

EDEN Open Education Week
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Insights on technology-supported teaching, learning and teacher development in contexts of low resources and marginalisation

Research with Refugees and Displaced communities

Dr Koula Charitonos

Institute of Educational Technology
The Open University UK



Koula.charitonos@open.ac.uk
@ch_koula

What does it mean to conduct research *in* forcibly displaced communities?

Taking some steps towards addressing epistemic injustice; by developing and using approaches that centre on relationship building; and by shifting to “new forms of scholarship that make visible the agentic potential and critical role [forcibly displaced people] can have in the transformation of their own social futures” (Gutiérrez et al., 2016: 275).

Connected learning in crisis contexts: Educators' perspectives on needs and support in the context of refugee tertiary education

To understand ways of working and learning of language teachers in refugee contexts (incl. practice, pedagogies, Covid impact)

With Mosaik Education, Centreity, and English language teachers in refugee settings in Jordan

Phase 1: April 2021 – July 2021; Phase 2: October 2021 – February 2022

Funding: OU GCRF and ASU/Mastercard Foundation.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top left, there is a red dot and the word "Recording". Below this, a white box titled "Themes" contains a bulleted list of topics. To the right of the themes is a grid of video feeds for participants. The participants shown are Ekhlass Abu Allan, Wajeeh Badwi, Betul Topal, and Ahmed Osman. There are also green squares with the letters 'R' and 'A' in the grid. The bottom right corner of the meeting area shows a green square with the letter 'A'.

Recording

Themes

- **Effect of Dogme Training on teachers who took part in this**
 - Awareness of the CA, inspiration for activities they could use, understanding of the approach, applying approach in their classroom
- **Range of resources used by teachers**
 - Personal, external (on internet), institutional (syllabus, NGOs, Min of Education)
- **Enhanced / Expanded role of the teachers in refugee settings**
 - Teacher as family, supporter, facilitator, community

Characteristics of the settings (challenges)

- "extreme situation", "not normal students", lack of resources

Effects of using Communicative approach on students

- Addressing multiple levels in the classes, learning more fun, more flexible, topics relevant to students

Traditional approaches to teaching the language VS communicative approach

- CA taking the focus away from grammar

Limited opportunities for professional development

- Not affordable, costly, financial implications BUT drawing on colleagues for help and support (especially during Covid)

Use of WhatsApp in moving teaching online

- Common tech tools

Participants: Ekhlass Abu Allan, Wajeeh Badwi, Betul Topal, Ahmed Osman. Grid letters: R, A.

Participatory Ethnographic Evaluation and Research (PEER)

PEER is an innovative approach that provides a rapid and effective way of gaining an in-depth understanding of the social world of specific communities and groups.

PEER uses community members to conduct detailed interviews with others in their social network and taps into established relationships of trust (Price and Hawkins, 2002).

PEER generates rich data of narratives and stories that gives a depth of insight into how people view their world, conceptualize their behaviour and experiences and make decisions on key issues (Brown, Grellier and Hawkins, p. 206).

In PEER approach, participants are included in various stages of the research (Elmusharaf et al., 2017).

PEER Session 5_data extracts Group 1 DOCX ☆ 📁

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Q. Thinking about your role as an English language teacher in refugee settings, what does this role involve? How do teachers in refugee settings see their role in the classroom?

BP4.1
I'm a friend for them [students] and I support them [students] all the time. In the beginning she was acting as a typical teacher who doesn't interfere with her students, but later she figured out she should be more like their friend. During the pandemic, she realized this was a better way to go. She had to follow up with students to check on them on Whatsapp, and there was a teacher-student relationship that developed over text and they became friends.

BP1.1
"I believe it is not just a language class. I always try to make them [students] like the classes [lessons]. I help them with anything they ask me and I am here to support them." He makes a relationship between them a trusting relationship.

BP2.2
He said he's the founder... he invites his students to...

BP6.1
As a teacher who teaches... should also be a helper, a...
The teacher teaches in the... ever. This is more importa...

18:35 Today
volunteers are teachers

Koula Charitonos 18:36 Today
teacher is an advisor for students

Koula Charitonos 18:42 Today
more than a teacher, not only a teacher

Koula Charitonos 18:44 Today
teachers are friends, helpers, mentors

Koula Charitonos

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Workshop 6

Data analysis - notes and reflections

- Role of the teacher in refugee settings is crucial.**
 - Teaching is a service to students.
 - Relationship with students is precious.
 - Relationship with teachers is precious.
- Teacher is a 'motivator', a friend, a model, an advisor, a 'changemaker'.**
 - Offer service to the community.
- Teaching in refugee settings is rewarding.**
 - There's appreciation about your work from students.
 - Feel valued
 - "We are in the same boat", we are in this together.
- Teachers are creating a safe and enjoyable environment for their students.**
 - Forget what else is happening, same for teachers.
 - Sharing information about their lives.
- Teaching in refugee settings is different than teaching in other educational settings.**
 - Beyond Language. Not just teaching language.
 - Not the same camps Vs centres (with variations)
- Teachers are creative in their approaches to teaching English.**
 - Use of communicative approach
 - Use of technology (Kahoot and other resources)

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Wajeeh Badwi

Ekhlass Abu Allan

Betül Topal

Ahmed Osman

A

Bushra lives in an urban environment north of Amman. She is an experienced university teacher who in 2023 is celebrating her 30th year in the field. [...]

At the onset of COVID-19, her university organised a workshop on online teaching which offered some support, but she thought it was inadequate [...]

She was worried when the pandemic broke out because some of her students were very poor and they struggled the most. She said that **'some of them did not have laptops and had to use their mobile phones. One student had to walk 40 minutes to his uncle's house to use the internet'**.

Issues with the quality of web connectivity and technical difficulties were not easily addressed. Bushra described feeling powerless: **'Sometimes the internet would just stop and I could not do anything about it [...]**

Omar, a Sudanese English teacher in Amman, has worked with refugees of different nationalities, backgrounds, and ages, including adults, since 2019.

[...] The transition to online education was rapid, and in Omar's words, *'everyone was new in this role'*.

Together with his colleagues, he initiated a pilot conversation class in the beginning. He had 15–16 students in each class, but this soon proved too difficult to manage [...]

Omar found the background noises and engaging students online challenging. Some of his students **did not have a good space for online meetings, as most of the family members shared one bedroom or a living room [...]** They would now keep cameras off to save internet bandwidth or protect family privacy.

Hira, a Jordanian public school English teacher with five years of experience, provides support classes to Syrian refugees in the afternoons and evenings [...]

Most of her students have experienced trauma, hence Hira describes her role as 'sensitive': *'I should not be a teacher. I should be a facilitator. [I need to] motivate them, talk to them more, to make them feel comfortable to do the exams'.*

A typical day for Hira before COVID-19 was already challenging [...] She often brought the needed materials from her home or spent her own money to buy them. She did not have access to a personal computer or internet connection at school, so **she had [...]** **to use her mobile phone.** When she was asked about the transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, Hira said: **'We have dealt with this situation randomly' [...]**

'I worked late, it was not organised, students responded on the time they preferred, even at 12 am, and they sent...images or photos by WhatsApp at [that] late time'.

What does it mean to conduct research with technology in forcibly displaced communities?

An environment with significant barriers and systemic disadvantages.

Digital poverty

Dependencies – on formal and informal networks, on devices, infrastructures.

Digital Inequalities are embedded in and interact with wider types of disadvantage that exist offline – ‘amplified disadvantage’

Human-technology relationships

“To be on the worse end of the digital divide [...] less agency in the digital era” (Jandrić et al., 2019: 166).

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- Dr Tara Ross – Centreity Systems
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- Mrs Miki Aristorenas – Mosaik Education
- Prof Agnes Kukulska-Hulme, OU

And our group of
peer-researchers





Open sanctuary hub

This hub is a space of welcome for refugees, people in the asylum system and the wider community. It offers free courses covering a range of subjects.

Refine by

Reset all

Sort by:

Date



Results: 46 items



Grid



List

Dr Koula Charitonos

koula.charitonos@open.ac.uk



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