

Student Collaboration in Student Active Learning

Prof. Dr. Astrid Margrethe Sølvsberg¹, Prof. Dr. Marit Rismark²

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

Abstract

Student active learning involves instructional approaches that actively engages students in the learning process through collaboration and discussions. However, the role and benefits of collaboration is described in different ways in the literature. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of collaboration in student active learning by exploring how students experience collaboration. We report findings from a study of a course at master level that aimed for student active learning by actively engaging students through collaboration. At the end of the term altogether 54 students wrote individual reflection notes about their individual learning outcomes and how group collaboration supported their learning. Students' experiences of collaboration in active learning were also collected through semi-structured group interviews. Analyzes of the data material took place through a pragmatic approach inspired by both thematic analysis and constant comparative analysis. The students report that the active learning brought them into close and binding collaboration with fellow students and teachers. Categories such as COntact, COntextualization, COnstruction, and COnnection describe in detail how the students understood the role and benefits of collaboration in student active learning. To communicate to educators how such knowledge may support faculty when they plan and implement student active learning, we also present a conceptual framework that is meant to guide educators and students in the phases of planning, implementing, and assessing student active learning. The framework describes how student active learning may allow for student engagement, student reflection and student influence.

Keywords: co-construction of knowledge, higher education, instruction, student engagement, student learning