

Exploring the Influence of Grouping Method for Teaching in Vocational Education

Zheng Li

Binzhou Polytechnic, Binzhou City, Shandong Province, 256603

Abstract: This paper serves as a qualitative study of the influence of grouping method for teaching in vocational education. The study probes into the different types of grouping, the preferred methods of grouping and the perception of teachers when they employ various grouping methods in their classrooms. The study discusses that there are several types of grouping, which can be summarized mainly as homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping, with all other types of grouping falling under these two main domains.

Keywords: Grouping Method; Vocational Education; Teaching

Chapter 1 introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Grouping method in education refers to the systems and methods which are employed by the teacher in arranging students into defined subsets. Grouping of students occurs when a large heterogeneous class is divided into smaller homogenous groups (Gorgonio et al., 2017). The teacher of the class would decide on the most appropriate method to use in grouping the learners, in consideration of the type of activity, number of learners and desired outcome from the process (Wang & Wang, 2022). Primarily, there are three ways in which the grouping method is implemented among learners. Firstly, the teacher can give the learners a chance to group themselves, secondly the teacher can just randomly group the learners without any criteria and thirdly the teacher can set criteria which will be used to form groups (Supianto et al., 2020). Therefore, this indicates that the principle of the grouping method is dependent on a wide variety of factors and this can lead to multiple types of groups being formed.

1.2 Problem Statement

There are existing studies which have probed into the effectiveness of grouping method, and they have yielded divergent views (Ansari & Khan, 2020). The existing studies probe into how the grouping method impacts the learners and in most cases, it has led to the improvement of results and learning outcomes. However, there are limited studies which focus on how the grouping method affects the abilities of the teachers, which this study seeks to address. This study probes into how the skills of the teacher and their competencies will be affected should they be subjected to grouping method.

Chapter 2 literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the literature review of this study, in reference to the findings from past scholars. The literature review will be conducted in alignment with the research objectives and problem statement, indicating the gaps in the body of knowledge. The chapter closes with providing a research framework for the study.

2.2 Grouping method influence on the teacher's ability

Yadgarova et al. (2020) explore the effects of grouping method on the teacher's ability and their study reveals both the merits and demerits of this aspect of education. The study finds that one of the merits of the grouping method on the teacher's ability is the improvement of problem-solving skills. When teachers are working among diverse groups with diverse needs, they are constantly

exposed to situations where students require unique kinds of help from them (Changwong et al., 2018). The teacher would then have to quickly devise a solution which would help the groups which are having difficulties. In vocational education, the teachers would be required to find alternative methods by which they can deliver their instructions to ensure that all their students are moving at their pace, and able to perform competently.

2.3 Vocational education and grouping teaching method

Vocational education is when students are being taught a specific profession by establishing a direct linkage between the theoretical knowledge and practice of a specific trade. Therefore, in its nature, vocational education takes on a faster pace in comparison to other forms of education. For example, one who goes to vocational school to learn a specific trade would be qualified faster and ready to work earlier than someone who has gone to a university (Fix et al., 2019). Therefore, the grouping method is essential for the teachers, as they would be focused on ensuring that the learners have accurately grasped the skills which they are being taught and can be competent if they are immediately put in a working environment. In some cases, the teachers would allow the students to randomly group themselves, and by observing the unique groups which are formed, the teachers will optimize their teaching style (Gedrimiene et al., 2020). Random grouping would ease the teacher from pressure of having certain expectations from their students, but instead focuses on understanding the groups and their members' major learning needs and then teaching accordingly.

Chapter 3 research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods of research that will be used in this study. The study discusses qualitative research methods and the various steps involved in data collection. Additionally, the data analysis techniques that will be used in the study will be discussed.

3.2 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is a subset of consumer research in which data is gathered through open-ended questions and a conversational format. Qualitative research is defined as “the examination of the origins of phenomena,” which includes “their quality, modified forms, the context in which they appear, or the points of view from which they are perceived,” but excludes “their range, frequency, and placement in a cause-and-effect platform sequence” (O’Donoghue, 2018) This is a rational research design, given the study’s focus on aspects of dispute that are constantly exposed to opposing viewpoints and preconceptions. Qualitative research enables respondents to freely express themselves through in-depth questions and follow-up discussions (Dornan & Kelly, 2017). Checklists, reflexivity, sample tactics, piloting, co-coding, and community and stakeholder participation can all be used to improve and assess research quality. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative designs will equip individuals with more effective tools for addressing a broader range of research challenges and addressing gaps in current organizational study and experimentation (Harreveld et al., 2016).

3.3 Data analysis

Data organization is the process of collecting data from interviews and structuring it coherently, thereby laying the groundwork for subsequent data collection. This is necessary to prevent the researcher from becoming overwhelmed by the responses and failing to analyze them adequately (Fozleski, 2017).

The first step in data analysis is to read the transcripts several times in order to grasp the interviewees' comments and information. Numerous notes can be written as the researcher becomes familiar with all of the data collected, laying the groundwork for future research (Bhattacharya, 2017). The coding procedure entails noting recurring phrases and highlighting key words and phrases gleaned from the interviews in order to identify and refine common concepts (Ary et al., 2018). After locating texts in paragraphs or other data items, the researcher can search for similar thoughts and ideas in other sections of the text.

Chapter 4 data analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the data collection process. The interviews were transcribed and they will be analysed, noting emerging trends and codes from the responses of the participants of the study. The interviews will be analysed per question and response, and a discussion will be undertaken based on the most common themes from the discussion.

4.2 Interview Findings

The interviews consisted of 6 questions and there were two respondents in the study, who are both vocational teachers in the Beijing District of China. The interviews were held online and the respondents were given room to express their answers on an open-

ended basis. The following table consists of the interview questions, transcript of interview and method for data analysis through open coding.

Chapter 5 discussion and conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions from the qualitative study undertaken. The chapter presents conclusions, in relation to each of the research objectives which have been articulated. The implications of this study to the vocational educational practice and industry as a whole are presented. The chapter closes with recommendations which can be implemented to improve future studies.

5.1.1 Learning and teaching is interdependent

From the responses in the interview, it can be deduced that learning and teaching is an interdependent process. The actions of the students and the teachers alike have a complementary effect on each other, and the outcome of the learning process cannot be isolated from each other (Gentrup et al., 2020). Therefore, this reflects how the grouping method cannot be used to fully attribute the teachers' abilities. The teachers' abilities would be moderated by the behaviour and the competencies of the students, before the final learning outcome is realized. However, it is essential to note that despite this interdependent relationship, teachers have the authority over their classes and are responsible for setting the standards which the students would aspire to (Pakar, 2018). Vocational education is largely practical and the standards and quality of work which the students produce is derived from their teacher's actions. Therefore, the grouping methods which the teachers apply would be based on the standards which the teachers have displayed. Vocational schools with highly innovative teachers would produce similar-mannered students, as they would learn the trade practices of their instructors (Orishev et al., 2021).

5.1.2 Ability-grouping is influential on teaching practices

Additionally, the teachers reflect varied sentiments over the issue of ability-grouping in their classes. Ability-grouping has been probed into by various scholars and there have been divergent findings. Other schools of thought deem ability-grouping as appropriate in sorting and measuring the progress within educational institutions (Mahmut, 2020). For example, if an institution achieves an 80% pass rate for its students, it would be deemed a success, and the school would be less likely to intentionally assist the remaining 20%. This poses as a challenge, as the remaining outliers would be left behind and the teachers focus on the high performing groups. However, other schools of thought identify ability-grouping as a tool which can be strategically used to foster collective growth among students (Tang, 2020). By intentionally pairing students with diverse ability, the teacher would be able to improve their lesson delivery and teaching principles as they seek to have all students achieve the practical skills which they must master.

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