Chapter XI
How to Use Vignettes in an Online Environment to Expand Higher Order Thinking in Adults

Maria H. Z. Kish
Duquesne University, USA

ABSTRACT

A challenge in teaching and providing any type of instruction in the online learning environment is to ensure that participants are engaged in the process and find meaning in their learning. This case study investigated the use of vignettes as a teaching strategy and learning activity of the Generative learning model in a hybrid online course. Vignettes are short and realistic stories that may help bridge participants' previous experiences to applying course material in relevant situations. The generative learning model, consisting of five main components: attention, motivation, knowledge, generation, and metacognition (Wittrock, 2000), was incorporated when requiring students to answer teacher-generated vignettes and to generate their own vignettes. Two outcomes were anticipated using vignettes within the generative learning model in a hybrid online course: (1) enhancement of academic achievement and (2) higher order thinking[1]. This study considered data from student work collected from the Instructional Techniques Course, GITED 631, taught in the Graduate School of Education at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 2003. Eight participants responded to teacher-generated vignettes, created diagrams and rubrics, created their own vignettes, and recorded their observations concerning vignettes in reflective learning logs. The adult online learners in this study professionally focused on teaching children and adults. This study's participants all professionally focused on teaching children and adults. The research findings indicate that the use of teacher-generated vignettes can increase academic achievement, and that learner-generated vignettes can help students achieve higher order thinking. This article also discusses the methods that have been used to teach adult learners how to respond to and create vignettes for their own teaching and presentation purposes.

INTRODUCTION

You are interested in getting a new job. After thinking about the type of position you want, you develop your own portfolio. You realize this is the best way to really display what you have learned, accomplished, and what your current projects are. Because the job market is tight, you need a way to "stand out" from everyone else.

At one point you have an interview for the "perfect job." The interview goes well, and you are told the interviewer was impressed with your portfolio.

The following addresses what you had to do to develop a successful portfolio (as defined in *Professional Portfolios for Teachers*, by Tomei and Wilcox, 1999):

1. Name and describe the type of job you are pursuing. What type of portfolio (intelligent or smart) would you develop? After defining this type of portfolio, explain why you would develop this type.
2. What level (learner, expert, scholar) should you focus on? After defining this level of portfolio, explain why you would work with this level.
3. Define what collection points mean. Consider and state the problem you face in this vignette, and indicate eight different collections points you would include in your portfolio that could address this problem. Also indicate which of the folders (collecting, working, and showcase) you would use to store these particular collection points.
4. Name and define the two types of assessments that should be considered for your portfolio. How would you consider these when you assess your portfolio? Name three different people who would be a part of the assessment process and explain why they should be a part of the assessment process.

This is an example of a vignette, an incomplete short story "written to reflect, in a less complex way, real-life situations in order to encourage discussions and potential solutions to problems where multiple solutions are possible" (Jeffries & Maeder, 2004, p. 8).

Online learning plays a significant part of the future of education, as online learning continues to provide education to individuals facing time constraints. With the benefits of online learning, vignettes may be used to provide meaningful learning experiences to adult learners.

The primary purpose of this study is to show how adults achieve higher order thinking and academic achievement when provided with a supportive online learning environment. The generative learning model is used in this study because it has been shown to help adults meet their learning needs. The techniques used for writing vignettes and teaching others how to write their own vignettes are discussed.

BACKGROUND

The following are the major components of this study: adult learning needs, the generative learning model, vignettes, online learning, and teaching strategies and learning activities helpful for working with narratives.

Adult Learning Needs

The learning environment best suited for adults is supportive, focuses on course and individual goals, and considers active learning activities that assist adults in transferring their learning to their own situations. Three significant learning outcomes that matter to adults include: higher order thinking (Pepicello & Tice, 2000; Wojnar, 2000); academic achievement (Kim, 1999; McKeachie, 1999; Thompson, 1997; Wlodkowski, 1999); and finding the learning activities helpful in under-

Related Content

Adaptive Animation of Human Motion for E-Learning Applications
Frederick W.B. Li, Rynson W.H. Lau, Taku Komura, Meng Wangand Becky Siu (2009). *Methods and Applications for Advancing Distance Education Technologies: International Issues and Solutions (pp. 134-144).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/adaptive-animation-human-motion-learning/26398

Introduction
France Belangerand Dianne H. Jordan (2000). *Evaluation and Implementation of Distance Learning: Technologies, Tools and Techniques (pp. 1-12).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/introduction/18634

The Lack of IT on Post-Conflict Regions: Calls for Increased Technology in Education Systems – Case Study Kosovo
Halime Cocaj (2022). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 1-23).*
www.irma-international.org/article/the-lack-of-it-on-post-conflict-regions/315613

Supporting Digital Natives to Learn Effectively with Technology Tools
Jared Keengweand David Georgina (2013). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 51-59).*
www.irma-international.org/article/supporting-digital-natives-learn-effectively/76315

Bridging of Digital Divide in Africa
S.E. Igun (2011). *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (pp. 11-20).*
www.irma-international.org/article/bridging-digital-divide-africa/49706