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THE ROLE OF ONLINE DEBATES IN THE FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Online debates have become increasingly popular in higher education as a tool for developing professional competencies. The ability to effectively communicate and argue ideas is essential in many professions, and online debates provide a platform for students to practice these skills. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many institutions to rapidly shift to online learning, including online debates. As a result, there is a need for further exploration of the implications of using online debates in a remote learning environment. This includes the impact of technology on online debates and how this may affect the development of competencies, as well as the potential for online debates to address issues related to isolation and disconnection in remote learning environments. This issue requires detailed scientific

consideration, research into the role of online debates in the formation of professional competencies of students of higher education.

Online debates have several benefits in developing professional competencies. Firstly, they allow students to practice communication skills and articulate their ideas effectively [1]. Online debates also provide opportunities for students to engage with diverse perspectives and consider alternative viewpoints, which is critical in professional settings. Furthermore, online debates promote critical thinking skills and help students develop research and analysis skills.

Online debates can improve argumentative writing and critical thinking, and can lead to better understanding of argumentation processes and group outcomes. Additionally, online debates have been found to be effective in improving learning outcomes in higher education. Thus, online debates have the potential to provide an effective and efficient means of developing professional competencies in higher education.

However, there are also limitations to using online debates for developing professional competencies [2]. One limitation is that they may not fully simulate real-world professional settings. Additionally, online debates may not provide opportunities for non-verbal communication, which is important in many professional settings. Finally, online debates may not provide equal opportunities for all students to participate, which can lead to unequal development of competencies.

When using online debates to develop professional competencies, there are several challenges and considerations that need to be taken into account. Firstly, the design of online debates should be carefully considered to ensure that they align with the learning objectives and are inclusive. Additionally, adequate support and guidance should be provided to students to ensure that they are comfortable and confident in participating in online debates. Another challenge is the need for effective moderation and management of online debates to ensure that they are productive and respectful.

In particular, the issue of participation inequality should be addressed. Participation inequality refers to the uneven participation of students in online

debates, which can lead to unequal development of competencies [3]. To address this issue, instructors can consider using strategies such as assigning roles and responsibilities, providing feedback and encouragement, and ensuring that the debate topics are relevant and engaging for all students.

In conclusion, the use of online debates in higher education has the potential to develop professional competencies of students. However, there are challenges and considerations that need to be taken into account when using online debates. In the future, more research is needed to better understand the effectiveness of online debates in developing professional competencies. Additionally, policies and practices need to be developed to ensure that online debates are designed and moderated effectively to promote equal opportunities for all students to participate and develop their competencies. What is more, as the use of online debate continues to grow in higher education, there is a need for ongoing professional development for faculty to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to design and facilitate effective online debate. Moreover, policies and guidelines need to be developed to ensure that online debate is used in a way that promotes positive learning outcomes and student well-being.

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