

# Review of: "Between Avoidance and the Need to Learn: Emerging Dynamics in the First Weeks of Classes in Higher Education in Angola"

Laura Dzurec<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hartford HealthCare

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Abstract—I would recommend following your opening sentence with a bit more context to situate the points you are making. In the absence of that context, your important points lose significance by my read.

Introduction—What is higher education frequency? Are you talking about numbers of programs? I think you raise very interesting points here. I struggled with your argument though—I couldn't really follow your logic.

Angolan higher education—Here, too, your points are interesting but I struggled with your logic. Maybe this is an issue of translation to English?

Contacts with higher education---Do you think the early orientation to education, if it introduces students to expectations, could also foster colonialist viewpoints?

Meaningful learning theory—I think here it would be very important to describe the learning itself and the links between the learning process, the embedding theory, and the issues you have described to this point.

Methodology—I would change this title to 'methods' because methodology is technically 'study of methods' and you're not studying the method, you're describing it. I think that if your primary purpose is to describe why students don't come to class in the initial days, you need to really build the link I mentioned in 'Contacts with Higher Education' above. Also in this section, it would be very useful to see a description of your analysis/synthesis process. How did you code and categorize?

Data Collection—I think the information in the first paragraph belongs in the section above (currently titled Methodology).

With regard to the third data collection, you don't really have a structure that will allow you to assess cause and effect.

Participants—Do you think the convenience sampling will affect your results, since you want a picture of attendance patterns across students?

Data analysis—I think the information here belongs in the Methods section.

Ethical procedures—I would recommend noting whether you had Human Subjects approval, and I would note that before describing your methods. No sense in having methods if you don't have approval.

The informal calendar—is it the students' perception that attendance is <25%? Wouldn't that be information to get from attendance records, rather than relying on student perceptions? It seems to me that more than attendance, teacher practices are of great significance.

The cycle of collecting and reproducing knowledge—I'm beginning to see some VERY interesting themes here; in the absence of a clearly articulated theory about what's really going on, though, the points you make get lost, at least by my

read. I think reworking the early sections of the paper as I noted above will be useful to you in making your points absolutely clear (and powerful).

Inhibition of enthusiasm—BINGO. Their attendance IS irrelevant if there is not teaching. What is the upshot of this disconnect, in terms of the points you opened your paper with?

The recovery of learning....—I think that in the absence of a clearer theoretical framework, the jump you make to “memorization as a totalitarian strategy” falls flat. Back I go to my earlier points about a clearer theoretical framework.

Results—Way down in your discussion here, you again note ‘cause and effect.’ You can’t look at that with an interpretive framework. Regarding servitude and power, you again make a HUGE leap here, I believe, because you don’t have the framework to support this observation.

I have a hard time buying your contention in regard to the affronts to Meaningful Learning Theory. I don’t think relationship COUNTERS the arguments of meaningful learning theory. I think it complements that theory, maybe insofar as it opens students to use the information they have amassed prior to coming to the learning situation.