STUDENT LEARNING CULTURES AS RESPONSES TO A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

I samtida och framtida lärkulturer beskrivs studenter ofta som självreglerande, självständiga och kunskapssökande studenter med världen som sitt redskap för kunskapsutveckling. Ur många aspekter skiljer sig den bilden från senaste års debatt i Sverige om studenter med försämrade förkunskaper och låg motivation för studier. Denna studie avser att istället lyfta diskussionen till att handla om studenters handlingar och hur dessa kan påverkas av mötet med en undervisningsmiljö.

I denna studie analyseras och diskuteras lärkulturer som studenters kommunikativa handlingar vid två längre utbildningsprogram. Handlingarna kategoriserades utifrån människors livsattityder och förhållningssätt i mötet med en utbildningsmiljö. Studenters handlingar och strategier bör inte betraktas som fixa identiteter eller grupperingar utan bör ses som reaktioner på mötet med en lärmiljö. Frågan aktualiserar syftet med högre utbildning samt ansvar för utformningen av lärmiljöer som bättre stödjer studenters meningsskapande och måluppfyllelse.

Nyckelord: högre utbildning, lärkulturer, MDA, studentaktiva arbetssätt, studentkulturer, utbildningsdesign

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of society has altered the conditions for producing knowledge and where the production of knowledge takes place (Gros, Maina, & Kinshuk, 2016). According to Ehlers (2013) the transformation of educational practices which 'take advantage of a greater freedom and empowerment of learning opportunities' (Ehlers p. 43) should be regarded as cultures rather than open-learning methodologies.

Technology has played the role of catalysing learning scenarios into more self-determined, independent and interest guided learning. A sphere of new open-learning cultures is emerging which is both empowering higher learning and challenging institutions, teachers, and learners at the same time. "In higher education institutions, open learning cultures are no longer visions of a distant future, but everyday reality for more and more students" (Ehlers, 2013, p. 1).

The more frequently occurring 'everyday reality' referred to in the quote above triggers an interest to investigate 'everyday reality' for students and how students respond to a learning environment. This study is therefore a case study identifying learning cultures among students' responses to a learning environment. What becomes visible in terms of 'self-determined, independent and interest guided learning'?

AIM

The aim of the study is to identify student-learning cultures in higher education as student responses to a learning environment. To be able to trace learning cultures to students' responses to a learning environment, rather than fixed student model behaviour, could better prepare higher education institutions in providing the most optional learning conditions for student course goal fulfilment.

BACKGROUND

Higher education teachers face many challenges to provide conditions for learning, orienting groups of students towards the same goal (Laurillard, 2002). We do not know what students bring to learning in terms of perceptions of knowledge, their readiness to learn and their understanding of pre-set goals (Laurillard, 2002, 2012). Non-synchronised expectations between students and teachers in a learning environment cause problems as student respond to an environment based upon their expectations and what they previously have encountered. This is established in a solid field of research like Marton and Säljö (1976) who linked students' previous experiences of constructing conceptions of learning and knowledge to deep or surface approaches to learning. Student search for coherence between a learning environment and their expectations and act accordingly. Ramsden (2003) makes a distinction between student strategies as striving to *understand* contrasted by strategies *to meet course demands*. Deep approaches are associated with sense of involvement, examination performance and positive self-assessment (Ramsden, 2003; Svensson, 1977). There are also studies of teachers being able to influence

their students' learning by making desired approaches by educational institution very clear for students (Ahlback & Reneland, 2005; Prosser, Ramsden, & Trigwell, 2003; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004).

Seamless and ubiquitous cultures?

The increased competition between a growing number of higher educational institutions in Sweden makes it a buyers' market. In this competition, contemporary flexible and digitized learning environments have become a sellers' argument resulting in a palette of terms as open, flexible, blended and even learning ecologies and networked learning environments and cultures. Digital technology has been characterised as a promise of change, using metaphors of volcanoes - the eruptive and disruptive forces of technology, avalanches and recently even melting glaziers. Teachers are in the same way the object of a reconceptualization referred to as *facilitator, mentors, supervisors, the guide on the side* and even *shepherds* (c.f. Ehlers, 2013). Conole (2014) writes about the shift from instructional approaches to what is described as authentic approaches providing skills needed for a constantly changing society. The use of educational technology has also introduced a discourse of educational design as *open learning* –open to when and where people learn. The concept of *seamless* or *ubiquitous* learning is one of the later etiquettes introduced to describe a person's experience of continuous learning across time, space and social settings (Gros et al., 2016). Talk of learning cultures or new cultures of learning according to Ehlers (2013) is characterized by the move towards a more autonomous learner and a model of learning moving away from knowledge transfer towards the mutual construction of knowledge and competence development preparing the learner for an unknown future. There is cause for reflection here as a one-sided focus on the learner and learning – the "learnification" of education (Biesta, 2010) could or would miss out on the purpose of learning having a focus on outcomes and what-works as evidence based. "Learnification" as a waking call is in line with criticism of alignment theory, presuming shared educational aims and meanings with students (Ashwin, 2009). Talking of learning should instead mean to hold on to the concept of education and relate the talk of learning to an educational practice guided by questions of what is good education and what promotes deliberation and good judgement and not forget what higher education is about.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This study acknowledges the importance of learning activities as shaping and interacting with students cognitive and social-cultural conditions for constructing knowledge, meaning that we can influence student learning through the design of the learning environment. A design perspective would argue that we cannot design learning but design for learning to happen (Selander & Kress, 2017). Design is here referred to as the material, the temporal conditions for learning and the learning activity itself and involves students' activities as well as the teachers' choices of settings (Selander, 2016). This design perspective relates to research on engagement rather than involvement as engagement refers to both student and institutional activities (similar to a design perspective) whereas involvement often refers to student activities only (Wolf-Wendel, Ward, & Kinzie, 2009).

This first section presents research on the possible value of student activity for student involvement, participation and engagement that can be traced through several theories and data-driven empirical studies (Zepke & Leach, 2010). Whether student activity also leads to better learning outcomes is not yet established by research according to Heaslip, Donovan, and Cullen (2014). The relation between course design and academic success is a currently expanding field and some recent major studies are here accounted for.

Keys to engagement

Zepke and Leach (2010) propose based on a survey of 93 studies, that working on student autonomy and self-beliefs, accessible objectives, teachers and teaching is central to engagement, creating a culture where learning is active and collaborative and ensuring a diverse and supportive environment.

Participation is a concept related to engagement and often similar with activity. The use of *participation* differs between research contexts as well as educational contexts. In its most basic form it is measurable in terms of attending and answering questions and thereby often referred to in quantitative ways (Rocca, 2010) (c.f the term busy with Fromm). The theoretical concept of participation described by Lave and Wenger (1991) refers, on the other hand, to a qualitative process of becoming an initiated member of a community and raises questions of the social organization of intentional learning design. The different meaning making contexts of teachers and students also influence levels of activity. According to Bippus and Young (2000) students' perception of participation is wider and involves actions taken outside the immediate educational context and is more associated with an approach to learning compared to tutors' perceptions. Tutors are said to have a more quantitative understanding and often perceive participation as in-class discussion. Bippus & Young suggests that students who are not observed as active but engaged in on-going processes could even be disturbed by attempts to engage them in activities if they only serve tutors' notion of participation.

Engaging with prior knowledge can be done by building upon the dialogical character of learning instead which may intertwines the process of making meaning for the individual and social communication (Reneland-Forsman, 2012; Selander, 2016). Through interactions students' prior knowledge can be related to new concepts and content and invent pre- and misconceptions (c.f Entwistle & Peterson, 2004; Rienties & Toetenel, 2016). Since students' respond to a learning environment based upon previous experiences sharing the experience of others can provide missing links to theory of relevance to students and provide a joint focus of *we* instead of *I* as a collective and shared experience (Reneland-Forsman, 2013).

Design that matters

Access to more and more meta-data has resulted in studies testing the correlation between course design and student success and satisfaction. It has also resulted in studies searching for predictions of academic retentions based on student categorization. Also informed by social learning theories, is Rienties and Toentenels

meta-data study (2016) which, based on the categorization of 151 course models, establishes links between learning design activities and academic retention (using multiple regression analysis) where the primary predictor of academic retention was the amount of communication and interactive activities. They claim that design decisions of teachers strongly influence how students engaged with the VLE. In Rienties, Toentenel and Bryan (2015) a positive correlation was found between assimilative learning design and student satisfaction but no relation between student satisfaction and academic performance. Another large scale study based on 48 blended and on-line learning modules (Arbaugh, 2014) found that learners' behaviour, measured by social presence, predicted learner satisfaction and academic performance. Strikingly, the technology used in these 48 modules did not significantly predict learners' learning experience and performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMING

The concept of culture in education is used on a gliding scale between talking about *the culture* in terms of the unification of education in Europe and on the other end as a normative orientation for a specifically defined learning culture. In this article learning culture is used for categorizing signs of common assumed values and underlying assumptions, orienting actions taken both by teachers and students in an educational practice (c.f. Ashwin, 2009).

In searching for sign of cultures, Fromm's modes of *having or being* are used (Fromm, 1976/2013). A rough distinction Fromm makes is between an orientation of the individual towards subject or ownership, as modes of existence involving the relationship between self and the world. In its most basic form having is a normal function of our lives as the means for carrying out tasks but also for enjoying them (Fromm, 1976/2013). But having and being are also two fundamental modes of experience. Fromm particularly addresses learning as consequences of the two different modes and describes the mode of having in relation to learning as an estrangement where content does not become part of the student's or the individual's system of thought. Content fails to enrich and widen the experience creating something new or changed (Fromm, 1976/2013, p. 25)[1]. Having or being are different mind-sets informing the underlying assumptions guiding orientations and actions by students and teachers constituting the fundaments of the learning environments. Different modes influence what engagement is oriented towards, e.g. passing an exam, engaging with teachers on administrative and organizational issues or trying to master content or expanding knowledge with the help of the teacher. Attitudes also influence how and for what teachers' competence is used and how this is expressed in communication.

The mode of being implies change – a change in orientating actions and in relating to the world. For students in a being mode, learning has a different quality in terms of relatedness to the world. Their response in an educational practice is what Fromm calls active. It is important not to confuse active with busy or taking action without the prerequisites of a being mode as independence and critical reasoning, to ex-

pand one's isolated ego and to be interested (Fromm, 1976/2013). When 'busy', focus is on the outcome rather than the self as an acting subject. A student in being mode does not just show up at a lecture but is prepared for what the lectures might be dealing with. Interacting with content, these students listen, hear, receive and most importantly respond in a way that is productive for stimulating their own thinking process – they are affected, affect and evoke change (Fromm, 1976/2013).

A model for analysis (Fig. 1) has been put together based on Fromm's two existential modes combined with both an active and a passive approach to different aspects of life as significant aspects characterizing different learning cultures. The different modes are directly linked to important characteristics associated with learning like involvement, engagement and participation. Signs of these cultures are traced among students' communicative actions/non-actions.

Fig. 1 Basic model for identifying signs of learning cultures as orientations and values underlining actions in an educational practice inspired by Fromm (1976/2013)
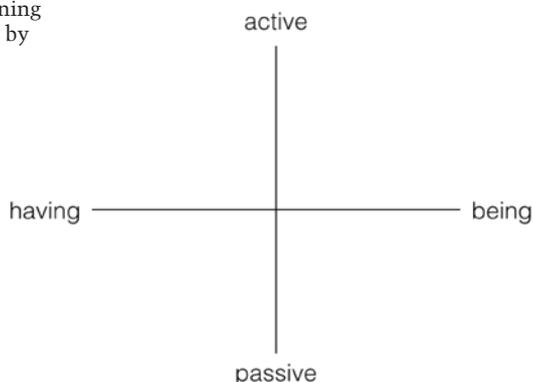
METHOD

The study objects are courses in two higher education programs that had been redesigned to better support student goal fulfilment. A collaborative and student active course design had been implemented. The design tried to synchronize teachers' and students' expectations, introduce supportive workshops engaging students with theoretical concepts, increase the number of collaborative activities and use a clear and consistent communication on responsibilities from before the course started. Supportive workshops or course activities took on different challenges in different courses and overall increased the number of ICT-supportive activities in courses. The changes sometimes introduced a clash between what students expected from course design and what students encountered and introduced an opportunity to study student strategies as communicative actions when students encountered these changes.

Design is here used as temporal conditions for learning and the learning activity itself. The design involves students' activities as well as the teachers' choices of settings and takes a functional stance, acknowledging that learning cannot be designed – rather designed for (Selander, 2016; Selander & Kress, 2017).

Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) (Jones & Norris, 2005; Scollon, 2001) has

informed the content analysis in that the study of language is here studied as situated action. The key aspect of this argument is that discourses of interest are represented as social action, not simply as text. Mediated action is used to stress the dialectic between action and its means (Scollon, 2001). Data is collected and mediated by technology and language.

… language in use, but we do not mean language 'in general' or abstractly; we mean some particular word, sentence, phrase, intonation, or perhaps a genre that is appropriated by a social actor to accomplish a specific action at a specific place and in a concrete moment. (Scollon, 2005, p. 20)

Analytical concepts following MDA are mediational means as the tools by which people undertake mediated action (Scollon, 2001). Sites of engagement are focal points of students' attention as different patterns of orientation in time and space containing different expressions of identity (Jones & Norris, 2005).

Data used for trying to identify learning cultures are accounted for in table 1 and are collected from two educational programs in behavioural science. Two focus group interviews were carried out at two different campuses and themes emerging from the interviews were tested in a survey with all 190 students in one of the programs. The focus group interviews covered three themes; *expectations and previous experiences* of studying in higher education, *support and learning environment* and finally questions related to *social aspects of learning* since these three areas well represent critical aspects of designing supportive learning environments (Reneland-Forsman, work in progress). Data from the other program (80 students) consists of mainly communication from the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) as group and assignment communication as well as private messages. Standard course evaluations are added to this data where the analysis is based on the open-ended questions.

Permissions to use data have been obtained separately from the students using the VLE and the students attending the interviews. The objects of analysis are learning cultures as students communicative actions in an educational practice and categorized based on links to assumptions and values orienting these actions and summarized as emerging clusters of actions in fig 2. It is important to consider circumstances that can be taken into consideration in an analysis. The characterisation of the means used to identify and recreate a situation, is not only connected to the means but also to how we use it.

Table 1 showing types and quantities of data

Type of data	No
Focus group interviews	Two 60 min interviews (12+5 students at 2 campuses)
Student survey	120 students – 1 program (190 in total, 63% answering rate)
Course evaluations	4
VLE communication (Asynchronous course threads & private messages)	2 programs (270 students)

EMERGING CULTURES – ANALYSES AND RESULTS

The results are presented as clusters of communicative actions with a common core (see fig. 2). The clusters present where energy and focus are oriented as actions for that particular statement. It is important to point out that students are not being categorized but their actions are being put into context. Individual student's actions might therefore migrate between categories in their relations to courses proceeding, the individual student's development and responses and dominating discourses in student communication. Table 2 presents excerpts illustrating the categorization of data. Since the excerpts are removed from their actual context, which for the categorization provides the clue to why a specific category is chosen, excerpts could seem to fit in more than one category but the examples are based on the interaction in the pedagogical practice where they were produced in line with MDA. The format here however, does not allow such contextual keys. Categories are therefore elaborated initially after a general introduction to the overall process.

Traces of cultures in actions

Diverging student expectations became visible early on in courses as different categories of communicative actions and later in course evaluations and interviews. The biggest challenges for teachers were the idea of offering supportive activities that were not mandatory for students and to achieve a clear and consistent communication of the purpose of the workshops. The concept of workshops and supportive student activities were more easily adapted by a majority of students than by teachers partly because teachers had to step out of their comfort zone in terms of how they put their expert knowledge in play and partly to let go of controlling student attendance. Teachers developed optional course activities better corresponding with assessment criteria and communicated these activities as valuable for students to attend. In some courses this created confusion with students who only wanted to know what the minimum attendance was in terms of activities. After experiencing the first workshop a couple of students e-mailed the teachers the same day to express disappointment when they realized how appreciated the workshop was with peers. 'If you had told us how important this was we would have attended'. For the next workshop attendance rates were high. In this course students rated teachers' instructions as very supportive for goal fulfilment, 58% to a to a very large extent and 35% to a large extent[2]. Before introducing more student active and supportive methods to the course, 4% of the students answered that instructions were supportive to a very large extent and 20% that they were supportive to a large extent[3].

Insecurity caused different orientations in actions. There was one group of students who, when presented with a course design, accepted it and tried to put it to use. Initially they struggled but by actively seeking relevance and meaning and sharing that, they seemed to commit to coursework, either goal-oriented (active/having) or knowledge production oriented (active/being) and used teachers to resolve difficulties. Another category used a 'busy' strategy to ask for information already provided to them. These students did not actively try to orient themselves in the virtual interface or study guide but kept busy asking for information.

Table 2.

Categories Type of data	Passive/having	Active/having	Active/being	Passive/being
Focus group interviews	…I sometimes check if someone asked a question online since I don't do that. I hope that others do…	I´d rather stay at home and read in my own book because it's no fun listening to teachers reading from a book. I experience the communication on facebook to be very negative – things that no one dare write in MyMoodle – it's not productive…	… so many wants to be served a paper saying this is what you should read for the exam. I was surprised by that. All information is on MyMoodle, sometimes a bit unclear but you can figure it out. No need to ask questions but still they come. There are different views on responsibility – your own responsibility. Why apply for an education when you expect to be served… like a cookie? …	(These students realize quite early that the course is not for them for different reason and drop out)
Survey	It takes time to figure out what is obligatory I find exams most important since they give me credits. I am so fed up with Svenssons book that I can throw up…at the same time I am really cross because there is no real lecture on the book…	There's a lot of literature so I focus on passing the exams than actually learn from the literature I have felt several times that we have studied things I probably will never have use for at work	Workshops, seminars and group-work are all very valuable for me. I enjoy discussing theories and key-concepts with others as it leads to en enhanced understanding.	

Categories Type of data	Passive/having	Active/having	Active/being	Passive/being
Standard course evaluation (open comments)	As I have been mostly confused and unsure during this course I think it is difficult to talk about what I've learned or appreciated…	The course needs to be clearer with possibilities to overlook the workload …ask students who disturb lectures to leave, as this have interrupted lectures to a really great extent"	Once you cracked the code for content it was very interesting and useful. Improvements I wish for has to do with students' motivation and attitudes at lectures and group assignments.	
VLE (group and individual communication)	I have been working very hard with this report and I think it deserves to be approved and I have neither the energy nor the time to improve it… Face facts you, in reality there is something called time for kids. … I am insulted by your e-mail and felt violated when having to work between Christmas and New Year.	I make a connection to constructivism, psychodynamics and socio-cultural perspective to increase literacy. (end of argument)	Yes you are right. I have plenty of fighting spirits… and I see that you're fighting too…that gives me a taste for more ;D …I am also very grateful that the teachers did not let us 'slip through' without knowledge.	Thanks for your reply. I have used the week-end to think and made a decision. I will drop out. Many thanks for your engagement. Kind regards…

The results are here presented as four clusters of characteristics of emergent learning cultures traced as student communicative actions; passive/having, active/having, active/being and passive/being (fig 2).

The passive/ having cluster
This cluster of actions is linked by student actions referred to the category 'busy' but not active. 'Busy' actions bring about a visible effect and could be focused on obtaining information already accessible to them, on passing or changing conditions or grades. Actions are founded in opinions and students here use opinions as arguments, often focused at executing students' rights. Energy and time were by these actions invested in raising a voice rather than facing what was actually rocking students' worlds. Raised voices and strong opinions tended to have a larger impact in campus settings since their actions were visible to the whole group cau-

sing breaks in orientations and colonizing lecture time. Recollection and references when they occurred were restricted to other individuals' statements. Students' actions were directed towards observing and adjusting expectations and often later moving towards an *active/having* dominance. A movement towards *active/having* as peer-supported actions seemed to be stimulated if teachers lingered in answering students. During this phase, it seemed to make an impact on students' actions if teachers re-directed students to study-guides or instructions rather than providing the answers promptly. These *having/active* orientations in peer-actions could irritate students in being modes.

Teachers chose two different strategies to respond to *passive* student strategies. According to VLE-conversations presented by the involved teachers, some of them chose opposition, with support in local regulations and the information they had already presented to students. Others invested time and effort in establishing a communication mode, trying to relate student actions to processes of learning and promises of expanded awareness. The latter often proved fruitful for student changing strategies but were very time-consuming and exhausting. Both strategies were however supported by the group of teachers. Using some kind of commitment of any kind, making students 'deliver' something in the learning environment, normally introduced a shift from passive to active. Whether expectations in these two categories become more synchronised, turned out to be a critical point in how learning cultures developed in this study.

The active/having cluster
There is an important distinction in the having mode between the passive and active clusters, and that is the presence of peer-supportive actions. Peer-supportive actions are present in the active cluster but missing from the passive cluster. Goal-oriented actions are here taken openly using peers and teachers, sharing information or conclusions or acting individually. In the passive cluster sharing is not applied and private messages are more common than using open channels as meetings or VLE:s. In terms of approaches to knowledge, actions mirror content in an assimilative way.

The purpose of lectures is an area where expectations differ between the *having* and the *being mode*. In the having clusters students expect lectures to summarize course literature and being 'busy' in relation to content had a focus on the outcome rather than the self as an acting subject. Actions moving towards or already in a being mode could instead interpret lectures as different activities resulting in experience of processing clues, identification of patterns in literature, experimenting with what-if scenarios, identifying key-concepts or producing questions aimed at helping students to develop strategies for taking on course content and literature rather than summarize content.

The active/being cluster
This cluster is categorized by actions oriented towards meaning, open to widen and challenge own experience. These actions are responses to opinions rather than acting out based *on* opinions. Actions here seem to integrate knowledge making

students able to direct towards other sites of engagements (as focal points of students' attention) using; "what if"…"can there be"…"Let's try to…"I'm thinking this is relevant for…". It is also in this cluster that we find actions expanding content by contributing with observations, readings and other initiatives.

An active/being mode also faces conflicts when course design and teachers' actions fail to live up to student expectations of higher education. In the focus group interviews, voices representing the being mode were raised as disappointment when being 'herded' through course literature in HE and in exams, being expected to 'tick off' the right references rather than giving proof of a developed knowledge. Students discussed this perceived mismatch between the role of higher education and the actual design of some courses. They felt they had returned to 'upper secondary school' where different experiences, conflicting thoughts and discussions were not appreciated. Means for collaborative processes were also underused according to statements in this cluster. Teachers did not on a routine basis design for open and visible learning processes making the students resources for each other.

The passive/being cluster

In the *passive/being* cluster, silence and non-action were sometimes the result of teachers failing to reach students in communicating, or drop-outs based on the lack of a meaningful context or a non-interest when presented content and core values in the course.

Fig. 2. Clusters of actions visible in data.
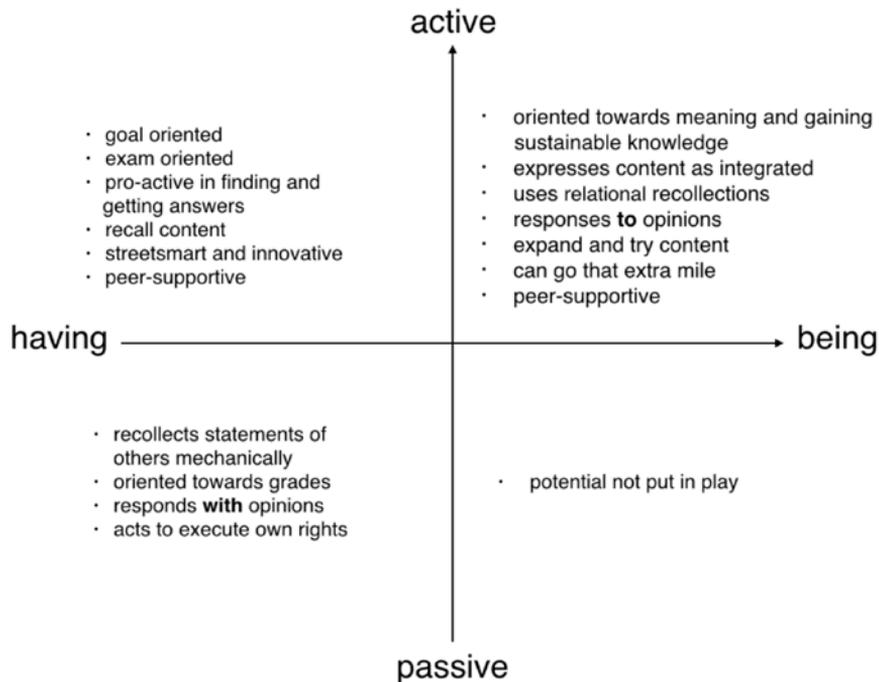
LEARNING WITH A CLEAR PURPOSE

The discourse of student learning cultures emerges parallel with emerging pedagogies responding to changes in society in general and higher education specifically. There has been a debate in Sweden of changing student behaviour and less prepared students coming to higher education. In this debate, many teachers who interact with students on a daily basis refer to students as not acting in this determined, independent and interest-guided learning associated with the being-cluster and new trends in higher education (c.f. Ehlers, 2010, 2013; Gros, 2016). Previous research highlights the importance of students' experience and attitudes forming expectations with which they respond to a learning environment (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004). Results from this study suggest that initiatives from emerging pedagogies might not be in line with what students expect and higher education is missing out on synchronizing expectations thereby influencing student behaviour.

It is possible to change learning cultures taking informed didactical choices provided some conditions are fulfilled. In dialogical learning environments, we can undermine the having mode and communicate expectations, better utilize technology to add and process new experience and consequently orient towards goals and criteria in meaningful contexts.

The discourse of student satisfaction is often linked to less reflected approaches to student centred learning and the use of digital technology. By instead using student-oriented approaches, we can act out of professionalism keeping student need in focus.

This study cannot present quantitative data from the different categories. Data can only point to variation and movements between clusters. As educators, we need to recognize that different learning cultures exist in the same practice, influencing both teacher and student actions and also causing tensions. There is however a need of an initiated approach acknowledging teachers' responsibility for using a design that reveals expectations, offers interaction and collaborations and orients students towards active strategies and possible active/having strategies (c.f.Rienties & Toetenel, 2016). To associate student behaviours and actions with individuals or student groups as fixed material is problematic however. Talking about how students 'are' means we are not considering the role of education to provide good conditions and engagement for students to develop knowledge as facts, understanding, capabilities and good judgement

The promise of rapidly changing open learning cultures faces challenges threatening to restrict rather than open up outlined future educational landscapes. *Learning cultures* as a learning and design model for education characterized by 'greater freedom and empowerment of learning experiences and driven by 'interests and current problems which learners wish to overcome' (Ehlers, 2013, p. 43) might be put on hold. The changed conditions for HE institution as the subject of increasing competition and students 'voting with their feet', course budget cuts, the construction of students as customers and the recent suggestions for a stricter legislation adding responsibilities and pressure on institutions to support students'

completion might have an even larger impact on learning cultures than the 'erup-tive' forces of new learning cultures. To rely on the forces of student demands and technology to open up the landscape might not do the trick.

Teachers and students have a shared responsibility for creating good learning con-ditions and involvement in learning trajectories.

> In all education sectors, knowing who our students are, and what they need from our teaching, has become so challenging that the hard-pressed teacher busy with the task of continually renewing and updating the curriculum, tends to trust the intelligence and motivation of the students themselves to construct the bridge between what they bring to their studies and where those studies are taking them. (Laurillard, 2012, pp. 26-27)

To fully succeed in this quest to better support student learning however, conflic-ting ideas as to what are the main objectives of higher education need to be back on the agenda not to force students to choose between *learning and succeeding* (Nilsson & Wihlborg, 2011).

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NOTER

1. c.f. Deweys distinction between activity and experience in Democracy and Education 1916

2. Course evaluation referred to here is based on an answering rate of 66%, where n=48 students

3. n=52 students