

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
Teaching Innovation Award 2016/17 (Staff category)
Post-conference sharing of the winner

Dr Melody Chong
Department of Asian and International Studies

The International Institute of Social and Economic Sciences organized the 5th Teaching and Education conference which was held between 19-22 June 2018 at Hotel Novotel Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands. The conference was co-organized by the University of New York in Prague.

Conference website: <http://iises.net/past-conferences/teaching-and-education/5th-teaching-education-conference-amsterdam>

Thanks to the support of CLASS, I was able to participate in this conference and learned about the recent development of innovative teaching practices. As one of the presenters, I shared the preliminary findings of my research about the effect of instructor support on student creativity. As a participant, I also learned some of the effective and innovative teaching practices and research findings shared by other scholars. This report summarizes some of the teaching techniques, pedagogies and/or recent research findings on higher education.

Effective and Innovative Teaching Techniques, Pedagogies and/or Research Findings

1. The use of student response system (SRS) in higher education in Hong Kong (Wong et al., 2018) – Best Paper

The SRS is a software tool (see Figure 1) that is designed to facilitate students' interactive learning. The tool helps making the lessons more interesting while also allowing quickly assessing their understanding of the subject and stimulating constructive discussions. Recently there are many mobile phone-based SRSs developed and accessible through the Internet, however, many university teachers are hesitant to use it due to the lack of research findings regarding student perception of the application of SRS in higher education.



Figure 1. (google pic.)

Research findings

Based on more than 400 student participants, the study reveals that students have positive perceptions on the usefulness and ease of use of the SRS, esp. students in the early state of study have a significant and positive perception using the software tool.

Author's comments:

To my knowledge, two universities in Hong Kong such as the PolyU and the OpenU have been using the student response system for some years. The apps are available for free downloading from the mobile App Store (Figure 2). I believe that the system shall be able to make the class more interactive and interesting. Especially, when the class with large size with discussion sessions, both teachers and students should be beneficial.



Figure 2. (Apple App Store)

2. Elaboration techniques in foreign language class (Mihaleva, 2018)

The author shares some elaboration techniques and practical hints to foreign language teachers who intend to make their lessons more effective and intriguing in terms of language acquisition.

A number of techniques are suggested as follows:
(for details, please refer to the conference proceedings)

- Commenting on initial quotations
- Introducing: antonyms and synonyms of a word, derivatives of a word, idioms and/or phrasal verbs
- Changing the facts in short paragraphs
- Changing the view point of a paragraph
- Using games for both beginners and advanced learners such as game cards, paper jumbled letters and story, topical discussions, project work, and role plays, etc.

Language Card Games
Learning languages is a big deal!



Observations

As indicated by the researcher, the above elaboration techniques prove effective as well as enjoyable for students. It helps boost students' motivation and confidence, and consequently making a progress. But it also relies on the instructors' ability in bringing about a relaxing atmosphere and learning environment.

3. The use of humanoid robots in foreign language teaching (Tuna, 2018)

The study reports how the use of humanoid robots with multilingual interaction can help students learn a foreign language. Humanoid robots look, move and act like a human and have the ability to provide real-time feedback. The tool can create an effective learning environment allowing students to practice real-life conversations and can be applied to a wide range of foreign language teaching programs. For instance, some basic functions are summarized as follows (for details, see conference proceedings): It helps students to:

- Remember vocabularies
- Correctly pronounce a word
- Learn certain phrases

There are also different modes for foreign language teaching including: storytelling, oral reading, cheerleader, action-command, and question-and-answer.

Challenges:

One of the challenges is that in most countries, there is strong hesitant in admitting the integration of humanoid robots in classrooms. Robots should be perceived as learning tools, not teachers, and it requires the teachers to take on a passive role and acquire the knowledge and techniques in using the robots.

Author's comments:

Although it is still rare to find higher education institutions in Hong Kong using the humanoid robots in-class, a school robot teacher "Saya" (Figure 3, the outlook perhaps needs further improvement!) was created in Japan recently. Saya can express surprise, fear, disgust, anger, happiness, and sadness (see Forbes, 2018).



Figure 3. Robot teacher Saya
(AP Photo/Koji Sasahara, FILE)

A recent article on Forbes titled “Ten Incredibly Lifelike Humanoid Robots To Get On Your Radar” reveals that how the technological advances in humanoid robots are starting to speed up in different industries (Figure 4) such as school teachers, receptionist and television reporters, etc.



Here's what you need to know about the humanoid robots that will be making their ways into your schools, work and homes over the next decade. (Forbes, 2018)

Figure 4.

4. The relationships between students’ perceptions (instructor support, distributional and interpersonal justice), psychological states (prevention- and promotion-focus) and creativity (Chong, 2018)

The sample (N=89) draws from a group of students enrolling in a general education course employing an Innovative Teaching and Learning Approach. It is set of pedagogic practices, which was developed to enhance course innovativeness, effectiveness and implementation.

The tentative empirical findings indicate that:

- (1) perceived instructor support is positively related to student creativity;
- (2) perceived instructor support can enhance students’ prevention- (increased responsibility) and promotion-focus (increased risk-taking and creative) behaviors;
- (3) perceived distributional justice (perception of fairness on grading, etc) has an impact on students’ prevention- and promotion- focus behaviors;
- (4) perceived interpersonal justice (whether students believe that they are respected by the teacher) also has an impact on students’ prevention- and promotion- focus behaviors;
- (5) students’ prevention-focus behavior mediates the relationships between perceived distributional and interpersonal justice and their creative behavior. This suggests that when the instructor shows his/her justice and respect to students, this will first enhance students’ responsibility in completing the assignment, and in turn stimulate their creative performance.

The preliminary study provides original theoretical and practical insights to educators regarding the importance of students’ perceptions and psychological states fostering creativity. Figure 5 depicts the theoretical model of the study.

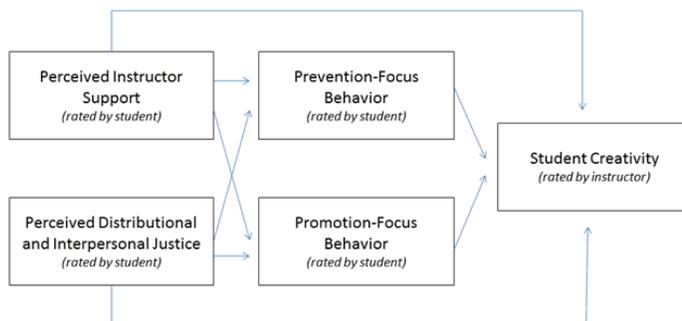


Figure 5.

This integrative research approach (turning the perception of teaching practices into research findings) gives educators concrete practical hints as they can seek to match the research findings to their actual courses and consequently being able to discover the problems and thus making continuous improvement on their teaching and learning approaches. As indicated by Goos and Salomons (2017)ⁱ, while student evaluations of teaching are widely used in tertiary institutions but survey response is typically low and course evaluations are sometimes biased. Being aware of how different pedagogical practices can enhance student creative performance based on a follow-up empirical study, instructors can make more purposeful tactics to adjust their pedagogical practices in order to enhance the overall quality of the course.

Conference proceedings/abstracts book can be found at:

<http://iises.net/proceedings/5th-teaching-education-conference-amsterdm/table-of-content>

AND

<http://iises.net/past-conferences/teaching/5th-teaching-education-conference-amsterdm/page-book-of-abstracts-5tec>

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ⁱ Goos, M., & Salomons, A. (2017). Measuring teaching quality in higher education: Assessing selection bias in course evaluations. *Research in Higher Education*, 58, 341-364.