SOLUTIONS LAB 8: USING DIGITAL CUES WITH YOUR STUDENTS

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Online learning in higher education is rapidly increasing in popularity, with millions of students worldwide enrolling in online courses each year.

Dropout rates higher and achievement lower in online courses compared to traditional face-to-face counterparts.

Digital learning environment designers have largely focused on delivery of course content rather than assessment.

Innovations in online assessment practices have traditionally been conservative, slow, and remain efficiency and procedurally-focused.

The importance of psychological closeness, social cues, and student-educator interpersonal connectedness in the online environment has been largely ignored in assessment design.
Educators report inflated impressions of the quality and effectiveness of feedback practices relative to the impressions reported by students.

There are discrepancies between what educators and students believe constitutes good quality feedback.

Dawson et al., (2019) re feedback qualities:
- Feedback design (i.e., timing, frequency, and modality)
  - Educators 53%
  - Students 17%
- Content of feedback comments (i.e., usability, detail, emotion and personalisation)
  - Educators 34%
  - Students 84%
WHAT DOES THEORY TELL US...

“two factors that influence the success of a communication channel are its social presence and its richness”

(Aldunate & Gonzalez-Ibanez, 2017, p. 2)
Feedback Social Presence

“the ability to perceive others in an online environment” (Richardson, Maeda, Lv, & Caskurlu, 2017, p. 403)

Two components:
- Intimacy - the use of non-verbal cues to foster a perception of interpersonal closeness
- Immediacy - the use of social cues to communicate accessibility/emotional availability

Online social presence associated with a variety of educational outcomes:
- Engagement, motivation, satisfaction, actual/perceived learning, retention, achievement
**WHAT DOES THEORY TELL US...**

- **Media Richness**
  - Rich communications are:
    - Fast, use natural language rather than numeric information, can transmit a variety of cues (i.e., physical presence, body language, words, numbers, and graphics)
    - Personal, tailored, and convey emotionality
  - Rich media are associated with:
    - Higher certainty - feedback is detailed and sufficient in quantity
    - Higher clarity - feedback is unambiguous and facilitates comprehension/understanding
  - Richness hierarchy:
    - FTF → Audio-visual → Audio → Text(personal) → Text(impersonal) → Numeric
SOME RESEARCH EVIDENCE...

- Grieve, Padgett and Moffitt (2016)
  - Higher levels of social presence predicted greater engagement with feedback
  - Students valued positive feedback, supportive comments, and positive reinforcement

- Grieve, Padgett and Moffitt (2019)
  - Markers were rated higher on extraversion, agreeableness and openness to experience when emoticons were included in feedback

- Moffitt, Padgett and Grieve (2020)
  - Happy emoticons increased perceptions of marker warmth (compared to no emoticons, or sad/confused emoticons)
  - Marker competence higher with 3 happy face emoticons than with 3 sad/confused emoticons
  - Feedback quality and marker professionalism were not impacted by emoticon use
 WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER...

Marker A

• Message delivered: “A little more care in proof reading will improve future assessments”

• Message received: There was insufficient care taken in the current assessment???

Marker B

• Message delivered: “A little more care in proof reading will improve future assignments”😊

• Message received: Warm, kind, helpful, personal, positive
WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS...

• Audio and audio-visual feedback
  • Canvas SpeedGrader

• Paralinguistic cues
  • Textese (e.g., “YOLO” for “you only live once”)
  • One-click phatic tools (e.g., Facebook Likes, Twitter Favourites, Discussion Board Likes)
  • Emoticons :-) or 😊
  • Emoji 😊
WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS...

COLLABORATE ULTRA
GIF ME SOME FEEDBACK...
GIF IT A GO???
COULD B GR8???
#YOLO