

Distributed Cognition vis-à-vis Cognitive Achievement with respect to openEd- A Reflection

The knowledge and cognition are not confined to individual but distributed in the surrounding environment (system/organization). Community (or culture) is important in cognitive distribution. Hence, participation of community (or culture) has the potential to enrich knowledge and cognition.

The openEd forum thus giving us the opportunity for collaborative synthesis of information or knowledge across multiple learners and turns (of interaction through comments) in the form of suggestion, addition/deletion/editing of information can be called as cognitive achievement.

Here the first part, i.e., collaborative synthesis of information or knowledge across multiple learners and turns (of interaction through comments) is description of cognition and the later part, i.e., suggestion, addition/deletion/editing of information is contextualization of cognition.

A-Z for successful cognitive achievement

In my opinion, the participants need to inculcate the following A-Z cognitive characters (here I am using the term, the practice which I believe would enrich knowledge cognition) in forums to shepherd successful cognitive achievement with respect to openEd:

Analyze and assess the point raised in the forum; believe in yourself and respond to the query; consider and at the same time critique; deem to estimate the ends of the issue; enrich the discussion based on your expertise and evaluate the points raised; feel the change that might have taken place with time; gather more information from different sources; always ask how for robust exchange of ideas; imagine, infer and instruct (mainly for moderator) wherever required; judge from proper perspective; infuse knowledge in the forum; learn and let learn; materials and methods are important; negate unnecessary discussion; opine fearlessly; presume, if necessary; raise question; review and reflect on issues; suppose for rational process of assumption; think again; be unequivocal to establish truth; visualize for futuristic action plan; wonder often; have an X-Ray-Eye for identifying new ideas; yearn for more ideas; be zesty for choosing ideas.

How to make cognitive achievement a success in openEd?

It's clear from above list that the success will depend upon the active participation of both learners and mentors. Sharing doubts, experiences and queries in the forum are the best ways of coding of important learning issues. This will be followed by collaborative resolution of inconsistency in coding focused on participants' learning and change processes. This will be followed by feedback from participants. Ultimately feedbacks need to be weighted with experiences of participants and intervention of moderator.

However, it is easier said than done. We may view the openEd as an organization and participants as the new entrants in this organization. Obviously, there will be certain amount of cognitive uncertainty. We know that a reduced cognitive uncertainty is basically individual centric cognition while an amplified cognitive uncertainty is organization centric cognition. The Grounded Theory Model of cognitive distribution showed that in reduced cognitive uncertainty, individual traits are valued. On the other hand, we cannot ignore the collective cognition of

organization called amplified cognitive uncertainty which is contextualized (environment) based cognition. An amplified cognitive uncertainty offset participants' normal propensity to depend enormously on abstract concepts and over-confidence. Hence, a balance between the two with slightly skewed cognition towards the amplified cognitive uncertainty (the reason for my inclination for skewed amplified cognitive uncertainty is based on the assumption that the participants have limited knowledge on the course of study which has provided impetus for joining the course) is warranted for fruitful cognitive achievement in openEd.

Acknowledgement

The reflection is based on the reading of Alexandra Michel's "A Distributed Cognition Perspective on Newcomers' Change Processes: The Management of Cognitive Uncertainty in Two Investment Banks".