

NTFS 2022: Authenticity in teaching and assessment

The world of education is constantly evolving and so it needs to provide context to what is being delivered at each session. This is more so for complex topics within the cyber science domain that evolves and changes every second.

The dynamics of such changes make the life of an educator interesting as well as challenging.

Also, the fact that this domain attracts a more diverse community and cohorts, it is best to be able to deliver an inclusive curriculum authentically while making sure that students feel they are included and able to achieve their potential.

Delivery of such content with real-life examples and data as well as explaining things in an effortless way that relates to that cohort, and what is currently going on in research and development and media, is essential to make sure that the students are also engaged and are ready to solve the changing cyber threats landscaped in the real world.

Hence, this is where authenticity comes in handy. As an educator, I always take the role of a mentor rather than someone with an authoritative body of knowledge. I encourage students to ask and challenge my discussions and explanations within the sessions. Each week while delivering the required learning outcomes and syllabus, this is contextualised with the latest examples and personal experience and quotes either from me or taken from the cohorts.

Using such an authentic approach makes the whole experience more engaging, authentic and memorable. As time goes by, students are more engaged and contribute more to and outside sessions.

Being dynamic and reactive to students' needs is part of authentic teaching philosophy. Using these principles helps students in understanding ideas and teaching as making learning possible (Ramsden 1992).

[Students] stay abreast of what is happening in the world of cyber security and is always open and thankful to hear about events he had not yet become aware of."

Student, MSc Cyber Security

Where assessments are also provided based on real-world examples and students are applied to apply their skills in a real-life authentic case student.

Authenticity and openness in teaching provide an open playing place that is inclusive and motivates the students who are not confident enough to get involved in the complete process and be part of the cohort. At the same time, this gives individuals a sense of belonging. More so if you the educator/mentor can learn from their experience as an educator and use this as an example during sessions without compromising the integrity and respecting what each student can contribute; this will further improve their experience.

An authentic educator needs to understand that we are all different and unique, with different abilities that contradict one another, from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, nations and tribes. Hence, when an educator provides a community that together if we respect and appreciate without distinguishing one another we bring out the best in each other, then the entire cohort's expression during such complex topic coverage will fulfil their potential and raise the challenge.

If you've been in one of Abdullahi's lectures you know the information you get is top quality, and this leads to the grades achieved in the exams."

Student, 3rd year Cyber Security

Based on my experience, students that have managed to have this environment have been able to succeed not only in the subject concerns but their confidence overall has been increased and this has led to positive outcomes. This applies to both students and staff within the teaching cohort and team.

You were one of the best teaching experiences on the course, I and many others used to say how we genuinely looked forward to your lectures, even so far as to be a little disappointed if it turned out you weren't teaching us one week!

Student, MSc Cyber Security

Dr Abdullahi Arabo is humbled to be able to mentor individuals and groups during their careers. He specialises in cyber science and has used experience from both industry and academics to develop and champion inclusive pedagogy and content delivery. Through his contacts and research and development as well as consultancies, he can contextualise teaching and learning materials that reflect topical issues and real-world scenarios. Hence, he can provide authentic teaching and an environment that brings out the best in each student and challenges them to achieve their full potential.

References

Ramsden, P. (1992). Learning to Teach in Higher Education, Routledge.

Rita Pierson, 2013, [Every Kid Needs A Champion](#)