Digital relational competence: Sensitivity and responsivity to needs of distance and co-located students

# Details

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# Abstract

Being relationally competent is an essential skill for teachers. This involves, for example, skills in social interaction, emotional communication, and human connection. Two key factors for relational competence are teachers’ sensitivity and responsivity to learner needs. In a distance-learning environment this can be a challenge because of the technical barriers, which often entail a lack of nonverbal cues that can guide teachers in social interactions and the orchestration of relations. In this study, nine semi-structured interviews capture the experiences of teachers in upper secondary school, in order to explore how they describe their own digital didactical design for distance courses and how they perceive that it supports students’ learning. In the qualitative content analysis of the interview data, the emphasis was placed on teachers’ digital relational competence with regard to their sensitivity and responsivity. These two factors are scrutinized in relation to six categories of student needs: emotional, cognitive-epistemic, metareflective, self-regulatory, social, and practical-logistic needs.

# Outcome

"The findings in this study suggest that wehave to create and agree uponnew norms of socializing and affirming each other in the ontext of distance learning.By involvingstudents in becomingactive co-creatorsof new norms for social interactions and collaborative learning they are being empowered." (Author, 198-199)