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Before Promoting Collaborative Learning in Professional Education: Legitimate Questions to Ask

The value of group learning activities, in comparison to competitive or individual forms of instruction, is widely acknowledged in the educational literature. All recent theories of learning, such as social constructivism, socio-cognitive, situative and sociocultural perspectives, are grounded in the view that learning is fundamentally a socially mediated process. Yet, the typical group work activities designed by teachers in professional education may not necessarily lead to students learning collaboratively. This presentation will address a number of legitimate questions to ask before promoting collaborative learning in professional education. These relate to the nature of productive collaborative learning, how it emerges and is sustained in naturalistic learning settings, how students conceptualise effective learning from each other, and how productive collaborative learning can best be induced in professional education.

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Simone Volet is Professor of Educational Psychology. Her research, grounded in socio-cognitive, sociocultural and situative perspectives on learning, focuses on: the integration of cognitive, metacognitive, motivational and social aspects of learning at university and other adult learning settings; effective collaborative learning in student-led group activities at university; social dynamics of group work; learning and teaching in culturally diverse contexts; social cohesion on multicultural campuses; and the internationalisation of higher education curricula. She currently serves as a member of several international editorial Boards as well as several international and national scientific research advisory Boards. She is also past president of the Educational, Instructional and School Psychology Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP). She was the first author of the journal article that received the inaugural "Outstanding Publication Award" of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction.