


Chapter 9


Exploring Interdisciplinary Collaboration Through Microsoft Teams in Initial Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores how digital tools—specifically Microsoft Teams—can facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in Initial Teacher Education (ITE). It examines a project developed by EFL and Primary Education teacher educators in Chile, who integrated the CLIL approach and Sanmartí’s learning cycle to guide preservice teachers in co-designing interdisciplinary unit plans. Through qualitative data, including reflections, planning documents, and surveys, the study analyzes how digital platforms supported communication, feedback, and collaborative planning. Findings show that while students valued the professional learning opportunity,

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challenges related to asynchronous communication, peer feedback, and workload distribution emerged. Despite these tensions, participants reported increased autonomy, pedagogical insight, and awareness of interdisciplinary teaching practices. The study highlights the potential of bottom-up, digitally mediated initiatives to promote innovation in teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration has never been more critical. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and knowledge expands across multifaceted domains, educators must be prepared to equip students with the necessary skills to navigate complex, real-world challenges that defy traditional disciplinary boundaries. This imperative is particularly pressing in the field of Initial Teacher Education (ITE), where the goal is to form future educators who are capable of integrating diverse areas of knowledge, adapting to varied classroom contexts, and cultivating inclusive, reflective, and transformative learning environments.

Interdisciplinary collaboration emerges as a compelling approach to achieving these goals. It allows preservice teachers to engage with multiple perspectives, co-construct knowledge, and design learning experiences that mirror the integrated nature of contemporary societal issues. However, implementing interdisciplinary collaboration in ITE remains challenging. Traditional models often face structural and logistical barriers including departmental silos, rigid curricula, and time constraints that hinder authentic interaction between students and faculty from different disciplines.

Digital tools have the potential to transform these dynamics. In particular, platforms such as Microsoft Teams offer flexible, centralized spaces for real-time and asynchronous communication, collaborative planning, and ongoing reflection. These digital environments allow preservice teachers to work together regardless of geographical location or scheduling differences. Features such as video conferencing, file sharing, and integration with tools like OneNote and SharePoint provide robust support for interdisciplinary engagement, enabling a dynamic exchange of ideas across disciplinary lines. Furthermore, such tools reflect the evolving realities of teaching in the digital age, supporting the development of professional competencies that preservice teachers will carry into their own practice.

Grounded in the theoretical foundations of constructivism and collaborative learning, this study examines how Microsoft Teams can facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration in ITE. By integrating methodologies such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Sanmartí's teaching and learning cycle, the study

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