

HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES

INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

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LEARNING VOLUME 52

HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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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 is 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 illustrates 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 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 leads 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.

Patrick Blessinger
Founder, Executive Director, and Chief Research Scientist,
International HETL Association

Enakshi Sengupta
Independent Researcher & Scholar

PART I

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACHES –
HIGHER EDUCATION IN
EMERGENCIES

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES: INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Enakshi Sengupta

ABSTRACT

It is estimated that nearly 2 billion world population is now living in countries affected by extreme forms of violence, war, and criminal activities (World Bank, 2016). Apart from being affected by war and having higher poverty rates, millions are affected by climate-related disasters, pandemics which have destroyed livelihoods and lives. In 2011 and 2012 alone, more than 450 million individuals faced environmental crises (Blankespoor et al., 2010; Laframboise & Loko, 2012). Human rights advocates that every individual has the right to live with dignity and respect. International agencies are trying their best to ensure that everyone, and mainly the vulnerable communities, gets assistance in a manner that is consistent with human rights and includes the right to participation and non-discrimination. One such right is the right to education, a right which has been articulated in numerous conventions and documents and has been a part of policy maker's debate. In emergency situations, whether man-made or a natural disaster, students face an acute crisis of accessing higher education, even when the country is limping back to normalcy. The book Higher Education in Emergencies: International Case Studies discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning practice in higher education in different countries and highlights the cultural transformation of policy and practice. In addition, the authors propose future directions on how to be prepared and address the challenges of emergencies and draw implications of their findings beyond the national context.

Keywords: Higher education; emergency; human rights; pandemics; transformation; policy; crisis; accessibility

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INTRODUCTION

Today's world in which we are living is fraught with perils and pandemics. While one part of the world is torn and devastated by war, uncertainty prevailed in the world due to the increasing number of deaths by COVID-19. Education will always remain a life-saving and life-sustaining effort, mainly for those who are vulnerable against exploitation and harm. Education alone has the potential to reconstruct life by disseminating key survival messages. It offers structure, stability, and hope for the future supporting conflict resolution and peace-building efforts. COVID-19 had led to a rise in creating awareness and managing formal and non-formal education in a non-disruptive manner. Universities are working with non-governmental agencies and those who are creating online platforms to ensure that millions of students continue to benefit from a continuous streaming of online classrooms.

Higher education in emergencies calls for a recognition that individuals do not forfeit their right to education, even in emergency situations and that it must remain as a priority in the agenda of humanitarian debate. While providing access to education in emergency, it definitely doesn't allow compromise as far as quality and accountability of delivery of education. An integrative and rigorous review of interventions and theories will help mitigate such situations soon. Higher education in emergency has various roles to play apart from just imparting formal education. It includes the psycho-social needs of children affected by trauma and displacement, protect the vulnerable, and develop study skills needed for peace-building effort, environmental education and education for world peace and citizenship behavior. Faculty members must be trained to ensure that they have the capability to deal with such situations. A rapid response team, with capacity building of both teaching and administrative staff and creating leadership capabilities among youth remains the main focus of higher education in emergencies. Education in such situations are meant to be durable with a focus toward resilience and providing ability to think critically and propose a solution to myriad of problems faced by people who are fraught with acute forms of emergencies in their daily lives. The challenge lies in incorporating immediate skills to respond to crisis along with survival and peace building messages in regular curriculum. Programmes need to be contextual in supporting the under-represented and those who are most affected by emergency situations. Higher educational institutions need to strengthen their commitment toward preparedness to combat such scenarios and would include resource allocation, staffing, and adequate training. Interagency cooperation can help institutions to reduce the risk and cover topics related to scholarship for crisis affected youth and community-based healing activities.

Quality control and value creation remains the topmost priority of those that are working in emergency affected areas and to design a curriculum that would serve as a tool of protection from exploitation and prevention of harm. This would include natural disasters and man-made emergencies caused by conflict and civil unrest. There are no "one size fit all" prescriptive standards and involves continuous development and evolution of new features as we keep battling with situations that were hitherto unheard.

During emergencies, state bureaucracy is often weak and disrupted and at times absent and is incapable of providing the basic infrastructure needed by its citizens and education remains the most neglected field. In such cases nonstate actors such as United Nations (UN) agencies and other international organizations often step in to support educational interventions. The move forward to provide supplemental educational activities aimed at protecting students from further harm and to promote the cognitive, emotional, and psychosocial development of the learners (Sinclair, 2001).

Such interventions are usually termed as “education in emergencies” programs and this field has thrived with interest in emergencies stemming from millions of children affected by man-made crisis or natural disasters, and where accessibility to education is negligible (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization, 2011). However, the debate continues whether response should be more inclined toward providing humanitarian aid and increase facilities for providing protection and basic needs or further goals laid down to achieve education for all, in such unstable environments.

Aid workers and international organizations have been motivated by the outcome of such interventions as mostly the programs have been implemented on a short-term basis. In recent years, they have started using randomized controlled trials (RCTs) which has been helping them in assessing and evaluating such programs and thus earmarking a portion of their spend to implement tools to evaluate their aid spending and mobilize researchers in countries affected by crisis. The surge of using RCTs which is popularly known as impact evaluation, carried out in low- and middle-income countries affected by crisis have increased the demand among funders to implement rigorous research to find out what works best for them and the achievements and outcomes of implementing such programs.

Linking humanitarian action to education helps ensure that support to education is not neglected as a form of relief aid. The approach toward education in emergency is created with an interest in improving the lives of beneficiaries, beyond catering to their basic needs and expanding it further than traditional activities. International human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 followed by several action-based meetings held by UN agencies expanded and strengthened the institutionalized recognition and protection of children’s rights, including the right to education. Educators and other practitioners in this field recognized and noted the gap in services provided to populations who are affected by crisis daily and thus advocated for increased support to education (Anderson et al., 2006; Cahill, 2010; Karpinska, 2012).

Educators working in crisis thus adopted several strategies to include education in the humanitarian response paradigm. First, in 2000, a group of educators, linked mainly to organizations such as the UN agencies and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), formed the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) to support education in countries affected by conflict and disaster. They defined education in emergencies as a category separate from development activities in order to incorporate education into traditional humanitarian assistance (Burde et al., 2011).

Major bilateral donor agencies and other international organizations have now earmarked funds for education in emergencies programs and diligently hire staff whose expertise includes tracking and monitoring these programs. However, not enough is being done in this sector and it is important to point out that funding for education in crises continues to lag behind other sectors ([Save the Children, 2013](#); [Winthrop et al., 2010](#)).

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

Rectifying the Deterioration of EFL Tertiary Students' Speaking Skills in Emergency Times by Farah Sabbah is about a study that uses a mixed methods approach to investigate the pedagogical approaches and teaching practices that the English Department at Phoenicia University implemented to rectify the deteriorating speaking skills of their students during the first few months of the lockdown in Lebanon between March and June 2020. The data consisted of semi-structured interviews with English instructors, the speaking assessment scores, and the English peer support program (PSP) enrollment records. Qualitative analysis of the interviews identified the main challenges that the English instructors faced during their transition from face-to-face (FTF) to distance education. The analysis also identified the intervention strategies that were implemented to overcome these barriers to learning and adapt to and even benefit from computer-mediated communication (CMC) instruction and other technological resources to develop and improve the oral proficiency and fluency of tertiary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. The quantitative analysis referred to the average percentage variation of the pre-test and post-test scores of the speaking assessment to track the improvement (or lack thereof) of the students' speaking skills across four semesters, prior to and after the intervention. A one-way ANOVA test was also conducted for the enrollment records of the English PSP and speaking assessment scores that showed that the program was an effective form of intervention that helped struggling students to at least prevent the further deterioration of their speaking capabilities in English. These findings show that for students to develop and enhance their speaking skills in English in a distance education context and during emergency times, efforts need to be made to reduce the hindering psychological factors and address all technology-related barriers that disrupt the online language learning environment and process.

Education in Emergencies and the Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Bangladesh: Cultural Transformation for Policy and Practice authored by M. Mahruf C. Shohel, Md. Ashrafuzzaman, Arif Mahmud, Farhan Azim, and Md. Shahadat Hossain Khan is about how the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically transformed higher education policy and practices across the globe, including Bangladesh. Higher education institutions were forced to deliver teaching and learning online. This chapter discusses the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning practice in higher education in Bangladesh and highlights the cultural transformation of policy and practice. In addition, it proposes future directions on how to be prepared and address the challenges of emergencies and

draws implications of the findings beyond the national context. In the beginning of the pandemic, most universities in Bangladesh had to initially shut down their operations without offering any alternatives. However, a number of universities gradually rolled out some online teaching and learning activities as the lockdowns kept extending. A large portion of the higher education institutions struggled to continue their online teaching and learning due to the lack of resources, i.e., devices, technological skills and training, lack of policy, negative mindset, poor network infrastructure, and high cost of internet. This unprecedented situation ushered in by the pandemic showed the lack of preparedness and below-par capacity to respond to emergencies for the continuation of higher education in Bangladesh. Furthermore, it highlighted that improving the higher education sector requires tremendous effort from the government, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, the universities, and other industries directly or indirectly related to the sector.

Differences in the Digital Divide, Educational Level and Gender in Turkey During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Comparison of Turkish Tertiary-Level Sophomore and Junior Students' Views on Online Learning by Serpil Meri-Yilan writes about the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic forced many educational institutions to move FTF education to entirely online education. This digital transformation has, in turn, reinforced the digital divide between learners who have easy access to digital devices and the Internet and other learners who do not have those. In addition to the digital divide, the differences in their genders and educational levels potentially impact leveling up learning. Therefore, the study in the present chapter has aimed to examine university-level sophomore and junior students' differences in learning online during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of gender, educational level, and the digital divide. Data from a survey indicate that both females and males, and sophomores and juniors had different attitudes toward using digital devices, attending virtual classes and accessing online courses through the mobile phone or the home Internet. Based on the findings on their differences, the chapter makes some implications and recommendations for policymakers, course designers, and teachers in the course design, especially in the emergence.

Crossword Puzzle Games, Short Stories, and Mind Maps Assignments as Innovative Online Teaching Methods: Three Promising Applied Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic written by Shimaa Mohammad Yousof explains that pandemic caused abrupt and unanticipated disruptions in many facets of society. A lot of authorities have quickly turned to online teaching methods. The best methods for online teaching have become a hot topic of discussion due to this urgent fast transmission. It was difficult to teach physiology to medical and paramedical students online because of concerns about how to give the students an effective interactive online teaching practice and how to guarantee successful outcomes. Therefore, three approaches have been individually applied to medical and nursing students for the first time in the physiology department of the Faculty of Medicine in Rabigh, King Abdulaziz University. Through online lectures and assignments, the strategies attempted to capture the students' interest and interaction. The second-year nursing students were given a mind map project

to complete after the lecture. The third-year medical students used a crossword puzzle game to test the students' understanding. The third-year medical students were presented with short stories to better comprehend the physiological processes covered in the lectures. Overall, the three instructional strategies received positive feedback from the students. Incorporating such cutting-edge and imaginative educational approaches, in conclusion, could significantly aid in managing the pressures that arise during pandemics.

Students' Perceptions, Attitudes, and Experiences of Higher Education in Emergencies Across Developing Countries Amid COVID-19 authored by Ahmad Samarji, Enakshi Sengupta, Sarwat Nauman, and Farah Sabbah writes about the COVID-19 crisis which had forced the majority of higher education institutions worldwide to transition to distance education. All countries have faced several challenges, such as the deteriorating economy, poor ICT infrastructure, and insufficient training, in their transition to distance education, with the severity of these challenges being remarkable for developing countries. This chapter aims to investigate tertiary students' perceptions, attitudes, experiences, and expectations of their higher education journey amid COVID-19 across four developing countries: Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh through an online questionnaire that was administered in each of these countries. This study found that many of the stances, attitudes, concerns, and challenges related to online learning experiences and the emergency status of higher education were common amongst the Lebanese, Afghani, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi participants. The participants across the four countries favored the physical classroom over online learning and identified the disadvantages of distance education that included lack of ICT skills, poor infrastructure, and insufficient training. The few differences that were identified across participants from these countries were mainly attributed to differences in contexts, including socio-economic and political contexts. These findings voice the concerns of one of the key stakeholders, tertiary students, that address the transition to distance education during emergency times and call for immediate intervention from decision and policymakers.

Lebanese Instructors' Satisfaction with Online Teaching and Learning Amid COVID-19 by Ahmad Samarji and Reem Ghaddar explores that since the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic in March 2020, higher education institutions (HEIs) across the globe have shifted – entirely or partly – to online teaching and learning; Lebanese HEIs were no exception. Such an unprecedented and “forced” transition to online teaching and learning has created a landscape for scholars and researchers to inquire into the efficiency and effectiveness of online teaching and learning, students' satisfaction with this virtual educational experience, and instructors' satisfaction with such an experience. This chapter presents a study about Lebanese instructors' satisfaction with online teaching and learning during the pandemic. Instructors' satisfaction was measured in terms of three satisfaction constructs of psychometrically validated “Online Instructor Satisfaction Measure” (OISM): instructor-to-student interaction (ISI); student-to-student interaction (SSI); and course design, development, and teaching (CDT). Data were collected through an online questionnaire from 102 Lebanese instructors across 7 Lebanese universities: 6 private universities and the national public