

Restructuring the College Classroom: Scaffolding Student Learning and Engagement in Higher Education

Authors : Claire Griffin

Abstract : Recent years have witnessed a surge in the use of innovative teaching approaches to support student engagement and higher-order learning within higher education. This paper seeks to explore the use of collaborative, interactive teaching and learning strategies to support student engagement in a final year undergraduate Developmental Psychology module. In particular, the use of the jigsaw method, in-class presentations and online discussion fora were adopted in a 'lectorial' style teaching approach, aimed at scaffolding learning, fostering social interdependence and supporting various levels of student engagement in higher education. Using the 'Student Course Engagement Questionnaire', the impact of such teaching strategies on students' college classroom experience was measured, with additional qualitative student feedback gathered. Results illustrate the positive impact of the teaching methodologies on students' levels of engagement, with positive implications emerging across the four engagement factors: skills engagement, emotional engagement, participation/interaction engagement and performance engagement. Thematic analysis on students' qualitative comments also provided greater insight into the positive impact of the 'lectorial' teaching approach on students' classroom experience within higher level education. Implications of the findings are presented in terms of informing effective teaching practices within higher education. Additional avenues for future research and strategy usage will also be discussed, in light of evolving practice and cutting edge literature within the field.

Keywords : learning, higher education, scaffolding, student engagement

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