Investigating the Impact of a Video Response Discussion on Student Engagement in an Online Course

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Introduction: The social learning theorists of the past, such as Vygotsky and Bandura identified the importance of social influence on the learning process. The majority of today's learners are considered part of the Millennials (Net Generation) and utilize technology on a daily basis (Sherman & Lynn, 2009). As we continue to strive to improve engagement in the online course room, it is important to identify the most effective ways to enhance learning. The discussion board has been used in online courses as a way for students to interact with their peers. This research proposes that there may be a more effective way to engage the online learner.

Objective: Compare student engagement/interactivity in two different types of assignments (Video versus standard Discussion Board).

Problem Statement: Faculty are often frustrated because the teaching strategies of the past are no longer effective with the Net Generation. Emerging technologies need to be investigated for effectiveness in promoting student engagement and interactivity in the online course. The traditional discussion board provides a flat, one dimensional format for students to interact with their peers. Richey and Klein (2007) discussed the ongoing interest in research related to technology-enhanced learning environments. Could research support the idea that technology enhanced learning may increase student engagement? Could an assignment using video responses rather than the flat, one sided discussion boards improve student engagement? According to Richey and Klein, it is important to clarify the process by which people learn, typically through interactions with instructional technologies and other learners (2007).

Theoretical Framework: Social learning theory discusses the importance of learning naturally in conversations with others rather than in regimented, pre-packaged segments (Batson, 2009). Bandura (1977) described social learning theory as how people learn from one another, Brunner (1964) believed that learning cannot occur in isolation. Vygotsky (1978) held the belief that learning cannot be understood outside the social concept of learning. In 2003, Bender concurred stating that working together in the course room enhanced learning by allowing students to question and share meaning with other learners. The common theme among these theorists is the belief that students do not learn in isolation, therefore instructional strategies that allow for social engagement may enhance the learning environment.

Sims and Koszalka, stated that social engagement/interactivity is critical to the overall effectiveness of the online learning experience. Students need to be able to communicate with their peers, both in writing and verbally. It is essential that that faculty participate in the learning process, but gradually decrease the amount of support given to students (Candel, 2016). It takes creativity in an online environment to ensure that students are given ample opportunities to collaborate with one another and reflect on their work. To overcome barriers, teachers must view the integration of new technologies as a vehicle to improve learner outcomes (Lawrence & Lentle-Keenan, 2013). While faculty believe video response will provide a more engaging learning environment, there has been little research on the topic.

Purpose Statement: The purpose of this quasi-experimental study is to determine the effect on student engagement when a video discussion is utilized instead of the traditional discussion board.
Research Question: Could an assignment using video responses rather than the flat, one-sided Discussion boards improve student engagement?

Hypothesis: For the purpose of this research study, the hypothesis was: The use of a video response assignment compared to a standard discussion board forum will increase students’ perception of engagement/interactivity in the online course.

Methodology:

A convenience sample was used of those students already enrolled in an online course. The students were adult nursing students enrolled in the master’s program. There were 160 students enrolled in the course (multiple sections). The duration of the subject’s participation in the study was 10 weeks. The study completed in winter quarter 2017.

All students enrolled in the course completed discussions in two different formats, with two imbedded video response exercises and two standard Discussion Boards. A survey measuring student perception was sent to all students who consented to be part of the study during the last week of the course using Qualtrics. The survey also contained some descriptive data of experience with online learning, ESL student, and age.

The data was collected by using the COLLES survey. The COLLES survey is designed to measure students’ preferred or ideal experience with online learning. The questions are grouped into six categories. The first four questions focus on relevance, Questions five through eight focus on reflection, Questions nine through 12 on interactivity, Questions 13 through 16 on instructor support, Questions 17 through 20 on peer support, and Questions 21 through 24 on interpretation. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on data collected from questions 9-12 on interactivity and questions 17 through 20 on peer support. The data were analyzed using paired sample t tests to determine statistical differences.

Title:
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Keywords:
Discussion boards, Online courses and Student engagement

References:


Abstract Summary:
Faculty are often frustrated because the teaching strategies of the past are no longer effective with Millennials. The traditional discussion board provides a flat, one dimensional format for students to interact. Research results will be discussed on the impact of using video responses rather than the traditional discussion board.

Content Outline:
Introduction: The discussion has been a standard interactive tool in online courses. Faculty have used discussions to improve student engagement and interactivity. Social learning theorists such as Vygotsky and Bandura identified the importance of social interaction on the learning process. Consequently, it is important to identify the most effective ways to promote learning in these discussions. Research was conducted to study the impact of video based discussion forums on students’ perceptions of learning. This presentation will present the findings and identify the impact on nursing education.

Body:
Discussion of Social learning theory: Social learning theory discusses the importance of learning naturally in conversations with others rather than in regimented, pre-packaged segments (Batson, 2009). Bandura (1977) described social learning theory as how people learn from one another, Brunner (1964) believed that learning cannot occur in isolation. Vygotsky (1978) held the belief that learning cannot be understood outside the social concept of learning. In 2003, Bender concurred stating that working together in the course room enhanced learning by allowing students to question and share meaning with other learners. The common theme among these theorists is the belief that students do not learn in isolation, therefore instructional strategies that allow for social engagement may enhance the learning environment.

Description of how video discussions can be used vs the traditional text based discussion board

Discussion of the research

a) Hypothesis: For the purpose of this research study, the hypothesis was; The use of a
video response assignment compared to a standard discussion board forum will increase students’ perception of engagement/interactivity in the online course.

b) Methodology: A convenience sample was used of those students already enrolled in an online course. The students were adult nursing students enrolled in the master’s program. There were 160 students enrolled in the course (multiple sections). The duration of the subject’s participation in the study was 10 weeks. The study completed in winter quarter 2017. All students enrolled in the course completed discussions in two different formats, with two imbedded video response exercises and two standard Discussion Boards. A survey measuring student perception was sent to all students who consented to be part of the study during the last week of the course using Qualtrics. The survey also contained some descriptive data of experience with online learning, ESL student, and age.

c) Results: Data analysis will be discussed and the statistical significance

d) Implication for practice in nursing education will be discussed

Conclusion: Summary of above and answer any questions.

Demonstration of video discussions (if time allows): A demonstration will be presented showing an example of how the video discussions can be used.

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Professional Experience: 2015–present – Assistant Professor, Drexel University College of Nursing and Health Professions 2013-2015 -- Assistant Professor, Marshall University, College of Nursing and Health Professions Ohio University, College of Nursing-developed online pathways for nurses to progress Visiting professor for Chamberlain College of Nursing Responsible for development of multiple online nursing courses Presented at multiple conferences at the state, regional, national, and international level on student engagement and using technology to enhance learning. Topics included: texting, blogging, voice threads, ApprenNet, mobile phones in the classroom. Published in the Nursing Education Perspectives for her work titled, “Examining the effect of texting on students’ perception of learning” Completed research on texting in an educational setting, the impact of an online orientation for nursing students new to online learning, using mobile phones in learning, and enhancing discussion boards

Author Summary: Dr. Swartzwelder received her PhD from Capella University in 2011 where she completed course work in Instructional Design/Online Learning. She became a certified nurse educator in 2010. Her research interests include improving learning techniques for her students – she was published in the Nursing Education Perspectives for her work titled, “Examining the effect of texting on students’ perception of learning” and has presented her research at multiple conferences including the NLN.
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Professional Experience: I have been teaching in higher education for the past 10 years. For the past two years, I have been teaching in the online MSN program at Drexel University. Courses I have taught include Advanced Ethics, Theoretical Foundations of Nursing Education, Nursing Education Practicum and Curriculum Design for Higher Cognition. In all courses traditional discussion boards are utilized to allow students to explore topics more in-depth and encourage collaboration. In the Advanced Ethics course, video discussions are used in conjunction with traditional discussion board assignments.

Author Summary: Jackie Murphy graduated from Drexel University with her MSN in Nursing Education and Faculty Role and is a Certified Nurse Educator and Certified Pediatric Nurse. She has been in higher education since 2007, both in teaching and leadership roles. Currently, Jackie teaches in the graduate nursing program at Drexel University. Jackie has presented on pediatric simulation and applied pediatric math. Her current research interest is in online education.