


Innovative Learning and Education Practices in European Universities: A Pathway to Modern Pedagogy

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the dynamic world that is associated with unpredictable informatization and globalization, it is indispensable for education to be sustainable and continuously evolve to facilitate in fulfilling the learners' needs in the current digital technologies and knowledge era. In this chapter, the author discussed how innovative learning and education practices for modern pedagogy have been developed in the European universities system. Specifically, the author provides a delineation of the attributes, pedagogy, ideology, ethical dimensions, and practical applications of innovative learning education practices. In the chapter, the author identified the different practices such as massive open online courses (MOOCs), blended learning, and flipped classrooms that have been applied at different European universities. Thus, the information discussed in this chapter is relevant to university educators and electronic learning practitioners.

INTRODUCTION

Preparing graduates to resolve the emerging contemporary challenges that are caused by change requires consistent review and update of the pedagogies used by teachers (Peterson, 2018). The 21st century is characterized by the proliferation of scientific and informative technology, the creation of knowledge, and the advancement of research and education (Mykhailyshyn et al., 2018). Burke et al. (2017) supported that the attributes of the modern society, especially, the increased innovation have resulted in the adoption and use of technology in learning. The social changes that have been caused by Web 2.0 tools have had a significant impact on the learning practices for modern pedagogy. Bennett et al. (2012); Kovarova and Simkova (2014); Yadav and Patwardhan (2016); and Henderson et al. (2015) posit that the emergence of educational innovation such as electronic learning, interactive multimedia, mobile learning, wireless devices, and hypermedia over the past 10 years has helped in promoting pedagogy at institutions of higher learning.

In the 21st century, universities in Europe and other parts of the world lost the monopoly of producing and disseminating knowledge as a result of the introduction of innovative learning and education practices (Freitas & Paredes, 2018). The challenges European universities are experiencing in pursuit of fulfilling the demands of the society can be categorized into economical, technological, and faculty-based issues. First, higher learning institutions models are based on the economy (Mehaffy, 2012). The model is focused on educating more students and promoting learning at a lower cost. Second, education at universities is affected by technological advancements because the Information Communication Technology (ICT) requires changes to the teaching and learning process. Third, the faculty is required to enroll in professional development activities that impart them with the competencies to offer the quality of education that is demanded in society. The faculty members at universities are required to be innovative and apply current academic teaching and learning methods. Hence, learning at universities should be innovative, engage students, and fulfill the learners' educational needs (Freitas & Paredes, 2018; Mehaffy, 2012; & Norgard et al., 2018).

In the modern era, the foundation roles of education include (a) guarding the quality of knowledge produced and disseminated, (b) promoting reflective and critical thinking, and (c) structuring learning (McGrath et al., 2016). Institutions of higher learning are the core validators of scientific theories, which is done through falsification procedures such as peer-reviews. The introduction of ICT has resulted in changes in academic research and publication because of the prevalent reliance on open science to disseminate findings. Faculty members in universities are responsible for promoting reflective and critical thinking by imparting students with competencies

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