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SUPPORTING STUDENTS' TRANSITION TO CAREERS OR COLLEGE: CLOSING GAPS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC [ABSTRACT]

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	As a result of the pandemic many students now face significant challenges as they prepare for the next phase of their educational or career journeys. This research aims to explore the best practices for educational leaders worldwide to develop, implement, and sustain adaptive learning and engagement strategies that bridge the academic gaps created by the pandemic.
Background	Global perspectives on resilience in education continue to examine the pandemic's far-reaching effects, particularly on high school students' employment opportunities and their transition from high school to college. The rapid shift to remote learning and widespread school closures disrupted learning, deepening academic and socioemotional disparities across diverse contexts.
Methodology	A qualitative case study approach using focus groups and an open-ended questionnaire will be used to collect data from high school graduates to gain their perspective on the impact of the pandemic on their academic progress and socioemotional challenges.
Contribution	The study will focus on supporting high school students' transition to college or career pathways, offering valuable insights on how leaders can foster resilience and ensure that this pandemic-impacted generation of students is equipped for post-secondary success.
Keywords	adaptive learning, global resilience, high school, pandemic impact

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AUTHORS



Dr. Imani Akin holds an MS in Special Education, an EdD in Educational Leadership, and an MBA in Data Analytics. She is deeply committed to fostering collaboration that effectively addresses the academic and social-emotional needs of all learners. As an educational leader, Dr. Akin has designed and led impactful professional development sessions, empowering educators to enhance their capacity for implementing response to intervention strategies in both K-12 and higher education environments. Recognized for her passion for research, Dr. Akin was awarded a grant to lead a research team focused on exploring the needs of doctoral graduates as they seek to launch and expand their scholarly activity. This research was later published and evolved into a model for identifying and engaging in research to build new knowledge. A strong advocate for the power of collegiate dialogue, Dr. Akin consistently seeks out opportunities to collaborate, present, and publish research, furthering the ongoing growth and innovation within the educational community.



Ramona Burress, PharmD, is an education and healthcare advocate. An active supporter of educational enrichment, Ramona was elected and served two terms on a local school council and continues to serve the school as the Chair of Friends of Kenwood Academy. Dedicated to improving community health, Ramona serves as the board chair of ONYX360 and the MarSid Fund, health organizations. A licensed clinical pharmacist with expertise in infectious diseases and oncology, Ramona serves on the boards of Susan G. Komen Chicago and the University of Chicago's Women's Board. As a healthcare professional and leader with extensive experience in patient engagement and health equity, she played a pivotal role in driving global health equity initiatives as the former Head of Patient Engagement and Insights at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. Ramona has also held leadership positions at Janssen Pharmaceuticals of Johnson & Johnson, where she focused on increasing diversity in clinical trials. Ramona is deeply committed to advancing education and healthcare access and outcomes, with a focus on underserved populations.