

Editorial

Pedagogical challenges in higher health education to promote critical thinking and sustainability in digital age

The digital age has revolutionized the way we live, work, teach and learn. However, it has also presented new pedagogical challenges that must be addressed to promote critical thinking and Sustainable Development Goals. In their fifth and most recent edition of the book 'Teaching for Quality Learning at University', Biggs, Tang & Kennedy (2022) show that the challenges posed to higher education institutions since the beginning of the 21st century have led to the democratization of access to this level of education. This increase in student participation and diversity has led to the need to rethink pedagogical models that respond to different educational needs.

At the beginning of this second decade, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the need for institutions' digital transition. The ubiquity of digital technologies in this digital age has meant that teachers have to deal with how these can be used effectively in teaching, learning and assessment. Higher education institutions and teachers must find new strategies for genuine student engagement that promote the quality and effectiveness of teaching, including outcome-based teaching and learning. Therefore, it is important to discuss the pedagogical challenges in higher health education and how they can be addressed to promote critical thinking and sustainability in the digital age.

One of the significant challenges facing higher health education is the digital divide. While digital technology has made education more accessible, many students still lack access to digital resources. Addressing the

digital divide requires institutions to invest in digital infrastructure and provide students with access to necessary digital resources. Additionally, institutions should develop strategies to support students who may struggle with the use of digital technology.

Another pedagogical challenge in higher health education is fostering active learning. Digital technology can support active learning by providing students with access to interactive simulations, online discussions, and multimedia resources. To promote active learning, institutions should incorporate digital technology into their teaching methods and provide opportunities for students to engage with digital resources actively. However, the use of digital technology in higher health education also raises ethical issues. Institutions should develop policies and guidelines to address ethical issues related to the use of digital technology in education. Additionally, students should be provided with opportunities to learn about ethical issues related to the use of digital technology in healthcare.

Critical thinking is an essential skill for healthcare professionals, which is even more pressing in the digital age. With the abundance of information available, it is crucial to develop critical thinking skills to analyze and evaluate the quality of information. Higher health education institutions should incorporate critical thinking into their curriculum and provide students with opportunities to develop and practice critical thinking skills. However, the use of

digital technology in higher health education also raises ethical issues. Institutions should develop policies and guidelines to address ethical issues related to the use of digital technology in education. Additionally, students should be provided with opportunities to learn about ethical issues related to the use of digital technology in healthcare.

Promoting sustainability is another challenge. Digital technology has the potential to support sustainability by reducing the carbon footprint of institutions and providing students with opportunities to learn about sustainability issues. Health higher education institutions can integrate sustainable practices into their curriculum by teaching students about the interlinkages between health and sustainable development, and provide students with opportunities to engage in sustainability initiatives. By emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices in healthcare management, students can become responsible healthcare professionals who are aware of the social and environmental impact of their actions.

Health higher education institutions can encourage interdisciplinary collaboration among healthcare professionals, environmental experts, and other

stakeholders to address health and sustainability challenges. This can be achieved through joint research projects, interdisciplinary coursework, and community outreach programs. By working together, these groups can create innovative solutions to address health and sustainability challenges in their communities.

Due to this digital, higher health education institutions face various pedagogical challenges in promoting critical thinking and creating responses to Sustainable Development Goals. Institutions must be proactive in addressing these challenges to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the digital age and to prepare healthcare professionals for the future.

Reference

Biggs, J., Tang, C. & Kennedy, G. (2022). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*. (5 ed). Open University Press.

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