

Schools should use Pandemic to teach important lessons.

Around the globe, school closures have affected more than 1.5 billion elementary and secondary students. As the shutdown of school buildings stretches from days into weeks and weeks into months, the question on the minds of many parents is not whether the lives of their children are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, but whether their children will lose academic ground when they learn online.

A larger concern should be whether schools are rising to their potential and making the most of the pandemic to teach important lessons. Instead of adhering to the standard curriculum, teachers across the country need to invent new lessons that meet students where they are. Creative teachers are already doing this.

Some subjects, like math, require a little more inventiveness. In English, students might be asked to keep a journal of their own experiences during the pandemic, sharing their stories with one another via Zoom.

Literature? For older children try Camus' *The Plague*, even though often interpreted as an allegory about the French resistance to the Nazis, provides a realistic account of a 19th-century cholera epidemic.

All of these lessons can be delivered via laptop – or, for that matter, via cell phone or traditional radio and television.

But beyond academic learning, the pandemic also offers an opportunity to teach some of life's major lessons. No matter the nasty rhetoric they see on TV or on their social media feeds, teach them how important it is to look for the good in every person.