Distance learning and motivation, a combination needed to get teenagers involved

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to make a research in distance learning and motivation based on bibliographic research. The idea or reason of this research came to me when distance learning during the pandemic while trying to teach remotely during pandemic, fortunately distance learning experienced a significant development in the last decade, facilitating learning remotely.

As distance education is clearly different from regular education in terms of a student or teacher's physical presence, this should not mean a lost in motivation. There should be no limits to when and where a student can learn. Engage students in learning when the school is out and stay on track with curriculum while instructing online.

In education, particularly those that desire to adopt a flexible learning approach, although ICTs can warrant new forms of teaching and learning to take place, they cannot guarantee that effective and appropriate learning outcomes are accomplished. It is not technologies, but educational purposes and pedagogy that must provide the guide, with students understanding not only how to work with ICTs, but why it is of benefit for them to do so. Knowing about students' use of media in addition to their attitudes and experiences can help teachers develop better courses in order to motivate students.

The main intention of this paper is to approach the purposes for considering motivation as an essential fact in distance learning.

Theoretical framework

Motivation and online education

As stated by Kendra Cherry, motivation "is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviors… Motivation involves the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate behavior." She believes that activation, persistence and intensity are key factors in motivation. Moreover Paris and Turner (1994) describe it as the "engine" of learning.

There are two types of motivation, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation. The first one is the one that comes from the outside of the person and generally involves rewards such as praise, recognition, among others, it occurs when the person is motivated to do something just for a reward; while the second type of motivation is the Intrinsic one; this one, refers to behavior that is involved to performing an activity or something because it is personally rewarding, and not for an external reward as it is the case of the intrinsic motivation. An example of extrinsic motivation could be studying a career for the tittle, while the intrinsic motivation would be to study a career for personal reward, because the person finds it exciting and challenging.

Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plays a fundamental role in education. Despite intrinsic motivation is generally seen as the ideal, both types of motivations are important when learning and driving behavior. In order to understand how they can impact on behavior of a student or a class, a teacher should understand the difference of both motivations and when it is necessary to use each one and how.

According to Ryan and Deci (2000), research demonstrates that motivated students are more likely to get engaged with challenging activities, enjoy, be actively taking part, and adopt a deep approach to learning and show an enhance performance, persistence and relativity. Park and Choi (2009) state in their investigation regarding factors that influence adult learners ´decision to drop out or persist in online learning and these types of investigations make even clearer the fact that there is a need of considering changes in order to keep students motivated when distance learning.

E-learning

E-learning is part of the new dynamic that characterizes educational structures in the 21st century. Likewise society, this concept of E-learning is constantly changing. Moreover, it is hard to arise with a single definition. Some authors define it in the following way: "E-learning refers to educational processes that utilize information and communications technology to mediate synchronous as well as asynchronous learning and teaching activities" (Jereb & Šmitek, 2006). Moreover, is the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services, as well as remote exchange and collaboration (Alonso et al., 2005). What is more, "E-learning is a broad combination of processes, content, and infrastructure to use computers and networks to scale and/or improve one or more significant parts of a learning value chain, including management and delivery" (Aldrich, 2005).

Some of the considerations that must be taken when talking about E-learning are that E-learning can not only be used as a way of collaborative learning, but also for individual learning and autonomous learning; E-learning should be considered a mean to achieve learning goals; as E-learning is a new way to learn that is constantly changing as it has to adapt to the necessities each society, group, student has, so there is a need to take into consideration these changes when preparing a lesson.

The use of ITCs in Education

Furthermore, the ITCs (Information and Communication Technologies) have become part of our daily life. According to Delgado, Arrieta and Riveros, the use of ITCs in education, requires a new type of teacher and a new type of student, due to this, there is a direct need in the change of the didactical and methodological process, where the knowledge is related only to the teacher and the student is just an information receiver. According to them, the use of ITCs increase the possibilities to store information, making the access to it, easier and by this giving an easier access to the educational process and to other society factors, allowing education to ignore the barriers of space and time.

The use of ITCs has many advantages but also disadvantages. Every time a teenager or a child enters to Internet, is in front of an innumerable amount of information, so there will always be a need of guidance or presence of an adult when working in this way.

UNESCO (1998) in its global educational report, based on education, remarks that virtual learning environments constitute a new technological education way and offer a series of opportunities to the institutions of the entire globe as they recognize that these virtual environments are a very recent innovation.

Scaffolding

The first person to use the term scaffolding in the educational context was Jerome Bruner, in the 1960s. The theory is based on the support the students need to receive while learning something new, they will stand in this way, a better chance of using that knowledge. Bruner based this theory and recommends through it, a positive interaction and three basic models of interaction between the teacher and the student when the teaching and are actions, images and language. The ideal way to work in this way is to start with a level that students can understand without problems and by that level start with the presentation of a task by guiding the students on how to solve it; in this process Bruner mentions that the combination mentioned before of actions, images and language, will help students to understand how to solve any problem.

Vygotsky adds to this Scaffolding concept, the concept of "Zone of Proximal Development" (the term was not used by Vygotsky in his writing, the ones that introduced it were Wood, Bruner and Ross in 1976), that zone has been defined as: "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Scaffolding, for Vigotsky, consists of the problems provided by a teacher or a peer with a higher level, to help or support the student while he or she is led through the ZPD. This ZPD is used in the beginning of a process as the idea is that the same way a "scaffold" works in a building, that guidance or help, is removed when the process is done.

Whitin learning theories there are some to be considered when appraising education, as the ones mentioned below.

Multiple Intelligences

The theory of Multiple Intelligences was suggested by the psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983.

The theory of multiple intelligences expands the definition of intelligence by recognizing that people may have another type of intelligence outside of the traditional one like the one we relate to school subjects of mathematics or language arts; in fact scientific studies prove that many people have more than one area of intelligence.

This theory is composed of eight categories or types of intelligences. The intelligences Gardner introduces are:

- logical-mathematical (thinks scientifically, processes data spontaneously and quickly)
- verbal-linguistic (learns language easily and is strong in reading)
- interpersonal (accuracy perceives the feelings and needs of others and uses that information to approach them, work well in groups)
- body-kinesthetic (controls physical movement with special grace or precision, they need to move)
- musical (uses songs, tunes, sounds, and rhythm, are always connecting content to songs)
- visual-spatial (uses visual cues well to design, navigate, draw; they can create)
- intrapersonal (knows themselves well including needs and feelings and uses that information to make sense of the world)
- naturalistic (recognizes the elements and systems of the natural world, love nature and the outside world)

The different intelligences will affect the ways in which students will approach to concepts and instruction that the teacher gives them in the classroom. Teachers should consider a variety of preference and intelligences when planning a lesson or when giving instructions by

integrating different methods that takes, to reach them. The idea is not to create different lessons one for each intelligence, but to create lessons that combine intelligences to create more meaningful learning experiences by outing all of the intelligences integrated in the same lesson.

Constructivism

With the appearance of the internet and communication technologies that empower interaction between students groups, contemporary learning theories progressively inform learning and teaching practices in online contexts (T. Anderson and Dron, 2011).

Constructivism is a theory that sees the learner as agentic; particular cognitive constructivism has come out of foundational work of Piaget (1977); and learning as an effective process of individual meaning-making. Constructivism identifies the learner at the center of the learning process and seriously concerned in the development of knowledge. Learning from this aspect states emphasis on authentic activities, reflection, peer work, collaboration ns intrinsic motivation. (Herrington and Oliver, 2000).

Analysis

Many ways of e-learning have become essential in distance education, such as lessons, curses, among others; due to pandemic, and motivation in crucial in these situations in order to keep students engage with the lessons. The main idea is to consider how students perceive the tasks and whether those tasks motivate the students; furthermore, how students learn in such e-learning environments with that new virtual reality and authentic problems and the way they perceive it.

Emmanuelle Quillérou recent research regarding increased technology provision and learning (2011) reflects how the development of new communication technologies has led to a push for greater technology use for teaching and learning, regarding distance learning education. Additionally, referencing surveys that show that students are indeed time-constrained. These is other of the reasons the author mention why there is a need to be considered for the design of an effective learning toolbox, as opposed to just providing a package of learning tools that may or not be effective on their own.

In addition, Quillérou mentions the urgent need to consider students backgrounds as most students seem to have limited time available for learning because of family and/or child-care responsibilities, and/or because they work outside of normal office hours. Other students have limited technological access. And despite, the resources provided to students are more time-effective, teacher sometimes increase as much all the material availability, students prefer material that require no more initiative, so they do not use the extra resources much. It would thus seem that adding new resources, each with its specific technological tools, does not necessarily enhance student learning other than by increasing student stimulation to study and learn from the course.

Besides, Hartnett, St. George, and Dron reflect on their research concerning examining motivation in online distance learning environments (2011) that, motivation in online environments adopts a trait-like model that views motivation as a relatively stable, personal characteristic of the learner. Research from this perspective has contributed to the notion that online learners are, on the whole, intrinsically motivated; so learning environments need a design to encourage an optimal learner motivation. As for them motivation is closely related to the relationship between the learner and the learning environment.

Conclusion:

Summary of the points and then:

According to the point raised throughout this paper the thesis statement presented in the introduction could or could not be proved since motivation is a crucial element when discussing the combination needed of distance learning and motivation.

With the appearance of the internet, advances in technology, and theories, as constructivism that empower interaction between students groups, contemporary learning theories progressively inform learning and teaching practices in online contexts.

There is a need for analysis, exploration and investigation that deepen in the consolidation of motivation and distance learning, from a contemporary situated prospect, in real life online context that explores, investigates motivation from a social and contextual influences.

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