

Supporting Collaborative Learning Through Flipped Classroom with Postgraduate Students in Saudi Arabia

Alqarawi R

School of Education, University of Exeter, United kingdom

School of Education, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia

Email: raq.14@hotmail.com

Abstract

The current research aims to understand the collaborative learning of postgraduate students in Saudi Arabia, and whether it can be supported through a flipped classroom strategy. Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 focuses on the importance of developing individuals' skills in education, which include collaborative learning, as well as the knowledge to prepare the students for the modern world. Within the educational system in Saudi Arabia, however, minimal attention has been directed towards effective teaching methods for postgraduate students, particularly in regards to collaborative learning.

The research uses a design-based approach that involves various iterations of flipped classroom lessons that incorporate forms of collaborative learning, planned by both the researcher and the teacher. A total of 27 postgraduate students in two classes at a female university participated the study, which was conducted in two phases. Phase One aimed to test and subsequently develop the preliminary design principles; and the advanced version of the design principles guided Phase Two for the same classes. The central findings of this intervention present how a dynamic and collaborative culture was created through the use of a flipped classroom in order to support collaborative learning. Moreover, the findings provide theoretical and empirical contributions about how using a flipped classroom strategy facilitates collaborative learning; and provides tested design principles for implementing these in a postgraduate context.

Various methods were utilised for data collection, which include: planning and reflective conversations with the teacher, participant observations, focus groups, as well as a research journal. A flipped classroom is shown to be a beneficial approach for supporting collaborative learning through the creation of an inclusive and dynamic environment; additionally, that supporting the collaborative learning of postgraduate students requires balancing the role of the facilitator and the learners' agency. A collaborative learning culture is also needed, as this will support postgraduates' emotional well-being through the implementation of a safe environment. This study concludes that the flipped classroom supports the collaborative learning of postgraduate students through a variety of collaborative learning forms in a supportive, safe and collaborative environment; and suggest that further investigation into a collaborative approach that supports postgraduate students in the Saudi context is required.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning; Flipped classroom; Postgraduate Students; Saudi Arabia.