

## **Stuckness at the threshold - Which strategies do students choose when facing difficulties within certain disciplines?**

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This study is motivated by Berg and Erichsen's (2014) paper which studied the effects of a learning activity among students aiming at deep learning. The paper suggests four hypothesis (1) what have been pupils, must be triggered to immediately become students, (2) efficient feedback must be timely, personal, specific and give guidance for further work (feed forward), (3) students wants to be seen, and (4) students with a deep approach to learning are primarily motivated by knowledge application. However, this study also revealed that a substantial amount of the students did not have the stamina to fulfil the entire learning activity, even though all these criteria were reported being present. This led us to the question of how and why they act as they do when they face difficulties coping with the challenges at hand. This project thus attempts to investigate into student experience, their potential strategies, or lack thereof, in this liminal stage of their learning trajectory. We suggest that what seems to be lacking in these students learning trajectory and the course design is to facilitate the development of studenthood, how to become a student, that differs from being a pupil.

We frame these issues within notions of liminality and stuckness. In the threshold concept framework, liminality plays an important role, and describes the transition from old to new insights (Meyer and Land, 2006, Land, Cousin, Meyer and Davies, 2005). We also draw upon Nolan's ideas of stuckness in the liminal zone (Nolan, 2005), stuckness too frequent leads to the feeling of failure, defeat and loss of self-confidence (Kiley and Wisker, 2009). Consequently, it is crucial that we develop better understanding of the student experience at this critical stage. The paper will build upon findings according to the important design principles of threshold concepts, namely listening for understanding. The first step is in-depth interviews among a group of bachelor students. The paper will suggest possible ways of incorporating student experience into the design of a teaching and learning trajectory by applying Nolan's methodology of joint enquiry (Nolan, 2005) as a possible means to facilitate the learners access to the "underlying game" (Perkins, 2006).

This explorative study aims at generating hypothesis which in turn will be the foundation for a larger survey. The population of the survey, will be around 10 000 students registered at the BI Norwegian Business School.

In the bigger scheme of things, the fact that the PISA surveys shows that Norwegian pupils at Primary schools have the lowest endurance within the Nordic countries, as well as below the average within the OECD region, makes this problem area a larger one than the isolated subject at hand might suggest. This common understanding assumes a perspective where the student is to blame for whatever ailments of the educational system (Biggs 1999). When these pupils become students, their reality is substantially more demanding. If we understand more about how students cope with the liminal stage, we have a better foundation to adjust the design of the teaching and learning trajectory accordingly.

The article is the first paper studying Stuckness at the threshold among Norwegian business schools students.

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