

School-level factors and student performance in the Iea studies. An example from Timss

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Iea international comparative studies traditionally include the use of background questionnaires. Data collected through those questionnaires are central to both international reports and secondary analyses, as they allow to better contextualize student results in the cognitive tests and help identify the school and classroom factors that have a direct or indirect impact on student performance. A systematic review of the literature on Pirls, Timss, and Iccs was conducted upstream, to identify those school, teacher, and classroom factors which are potentially useful predictors of student performance. Such a review highlighted that it is exceedingly difficult to draw causal inferences, as well as to find strong associations between process-related school variables and student achievement. The type of constructs and variables used in the questionnaire development, the way these constructs and variables are operationally defined, the self-reported nature of the collected data, and the kind of data analyses carried out all contribute to explain that difficulty. In order to verify whether the impact of specific school and teacher characteristics varies as a function of the socioeconomic status of students at the school level, a hierarchical multilevel analysis of Timss 2011 data was conducted. Data from the European countries participating in the survey were included in the analyses. The analysis measured what proportion of the variance was actually explained by the factors included in the model and whether the impact of the same factors varies in relation to the school socioeconomic background. A separate analysis was conducted for each considered country and the same multi-level regression model was used first

on the schools as a whole, and then treating schools with high and low socioeconomic backgrounds (based on average student Ses at school level) as two distinct groups. In most countries, results showed the influence of socioeconomic status at school level for all three groups of schools – all schools, high Ses schools, and low Ses schools. Furthermore, results showed that school and teacher characteristics have different impacts across countries and in relation to school socioeconomic backgrounds.

Keywords

Timss, Pirls, Iccs, school factors, contextual questionnaires.

Psychology students' attitude towards quantitative disciplines as a predictor of statistics anxiety and academic procrastination

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of students' attitude towards learning quantitative disciplines on statistics anxiety and academic procrastination. Participants were 142 graduate students attending a required psychometric course (23.2% male, 76.8% female), with a mean age of 21.5 (SD=4.54). Data were collected administering a 15-item *ad hoc* questionnaire. Both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to gather construct validity of the constructing measure. Multiple regression analyses were applied to study what are the relationships between the observed variables. According to our results, the administered scale revealed promising psychometric properties, in terms of structural validity and internal consistency reliability. As expected, false beliefs significantly predict academic procrastination by the mediation of statistic anxiety. Implications for educational interventions aimed at improving achievement are provided.

Keywords

Academic procrastination, statistics anxiety, student attitude, quantitative disciplines, educational interventions.

Art Education and Museum Management: Students' Interests Discussing their manuscripts

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This paper analyzes the students' expectations on the "Art Education and Museum Management" diploma of the University of Valencia digging in their likes, interests and preferences. The study reviews the handwritten essays made during the fourteen consecutive editions of the course. The students answered the survey in the initial sessions of the program showing their views on art museums and telling their personal experiences. We compare the results in the different editions of the course to analyze how students have evolved considering the ideas that they give us, checking the changes in their productions. Their views reflect the evolution of the public about the uses and the knowledge of museums, offering data coming from university public at different times in recent history. The results show how arts education has influenced the views that society has about museums and heritage education, evaluating the history and evolution of the postgraduate course.

Keywords

Art, heritage education, museums, teacher training, writing manuscript.

Types of communication in a collaborative virtual community of pre-service teachers

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Communication is studied in a virtual collaborative community of future teachers. The participants collaborate in a virtual learning environment in higher education. The main theme of this article is computer-mediated communication and the analysis of the three most used communication tools (chats, forums and emails). The different types of communication (social presence, cognitive presence, teaching presence) and the perception of the future teacher on them are exposed in the article. The results show differences in the elements analyzed for the communication tool which is used. The analysis of communication in virtual collaborative environments is a promising line of research to contribute improving the initial training of teachers and therefore improving education.

Keywords

Collaborative community of inquiry, computer-mediated communication, social presence, cognitive presence, teaching presence.

A tool for Oers evaluation

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This paper is part of a wider research project and focuses on the model adopted for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of online teaching and learning, enabling students to adopt a critical approach which could be extended to any online resource which they may use for their lifelong learning. Technology plays a fundamental role in everyone's life and must be approached critically, especially by young people entering the labor market for the first time. The Laboratory for experimental pedagogy (Lps) based at the Department of Education – Roma Tre University has been working, since 2010, on research focusing on the enhancement of students' critical thinking skills to foster the development and promotion of the critical use of technology in education.

The present contribution describes how giving students the tools to carry out an evaluative analysis of the resource they are accessing can enable them develop their analytical and critical thinking skills. It can also help them gaining insight into the importance of “learning to learn” and independently evaluate the quality of online digital resources both as learners and future educators. Doing so it is possible to overcome “brief term instrumental characteristics” of tools and promote long term evaluation processes (Vertecchi, 2012).

Keywords

Oer, higher education, teaching evaluation, critical thinking, learning to learn.