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COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Collaborative learning (CL) can be defined as a set of teaching and learning strategies promoting student collaboration in small groups (two to five students) in order to optimise their own and each other's learning. Earlier studies have identified several problems that teachers encounter when applying CL in the classroom. There are two problems affecting CL effectiveness: organisation of collaborative activities, and assessment of learning.

Firstly, teachers face challenges while structuring collaborative activities such as monitoring students' on-task behaviour, managing group-work time, providing relevant materials, assigning individual roles, and establishing teamwork patterns of behaviour.

Scientists state that analysed material about preparation of collaborative activities of teachers in various contexts revealed insufficient attention of teachers to organising collaborative work such as determining group norms and facilitating activities. Furthermore, research demonstrated that a large number of primary teachers often place students in groups and let them work together without preparing students to perform collaborative activities productively.

Secondly, teachers frequently find it difficult to assess students' performance and achievements as they implement CL in classrooms at all levels of education. Teachers reported that the criteria or rules for assessment lacked transparency and concreteness. Furthermore, the lack of assessment tools to measure collaborative

performance of every group member may cause student disappointment about the transparency and equality of the assessment.

The problems that teachers encounter will likely also affect collaborating students. This relationship between problems experienced by teachers and by students is, however, rarely addressed during previous research. If teachers, for example, are unsure about how to monitor students' group discussions, and cannot adequately intervene when necessary or model appropriate pattern of collaborative behaviour, this will probably affect the quality of the collaborative process as experienced by students.

When both teachers and students do not pay a lot of attention to the collaborative aspects of CL, they may experience a number of obstacles to the effectiveness of CL as follows:

- lack of collaborative skills;
- free-riding,
- competence status,
- friendship.

A learner has to have a very strong motivation as it influences his/her further learning and attitude towards the language. They rule what is going on. They should take some self-directed steps to control their activities outside the class. Their participation characterizes internal motivation. External motivation is characterized by the role of the teacher who should be some kind of a significant other whose attitude towards the language, teaching and the learners forms the students' perception of the course. There always exist dual objectives to learn for development and to keep the students being motivated.

There should be some kind of connection that leads to feedback. Students should feel free to express themselves the way they like. Speaking in public causes fear and doubts, especially if the student has to tell about his/her professional issues. It may be difficult to pay attention to every student and his/her needs, though to make progress they have to understand that speaking and communicating is the best way to step forward.