Working Paper: "A Teaching Framework for establishing an Inclusive and Highly Engaging Learning Environment in Online Education"

Objectives

- This is a working paper which is a continuation of a research effort started on student engagement that started in 2015 by Konstantinos Biginas and Antonia Koumproglou.

- The purpose of this working paper is to critically discuss the creation of an engaging online learning environment, what the authors consider to be the foundation of a successful classroom setting, while communicating and maintaining clear expectations to students. Students are involved in co- setting the class rules and expectations together with their instructor. Hence, students become equal partners in education and in their learning experience (QAA, 2017).

- This conceptually driven set of elements, all of which make the ideal online learning environment, is seen as the building blocks within the learning community to allow for the creation of the most effective design for a learning situation based on the principles of mutual trust, empowerment, respect and responsibility.

- The discussed approach is based on the fundamental Stakeholder Management theory. Involvement and engagement of students in the decision-making process is essential to deal with any resistance and lack of interest throughout the term. Making students feel like active stakeholders Jeffrey (2009).

- Our common objective is to maximize students' learning experience through enjoyment, participation, learning, respect and punctuality. In such way the students' feeling of belongingness (Maslow's hierarchy of needs) is enhanced and allow them to achieve very good results.

The Student Engagement Framework

Engagement is more than involvement or participation – it requires feelings and sense making as well as activity (see Harper & Quaye, 2009a, 5). Acting without feeling engaged is just involvement or even compliance; feeling engaged without acting is dissociation. Although focusing on engagement, Fredricks *et.al.* (2004, 62-63), drawing on Bloom (1956), usefully identify three dimensions to student engagement, as discussed below:

1. Behavioural engagement. Students who are behaviourally engaged would typically comply with behavioural norms, such as attendance and involvement, and would demonstrate the absence of disruptive or negative behaviour.

2. Emotional engagement. Students who engage emotionally would experience affective reactions such as interest, enjoyment, or a sense of belonging.

3. Cognitive engagement. Cognitively engaged students would be invested in their learning, would seek to go beyond the requirements, and would relish challenge.

Our approach has been tested on online learning environments, and evidence so far suggests that it can be applied successfully. Students do have very similar learning needs and the element of engagement and involvement can be seen as an essential one. More data and evidence will allow us to generalise findings and come up with practical suggestions and observed outcome. This will inform further our research on the development of an ideal teaching and learning approach in online education.

References:

1. Bloom, B. S. (1956). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook I: The Cognitive Domain*, David McKay Co Inc, New York.
2. Harper, S.R. & Quaye, S.J. (2009). Beyond Sameness, with Engagement and Outcomes for All. *Student Engagement in Higher Education*, S.R. Harper & S.J. Quaye (eds.), Routledge, New York & London.
3. Fredricks, J.A., Blumenfeld, P.C. & Paris, A.H. (2004). School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74 *(1)*.
4. Jeffrey, N. (2009). *Stakeholder Engagement: A roadmap to meaningful engagement*. Dougherty Centre, Cranfield School of Management, Cranfield. Available from: http://www.som.cranfield.ac.uk/som/dinamic-content/media/CR%20Stakeholder.pdf
5. QAA (2017). *Higher Education Toolkit-Alternative Providers: Engaging with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. Available from: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/quality-code-toolkit-17.pdf?sfvrsn=4754ff81_4