

CO-CREATION OF VALUE: APPLYING THE PARADIGM TO HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The co-creation of value is a competitive service strategy which relies heavily on increased customer participation to enhance service outcomes and customer loyalty. The paper summarizes the basic tenets of the approach to service management and explains how these principles can be used to transform conventional learning experiences to improve student participation and accountability in higher education. The authors structure the paper around the DART model (Prahald & Ramaswamy, 2004), which summarizes four fundamental building blocks for fostering effective co-creation of value in traditional service settings.

(D)ialogue. In co-creation, communication is multi-directional and dialogue focuses on collaborative information sharing rather than one-way information conveyance. In education, this requires the instructor to provide the foundation in terms of clearly specified learning objectives and basic frameworks for the delivery of learning processes. In turn, students become responsible for identification of gaps in their knowledge as their learning progresses. Instructors and students then collaborate to determine and deliver the resources and information needed to fill the gaps in the learning experience.

(A)ccess. Advancing access requires the provision of alternative experience environments which allow greater access to co-creation opportunities and allow customers to self-select the context of their experience; the more experience environments provided, the better. This approach is the very essence of what is suggested by education trends related to blended learning models. Content delivery is multi-modal and is provided when and where students best learn. Synchronous time and/or place interactions are scheduled to exclusively support experiential learning processes and/or exceptional intervention activities as required.

(R)isk assessment. This element focuses on the reality that co-creation entails greater responsibility and accountability from the customer for service successes and failures. Such a reality can be empowering or disturbing to students more accustomed to traditional learning environments. Today's learning management systems provide mechanisms which facilitate greater accountability through the use of tracking tools which document

students' usage of learning resources and responsiveness in the learning community. Educators and administrators can immediately recognize the benefits to be gained from greater student accountability, but potential costs must also be considered. Bandapudi and Leone (2003) found evidence of a self-serving bias in the attribution of responsibility for success and failure in services in which high customer participation is involved. The implications of these and other issues are discussed in more detail in the paper.

(T)ransparency. Under conventional service models, companies benefit from information asymmetry with their customers. The co-creation model is different in that it supports the availability of proprietary information to the customer as part of the strategic relationship. In education, instructors now have new tools and options for similarly opening access to materials once considered proprietary in higher education. Online posting of lecture materials and podcasts and the integration of open source materials are just a few examples of how educators can enhance student use of and access to learning resources. Similarly, the sharing of clearly stated learning outcomes, well formulated assessment rubrics, and examples of quality learning outcomes with students demystifies the process of assessment and in turn gives students more control and understanding of what it takes to achieve desired learning outcomes.

The idea of placing greater responsibility with the student in his/her learning process is not new to education. What is new is an understanding of how the educational system can take advantage of innovations in learning tools and policies to create environments which advance co-creation in learning.

REFERENCES

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