

Chapter 6

Course Redesign for Authentic Learning and Active Citizenship: A General Education Course Context

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ABSTRACT

As society evolves and students' needs rapidly change, educators are expected to keep exploring strategies to enhance the teaching and learning process. This chapter documents the approaches adopted to redesign a general education (GNED) course to foster students' authentic learning. Using a qualitative strategy, data collection and analyses were done to determine students' views of education and how they will support innovation, drawing on the redesigned course. The results indicate a variation in male and female understanding of education and its purposes, even though they all generally see it as a tool for societal transformation. The results also show that students consider involvement in innovation in the country essential and highlight measures they will take, including awareness campaigns, nurturing younger generations, and preserving cultural heritage. Based on the results, implications of the findings for stakeholders, such as instructors and institution leaders, are shared.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in societies and students' needs require constant modifications in the teaching and learning process, including course redesign and pedagogical approaches. Specifically, course redesign is essential to accommodate any needed curriculum content modification to support students' meaningful learning and active social participation. In emergencies, the careful selection and intentional technology adoption to sustain learning quality for global transformation (Bernardo, Cordel & Calleja, 2023) will

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be indispensable in course redesign. As Fink (2013) explained, course redesign allows tutors to rethink and modify their courses based on students' feedback and best practices shared by colleagues with the potential to promote inclusive learning environments. Fink (2013) added that redesigning courses would only be effective with relevant, measurable learning outcomes, appropriate pedagogies, learning experiences, and assessments aligned with the learning outcomes encapsulated in the revised course syllabus.

As General Education (GNED) courses assist students in developing transferrable soft skills to complement their core educational programs, educators have to keep examining means to enhance students' engagement (Aderibigbe, 2021). This endeavor will involve experimenting with active learning activities influenced by the authentic learning approach and constructivist pedagogical philosophy. As reported, educational institutions are increasingly exploring means to adopt active learning strategies to enhance teaching and learning with efforts focused on understanding and addressing learning space-related concerns (Talbert & Mor-Avi, 2019). The literature also indicates that authentic learning is a pedagogical approach that promotes discussions and exploration of concepts about real-world problems relevant to the student. It helps stimulate innovation to develop a fundamental foundation of vital problem-solving and critical thinking skills, which are mandatory in a real-life setting (Herrington et al., 2014; National Research Council, 1999). Implementing real-life practice and realistic learning tasks is viable means to strengthen students' engagement and motivation (de Lima, 2021).

In ensuring and promoting an authentic learning environment, students must have the opportunity to reflect on real-life experiences. Since the aim is to motivate students, stimulate their engagement, and strengthen their learning, an authentic learning environment must ensure the application of practical skills in the classroom. This enterprise prompts a thriving, authentic learning environment that yields positive and meaningful learning experiences through strategies such as problem-based learning, inquiry-based learning and simulations (Stanley, 2021). So, implementing an authentic learning approach aims to help students see a connection between what is learned in school and real life situations (Jandigulov et al, 2023).

Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, utilizing technology in education has been indispensably essential and will continue to play a pivotal role in post-pandemic education to aid and improve students' performance (Ploj Virtic et al., 2021). Various studies concluded that studying in a technologically enhanced environment has a more significant and positive impact on student learning and academic success than traditional learning (Brooks, 2011; Neuwirth, Jović & Mukherji, 2021). It has also been proved that incorporating technological devices and equipment in an authentic learning environment improves student learning behavior. Studies showed that the use of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are successful learning approaches that follow the criteria of an authentic learning environment (Utami et al., 2021; Chin & Wang, 2021). VR is a complete immersion in a digital environment, whereas AR layers devices on top of the natural world, thus enhancing what is being seen (Jung & tom Dieck, 2018; Elmqaddem, 2019). Despite this difference, the implementation of both VR and AR strives to promote interactivity and enable sensory sensations to develop the learning environment further.

In addition, the results of an experiment proved the potential of AR in increasing students' learning interest and improving their learning achievements in outdoor settings (Chin & Wang, 2021). Both studies concluded that students' motivation and interest have increased after implementing VR and AR in the classroom. Therefore, the innovative classrooms with e-learning and authentic learning has the power to advance student learning performance and academic achievements (Sumarmi., Bachri, Irawan & Aliman, 2021; Aderibigbe, AbdelRahman & AlOthman, 2023; Aderibigbe et al., 2022). With its characteristics, an authentic learning environment is grounded in the constructivist teaching and learning philosophy. As the literature indicates, the constructivist theory states that individuals do not learn

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