

Chapter 4

The Shared Work of Learning: Lifting Educational Achievement Through Collaboration

ABSTRACT

The objective of teaching is learning, not teaching. Improving student performance means improving teacher performance. Research shows that teaching for critical thought isn't widespread in our classrooms. Teaching teachers new approaches to instruction demands effective professional development. This chapter discusses the role of teacher in the classroom. Additionally, a discussion on emphasizing social capital in the school network increases teacher ability to teach and learner ability to learn.

INTRODUCTION

Today, there are two worlds that use the word education with opposite meanings: one world consists of the schools and colleges of our education complex, in which standardization prevails. In that world, an industrial training mega-structure strives to turn out identical replicas of a product called “people educated for the twenty-first century”...” Knowledge @ Wharton, 2008, p. 4)

Evolutionary Nature of Education

Sfard (1998) identified two metaphors for learning- acquisition of new concepts and participation in new practices (in Johnson, Lustick & Kim, 2011). The acquisition metaphor explains how knowledge is transferred from one context to another while the participation metaphor offers new insights into how we learn through social interaction.

The evolutionary nature of education means reframing and rethinking our methods, instruction, and practices. Just as our classrooms are dynamic, so too should be (a teacher's) own learning (Beth Morrow, 2014). Teachers are tasked with fostering collaborative activities, debate, and critical reflection among learners, but school districts rarely require these same learning techniques to be developed by teachers or new teacher-trainees. This disparity must be addressed if learners are to fully benefit from effective instruction (Center for Public Education, 2013).

Questions are often put to educators about how students learn but that is only part of the picture. Additional vital questions to ask are: How do teachers learn and how do teachers learn to teach? A teacher's role is to guide learning in the classroom, not to dominate it (Davis-McGaw, 2016). It is not the teacher's job to entertain students, but it is vital to engage them in the learning process (Gill, 2013, 2018).

Guiding teachers through the learning process is essential to preparing teachers for effective classroom leadership.

The Central Idea of Education Is Learning, Not Teaching

“When those who have taught others are asked who in the classes learned most, virtually all of them say, “The teacher.” It is apparent to those who have taught, teaching is a better way to learn than being taught Knowledge @ Wharton).

Teaching involves learning which instructional methods can effectively cross subject boundaries and when it is necessary to introduce different ways to learn (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007; Gulamhussein, 2013). In the process of educating learners, using a wide variety of learning methods from which students can choose and experiment with, as well as promotes a sense of ownership for ones learning journey is vital. One of the first and hopefully earliest lessons a child learns about school is that learning is their

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