

Chapter 13

Development of Innovative Pedagogy Strategies and Decolonization of Curriculum in Higher Education Institutions in the COVID–19 Era

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are faced with the challenges of supporting learning and teaching processes in a new normal environment. It has been accorded in literature review that effective pedagogy drives meaningful curriculum change, and it is thus essential for the curriculum to be redesigned. Educators are confronted with devising innovative pedagogical strategies and redesigning their curriculum as a way of enhancing teaching and student e-learning experience in response to this pandemic crisis. But how prepared are educators to adopt innovative pedagogy strategies in their e-learning environment? How will decolonizing curriculum happen within a short period of time? and How prepared are lecturers and students to adopt a decolonial way of teaching and learning? The chapter observes that most educators are not well prepared to respond to curriculum change and as a result, do not feel confident to teach in a decolonial way. In this light, educators are faced with the problem of implementing pedagogy of eLearning strategies in order to achieve the desired learning goals.

PREFACE

It appears as if there is no consolidated approach regarding the decolonizing issues within the HEIs, although many educators acknowledge the importance of decolonizing curriculum and adopting innovative pedagogy strategies. It also appears as if there is no collaborative approach for best practices within the HEIs. Through collaboration and partnership with other institutions, educators would be exposed

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to new ideas, strategies and tools, and be able to acquire knowledge and skills needed to compete and succeed in a new academic environment. This also require educators to be self-motivated and to seek appropriate help and support from fellow colleagues when necessary. Developing pedagogy strategies and decolonizing curriculum is therefore a process which may not be accomplished within a short period unless there are some forces or immediate interventions programs implemented by HEIs which may speed up transformation. Most of the models and frameworks have centered on general understanding of curriculum development as a way of decolonizing curriculum at national and international levels. This chapter suggests that for effective eLearning, educators need to draw on their theoretical understanding, knowledge structures approaches, and on the models and framework for pedagogy strategies and curriculum development. Theoretical models and frameworks towards transforming educators' online pedagogical reasoning strategies and for constructing effective teaching and eLearning, were thus reviewed in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has caught the world population by surprise and it affected nearly each of the country's population globally, within a short period of time. The education systems have come to a standstill by extended closures of schools and Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). Within the blink of an eye, HEIs around the world had to migrate from face-to-face to a complete online teaching. The lockdown rules created social restrictions which required educators to quickly adapt to working from home and to the "new normal" of teaching. Educators found themselves having to teach in a complete online environment, which came with a lot of pressure as they adjusted to new normal of teaching and learning. However, in a complete online teaching environment, there is lack of social and logistical support whereby educators are able to interact with their peers on a regular basis as in their physical teaching and learning environment. This transition necessitates a need to review and reimagine pedagogical strategies to effect meaningful curriculum change during this intense period, more specifically in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It made it necessary for educators to reflect on their current teaching or pedagogy practices and to become innovative in new academic environment. New methods of combining practices, tools, ideas, and technology allows curriculum to meet new needs. Pedagogy refers to repeated patterns or sets of teaching and learning practices that shape the interaction between teachers and learners (OECD, 2018). In HEIs, new tools and strategies offer a wider range of personalized learning opportunities, for example, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and open educational resources (OER, 2015). Grimus (2020) indicate that self-directed learning as well as curriculum managers are greatly assisted through these new tools. Innovative pedagogies are supporting individual learning strategies for knowledge development and self-directed learning.

Pedagogical strategies or approaches have therefore been developed and refined to promote a variety of different kinds of learning, for example, learning of explicit content, learning of particular ways of doing things or the learning of values and habits. These approaches allow the pursuit of multiple purposes simultaneously, provide reliable ways of organizing learning and offer ways of bundling practices. However, Jensen et al. (2015) argued that teachers make choices about their pedagogy not based on their own preference but according to a local or national curriculum structure. As noted by UNESCO (2015) many curricula now include core competencies, transversal skills or general capabilities which point towards certain kinds of pedagogy and provide alternative starting points for learning design. Bristow

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