HUMANIZING HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Edited by Enakshi Sengupta,
Patrick Blessinger and Mandla Makhanya

INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

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AND LEARNING VOLUME 35

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SERIES EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this series is to publish current research and scholarship on innovative teaching and learning practices in higher education. The series is developed around the premise that teaching and learning are more effective when instructors and students are actively and meaningfully engaged in the teaching–learning process.

The main objectives of this series are to:

(1) present how innovative teaching and learning practices are being used in higher education institutions around the world across a wide variety of disciplines and countries;
(2) present the latest models, theories, concepts, paradigms, and frameworks that educators should consider when adopting, implementing, assessing, and evaluating innovative teaching and learning practices; and
(3) consider the implications of theory and practice on policy, strategy, and leadership.

This series will appeal to anyone in higher education who is involved in the teaching and learning process from any discipline, institutional type, or nationality. The volumes in this series will focus on a variety of authentic case studies and other empirical research that illustrate how educators from around the world are using innovative approaches to create more effective and meaningful learning environments.

Innovation teaching and learning is any approach, strategy, method, practice, or means that has been shown to improve, enhance, or transform the teaching–learning environment. Innovation involves doing things differently or in a novel way in order to improve outcomes. In short, innovation is a positive change. With respect to teaching and learning, innovation is the implementation of new or improved educational practices that result in improved educational and learning outcomes. This innovation can be any positive change related to teaching, curriculum, assessment, technology, or other tools, programs, policies, or processes that lead to improved educational and learning outcomes. Innovation can occur in institutional development, program development, professional development, or learning development.

The volumes in this series will not only highlight the benefits and theoretical frameworks of such innovations through authentic case studies and other empirical research but also look at the challenges and contexts associated with implementing and assessing innovative teaching and learning practices. The volumes represent all disciplines from a wide range of national, cultural, and organizational contexts. The volumes in this series will explore a wide variety of teaching

and learning topics such as active learning, integrative learning, transformative learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, meaningful learning, blended learning, creative learning, experiential learning, lifelong and lifewide learning, global learning, learning assessment and analytics, student research, faculty and student learning communities, as well as other topics.

This series brings together distinguished scholars and educational practitioners from around the world to disseminate the latest knowledge on innovative teaching and learning scholarship and practices. The authors offer a range of disciplinary perspectives from different cultural contexts. This series provides a unique and valuable resource for instructors, administrators, and anyone interested in improving and transforming teaching and learning.

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PART I

PEDAGOGICAL IMPACT ON LEARNERS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HUMANIZING HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH INNOVATIVE APPROACHES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Enakshi Sengupta, Patrick Blessinger and Mandla S. Makhanya

ABSTRACT

With the turn of the century, the Earth's natural resources continue to be stretched as nonrenewable resources continue to dwindle and as the population continues to grow. Academia is no exception with human and teaching resources remaining a constraint for all universities including financial resources. Higher education (HE) leadership struggles to contain costs by reducing unnecessary expenditures while trying to ensure that quality remains a top priority. Innovative pedagogy is one way that institutions can help bridge both scarcity and quality and address the growing demand for quality education. New technologies, designing of new curriculum which is relevant and can address the realities of economic demands, have become a high priority in HE. Educators, policymakers and stakeholders have to embrace this transformational change for the progress of their institution. This book addresses such innovative changes that are being initiated by academics around the world. The focus of this book remains on innovative pedagogy, success stories of such interventions, impact on students while reinventing the learner-centered approach and its implication on the future. The authors of this book address the successes and the challenges they have faced.

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Keywords: Innovation; pedagogy; resource constraints; quality; teaching–learning methods; relevance; reinventing; market demands; curriculum; action-based models; learning environment

INTRODUCTION

Nabwire (2016) distinguished between the two concepts of educational innovation and innovation in education. He argued that innovation in education is a much broader concept than educational innovation. Innovation in education is all encompassing and includes technology, infrastructure development, economic, social, legal, administrative and scientific innovation. Whereas educational innovation is contained within the boundaries of teaching methods and is an effort to be different from the established educational practices with an aim to increase the efficiency of the students and make them ready in a competitive environment. It is a pedagogical innovation that deals with methodology and delivery of curriculum and content. A highly competitive market of education demands innovation in education. The modern labor market requires graduates who have the ability to meet the needs of the information society, equipped with modern technologies and knowledge that will help them establish themselves in the new roles of society.

The word pedagogy has been interpreted in various ways and generally involves the study of being a teacher and delivering educational content with a view to enhance the knowledge of the students. It is a process that is evolving and explores various avenues by which society transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills and values from one generation to another. As Salazar (2013) points out, the major question in pedagogy is how to make student learning more effective and how to meet the needs of various learners. It is about reinventing the requirements, principles and practices to make the learner more responsive and to humanize the pedagogy. Innovative pedagogy has been bestowed with the responsibility to create knowledgeable citizens, creative thinkers, problem-solvers and caring humans (Bozalek et al., 2013). The product exists, as does education; it is the only way in which we can develop it further and apply in a context that helps in creating value for others (Kirkland & Sutch, 2009).

The pedagogy of teaching and learning has undergone changes due to the increased use of information technology as a method that can increase students learning (CfBT, 2012). Universities are creating a strategic plan to enlist a recognized process that will valorize teaching and motivate both students and faculty members to engage in meaningful research that will result in a new body of knowledge. The education sector in the twenty-first century has gained its prominence in developing education through innovative approaches. Universities have started to realize and recognize that the student profile will be heterogenous in nature, the quality of teaching method needs to be improved, and scarce resources have to be utilized to maximize benefits for students and to adapt to various cycles of innovation (CfBT, 2012). Like-minded educators are working in a collaborative way to give opportunities to each other to expand knowledge and create a level of understanding and motivation towards a learner-centered instruction (Nabwire, 2014).

The world has seen its own tribulations and the coming years will throw the education system in to further challenging roles with economic issues, demand for the effective educational system, mitigating constraints and creating flexible yet professional practices.

Kondur and Mykhailyshyn (2018) distinguished some of the main factors that are responsible for creating innovation in the internal environment of universities:

- Educational innovation is an area that concerns with the content of the curriculum, new teaching technologies and expects professional staff members that can render methodological support to the educational process.
- Administrative innovation deals with university structure and the management systems, provisions and service quality of education.
- Ideological innovation is about university participating in events, debates and discussions that may or may not involve governmental institutions.
- Innovation through training of educational staff and creating a synergy between the existing market and the universities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The reinvention of higher education (HE) is a challenging job and involves various dimensions, and the changing world environment is making things more difficult than before and the field of education is no exception. Students must deal with financial constraints and the prospect of unemployment makes them want relevant career-oriented curricula. Universities are facing competition both nationally and internationally, and internationalization of education doesn't seem to provide relief to the stressed resources of a university. Decreased enrollment, decreasing retention rates and keeping students satisfied are impacting the education system. Technology, work and resource-based learning, community welfare through service-learning and high impact practices are some of the ways that a university wishes to differentiate itself.

Weblog, edu-games, virtual worlds, and video communication among others are gaining ground in the field of education and becoming a part of the pedagogy (Mwaka, Nabwire, & Musamas, 2014). Collaborative learning where the learner is offered various opportunities like digital archives, virtual classrooms, social software, social networking, and portfolios (Nabwire, 2014) is gaining popularity among students. Humanizing pedagogy (Vanbuel, 1998) is more capable of addressing the needs of the students.

Academics like Dewey (1897) and Piaget (1985) have suggested the constructivist model based on best practices at the classroom level. They advocated holistic education, development modes of growth and learning, enhancing human potential, and an inquiry-based learning approach. The approach is learner-centric and requires the active involvement of the learner. Several innovative approaches are adopted by both faculty and students, which is based on communication, reasoning and problem-solving. It also advocates differentiated instruction where adequate attention is given to the individual differences in students (Isikoglu, Basturk, & Karaca, 2009). Faculty are expected to coach mentor and facilitate the prompting of students to learn and to assess them to ensure they are learning.

HE is placing more pressure on the leaders of the institution – innovative approaches being one of their main demands with accountability and responsibility to stakeholders. Leaders are responsible for defining the outcomes of the learners, and quality assurance agencies (accreditation organizations) are making more demand of the institutions (Swanger, 2016). Borysenko (2014) also voices that increased scrutiny is becoming a major challenge for universities. Students are complaining that college degrees are failing to provide an adequate return on their investment with no immediate job opportunities within a competitive employment market which may not be satisfied with the degrees they have worked hard to achieve. Additionally, family members are expecting an immediate financial return on the money they have spent on their children's education, subjecting students to pressure and a sense of frustration.

Students have a variety of choices from the option of private institutions, small colleges, public universities and community colleges. Universities are no longer hard to access places, and on the contrary, universities are planning strategies in securing high enrollment rates. HE operates within a highly competitive marketplace and is now using a diversified line of business to attract more revenue and resources for themselves. HE institutions have to adapt and adjust to these new challenges.

CONCLUSION

Academics have stated in the past that innovative development in HE is an objective that needs to be achieved (Kondur & Mykhailyshyn, 2018). Khmelevska, Kuzmina, and Muzychenko (2012) explained that:

> innovation may be examined as a combination of industrial and intellectual resources, which contributes to the creation of new products and services, uses advanced production methods, source materials and technologies. (p. 103)

Managing innovative approaches in HE requires economic commitment, psychological support and the help of information technology. Its greatest aim is to create a know-how inspired environment that creates an opportunity for the entire society and not just the students. It is a multi-disciplinary approach that lays emphasis on regional innovations and an increased amount of work in entrepreneurship with active involvement in research and development (Kantola & Kettunen, 2012). Teamwork and active learning methods produce study-specific innovative competencies that will ensure direct social benefits and social well-being (Lehto, Kairisto-Mertanen, & Penttilä, 2011).

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

The Interesting as a Pedagogical Concept – An Essay, by Andreas Seland, is a philosophical exploration of the concept of the interesting. It draws a line from philosophical aesthetics to the philosophy of pedagogy, and argues that an awareness of the nature of the interesting – an awareness of what makes something

interesting, aesthetically – can help improve the pedagogical impact of academic lectures. Specifically, the essay argues that something that strikes us as interesting is also something that engages us. Hence, that making lectures interesting will lead to student engagement and to an enhanced learning experience. With regard to rhetorical composition, the essay enacts the aesthetical principles that it discusses. Thus, it does not abide by the standard rhetorical academic conventions. (It attempts to be interesting, after all.)

Understanding Processes and Strategies for Integrating Sustainable Development in Curriculum, by Divya Sharma, is about curriculum designers who have a colossal role to perform. They not only behold responsibility of viewing futuristic needs of society but also of the planet as a whole. They have not only taken into consideration intangible needs of society but also cognitive, affective and psychomotor needs of individual learners. Curriculum as a whole tends to stress more on the cognitive development of the child more while the, "affective learning …is included infrequently in curriculum." Sowell (2005, p.74) states that at times affective and psychomotor domains are overlooked during curriculum transaction. Emotional development is important for the development of humane society. Combs (1982) notes that when we ignore emotional components of any subject we teach, we actually deprive students of meaningfulness. There is a need to give importance to the development of values among the students. As microcosms of society school curriculum can play an important role in developing a humane society. This purpose can be realized to some extent by modifying the school curriculum in such a manner that values and skills that are expected for imbibing humane culture are integrated along with the content of the regular school curriculum. The process of designing school curriculum so as to integrate the sustainable development goals may include defining learning outcomes, identifying plug points for integration, ascertaining strategies for integration at cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain, devising curriculum transaction plan, implementing integrated curriculum, evaluating, reviewing and monitoring learning outcomes and implementing process. It is possible to develop a climate of encouraging and safeguarding cultural heritage by developing resources to educate people. Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge can be safeguarded by supporting practitioners and transmission of skills and knowledge. Plugins can be provided in secondary education at various levels of languages, mathematics and sciences to integrate the curriculum. This text provides comprehensive process and strategies to equip curriculum designers and educators as they guide a whole generation to a bright, safe and a beautiful future.

Supporting At-risk Students in a Small Private University, authored by Ellina Chernobilsky, Barbara Chesler, Henrietta Genfi, Susan Hayes and Jhoanna Oliva-Marquez, is about a study to understand factors that hinder success of at-risk students and whether blending advising models helps students who are on academic warning or probation. In this chapter, the researchers reflect on the development and implementation of an academic recovery program (ARP) that involved 332 at-risk students during a three-year period, beginning in the Fall of 2016. When conceptualized, the ARP centered on the issue of development of students on all levels – as individuals, as scholars and as creators and consumers of knowledge.