COLLABORATIVE LEARNING, A CHALLENGE TO THINK IN CLASS

BORIS JAVIER BELLO TEHRAN - Escuela Naval de Cadetes Almirante Padilla. Bachelor of Mathematics-Physics (Universidad de Pamplona), Specialist in Pedagogy and Autonomous Learning (UNAD), Specialist in Education Management (Universidad de Cartagena). Master's Degree in Education (Universidad del Norte), MSc Oceanography (Naval School of Cadets Almirante Padilla). E-mail: bello0810@gmail.com .

Summary. Collaborative learning is a teaching strategy that promotes learner-thinking skills such as describing, explaining, sequencing (order), inferring and troubleshooting. With these, we are learning for life, i.e. what is significant; to be centered in all of the competencies: learning, learning to do, being and living. These tools promote the interaction with individuals and the environment which they live in, and also, their actions with others, allowing concepts and also learning from one another. It also demands that teachers change their pedagogical focus: a dictator or a counselor or mediator of the learning process.

Key Vocabulary: Collaborative learning, meaningful learning, skills, teaching and thinking skills.

For centuries, a traditional paradigm has dominated the education systems around the world. This is because most teachers are afraid of change and content strategies that lead to educating in another scenario where their skills are being tested. In this paradigm, the role of the teacher is to impart knowledge, regardless of whether the student has learned or not. Thus, learning becomes a repetitive routine, and it does not lead to reflection and analysis. Also, teacher is the center figure of the teaching-learning process. Consequently, the role of the student becomes the passive receiver of knowledge, with little cognitive independence. Thus, it overrides any communication between students during class, and then silence becomes the most effective means to ensure attention is held in the classroom.

In the same context, students do not participate in the development of objectives, programs or systems of work, when these are imposed. Of course, this also affects the choice of teachers.

In contrast to the traditional routine paradigm, the Active School or contemporary education, places the learner at the center of the educational process. From here, he interacts with the teacher in the selection of content. In addition, this framework allows the teacher to seek new alternatives that promote the goals of the teaching-learning process and comprehensive training of successful students. In turn, this favor a wealth of learning that contributes to their personal growth.

In this regard, Leon (2003) suggests that,

"The human being is willing to really learn only that to which he is or logical sense. [...] Tends to reject what does not make sense. Authentic learning is meaningful learning, [...] with respect. Any other [...] is purely mechanical, routine, and circumstantial: learning to pass a test in order to pass the subject, etc... The [...] is a significant relational learning. The direction is the ratio of new knowledge: prior knowledge with everyday situations, with experience, with real situations, etc..." (P. 45)

From this perspective, the paradigm shift from traditional in order to the active or the contemporary. In the latter, the whole educational process focuses on the knowledge of the learner and how they are learning and then implement them in other contexts independently. Thus, it promotes meaningful learning understood as "that (learning) that leads to the creation of knowledge structures by the substantive relationship between the new information and previous ideas" Diaz Barriga & Hernandez (1999, p. 39).

This means that meaningful learning works based on the conceptual network before the intervention of the mediator in the learning process. It is therefore important to note that this strategy is not to speak of teacher or educator, as the aim is that the student is able to give meaning to individual content from preconceptions, instead of teaching from the preconceptions it teaches.

Indeed, learning is an individual and unique experience for everyone. Therefore, the mediator must provide the tools and create the conditions necessary for learning, but with the awareness of the active student inevitably, one actor mobilizing his own process. (Diaz, Barriga & Hernandez, 1999)

In addition, the mediator must have the provision, training and motivation for teaching significantly. Also the mediator should have previous experience and knowledge as a teacher and specialist in the field. You also need to generate spaces for both assessment and counseling to the student.

Similarly, the mediator uses active methods for mobilizing the cognitive structures of learners. So, this promotes different learning techniques that involve the student in understanding and learning. These skills describe, explain, sequence (order), infer and solve problems. Each of these aims to strengthen critical thinking, so that students develop metacognition in the learning process. At the same time, they are able to continue to use what they have learned throughout their life in different situations (Priestley, 1996).

These tools promote the interaction of individuals with the environment in which they operate, and their actions with others. This allows them to reconstruct the concepts and also learn from the other person.

The traditional form of education, behavior based- that is favored by conventional sociopolitical models, is determined to exalt the individual's achievement and competition over teamwork and collaboration, this is "the" reality. As pointed out by Diaz Barriga & Hernandez (1999), this situation is seen "not only in the curriculum, the class work and the assessment, but in thought, the action of the teacher and his students". (p. 52-53, apud Calzadilla, 2002, p. 4)

According to Calzadilla (2002), "behaviorism raised the absolute dependence on the teacher, who dominated and ruled the students in the classroom. However, when talking about collaborative learning, let us not trespass this situation into the group, its essence is far more complex and enriching. In this type of learning, each participant takes their own pace and potential, autonomy permeating activity and every person understands the need to bring their best to the group in order to achieve a synergistic result, none would agree to on their own. As a general result, achieved is an interdependent relationship that favors the individual processes of growth and development, interpersonal relationships and productivity.

Thus, collaborative learning is another constructivist postulates. "…this part of conceiving education as a socio-construction process which allows us to know the different perspectives in order to address a particular problem; this also enables us to develop tolerance around diversity and expertise to rework an alternative junction." (Calzadilla, 2002, pg. 3) In turn, constructivist learning environments are assumed to be "a place where students must work together, helping each other, using a variety of tools and information resources to enable the pursuit of learning objectives and activities for the solution of problems ". (Wilson, 1995, p. 27; apud Calzadilla, 2002, p. 3)

From this perspective, the constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1979) says, the learner needs "the action of a mediator agent to access the zone of proximal development, it will be responsible for serving as a scaffold to provide security and allow it to appropriate knowledge and transfer it to their own environment ". (Apud Calzadilla, 2002, p. 3)

Considering the paragraphs above, we can say that collaborative learning is a pedagogical tool that allows the student learning how to learn, learning to live together and learning to do independently in any context. This amounts to be competent in solving problems of daily life. This statement is based on comments made by Lopez (2000), when he says that:

"In accordance with the learning challenges imposed on us by the XXI century, the class to think about- either by class assistance or a virtual classroom from kindergarten to university-student training facilitates acquiring strategies for lifelong learning, problem solving in a changing world,

think critically, creatively and constructively, for the purpose of industrial action that reflect a high degree of social responsibility as being sensitive to the others persons' needs, responding in a manner consistent with the values and virtues that ensure coexistence for a healthy and productive future for the country and the world". (p. 35)

From this point of view, the classroom used in order to think becomes the new paradigm that modern society imposes its educational strategies, where what matters are the teaching strategies used by the advisor where the student learns to grasp and learn. As the new era of computing will provide the content or concepts, but he should be able to encode, interpret, analyze and implement it in an independent context. This will demonstrate their skills from the three pillars of education: learning to be, doing and living.

In conclusion, it can be concluded that one of the teaching strategies that streamlines the process of learning to learn, is collaborative learning from a constructivist perspective. In this, the learner acquires pedagogical tools that promote meaningful learning and therefore conceptual change in the information age, where all items are within daylight.

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