

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF RURAL SCHOOL IN CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

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Abstract

Education has undergone tremendous development. The education paradigm has shifted from teacher-centered towards student-centered. In this new paradigm, Brown (2005) states that students have more emphasize and participation in the teaching learning process. Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual effort by students or students and teachers. Collaborative learning refers to methodologies and environments in which learners engage in a common task in which each individual depends on and is accountable to each other. Unesco (2017) states that learning takes place in multiple settings and the learning environment can be structured or unstructured and the learning in different environments can complement each other. Formal and non-formal education occurs mainly in structured environments in the form of institutions (schools, community centers, multimedia centers, learning villages/cities, etc.). The learning environment in the classroom is vital to students' success and impacts them in many ways. This study reveals the physical environment of rural school in conducting the teaching and learning process. The data are collected by using observation and questionnaire. The study is qualitative exploratory. The results of this study show genuine data of the condition of physical environment in rural school. The results would be an input for researchers or decision makers who are keen on rural development.

Keywords: physical environment, rural school, collaborative learning

Introduction

Education has undergone tremendous development. The education paradigm has shifted from teacher-centered towards student-centered. In this new paradigm, Brown (2005) states that students have more emphasize and participation in the teaching learning process. Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual effort by students or students and teachers. Collaborative learning refers to methodologies and environments in which learners engage in a common task in which each individual depends on and is accountable to each other. The development of education, in terms of classroom teaching learning process, is boosted in all areas in Indonesia, from the cities to rural areas.

The fact found in the observation conducted in SMP N 4 dan 5 Pakis, which is located in rural areas, that most students experienced difficulties in learning English

in the classroom because of the formal teaching and situation. This situation makes them uneasy in the activities in class. The class feels frigid.

Most teachers taught English for completing the material stated in syllabus and for pursuing the national exam. It is because teachers have to commit to the material set by the ministry. The items are tested by using the tests set by the ministry as well. As a result, they must always keep an eye on this manual.

The learning model used is not student-centered; it refers to characteristics of conventional learning model. It is seen from the prior observation that the teacher is the center of the class. He is the only rule maker. He conducts the class without engaging the students in attractive and joyful activities.

Earliar collaborative learning was proposed by Vygotsky with his scaffolding theory and followed by the theory of ZPD (

Zone of Proximal Development). Vygotsky (1962) examined how our social environments influence the learning process. He suggested that learning takes place through the interactions students have with their peers, teachers, and other experts. Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes the learner's ability to interact with each other through discussion, collaboration, and feedback. The zone of proximal development explains tasks that a learner has not yet learned but is capable of learning with appropriate stimuli (Brown, 2007: 13).

He believes that learning takes place when children are working within their zone of proximal development. Tasks within the zone of proximal development are the things that a child could not yet do alone but he can do with the assistance of more competent peers or adults (Slavin, 2006: 44-45). So learning is a continual movement from the current intellectual level to a higher level which more closely approximates the learner's potential. An understanding of human thinking depends in turn on an understanding of the mechanism of social experience; the force of the cognitive process deriving from the social interaction is emphasized. Also, the role of the adult and the learners' peers as they conversed, questioned, explained, and negotiated meaning is emphasized. In other words, the ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability solving the problem independently. It was developed and enriched by Krashen with his input hypothesis. Slavin, after that, proposes various activities involved in collaborative learning.

Collaborative learning is based on the view that knowledge is a social construct. Collaborative activities are most often based on four principles:

1. The learner or student is the primary focus of instruction.

2. Interaction and "doing" are of primary importance
3. Working in groups is an important mode of learning.
4. Structured approaches to developing solutions to real-world problems should be incorporated into learning.

The collaborative learning techniques presented here should help make this possible for teachers. Also, in collaborative learning small groups provide a place where:

1. learners actively participate;
2. teachers become learners at times, and learners sometimes teach;
3. respect is given to every member;
4. projects and questions interest and challenge students;
5. diversity is celebrated, and all contributions are valued;
6. students learn skills for resolving conflicts when they arise;
7. members draw upon their past experience and knowledge;
8. goals are clearly identified and used as a guide;
9. research tools such as Internet access are made available
10. students are invested in their own learning.

Discussion

Unesco (2017) states that learning takes place in multiple settings and the learning environment can be structured or unstructured and the learning in different environments can complement each other. Formal and non-formal education occurs mainly in structured environments in the form of institutions (schools, community centers, multimedia centers, learning villages/cities, etc.). The learning environment in the classroom is vital to students' success and impacts them in many ways. Environment itself can be seen from several perspectives. They are physical, psychological, instructional, and social environment.

Physical Environment, in Firestone (2015), relates with the arrangement of the classroom. The use of space includes how furniture is arranged and organized, how materials are stored and maintained, how clean the classroom is and the overall color and brightness. Imagine a classroom that has little light, dirt on the floors, messy bookshelves and broken supplies. Nobody even wants to step in. The students need a clean, bright, organized space to strengthen learning experiences. Phillips (2014) shares ideas that the physical structure of a classroom is a critical variable in affecting student morale and learning. He also states that students' involvement in the process of creating their environment can empower them, develop community and increase motivation.

The physical environment of a classroom plays a part in the ownership. Students feel about their school and more specifically their class (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). The classroom environment should do as much to foster cooperation and acceptance as the instructional method the teacher uses. Children are sensitive to the atmosphere created in the classroom. Questions like is the classroom warm and inviting? Are all areas of the classroom accessible to all children? Are the walls bleak and lacking in color or do the decorations help to make the students feel comfortable? Are areas well defined as to their design and purpose? are generally raised when creating comfortable classroom (Scott, Leach, & Bucholz, 2008).

Furthermore, Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) state that decorating a classroom with some kind of warmth can help promote a sense of comfort and security. Classrooms tend to be rather cold, bare places until they are decorated. Adding a splash of color can bring life to a sterile environment. Color choice is important when decorating a classroom. Teachers should keep in mind that red and orange can make children feel nervous and unsettled while blue and green can help students feel calm. On the other hand, dark colors take natural sunlight out of

a room and can even make people feel drowsy and listless (Hathaway, 1987). Plants, soft chairs, rugs, and pillows can help to add warmth and comfort to a class environment (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979).

Conclusion

From the observation and the questionnaires, it can be concluded that the physical environment in the rural schools is noted with the following information. The classes have 9 x 7 m² size, Colour : blue, 1 piece of whiteboard, Pictures: president and vice president, Board of the data of the class, 1 wooden teacher chair, 1 wooden teacher desk, 16 wooden student desk, 16 wooden student chair, White ceiling, 4 lamps (2 are off), 11 glass windows with wooden frame, 1 door, The arrangement of the student chairs: rows.

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