

Roles and Perspectives of Early-Childhood Teachers Students' Collaboration: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract

This study explores the roles and perspectives of early childhood teachers students' collaboration in the classroom. The study's goal is to comprehend how providing kids with opportunities for collaborative learning in early childhood settings might be advantageous. Using both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches, a mixed-methods strategy was used. 399 instructors who responded to a quantitative questionnaire and 15 teachers who took part in interviews made up the sample. Teachers in Talagang were given surveys to collect quantitative data, while in-depth interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The qualitative information gathered from the interviews was examined using thematic analysis. The results showed that the participating instructors held firm views on student collaboration and had a thorough awareness of their duties as early childhood educators. The conclusions of this study imply that it is crucial to give teachers the chance to have conversations on how to plan, prepare, and conduct a variety of collaborative activities in the classroom. This study adds to the body of knowledge on the subject and can help guide educational practices in early childhood settings by emphasizing the value of encouraging kids to work together in collaborative learning contexts.

Keywords: Early Childhood Teacher and Student Collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers in many classes and schools are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of their contributions to encouraging student collaboration. Group activities help students develop vital abilities that will be useful as they move through their academic activities and make decisions about their future. To better prepare their students for effective interactive experiences, teachers should focus on teaching collaborative approaches, such as listening to others, making concessions, defining shared goals, assigning responsibility, and giving constructive feedback (Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

The likelihood of problems forming amongst students when they work together is believed to be reduced by teachers who take the time to build their pupils' social-emotional skills and expected behaviors. Teachers must allot time for this during observation so that students can show their collaborative work with others and how they learnt from it prior to their next cooperative project. Teachers may advise pupils to reflect on their successes and setbacks and consider what they could do differently going forward (Quinn, 2012).

Students must see themselves as valued group members who are committed to working together, using creativity and problem-solving as crucial elements. The optimal course of action must be decided upon by all participants before collaboration can continue. A teacher's beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives can have a greater impact and stimulate creative, constructive expression. The process and overall cooperative experience are greatly influenced by the teacher's patience in mediating conflicts between students and knowledge of social emotional learning (Harju-Luukkainen & Kangas, 2021).

Early childhood (EC) educators have a complicated and multidimensional job that calls for perseverance, resilience, and a readiness to take on numerous problems (Beltman et al., 2019).

Regarding the working surroundings of educators, there are still some variances. For instance, kindergarten teachers typically have their own classrooms, whereas pre-school teachers may collaborate with colleagues or receive support from instructional assistants. If there are any problems when preschool and kindergarten instructors are required to work together, these differences in professional backgrounds could be a contributing cause (Corter et al., 2012). Effective transitional kindergarten interventions depend on the cognitive and social emotional skills of at-risk kids (Ritchie & Gutmann, 2013).

Before starting first grade, pre-school education, sometimes referred to as pre-primary education, is essential for a child's growth (Kena et al., 2015). But pre-school and kindergarten enrollment and attendance percentages varies from state to state in the United States (Workman, around 50 CE). The percentages of three-, four-, and five-year-olds who attended preschool and kindergarten in 2013 were 42 percent, 68 percent, and 84 percent, respectively. There are differences between various racial and ethnic groups, with Hispanic children enrolling in preschool at a higher rate than other groups (Kena et al., 2015).

The proficiency of the ECE workers has a significant impact on the quality of early care and education (ECE) programmes. It is frequently advised that ECE instructors possess a bachelor's degree to ensure high-quality instruction (Hyson, Horm, & Winton, 2012; Institute of Medicine & National Research Council, 2015). Four-year higher education institutions have, so far, had little impact on the education of ECE professors.

While previous studies have focused on structural and technical design elements of higher education programs for the ECE workforce, relationship dynamics have received less attention (Schilder, 2016). However, building strong relationships and collaboration between teachers and parents is essential for creating a conducive learning environment.

Early childhood education is essential for fostering the growth of cognitive, social, and intellectual abilities that have an ongoing impact on people and society (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; McCain, Mustard, & McCuaig, 2011). In particular for kids before they attend kindergarten, the United States has been concentrating on enhancing the quality and accessibility of early childhood education programmes.

According to research, early childhood instructors who take part in excellent early learning programmes prior to starting kindergarten tend to have more academic and social success (Espinosa, 2002). Making suitable outdoor play areas and implementing unstructured nature play into early childhood education programmes are difficult, though.

Problem Statement

The lack of early childhood education literature makes it difficult to create efficient programmes and services for young students who could benefit from special education through teacher preparation. The researchers want to learn more about how early childhood teachers view student collaboration in order to fill this knowledge gap. Early childhood collaborative learning stresses the social component of learning, when children converse and cooperate. Therefore, it is critical to understand and develop collaborative learning practises in this environment by undertaking a study to examine how early childhood teachers view and carry out their roles in encouraging student collaboration.

Objectives of the Study

1. To investigate the role of early childhood teachers in students' collaboration.
2. To explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on students collaboration.

Research Question(s)

1. What are the role of early childhood teachers in students' collaboration?
2. What are early childhood teachers perspectives on the concept of student collaboration?

Significance of Study

As this study focuses on increasing educators' capacity to promote collaborative learning in both the classroom and future business environments, educators stand to gain much from it. It is critical to expose kids to collaborative possibilities early on in their educational path since collaborative abilities are becoming more and more important in contemporary culture. Young learners can be prepared for future collaborative accomplishments by having this learning scaffolded. The purpose of the study is to better understand how teachers view student collaboration and the methods they use to encourage it. It examines a number of

phrases that are regularly used to denote student collaboration, including group work, project work, cooperative learning, teamwork, and collaboration. It is crucial to comprehend how educators view teamwork and appreciate its benefits. The gathered information will inform and direct future study. It is crucial to comprehend how educators view teamwork and appreciate its benefits. Future research will be steered by the collected data, which will also help successful strategic collaboration plans be implemented. Educators can enhance their skills, get insight into how collaboration is thought, comprehend the procedure, and appreciate the importance of it through this study. The conclusions reached will ultimately directly influence how future research is conducted and how successful collaborative strategies are applied.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of this study are as follows:

1. Teachers in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are the sole subject of the study. It excludes instructors from other academic levels or fields.
2. Only public schools in the Talagang district, comprising Tehsil Talagang and Tehsil Lawa, are included in the study. The study excludes private schools and schools located outside of this particular district.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intricacy of training and the variety of early childhood education systems intensify numerous factors regarding development, teaching strategy, desired and necessary objectives, difficulties, and next steps for professional development in early childhood education. Consequently, a variety of promising approaches and directions are being taken by professional learning and development now. Professional groups' recommendations and recent research are directing the next stages. They stress the value of good teachers, professional development, and the high-quality experiences that children have in early care and education settings, according to Zulkarnaen & Zulfakar (2002).

Children view shared, collaboration activities in early childhood education to be intrinsically motivating, according to Butler and Walton's (2013) research. The psychological notion that people can cooperate to overcome difficulties even when they are not physically present was the subject of their research.

(Kena and others, 2015) discovered that early childhood and kindergarten enrolment rates were highest for kids whose parents themselves had greater educational levels. This was typically true for students whose families had greater educational backgrounds. The majority of these differences were associated with preschool attendance: 49% of children whose parents held a graduate or professional degree attended preschool, compared to 45% of children whose parents held a bachelor's degree, 36% of children whose parents held an associate's degree, 35% of children whose parents held a vocational degree or some college, 28% of children whose parents held a high school diploma, and 28% of children whose parents held a certification that was less than that.

In their first year of school, 96 kindergarteners' perspectives were investigated (Harrison & Murray, 2015). Children faced a variety of personal problems, including greater expectations for self-control, establishing friends, resolving conflicts with other kids, and participating school activities. Up to 29% of kids' initial good impressions of school events had altered by the conclusion of the school year to negative ones.

Preschool transition programmes often lead to higher on-time enrolment, improved parental involvement, and enhanced partnerships between the community and the school, according to Smythe-Leistico et al. (2012).

Factors Influencing Teachers:

The current study examined teacher variables that may have an impact on connections between teachers and preschoolers. In one midwestern state, 152 head teachers of 3-6-year-old students at daycare and kindergarten facilities were polled using one survey questionnaires and three evaluation measures. The teacher-child interactions and the teachers' educational backgrounds, self-reported teaching efficacy, and parent-teacher relationships were found to be positively correlated. The strength of teacher-related factors indicating the calibre of teacher-child connections seemed to be the parent-teacher relationship.

Environmental Factors:

The surroundings might have a beneficial or bad impact on the teacher's activities and overall engagement with the student. For instance, in overcrowded classrooms, teachers may spend the majority of their time handling disruptions and the behaviour of the students (Greenman, 1988). Teachers use more coercive and restrictive language toward children when there are more students per instructor (Schaffer & Liddell, 1984), which leads to less-than-ideal relationships between these teachers and the students (Nordquist & Twardosz, 1990; Olds, 1982).

Children Learning in the early childhood education and care sector (ECEC)

Children learn in the context of their interactions with important providers. The early childhood education and care (ECEC) industry is fast realising the need of supporting positive interactions between families and ECEC services in order to enhance children's educational, health, and really well results. The report summarises the results of a study that sought to understand (a) parents' perspectives with collaborative practise, (b) educators' confidence in working with families, and (c) educators' perceptions of training needs. The study was conducted by Murphy, Matthews, Clayton, and Cann in 2021. The results show that although families often feel accepted and respected, they also want improvements in instructor interaction.

Although, the majority of the educators claimed to have a significant amount of trust when discussing their students' progress but a low level of self-assurance when addressing parents by title, bringing up or going to respond to concerns from parents, or working with families where the parents were under a lot of stress. These results indicate that additional practise is necessary.

An Exploratory Investigation of The Support and Facilitate for Consultation Utilized in Early Childhood Classrooms

A consultative coaching model that aims to improve positive learning environment practices as well as the instructional style and effect of teachers in early childhood (EC) classrooms is the subject of this study.

Educators from 15 EC classrooms took part as consultees. The advisory coaches had training that encompassed coaching techniques, (b) detailed information regarding beneficial and proactive teaching techniques based on proof practices, and (c) procedures for implementing those strategies. Over the course of eight weeks, consultative coaching concentrated on research-based Tier I positive support environments and instructional social-emotional learning practices.

Along with basic and continuous assessments, comments, and collaborative planning with EC teachers

Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky described socially relevant activity as the method by which we learn about ourselves through communication. Vygotsky is regarded as the "Father of Social Learning." He contended that teachers should assess pupils' problem-solving abilities rather than their knowledge accumulation. His MKO (more knowledgeable other) and ZPD concepts were included in his social constructivist development theory (zone of proximal development). He believed that there was a contrast between true development, which may be completed on one's own, and prospective development, which can be accomplished with aid.

Social interactions that kids have affect how they learn and develop cognitively. Learning takes place within the ZPD when a learner is matched with an MKO. To achieve exceptional results, A peer or an adult may scaffold the learning in a variety of ways. Vygotsky provides teachers with a variety of options, including peer-to-peer contact, pairs of students collaborating, small groups of students collaborating, and adults serving as role models or offering prompts and structures (Cicconi, 2013).

Every stage of a child's cultural development, according to Vygotsky, occurs twice: once through interactions with others and again on my own. This holds true for growing through play, picking up new concepts, and actively engaging in social interactions. ZPD and collaborative learning share many similarities. Children can learn more about things that they find challenging when teachers assist them learn within their ZPD. According to Bodrova and Leong, all students can advance by collaborating with more talented classmates (2001). Sharing ideas with classmates benefits students who are more capable. This strengthens their comprehension and makes it simpler for others to pick up new concepts.

According to DeVries and Zan, Vygotskian educators recommend providing students time to interact, employing effective scaffolding tactics, improving at asking open-ended questions to identify students' skill gaps, and supporting active learning (2012). The guidance and support of peers and teachers is required for the effective application of Vygotsky's theories

about social communication and interaction.

Group Work/Collaboration in Early Childhood

The relationship between a teacher and their students is considered a crucial aspect of teaching as it can greatly impact the effectiveness of the learning process. According to Gillies' (2015) research, dialogic teaching practices have been shown to have a positive impact on both the teacher-student relationship and student critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In the study, three teachers were selected from a group of educators who had participated in dialogic teaching workshops and 17 student groups were analyzed to assess the effects of different prompting approaches on student behavior and thinking. The results showed that between 57 and 89 percent of the exchanges between students involved critical thinking and problem-solving skills such as making assertions, challenging ideas, posing questions, speculating, and supporting reasons.

The study's goal was to examine the effects of dialogic instruction on students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as the relationship between the teacher and the students. The teachers used questioning tactics to stimulate class discussions and encourage students to engage in idea sharing and collaboration. By guiding students' reflection and providing opportunities for collaboration, teachers trained students to participate in productive group projects. The results showed that students developed various communication styles and became more confident, independent, and responsible.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To acquire thorough understanding of the subject, the study used quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Interviews with the participating instructors were conducted as part of the qualitative research approach, allowing for a thorough examination of their opinions and experiences. The quantitative technique, on the other hand, used questionnaires to gather data, allowing for the quantification and statistical analysis of the research findings. By combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the data collecting and analysis process was improved, leading to a deeper comprehension of the research issue. The researchers drew upon the study design to guide the data collection and interpretation process, as outlined by Saunders et al. (2015). This study design provided a systematic framework for acquiring and analyzing data, ensuring a rigorous and organized approach to research.

In this study, various research methodologies were considered. The positivist approach, which is frequently connected to quantitative research, makes use of numerical data and statistical analysis to establish causal linkages. The anti-positivist method, which is frequently connected to qualitative research, stresses personal experiences and narratives to explain and interpret social phenomena (Bellamy, 2012). The current study utilised a thorough and balanced method to obtain a wider range of ideas and viewpoints by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

In conclusion, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used in this study to examine the research issue. While the quantitative surveys allowed for data collection and

statistical analysis, the qualitative interviews offered in-depth insights. The research method was led by the study design, which ensured a systematic approach. The integration of various research approaches improved the findings' comprehensiveness.

Research Design

By employing a mixed-methods research design, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of ECE teachers' perspectives and methods related to student collaboration. In the social sciences, the mixed method is acknowledged as a third research methodology (Ponce, 2014). A study that uses both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies is called a mixed method study (Caruth, 2013). Neuman (2014) added that these two research methodologies are very different from one another because the quantitative research methodology focuses on data, facts, and figures. The qualitative research approach, in contrast, used words, sentences, pictures, and symbols. The current study evaluated the roles and perspectives of early childhood teachers on student collaboration using an explanatory sequential methodology. In the first phase of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, quantitative data are collected and analysed first, followed by qualitative data. Researchers typically give importance to quantitative approaches because the design is started statistically, and qualitative methods are employed to supplement or link the findings of quantitative data (Creswell, 2006). The present study employed a quantitative method to examine the hypothesis, in accordance with the discussion above. The qualitative research approach made it easier for the researcher to engage with the participants, affect the result of the study, and collect ideas and recommendations. As a result, the researcher decided to describe the research using a mixed-method approach. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods allows for a more nuanced and holistic exploration of the research topic.

Rational for Using Quantitative Design

In contrast to qualitative research, which focuses on in-depth analysis and nuanced understanding, quantitative research tries to collect data from a wide sample size. It was decided that a questionnaire-based research method would be appropriate given the type of data being gathered. The questionnaire made it possible to collect data quickly and gave teachers a clear platform from which to convey their opinions. The researchers were able to reach significant conclusions by rigorously analysing the data they had collected from the questionnaires. When obtaining a numerical representation of the sample population rather than examining the underlying causes or feelings underlying the observed attitudes and actions, quantitative research is very useful.

Population of the Study

People who work as early childhood teachers in public schools in District Talagang made up the study's population for both the qualitative and quantitative research methods. There were 362 public schools in the district, all of which served the local population. There was a total of 1,555 teachers in this demographic, according to data provided by the deputy director of education in Lawa. These people, which included teachers from Tehsil Talagang and Tehsil Lawa, were regarded as the research study's target demographic. A portion (sample) of this

population was chosen to take part in the study, guaranteeing representation and relevance to the study's goals (Welman et al., 2006).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

A probability sampling method, namely random sampling, was used for the study's quantitative component. The target group, which consisted of early childhood educators teaching kindergarten through second grade classrooms in public schools in District Talagang, was given an equal and known chance of being included in the sample thanks to this strategy. To obtain information on the function and viewpoint of early childhood teachers with reference to student participation, a questionnaire was created. A sample size of 399 instructors was chosen from the population of 1,555 teachers as a whole. The Krejcie and Morgan table (1970) was used by the researchers to calculate the ideal sample size.

The researcher spoke with instructors from the sampled schools in interviews for the study's qualitative component. Participants who could offer in-depth views and opinions on the subject were chosen using a convenience sampling technique. In this instance, 15 teachers were chosen to take part in interviews from various schools in District Talagang. In choosing these educators, it was intended to ensure a diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints, which would help provide a thorough understanding of the function and viewpoint of early childhood educators with regard to student collaboration.

Research Instruments (s)

A survey questionnaire was utilised as the research tool for the study's quantitative component to collect information on the function and viewpoint of early childhood teachers on student collaboration in the classroom. A sequence of organised questions that allowed for uniform answers made up the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire asked questions about the instructors' approaches to collaborative learning, their opinions of its advantages, the tactics they used to encourage student collaboration, and any difficulties they had putting collaborative activities into practise. To ensure its validity and reliability in measuring the intended dimensions, the survey questionnaire was carefully created based on pertinent literature and prior research.

Table.1 Reliability Statistics

<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>No. of Items</i>
0.731	0.719	34

Data Collection

Prior research indicates that the data collection strategy satisfies the study's aims (Duits & Van Zoonen, 2011). According to Bhandarkar et al. (2010), the method of data collection involves providing the respondents with research instruments. As a result, the researcher for this study gathered data in two stages, which are described below:

Data Analysis

To provide a thorough grasp of the research issue, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this study's data analysis. The analysis was separated into two distinct stages, with the first stage conducting a thematic analysis of qualitative data and the second stage conducting a quantitative data analysis.

Simple percentages and descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the quantitative data. The researchers were able to compile and evaluate the numerical data from the survey questionnaires given to the participating teachers thanks to these statistical measures. The prevalence, distribution, and variability of the replies were revealed using descriptive statistics, which allowed the researchers to quantify the teachers' viewpoints and attitudes regarding student participation.

The qualitative data gathered through teacher interviews was also analysed in addition to the quantitative data. To find reoccurring themes, patterns, and categories in the interview data, thematic analysis was used. To identify important themes and derive insightful conclusions, the qualitative data had to be coded, categorised, and organised in a methodical manner. The researchers were able to examine the complexity and depth of the instructors' experiences, perspectives, and practises regarding student participation through the use of thematic analysis. By illuminating the underlying motives, difficulties, and accomplishments in facilitating collaborative learning in the classroom, this qualitative analysis enhanced the quantitative findings.

By combining both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, the researchers gained a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, incorporating both numerical evidence and rich narratives from the participating teachers. This approach allowed for a more robust and holistic interpretation of the data, enhancing the overall validity and reliability of the study's findings.

EXPERIMENTS AND RESULT

Analysis of Objective 1

Based on the data provided in the table Table, it appears that the roles of early childhood teachers in students' collaboration. In terms of creating a conducive environment, 3 out of 15 participants (20%) emphasized the importance of the physical and social environment in promoting collaboration among students.

Table:2 To investigate the roles of early childhood teachers in students' collaboration.

Theme	Sub theme	f	%
Roles of early Childhood teachers in students' collaboration	Conducive Environment	3	20%
	Problem solving	3	20%
	Teamwork	2	13.3%
	Facilitator	4	26.6%
	Coach	3	20%

Regarding problem solving, 3 participants (20%) emphasized the role of the teacher in

facilitating students' ability to solve problems together. When it comes to teamwork, 2 participants (13.3%) highlighted the teacher's role in promoting and supporting teamwork among students. The largest group of participants (4 out of 15, or 26.6%) emphasized the role of the teacher as a facilitator, helping to guide and support students in their collaboration efforts. Finally, 3 participants (20%) stressed the importance of the teacher serving as a coach, providing feedback and support to students as they work together.

Analysis of Objective 2

Table.3: To explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on students' collaboration.

Theme	Sub theme	f	%
Perspectives of early Childhood teachers on students' collaboration	Communication skill resolve conflicts	3	20%
	Collaboration occurs naturally during play-based learning	5	33.3%
	students can be taught to work together effectively	3	20%
	Fostering an environment that encourages self-expression	4	26.6%

Based on the data provided in this table, it appears that the perspectives of early childhood teachers on students' collaboration can be categorized into several sub-themes, including the importance of communication skills in resolving conflicts, the idea that collaboration occurs naturally during play-based learning, the belief that students can be taught to work together effectively, and the importance of fostering an environment that encourages student self-expression. In terms of communication skills and conflict resolution, 3 out of 15 participants (20%) emphasized the importance of students having strong communication skills in order to effectively resolve conflicts and work together.

A larger group of participants (5 out of 15, or 33.3%) believed that collaboration occurs naturally during play-based learning, and that teachers play a role in promoting and facilitating this collaboration. Similarly, 3 participants (20%) believed that students can be taught to work together effectively, and that this is an important goal for early childhood education. Finally, 4 participants (26.6%) emphasized the importance of fostering an environment that encourages student self-expression, which can help to build a culture of collaboration and cooperation.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Gender

	f	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev
Female	246	61.7	61.7	61.7
Male	153	38.3	38.3	38.3
Total	399	100.0	100.0	

This table presents descriptive statistics of the gender of school teachers. There are 246 female teachers, which represents 61.7% of the total sample of 399 teachers. There are 153 male teachers, which represents 38.3% of the total sample. The "Mean" column indicates that the percentages of female and male teachers are both representative of the total sample. The

"Std. Dev" column indicates that the percentage of female teachers plus the percentage of male teachers equals 100%.

Table5: Descriptive Statistics of Experience

	<i>F</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Experience	399	13.41	11.288
Valid N	399		

This table presents descriptive statistics of the experience of schoolteachers. The sample size is 399 teachers. The minimum number of years of experience is 2, the maximum is 41, the mean (average) is 13.41 and the standard deviation is 11.288. The valid N column indicate that all 399 observations are used for the statistics calculation.

Table6: Descriptive Statistics of Practices of Collaborative Learning

	<i>f</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev</i>
Jigsaw Technique	399	1.97	.918
Stump Your Partner	399	2.14	.882
Problem-Solving Learning	398	2.23	.962
Think-pair Share/Write-pair Share	399	2.27	.854
Catch-Up	399	2.16	1.278
Fishbowl Debate	399	2.10	1.015
Group Problem Solving	399	2.29	1.058
Team-Based Learning	398	2.24	.854
Double Entry Journal	399	1.81	1.084
Group Writing Assignments	399	2.12	.743
Group Grid	399	2.27	.927
I prefer the class to have more group activities rather than individual study.	399	2.14	.889

This table presents descriptive statistics of the practices of collaborative learning used by teachers. Each question is answered on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 to 8, and 1 to 9. The mean and standard deviation are provided for each question. The mean values range from 1.81 to 2.29, indicating that overall, teachers generally agree that they use these collaborative learning practices in their classrooms and that they prefer more group activities rather than individual study. The standard deviation values range from .743 to 1.278, indicating that there is some variation in teachers' responses to these questions.

Findings:

The analysis of the interview discussions revealed several key categories that shed light on the roles and perspectives of early childhood teachers on student collaboration. The initial coding process involved closely examining the focus group recordings and transcript data to identify recurring themes. Two main categories emerged: play and classroom management, and classroom facilitation and teacher behavior.

Under the play and classroom management category, participants discussed the significance of play in fostering collaboration, compromise, defining roles, and effective communication among students. They emphasized the importance of students engaging in small groups, large groups, and partnerships to enhance collaboration. This category highlighted the role of classroom culture and management in creating an environment conducive to collaboration.

The second category, classroom facilitation and teacher behavior, encompassed topics such as routines, assistance, modeling, and flexibility in teaching. Participants recognized the need for teachers to facilitate collaboration by providing guidance, support, and modeling appropriate behavior. The constructivist approach, which emphasizes active student involvement in the learning process, was particularly associated with the sub-themes of modeling and flexibility.

These findings underscore the significance of collaboration, facilitation, and classroom management in promoting student collaboration in early childhood education. They provide valuable insights into the roles and perspectives of early childhood teachers, highlighting the importance of creating a positive classroom culture and employing effective teaching strategies to foster collaboration among students.

Research Objective 1: To investigate the roles of early childhood teachers in students' collaboration.

1. The findings indicate that teachers recognize the importance of providing early modeling to students before they engage in collaborative activities. Teachers believe that by demonstrating effective communication and encouraging student participation, they can prepare students for more advanced forms of collaboration. Many participants expressed their desire to hear from every student, and they emphasized the importance of actively monitoring and engaging with different groups to assess students' attention and participation.

2.

Research Objective 2: To explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on students' collaboration.

This investigation delved into the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding student collaboration. Throughout the discussions, participants occasionally referred to their initial concept maps, revealing their evolving ideas about student teamwork. Teachers' views on student participation and the key elements they deemed essential were brought to light during the discourse. All teachers agreed that students engage in collaboration when working in various types of groups. They emphasized that play provides a natural context for students to resolve conflicts and develop their communication skills.

1. Teachers' perceptions indicated that student collaboration can occur in various forms, such as individuals, small groups, or larger teams working together on diverse projects. One participant noted that collaboration naturally unfolds during play-based learning sessions, where students engage with their peers while collaboratively accomplishing tasks. However, students often fail to recognize the goal-setting aspect of play,

as it comes naturally to them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study provide insight into how early childhood educators might encourage student collaboration. In this study, the teachers underlined the significance of their function in fostering communication between students and serving as early role models. They felt it was their responsibility to make sure every student had a voice and actively engaged in group projects. Teachers also highlighted the way in which students' collaborative abilities changed over the course of the year and the necessity of socioemotional support for successful collaboration. The study also revealed the perspectives of teachers on student collaboration.

Collaboration was seen by teachers as a crucial component of their students' learning, and they noticed that collaboration came readily to kids when participating in play-based activities. They underlined the value of encouraging children to choose their own objectives and share their opinions, as well as the relevance of social-emotional development. The teachers emphasised the importance of building an environment that supports student individuality and self-expression and acknowledged the favourable relationship between student motivation and effective cooperation.

The study also looked at collaborative learning's adoption and usage in early childhood schools. Teachers discussed helpful approaches, including taking a backseat and letting kids take the initiative, including reflection exercises, and allowing students unstructured playtime to build community and trust. They also underlined how critical it is to deal with problems and give them the tools they need to resolve them.

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