REVISTA INVECOM
ISSN en línea: 2739-0063

Learning communities in the educational context: a systematic review article

Comunidades de aprendizaje en el contexto educativo: un artículo de revisión sistemática

Received: 25/03/2025 - **Accepted:** 17/06/2025

Antonia Amparo Villanueva Chumpitaz
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2418-138X
avillanuevachumpitaz@ucvvirtual.edu.pe
Universidad César Vallejo. Lima, Peru

Lizet Karina Riveros Cones
https://orcid.org/0009-0002-5718-5352
Lriveros05051@ucvvirtual.edu.pe
Universidad César Vallejo. Lima, Peru

Candelaria Aida Camacho Porras
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1222-0011
ccamachop@ucvvirtual.edu.pe
Universidad César Vallejo. Lima, Peru

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to analyze the implications of learning communities in education. To do so, a methodology based on a systematic review was used, selecting articles published between 2018 and 2025 from the Scopus, Scielo, WoS, and Latindex databases. The search was conducted using the descriptors "learning communities" and "learning communities," combined with Boolean operators such as AND. Initially, 117 articles were identified; however, after applying the inclusion criteria, 20 relevant works were selected: 10 from Scopus, 1 from WoS, 4 from Scielo, and 5 from Latindex. The results show that learning communities constitute a transformative educational strategy, as they enhance educational management, foster quality and equity in teaching, and promote both academic success and pedagogical development. Furthermore, these communities foster inclusion, collaboration, and active participation among students, who perceive that their skills are valued by their teachers. Furthermore, the strengthening of collaborative learning and critical dialogue is highlighted, which contributes to the development of academic and socio-emotional skills, especially in diverse contexts. In conclusion, learning communities generate a positive impact on school coexistence, help overcome educational failure, and strengthen the ties between school and community, consolidating themselves as a fundamental tool for educational transformation toward a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable model.

Keywords: learning communities, strategies, educational management.

Resumen

El objetivo principal de este estudio fue analizar las implicancias de las comunidades de aprendizaje en el ámbito educativo. Para ello, se empleó una metodología basada en una revisión sistemática, seleccionando artículos publicados entre 2018 y 2025 en las bases de datos Scopus, Scielo, WoS y Latindex. La búsqueda se realizó utilizando los descriptores “comunidades de aprendizaje” y “*learning communities*”, combinados con operadores booleanos como *AND*. Inicialmente, se identificaron 117 artículos; sin embargo, tras aplicar los criterios de inclusión, se seleccionaron 20 trabajos relevantes: 10 de Scopus, 1 de WoS, 4 de Scielo y 5 de Latindex. Los resultados evidencian que las comunidades de aprendizaje constituyen una estrategia educativa transformadora, ya que potencian la gestión educativa, fomentan la calidad y la equidad en la enseñanza, y promueven tanto el éxito académico como el desarrollo pedagógico. Asimismo, estas comunidades impulsan la inclusión, la colaboración y la participación activa de los estudiantes, quienes perciben que sus habilidades son valoradas por sus docentes. Además, se destaca el fortalecimiento del aprendizaje colaborativo y el diálogo crítico, lo que contribuye al desarrollo de competencias académicas y socioemocionales, especialmente en contextos diversos. En conclusión, las comunidades de aprendizaje generan un impacto positivo en la convivencia escolar, ayudan a

superar el fracaso educativo y refuerzan los vínculos entre la escuela y la comunidad, consolidándose como una herramienta fundamental para la transformación educativa hacia un modelo más inclusivo, equitativo y sostenible.

Palabras clave: comunidades de aprendizaje, estrategias, gestión educativa.

Introduction

Learning communities represent a valuable tool for promoting inclusive and equitable education. According to one of the reports on "Education 2030," these communities are deemed essential for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to education, as they contribute to building more participatory and collaborative educational systems (UNESCO, 2020). Similarly, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OCDE, 2019) has highlighted, through various studies, how learning communities enhance educational quality by fostering collaboration among educators. Such reports underscore that these communities are crucial for strengthening teachers' professional competencies and improving learning outcomes. In developing countries, the implementation of learning communities has been encouraged as a strategy to optimize educational systems and reduce learning gaps in particularly challenging contexts.

In Latin America, community work has been promoted as a response to educational challenges, such as inequalities in access to and quality of education. This strategy aims to strengthen professional training, foster educational inclusion, and propose solutions tailored to local realities, thereby overcoming the limitations of traditional teaching models (UNESCO, 2021). In the region, various types of learning communities exist, with their focus and structure varying according to the identified issues. For instance, professional communities are developed when challenges arise at the managerial or pedagogical level, while school communities are formed when difficulties involve families, students, and teachers (Banco Mundial, 2022).

In the case of Peru, the utilization of learning communities has been pivotal in identifying and addressing issues such as low educational quality, limited ongoing teacher training, and inequality in learning outcomes across regions. These communities have facilitated collaboration among teachers, improving their pedagogical practices and promoting a student-centered approach. Additionally, they have contributed to reducing educational gaps through the adoption of inclusive and contextualized teaching strategies, especially in rural and low-resource areas (Minedu, 2021).

By definition, learning communities involve the active participation of the entire educational community, grounded in egalitarian dialogue and interaction as a means to generate knowledge and skills (Flecha et al., 2003). They are also considered environments where students learn not only from teachers but also from their peers through collaboration and dialogue (Revelo et al., 2018). In this sense, these communities promote a culture of collaborative learning and shared responsibility for the progress of all students (Minedu, 2022).

Theoretically, the conception of learning communities is based on dialogical interaction and the active participation of all community members, aiming to improve both academic performance and school coexistence (Flecha et al., 2003). Collaborative learning, in turn, promotes positive interdependence among students, emphasizing cooperation and interaction to create a shared learning environment (Johnson et al., 1994).

Similarly, Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural approach highlights the fundamental role of social interaction in cognitive development and knowledge construction, stating that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through participation in social activities and the use of symbolic tools such as language (Vygotsky, 1979).

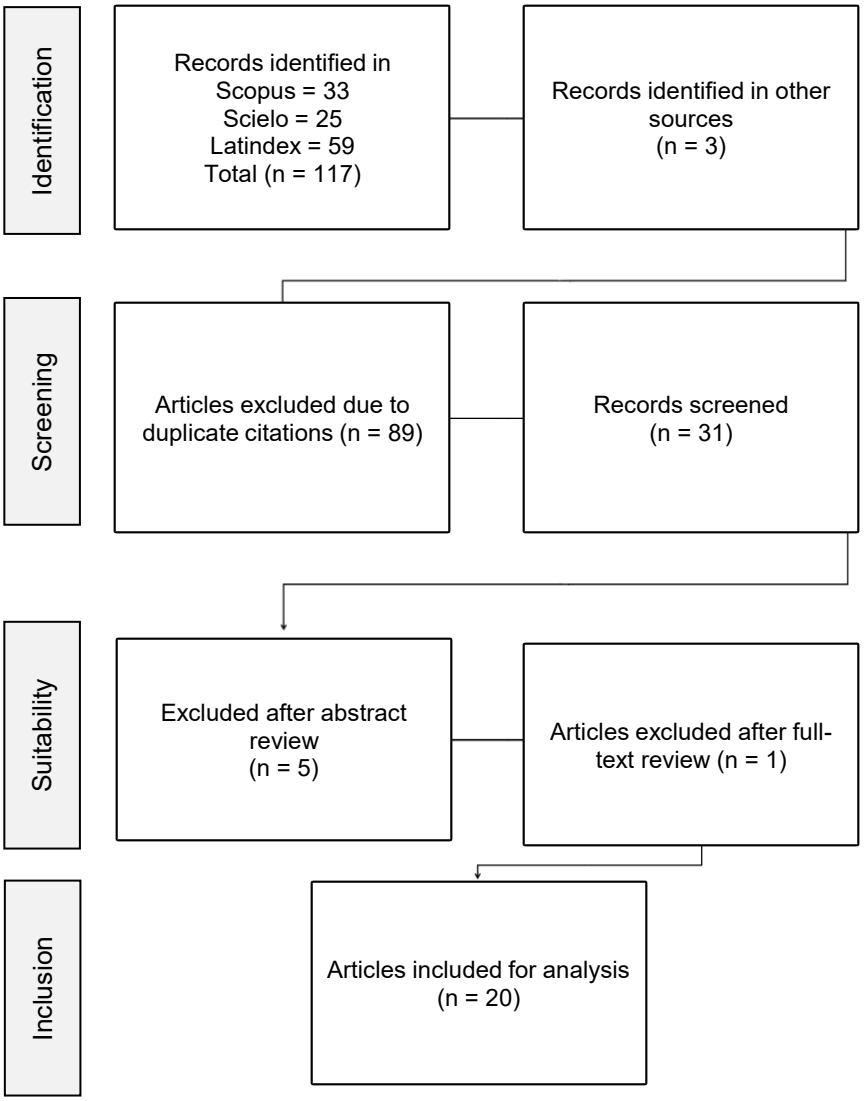
From this framework, the following research question arises: What are the implications of learning communities in the educational context? Therefore, the objective of this systematic review article is to analyze these implications in the educational field.

Methodology

Currently, there is a growing trend in scientific production related to learning communities, reflected in various articles published in databases recognized for their academic impact. To analyze this production, a systematic review was conducted, considering as inclusion criteria articles published between 2018 and 2025. The search was carried out in the Scopus, Scielo, Web of Science (WoS), and Latindex databases, using Boolean operators such as AND and the keywords “comunidades de aprendizaje” in Spanish and “learning communities” in English.

A total of 117 articles were identified; however, after applying the selection criteria, 20 articles were chosen for final analysis. Of these, 10 are from Scopus, 1 from WoS, 4 from Scielo, and 5 from Latindex. This collection of studies allowed for the construction of an updated and rigorous overview of the state of research on learning communities, evidencing their relevance and contributions in the educational field.

Figure 1
PRISMA flow diagram for article selection



Results and discussion

Table 1
Implications of learning communities

No.	Author	Implications of didactic processes for educators
1	Stevens (2024)	Learning communities are designed to bring together students, faculty, and potentially other health professionals, allowing them to learn together both formally in educational activities and socially.
2	Jáuregui (2022)	Learning communities enable the transformation of educational practice by promoting more effective teaching and collective decisions that positively impact student learning. Educators can share their experiences and reflect within a collaborative space under pedagogical leadership.

3	Eirín (2018)	These communities facilitate professional development and collaborative learning, contributing to sustainable change in educational quality and team cohesion.
4	Soriano et al. (2022)	Learning communities are increasingly relevant in education as they promote collaborative learning and educational equity, generating a positive impact within their context and on academic achievements.
5	Clarke (2021)	Collaborative and collegial forms through which educators can enrich their learning and professional development are particularly manifested in professional learning communities and communities of practice.
6	Ruiz-Eugenio et al. (2023)	Dialogical learning is an approach that emphasizes the importance of reflective dialogue for equitable knowledge creation in the classroom, suggesting inclusive and participatory learning environments. Current research highlights that dialogical learning facilitates relevant interactions that enhance academic capabilities and develop socio-emotional skills by promoting mutual respect and social unity among students.
7	Arribas & García (2023)	In learning communities implementing dialogical gatherings, students actively participate and feel valued when given the opportunity to express their viewpoints, opinions, and reflections, favoring their holistic development.
8	Cosme-Garcilazo et al. (2023)	Dialogical learning is particularly effective in multicultural and diverse environments, fostering equity by ensuring that all participants play a role in shaping the learning process, regardless of their background or academic level.
9	Ordóñez-Olmedo & Gutiérrez-Martín (2023)	Dialogical learning emerges as a powerful strategy to transform traditional educational dynamics, promoting a more inclusive and democratic education that encourages critical and constructive dialogue as the foundation for acquiring knowledge and skills.
10	Palomares & Domínguez (2019)	Recent research has highlighted the benefits of dialogical literary gatherings, a technique associated with the development of linguistic competencies and the strengthening of classroom coexistence.
11	Virtue et al. (2019)	Teacher participation and preparation, along with the application of High-Impact Practices, are fundamental aspects for addressing peer dynamics in our classrooms within learning communities. Additionally, the consistent practice of monitoring students to assess the potential lasting effects of these communities has significantly influenced our work, allowing us to better understand their impact and improve the educational strategies implemented.
12	Jiménez & Gómez (2023)	Work through learning communities is directed towards the learning of teachers, focusing essentially on their participation, thus fostering them as transformative agents.
13	Layton et al. (2024)	The advantages of collaborative work proposed by communities significantly influence shaping the effectiveness of teachers' skills and what they can contribute to their students through participation in interlearning groups.

14	Jiménez-Cruz (2019)	Learning communities represent a significant educational strategy that aims to strengthen educational management, thus seeking to overcome school failure and improve coexistence through collaboration among students, teachers, families, and other community members.
15	Bermúdez (2022)	This strategy is based on active participation and an educational management approach that enhances inclusive and transformative learning.
16	Garzón (2020)	Learning communities integrate dialogical and mediative interventions that collaboratively address conflicts, reinforcing the sense of belonging and shared commitment while strengthening the actions of the facilitator.
17	Grau et al. (2024)	The impact of learning communities on the development of socio-personal competencies and a longer, enriching academic trajectory is shown in vulnerable community groups.
18	Renaud (2020)	Learning communities implement practices grounded in egalitarian dialogue to improve school coexistence. Moreover, successful educational actions strengthen inclusion and consequently enhance academic outcomes.
19	Sánchez & Choles (2019)	The transformation of educational centers and innovations in the educational management system arise from the interaction among their members, changes in their mindset, professionalization, and positive expectations grounded in training and humanistic development.
20	Alves & Pinheiro (2023)	The team-teaching model, based on shared responsibilities and active listening to experiences, constitutes a fundamental pillar of the management model of learning communities. This approach emphasizes inclusive participation and positions transformative learning as a central axis oriented towards social change, collaborative strategies, and teacher leadership development. Considering these key aspects confirms the crucial importance of community work in the educational field.

Importance of learning communities

Learning communities are designed to bring together students, educators, and occasionally other professionals, such as those in the health sector, to learn collaboratively in both formal teaching activities and social settings. In recent years, these communities have gained recognition as an effective educational strategy; however, their implementation is still not widespread. Among the numerous reported benefits are improvements in academic performance, the strengthening of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, as well as increases in personal confidence and communication skills. Additionally, learning communities provide valuable opportunities for personal growth, mentorship, and self-reflection, which significantly contribute to students' professional development (Stevens, 2024).

Moreover, learning communities facilitate the transformation of educational practice by promoting more effective teaching and supporting collective decision-making that positively impacts learning. In these collaborative spaces, educators can share experiences and reflect under the pedagogical leadership of administrators, thereby reinforcing their roles (Jáuregui, 2022). Similarly, these communities drive professional development and collaborative learning, contributing to sustainable changes in educational quality and team cohesion (Eirín, 2018).

Finally, learning communities are increasingly relevant in education as they promote collaborative learning and equity, generating a positive impact on both their context and academic outcomes. Through interactive groups, dialogical and egalitarian learning is encouraged, fostering inclusive and high-quality education that integrates students, families, and educators in a collective learning process (Soriano et al., 2022). Furthermore, collegial and collaborative forms through which educators enrich their learning and professional development are particularly manifested in professional learning communities and communities of practice (Clarke, 2021).

The dialogical learning model for developing educational communities

Dialogical learning is an approach that emphasizes the importance of reflective dialogue as a means for equitable knowledge construction in the classroom, promoting inclusive and participatory learning environments.

Various recent studies demonstrate that this type of learning facilitates meaningful interactions that enhance not only academic skills but also socio-emotional abilities by fostering mutual respect and social cohesion among students (Ruiz-Eugenio et al., 2023). In particular, in learning communities where dialogical gatherings are implemented, students actively participate and feel valued when able to express their viewpoints, opinions, and reflections, contributing to their holistic development (Arribas & García, 2023).

Furthermore, recent studies indicate that dialogical learning is particularly effective in multicultural and diverse contexts, promoting equity by ensuring that all participants play an active role in the construction of learning, regardless of their background or academic level (Cosme-Garcilazo et al., 2023). Thus, dialogical learning consolidates itself as a powerful strategy for transforming traditional educational dynamics, fostering a more inclusive and democratic education that prioritizes critical and constructive dialogue as the foundation for acquiring knowledge and skills (Ordóñez, 2023). Additionally, recent research has highlighted the benefits of dialogical literary gatherings, a technique linked to the development of linguistic competencies and the strengthening of classroom coexistence (Palomares & Domínguez, 2019).

Strategy for improving teacher learning

Active participation and proper preparation of teachers, along with the implementation of High-Impact Practices, are essential for effectively managing peer dynamics in learning community classrooms. In this context, the consistent practice of monitoring students to assess the potential long-term effects of these communities significantly impacts the work done. Therefore, this practice should be integrated as a fundamental component in evaluating learning community programs (Virtue et al., 2019).

Moreover, the work developed through learning communities primarily focuses on the professional development of teachers, emphasizing their active participation and solidifying them as transformative agents within the educational process (Jiménez & Gómez, 2023). The benefits of collaborative work proposed by these communities significantly impact the improvement of teaching skills and their ability to contribute to student learning through interaction in interlearning groups.

The immense potential that arises from the committed participation of educators is reflected in the quality of teaching. By implementing effective strategies, teachers assume a leadership role based on critical thinking, proactivity, and commitment to current pedagogical challenges (Layton et al., 2024).

Educational management in learning communities

Learning communities constitute a powerful educational strategy that contributes to strengthening educational management. In this sense, their purpose is to overcome school failure and improve coexistence through active collaboration among students, teachers, families, and other community members (Jiménez-Cruz, 2019). Additionally, this strategy is grounded in committed participation and a management approach that promotes inclusive and transformative learning (Bermúdez, 2022).

It is noteworthy that learning communities incorporate dialogical and mediative interventions that collaboratively address conflicts, reinforcing the sense of belonging and shared commitment, which strengthens the actions of educational managers. They also promote the creation of interactive contexts and spaces for knowledge exchange, as well as strengthening interpersonal relationships—key elements for improving educational management.

On the other hand, the success and sustainability of these communities drive the implementation of more effective processes and strategies for managing educational institutions (Garzón, 2020). In this framework, the positive impact of learning communities on the development of socio-personal competencies and the extension of enriching academic trajectories, especially among vulnerable community groups, has also been evidenced (Grau et al., 2024).

Transformational management model for learning communities

Undoubtedly, learning communities implement practices grounded in egalitarian dialogue aimed at improving school coexistence. In this way, successful educational actions strengthen inclusion, which in turn leads to better academic outcomes (Renaud, 2020). Furthermore, the transformation of educational centers and innovations in educational management systems emerge from the active interaction of their members, changes in their ways of thinking, professionalization, and the positive expectations derived from training and humanistic development (Sánchez & Choles, 2019).

In this context, the team-teaching model, which promotes the sharing of responsibilities and the listening of experiences, is an essential part of the management model of learning communities. This model emphasizes inclusive participation and positions transformative learning as the central focus, oriented towards social change,

collaborative strategies, and the development of teacher leadership. Considering these key aspects, the crucial importance of community work is confirmed.

Moreover, pedagogical skills are strengthened through collaborative work, constant exchange of experiences, effective communication, and the use of diverse learning resources, all enhanced through meetings, training sessions, dialogical gatherings, and internships (Alves & Pinheiro, 2023).

Conclusions

Learning communities represent a transformative educational strategy that strengthens educational management and promotes the quality of teaching, equity, and both academic and pedagogical success. These communities foster inclusion, collaboration, and active participation from all members, creating an environment where students feel valued and recognized by their teachers. In this process, collaborative learning and critical dialogue are encouraged, contributing to the comprehensive development of academic and socio-emotional competencies, especially in diverse contexts.

Additionally, learning communities enhance educational quality by reinforcing the sense of belonging and collective commitment. Their innovative and humanistic approach professionalizes teachers, highlighting them as critical, reflective leaders committed to pedagogical transformation. Furthermore, these communities have a positive impact on school coexistence, help overcome educational failure, and consolidate the ties between the school and the community.

In conclusion, learning communities are positioned as a fundamental tool for transforming traditional educational dynamics, moving towards a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable model.

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AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION:

1. Conceptualization: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
2. Data curation: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
3. Formal analysis: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
4. Funding acquisition: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
5. Research: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
6. Methodology: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
7. Project management: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
8. Resources: Lizet Karina Riveros Cones
9. Software: Lizet Karina Riveros Cones
10. Supervision: Lizet Karina Riveros Cones
11. Validation: Candelaria Aida Camacho Porras
12. Visualization: Candelaria Aida Camacho Porras
13. Writing – original draft: Villanueva Chumpitaz, Antonia Amparo
14. Writing – proofreading and editing: Candelaria Aida Camacho Porras