Implications of Humanizing Pedagogy on Learning Design in a Technology-Enhanced Language Learning Environment: Critical Reflections on Student Identity and Agency

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Abstract : Nelson Mandela University subscribes to a humanizing pedagogy (HP), as housed under broader critical pedagogy, that underpins and informs learning and teaching activities at the institution. The investigation sought to explore the implications of humanizing and critical pedagogical considerations for a technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) environment in a university course. The paper inquires into the design of a learning resource in an online learning environment of an English communication module, that applied HP principles. With an objective of creating agentive spaces for foregrounding identity, student voice, critical self-reflection, and recognition of others' humanity; a flexible and open 'My Presence' feature was added to the TELL environment that allowed students and lecturers to share elements of their backgrounds in a 'mutually vulnerable' manner as a way of establishing digital identity and a more 'human' presence in the online language learning encounter, serving as a catalyst for the recognition of the 'other'. Following a qualitative research design, the study adopted an auto-ethnographic approach, complementing the critical inquiry nature embedded into the activity's practices. The study's findings provide critical reflections and deductions on the possibilities of leveraging digital human expression within a humanizing pedagogical framework to advance the realization of HP-adoption in language learning and teaching encounters. It was found that the consideration of humanizing pedagogical principles in the design of online learning was more effective when the critical outcomes were explicated to students and lecturers prior to the completion of the activities. The integration of humanizing pedagogy also led to a contextual advancement of 'affective' language learning. Upon critical reflection and analysis, student identity and agency can flourish in a technology-enhanced learning environment when humanizing, and critical pedagogy influences the learning design.
Keywords : critical reflection, humanizing pedagogy, student identity, technology-enhanced language learning
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