Developing Student Identities in Tertiary Teaching & Learning

Jo Ann Netto Shek
National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Abstract

Student identity is an important aspect of development for both the learner and for learning but often overlooked. In university courses, there is a similar trend of sacrificing identity development for content goals. Furthermore, there is the challenge of where and how student identity could be situated in courses to be of service to student development and education. The inventory of 21st-century competencies reminds us that more needs to be done to help students embrace their future roles through the development of the requisite work or personal identities. In this session, I present findings from a study on the development of reader and global identities in university students. Quantitative and qualitative data reveal that student identities are explored, considered, and either encouraged or disbanded through engagement in literacy activities like collaborative online discussions, social media, and digital book talks. Findings from the study suggest that identity development is possible when explicitly prompted during the learning process of course content. The findings suggest that by strengthening student identities in courses, we may be inching towards holistic approaches that respond to the education of students as 21st-century learners.

Keywords

Tertiary education, student identity development, university courses.