COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS

by:
Michelle Serenas Nebrija
Teacher III, Balon Elementary School

Perhaps, we should focus on developing students’ critical thinking than training them to retain and memorize information. This would be beneficial in preparing them to navigate the world once they graduate. Exercising their critical thinking skills would allow them to be rational and logical, to formulate their opinions, and to better their understanding on how things work whenever they are exposed to information. Being able to think critically will distinguish the visionaries from a group of mere followers.

In schools, children are bombarded with information. From their teachers’ lectures, reading assignments and down to everything that they see online, it is indeed necessary for them to learn how to process and evaluate what they see. Critical thinking is not only about being rational, but it also pertains to the ability to think independently and draw conclusions based on a set of information. To draw your own conclusion would mean that one will need to seek and analyze data, and to see the connections in order to draw a strong conclusion.

Collaborative learning is one way to develop critical thinking. According to Gokhale (1995), allowing the students to interact with one another in achieving a common goal would increase their interest in learning while promoting this skill. Engaging them in small groups would enable them to share their ideas and participate in discussions with one another. They would be exposed to contrasting opinions of their classmates, therefore providing them the space for evaluating the ideas of others.

The first step in collaborative learning is for teachers to ask a question that would trigger the interest of their students – coming up with the right topic is important. Doing
so will eventually encourage discussion and brainstorming among members once you divide them into groups. Their problem-solving skills will be needed to solve the query, and they must be required to provide support for their claims with a reliable research data. Throughout the process, they will be trained to acquire legitimate information, filter the ones that they need, and to analyze and interpret the filtered information to help them in answering the question.

References: