



A Review of Cooperative learning and related theories

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Abstract:

One of the legacies inherited to the scientists of the twentieth century from Charles Darwin has been the thesis of the inherent naturalness of human striving for superiority. Adopted by the "Social Darwinists", this qualified biological observation became a credo of those arguing for instinctive competition in human kind in all social and economic interactions. That is why our present educational system is mainly based on competition and this is reflected in almost every aspect of it. Students have to compete with their fellow students, right from the stage of admission to nursery class up to the highest level. Excessive competition robs of childhood from children and youth from the young adolescents. Competition is against the spirit of creativity also because it favors convergent thinking in place of giving children a chance to develop divergent ideas. We humans have been as successful as a species because of our ability to apply our intelligence to cooperate with others to accomplish group goals. It is difficult to think of adult activities in which the ability to cooperate with others is not important. Human society is composed of overlapping cooperative groups: families, neighborhoods, work-groups, political parties, clubs, teams etc. Because schools socialize children to assume adult roles, and because cooperation is so much a part of adult life, one might expect that cooperative activity would be emphasized in schools. However, this is far from truth.

Keywords: Cooperation, Competition, Cooperative Learning, Characteristics

Introduction:

There are many different fields studying collaborative learning (CL). This group based approach is beneficial in many areas such as instructional design, learning sciences, sociology, computer supported collaborative learning and educational psychology. Even though professionals in these fields may disagree on a theoretical basis, appropriate language, and research contexts, many of them believe that collaborative learning is the basis of human growth and development. Collaborative learning can be observed throughout history as being used in ancient gatherings to now present time scenarios such as online learning. Collaborative learning is when a group of learners all share opinions and experiences to build knowledge. Each person contributes equally with their own resources, perspectives, and knowledge to find a solution to the task given. The group must coordinate their different opinions into one cohesive structure and everyone depends on one another to work on a common task. Some aspects of CL that are considered when forming these groups are the group size, having a heterogeneous group versus a homogenous group, levels of ability of group members as well as race and ethnicity, the use of rewards, and the amount of structure of the tasks given to groups.

Definition of Cooperative Learning

Students' learning goals may be structured to promote cooperative, competitive, or individualistic efforts. In every classroom, instructional activities are aimed at accomplishing goals and are conducted under a goal structure. A **learning goal** is a desired future state of demonstrating competence or mastery in the subject area being studied. The **goal structure** specifies the ways in which students will interact with each other and the instructor during the instructional session. Each goal structure has its place. In the ideal classroom, all students would learn how to work cooperatively with others, compete for fun and enjoyment, and work autonomously on their own. The instructor decides which goal structure to

