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International Conference 2022

**INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
GLOBAL TRENDS AND PRACTICES IN THE POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

SEAMEO RETRAC, July 07-08, 2022

Tweaking Pedagogical Strategies in a Virtual Learning Environment

Mr. Cyr Jae E. Lomeda

Introduction

The outbreak of the global health crisis halted education activities for some time. Schools worldwide were forced to close to prevent the transmission of the COVID-19 infection. Despite the health crisis however, the children's right to education remains imperative, thus binding education policy makers to find alternative ways in place of face-to-face instruction. The advancing technology with the increasing bandwidth of internet access was turned to as the immediate consideration for an alternative to in-person classroom teaching and learning. How teachers use their pedagogical tools in the context of the online platform for effective instructional delivery determines the progress of student learning. Tweaking pedagogical strategies in a VLE may appear to be a challenge more particularly when subjects taught require field demonstration like Physical Education course or on-site internship like practice teaching or hospital training. At the same time, it may be of equal concern for schools to make do with limited resources and technological infrastructure as these pose restrictions to the optimization of the tools embedded in the computer system to deliver instruction.

Objective

The purpose of this study was to explore the ways by which the faculty participants of a Bible college in Valenzuela City fine-tuned their teaching strategies in a VLE. The central question, “How do the faculty participants describe tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a VLE?” was addressed.

Methodology

- The study employed a qualitative research design. Specifically, the study used the phenomenological approach to describe the faculty members' experience of tweaking pedagogical strategies in a VLE.
- Faculty members of a Bible college in Valenzuela City who experienced teaching transition from on ground, in-person classroom setting to an online teaching platform were invited to participate in in-depth interviews from late February to May 2021.
- Using Colaizzi's seven steps of phenomenological analysis, the field texts were read and re-read. Significant statements reflective of the participants' lived experience were identified, extracted, and categorized. The themes that emerged during the data analysis were then developed. The findings were presented back to the participants in the process of member checking.

Findings & Discussion

The themes that emerged during the data analysis were identified using the acronym T.W.E.A.K.

- (1) **T**echnology-supported Design of Lesson Plans,
- (2) **W**ellness-sensitive and flexible class expectations,
- (3) **E**fficient selection of activities and assessment tasks,
- (4) **A**ttention-keeping strategies in student participation, and
- (5) **K**nowledge acquisition through creative visuals and demonstrations.

Findings & Discussion

1. Technology-supported Design of Lesson Plans

The participants have found the following as effective in tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a virtual learning environment:

- a. Course plans are reflected in the organization of the virtual classroom including the scheduling of the posting of materials and activities for the whole course period.
- b. The non-synchronous nature of an organized classroom enhances the students' ability to track course flow despite unexpected circumstances.
- c. Students are linked to well-chosen online resources.
- d. Activity instructions and expectations are made clear (including the provision of examples) so students can follow carefully throughout the course despite constraints in online education.

Findings & Discussion

2. Wellness-sensitive & Flexible Class Expectations

The participants have found the following as effective in tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a virtual learning environment:

- a. The learning of students, rather than a scrupulous observance of the course plan, is prioritized in the pacing of lessons.
- b. Relationship-building activities such as online icebreakers create a safe space for students and allow them to be engaged.
- c. Students who have become inactive are given individualized instruction and review of lessons through follow-up efforts.

Findings & Discussion

3. Efficient Selection of Activities & Assessment Tasks

The participants have found the following as effective in tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a virtual learning environment:

- a. Syllabus and handouts are revised and filtered according to the most essential objectives and content.
- b. Outcomes that indicate understanding, integration, and application are more emphasized than those that test knowledge acquisition.

Findings & Discussion

4. Attention-keeping Strategies in Student Participation

The participants have found the following as effective in tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a virtual learning environment:

- a. Efforts are taken by teachers to make their critical presence felt by everyone such as the preparation of interaction questions and a more frequent roll call of students.
- b. Live student reports with subsequent feedback enhance engagement and serve as tools for teachers to assess learning.
- c. A variety of means for students to respond (e.g. chatbox) are utilized.

Findings & Discussion

5. Knowledge Acquisition through Creative Visuals & Demonstrations

The participants have found the following as effective in tweaking their pedagogical strategies in a virtual learning environment:

- a. Utilization of PowerPoint presentations allow students to be visually fixed on the lectures.
- b. There are more devices that visually capture demonstrations done by teachers, especially in skills-based training.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- Having received training to navigate the digital online teaching-learning platform provided by the higher learning institution, the teacher-participants, the study revealed, utilized the tools that are made available in the technology-mediated classroom. This implies the participants' modification of their education materials to meet the prescriptions of the virtual learning environment.
 - A sustained educational technology training may be prioritized in the faculty development program.
 - The use of technology as a pedagogical tool may be the emphasis of all efforts for curriculum enhancement.
 - Library holdings may include electronic instructional and learning materials that are integrated in the virtual learning environment.

Conclusions & Recommendations

- The study also reported a new definition of classroom management with the teacher participants' effort to make their critical presence felt in a classroom environment that digitally separates them from the students.
 - It is crucial to formulate new policies that define acceptable and unacceptable student behavior. Digital classroom rules may also be specified for student reference. This may also be incorporated in the student handbook.
- The participants' consideration of the students' psychological well-being was also revealed in the study with the participants relaxing their class expectations by extending deadlines of assignments and lending time to meet the students at the level of needs that particularly affect their learning progress.
 - Training teachers the basics of counseling may be put in place to further equip teachers in serving the needs of the students that bear on their academic performance.
 - The Student Affairs Office that takes charge of student development in coordination with the Guidance Office may consider designing a program of activities that promotes the psychological well-being of the students.

Conclusions & Recommendations

The study delved into the description of the experiences of the teacher-participants tweaking their pedagogical strategies to meet the requirements of a virtual learning environment. Future researchers may look into other variables in undertaking similar investigation. Moreover, future researchers may consider assessing student learning engagement and his progress in a virtual learning environment.



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