

o What was your SUTQ project about?

The main goal of my SUTQ project was to develop a (computer-supported) collaborative learning approach that promotes positive interdependence in a group assignment.

o What have you learned?

In cooperative learning there are three main types of positive interdependence: outcomes, means and boundaries interdependence. Outcomes interdependence relates to the goals and rewards that are defined in the group work. Means interdependence includes for example the roles and tasks assigned within the group. Boundaries interdependence is related to the specific space where the group work takes place and what binds students together.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis show that means interdependence is the most predominant characteristic of positive interdependence present in group work and positively perceived by the students. In the collaborative learning approach that was designed, both the group dynamics workshop (analogue/in class) and the group pages in the learning management system (LMS) seem to help in improving means interdependence.

Outcomes interdependence requires further attention as the objectives of the group work and the instructions uploaded in CANVAS are not always clear.

In terms of boundaries interdependence it seems that working in class in different groups is favoured by the students and even more when there is the possibility of contacting the staff in class (e.g. to receive feedback). I also learned that students favour inter-group collaboration and do not see other groups as “outside enemy”.

Johnson et al., (2007) summarize the core of positive interdependence by asserting that the precondition for any cooperative learning situation is that students “must perceive that they are positively interdependent with other members of their learning group, that is, students must believe that they sink or swim together” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 23). The way that the LMS and the collaborative learning approach is designed and implemented could help students to “swim together”.

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., & Smith, K. (2007). The State of Cooperative Learning in Postsecondary and Professional Settings. *Educational Psychology Review*, 19(1), 15-29.

o What was the biggest challenge?

I started the SUTQ with a new MSc structure that required the development of new material, including the use of a new learning management system (LMS) environment (CANVAS). I tried to capitalize the challenges of starting the SUTQ with a cohort of students using Blackboard as LMS and developing the collaborative approach with another cohort of students using CANVAS.

o What are you proud of?

In my role of course and specialization coordinator I could discuss with other staff members the challenges they face while implementing group work assignments and how they cope with it. Furthermore, since our students learn to use similar research methods as those I had to use for my SUTQ, I could run the Focus Group Discussion as part of the students' practices of research skills. Similarly, I could explain to my students the type of questionnaire I was using in my SUTQ and why I had distributed consent forms. This was one of the most inspiring and motivating moments of my SUTQ as I could explain and apply research methods with my students.