1. Title: Changing "Course": Reconceptualizing Educational Variables for Massive Open Online Courses

Author: Jennifer DeBoer, Andrew D. Ho, Glenda S. Stump, Lori Breslow

Journal: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER, March 2014, vol. 43, no. 2

Abstract: In massive open online courses (MOOCs), low barriers to registration attract large numbers of students with diverse interests and backgrounds, and student use of course content is asynchronous and unconstrained. The authors argue that MOOC data are not only plentiful and different in kind but require reconceptualization—new educational variables or different interpretations of existing variables. The authors illustrate this by demonstrating the inadequacy or insufficiency of conventional interpretations of four variables for quantitative analysis and reporting: enrollment, participation, curriculum, and achievement. Drawing from 230 million clicks from 154,763 registrants for a prototypical MOOC offering in 2012, the authors present new approaches to describing and understanding user behavior in this emerging educational context.

Database: Sage Journals Online

2. Title: The Surprising Effects of the Great Recession: Losers and Winners in Thailand in 2008-09

Author: Jonathan Haughton

Journal: World Development, Volume 56, April 2014

Abstract: The "great recession" of 2008-09 affected Thailand significantly, reducing exports by 19% and tourist arrivals by 14%. Yet monthly survey data show, after controlling for household variables, that real consumption per capita rose in 2009 relative to 2008 for most groups, including the poor, and urban and rural households. Losers included some residents of Bangkok, especially those aged 20-29. Nationally, school enrollment rates did not fall, and durables purchases rose. A simulation exercise based on the drop in GDP would have missed these effects. Hence the importance of country-specific policy analysis, rooted in timely local evidence.

Database: ScienceDirect
How Much Infrastructure Is Too Much? A New Approach and Evidence from China

Hao Shi | Shaoqing Huang

World Development Volume 56, April 2014,

This paper extends the Ackerberg-Caves-Frazer approach to a nonparametric aggregate production function to address both the endogeneity and the function misspecification issues in estimating the returns to infrastructure and private capital and thus the optimal allocation between them. Based on Chinese provincial data over 1995–2011, we find that in 1997 most Chinese provinces were under-invested in infrastructure, whereas in 2008 most of the western provinces were over-invested in infrastructure. Such findings suggest that the nationwide large-scale infrastructure investment enacted by the Chinese government after the 1997 and 2008 financial crises may be of different economic efficiency.

Self-Employment in the Developing World

T.H. Gindling

World Development Volume 56, April 2014,

This paper analyzes heterogeneity among the self-employed in 74 developing countries, representing two-thirds of the population of the developing world. After profiling how worker characteristics vary by employment status, it classifies self-employed workers outside agriculture as “successful” or “unsuccessful” entrepreneurs, based on two measures of success: whether the worker is an employer, and whether the worker resides in a non-poor household. Four main findings emerge. First, jobs exhibit a clear pecking order, with household income and worker education highest for employers, followed by wage and salaried employees, non-agricultural own-account workers, non-agricultural unpaid family workers, and finally agricultural workers. Second, a substantial minority of own-account workers reside in non-poor households, suggesting that their profits are often a secondary source of household income. Third, as per capita income increases across countries, the structure of employment shifts rapidly, first out of agriculture into unsuccessful non-agricultural self-employment, and then mainly into non-agricultural wage employment. Finally, roughly one-third of the unsuccessful entrepreneurs share similar characteristics with their successful counterparts, suggesting they have the potential to be successful but face constraints to growth. The authors conclude that although interventions such as access to credit can benefit a substantial portion of the self-employed, effectively targeting the minority of self-employed with higher growth potential is
important, particularly in low-income contexts. The results also highlight the potential benefits of policies that facilitate shifts in the nature of work, first from agricultural labor into non-agricultural self-employment, and then into wage and salaried jobs.

Database: ScienceDirect

5. Title: Investigating value creation in a community of practice with social network analysis in a hybrid online graduate education program

Author: John E. Cowan | Michael P. Menchacab

Journal: Distance Education

Abstract: This study reports an analysis of 10 years in the life of the Internet-based Master in Educational Technology program (iMET) at Sacramento State University. iMET is a hybrid educational technology master’s program delivered 20% face to face and 80% online. The program has achieved a high degree of success, with a course completion rate of 93% and a graduation rate of 84%. iMET is based on Lave and Wenger’s seminal community of practice (CoP) model, which is identified by faculty and students as key to the program’s success. This study applied a value creation framework (VCF) created by Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat for assessing value creation in a CoP. The article presents detailed information concerning the framework and how it was applied. It then outlines how a social network analysis led to findings that value was created in the iMET CoP and how the value created led to a sustained CoP currently entering its 13th year.

Database: Taylor & Francis Online

6. Title: Influence of academic self-regulation, critical thinking, and age on online graduate students’ academic help-seeking

Author: Karee E. Dunn| Glenda C. Rakes| Thomas A. Rakes

Journal: Distance Education

Abstract: Academic help-seeking is an invaluable learning strategy that has not yet received much attention in the distance education research literature. The asynchronous nature of distance education and many online courses presents an inherent roadblock to help-seeking. The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of academic self-regulation, critical thinking, and age on online graduate students’ help-seeking. Results indicate that these variables did significantly influence help-seeking, and that as self-regulation and critical thinking increased so did help-seeking. However, as age increased, help-seeking decreased. These results and
implications for practice are discussed.

7. Title: ‘Computer games can get your brain working’: student experience and perceptions of digital games in the classroom

Author: Catherine Beavis, Sandy Muspratt, Roberta Thompson

Journal: Learning, Media and Technology

Abstract: There is considerable enthusiasm in many quarters for the incorporation of digital games into the classroom, and the capacity of games to engage and challenge players, present complex representations and experiences, foster collaborative learning, and promote deep learning. But while there is increasing research documenting the progress and outcomes of game-based learning, relatively little attention is paid to student perceptions and voice. In order to effectively target game-based learning pedagogy, it is important to understand students’ previous experience, if any, of the use of games in the classroom, and what they made of these. In this paper, we present findings from a survey of 270 primary and secondary school students in Years 4–9 (aged 9–14) in 6 Queensland schools at the start of a 3-year Australian Research Council project researching the use of digital games in school to promote literacy and learning.

Database: Taylor & Francis Online

8. Title: Analysis of the use of Twitter as a learning strategy in master’s studies

Author: Tiberio Feliz, Carmen Ricoy, Sálvora Feliz

Journal: Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning

Abstract: The present study analyses the use of Twitter in the course Social Media and Digital Learning, taught as part of a master’s programme at Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (Spain). The main purpose of the use of this resource was to develop a learning community. This was implemented through the micro design of activities. A mixed research study was undertaken with the aim of enhancing practice and sharing the findings with the scientific community. The initial phase of the study, involving virtual ethnography, utilised observation supported by a diary to detect problems and propose solutions. Implementation was followed by a statistical analysis of the main aspects explored in the previous phase. Thirty-nine people (20 male and 19 female) participated in the study, generating a total of 3026 tweets that were subjected to analysis. The findings indicate that students actively participate in training activities using Twitter but have problems integrating interaction mechanisms. Therefore, they need to be
Given guidance, insisting on retweets, as well as on improving horizontal interaction. There is a tendency to send tweets via browsers and HootSuite, which avoids viewing problems. Users tend to take full advantage of the maximum length allowed by this tool. They do not perceive the character number restriction as negative and believe it encourages reflection and analysis. Training activities on Twitter follow a classic pattern, concentrated around the days in which the activities are proposed.
Technological utopia, dystopia and ambivalence: Teaching with social media at a South African university

Author
Patient Rambe, Liezel Nel

Journal
British Journal of Educational Technology

Abstract
The discourse of social media adoption in higher education has often been funnelled through utopian and dystopian perspectives, which are polarised but determinist theorisations of human engagement with educational technologies. Consequently, these determinist approaches have obscured a broadened grasp of the situated, socially constructed nature of human interaction with educational technologies and failed to explain ambivalent positions of technology adoption. To contest the innate determinism embodied in the aforementioned technological views, this paper draws on technological ambivalence to unravel the complex, multiple possibilities in pragmatic use of technology—including the double-bound relationship between human agency and educational technology. A phenomenological approach that draws on self-narratives of the use of social media by Computer Science and Informatics educators at a South African university is employed to unravel how their perceptions of social media shaped and informed their pragmatic instructional uses of these technologies. Findings suggest that the sharp contrasting experiences of collaborative engagement, enactment of decentralised power and democratic expression in social media coexist recursively with the disempowering, dependence-ridden and distractive effects of these technologies. This technological divergence is further compounded by ambivalent views that neither celebrate the unrealistic hopes of social media nor grossly protest against the debilitating effects of these technologies. This view foregrounds the social embeddedness of technology and its potentially multiple, contradictory effects. The implications of these findings include the need for educators to consider social conditions of technology use, the alignment of such conditions with innovative social media-enhanced pedagogical models and the use of proven models to demonstrate the educational potential of social media technologies.

Database
Wiley Online Library