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Teachers Learning During Covid-19 Pandemic: Higher Education Perspective from Ghana, India and Serbia

Abstract: The topic of this study is inspired by the conversation and sharing of personal experiences about living, working, and teaching during the pandemic by researchers from Ghana, India, and Serbia. This paper aims to identify higher education teachers' learning experiences that helped them to adjust a new situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We collected stories from nine teachers employed in higher education in Ghana, India, and Serbia. Inductive thematic analysis was employed to identify themes within the stories collected. The common topics were identified in each country and compared with that of others. Silence to active classroom transformation is a common topic among teachers in each country. Other similarities were identified as fear that put more pressure on teachers and students. Differences among the teachers' learning and teaching experiences in researched countries were more of inequality issues related to access to necessary resources for online learning. Conclusively, teaching in online education during the crisis requires constant and multi-directional learning processes and understanding of students' resistance and negative emotions.

Key words: disjuncture, COVID-19, teachers, higher education, learning.

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Introduction

Teaching and learning in crisis situations play an important role in adjusting to societal life. Education thus provides knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed for solving problems and future planning. Educational system therefore ought to nurture the values important to the community. We pointed out only a few reasons for maintaining teaching and learning in one of the most serious crises. But, in the history of formal education, there are a lot of interruptions. The education usually stops because of the wars and spreading the infections. The research results (Stern, Cetron, and Markel, 2009) based on lessons learned from the U.S. influenza pandemic from 1918–19 show that regarding the circulating A/H1N1 virus does not recommend school dismissal as the first line of community mitigation, with the possible exception of selective and medically vulnerable student groups (p. 1077). Anyway, it is important to bear in mind that each public health situation has specific characteristics and should be followed according to local and institutional conditions. The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic happened when our societies experienced significant technological progress, which caused, in many cases, an immediate switch to distant education. The aim of this paper is to identify teachers' learning experiences that helped them to adapt to a new situation caused by COVID-19 pandemic.

We are facing not only a global health crisis but a systemic social crisis that includes the educational sector. It seems that we are facing similar symptoms affecting higher education. There are two reasons for that. First of all, the world is interconnected more than ever. Humanity uses various and complex communication channels. Secondly, technological advancement opens up possibilities for experimenting with new ways of interactions, governance, and care. Ours is an example of three researchers from different continents, who continuously follow, discuss and exchange experiences about living, working, and teaching during the pandemic, inspiring the topic of this research. Each of us experiences the urge to learn — primarily to understand the virus. We honestly try to understand what COVID-19 is. We learned that we should step back in front of the global enemy and think of how adult education could help us. The first question was related to understanding what COVID-19 did to our colleagues and us in academia. As researchers, we used to work and communicate online, but as teachers, we faced a variety of challenges. Nobody even dreamt of a reality where higher education has no alternative except online teaching. Everything happens instantly, and everybody is expected to adapt to a new situation. From an andragogical viewpoint, this is an ideal potential for learning.

Bearing in mind different conditions in different countries, communities, and institutions, we will firstly explain the local context of Ghana, India, and Serbia, which constitute this study, in relation to higher education. The data presentation related to COVID-19 helped us to understand how crises influence our local communities and what is important to design this research. We recognized that the response to the crisis was similar in each country, which provides us a good basis for comparison.

COVID-19 Context Description per Country

Ghana

Ghana recorded the first two cases of COVID-19 on 12th March, 2020 (Ghana Health Service, 2020a). The report from the Ghana Health Service (GHS) indicates that COVID-19 was imported into the country by two individuals who returned to the country from Norway and Turkey. The number of cases increased from two to four the next day and within a week from the first case, the country confirmed increased cases at community levels with no links to foreign travels. Majority of the confirmed cases were found in the two most populated cities of Ghana; Accra and Kumasi (GHS, 2020b).

To prevent rapid spread of the disease in Ghana, instant measures were put in place to detect, contain and manage the disease. Among others, these measures included a ban on all public gatherings, closure of schools, churches, mosques and other places of worship on March 16th, 2020; ban on entry for travellers coming from countries with more than 200 confirmed COVID-19, mandatory quarantine of all travellers who arrived in the country 48 hours prior to the closure of Ghana's borders on March 22nd; a partial lockdown of Accra, Kasoa and Kumasi on March 30th, 2020 (Kenu, Frimpong, and Koram, 2020; Kokutse, 2020; KPMG, 2020). The partial lockdown of these cities was lifted on April 20th with a mandatory use of protective masks on 26th April. Within the lock-down period, a nationwide sensitization and education on the disease and preventive measures such as hand-washing with soap under running water and use of alcohol-based sanitizer together with social distancing was provided. Additionally, active case search and contact tracing strategies were initiated for early detection, isolation and treatment of all confirmed cases (Kenu, Frimpong, and Koram, 2020).

In addressing the impact of the pandemic on educational institutions, school closure was partially lifted in the middle of June, 2020 for the purpose of examination preparation and completion for all final year students right from the

basic to tertiary levels. Following this, a series of stakeholder consultations and deliberations were made to reinstate all schools nationwide while adhering strictly to all the COVID-19 protocols in January, 2021. Just like other nations, teaching and learning in Ghanaian schools rapidly transformed from the traditional face-to-face to online approaches. That of the primary to secondary levels were broadcast on television and radios while that of tertiary levels took diverse approaches, including a blended approach of face-to-face and online in recent times.

Teaching format in higher education institution (HEI) in Ghana during COVID-19

Teachers' and students' engagement in online teaching and learning in HEI is not a new phenomenon in Ghana. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have long been incorporated into the country's educational systems. Nonetheless, pressure on educational institutions to continue teaching and learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic led to a rapid shift from the traditional face-to-face to online teaching and learning using digital technologies and mobile applications (Demuyakor, 2021).

The closure of all public and private schools right from primary to tertiary levels halted all academic activities within the period of COVID-19 pandemic. In order to continue academic activities in the schools, most universities, including the University of Ghana, University of Education, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Wisconsin International University, and Ashesi University, resorted to e-learning platforms for engaging students for academic work (Agormedah, Henaku, Ayite and Ansah, 2020). Teaching and learning in Ghanaian higher education institutions are facilitated through technological applications such as video conferencing software, discussion boards, or learning management systems (Agormedah, Henaku, Ayite, and Ansah, 2020). Learning management systems like Moodle and Sakai platforms are the most commonly used teaching and learning evaluation platforms in Ghana. Face-to-face sessions are additionally organised in smaller groups for students while adhering strictly to all the COVID-19 protocols.

India

The outbreak of COVID-19 from Wuhan, China has caused fear and alert in the world and led to countries going for lockdown. India's first case was reported on January 27, 2020 (Andrews, et al., 2020) and the travel history of the patient

was from Wuhan, China. In the month of March, India went for a full lockdown (Soni, 2021), and all educational institutions were also closed.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, apart from many issues that have been levied upon the worldwide population, one of the most important and widely discussed issues is the higher education scenario and its challenges, especially in a country like India. COVID-19 brought up a number of challenges in the field of higher education for both students as well as educators. Most of the universities and colleges have decided to switch to the virtual modes of teaching and learning. In addition to that, it also led to the postponement of various examinations, evaluation processes, and the non-availability of funds in higher education. Adapting to new technological tools, implementing innovative ways of engagement of teaching through a virtual mode have been an important prospect as per the current pandemic situation, which has led to the adaptation and learning of new skills and becoming more technologically sound for students, academicians as well as educators. While this has been a challenge to continue the learning process during the tough times of pandemic situations, it has also been proved as an alternative to adapt to a more technologically advanced situation. However, in a developing nation like India, where a large part of the country comprises the rural setting, the problems of internet connectivity and the absence of technologically advanced tools are still a concern.

Serbia

In the Republic of Serbia, the first case of COVID-19 was reported on 6th March 2020⁴. The measures for preventing the virus from spreading vary from curfew to recommendations dedicated to avoiding public gatherings and wearing protective face masks. The schools and universities were closed. The teaching for elementary and high school moved to TV programmes, then to eLearning portals.

The universities from the beginning use the eLearning platform for teaching. The students left the dorms and returned in May 2020. The Institute for Students' Healthcare recorded the increment of positive cases among the student population in the period of June–December 2020⁵. It was evident that conditions at student accommodation, restaurants, and classrooms were not adequate for the prevention of virus circulation during 2020 and 2021. Faculties decided about the teaching format regarding the following condition: requirement of the teaching, physical environment, and proposed preventive measures. The majority

⁴ Source: <https://COVID19.rs/homepage-english/>

⁵ Source: <http://zzzsbg.rs/>

of the faculty decided to organize online lectures. It is only in specific cases that some practical teaching is organized by faculty in smaller groups. In some periods the blended format of teaching has been used. Finally, examinations are organized in smaller groups while applying all preventive measures.

The crisis provoked by spreading the COVID-19 virus stopped the whole world. Different countries apply different measures, but almost all of us experience lockdowns, wearing protective face masks, sanitation of hands and surfaces, physical distancing, popularly called social distancing. Higher education institutions experience more or less similar conditions in Ghana, India, and Serbia. Online learning is applied at all levels in higher education. First, it seemed to be a short-term solution. Today, after almost two years of online teaching, that approach is becoming a “new normal” in global higher education reality.

Theoretical Background

The COVID-19 pandemic moved teaching into an online environment. In some countries, it happened instantly while hybrid models were applied in other countries gradually. The teaching occurs in both ways, traditionally and online. Distance education was not a novelty for higher education. However, applying distance education to a whole academic population created an initial shock, especially among the teachers who did not have much experience with distance and digital education. This time, the change happened in the whole world and one of the reactions to that situation was learning. In this case, teachers adjust teaching to the online environment by learning. Peter Jarvis talks about disjuncture as the gap between what we know and what we experience, which provokes our initiative to understand and deal with particular situations so that we can return to a harmonious state (Jarvis, 2012).

The main challenge for learning and teaching online is understanding the secondary experiences “which occur as a result of language or other forms of mediation” (Jarvis, 2018, p. 22). “When so much of our experience in a digital age is secondary, mediated, we need to understand how this affects the way we experience new events or engage with the Other” (Dyke, 2017, p. 29). When teaching moves online, we had an experience, which occurred as a result of disjuncture. Some teachers reject it, some start to think or do something about it, and some respond to it emotionally — or any combination of these.

In this paper, we understand “learning as the activity that enables a person to deal with disharmony and involves the movement from one state of being to another” (Bjursell, 2020, p. 679). We are interested in searching the stories about

the crisis and the teachers' response to it. Mainly, we believe that the reflection on adaptation to new teaching conditions still is ongoing, but we could recognize some unique patterns. "The teacher as a reflective practitioner will then think and reflect on the experience at a number of levels including 'reflection in action' and 'reflection upon action', which lead them to adapt their teaching, and hopefully improve it (Dyke, 2017, p. 30). In this process, teachers are re-examining the essence of their practice. They need to deal with practical problems in teaching, but at the same time with their values and fundamental principles. After almost two years of working in an online environment, teaching practice has been transformed and we, as an international group of researchers, are looking for this outline of upcoming change initiated by learning processes among teachers in higher education.

If we perceive the current pandemic as disjuncture, we are confronted with a disconnection between the world as we know it and the world as it is (Bjursell, 2020 p. 685). That is a world where we are learning and teaching online because of fear and a low vaccination rate. This is one unjust world, which is interconnected, but where resources are unevenly distributed. In many countries, teaching online is a challenge because of the internet infrastructure. Furthermore, "before the crisis, classes took place at the university building and by moving teaching to a digital environment, the learning space intertwined with private space, the boundary between the activities of everyday life and teaching became weaker" (Koruga and Nikolić, 2021, p. 45).

We need to be aware that teachers should establish a deeper understanding and dialogue with persons via the screen. Finally, we should be aware that "we can learn and transform our understanding of the world in the company of others as a social process of interaction" (Dyke, 2017, p. 33). This means that we are always in the process of becoming through interaction with social events, others, and ourselves.

Methodological Framework

Comparing the stories from three very different countries, we would like to understand the common learning process among teachers initiated by the global pandemics and understand the differences caused by our local conditions.

In this research, we aim to answer the following questions: What are higher education teachers' views about the changes in teaching provoked by the COVID-19 health crisis? What were the teachers' learning process characteristics related to the teaching adaptation to work during COVID-19 pandemic? What are

the differences among the teachers' learning process in Ghana, India, and Serbia related to the teaching adaptation to working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Considering that we include higher education teachers from Ghana, India, and Serbia, the comparative qualitative approach is applied in this research. First of all, we want to identify the commonalities and differences in the teachers' stories about the global health crisis which similarly affected the educational system in the whole world. The preventive measures dedicated to social distancing are applied around the globe. We collected the stories about the teachers' practice during the COVID-19 crisis from the beginning of March 2020 up to October 2021. This research included three teachers per country engaged in higher education teaching for more than five years. The sample includes teaching assistants [TA], professor assistants/senior lectures [PA/SL], and full professors [FP], an assistant professor [AP], a senior professor [SP], from Ghana, [GH], India [IN], Serbia [RS]. We collected data asking the respondents to tell us their stories online or face to face. The stories covered the following topics: the description of the situation related to the teaching during the COVID-19 crisis, the biggest changes in teaching practice, and the process of adaptation to a new situation.

This research employed narrative approaches, which is based on the premise that, as human beings, we come to understand and give meaning to our lives through storytelling (Andrews, Squire & Tamboku, 2008). "The construction of the story reflects the current internal world of the narrator as well as aspects of the social world in which he or she lives" (Josselson, 2011, p. 227). Inductive thematic analysis was used to identify themes and patterns (Braun and Clarke 2006) from the stories collected. We first familiarize ourselves with the data by reading and listening to the audio recordings over and over as expected in qualitative analysis. The data were then transcribed and coded to generate precise labels for pertinent features of the data that addressed the research questions. All the codes and their relevant data were extracted to search for appropriate themes. Requisite themes that addressed the research questions and the extracted data were then constructed. The coded data relevant to all themes were selected and cross-checked against the coded extract and the entire data collected from the study areas. While doing this, we also checked for similarities and differences in the data patterns. Similar themes were collapsed into one. The generated themes were then defined and labelled into topics according to the research questions and presented with some extracts of data.

After the coding processes, the researchers from each country formulated coherent themes. Then we compared the themes from each country according to the formulated common themes for differences among the countries. Within the discussion, we formulate a conclusion about the holistic thematic framework.

Research Results

COVID-19 affected every institution including higher education institutions in all analysed countries. Different experiences have been accumulated by teachers. The key common topics (1. Overcoming difficulties by learning; 2. Communication and interaction turned upside down; 3. Rethinking and innovative teaching), with some variations in subtopics, were identified from narratives in Ghana, India, and Serbia. The teachers' narratives somehow represent ongoing dialogue. All three cases clearly could be identified by the description of the initial situation and its ongoing transformation.

Overcoming difficulties by learning

From the narratives, the teachers from all three countries acknowledged that online teaching was not new, rather the agency with which all faculty members had to transition from the traditional face-to-face to online teaching in the midst of the global pandemic was sudden. Some teachers had to learn how to use new tools for online teaching (video conferencing, learning management systems, tools for interactions, etc.). This is evident from the following response: "at the onset of the pandemic, it was more or less a do or die situation, you have no excuse than to learn to be able to survive in the profession" (SL3, GH).

It came as a surprise, and a quick adjustment was needed. The senior professor highlighted how teachers of old age were finding it a little difficult in the starting phase as all were in their homes. Help was taken from family and peers. After some time the learning process started and online teaching started smoothly: "it wasn't very easy for people who are a little senior in age, but the situation warranted a quick adjustment and with the help of peers and family members it became possible." (SP, IN).

The aforementioned difficulties to adjust to a new situation did not follow only by learning, but with emotions. From one side we have the threat of COVID-19, from another, teachers "themselves are also under pressure to perform, and for many fear plays a big part in their day-to-day lives" (Jackson, 2017, p. 148). Fear was always part of the educational process for both sides, teachers, and learners. In pandemic situations, this is more highlighted. In the next line we have an experience of fear related to the usage of technology: "...I needed to master technology to overcome the panic and fear that something unforeseen will happen" (FP, RS).

The learning could help to deal with negative emotions in the situation of crisis. Furthermore, the help of peers and family members plays a significant role in this learning process. And most importantly, teachers recognized that learning is the best strategy for facing sudden changes in teaching.

Previous learning experiences was helpful

The subtopic about the previous experience was identified within the topic overcoming from difficulties by learning. Teachers in each country mentioned their previous experiences with teaching in a digital environment when they were invited to explain adjustment to the swift switch to online teaching. In essence, the teachers had no option but to position themselves for new learning approaches to cope with the situation. By doing so, they encountered different challenges. Among these are difficulties in monitoring students in online sessions and accessing topic-related links and reading materials for students, family interference during virtual sessions, and internet connectivity problems. Nevertheless, these challenges were experienced differently among the teachers. Those with technological experiences are better placed than those with little or no exposure at all as seen from the following statements: “I have to sit up as a lecturer and to become very much conversant with the digital approach to facilitation before I can meet the standard my students expect me to demonstrate” (SL1, GH).

Even though HEI regularly trains faculty to use learning management systems for their routine works, teachers also took personal initiatives to explore other digital tools to complement their teaching within COVID-19 situation. “*You need to be a lifelong learner, self-directed learner to cope with the digital era we found ourselves in* (SL1, GH)”. Previous experience with online teaching helped teachers to continue exploring the possibility of technology and to be more motivated to become a lifelong learner.

Learning from and about students

In the narratives researchers identified the subtopic related to understanding the students. First of all, the digital divide as a point of disadvantage for some students was identified in this subtopic especially in India. Lack of connectivity was ranked as a major hindrance in online learning (Muthuprasad et.al, 2021). In the following statement the teacher explains that we need to be aware of inequality in the digital world: “The most disheartening part — when we encounter a lot of students are interfacing the problem to have access to gadgets or internet facilities across the country.” (AP1, IN).

One of the key issues for a country like India with 1.4 billion of population was the digital divide. Earlier when in a physical mode, students of economically weaker to stronger backgrounds came together in a common classroom and had lectures. However, in this “new normal” for the same lecture, some students are having a high-speed internet while others cannot afford it. One student is able to afford expensive gadgets while the other one cannot.

Over and above the technical precondition for learning and teaching in an online environment, teachers put focus on dialogue during the online sessions in both ways: teacher-learners-teacher. There was a consciousness among teachers that the interaction in online teaching should be different. At that point, we saw a possibility for further understanding of the learning process in a digital environment with the help of students’ experience with it. Understanding and support are keywords for this subtopic. First, teachers recognized that online education provides an opportunity for students to be in various situations during the classes. The following quotation describes this teacher’s impression: “the focus here is now on other things. Now I see someone occurring in some situations that are not common. Students attend the call from the car and some other place.” (FP, RS).

Furthermore, we mentioned the fear related to the use of technology, but from the students’ perspective, there are negative emotions that are not related to the confidence in how to use the technology. Students feel lonely, not supported, etc. Teachers learned to be more careful about students’ emotions than usual. “Now I am careful to start and end the class with positive statements. I try to verbally tell them that everything is OK.” (TA, RS).

Communication and interaction turned upside down

The adjustment in communication was the major change identified in the analysed interviews. Communication gap has been created right from the beginning till now. The gap is wider and has made the learning process less effective. Respondents are pointing out the difficulties in the online environment. Body language is key in the physical mode. Students do not necessarily have to respond yes or no if they are understanding what is being taught. Sometimes you find the faces of students, sometimes all cameras are switched off: “we are there to help them to overcome the various difficulties or the various personality issues which are associated with them that can only be achieved in the regular communication” (AP1, IN). From the first days of online teaching, teachers reported silence from the students’ side. It was more of a one-way communication. Even professors were not sure if anybody was really listening. The following

part of the teachers' stories best reflects this situation: "In the beginning, you see only twenty circles in online lectures. When you ask if someone listening, a few of them say, "yes". As for the others, I don't know." (FP, RS). The silence means isolation, where there is no space for learning. Teachers did not accept students as passive receivers of information or even passive at all. After the initial stage, the period of adaptation, they start to apply different strategies to improve interaction with students, and within the group. Invitation for a discussion, using instant reactions, asking about daily activities are some of the applied approaches: "Then I started convincing them, if they don't want to turn on the cameras, to show presence by clicking on different stickers." (TA, RS). The main point of communication in online education is encouragement of dialogue and interaction. That idea is related to balance in interaction and invitation for participation in activities. We should be aware that the distance and many worlds between us in a digital environment puts groups in a situation where the interactions could be easily cut. When we are online it is so easy to navigate between different spaces. The following statements describe that dialogue could be established only without pressure for interaction: "For me, I did not push them to discuss. We just talk. I find a way to invite them to talk and share. No one is forced." (AP, RS)

One significant change is how the teachers could ensure that there is consistent interaction between them and their students on virtual platforms. The rapid nature of the pandemic paved the way for teachers to explore other avenues to make virtual learning flow like the traditional face-to-face for better interaction and understanding. This is evident from the following topic related to rethinking the innovative teaching strategies.

Rethinking and innovative teaching

The following statement describes the teacher's reflection about the teaching approach applied during the lockdown: "Today's learning is more of a constructivist approach. It is not those days that a whole note has to be read or dedicated to students to imbibe them and then reproduced for you. You just give them the salient points, they will go creating their own world and then produce the answers as per their own understanding" (SL1, GH). One of the greatest changes in teaching provoked by COVID-19 is a hands-on learning experience. The teachers explained that COVID-19 caused them to be explorative in learning new teaching approaches in a practical way. Interaction has been realised by dividing tasks into smaller units. Teachers together with the group constantly

should produce some results. That's why students stay engaged. The following statement explains the importance of introducing more practical aspects in teaching complex content: "You have to constantly produce some results so that they see that something is happening. In fact, you follow them and you have an outcome of each phase." (TA, RS).

A new approach in organizing teaching

Including the students in teaching planning was an example of good practice in teaching organization. It seems that it was hard to coordinate all teaching activities at the beginning, during the phase of adaptation on regular program virtualization. "They were grateful in my case that they could choose the assignments themselves. And to choose the pace and dynamics of work." (AP, RS).

Respondents also pointed out new apps that are now making it possible to have a very wide audience at a time. Also, now you have an option of not wasting time to travel. The place in teaching becomes irrelevant. You can take a class as per your convenience. You no longer have to push everything aside as you now have an option to reschedule. This makes knowledge more accessible "...and the most significant change I have encountered is that it has become very easy now to extend your knowledge dissemination exercise to very far off areas" (SP, IN). Working online according to the lectures provided them with ease and convenience of teaching at different locations and times other than the classrooms at specified periods. By doing so, they are able to apportion time for other obligations. Moreover, removing the border between time and place, and bringing learning in any place, make teachers more available for students: "But certainly, this has made the teachers more available to the students." (AP2, IN)

In the organisational aspect of teaching the major differences between countries were identified. Ghana applied a blended learning approach at the moment of collecting data. India and Serbia still deliver classes only in an online format. Responses from the teachers in Ghana show that different teaching and learning approaches are adopted from the onset to the current state of the pandemic. According to them, the initial part characterized by lockdowns replaced traditional face-to-face with online teaching so they had no option other than to go strictly virtual. A blended approach of face-to-face with virtual sessions in recent times has been employed, as they keep to required protocols for face-to-face sessions. This can be seen from the following statements: "We are now using a blended learning approach—some degree of face-to-face and a degree of online teaching fused together" (SL1, GH).

Discussion

In the discussion part, this paper intends to see answers to the research question made at the start of the study by analysing the discussion and dialogue made between each country researcher and teachers.

What are the higher education teachers' views about the changes in teaching provoked by the Covid-19 health crisis?

The higher education teachers view COVID-19 as an activation event for lifelong learning in digital teaching technologies. One of the biggest and the most critical changes was a reflection on the teaching process in general. Unexpected virtualisation of the higher education programmes teaches us about communication, interaction, and teaching from another angle. This new perspective gives us a deeper understanding of learning. Imagine the situation where a person is trying to learn to dance blindfolded. Firstly, it makes the person uncomfortable and can feel fear or pressure to learn in a new situation. In the end, the person mastered dancing better than those who did not put themselves in that risky learning situation. Teachers of all three countries encountered the parallel, but step by step, teachers find many creative ways to overcome the obstacles of teaching in an online environment. The pressure on teachers, fear, and waiver of the right to privacy are symptoms. Society is struggling not only because of COVID –19 but also because of the urge to save the capitalist mindset. “In the midst of this chaos, our responses have actually been about organizational continuity, capitalism, and reducing our value to what we are able to sustain and what our bodies are able to produce” (Stewart, 2020, p. 263). We need to be ready to critically reflect on capitalism's weaknesses, save humanity, empower the academic community, and produce alternatives that could cope with the crisis and overcome it. It seems an era where we might be captured where the crisis is being produced as any other kind of goods.

What were the teachers' learning process characteristics related to the teaching adaptation to work during COVID –19 pandemic?

The answer to the research question about the teachers' learning process characteristics embodied the best aforementioned processes. Teachers' learning process is devoted to getting skills related to technology, but more valuable are insights about interaction and communication in the online world. It was apparent that teachers should find a way to fight with silence and isolation from the beginning. Microlearning was one of the solutions for bringing life into online classrooms. The tasks are split into smaller pieces and practical tasks. Also, in the microlearning approach, we should be aware that we are not disrupting the interaction with strict planning where there is no room for mutual

exchange of meaning (Kerres, 2007). Teaching and learning in an online environment could support the interaction only if we become aware that we should change the language, the way we select and place information, and how we deal with emotions.

“Teachers must learn to embrace ways that will keep learners connected all the time, since they must deal with absence in the current (COVID –19) times, moreover teachers will have to go the extra mile to consciously provide warmth and a sense of belonging to learners” (Ananga, 2020, p. 318).

What were the differences among the teachers’ learning process in Ghana, India, and Serbia related to the teaching adaptation to working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The analysis found more resemblances than differences in the teaching approach and strategies. Similarities can be justified as COVID-19 is a global pandemic affecting the world in the same way, and here in our study, all three countries.

Differences which can be pointed out is the use of tools, which were not similarly used but by teachers in three counties of our study. If we talk about tools, we are talking about various online teaching platforms. In Ghana, teachers applied a blended teaching format, but an online teaching model was used in India and Serbia while collecting data. The use of the different teaching formats opens the possibility of further research and discussion as to which mode is better and effective for a county as a whole. Inequality issues arise as one topic in the context of India. Teachers from Ghana and Serbia did not bring out any issue of inequality, but India’s teachers did have. In each of the three countries, we need to be aware of learning conditions. Prerequisites for online learning are providing adequate software, hardware, and network access for all. Furthermore, we should think about the living conditions of people involved in online teaching. It was a presumption that everyone lived in comfortable homes, but the reality was not the same for all and also erased those who could not work from home (Stewart, 2020, p. 263).

Over and above, teaching in online education during the crisis required constant and multi-directional learning processes. Dialogue helps teachers understand the students over the screen and reflect on their practice. We hope that love also is part of the teaching process. In times of crisis and significant changes, we need to care more about each other. Also, as bell hooks pointed out, “there can be no love without justice” (hooks, 2003, p. 137). Finally, we hope that dialogue and love will help us learn how to find creative solutions to build a more just world inspired by lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis.

Conclusion

Higher education passed a long trip from non-learning to non-reflective to reflective learning, talking in terms of Jarvis's (2018) approach. After almost two years of the global health crisis, "we still have people who reject the learning potential of the situation and merely wait for things to get back to normal" (Bjursell, 2020, p 683), but the process of reflective learning is the most common among higher education teachers. Non-learning happens only initially, and then we transfer the information to the students by online teaching platforms and tools. Shortly after that, the ongoing process of reflective learning was initiated. "This includes drawing on knowledge which is relevant to how a situation might be mastered and reaching conclusions which, in turn, become part of a new frame of reference" (Bjursell, 2020, p 684).

Teachers in higher education find many ways to deal with the crisis. They become more aware of specific communication strategies which should be applied in an online environment. The content should be divided into smaller pieces. All activities and interactions need visibility and practicability. At the cutting edge, teachers created the space for dialogue and a new understanding of teaching in crisis and the online environment. Disjuncture in the context of this prolonged global crisis opens up the topic of becoming. We should search for answers to how our digital selves will influence the learning process after the crisis when we come back into the actual classrooms. Should we learn the reverse process of transferring teaching from virtual to real classrooms? For now, we are sure that communication and interaction are keywords for learning; those are critical medicines for loneliness and exclusion in learning.

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Učenje nastavnika tokom pandemije kovida 19: perspektiva visokog obrazovanja iz Gane, Indije i Srbije

Apstrakt: Tema ove studije inspirisana je diskusijom i razmenom ličnih iskustava istraživača iz Gane, Indije i Srbije o životu, radu i podučavanju tokom pandemije kovida 19. Cilj ovog rada je da se identifikuju iskustva učenja nastavnika visokog obrazovanja koja su im pomogla da se prilagode novoj situaciji izazvanoj pandemijom kovida 19. Prikupili smo priče od devet nastavnika zaposlenih u visokom obrazovanju u Gani, Indiji i Srbiji. Induktivna tematska analiza je korišćena da bi se identifikovale teme u prikupljenim pričama nastavnika. U svakoj državi su utvrđene zajedničke teme koje su potom upoređene. Transformacija od tihe do aktivne učionice je uobičajena tema među nastavnicima u sve tri države. Sličnosti su identifikovane u izražavanju straha od strane nastavnika što je doprinelo povećanju pritiska na nastavnike. Razlike u iskustvu podučavanja i učenja među nastavnicima u istraživanim državama odnosile su se na pitanje nejednakosti pristupu neophodnim resursima za onlajn učenje. Zaključak je da nastava u onlajn obrazovanju tokom krize zahteva stalne i višesmerne procese učenja, kao i potpuno razumevanje otpora i negativnih emocija studenata.

Ključne reči: disjunkcija, kovid 19, nastavnici, visoko obrazovanje, učenje.

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