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INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING FOR HIGH-ABILITY LEARNERS: COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL INSIGHTS FROM CLASSROOM RESEARCH

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Abstract

This session presents a collaborative critical inquiry study conducted across four primary schools in Singapore, examining the impact of inquiry-based learning (IBL) on high-ability learners and foregrounding teacher learning within a networked learning community. Within this network, theory and practice were intentionally bridged as teachers and researchers collaboratively designed, enacted, and refined inquiry-based lessons. A rapid cycle evaluation framework was used to systematically examine instructional decisions and their effects on students' cognitive and socio-emotional learning. The study was conducted across four primary schools. Multiple sources of data were used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of IBL. Students completed a questionnaire on student agency (comprising of dimensions of intentionality, self-regulation and self-reflection) and a selected sample of students were interviewed. In addition, student artefacts and teacher reflections were also examined. Findings indicated that across successive inquiry cycles, teachers developed stronger pedagogical coherence, heightened sensitivity to student responses, and increased capacity to use students' evidence of learning to adjust instruction formatively. For students, IBL supported deeper conceptual understanding, higher-order thinking, learner agency, productive collaboration, and socio-emotional growth. This session will also surface key design principles of IBL and instructional moves that mediated both teacher learning and student outcomes. These perspectives will contribute insights into strengthening inquiry-based learning for high-ability learners, which may inform practice across various educational contexts.

Keywords:

Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL), High-Ability Learners, Teacher Learning, Learner Agency, Networked Learning Community