Distance Higher Education Learning and Professional Pedagogy: Training the Trainers

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Abstract

The global disruption of all physical educational activities due the covid-19 pandemic impacted among others also professional development activities of higher educational faculty members and staff. Teaching and learning had to be organized exclusively online. This transition is not straightforward as it often requires a different way of facing new challenges, or even a cultural change in all involved stakeholders. Hence, instructional designers, but also instructors and researchers need to consider multiple factors related to online education instructional design. In this empirical study, we present in detail the views and needs of twenty-three higher education faculty members, on their preferable pedagogy for distance training that had to replace a face-to-face one, in the frame of a multinational capacity building project. The core research question was "what are higher education instructors' views and educational needs toward meaningful and effective pedagogy of professional development teaching and learning activities both in a face to face and an online training process". A mixed research method was employed in the form of a 22-item questionnaire (pilot survey) that combined qualitative and quantitative data in the form of open and closed questions, respectively as well as observation. The results are illustrated through graphical representations and analysis comments. Specifically, the examined research indicators were the preferable training form, methodology, assessment, and feedback. Findings suggest that in online training, a flipped learning approach can accommodate the needs of academics where online meetings can be dedicated mainly to critical discussions and practical applications based on prior asynchronous individual study of theoretical material. This knowledge can be useful and support continuous professional development initiatives in the design and implementation of effective e-learning strategies.