Understanding Students' Needs in the Age of the Internet (and COVID19!)

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Outline

- What is education?
- Current context
- The "Millennials"
- Role of universities
- Role of academics
- The comfort zone
- The COVID19 disruption
- Personal discoveries in online delivery
- The new "normal"

What is education?

https://sites.google.com/site/jarradwyett/time-tracker

"Education is the process of transforming individuals' behaviour through learning"

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Current context

This process is affected by:

- The quality of the School system
- The needs of industry/society
- Resources available to teach and learn
- Government's agenda
- Social beliefs
- Institutional and personal teaching philosophies

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The "Millennials"

- Each individual has unique needs.
- Don't want it all, but want it now.
- Crave new experiences.
- Very precious with their time.
- Concerned about society and the environment.

- Gender/Colour-blind.
- Natives to a digital land.
- Prone to anxiety and depression.
- Access to instant information.
- Short attention spans.

The role of universities

Middle ages to 20th century
Repository of information

- Information was not readily available. Lecturer was the "sage on the stage" who explained the information contained in books.

- The "chalk and talk" format widely used.

- Student role reduced to listen during lectures and apply information in homework and practicals.

- Education finished on graduation.

- Universities held moral and intellectual authority/responsibility.

The role of universities

Late 20th century to present
Use of information

- Information readily available. Lecturer becomes facilitator of learning, a designer of learning experiences.

- The "chalk and talk" format used to show how to use information.

- Students take an active role. Learning depends on what they do, not on what the lecturer does.

- Education does not finish on graduation. Need for long-life learning skills.

- Universities are a voice among many.

We are in the middle of this transition. Nobody knows what a successful university will look like by the end of the 21st century.
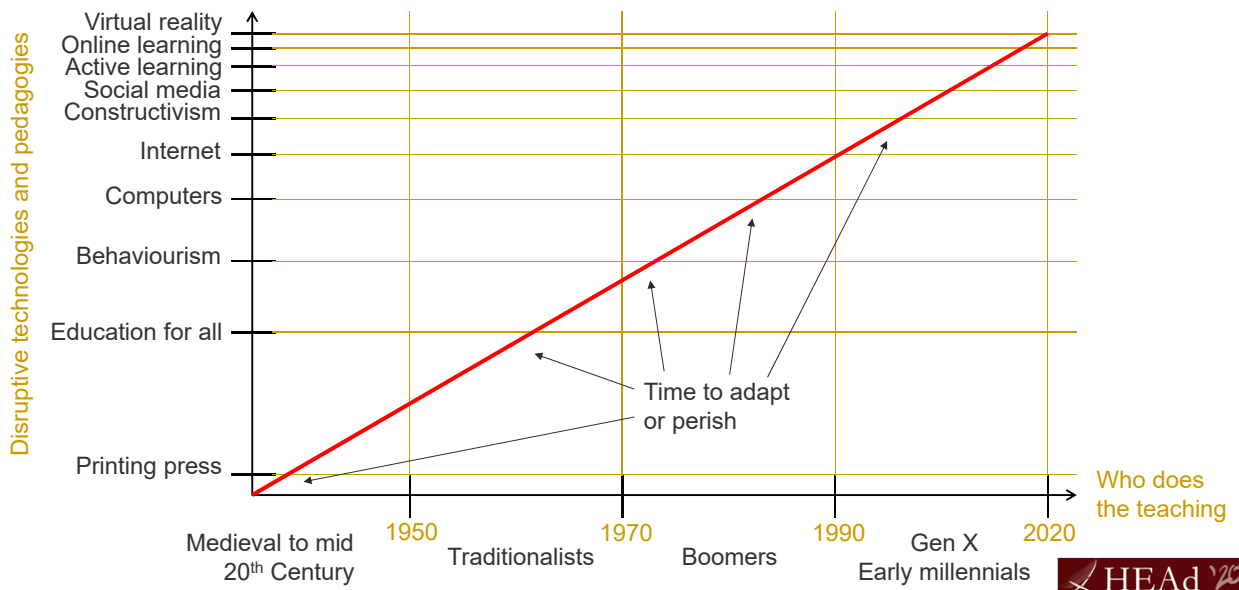
Role of academics

https://htasa.org.au/2019/09/2019-history-teacher-of-the-year-award/

Role of academics

Disruptive technologies and pedagogies

- Virtual reality
- Online learning
- Active learning
- Social media
- Constructivism
- Internet
- Computers
- Behaviourism
- Education for all
- Printing press

Time to adapt or perish

Who does the teaching

Medieval to mid 20th Century
1950
Traditionalists
1970
Boomers
1990
Gen X
Early millennials
2020

The comfort zone

https://www.instagram.com/thewealthhike/p/Bp5EkQvncnW/?hl=en
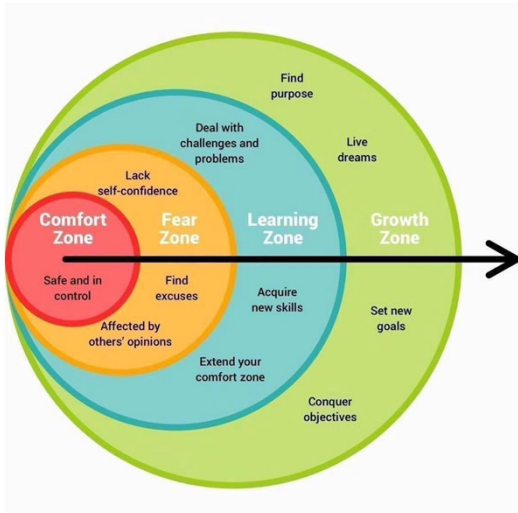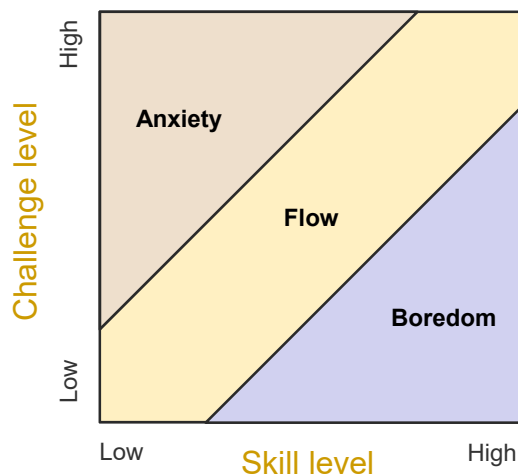
- Comfort zone is safe but boring.
- Learning is painful.
- Comfort zone grows with learning.
- Going too far from the comfort zone may lead to anxiety and panic.
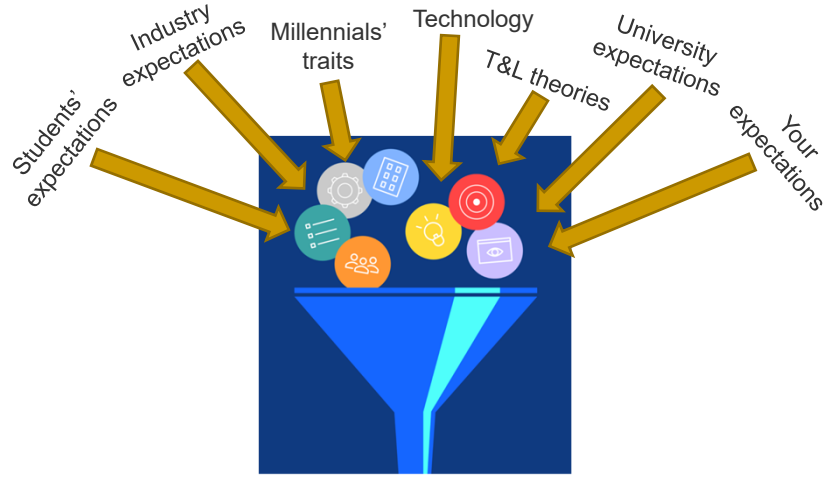- Students (and academics) need to understand this.

The comfort zone

Learning activities are more effective when they are just beyond the reach of students' current abilities. This is why games can be so engaging.
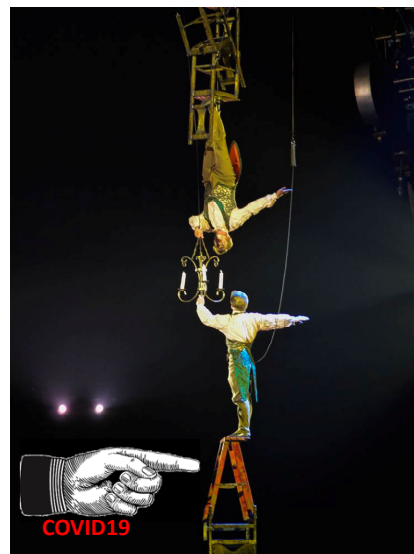
Putting it all together

Students' expectations · Industry expectations · Millennials' traits · Technology · T&L theories · University expectations · Your expectations

Learning outcomes + Syllabus + Activities + Assessments

The COVID19 disruption

And just when we thought we had everything (almost) under control…

COVID19

https://www.funinfairfaxva.com/cirque-de-soleil-kurios-comes-to-tysons/

The COVID19 disruption

On very short notice and with minimal or no training:

- Adapt your material for online delivery.
- Coordinate and train the tutors who will facilitate the activities.
- Design assessments that can be completed with no need for invigilation.
- Communicate with students clearly and frequently.
- Answer students' emails and make more concessions than ever.
- If face-to-face activities are allowed, make sure social distancing and hygiene practices take place.

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The COVID19 disruption

Students do not have it easy either:

- Manage time to watch videos, attend online activities and complete assessments.
- Have access to technology and an adequate study environment.
- International students worry about what is happening at home.
- Stuck because don't know where to start.
- Withdraw from units to avoid a catastrophe.
- Learn the new environments and tools on top of the contents.
- Feeling of isolation and being lost.

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Personal discoveries in online delivery

- Online delivery is not the devil.

- Technology is robust enough to be trusted.

- There is very good content on the Internet if you know where to look.

- Is is very easy to over-estimate the ability of students.

- Communication with staff and students has to be frequent and efficient.

- Most students are not lazy or entitled.

- Most students struggle to make good questions.

- Some students expect you to be the sole source of information.

- I can learn more than I thought. (But it is tiring)

https://www.rd.com/true-stories/hidden-treasures-havent-been-found-yet/

The new "normal"

Nobody knows how the new normal is going to be, but everybody knows is not going to be the same as in pre-COVID19 times.
I expect to see changes in:

- The way people interact with each other.

- The way we work.

- The way we learn.

- The way we teach.

- The way we vote.

- The things we take for granted.

How long will these changes last?

May be until the next crisis!

Do you have any questions?

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