Students’ collaborative inquiry – relation to approaches to studying and instructional intervention

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Context

- two courses in an upper secondary school
- 30 students in Finnish literature & 28 students in History
- collaboratively write an article according to Wikipedia standards
- what influenced their work:
  - approaches to studying?
  - instructional interventions?
Inquiry learning

- method for developing information literacy
- Guided Inquiry based on the information search process (Kuhlthau, Maniotes & Caspari, 2007)
- need to understand students' natural ways to work in inquiry tasks
Inquiry learning – the role of the teacher

- important to guide the students
- clarify the goal of the task
- find manageable research questions
- instruct them on critical evaluation of sources
Approaches to studying

- surface: extrinsic motivation, memorization
- deep: intrinsic motivation, relate new information to previous understanding
- strategic: organized, strive for achievement
Research questions

1. Are high school students’ way of working on the source-based writing assignment related to
   a) instructional interventions and/or b) approaches to studying? If so, how?

2. Are challenges in the project related to
   a) instructional interventions and/or b) approaches to studying? If so, how?

3. Are students’ learning experiences related to
   a) instructional interventions and/or b) approaches to studying? If so, how?
Method

- two eight-week courses in an upper secondary school

- 30 students in Finnish literature & 28 students in History

- assignment: collaboratively write an article according to Wikipedia standards

- groups of 3-5 students, groups assigned by teacher
Method

- surveys
- 53 respondents
- Likert scales measuring
  - ways to work (18 statements)
  - challenges (12 statements)
  - learning experiences (11 statements)
- OPPI test of approaches to studying
Findings

Three work patterns:
1. collaborative
2. subject oriented
3. labor intense
Collaborative work pattern

- discussed sources with the teacher and team-members
- wrote their text collaboratively
- asked for comments on their writings
- reworked their text based on comments
Collaborative work pattern

- instructional differences most influential

Finnish literature
- students instructed to work together
- teacher involved throughout the course

History
- students left to work on their own
- substitute teacher
Subject oriented work pattern

- focused on discovery of new content
- learning the subject matter
- worked closely with sources
- checked notes while writing
- worked individually
Subject oriented work pattern

- positively linked to a deep study approach
  - enjoy exploring
  - focus on learning about subject area

- negatively linked to a strategic study approach
  - strategic students more pragmatic, achievement-oriented
Labor intense work pattern

- organized
- thorough
- source intense
- negative connection to group-work at school
- discussed at home and asked parents for comments

- no connection to approaches to studying or instructional intervention
Challenges

Finnish literature

- teacher more involved throughout the course
- mechanical challenges:
  - Wikipedia
  - references

History

- students left to work on their own
- analytical difficulties
  - understanding goal
  - finding personal angle
Challenges

- deep students: no difficulties in forming an overview of the topic
- strategic students: Wikipedia/wiki publishing difficult
- surface students: difficult to understand the goal of the project
Learning experiences

Finnish literature
- teacher more involved throughout the course
- no connection to learning experiences

History
- students left to work on their own
- learnt more about information seeking in the library
Learning experiences

- strategic: learnt about information seeking in the library
- deep: learnt about information seeking online
Conclusions

- Instructional differences related to information literacy aspects
  - degree of collaboration
  - working with information sources
  - developing a focus

- Approaches to studying related to learning about the subject area (Finnish literature or History)
  - content
  - analytical difficulties
Thank you for your attention!

Further information on the Know-Id project:
https://www12.uta.fi/blogs/know-id/