

Challenges and Strategies for Overcoming them Applied by University Teachers in Distance Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

In 2020, higher education shifted to distance teaching and learning globally. This new digital scenario required academic teachers to rapidly transform their teaching plans and acquire and/or deepen their digital competence level. Transition to digital teaching raised sharp debates regarding innovative culture of universities and their readiness to introduce digital technologies. The aim of the paper is to reveal the main challenges and strategies for overcoming them the academic teachers applied while teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing this, interviews with teachers were conducted at two universities in Lithuania and Slovenia. The main findings revealed that time restrictions, teachers' digital literacy, and institutional support were the main challenges the teachers encountered while delivering lectures or supporting the students in their learning process. Following results, colleague support served as the core strategy for increasing the teachers' readiness to implement remote teaching and to use various multimedia tools. The paper opens the avenue for broader discussion about the shared responsibility between university and teachers for the quality of distance teaching. Moreover, the need to increase the skills and knowledge necessary for teachers in a digitalised work is once again underlined.

Keywords: academic teachers, digital competence, distance teaching, COVID-19, digital literacy.