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BETWEEN DESPAIR AND JOY - EMOTIONS AS GUIDES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Abstract:

In contemporary as well as in future working life, constant learning is an obligation. Organizations change fast and demand skills on managing yourself and your learning while working. Everyone needs an own learning strategy and a constant updating of his or her knowledge in a world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Within the education sector, the role of the teacher becomes more of a learning coach and the teacher and the student are co-learners. Digitalization and MOOC's offer on-demand learning experiences and even customized solutions. Artificial intelligence will take care of everything that can be automated. Something that remains the same is the way we feel when learning and what emotions learning processes evoke. That is why we aim at deepening our understanding on the role of emotions in learning to be able to address future pedagogical challenges regardless of context. We emphasize that emotions are not changing at the same pace as technology does. How we feel about learning and what we feel when learning, remains the same. In other words, the role that emotions play and how they enhance or destroy good learning experiences is crucial. Different emotions, both stronger and weaker ones, are innate in every learning process. They can be triggers to learn to manage yourself and your emotional experiences. In order to enhance learning, it is imperative to understand and manage the emotions of oneself and to understand the emotions of others.

Our study analyses how emotions are playing a role in different encounters within a learning setting. We gathered 40 student, multidisciplinary narratives in three Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences. In the narratives, students told a story about emotional experiences connected to their studies and answered questions that were inspired by critical incident technique. In the analysis of the narratives, we chose an ethnographic approach where our own experience as teachers play an important role. The results are presented in dialogue with research on emotions in learning, group dynamics, pedagogic authority and student dropout. The results were also anchored in our organizations through discussions with teaching professionals. In the discussions we used Janus Cones, a foresight tool, that visualizes the discussion backwards and forward in time. To address future research endeavors we address learning and emotions in a digital setting, touching also upon the subject of artificial intelligence.

Keywords:

critical incident technique, digital learning, emotions, learning, narratives

JEL Classification: I21, I23, I29