Bangladesh Panel Discussion - 2021-03-16

Session- International Panel Discussion-2: Reimagining the Post-Covid Education: Our Challenges and Opportunities

Time: Mar 16, 2021 08:00 PM (GMT + 6) Bangladesh Time

* The session is a panel discussion only followed by question-answering, so NO presentation is required.

Session Objectives:
- Transforming physical to phygital (physical + digital) education at the post-Covid era
- Identify challenges of education in the days ahead
- Identify opportunities relating to digital education during and after pandemic
- Formulate online education policy for transnational competition and branding Education Bangladesh

Panelists:

Sir John Daniel - Canada
Rory McGreal - Canada
Mark Brown - Ireland
Badrul Huda Khan - USA

Remarks from Sir John Daniel

Identify challenges of education in the days ahead

There are three areas of challenge:

First, the gradual lifting of the restrictions imposed for the COVID-19 pandemic;

Second, the evolution of student attitudes after their experience with emergency remote teaching;

Third, developments in teaching and student support in HEIs during the pandemic.

1. Lifting of restrictions. Restrictions on in-person teaching have varied across the world, but in many countries higher education institutions (HEIs) had to move their operations off campus and conduct emergency online teaching for months in 2020 and 2021. As immunisation programmes roll out across the world, public health restrictions are now being eased. In British Columbia, Canada, for example, universities have now been told that they should prepare to conduct in-person instruction in September. The provincial ministry has said it will issue guidelines over the next few months on how to resume campus life safely.

2. Student attitudes. It is difficult to get a common view on how student attitudes to online teaching and learning have evolved during their experience of emergency online teaching. Their attitudes reflect the quality and effectiveness of the online experiences offered by their own HEIs, but when you look at large scale surveys of students' views across many HEIs the results

seem mostly to depend on the organisation that is asking the questions and what axes it may have to grind.

I note the results of three recent surveys. One, by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) in the UK, reports that 68% of students are happy with their online experience (University World News, 2021). Two others, by student and faculty associations in Ontario respectively, find the opposite: 62% of students had negative views of online quality, a figure that rose to 76% among faculty. In a recent blog my fellow Vancouverite Professor Tony Bates (2021) reviewed these two surveys and concluded that their methodological weaknesses reflected the underlying hostility of these associations to online learning.

As a result we have opposing views on how HEIs should teach and support students as we emerge from the pandemic. Usher (2021) writes: 'I believe very strongly that Canadian HEIs will likely look ridiculous if they do anything other than a near-complete return to in-person teaching for the fall'. On the other hand, Bates and most writers from the educational technology world - like my fellow panelists today- believe that much online teaching will continue.

3. Developments during the pandemic. I have direct contact with this challenge as chancellor of the Acsenda School of Management, a small, Australian-owned, for-profit higher education institution in Vancouver. This is largely a ceremonial role, but I take part in many Acsenda meetings and have written about its rather successful experience with emergency remote teaching (Daniel, 2021; Mort & Daniel, 2021).

From these observations I noted that:

- Both students and faculty became more appreciative of online operations as the pandemic progressed, with the result that student performance and assiduity steadily increased.

- As well as organising training and development session for faculty and staff Acsenda paid close attention to intensifying student support off campus.

- In the early days, emergency remote teaching took the form synchronous video lectures, mostly on Zoom. But, as the year progressed, both faculty and students came to appreciate the value of asynchronous online activities. A webinar by Murgatroyd (2021), who created the world's first wholly online MBA in the mid-1990s, was particularly helpful.

The Way Forward

The pandemic has exposed students and faculty to new ways of teaching and learning. HEIs should now treat students as co-designers of their learning experience and follow the choices that they make over time as their study options evolve. Faculty need to become proficient at providing asynchronous learning options and ensuring that students can get the academic, administrative and social support they need for a rounded experience of higher learning.

References

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Usher, Alex (2021) https://higheredstrategy.com/fall-2021/