Promoting Student Agency in the Classroom Using the Hybrid Teaching Model During the Pandemic

Karen Ruiz

Massachusetts Reading Association, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When teachers promote student agency, student learning improves. Students take ownership of their education and an active role in the lesson, such as participating fully in discussion and creating solutions. Students take pride in their accomplishments and want to complete tasks. Students think independently. Student agency involves student-centered learning, which supports self-efficacy, as students accomplish work and believe in their ability to work effectively. As students learn to revise their work and improve after receiving feedback, they attain self-regulation. Completing challenging tasks and feeling the support of teachers causes students to actively participate instead of experiencing school passively. Promoting student agency is possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, all aspects of teaching have become more complex. Students must be socially distanced and closely monitored to avoid the spread of the virus. This resulted in instruction being delivered remotely, yet many educators have difficulty teaching students through virtual platforms such as Google Meets© or Zoom© According to Trust and Whalen (2021), the global pandemic required every teacher to use technology to teach. As educators needed to pivot to remote teaching, technology was used in ways unfamiliar to many teachers. Therefore, it was necessary to help teachers learn to use tools to support virtual learning and to do so in ways that supported student learning.

As teachers adjusted to school settings determined by the pandemic, they may have found that promoting student agency became difficult or impossible. Hybrid classes, which were new to most educators,

required online teaching using Zoom© or other video conferencing platforms in a combination with in-person teaching. In hybrid settings, classroom management is prioritized over affective needs of students. However, promoting student agency in a hybrid teaching setting is not as difficult as it sounds. Educators can help students attain student agency in hybrid settings by understanding how motivation works.

Motivation is critical to student agency and can be addressed through the use of autonomous motivation rather than controlled motivation pedagogies. Controlled assignments are teacher-centered with an emphasis on students showing compliance to the one assigning the task. Controlled motivation relies on extrinsic rewards such as grades or teacher approval. Autonomous motivation allows a student to own the educational responsibility and become personally invested in it (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers have been forced to manage social distancing and the fear of contracting COVID-19 while meeting students' learning needs. Strategies that center on student agency are critical in these hybrid and online spaces as they help to preserve students' interest in and motivation for engaging in learning. Student agency improves student learning by supporting motivation in lasting ways (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

SETTING THE STAGE

Student agency is a critical factor in learning; it can improve students' energy, interest, and motivation for learning (Zeiser et al. 2018). Scholars have many different ways to consider agency. For clarity purposes, educators and scholars define student agency in the following manner.
Student agency can be defined using these three areas:

- self-efficacy, which is the belief in the ability to succeed
- self-regulated learning, which is the ability to plan a task and reflect on the outcome
- persistence, the ability to struggle with a problem without quitting (Zeiser et al. 2018).

The attributes of student agency prepare a student for challenges; this may include obstacles associated with working in a hybrid learning environment. Students with agency are capable of accepting feedback, thus, they become willing to improve their work (Dweck, 2017).

There are several critical characteristics of student agency: growth mindset, self-efficacy, and persistence. Students who demonstrate growth mindset can receive feedback and use it to improve outcomes (Dweck, 2017). Such students want to improve their work and skills and feel capable of improving. They will accept criticism from others and receive it as helpful information for self-improvement.

Self-efficacy is also essential for students to remain motivated academically (Daniels, 2017). Students with self-efficacy are more likely to persist and stay motivated to learn because they believe in their ability to succeed. During adolescence, however, self-efficacy declines (McTigue & Liew, 2011). Teachers may provide students with opportunities to gain self-efficacy by helping adolescents recognize the effectiveness of their actions to improve learning and face challenges with the belief in the effectiveness of their efforts (Dweck, 2017).

Persistence is also required to maintain effort during diversity, such as COVID-19 (Kikas & Magi, 2017). Students must be able to continue working on a task despite the challenge it presents and not give up (Duckworth, 2016). This may be especially important in hybrid learning spaces, where students may encounter numerous challenges. I have observed that students with strong persistence managed the un-

Related Content

Multidimensional Modeling of Complex Data
Omar Boussaidand Doulkifli Boukraa (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1358-1364).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/multidimensional-modeling-complex-data/10998

Discovering an Effective Measure in Data Mining
Takao Ito (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 654-662).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/discovering-effective-measure-data-mining/10890

Multiple Criteria Optimization in Data Mining
Gang Kou, Yi Pengand Yong Shi (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1386-1389).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/multiple-criteria-optimization-data-mining/11002

Data Mining Applications in the Hospitality Industry
Soo Kim (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 406-410).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/data-mining-applications-hospitality-industry/10852

Realistic Data for Testing Rule Mining Algorithms
Colin Cooperand Michele Zito (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1653-1658).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/realistic-data-testing-rule-mining/11040