

ALIGNING STUDENTS' SELF-REPORTED LEARNING APPROACHES WITH OBSERVED ENGAGEMENT ONLINE

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SUBTHEME: Empowering educators

BACKGROUND. Tertiary education has digitalised through Learning Management Systems (LMS) making it crucial to understand effective teaching practices for meaningful learning online. LMS metrics, tracking student engagement, have been used to study the correlates of academic performance (Mogus et al., 2012; Conijn et al., 2017; Zacharias, 2015). However, the relationship between engagement level and academic performance is conflicting with some studies identifying it as non-linear (Firat et al., 2019; Li et al., 2021). High achievers may not be spending extensive hours on LMS but engaging in more productive activities (Li et al., 2016). This raises questions on specific online activities that are cognitively stimulating and why they choose them. Marton and Säljö (1976) introduced two learning approaches: deep learning, involving motivation for in-depth knowledge achieved via application-based strategies, and surface learning, involving rote memorisation to merely pass exams. Ultimately, bridging the gap between numerical LMS data-represented behaviours and the reasoning behind this engagement, is vital. **Aims:** This study seeks to interpret numerical LMS engagement data through student perspectives (via a self-report survey and focus groups) and identify best practices supporting deep learning.

METHODS. Students' input will be gathered from a cohort of Biomedical Science (N=600) students via Biggs' (2001) R-SPQ-2F survey assessing students' learning approaches and focus groups discussing how meaningful engagement can be encouraged. These perspectives will be used to give reasonings for trends observed in LMS data for the same group of students.

FINDINGS. We anticipate a clear distinction between the motivations and learning strategies of top and low performers and differences in the students' online behaviours between deep and surface learning. Focus groups will guide understanding on how to enhance meaningful learning.

OUTCOMES. This study is unique in utilising three measurement strategies to assess the factors believed to influence students' learning approaches and engagement. Through this investigation, we anticipate insightful students' perspectives on how academics can encourage meaningful rather than superficial learning.

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