ENHANCING TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: Ensuring educators are well equipped to foster collaborative learning environments is essential for the success of modern educational approaches. This article explores strategies to enhance teachers' qualifications in facilitating collaborative learning. Drawing on current research and best practices, it provides insights into professional development initiatives that can empower educators to effectively engage students in collaborative learning experiences.

Key words: collaborative learning, teachers' qualifications, professional development, initiatives.

Аннотация: Обеспечение того, чтобы преподаватели были хорошо подготовлены к созданию среды совместного обучения, имеет важное значение для успеха современных образовательных подходов. В этой статье исследуются стратегии повышения квалификации учителей в целях содействия совместному обучению. Опираясь на текущие исследования и передовой опыт, он дает представление об инициативах профессионального развития, которые могут дать преподавателям возможность эффективно вовлекать студентов в совместное обучение.

Ключевые слова: совместное обучение, квалификация учителей, профессиональное развитие, инициативы.

Annotatsiya: O'qituvchilarning hamkorlikdagi ta'lim muhitini yaratishga yaxshi tayyorlanishini ta'minlash zamonaviy ta'lim yondashuvlarining muvaffaqiyati uchun muhimdir. Ushbu maqola hamkorlikda o'rganishni rivojlantirish uchun o'qituvchilarni rivojlantirish strategiyalarini o'rganadi. Mavjud tadqiqotlar va ilg'or tajribalarga tayangan holda, u o'qituvchilarga talabalarni hamkorlikda o'rganishga samarali jalb qilish imkonini beradigan kasbiy rivojlanish tashabbuslari haqida tushuncha beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: hamkorlikda o'rganish, o'qituvchilar malakasi, kasbiy rivojlanish, tashabbuslar.

Collaborative learning has emerged as a valuable pedagogical approach that enhances student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. However, for collaborative learning to be effective, teachers play a central role in guiding and facilitating the process. Therefore, it is imperative to invest in strategies that improve teachers' qualifications in this domain.

Academic qualification is the basic requirement of teaching. It becomes more important when it links with the competences and abilities of teachers in general specially at primary level. In past, teachers were only considered as the knowledge provider and the source of information for their students. Now the teacher is helper and facilitator for students. According to Monza, Harris, and Shaw (2015), teacher qualification, their test score, marks of degrees, specialization in any subject and experience are the factors affecting the student’s achievement in final examination.

The quality of education hinges on the quality of teaching that goes on in the classroom reinforcing the idea that quality teachers make up for the deficiencies in the curriculum and in educational resources (Anderson 2011). Teacher quality is widely thought of as an essential determinant of academic performance, yet there is little agreement as to what specific characteristics make a good teacher (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2016). Effective learning in schools would require effective teaching to accompany the efforts of the learners. Teacher qualifications needs to be very high in order for meaningful teaching and learning to take place (Segun, 2016).Teacher qualification provides the knowledge and skills of an innovative method of teaching, the current change in content and context, analyzed the job market and provided the education on the demands of contemporary society (Mohan, 2013).

Teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching are the propositions about learning and teaching that a teacher holds to be true, which in turn guide to her or his thought and behaviors. A specific feature of beliefs about learning and teaching is that often they tend to be robust. That is, over time and with greater use, beliefs become robust; the earlier a belief is acquired, the more difficult it is to alter (Murphy & Mason, 2006; Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching develop during the many years teachers spend at school, first as students, then as student teachers, and finally as teachers (Bolhuis, 2000; De Vries, 2004; Hargreaves, 2000; Kelchtermans, 2008; OECD, 2009).

In reference to teachers' beliefs about learning and teaching, educational research often uses a distinction between subject matter and student orientations (Meirink, Meijer, Verloop, & Bergen, 2009; Van Driel et al., 2007). The same distinction has been described using other terms too, such as content versus student (Denessen, 1999), transmission of knowledge by the teacher versus student learning (De Vries, 2004; Van Veen, Sleegers, Bergen, & Klaassen, 2001), traditional versus process-oriented (Bolhuis & Voeten, 2004), traditional versus constructivist (Becker & Riel, 2000; Tondeur, Hermans, Van Braak, & Valcke, 2008), and reception/direct transmission versus constructivist (OECD, 2009). Regardless of the terminology, this distinction refers to differences in views of learning and teaching methods. A subject matter orientation implies more traditional, “transmission” teaching, with a focus on transmitting content/knowledge about the subject matter to student recipients (Hargreaves, 2000). The teacher plays the central role as the knowledge expert and deliverer, ensures calm and concentration in the classroom, and

does not orient her- or himself to the needs of the individual students but rather treats the whole class as a kind of collective student. A student orientation, as more widely promoted today by most educational researchers and teacher educators (OECD, 2009), instead is based on constructivist theories of knowledge and learning, focused on the development of skills and competencies. Students thus actively construct knowledge individually and in social interactions with others; teachers account for differences among students (Pieters & Verschaffel, 2003). Such constructive visions of learning and teaching demand that teachers develop a strong conceptual understanding of the subject matter. To create effective learning environments for students with different backgrounds and conceptions, teachers also need a wide repertoire of general pedagogical knowledge about basic principles, as well as pedagogical content knowledge involving the subject matter (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Shulman, 1986). This teacher thus must fulfill both roles, as knowledge expert and competent deliverer of knowledge and as the facilitator and activator of students' learning processes (European Commission, 2010; Verloop, 2003). According to Slavin (1989), for effective collaborative learning, there must be “group goals” and “individual accountability”. When the group’s task is to ensure that every group member has learned something, it is in the interest of every group member to spend time explaining concepts to groupmates. Research has consistently found that students who gain most from cooperative work are those who give and receive elaborated explanations (Webb, 1985). Reflection in relation to professional activities implies a specialized form of thinking, applied to deal with a puzzling or curious situation (a problem) to make better sense of the situation (Dewey, 1933). Schön (1983) calls this form “reflection-on-action” and defines it as a deliberate process, developed and purposely used to reconsider existing knowledge, beliefs, possibilities, ideas, and actions. In contrast, “reflection-in-action” constitutes an almost subconscious process that experts develop and refine through their learning with experience. Reflection is a critical professional activity (Eraut, 1994; Schön, 1983) and vitally important to CPD (Cheetham & Chivers, 2001), because it helps teachers make their implicit or tacit knowledge and beliefs explicit, such that they gain control over their routine actions in the classroom and can make changes if necessary (Schön, 1983). Some teachers may be hesitant to engage in reflective activities (Runhaar et al., 2010; Schön, 1983), for fear that the information they reflect on might affect their self-image by overemphasizing their shortcomings or anomalies (Korthagen, 2012). We emphasize the active and problem-solving nature of reflection and thus focus on reflection-on-action in this study. Teachers who engage in conscious reflection-on-action processes to identify problematic issues in their practice and pursue solutions that bring about valued effects for student learning are “reflective practitioners” (Copeland, Birmingham, De La Cruz, & Lewin, 1993; Schön, 1983). Reflective practitioners may act individually but benefit from feedback from colleagues or students, or by carrying out practical research individually or in collaboration with colleagues (Kallenberg, Koster, Onstenk, & Scheepsma, 2007; Ponte, 2002a).

Collaboration is the process of working together to achieve a common goal. In teaching, the common goal is always improved learner outcomes.

According to Australian school (March 2018), teacher collaboration involves:

- debating, planning, and problem-solving together
- inquiring together, using evidence and research to guide decision-making
- capitalising on each other’s strengths and working with each other’s weaknesses
- actively contributing to a respectful and supportive learning environment.

Active collaboration is particularly important for creating a growth-based learning environment and for increasing student learning progress. Research shows that teachers who work together and learn from each other are more successful in improving student outcomes than those who work alone.

By implementing a comprehensive professional development framework that includes these strategies, educators can enhance their qualifications in collaborative learning environments, ultimately improving student engagement, critical thinking skills, and overall learning outcomes in today's dynamic educational landscape.

Investing in the professional development of teachers to improve their qualifications in collaborative learning approaches is crucial for creating dynamic and effective educational environments. By implementing strategies such as professional development workshops, peer observation, mentorship programs, action research projects, and technology integration training, educators can enhance their skills and knowledge, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes in collaborative settings.

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