

Learning Context Editorial

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Learning is an increased understanding of the world and ourselves and interactions. Therefore, learning context is the physical spaces and invisible influences that help us understand. The physical spaces are much easier to identify and understand. They are described as: student/faculty ratios, the structures and visible physical objects in a space such as desks, computers, chairs, sizes of classrooms and buildings. As well, it includes the environment of on-line, face-to-face or blended. It also encompasses the relationships between those in the physical environment.

The invisible influences are the learner and teacher's history, their values and beliefs and what counts as knowledge and learning. It is the unwritten rules or the biases of each individual's lens on the world. It is the power structures and the rewards which may be visible or invisible. These are influenced by the supports available on campuses to achieve success and the pedagogical approach of the teacher, whether the teacher teaches from a teacher centred or learner centred approach. It is also influenced by relationships of all involved in the process.

In this issue you will find numerous discussions, research, and understandings of learning environments that cover a wide range of ideas. Michele Pearson reflects on teaching Instructional Skills Workshops in Kazakhstan. Another reflection explores the impact of five minutes on learning. Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber discuss the speed of the teaching and learning environment. In Creation of the Comfortability in Learning Scale, Kiener et al, discuss the connectedness of students, teachers and content and if a safe learning environment can allow students to challenge their own knowledge and positions and integrate new learning. Colleagues from different disciplines: Cheryl Kier, Social Sciences; Caroline Parks, Nursing and Health Sciences and Kam Jugdev from Business discuss the use of debate as an instructional tool and how creativity develops when rules are removed. Jodi Nickel's article is on the learning perceptions of students, their reflections and the type of learning. In Affective teaching: the place of place in interdisciplinary teaching, the authors explain how place or context have an impact on the what and how of learning. Peter Bergström in Bridging the Distance in Teacher Education: Teachers' Perspectives on Process-Based Assessment tries to understand how teachers are engaged with students and if they are approaching learning from a teacher-centred or student centred perspective. Mouraz and Leite discuss how learning is influenced by sharing the context of the knowledge.

These and all the other articles show the thoughtful nature of Learning Contexts that all of the authors have brought to this issue and which, together, help explore the teaching/learning context from various perspectives. The authors draw attention to several concepts including interactions, assumptions, relationships, beliefs, power and time. This issue is certain to cause you to reflect on your own teaching and learning. Please share your reflections by submitting them to TD so we can continue the dialogue!