Engaging Students’ Learning in a Digital World

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In current information times, the rapid development of computer technology, network technology, mobile interconnection and multimedia technology have created the necessary technical conditions for the innovation of the field of academic advising.

The field of academic advising lags behind other similar fields in the use of technologically mediated communication modalities shown to improve academic outcomes (Junco et al., 2016).

The research is not sufficient for the applications and innovation of social media for improving the students’ academic performance in higher education institutions, especially in China.

For Chinese college students with the characteristics of self-restraint and reticence, the information network technology not only supplies academic advising services with modern means, but also expand the communication channel and space.
Questions:

1. What is technologically mediated communication modalities for college students? A treasure or a poison?

2. Why do Chinese college students have more demand for learning in the digital world?

3. How to Engage Students’ Learning in a Digital World?
1. What is technologically mediated communication modalities for college students? A treasure or a poison?

- College students are easily distracted by the various digital information and internet activities such as online games, social media.
- The academic development research report of Beihang University undergraduates:
  - more than 80% of students give the feedback that learning efficiency is negatively affected by online games and online social media;
  - the most serious issues affecting the students’ academic performance are anxiety mood (accounting for 25.59%) and serious procrastination in learning (accounting for 25.57%);
  - furthermore, students dragged by the two problems tend to keep being indulged in online games, social networks and other digital virtual worlds.
1. What is technologically mediated communication modalities for college students? A treasure or a poison?

- College students' internet addiction is positively related to academic malpractice, and college students with serious internet addiction are also experiencing more serious academic problems.
  - China Education Journal: internet addiction among college students is increasingly prevalent, and 80% of cases in which college students discontinued their study (including dropping out and suspension) are caused by internet addiction;
  - Oriental Culture Weekly: 86% of these students’ studies suffered seriously because of internet addiction, 1/3 of the students flunked a course or have to retake a course because of unlimited internet use, and 3.6% were expelled after internet addiction ruined their study.

- Is it proper for us to conclude that digital information technology is a stumbling block for college students to successfully complete their studies?

The China College Student Survey (CCSS) pointed out that such a learning crisis also exists in colleges.

- the students arrive unprepared for the study;
- the teachers often lack the skills or motivation to teach effectively;
- Education systems based on the students’ characteristics and behaviors are misaligned with learning.

Schools lack technologically mediated communication modalities to engage and support students’ efficient learning.
2. Why do Chinese college students heaped more demands on learning in the digital world?

**Inner-directed**

77.3% of college students would choose what they like based on “personal preferences” in terms of consumption.

**Independent and Struggling**

Together with “otaku”, are the top three self-evaluations of college students.

**The main characteristics of Chinese students——distinct personalities of the times**

**Otaku**

30.5% of college students think that they are very otaku, while 62% spend their leisure time surfing the Internet at home.

Post-2000s Generation Research Report by Tencent in China
2. Why do Chinese college students heaped more demands on learning in the digital world?

- **Mobilehone and Network fanatics**
  More than 95% of college students think that they can’t live without mobile phones or networks.

- **Face obsession**
  99.1% of college students evaluate others through their speaking and demeanor. 71.8% of college students value dressing, and 62.7% value looks.

- **The main characteristics of Chinese students**
  special times labels

- **Elite worshipper**
  Among the idols, business elites rank first, with the highest prevalence rate of 54.9%.

- **Information and learning stressing**
  63.7% of college students are willing to learn the knowledge they are interested in, and 23.8% will learn all new knowledge.
2. Why do Chinese college students heaped more demands on learning in the digital world?

The main characteristics of Chinese students—College students are generally confused when they’re growing up

- 95.7% of college students are confused, especially freshmen and seniors;

- According to the survey, the top 10 most confusions of college students today are: study, career, organization, daily life, practice, self-management, emotion, spirit and value, troubles, and future. Among them, "study" ranks the first. It includes major courses, postgraduate-entrance examination (curriculum), scores, exam failures, exams, CET 4/6 (excellent courses), etc;

- More than 90% of college students would turn to “professional learning institutions” or experienced seniors and industry experts in the face of growth problems.
2. Why do Chinese college students heaped more demands on learning in the digital world?

According to the analysis of the relevant survey results of Beihang University, the online media behaviors and habits of college students today show the following trends:

- The Internet is already indispensable
- Internet-surfing habits change rapidly
- Cognition on network information is not yet mature
- 9.78 hours online every day
- 1.08GB Internet data each day
- The usage rate of “WeChat” from 23.4% in 2012 to 83.8% in 2015
- The main purpose of students surfing the Internet is to entertain (44%) and acquire information (32.8%)
- 50% students are delighted to share the learning and living clips of their own and their friends.
- 45% of students believe that the Internet is the primary factor affecting their thinking.
2. Why do Chinese college students heaped more demands on learning in the digital world?

The academic advising work of Chinese colleges started late

- In contrast to the characteristics of Chinese college students and the online behaviors and habits, the academic advising form is relatively traditional;

- The “post-2000” generation needs interesting and attractive learning content, and they expect more efficient learning ability and more competitive global competence;

In summary, digital technology itself is not the initiator of college students' learning problems, but the incomplete and shallow application of technologically mediated communication modalities in Chinese academic advising and academic support systems, which fails to integrate with the academic advising content, form and assessment of the current Chinese universities.
Beihang University has established an exclusive WeChat platform, called "Micro-Words in Beihang" that has attracted more than 28,000 fans, 1,165 push notifications and cumulative read of 2.5 million students;

By establishing the information column for supporting student learning and operating the online academic advising system on the WeChat platform, we notice that students remain visible and active on focused scholarly topics if they increase social interaction.

A series of practices by Beihang University focus on the process of the digital academic advising service and the related data produced by the application of China social media, such as WeChat, Weibo and Webcast.

3. How to Engage Students’ Learning in a Digital World?
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<th>Content and function</th>
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<td>Network information platform for real-time communication in academic advising</td>
<td>publishing, receiving, spreading and feedbacking learning information to college students;</td>
<td>WeChat (group, Circle of Friends, subscription) Sina Weibo, QQ space, etc.</td>
<td>stimulate students’ interest and motivation in learning; facilitating them to acquire information for study;</td>
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<td>We-Media interaction in academic advising</td>
<td>a live streaming platform of the Academic and Development Support Center for sharing online tutoring resources with rich contents and interactions; including explanations and Q&amp;A of basic courses and professional courses, reports of famous teachers and theme salons, exchange and sharing of peer advising, discussions of general learning ability, etc.</td>
<td>Sina Weibo, Webcast APP</td>
<td>convenient and efficient; Beihang has held more than 70 live broadcasts with a total of 76,269 viewers, an average of more than 1,000 viewers per live broadcast</td>
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<td>Smart information tools for supporting student study</td>
<td>Information tools with specific functions to assist and supervise student learning; Smart information tools like this can help students manage their learning behavior, and urge students to achieve their learning goals through functions like recording, displaying, reminding and providing feedback.</td>
<td>“punching-in” applet embedded in WeChat, etc.</td>
<td>Helping students know more learning partners and form a cooperative learning model of peer interaction; increasing students’ internal motivation for study, and on the other provide external incentive, forming an effective independent learning mechanism.</td>
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