Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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“How Does the Quality of Planning Contribute to Group Performance and Challenge Perceptions under Three Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) Conditions”

Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies

Wednesday, December 23, 2020
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Remote Defence

Supervisory Committee:
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Abstract

Students often struggle with collaboration. Successful collaboration requires planning which is often neglected by individuals and groups. Research about whether group interventions impact collaborative processes and how these interventions take effect is limited and is needed in order to guide best practices for academic engagement.

The aim of this qualitative case study was to explore how the quality of planning discussions contribute to group performance and planning challenge perceptions, under the three different planning support conditions. Specifically, the study compared the planning interactions among groups who (a) reported different planning challenge experiences, (b) received different kinds of planning support, and (c) achieved different learning outcomes (group performance). Participants were drawn from 180 undergraduate students enrolled in a first-year course in a university in Canada. Students used an online chat tool to complete a collaborative task and reflect on the process. Extreme case sampling was used to identify groups who perceived planning as problematic (6 groups) and groups who did not (6 groups). Chat transcripts were analyzed for quality and characteristics of groups’ planning discussions. Findings indicate (a) planning was largely neglected by groups, (b) the overall quality of groups’ planning discussions were not calibrated with groups’ perceptions of planning challenges encountered by the group, (c) groups who received the planning support in the form of nominal visualizations engaged in more powerful planning processes during collaboration, and (d) group performance on the task differed between groups who perceived planning problematic and groups who did not. This study contributes to the field by recognizing the deficiency of groups’ planning process in collaboration and providing evidence of the effectiveness of a planning support tool.

Key words: Planning Support, collaborative learning, planning discussions