Pedagogy and Online Teaching and Learning

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Introduction

Higher education learning is to ensure that students achieve meaningful learning outcomes and succeed in the world of work.

- AASW regards face-to-face instructional engagement as an essential requirement for meeting the standards of the profession.
Online Learning & meeting AASW requirements: Challenges

- There is debate as to whether online teaching can deliver deep learning required for gaining social Work skills/competencies
- University Teachers have ambivalence about online teaching
- There issues around Student attrition and lack of motivation to engage with online learning activities
Today’s facebook generation is characterised by:
- Desire for immediate feedback,
- Demand for flexible university study arrangements to align with family and work obligations.
- i.e. University education is no longer for people who are only committed to study.
Pedagogy and Online Education

- Universal Design and Social Work: *Useful and yet not fully achieved*
- Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Constructivist theory and learning –
- Bruner's constructivist theory
  - Learning is effective when learners faced with new material are able to follow a progression from enactive to iconic to symbolic representation; this holds true even for adult learners.
Pedagogy

- To Brunner, education should aim to create autonomous learners (i.e., learning to learn).
- Jerome Bruner proposed three modes of representation:
  - Enactive representation (action-based)
  - Iconic representation (image-based)
  - Symbolic representation (language-based)
- Lev Vygotsky talked about the link between cultural context and learning.
- He also talked about Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) linked to Scaffolding
Pedagogy

- For HE teaching and learning, Wlodkowski’s (1999) argument that the role of the teacher is to nurture the intrinsic motivation of the learner is paramount.

- In the current blended learning regime, social work education should seek to nurture the intrinsic motivation of learners.
Pedagogy

- We also need to take cognisance of:
  - Ramsden’s (2003) Third Theory of Teaching and Learning, which sees teaching as making learning possible and also
  - Biggs and Moore (1993) notion of the motivational context of learning, including time pressures, assessment tasks, etc.
Teacher Action and Student Reaction

- Biggs and Moore’s (1993) statement about learning design is useful here:
  - Every decision a teacher makes has a functional side (what is obvious to the teacher) and
  - An impact side (what is obvious to the student) becomes a paramount consideration

- These possible reactions are to be reasonably expected because students’ capacities to engage are influenced by both.
Teacher Action and Student Reaction

- Teacher Actions need to be assessed in terms of their capacities to enhance the behavioural intentions of students to participate (Kuyini, 2009).

- In implementing online teaching activities, initial efforts should aim at making activities exciting for students; building connections between what the teacher wants students to do and their own concerns and expectations (Brookfield 1995, 93), as a way of establishing positive attitudes towards learning tasks.
Teacher Action & Student Reaction to Learning Engagement

Attitudes
- towards a teaching or learning behaviour
- Teachers: E.g. Using particular teaching methods such as Online Group Learning Activities
- Students: Attitude towards particular activities, modes, and formats of learning - e.g. online groups

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC)
- Teachers' PBC: is influenced by
  - Self-efficacy,
  - Personal knowledge and skills,
  - Resources, including time
- Students' PBC: is influenced by
  - Self-efficacy,
  - Technology use and access,
  - Number of units study
  - Tasks/assessment difficulty, etc

Subjective Norm (SN)
- Teachers: influenced by
  - University policy, Unit requirements, Using specific teaching methods etc.
- Students: influenced by
  - The non-negotiable aspects of the curriculum, Employer requirements, Fear of failure, etc

Teacher Action (TA)
- (Teacher Actions & Decisions)

Student Reaction (SR)

Re-Evaluation of Attitudes, PBC, SN
Actions from TA-SR Model for Online Participation

- At a pragmatic level we could:
- Use Constructivist approach through the use of Case-based and Problem Based Learning (PBL);
- Be aware of the importance of making tasks challenging and yet achievable, which aligns with Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD);
- Recognition of the centrality of factors such as time pressures and assessment tasks which contribute to what Biggs and Moore (1993) term the motivational context of learning.
Addressing the Challenge

- To address this challenge, we need to increase online engagement via:
  - implementing task and activity flexibility to address students’ lack of time; Wlodkowski (1999)
  - A good balance materials to facilitate progression from enactive to iconic and to symbolic representation
  - allowing personal choice within the learning environment to develop appropriate attitudes to learning and increasing the chance of participation; and
  - ensuring instructor immediacy behaviours to minimize student dissatisfaction with content and teacher support.
Addressing Challenge

- At UNE, weekly learning materials include clear signposts to steer all students precisely towards required outputs and to flag critical timelines for participation,

- This structure allows students to link the Learning modules and their activities together over time according to their own needs and preferences.
Group work

- Flexibility in:
  - group formation,
  - online delivery,
  - Assessment completion and mode of presentation are critical to enhancing positive attitudes and perceived behavioral control.
References


- Kuyini A. B. (2011). Exploring the effects of including students' ideas and concerns on their participation in online groups. *Journal of Distance Education, 25*, (3)

