Dr. Chanphirun Sam– Cambodia –

7th September 2021

Online learning in Cambodian higher education amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Challenges and opportunities.

Purpose and context of the presentation

The presentation provides information in the context of Phnom Penh Teacher Education College. It considers the online education situation at this higher education institute, as well as the challenges and opportunities identified in the change to online education. The data set comprised a survey of students at the college on the challenges and opportunities of online education.

The teaching, review and oversight system

At Phnom Penh Teacher Education College, the director and deputy directors liaise with and oversee the academic office and department heads. These support the lecturers to identify the appropriate document centres and interactive learning platforms, which after some experimentation were narrowed down to Telegram and the Google suite. The lecturers prepare and upload teaching materials to these channels, and students access them, and interact with each other and the lecturers. Assessment takes place through these channels, and Quality Assurance monitors and evaluates these processes and systems to ensure continuous improvement. The survey in this presentation contributed to the evaluation process, as a way to ensure that teaching and learning is effective.

Survey results: Challenges

The following challenges were identified in the survey:

- Digital competence – particularly, a lack of digital literacy which meant that neither students nor lecturers could perform effectively during the swift migration to online mode.
- Technology – limited internet access, out of date devices, lack of awareness of digital resources.
- Digital teaching and learning materials – absence of digital materials and e-library.
- Socioeconomic situation – lecturers and students who cannot afford devices or internet connection.
- Student and lecturer workload – workload is higher than in face-to-face mode.
- Instructional delivery – limited ability to organize productive interaction with students online, difficulty promoting active collaborative learning and teaching, lack of flexibility.
- Assessment and supervision – difficulty regulating and controlling academic integrity during assessment.

Presentation Summary - Extracted Key Points from September AAAF Presentations

- Compatibility – online learning is not easily adaptable to practical activities required for some disciplines.

Survey results: Opportunities

Opportunities were also identified through the survey, including:

- Independent learning – students are learning to be more self-reliant, studying independently and relying less on teachers.
- Digital competence – students and lecturers are learning to use technology and improving their digital literacy.
- Digital materials – the institution has emphasised the use of digital materials for teaching and learning and is working with partners to develop and provide these materials.
- Professional development – lecturers are receiving more learning opportunities on how to use ICT in education.

Conclusions

The institution is working to overcome identified challenges by providing support to students and lecturers in online education and digital literacy, materials and technology. Despite all efforts, these challenges have affected the quality of education during the pandemic. However, opportunities have also been identified especially regarding the promotion of digital technology in education moving forward.