

Learning Analytics and Deep Learning: New Quantification for STEM Instruction

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ABSTRACT

The quantification of results, analysis of efficacy and enhancement of live instructional teaching techniques is now being enabled by advances in emerging technologies, e.g. Learning Analytics, Deep Learning, Neural Net Training, and Meta-Disciplinary approaches to instructor, teacher and professorial selection and preparation. For millennia, sages, teachers, and mentors have been sought to help prepare people for success. Most of that search has been based on subjective and un-quantified evaluations. The drive of human emotions has masked even the modest ability people had to evaluate the effectiveness of education. Data is adduced in this paper to show how this conflation of personal attractiveness and teacher productivity has doomed early attempts to evaluate teacher skills. The authors have participated in DoD-Sponsored research in the use of virtual human conversational human/computer interfaces that surfaced a number of issues around teacher evaluation. Concomitantly, many researchers into training efficacy of simulated have made significant strides in Learning Analytics that suggest the Artificial Intelligence community may have insights that could be transferred back to studies of live pedagogies. Those studies are surveyed and reported. Also, several emerging capabilities in the computational sciences have showed both results and promises for additional advances. These new technologies are outlined and reviewed. Then the paper lays out work that posits the ability of machine learning to produce improved evaluation of humans. All of these issues are then synthesized to produce a supportable path to a new set of psycho-metric tools for a better regimen of pre-selection evaluation, tailored education, and final competency assessment of instructional personnel in primary, secondary and, especially, tertiary education, a pressing current concern of the authors. The conclusory remarks present the potential, the risks, the benefits, and the costs of a few paths to more optimal STEM education and training.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dan M. Davis, JD is a Staff Member at Catholic Polytechnic University and is active as a consultant at the Institute for Creative Technologies, University of Southern California (USC), focusing on large-scale DoD simulations and avatar uses. Prior to retirement, he was the Director of the JESPP project at USC for a decade. As the Assistant Director of Advanced Computing Research at Caltech, he ran Synthetic Forces Express, bringing HPC to DoD simulations. He also served as a Director at the Maui High Performance Computing Center and in computer research roles at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Martin Marietta. He was the Chairman of the Coalition of Academic Supercomputing Centers and has taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels. As early as 2071, Dan was writing programs in FORTRAN on one of Seymour Cray's CDC 6500's. While in the Marine Corps, he saw duty in Vietnam as a Cryptologist and retired in 2002 as a Commander, U.S.N. He received B.A. and J.D. degrees from the University of Colorado in Boulder.

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