Session D1 - English papers

Students as active co-creators in an online learning environment

Program text

In an online course students had the task of developing questions to discuss. Was it possible to engage students in co-producing knowledge in an interplay between theory and reflections on practice?

Abstract

Introduction
Focus is on an online masters' course on ICT and Learning in Organizations where the traditional practice of the teacher as sole designer of the learning environment was challenged by expecting the students not only individually to take part in online discussions, but also on a group level to develop questions to pose in order to invite co-students to take part in the online dialogue. Thus, the students were involved as co-creators.

Method
The methodological approach deals with developing designs for learning that involves students as co-designers. Drawing on theories of dialogic digital communication and collaborative learning, the presentation will analyze the challenges for students as independent and interconnected learners and the varied dimensions of the teacher role.

Results
The course was based on online dialogues and collaboration on small projects, with a goal of knowledge building among the participants. Students had the task to comment on each other's contributions and theoretically reflect experiences from their everyday practice. The activities had an emphasis on meta-learning: - What insights did they achieve? - How did they learn during the process? - How can course activities be useful for later project work in a group?

Discussion
Was it throughout the course possible to engage students in co-producing knowledge together in an interplay between theory and reflections on their own work practice? Did the participants succeed in letting different approaches to and conceptions of knowledge come into play in a respectful manner aiming to "build bridges across differences" (Phillips, 2011, p. 1)?

A process of social interaction and collaboration may be filled with tensions, contradictions, dilemmas and power imbalances. But throughout such moments of 'crisis' students may experience important learning. However, if the frustrations get too big, it may affect the collaborative climate.

Author

Jørgen Lerche Nielsen, RUC; Lars Birch Andreasen, AAU

Literature

Illeris, K. (2004). The Three Dimensions of Learning. Contemporary learning theory in the tension field between the cognitive, the emotional and the social (2nd ed.). Frederiksberg: Roskilde University Press & Leicester: Niace Publications.

Phillips, L. (2011). The promise of dialogue: The dialogic turn in the production and communication of knowledge. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Schön, D.A. (1987). Educating the Reflective Practitioner – Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Wegerif, R. (2013). Dialogic: Education for the Internet Age. London: Routledge.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.