



SKILLS-ENHANCED COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES FOR PREPARING BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS TOWARDS WORKING IN A CHANGING WORLD

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Abstract

This study determined skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. The need for inclusive collaboration on how to impart lifelong functional and interdisciplinary skills, in addition to vocational business skills, for career success in a changing world led to this study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was carried out in the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria with a population of 300 respondents (275 business education students and 25 educators). No sampling was done because of the manageable population size. A structured questionnaire with a reliability index of 0.75 was used for data collection. Three research questions were answered using mean, while t-test statistics was used to test three hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that collaborative group problem-solving, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning communities enhance acquisition of functional skills for business education students to become highly productive citizens in a changing world. The study recommended that business education students should be well motivated to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning practices to develop their social and diversity skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, among others for successful career in a changing world of work.

Keywords: *Changing world of work, Skills, Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices, Students*



Introduction

Today, the need for collaboration to meet modern skills-demand and changing world of work with high emphasis on emerging functional and interdisciplinary skills pose a new challenge of equipping students to become highly productive citizens. This is because emerging 21st century skills to succeed are not only generic but also in constant dynamic variation that collaboration of business educators on skills-enhanced instructional delivery are imperative. Also, collaboration is needed to bridge the gap between the learning experiences acquired by students in the school and the functional and career skills needed in order to achieve the mandate of business education in Nigeria. This study therefore focuses on the skill-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students in Nigeria towards working in a changing world.

Preparing business education students towards working in a changing world in this study implies that in addition to specific vocational business skills in the curriculum, students are able to acquire 21st century social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online engagement, knowledge-sharing and communication skills to mention few. This is in line with the mandate of business education to ensure that students are educated for and about business through carefully planned experiences that offer them the opportunity to master the knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes needed not only to succeed in business but also have equal opportunity succeed in life (Association of Business Educators of Nigeria, ABEN, 2017). This can be achieved by imparting the needed academic and functional skills via skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices to make business education students fit into the changing world of work.

Collaborative teaching and learning is an umbrella term for a variety of joint intellectual efforts and approaches by students and educators for better learning outcomes. Usually, students work in groups of two or more to learn through social interaction and collaboration. According to Rosella (2016), collaborative teaching and learning refers to an instructional method that allows teachers and students work together to create and sustain a learning environment that allows students to investigate problems, provide explanations and generate ideas. Kelly (2017) described collaborative teaching and learning as an approach which enables students relate together in an unbiased way to share ideas and find solution to a given task. In the process, the teacher suggests the steps in completing a task so that learners can focus on achieving the learning objectives rather than surfing aimlessly (Smith, 2018).

As business educators look for ways to meaningfully engage the students for better learning outcomes, Veletsianos and Navarrete (2012) recommended collaborative online learning community for schools to enhance quality instructional delivery and interdisciplinary skill. Also, Dawn (2017) suggested *collaborative teaching and learning* strategies to enrich students' experiences and expose them to viable social, interpersonal and interdisciplinary skills through active interaction, participation and deliberation. Hershey (2012) opined that collaborative instructional delivery is a viable option to make active deliberation and enhance participatory role among students. *Collaborative teaching and learning* enables teachers to share their expertise, and once students understand the expected instructional behaviour, they will be prepared to excel in their roles; and in the process contribute to each other success, develop their creative thinking and problem-solving skills through collective brainstorming efforts (Miriam, 2018 & Rosella, 2016).

Effective collaborative teaching and learning practices for delivering quality education should among others focus on 21st century skills and interdisciplinary themes, knowledge and expertise; and engage students with the real world data, tools and needed skills they will encounter on the job or in life (Halah & Patrick, 2015; Drew, 2013; Partnership for 21st Century



Skills, 2006). Veletsianos and Navarrete (2012) found out that collaborative web-based teaching and learning facilitates online learning environment and access to multiple perspectives on issues and make use of technologies for students in different locations to share vital information. Barbara, Felder, Brent and Imad (2004) found out that making students work in groups harmonizes diversity of skills and encourages team spirit to achieve a common goal. For example, through group media project students can acquire new knowledge and skills in the course of designing and producing a multimedia product.

Collaborative research-based learning promotes information-seeking skills. Sharing research technologies to access and process relevant information that help students find solution to a given problem (Halah & Patrick, 2015). Students become informed about a topic of inquiry, collaborate to search for solution and sometimes publish findings for others to use. Lombard (2007) suggested use of problem-solving to promote authentic learning and critical thinking skills to help students overcome challenges they may face in the real world. Miriam (2018) stated that skills-based quality education can be achieved through cooperative learning community strategy which divides students into different learning communities with diverse abilities or talents, and uses joint contributions of every member to achieve distinctive results. This may involve students teaching one another, and sometimes, teacher to students relating as colleagues. Social interaction is unavoidable, thus, students are expected to develop interpersonal skills, high sense of social responsibility, adaptability and leadership skills with others for success.

Using best collaborative teaching and learning practices to impart relevant skills and knowledge during curriculum implementation is a key factor for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. Business education students are learners who undergo formal business education programme that equips them with relevant vocational skill, knowledge and aptitude to gain employment or generate employment. According to the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (2017), Nigeria students need business education to: fit into the world of work and be employable, create jobs and play their role effectively in national development; develop life skills and attitudes for economic success, broaden educational opportunities for acquisition of global business knowledge, encourage creativity and innovation in entrepreneurial thinking to explore career interest. Mere outlining these skills is not enough, there is need for concerted efforts to achieve them through skills-enhance collaborative teaching and learning practices.

Statement of the Problem

The mismatch between the skills required in the labour market and skills acquired by students in the school has become a serious concern because of the rising unemployment rate in Nigeria. The Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reported that unemployment rate was 18.8% in the last quarter of 2017, up from 14.2% in 2016 to decry many institution graduates lack of required skills to work with modern facilities, and find it difficult to solve complex problems or think creatively to be successfully self-employed (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). This calls for innovative ways of imparting modern work-specific and interdisciplinary skills because students need to acquire generic skills for career success in addition the school subjects to improve the quality of Nigerian system of education in this 21st century. The major challenge is how to deliver both the academic contents and the required functional skills. Thus, the concern of this study is to address the challenges of delivering curriculum contents and functional skills needs of business education students in this changing world of work via skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices.



Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?
2. What are the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?
3. What are the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted because it is suitable for collection of public opinions on a phenomenon (Ezeh, 2011). The study was carried out in the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria with a population of 300 respondents (275 business education students and 25 educators). No sampling was done because the entire targeted respondents were covered due to manageable size. A structured questionnaire made up of 42 items developed from relevant literature was used as instrument for data collection. Each questionnaire item had 5-point rating scale: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided with assigned numeric weights 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively to elicit responses from the respondents in line with the research questions.

The instrument was face validated by three experts and Cronbach Alpha technique was used to obtain a reliability index of 0.753 from 25 copies administered outside the institution. The researchers administered 300 copies of the questionnaire to the respondents and were duly collected. The data collected were analyzed using mean based on the combine responses of the lecturers and students to answer the research questions. The results of the combine mean responses on each questionnaire item were interpreted as follows: 4.50-5.00 strongly agree, 3.50-4.49 agree, 2.50-3.49 disagree, 1.50-2.49 strongly disagree and 0.50-1.49 undecided. Three hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. The t-test results were obtained from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, 26). Any hypothesis with significant value above 0.05 probability level was not rejected otherwise, it was rejected.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question One: What are the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?



Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_c	Remark
1.	Group problem solving	4.74	.75	4.72	.83	4.73	SA
2.	Team-based teaching and learning	4.20	.72	4.10	.86	4.15	A
3.	Collaborative inquiry-based learning	4.68	.58	4.56	.60	4.62	SA
4.	Collaborative discovery learning	4.80	.68	4.72	.79	4.76	SA
5.	Collaborative project-based learning	4.68	.76	4.64	.56	4.66	SA
6.	Collaborative web-based learning	4.87	.44	4.81	.52	4.84	SA
7.	Collaborative research-based	4.66	.63	4.54	.78	4.60	SA
8.	Learning communities	4.65	.91	4.87	.82	4.76	SA
9.	Guided group discussion	4.93	.40	4.85	.55	4.89	SA
10.	Interdisciplinary learning	3.80	.72	3.56	.81	3.68	A

Keys: \bar{X}_1 = Lecturers, \bar{X}_2 = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, \bar{X}_c = Combine Mean, SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree

Data analysis in Table 1 shows that the combine mean values for items 1, 3-9 ranging from 4.60 to 4.89 indicated that the respondents strongly agreed on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. While items 2 and 10 with combine mean values of 4.15 and 3.68 respectively also indicated that the respondents agreed. This implies that the all the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices in items 1-10 for preparing business education students can be used.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.60	.66	.05	.692	.361	NS
2	Students	275	4.54	.71				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant.

Table 2 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis one with a t-calculated value of 0.692, and p-value of 0.361 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, null hypothesis one was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Research Question Two: What are the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?



Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Ways of Implementing Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_c	Remark
1.	Establish functional skills to	4.95	.49	4.83	.75	4.89	SA
2.	achieve	4.65	.82	4.54	.86	4.60	SA
3.	Keep sizeable group for	4.89	.60	4.81	.72	4.85	SA
4.	effectiveness	4.80	.63	4.74	.78	4.77	SA
5.	Create individual and group roles						
	Establish flexible group norms	4.66	.76	4.52	.89	4.59	SA
6.	Establish procedure for group						
	interactions to avoid distractions	4.97	.41	4.89	.82	4.92	SA
7.	Consider diversity, gender balance						
	and individual intellect or talents	4.79	.96	4.65	.79	4.72	SA
8.	Handle emotional and						
	interpersonal criticism carefully	4.97	.32	4.88	.60	4.93	SA
9.	Consider technologies that can						
	make learning and collaboration	4.79	.78	4.71	.85	4.75	SA
10.	very easy						
	Discourage inferiority feelings as	4.90	.69	4.96	.38	4.93	SA
11.	students perform assigned roles						
	Build confidence and promote open	4.88	.26	4.90	.67	4.89	SA
12.	communication amongst students						
	Engage students to discuss and	4.61	.89	4.57	.96	4.59	SA
13.	solve real-world problems						
	Include different types of learning	4.93	.54	4.81	.86	4.87	SA
14.	scenarios and strategies						
	Focus on enhancing creative	4.61	.92	4.52	.88	4.56	SA
15.	thinking and problem-solving skills	4.89					
	Give opportunities for all the		.85	4.71	.97	4.80	SA
16.	students to give feedback	4.94					
	Assess the progress of individual		.24	4.89	.71	4.92	SA
	student and group performances						
	Mastering areas of gaps in the						
	needed skills after assessment						

Keys: \bar{X}_1 = Lecturers, \bar{X}_2 = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, \bar{X}_c = Combined Mean, SA = Strongly Agree

Data analysis in Table 3 shows the combine mean values ranging from 4.59 to 4.93 for all the questionnaire items. This implies that the respondents strongly agreed on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.



Table 4: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Ways of Implementing Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.83	.64	.05	.989	.260	NS
2	Students	275	4.75	.83				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant

Table 4 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis two with a t-calculated value of 0.989, and p-value of 0.260 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis two was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Research Question Three: What are the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world?

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation on the Benefits of Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	\bar{X}_c	Remark
1.	Promote open communication skill	4.89	.67	4.81	.70	4.85	SA
2.	Foster curiosity, tolerance and team spirit	4.71	.87	4.67	.84	4.69	SA
3.	Active participation and flexible learning	4.78	.65	4.92	.61	4.85	SA
4.	Develop social and interpersonal skills	4.94	.45	4.96	.49	4.95	SA
5.	Harmonize talents and diversity skill	4.91	.83	4.83	.91	4.87	SA
6.	Allow students to construct their own knowledge for creative thinking skill	4.95	.33	4.89	.69	4.92	SA
7.	Enhance interactive learning environment	4.60	.89	4.46	.97	4.53	SA
8.	Reduce learning anxiety by collaboration	4.94	.46	4.82	.75	4.88	SA
9.	Expose students to leadership skill as students perform assigned roles	4.69	.80	4.55	.60	4.62	SA
10.	Enhance cooperation and positive heterogeneous relationship	4.88	.77	4.76	.88	4.82	SA
11.	Reduce real-life inferiority and phobia	4.85	.61	4.69	.97	4.77	SA
12.	Build self esteem, confidence and sense of responsibility in students	4.95	.46	4.84	.77	4.90	SA
13.	Enhance different learning scenarios and instructional strategies	4.71	.84	4.57	.88	4.64	SA
14.	Students engage in problem solving	4.93	.52	4.81	.66	4.87	SA
15.	Promote interdisciplinary functional skills	4.68	.59	4.54	.97	4.61	SA
16.	Foster networking, knowledge-sharing and online ICT skills	4.87	.64	4.71	.75	4.79	SA

Keys: \bar{X}_1 = Lecturers, \bar{X}_2 = Students, SD = Standard Deviation, \bar{X}_c = Combined Mean, SA = Strongly Agree



Data analysis in Table 5 shows that all the questionnaire items 1-16 had combined mean values ranging from 4.53 to 4.95. This implies that all the respondents strongly agreed on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Table 6: t-test Analysis of difference in the Mean Responses on the Benefits of Skills-Enhanced Collaborative Teaching and Learning Practices for Preparing Business Education Students towards Working in a Changing World

S/N	Respondents	N	Mean	SD	Sig Level	t-cal	P-val	Decision
1	Lecturers	25	4.85	.65	.05	.742	.129	NS
2	Students	275	4.73	.79				

Keys: SD = Standard Deviation, n = Population, t-cal = Calculated t-test Value, P-val = 2-tail Significant Value, NS = Not Significant

Table 6 shows the summary of t-test result for hypothesis three with a t-calculated value of 0.742, and p-value of 0.129 greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis three was upheld since no significant difference existed in the mean responses of the respondents on the benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings on research question one revealed that group problem solving, team-based teaching and learning, peer-to-peer teaching and learning, guided group discussion, collaborative inquiry-based learning, discovery learning, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning communities can be used for skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world. The findings are similar to the submission of Drew (2013) that there is a significant correlation between problem-solving activities and the critical thinking skills. Similarly, the findings of this study give credence to the reports of Herrington and Kervin (2007) and Dunlosky (2013) that students who work together as a team usually solve problems and create meaningful projects better than those who do not. Also, these findings are in line with the report of Barbara, Felder, Brent and Imad (2004) that students taught in a manner that incorporates small group learning achieve higher grades and acquire greater communication and teamwork skills. The null hypothesis one was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views.

The findings on research question two revealed that the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world include: establish group goal(s) to achieve functional skills, involving students in real-world experience, creative thinking and problem-solving skills, flexible group norms, individual and group roles; promote open communication and so on. The findings are similar to the submission of Hershey (2012), Ebner, Leichardt, Rohs and Meyer (2010) that collaborative instructional delivery makes active deliberation, participation and team spirit across students possible. These findings give more credence to the recent studies of Miriam (2018) and Dawn (2017) that collaborative learning strategies promote inclusive learning environment where learners can freely exchange information, ideas and experiences for



interactive, informative and educational purposes. The result of null hypothesis two was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views on the ways of implementing skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices in this study.

The findings on research question three revealed the following benefits of skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices: open communication skill, social and interpersonal skills; positive heterogeneous relationship, cooperation, team spirit engagement and diversity skill; creative thinking, innovation, problem solving and leadership skills; ICT skill through online knowledge-sharing; active participation, self esteem and sense of responsibility in students; inclusive flexible learning environment. The findings are in line with the submission of Kelly (2017), Rosella (2016) and Halah and Patrick (2015), that collaborative learning promotes implementation of 21st century curriculum standards, social and interdisciplinary skills movement. Also, they are in line with the report of Trilling and Fadel (2009) that 21st century learning systems constantly engage students in critical thinking, communication, collaboration and problem solving to improve learning outcomes. These findings further collaborate with the studies Smith (2018) Drew (2013) and Lombardi (2007) that collaborative learning prepares students with authentic experience, creative and innovation skills needed in real life experience. The result of null hypothesis three was not rejected because significant difference did not exist in the mean responses of the respondents. This shows that the respondents had similar views.

Conclusion

This study emphasized skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world in line with the demands for 21st century functional and interdisciplinary workplace skills. The study identified collaborative teaching and learning practices that can enhance acquisition of these skills; ways of implementing them and their benefits. It was upheld that skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning will help business education students to develop their communication skill, social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online knowledge-sharing and information seeking skills through active collaboration between students to students and lecturers to students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommended that:

1. Business educators should engage students in collaborative group problem-solving, team-based learning, peer-to-peer learning, guided group discussion, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning, web-based learning, research-based learning and interdisciplinary learning.
2. Business educators should carefully implement skills-enhanced collaborative teaching and learning practices for preparing business education students towards working in a changing world and ensure that students are actually well equipped with functional skills to become highly productive citizens upon graduation.
3. Business Education students should be well motivated to take advantage of the benefits of collaborative teaching and learning practices to develop their social and diversity skills, team spirit engagement and leadership skills, creative thinking and problem solving skills, online knowledge-sharing and information seeking skills.



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