The emotional labour of online course discussion forums: insights from personal affective responses

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Online discussion forums

Discussion forums have become key components of HE courses, both in distance learning and 'face-to-face' contexts.

Forums enable learners and tutors to,
➢ interact
➢ discuss and debate ideas
➢ ask questions
➢ work collaboratively
➢ build social connections
➢ foster a sense of connection and belonging

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The relationship between thought and feeling

Subjective senses and subjective configurations (Gonzales Rey, 2017)

perception

'Feelings', 'awareness', or 'sensations' that shape our understanding of a situation or issue.

Intuition

González Rey, F. (2017). Advances in subjectivity from a cultural historical perspective: Unfoldings and consequences for cultural studies today. In M. Fleer, F. Gonzalez Rey, & N. Veresov (Eds.), Perezhivanie, emotions and subjectivity: Advancing Vygotsky's legacy (pp. 173–193). Singapore: Springer.

You are about to go to a faculty-wide meeting which starts in 20 minutes. Your head of department contacts you and explains someone is delayed. They need you to give a presentation about a project you've been working on.

The project

‣ Research Question - *What can one's own personal affective responses to online course discussion forums reveal about the decision whether or not to participate, and the emotional labour involved?*

‣ Data gathered over three, 12-week PG microcredential courses

Data Set
➢ Course 2 data set- 47 entries
➢ Course 3 data set– 51 entries
➢ Course 4 data set– 33 entries

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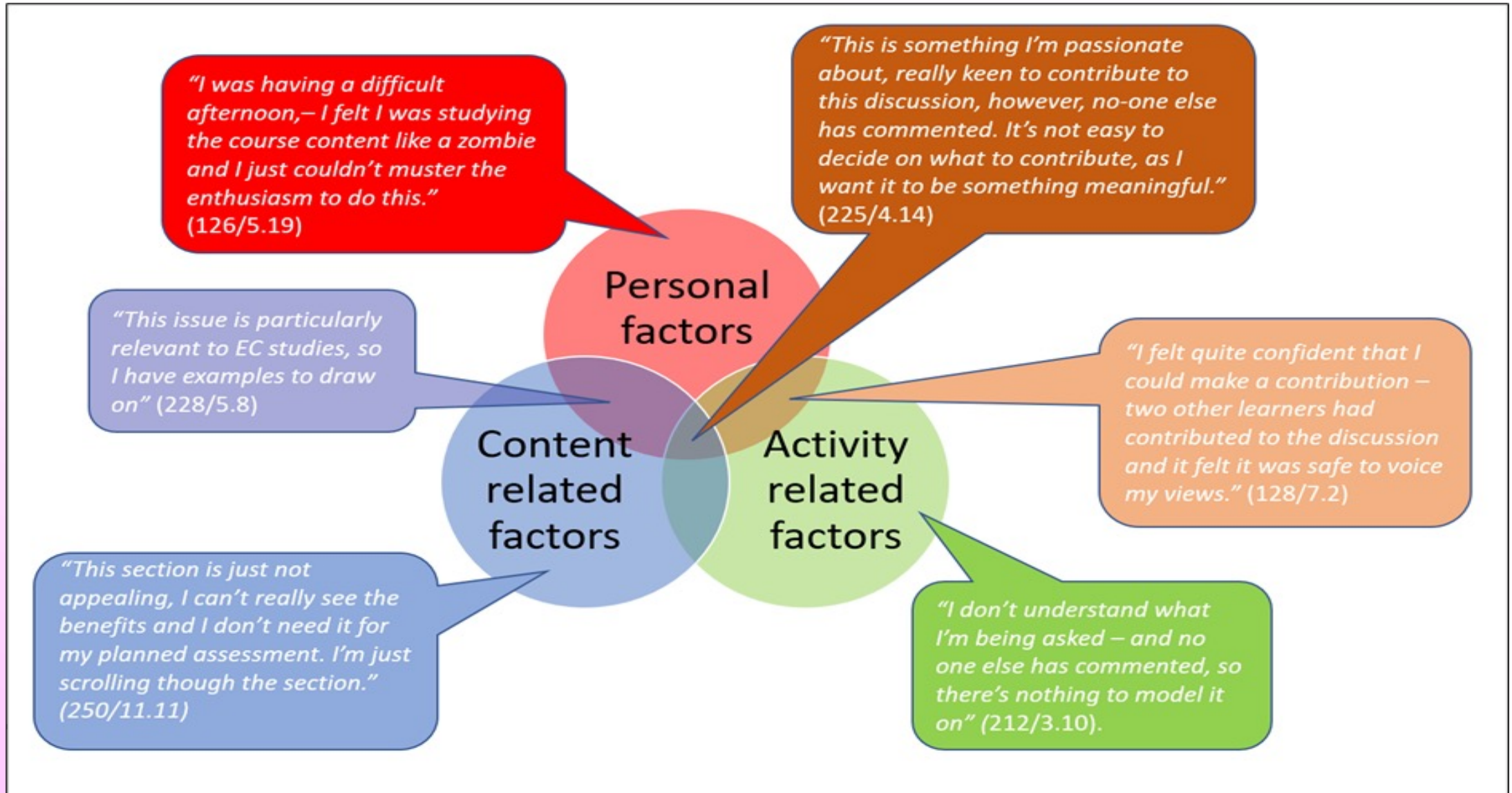
Categories and themes

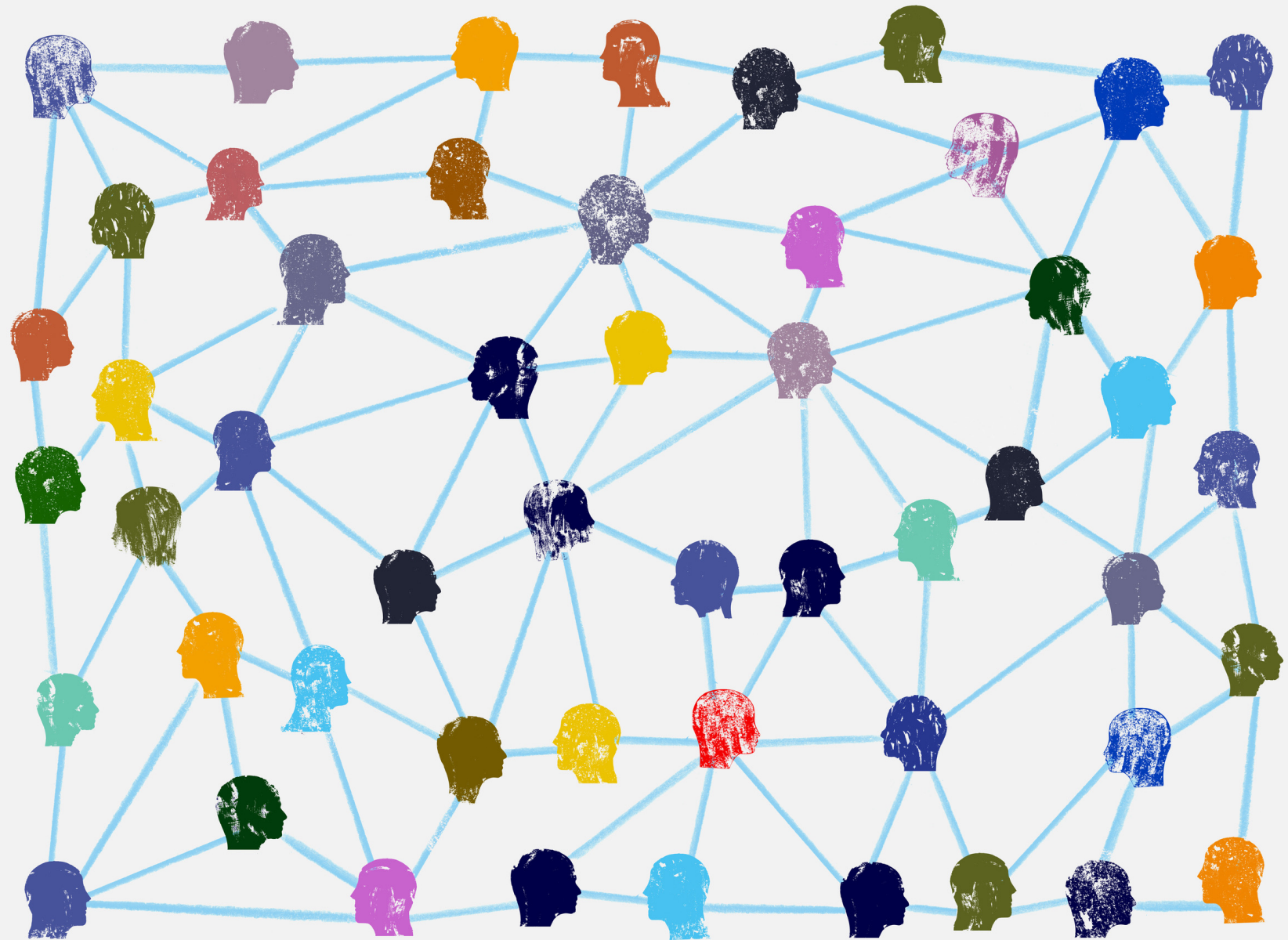| Theme	Category	Description
Nervousness	Anxious	Feeling anxious, or worried by the prospect of contributing including fear of looking stupid, inadequate, wrong
	Confused	Feeling of not being clear about what was being asked, or expected, or that the instructions were vague
	Unready – unequipped	Feeling of being unprepared, or not yet ready to complete task or contribute to the forum
	Sensitive	Feeling that the subject matter could be sensitive, and not wanting to say the wrong thing or inadvertently cause offence.
Motivation	Engaged - mentally stimulating	Relates to feeling of being engaged or inspired by the subject.
	Confident	Feelings of being self-assured about own post
	Purposeful	Could perceive the purpose or value of the task.
Demotivation	Disinterested	Topic of forum discussion is of no interest.
	Frustrated, irritated	Annoyance about a forum task
	Lacking purpose	Could not perceive the purpose or value of contributing
	Isolated	Feeling of 'speaking to no body' - no one else visible on the forum
Stress	Fatigued	Feelings of tiredness or being exhausted
	Time related	Responses related to issues of time
	Obligated or feeling guilty	Feeling obligated to contribute - or guilty about not contributing
	Outliers	Segments of data that didn't fit other codes

Unique learners – unique journeys

The Rollercoaster

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ENTANGLEMENTS OF FACTORS SHAPING RESPONSES

Forums as spaces of connecting and belonging

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Thank you

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