another respondent shared, “One benefit is that I am more proficient in tech now, and the use of Zoom conferencing is something I will continue offering in my online-only classes.”

Forty-eight respondents shared that the use of new tools and technology was the most common teaching adjustment faculty made during the pandemic. One respondent noted, “I use more technology now (Zoom, Padlet, Kahoot!, etc.).” Another respondent described, “I have added more asynchronous Zoom sessions for formerly fully online classes (optional for students) and I

record many, many more short Zoom lectures that I upload to my (new) YouTube playlist.” Furthermore, another participant shared, “I am using Discord for office hours because the experience is far preferable to Zoom, and I’m using Zoom for lectures specifically.” Overall, many participants mentioned learning to use new tools such as Zoom, Google Docs, and Microsoft Teams.

In addition, 44 participants described their increased use of technology. A participant mentioned “significantly increased use of technology and self-funded internet,” while another stated, “My use of technology has definitely increased.” However, one participant shared, “My use of technology has increased tremendously. I try to make roughly parallel experiences, but it is very time-consuming and less effective.” Despite the increased use of technology and its impact on workload for many faculty, a lot of the responses were focused on student success. As one participant noted, “I use more technology, but it hasn’t changed my commitment to placing students at the center.”

Additionally, 39 participants mention how their teaching and workload was affected due to the need to create digital content for their classes. Representative comments illustrating this include: “I have been trying to incorporate more videos of myself into my courses,” and, “I record many, many more short Zoom lectures.” Additionally, one participant shared, “I’ve had to spend the past year entirely redoing every single assignment, essay prompt, rubric, instructional material, creating videos for harder to understand concepts, etc. It feels like I’m redoing my first years of teaching, but way way way way way way more.” Although creating lecture videos and content to upload to Learning Management Systems is a lot of work, some faculty expressed they will continue to practice this in their courses beyond the pandemic, as one respondent shared, “Going forward, I will now record all lectures for students to view at their leisure. Their ability to watch and re-watch my lectures has improved their retention and my ability to say via email, ‘review lecture X for that answer.’”

What emerges across these responses is a picture of the wide range of impacts to teaching English and the pedagogical shifts faculty had to make during the pandemic.

## Effects of the Pandemic on Students and Teachers

Question 18 was coded in two parts, with responses divided between those in which respondents described students’ experiences (104 of the 330 excerpts) and those addressing how instructors adjusted their workload to support students (258 of the 330 responses). Those that addressed simply increases, decreases, or unchanged workload levels were excluded since those were captured by the closed-ended questions. The next tables show the trends in what most respondents identified as effects on students:

Code	Number and Percentage of Responses	Examples
Stress	n=36 (21%)	“They are stressed out.” “They are even more stressed than they were before and they were already at the breaking point.”
Disengagement	n=30 (19%)	“Many more disappear and with the loads

		and numbers we are having to take on it is harder and harder to make connections and offer support. Without being able to require synchronous meetings in any form it is hard to engage with them.”
More Non-School Responsibilities	n=22 (14%)	“My students have had a difficult time in managing all of their responsibilities while also being expected to keep up with their academics. Since most of my students also work and take care of families, they have had a hard time when it comes to completing their coursework and staying motivated in their classes.”
Mental Health	n=21 (13%)	“Many students mentioned how emotionally stressful the pandemic is.” “Fall 2020 was full of students with massive amounts of trauma.” “Students have suffered from depression and other mental health issues at a greater rate than normal.”
Divided Attention	n=21 (13%)	“I see similar home experiences with my students who are learning from home where their children, parents, siblings, etc., are a regular disruptive factor. Many have dropped courses due to synchronous expectations.”

Table 2: Predominant codes in response to the survey question “How has the pandemic affected your students?”

Code	Number and Percentage of Responses	Examples
Adjustments to Policies	n=61 (24%)	<p>“I can’t require deadlines for assignments. I need to be flexible about allowing students to do the coursework as they are able to. It means meeting with students at odd hours to help them understand the material that the class covered three weeks ago. I believe it is my job to try to help as many students through this crisis as I can.”</p> <p>“I have extended deadlines and created shorter, alternative assignments for students with limited access to the internet.”</p>



Communication	n=52 (21%)	<p>“My struggling students who would previously make it through are disappearing. I reach out to students via telephone now, which I wouldn’t have done before.”</p> <p>“Motivation is a challenge. I send reminders that I normally would not.”</p> <p>“Students are struggling a great deal, and I spend a significant amount of time in communication with students about their individual issues and needs.”</p>
Changes to Course Content	n=21 (8.5%)	<p>“I’ve dropped things that I think are valuable in the writing classroom—like I don’t require journals or weekly writing anymore. I focus heavily on the writing process and drafting. In literature courses, I’ve started to get much more lecture heavy and explication heavy. Just to get students through the course. I dropped a research paper in lit and instead assign a creative project that asks student to create a library or museum exhibit or a lesson plan (lots of my students are education majors).”</p> <p>“I have slowed curriculum down, shortened papers, and gotten rid of some assignments. Overall, I teach a truncated version because it feels like everything takes longer for learning.”</p>
Nonspecific Support	n=20 (8%)	<p>“My students are far less supported—they have lost much needed tutoring and one-on-one instruction. For my non-transfer class this is particularly difficult because they need a higher level of support.”</p>

Table 3: Predominant codes appearing in responses to “What changes (if any) have you made to your workload to support students because of the pandemic?”

What question 18 helps us understand is the nuance of two dimensions: how the first year of the pandemic (Spring 2020 through Spring 2021) evolved and changed, including how teachers perceived their students being impacted by the necessitated changes, and how instructors responded with changes to their assignments, policies, course content, communication, and support levels.

## Emotional Dimensions of Pandemic Workload

In our analysis of this question, *We're interested in learning more about the emotional dimensions of work during the pandemic. In what ways (if any) has the pandemic affected the emotional labor component of your workload?*, we unpack responses to a question focused on emotional (and sometimes affective) labor. In this case we mean either the individual worker (instructor) managing their emotional responses in order to perform their job, or meeting the emotional needs of others in their workplace—in the case of this survey, students (see Carlson et al. 2012; Bessette and McGowan 2020). In this open-ended question, 249 respondents added comments in response to the prompt in which they referenced workload changes. Of those, 201 responses referenced increased workload in this area, 9 indicated a decrease in workload, while another 9 said their workload stayed the same in terms of level but shifted in type, and the remaining responses in this group were coded as “other.”

Of those 249 open-ended comments, 335 codes were applied to identify a cause or source of workload. They fell into the following categories:

Code (Source or Cause)	Examples
Caregiving Responsibilities	“I’m worried that students will evaluate me poorly based on my usually adequate but limited skills in using virtual delivery methods. I’m a single parent with a young child who has been learning by remote classes. Many days we both cry at least once. Some days I have trouble getting to my computer until afternoon due to childcare and his learning needs. I consistently feel inadequate.”
Colleagues	“I find it really difficult to take grading as seriously because I find it important to simply acknowledge the fact that we’re all just doing the best we can right now. I also am an administrator and find a lot of my emotional labor going toward supporting my staff.”
Institution	“Our institution was going through serious struggles prior to the pandemic and this has caused those issues to explode. We are sent links weekly to take advantage of online support but who has the time? And from experience with the services provided, checking things off a list doesn’t help.”
Mental Health	“Honestly, I am tired and sad. It’s been really hard, but I’m pushing through as best as I can.”
Other	“I feel pressured to be engaging, interesting, and motivated when I am not sure that is possible day in and day out.”
Pedagogy/ Instruction	<p>“With all my classes online and with most of my day spent in front of a computer now, I’m finding that I feel more like a machine than a teacher.”</p> <p>“I feel like I’m offering a suboptimal experience. Maybe that comes from the fact this is my last semester before retiring (I’ll be 70 this summer) and thus am loath to make too many innovations, or maybe it’s the lack of</p>

	in-class human presence. I feel like I have been working from my basement for a year. It's wearing, and I try my best to be cheerful and inviting in class—but I still rely more on lecture than I want to, and though I still do a lot of group work (usually every class), connectivity goes away for some students and I feel terrible I can't help them fix that. I am drained at the end of a day, and I wake up every night thinking of what I am not doing that I should be in class. I am hoping I can get revitalized over spring break."
Students	"I find myself often frustrated—no matter what I do to reach out to students (video messages, course announcements, emails, live chat, academic intervention campaigns), there is silence...and students continue to make the same errors, continue to ignore our course site materials and try to complete assignments with no info or scaffolding...they could be doing so much better with simple changes. They also work too much...being fully online has allowed students with jobs to increase their hours, which of course makes their coursework suffer."
Technology	"Zoom fatigue is a real thing. It's a different kind of fatigue. Managing the technological platform while managing a classroom and teaching at the same time is a lot. It's draining for all of us."

Table 4: Source or cause of emotional labor for two-year college English instructors during the first year of the pandemic.

<b>Most frequent (of 335)</b>	Students: N=136 (41%) Pedagogy/Instruction: N=49 (15%) Institution N=33 (10%) Mental Health=32 (9.5%) Technology: N=29 (9%)
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Table 5: Most frequently appearing codes related to source of cause of emotional labor.

What should be clarified in the results in Table 3 is that instructors were largely sympathetic to but overwhelmed by the needs of their students. Students became a source of emotional labor because the demands of their lives intensified, and in the writing, reading, and other literacy courses students take, the small class sizes and feedback cycle of writing creates an environment more conducive to discussion and disclosure. The predominant themes emerging from our analysis of question 19 are that the classroom, and meeting the needs of students who themselves were facing numerous and varied obstacles to continuing their education, were significant sources of emotional and affective labor for TYCA English instructors.

Though the experiences of students and the kinds of emotional/affective dimensions of their pandemic experience in the first year were discussed in question 18, additional themes emerged in the coding for question 19. The table below shows responses that were coded for the "type" of emotional labor or affective labor that respondents addressed. A wide range of dimensions were reflected in the narrative comments. We include the codes applied below, along with the most frequently appearing codes:

Code (Type of Emotional Labor)	Examples
Anxiety	“And then there’s the uncertainty of when anything is going to get better. That’s a lot to negotiate on the daily, which makes easy stuff like teaching a lot more challenging.”
Decrease in Enjoyment	“It has pushed me to retire. If I can’t be in the classroom f2f with students, then my career is no longer fun.”
Depression	“I have lost sleep and developed anxiety and depression to varying degrees as I’ve tried to navigate all of the chaos.”
Empathy/Understanding	“Trying to bring some structure and reliability to my students, and cutting them a lot of slack, offering a ton of options. It’s hard to be firm with someone who you know has a mother in their home with COVID, or they themselves have COVID. Part of my work is to not add to their pressures and stress, but to show them that I am approachable and willing to work with them.”
Exhaustion	“Throwing in the quarantines, time away from class, and deadline extensions for quarantined students, makes it feel like I’m not teaching 5 classes of 24 students each. Rather, I feel like I’m teaching over 100 students individually, and it’s exhausting sometimes.”
Frustration	“There is a deep frustration in not being able to reach the same number of students or reach them in the ways we might when in the classroom.”
Loneliness/Isolation	“The technology can only bridge so much, and it’s far more difficult to bridge the relationships necessary for a positive writing class. It’s lonelier.”
Other	“I think I spend more time considering the educational backgrounds of my students than before. I rarely considered the impact of economics on education at the secondary level. I teach a number of dual credit students who have struggled with access.”
Physical	“Less active lifestyle. Weight gain.” “Also harder to keep in shape both physically and emotionally when sitting at the computer at home. I notice that I and my colleagues have put on weight.”
Sadness, Loss, or Grief	“So, I am sad for education, sad for the students, and my co-workers.” “It’s sad.”
Stress	“...(and that isn’t even counting my own stressors living through a global pandemic).”

	<p>“Because I teach at home, I am constantly stressed.”</p> <p>“Early in the pandemic, it was disastrous, stressful, difficult to keep calm for the sake of my students.”</p>
Trauma/Vicarious Trauma	<p>“Hearing more students report deaths and illnesses is stressful.”</p> <p>“I have had students try to complete work in quarantine, students who lost family members. I had one student get word of the loss of two family members during our Zoom class.”</p> <p>“My bosses act like it’s business as usual. Do they know the kind of triaging we are handling and the horrifyingly sad stories we’re hearing?”</p>

Table 6: Codes and examples of the type of emotional labor/affective labor experienced by respondents.

<b>Most frequent</b>	<p>Stress: N=68</p> <p>Exhaustion N=49</p> <p>Other: N=44</p> <p>Loneliness: N=36</p> <p>Empathy: N=29</p> <p>Anxiety/Trauma =N=23 each</p>
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Table 7: Most frequently occurring types of emotional labor experienced by respondents.

In this analysis, we observed that emotional labor or affective labor (by either the individual worker managing their emotional responses in order to perform their job, or by meeting the emotional needs of others—in this case, students—in their workplace) took on a range of shades. For example, stress was the most frequent source of internal and external labor, but exhaustion and loneliness also predominated. Respondents reported an intensification in amount and type of emotional responsibilities.

## Trauma and Vicarious Trauma

For question 19, there were a total of 1509 co-occurrence code applications analyzed, with 917 applications classified as Type of Emotional Labor, 914 as Extent of Emotional Labor, and 898 as Cause of Emotional Labor. In terms of co-occurrences, the most frequent was Students as Cause of Emotional Labor and Increase in Extent of Emotional Labor, co-occurring a total of 131 times. Respondents outlined the wide variety of needs and struggles of students, who were described as dealing with illness, illness and death of family members, isolation, mental health issues, lack of emotional support, and inability to keep up with class assignments. Respondents detailed the connections between an increase in students’ needs and their own emotional labor. One respondent stated, “Early on, I worried constantly about students. I cried at times because [of] their stories (of being homeless or sick or worried about their futures), and I’m not much of a crier.” Numerous respondents refer to the type of counseling support their students needed within their classes. Respondents indicated both a desire and, at times, an institutional expectation to provide additional supports—and additional emotional supports—to students. The most frequent co-occurrences of Type of Emotional Labor and Extent of Emotional Labor were Stress and Increase in Emotional Labor, co-occurring in 64 instances, and Exhaustion and Increase in Emotional Labor, co-occurring in 44 instances. Oftentimes, respondents described

the ways in which students' needs caused them to feel more stressed and/or exhausted, to an overwhelming extent.

Of particular note in the findings for question 19 were the occurrences of Trauma or Vicarious Trauma, which was present in the responses of 23 out of 249 respondents and co-occurred more frequently than Depression, Decrease in Enjoyment, and Frustration, with Increase in Extent of Emotional Labor and Students as Cause. Some respondents described the level of trauma experienced by their students, struggling with death, illness, mental health, and lack of housing, as seeming "unbearable" and unsustainable. One says of emotional labor related to students, "Oh, you take it on, of course," proceeding to describe students as in crisis. Another felt "fed up" with the reality that students were not having basic needs met, stating, "I've talked with students who were sobbing over really serious issues. It's no joke." Another says, "I'm not a mental health professional. I don't want to be a mental health professional...I'm in no way qualified to handle the levels of grief and loss several of my students have experienced." Many respondents indicated that they felt debilitated when trying to balance academic standards and course expectations with the trauma students were experiencing. The references to vicarious trauma and inability to cope with the emotional needs and daily struggles of students demonstrate the increasing emotional support that faculty members are expected to provide to students, most often without training, support, or institutional acknowledgement of this new—and expanding—dimension of teaching.

## Conclusion and Implications

The overwhelming theme of this survey from the first two pandemic semesters is the increase in and intensification of workload. This was largely due to student needs, the learning curve attached to adapting instruction to new technologies, and the blurring of personal and work-related boundaries. Taken together, the open-ended questions offer a window into the day-to-day experiences in the early pandemic year that complements the closed-ended questions we reported in "[The COVID-19 Pandemic and Workload: Results from a National TYCA Survey](#)" (Tinoco et al. 2022). A few key conclusions stand out from our work and this data set:

- Instructors and students struggled with engagement, motivation, and work management.
- The shift to online and technology facilitated learning was (and likely continues to be) a strain for educators and students.
- At least some respondents reported a sense of greater access and opportunity for college students through remote learning, a theme in much of the scholarship on tech-facilitated college courses (Jaggers and Bailey 2010; Means et al. 2010).

We also want to emphasize several implications and questions that emerge from our analysis.

- Nearly three years into the COVID-19 pandemic, we don't fully know the implications of the changes necessitated by the pandemic. Are they permanent? If so, which ones? How do we adapt and make decisions about instruction, programs, and policies going forward?
- What are the consequences and the ongoing impact of the emotional labor, trauma, and drain of the pandemic years? Is resilience an appropriate way to frame possible gains, or is there permanent damage to a collective psyche of a generation of students, or both?
- As an organization, and a profession, there is an urgent need to attend to engaged, inclusive, and well-designed online pedagogies, with emphasis on the wide variety of

modes remote learning is offered—HyFlex, blended/hybrid, asynchronous online, synchronous remote, etc.

As an organization, TYCA can support instructors by developing a tool, resource, or guidance about what factors can guide our thinking in adapting instruction for online contexts. TYCA can and should consider a position statement or set of professional standards that might be developed to support programs and campuses in their future development and assessment of technology-assisted curriculum and instruction.

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