
The challenge of project-based learning for first year students in teacher training program at Kaye Academic College¹ for Education

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of project-based learning (PBL) as a driving force in optimal training for first-year students at a College of Education. In addition, we examined students sense of satisfaction with this type of unique approach of learning in relation to a more traditional one. After exploring and analyzing the results, a question arose as to whether this approach should indeed be integrated into the training process as early as the first year. If so, how important is its contribution to the continuation of the training process in the coming years?

The data was collected through personal interviews with first-year students at Kaye College of Education, as well as through reflective diaries written by the students throughout the learning process. Four major topics emerge from the research: the contribution of learning by PBL in the second semester (compared to traditional learning in the first semester) and the degree of student satisfaction; teamwork and cooperation during the exploration process of PBL; the time invested that was required for the implementation of the projects in the local communities; the preferred method of evaluation of the students.

The findings of this study indicate that students' views differ on these four topics. However, the majority (95%) tended to prefer learning through PBL

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over traditional learning. The conclusions of this study indicate that PBL is a vital method which future teachers should experience themselves, in order to be able to instruct their own students in this innovative learning approach. This conclusion stems from the importance of collaborative learning (which is an inseparable part of the teacher's actual work), as well as from the change in the teachers status (information is available to all, and the teacher becomes a facilitator of knowledge more than one that transfers his knowledge).

Key words: active learning, collaboration, project-based learning, teacher training.

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