

Students' feelings in social and collaborative learning: two case studies

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OOFHEC2019: The Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference
16-18 October 2019, Madrid

Group work

- Good for you
 - 21C skill
 - Achieve more than an individual
 - Learn from others, social learning
- Hard work – emotions
 - Commitment and time
 - Different goals and priorities
 - Personality clashes
 - Worries about communicating with others

Two case studies - context

TM255 Comms. & IT

- Second year undergraduate module
- Group work - middle of the module
- Small groups 6-8 students
- Work together on a group product
- Assessed – individual marks and group marks

TG089 Photography

- Not-for-credit short course
- Social learning
- Students share photos
 - View each others' work
 - Comment on others' photos
 - Receive comment on photos
- No assessment of shared work
- Submit their best 10 photos

Two case studies - methods

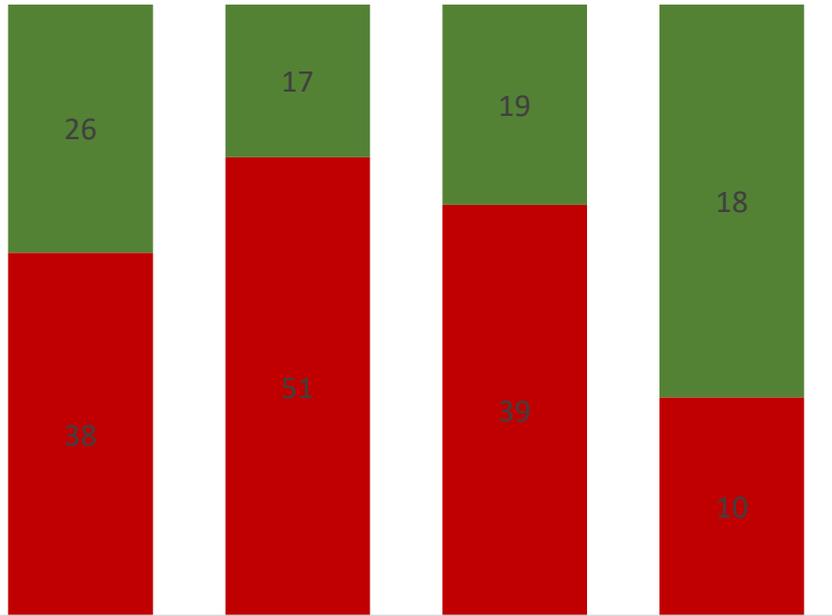
TM255 Comms. & IT

- Qualitative approach
- Open-ended diaries
 - 20 students
 - 4 occasions
- Prompted to write about emotions, causes and impact
- Analysed used word count analysis

TG089 Photography

- Word count analysis
- Forums
 - 1800 posts
 - 4 periods
 - Crude word count by software
- Course evaluation
 - 1500 comments
 - Read closely & tagged

TM225 emotions over time



Beginning

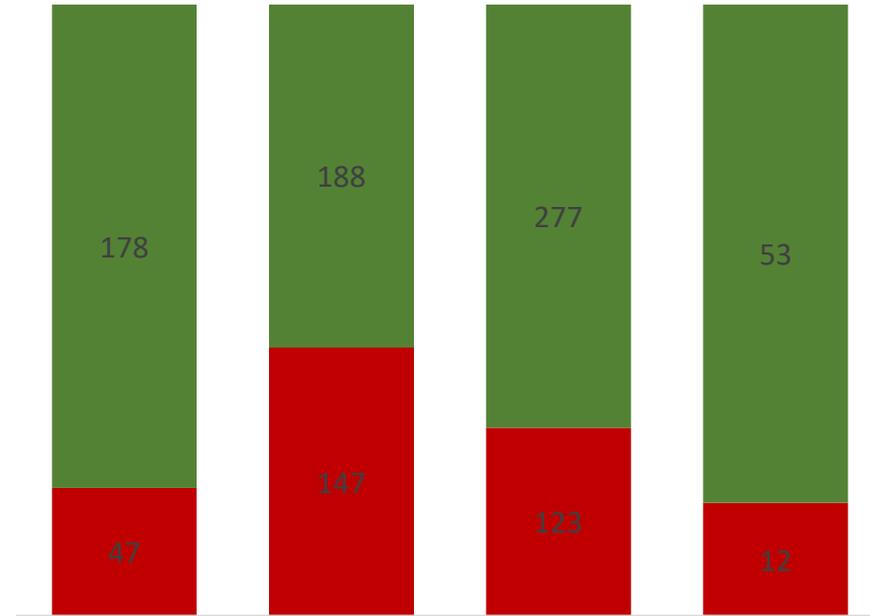
Mid-way

End

After

■ negative ■ positive

TG089 emotions over time



Before

Early

Late

After

■ negative ■ positive

Diary entry 1

(Beginning of collaborative project)



Diary entry 2

(Mid-way through collaborative project)



Diary entry 3

(End of collaborative project)



Diary entry 4

(1-month after collaborative project)



stress difficult
enthusiasm interest
excitement confidence
fear appreciated
confusion supported
challenge. admiration
enjoyment
inspired unhappiness struggled
anxiety overwhelmed
calmness encouraged

Before

(Two weeks before module start)



Early

(Weeks 1-5)



Late

(Week 6 to assessment deadline)



After

(Assessment deadline to results)



Quotes from TG089 forum

“I'm really looking forward to chatting with you all and the challenges that this course will bring. I think it's going to be tough squeezing it in with my job and other interests but definitely will be rewarding.”

“I generally felt quite overwhelmed by the pressure to comment on so many images.”

“I'm really enjoying looking at all your images on Open Studio. I'm finding that I'm learning a lot from this, I just wish I had more hours in the day!”

“It can be quite intimidating posting photos alongside other students who seem to have a far more advanced skill set, knowledge and who comment on my photos with things I don't understand. On the flipside, I also don't feel confident enough to critique their images due to my inferior knowledge.”

Conclusions

- Online collaboration is a highly emotional experience for students
- Different emotional journeys depending on the context:
- Group work with an assessed final product:
 - *Anxiety* initially a predominant emotion (but also *excitement*)
 - *Frustration* common during the project (also *worry*)
 - *Happiness* and *satisfaction* afterwards
- Sharing individual work and non-assessed peer comments:
 - *Enjoyment* and *interest* the predominant emotions all the way through
 - *Supported* and *appreciated* but also *overwhelmed* and *anxiety* during the project

Implications

- Design activities
 - Minimize frustration, avoid serious problems
 - Choose tasks that are intrinsically engaging & enjoyable
- Prepare students for an emotional rollercoaster
- Support students
 - Space to chat, share, vent...(negative not always bad)
 - Watch out for serious issues...
 - real-time student feedback
- Allow time before asking for reflection

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