

## *Exploring the Impact of Teachers' Collaboration on Their Professional Development: A Case Study of Teachers of Journalism*

استكشاف تأثير التعاون بين الأساتذة على تطويرهم المهني:  
دراسة حالة أساتذة الصحافة

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### **Abstract:**

*Professionalism for journalism educators is a key factor in ensuring that educational institutions excel in this field. Recent research aims at exploring how teacher collaboration impacts professional development and found that collaborative initiatives for course planning, assessments, guidelines for instruction, and teaching-learning material can have far-reaching effects on pedagogy. Using a case study design by applying a qualitative technique involving semi-structured interviews with 20 university journalists and educators was obtained.*

*After conducting open coding analysis for data analysis purposes which incorporated three themes: acknowledging each other's contributions; solidifying effective classroom management skills; cultivating constructive relationships with colleagues; while recognizing limitations in terms of creativity stemming from being exclusively beholden to established standards; it was determined that educational institutions must prioritize collaborating among themselves through sharing ideas about theory or practice.*

*We discovered that teacher cooperation enhances professionals' continuous learning process while simultaneously serving as a magnet for conducive workplace environments characterized by effective management. As long as it doesn't impede creativity, embracing collaborative teaching practices could contribute to further progress within this field from a professional standpoint.*

### **Keywords:**

*professional development; collaboration; teaching; learning; journalism.*

## الملخص:

الاحترافية بالنسبة لمُدْرسي الصحافة تعتبر دورًا محوريًا في ضمان تميز المؤسسات التعليمية في هذا المجال. يهدف البحث الحديث إلى استكشاف تأثير التعاون بين المدرسين على التطوير المهني، وكشف أن المبادرات التعاونية في وضع خطط الدورات الدراسية، والتقويمات، وإرشادات التدريس، ومواد التدريس والتعلم، يمكن أن يكون لها تأثيرات بعيدة المدى على أساليب تدريس الصحافة. استُخدم تصميم دراسة الحالة مع تقنية نوعية تتمثل في إجراء مقابلات شبه مُنبية مع 20 من صحفيين ومُدْرسي الصحافة في البعد إجراء تحليل التشفير المفتوح لأغراض تحليل البيانات والذي تضمن ثلاثة محاور: الإقرار بمساهمات بعضهم البعض، وتعزيز مهارات إدارة الفصول الدراسية الفعالة، وتنمية علاقات بناءة مع الزملاء، مع إدراك قيود الإبداع الناجمة عن الالتزام الصارم بالمعايير المعمول بها، تبين أنه يجب على المؤسسات التعليمية إعطاء الأولوية للتعاون فيما بينها من خلال تبادل الأفكار حول النظرية والممارسة.

اكتشفنا أن التعاون بين المدرسين يعزز عملية التعلم المستمر للمهنيين بينما يعمل في الوقت ذاته على تهيئة بيئة عمل إيجابية تتميز بالإدارة الفعالة. طالما لا يعيق الإبداع، فإن تبني ممارسات التدريس التعاونية يمكن أن يسهم في إحراز المزيد من التقدم في هذا المجال من منظور مهني.

## الكلمات المفتاحية:

التطوير المهني، التعاون، التدريس، التعلم، الصحافة.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Professionalism in teaching journalism is the main factor that determines the success of educational institutions. Almost all schools and universities are rationally aware of the quality of instructors who represent their institution; as a result, they focus more on finding effective ways to continue growing their abilities and traits, particularly in these trying times. Being a professional journalism teacher is not only about knowing skills and activities, it requires more than these. While dealing with ongoing teacher professional development can be challenging, collaboration among instructors can simplify and minimize efforts toward enhancing teaching career development. Several recent investigations and meta-analyses examine the link between teacher inputs and teacher quality in an attempt to increase teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Wenglinsky, 2005; Kafyulilo, 2013). From a professional standpoint, "being a journalism teacher" is more than just a collection of various activities and abilities; it is, in reality, a component of the "socialization" process (VanZetten & Marks, 2007) which may lead mostly to professional development. Professional socialization, according to Cohen (1999), is the process of gaining skills and essential knowledge to attain a professional function with valued and professional standards.

This is accomplished through professional education and working experience in a work environment, namely collaboration. While there is a lot of empirical evidence pointing to the importance of teacher collaboration as a powerful form of professional learning and a way to build professional capital (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2000), the literature on evaluating and measuring the impact of professional collaboration is still relatively new (Cordingley, 2015). Despite significant commentaries and models that have aided in the evaluation of collaborative and collegiate professional practice (Guskey, 2003; Gebo & Kirkpatrick, 2002), determining the impact of collaborative professional learning in contemporary university settings remains a challenge (as cited in Harris and Jones, 2017), especially these days when teachers use to close their classrooms and do their lessons on their own. Recognizing the importance of teacher professional growth, this study seeks to investigate how instructors' levels can be influenced by others, with an emphasis on teacher collaboration. Furthermore, when teachers advance professionally, their practices impact the educational institution and outcomes. Two questions emerged from this research: - What is the effect of teachers' collaboration on the professional development of journalism teachers? - How does it impact their teaching practices and career development?

## **1. Theoretical Framework:**

### **1.1 – Teachers' Collaboration**

Collaboration has been the subject of substantial study across disciplines in recent years, particularly from knowledge co-construction in the context of shared corporations (John-Steiner & Abraham, 2000) and learning communities. According to John-Steiner, collaboration carries the complexity of human connectivity, reinforced by shared purpose and stressed by opposing emotions. Collaborative learning is at the core of communities of practice involving the co-construction of meaning and mutual relationships through a shared enterprise (Ibid). Many researchers have labeled the concept of teachers' collaboration in various ways, the most common of which are team teaching and co-teaching. In this paper, the researcher will use collaborative teaching to refer to a group of teachers sharing their experiences, offering their expertise, and striving to improve their professional teaching to achieve better results. According to Moolenaar (2012), the concept of teacher collaboration has been interpreted in a variety of ways, including as a type of school climate or culture comprised of norms of collegiality, trust, and social support, a management tool to improve school effectiveness, and a feature of a professional learning community. It is mentioned that, as a result, collaborative

practices have been identified as essential to professional development because they provide additional opportunities for teachers to build “networks of relationships” through which they can reflect on how they teach, review beliefs about teaching and learning, and collaborate on knowledge (Achinstein, 2002; Chan & Pang, 2006). An important question that must be asked is how teachers collaborate. Schleifer (1997) admits that describing the precise methods in which instructors collaborate is difficult. Different terminologies describe various sorts of collaboration, but they are not all thought to mean the same thing. What one researcher could call "peer coaching" may be labeled as "mentoring" or "induction" by another. In their most current extensive literature review on teacher collaboration, Katrien Vangrieken and colleagues (2015) concluded that the study lacked consistency in the terminology used to identify the sort of cooperation. The authors go on to say that such a way of collaboration, like any other educational activity, might be carried out differently in terms of goal, breadth, quality, and depth. When making conclusions regarding the influence of any given type of cooperation based on research that does not explain how that kind of collaboration works, it is critical to exercise caution. Several studies (Brownell et al., 2006; Baker, 2015) have documented the definition of teachers' collaboration, with each study adding a layer of complexity to the concept. First, collaborative teaching has aroused various connotations, making it the emerging arena of teaching/learning skills nowadays. Collaborative teaching first appeared as guidance and support for both students and instructors (Jeon, 2010). According to Friend and Cook (1995), collaborative teaching is a method of interaction between two or more persons who are willing to work together to create goals and make decisions. In this context, decision-making refers to selecting the reading message, for example, while taking into account the learners' learning. The choice to consider the gradation of classroom activities can be shared by both experienced and inexperienced participants. Many researchers have identified types of collaboration. According to Sandholtz (2000), there are three traits of team teaching or collaboration. First, a group of teachers shares responsibilities; second, the same planning but various classrooms; and last, a collection of prior lessons, plans, directions, and assessments. Teachers are thus able to learn from previous experiences, grow professionally, and meet students' most urgent needs. As a result, novice teachers may lack expertise on how to arrange and offer daily instructions. The "know-how" is in the hands of competent teachers. Less experienced teachers may use different strategies. This melting pot will benefit everyone involved in the partnership. Everyone comes out on top

## **2.2- Professional Development**

Professional development is of utmost importance in any field of education. Professional development includes all-natural learning experiences as well as conscious and planned activities that are meant to be of direct or indirect value to the individual, group, or institution, and that contribute to the quality of education in the classroom (Nawab, 2020). It is the process by which teachers, alone or with others, review, renew, and extend their commitment as agents to the moral purposes of teaching; and by which they acquire and critically develop the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence necessary for professional thinking and practice with children, young people, and colleagues at each stage of their teaching careers (Day, 1999). Professional development is a serious business that is critical to preserving and improving the quality of teachers and leaders. Professional development is an example of what others have called an "extended view of professional learning" (Lieberman, 1996, as referenced in Day, 1999). It thus includes mostly private, unaided learning from experience through which most teachers learn to survive, become competent, and develop in classrooms and schools, as well as informal development opportunities in school and more formal 'accelerated' learning opportunities available through external and internal in-service education and training activities (Day, 1999). Because student results are heavily influenced by teacher quality, governments, local politicians, and school administrators must encourage teachers' continuing professional development in order for them to cope successfully with ongoing changes and increase educational quality. Strengthening internal school conditions to support teachers' professional development is regarded as an important prerequisite for dealing with a constant stream of changes in their environments (e.g., demographic changes, large-scale educational innovations, and sociocultural renewal), the multidimensional restructuring demands to which they must respond, and the significant external pressures resulting from the tighter "output" controls imposed by accountability policies. Furthermore, encouraging teachers' professional growth is believed to decrease the alienation that bureaucracy may cause (Scheerens, 2010).

### 3. Methodology

This study was conducted at the National Superior School of Journalism and Communication Sciences, University of Algiers 2. The school includes 55 permanent teachers, and their professional level is either a magister or a doctorate. They had more than one year of experience. The researcher is already informed that teachers of the same specialty have had meetings with their colleagues to discuss their teaching practices, which in turn may result in their academic development, particularly with novice teachers who might lack materials and teaching instructions. This study endeavors to measure the “what” and “how” questions to explore the impact of teachers' collaboration on their professional development. The kind of teacher collaboration indicated in this study is cooperation in planning lessons, evaluations, instructions, and teaching-learning materials. To determine the relationship between collaboration among journalism teachers and its impact on their professional development, this research selected case study research through the implication of the qualitative method to explore the influence of teachers' collaboration on the professional development of journalism teachers. According to Yin and Feng (2012), case studies are empirical research approaches used to examine current events while focusing on the dynamics of the case in a real-life context. A case study is a thorough research strategy encompassing the logic of design, data-gathering techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis (Ibid). The qualitative research method was amplified in the form of semi-structured interviews to seek information from 20 journalism teachers, 14 females, and 6 males, in order to generalize the results. The sampling was purposefully chosen in order to meet the research question. Teachers were asked individually to produce honest and valid answers. The interview took place in the teachers' room on different occasions either in Arabic or French language. The time allotted for each interview is between 10 to 15 minutes. The questions guide participants to provide information on the impact of collaboration on their career development. Because the journalism professors teach either in French or Arabic and occasionally both, the questions are offered in either language to facilitate understanding. The researcher began by asking whether the teacher had collaborated this year. This question was followed by asking them how they see the collaboration. Additionally, the teachers were asked whether, after collaborative meetings, they noticed any difference; and whether collaboration with other colleagues gave them a chance and freedom to seek new knowledge, they were asked about the content and purpose of their collaboration.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Results

The current study's data analysis follows the methodologies given by Stake (2010) and Creswell (2013). As a first step, the researcher went through the interview line by line numerous times to construct "memos" and margin notes, as Creswell (2013) describes. Then, researchers used an open coding technique, in which they studied the written transcripts and developed concepts and important points, producing the first codes (Stake, 2010). The researcher has already taken notes on the answer of the teachers to take a look at them later and obtain a general overview before coding the results. As a last step, the answers are classified into categories based on similar answers. The classes were integrated, and meaning units or themes expressing the shared experience of each participant in the given situation emerged (Merriam, 2009). The final themes are presented in Table 1.

Four themes emerged from the analysis of interview answers: a) learning from each other; b) classroom management; c) a good atmosphere with colleagues; and d) limiting creativity. Learning from each other codes from the interviews of journalism instructors reveal that teachers learn from each other. All of the teachers show that meeting with teachers of different backgrounds, ages, and mental capabilities gives them a chance to build their knowledge. This theme uncovers the importance and value of peer collaboration in their professional development. The following is an excerpt from an interview that demonstrates instructors' professional development throughout the collaborative process. "We all learn tremendously from one another. Each teacher introduces a different way backed up by ideas and prior research. Sometimes I have the impression that I am hearing about some concepts for the first time.

This, in turn, strengthened my scaffolding and piqued my interest in learning more about such fields or methodologies. In addition, I perceive an improvement in my teaching techniques as I rectify certain errors from my colleagues' prior experiences. As a result, I regard teacher cooperation as an active aspect of teacher growth." This topic emphasizes the importance of teacher cooperation in their continuous learning and classroom practices. Furthermore, instructors report that they have grown. Classroom management participants in this study demonstrate that communication among instructors aids in class management, particularly in this digital era, which provides teaching journalism with a new perspective. This covers methods of instruction, materials, evaluations, and assignments. Adapting to the current age is difficult; therefore, engaging with peers may ease the process so that



instructors may share what they learn about research. One of the teachers' states: "In some ways, I can see that my teaching technique has shifted as a result of my cooperation with colleagues. I can't deny that I've offered new approaches and teaching materials that I thought were intriguing and many instructors appreciate them and say they're going to employ them. Furthermore, we work together to develop a single evaluation criterion so that no one falls behind. In reality, this enables me to establish clear goals and encourages me." Although the cooperation of journalism teachers does not entail peer teaching, the teachers establish the validity of the collaboration on their abilities to manage the classroom from all sides. A Good Atmosphere with Teachers is another theme. According to most of our participants, interacting with colleagues of the same specialty generates a professional and formal environment, especially when meeting with teachers of different gender (male/female instructors), but some of them feel more comfortable when meeting with teachers of the same gender. They mention communicating officially since they are seeking to understand their field. However, they find collaboration with other instructors to be uncomplicated and supportive. The example below exemplifies the collaborative atmosphere. It is good, in my opinion.

We talk about everything related to education. "I sometimes just listen to colleagues, especially those with much experience, who are referred to be heads of specialization. They attempt to clarify issues in education, such as what we should add and the concepts we should teach." Another teacher states the following: "Collaboration is typically beneficial, but there are some boundaries beyond which I cannot express myself fully, particularly with experienced professors. This is not always the case; I may occasionally share my thoughts, and I may see this as a method to gather feedback that I can use in my lessons." Meanwhile, another teacher states: "Our partnership takes place in an inspirational environment in which we learn from one another in a modest and courteous manner". We may infer that despite its formality, collaboration among journalism professors fosters a positive environment. Limiting creativity from our participants' perspectives is doing what others say is the best way to educate. Some teachers believe that collaboration might limit creativity if we are required to use the same exam and teaching technique. It may also hinder creativity when inexperienced instructors just follow experienced teachers' instructions. Meanwhile, some professors highlight that we are not limited; cooperation is done to lead and observe where instruction is so that we can be on the same road as other classes. As a result, rather than limiting creativity, teacher cooperation tends to enhance and foster it. The excerpts below provide samples of



teachers' answers. "Teachers' collaboration might limit creativity. This can be seen in following other teachers' constructions as the lessons we teach, evaluation standards, etc., especially for me as a novice teacher in the school. Another teacher's statement is as follows I don't see collaboration as a boundary to creativity. If a teacher is creative, s/he can impact the group positively. Collaboration stays a factor in teaching development; it gives a new concept to teaching and helps us grow professionally without pain, particularly, the new teachers in the domain." From the above theme, we conclude that collaboration has mainly a positive effect on teachers' practices either novice or experienced. However, it is still a challenge for some who like working in isolation.

#### **4.2. Discussion**

The current study's goal is to investigate the effect of collaboration among journalism teachers on their professional growth. The findings suggest that teacher cooperation has a good influence on teachers' professional progress, whether professionally or personally. Teachers' learning and changes in teaching methods and strategies are essential components in determining the value of cooperation. The case's overall outcome demonstrates that cooperation helps instructors to learn from one another and exchange intriguing knowledge, particularly those who are new to the field of teaching. It also gives assistance to teachers who may have missed advice or encountered challenges with the curriculum. Thus, it is clear that there is a positive influence of collaboration on teachers' professional growth. The finding of the study is congruent with previous research by Acar et al., (2016) and Yilmaz (2022) who found that teachers favorably experienced the process of online peer collaboration and considered it to be beneficial and impactful in their professional growth. Collaboration with peers was found to be satisfying and useful for the professional development of primary school teachers. Furthermore, journalism professors discuss the influence of cooperation on their classroom management, and teachers from the same specialization may provide advice and assistance to their colleagues in solving difficulties and improving their teaching process by sharing new approaches and methodologies. This study's impression of the teachers is consistent with earlier findings presented by Graham (2007) and Nguyen et al., (2020) who found that obtaining feedback from peers and witnessing their peers' classroom practices was extremely beneficial in their own teaching and classroom management and teaching improvement. A previous study has also shown that having coaching or peer assistance has helped instructors enhance their professional abilities in the classroom. Professional development has been shown to enhance teachers' classroom behavior skills as well as their positive connections with students, and this progress is reflected in beneficial outcomes for children such as behavior engagement and academic success (Gregory et al., 2014; Acar & Yidiz 2016). The question of "limiting creativity" investigates participants' thoughts about

how cooperation affects creativity in classrooms. Some instructors feared that collaboration might hinder innovation, especially when they felt obliged to use the same test and teaching procedures as their colleagues.

They also mentioned that new teachers could simply repeat more experienced teachers' instructions, thereby destroying originality. However, other teachers stressed that cooperation does not necessarily prevent innovation. On the contrary, they believe that cooperation can promote creativity by creating new ideas and educating ideas. These conclusions show that educators have different perspectives on the connection between collaboration and creativity, some see cooperation as an obstacle and others as a catalyst for invention. Overall, the analysis of data revealed that teaming up presents a helpful effect on both teacher professional growth and class activities. Collaborating teachers can learn from each other's expertise, navigate unpredictable changes in education systems efficiently, and develop efficient disciplinary strategies in classrooms while nurturing supportive and motivational environments. However, collaboration poses challenges for those individuals who prefer working alone. Also, crucial is the question of whether collaboration can spark or stifle creativity among teachers.

## 5. **Figures and tables:**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Theme 1</b> Learning from each other	Whether they see any difference in their process after collaboration.
<b>Theme 2</b> Classroom management	Teachers describe whether collaboration helps in improving classroom practices and management
<b>Theme 3</b> Good atmosphere during their collaboration	Teachers were intended to describe the Good atmosphere with teachers with their colleagues'
<b>Theme 4</b> Limiting creativity	Teachers' perception of creativity of their collaboration with colleagues

**Table 1: Description of the themes;(Merriam, 2009).**

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Professional development for teachers is critical to the functioning of educational institutions. Teachers' collaboration has an influence on their professional growth since it allows them to expand their background knowledge. It has the potential to help instructors advance in their careers. According to the findings of teacher interviews, teamwork encourages instructors to learn from one another, which enhances their teaching vision and results in effective class management. Few instructors, however, regard cooperation as an impediment to their creativity. This is only possible if they are required to follow the same teaching instructions or are strict with the same teaching equipment and resources. This research is useful because it depicts how instructors work together to promote their professional growth. It was established that educational institutions should prioritize collaboration among themselves through exchanging theories or practices. These findings hold great importance for educators and policymakers as they underscore the crucial need to foster a collaborative environment, acknowledge individual preferences, and promote creative independence under a collaborative framework. Again, universities may provide extra time and encourage instructors to meet on a regular basis to enhance their practices, which may result in professional advancement. Future proposals include academics doing research on a broad population to produce a more succinct

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