
Insights taken from the learning experiences of our Students. An educational partnership “Saga”

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Abstract

Learning and education have become an “alchemical fusion” of the cognitive (reasoning), the conative (doing) and the affective (feeling), and the sum of these is much more than the individual elements. In achieving this delicate craft, the “alchemical educator” guides, nurtures and patiently coaches.

This study aims at exploring as well as drawing a series of interpretative insights from what might be termed a “transformational initiative” within the culture of a Business School in a University. The authors investigated those meanings undergraduate students attribute to their lived experience (phenomena) and the story of their learning journey (“saga”), which are by definition transformative and emancipatory.

After conducting one to one interviews and several focus groups with level 5 and 6 students the authors started to craft a longer-term strategic response - aka the “Student Partnership” - an option aimed not only at improving NSS metrics but also at introducing an educative-coaching approach to the personal, professional and educational development of students. We also consider that the qualitative data extracted from students’ visual representations of their educational “saga” are more than simple “mind maps”, being more precisely “meanings maps” produced as narrative and phenomenological manifestation - richly invested “meanings” laced with affect.

This study is the expression of the School of Business and Entrepreneurship (SBE) cultural transformation driven through the Student Partnership, a goal that we have been pursuing as a necessity to improve our students’ feedback, to improve our educational leadership and to address the education market cultural transformation. In fact, this study revealed that our value proposition as a School is demonstrated through the Student Partnership - an important facet of a wider and deeper cultural transformation in the University, which encouraged us to explore, reflect upon, enhance and improve our learning and teaching practice.
