STRATEGIES AND MODELS USED IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES: WITH REFERENCE TO INDIAN CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

Cooperative learning is the learning process in which individuals learn in a small group with the help of each other. Cooperative learning gives importance to cooperation as against our present educational system, which is based on competition. Cooperation rather than competition is the predominant characteristics of human beings. People are bonded together by love and cooperation and it is this quality on which the survival of human kind is based. The present paper discusses the concept and salient features of cooperative learning.

Keyword: -Cooperative Learning, Teacher, Strategies, Role, Goals

I.   INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Learning

In contrast to the above two ways of learning i.e. individual and competition approach is, in case of cooperative learning a common goal is chosen for which all students work together. They work on the goals in such a way that student do not get the benefit individually but the all the group member's benefit from it. Other than the competitive spirit, student's, work together in cooperative spirit to reach their assigned goal. This type of learning motivates students for real, understanding with higher achievement, making them socially more acceptable and psychologically healthy in comparison to individualistic and competitive.

Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) said that, "cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and their peer's learning. Working in cooperative groups, students learns valuable social skills, use higher-order thinking and rehearse and practice new concepts, processes and information."

Cooperative learning would not occur effectively until coordinated properly and certain sounds are contemplations are attained. This deliberate effort by all members increases the chance of getting best output as per the objectives set. The motivational perspectives concentrate more on the combined objectives or goal under which a group operates.

Deutsch (1962) identified three goal structures: cooperative, competitive, and idealistic. According to different motivating educationists such as Slavin, Johnson, Nelson and Maurya, the cooperative goals are reliant on the goal achievement of how each group member work with each other and give their best possible help to make the other reach the objective to be attained.

Keeping in the mind the paradigm shifts of our teaching learning process and seeing the comparative view of individualistic, competitive and cooperative view the researcher decided to choose cooperative learning as the teaching methodology in science elementary class level.

Cooperative learning is an educational tool in which small groups of students work together to increase individual, as well as, group member learning. Cooperative learning exists when students work together to achieve joint learning goals (Johnson et al., 1992, 1993). Any assignment in any curriculum for any age student can be done cooperatively. There are three ways that cooperative learning may be used. Formal cooperative learning groups may last for one class period to several weeks to complete any course requirement (such as solving problems, reading complex text material, writing an essay or report, conducting a survey or experiment, learning vocabulary, or answering questions at the end of a chapter). The teacher introduces the lesson, assigns students to groups (two to five members), gives students the materials they need to complete the assignment, and assigns students roles. The teacher explains the task, teaches any concepts or procedures the students need in order to complete the assignment, and structures the cooperation among students. Students work on the assignment until all group members have successfully understood and completed it. While the students work together the teacher moves from group to group systematically monitoring their interaction. The teacher intervenes when studentsdo not understand the academic task or when there are problems in working together. After the assignment is completed the teacher evaluates the academic success of each student and has the group's process how well they functioned as a team. In working cooperatively, students realize they (a) are mutually responsible for each other's learning and (b) have a stake in each other's success.

II. DIFFERENT MODELS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Students are given their specific roles and responsibilities for having effective output. They discuss the subject matter, help each other for understanding that and assist each other to reach the goal. This well-planned cooperative structure where student work hard, encourage each other to reach the goal to learn specific content is the formal cooperative learning group.

On the other hand just ensuring active group discussion by exchange of cognitive ideas during lecture or demonstration is called informal cooperative learning groups.

Formal Cooperative Learning

According to Johnson, Johnson, &Holubec (1993), "Any assignment in any curriculum for any age student can be done cooperatively. Formal cooperative learning involves students working together, for one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments (such as decision making or problem solving, completing a curriculum unit, writing a report,

conducting a survey or experiment, or reading a chapter or reference book, learning vocabulary, or answering questions at the end of the chapter)"

Structure of formal cooperative learning group's teaching is as follows:

Objectives are specified – Every lesson starts with objectives specified in two parts – academic and social skill. Academic objectives consider the content, concept, method and strategies to be used during learning. Social skill objectives include the interpersonal or group skills that should be used for making student socially competent.

Effective preplanning – A teacher who has to follow the formal cooperative learning has to decide before hand the number of members in the group, the roles and responsibilities of each members, content division among groups and group members, seating arrangement and at last the way the teaching is to be conducted.

Clarity about task and interdependence of group members – First and foremost duty of the teacher is to define what cooperative learning is, clear the concept of interdependence and sense of responsibility. Then clear the basic background of topic and show them the criteria of reaching their goal and achieve success. Teacher will also explain how socialyl competent person can reach success easily.

Monitor and give feedback for aligning them in correct direction- A teacher has to continuously monitor students learning by observing, collecting pretest and posttest and evaluating their group skills. If needed teacher assists the group of students so that they start moving towards right track and work effectively.

Assessment and feedback of the student's process and result of learning – Main role of teacher is to minutely assess students learning. Each individual's performance within the group and outside the group is also assessed. Feedback is always given in the form of positive reinforcement.

Informal Cooperative Learning

Informal cooperative learning also includes working of students in groups to reach a common goal assigned. These groups are temporary in nature. Mainly these groups stay for one lecture or maximum two consecutive lectures.

Informal cooperative learning can be integrated during normal lecture or lecture cum demonstration classes. Structure of informal cooperative learning group's teaching is as follows-

Focus – with the increase in interaction student's interests is focused towards content to be acquired.

Setting an attitude – According to blooms objectives, group studying creates a conducive environment to learning,

Set Expectations- Helps to set the achievement level after the session of class gets over

Ensure Active Involvement –Teacher has to ensure that each student is actively engaged in cognitive process of gaining the material being taught

Closure and Recapitulation-At the end whole learning material has to be summarized in closure session provide.

III.   ROLE OF TEACHER IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING

To make a lesson to be collaborative and indulgent, the teacher makes pre-instructional designs and clarifies and unfolds the major objectives of the lesson by explaining the different aspects of the lesson including the nature, the manner or the conduct of the lesson, thereby finally evaluating it and coming up to the solution. So the important role of the teacher is as follows

Making Pre-Instructional Design

The main role of the teacher includes framing up and making a pre-instructional design, which includes the instructional experiences which assists in attaining the knowledge and skill efficiently, effectively and reliably.

Explaining the Instructional Task and Cooperative Task

Once the teacher is done with the pre-instructional design, the next step is to conduct it is the role of the teacher to explain the academic assignment, criteria of its evaluation and inculcate the value of positive interdependence and accountability in the students towards the same.

Intervention in students learning

Once the teaching learning is done, the teacher is there to facilitate and control the students watch and provide support too. She also evaluates them.

Assessing Students Learning and Helping Them

This includes teachers assessing as to how well the students and the content along is functioning. She ends up the lesson, sums it up and assesses and evaluates it. Active involvement of each and every student gets noticed by the teacher.

IV.   COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

To translate the 'principles and assumptions of cooperative learning into practice, several strategies have been evolved by the educational researchers and practitioners. These strategies differ from each other in some respects but they have many common features also as all of them are based on the same principles. However, the cooperative learning strategies have the following essential components

- Group goals

- Individual accountability

- Equal opportunity for success

Group goals: In a team sport like hockey or football, all the members do not possess the same level of expertise but they all contribute to the team effort to realize its goal of winning the game. The victory is perceived as the reward of the entire team rather than the reward of one or a few individuals. Goals of .Cooperative learning groups are similar. The goal of a learning group is evidently the successful completion of the given learning task. The group members work together, help each other and win the reward as a group. On the other hand, in the whole class teaching system, each student competes for recognition and reward as an individual.

Individual accountability: As stated earlier, in cooperative learning it is the group which wins recognition. However, this does not mean that individual members can afford to be lethargic. Each team member is responsible for mastering the content, as each student has to be assessed individually. The group performance and individual performance in a group are always interdependent; therefore, it is imperative to enhance the performance level of each member of the group.

Equal opportunity for success: In groups, all students, reeardless of their past achievement, have equal chance of contributing to the realization of group goals. Students compete with their own performance, not with each other. Improvement in the performance of a low achiever or average achiever or high achiever leads to improvement in the overall performance of the group as a whole. Thus, each member, irrespective of hisher level of past achievement, gets a similar opportunity to contribute to the accomplishment of the group.

V. CONCLUSION

Cooperative learning is a set of teaching, learning strategies used to help learners meet specific learning and interpersonal goals in structured groups. It takes place in small groups. It is based on the assumption that students enjoy working in groups and group work provides opportunity to all the students to actively participate in the process of learning and acquisition of knowledge and thereby to enhance their learning achievement. Besides, they also get opportunities to improve their interpersonal and communication skills.

The application of cooperative learning in learning places more emphasis on cooperation between students in groups. This is based on the idea that students find it easier to understand and understand a concept of facts if they discuss the problem with each other. In cooperative learning, students have good behavior, because they are motivated to learn and actively engage in various activities. To ensure that students will use time effectively and direct their energy toward productive activities, teacher creativity is needed in the process of learning activities.

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