60-Second SoTL

Episode 27 – What are the Features of Group-Based Collaborative Learning?

(Piano Music)

0:03

Jessie L. Moore:
How might teachers help students optimize group dynamics in case-based collaborative learning? That's the focus of this week's 60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning. This episode is the second in an 8-part series hosted by Elon University Masters of Higher Education students who are exploring collaborative assignments and projects as a high-impact practice. Listen for future episodes in their series wherever you subscribe to 60-Second SoTL.

0:29

(Piano Music)

0:32

Stephen Gyan:
Hi, I am Stephen Gyan.

In 'Understanding and optimizing group dynamics in case-based collaborative learning' published in the Medical Science Educator, SoTL scholars Kochis Michael, Daniel Kamin, Barbara Cockrill and Henrike Besche examined the characteristics of group-based learning among first-year medical students.

0:49

The researchers studied team behaviors of case-based collaborative learning that require students to independently review a case prior to class and meet as a group to solve clinical problems in class based on the case. The researchers employed a mixed method triangulation design to engage Harvard University's first-year medical and dental students enrolled in the Harvard Medical School Pathways courses that run in the Spring semesters for 9 weeks.

1:16

In 2017, the course did not have peer assessment and feedback as typical of a collaborative learning-structured course. The researchers used this course structure as a baseline. They collected team behavior data using Team Performance Survey in weeks 2, 4, and 6 and that of week 4 in 2018. After the fourth week in 2018, the faculty of the course introduced peer feedback and team learning activities

where team members discussed how best to develop team norms to support their learning and performance. The researchers collected another set of Team Performance data in week 8 and compared the results to the baseline data.

1:57

The findings show that the Team Performance Score increased after introducing the peer feedback. The researchers' analysis found six key themes that explain team behaviors on the Team Performance Score. These themes describe team behaviors on three levels: individual, group, and classroom.

2:15

At the individual level, team members require preparation to identify individual tasks and team-related processes. Promotion of balance-participation, building universal understanding, and grappling and synthesis are more seen at the group level. The researchers identified that the presence of positive psychological safety enhances learning at the group level. The classroom level encompasses large group learning which synthesizes learning from the individual groups.

2:44

The researchers highlighted the significance of integrating accountability systems in collaborative learning. Seen as peer assessment in most cases, this study used peer feedback to build teams' norms that elevate individual awareness to group awareness.

3:00

The researchers found that this approach enhances psychological safety which is instrumental in building team cohesion and performance. Additionally, this study provides a guiding framework for educators in designing collaborative courses that improve deep learning from the individual, group, and the classroom. To learn more, see the full citation in our show notes.

3:22

(Piano Music)

Jessie L. Moore:
Join us next week for another snapshot of recent scholarship of teaching and learning on **60-second SoTL from Elon University's Center for Engaged Learning.** Learn more about the Center at www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org.

3:38

(Piano Music)