



DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS THROUGH EDUCATION FOR AN IDEAL SOCIETY

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Abstract

An educated person is related with having a certain command of a curriculum, and knowledge of theories and facts from various disciplines. But this is not right. Being an educated person means that individual is equipped with traits and skill such as problem solving skills, emotional health, social skills, Life skills—that allows him/her to contribute meaningfully to society and to succeed in their public lives, workplaces, homes, and other societal contexts. Life skills are abilities, individuals can learn that will help them to live a fruitful life. Teachers in school should take up the responsibility of developing life skills of the students in order to prepare better students for this new century. An experimental research was carried out to study the effectiveness of Co-operative learning strategies on development of Life skills -empathy and interpersonal Relationship. Co-operative learning strategies were found to be very effective in developing empathy and Interpersonal skills in the pupils. If life skills are developed right from the childhood years, the society will surely have good citizens in future years to come. Strategies to develop the life skills in the pupils need to be developed and adopted in classroom. Promoting efficient life skills training programme in schools would thereby be an ode to the youth in the country. It would be a way of empowering youth to build their lives and their dreams. It would be a means of handholding them through the critical stages in their life and helping them tap their potential to the fullest. Thereby, it is hoped that the current education system with its oppressive rigidity would open up and make life skills education a part of its mainstream curriculum. This would enable the country to build individuals who believe in themselves, who are efficient leaders and administrators, who are able to understand their potentials and achieve them. The achievement of these goals will lead to a healthier and more fulfilling existence, further emphasizing the importance of the ideal society.

Keywords: *Life Skills, Empathy, interpersonal skills, Co-operative learning Strategies, youth development, society*



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Introduction

One of the most significant aims of education is the Harmonious development of the Individual. This aim of Education has been stressed by Mahatma Gandhi. In his words **Mahatma Gandhi defined Education by saying-** “By Education, I mean an all-round

drawing out of the best in child, man—body, mind and spirit.”This implies that true education takes care of all the aspects of human personality in totality thereby justifying the aforesaid aim of Education. The education system of any nation is connected with society and is conditioned by the ethos, culture and character of the nation. Education helps in the development of the potentialities of the child according to the changing needs of the dynamic and ever growing society. **Education therefore is to be linked with the overall needs of the society. Happiness, progress and prosperity of the whole humanity depend on the education system.** Though this is true and there should be an emphasis on all round development of personality through education. The definition of an educated person is perceived in a narrow sense and a person’s cognitive skills are given too much of importance rather than other skills.

Importance of Non-cognitive skills

An educated person is related with having a certain command of a curriculum, and knowledge of theories and facts from various disciplines. But this is not right. **Being an educated person means that individual is equipped with traits and skill such as problem solving skills, emotional health, social skills, Life skills—that allows him/her to contribute meaningfully to society and to succeed in their public lives, workplaces, homes, and other societal contexts. These traits are called, non-cognitive skills. These Non- cognitive skills are very essential for life.** Though these skills are very vital, education analysis and policy have tended to overlook their importance.

A review of literature on non-cognitive skills have brought about a number of facts definitions and issues related to non-cognitive skills. (Borghans et al. 2008) defined Non-cognitive skills broadly as “patterns of thought, feelings and behavior” in the individual. (Bloom 1964) further added to this definition stating that the individuals may continue to develop these thoughts and feelings throughout their lives. To advance research and policy pertaining to non -cognitive skills, we focus on particular non cognitive skills that schools should nurture and policies should promote. These include critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, emotional health, social skills, work ethic, and community responsibility. Also important are factors affecting personal relationships between students and teachers with regards to the closeness, affection, and open communication between the two, self-control, self-regulation, persistence, academic confidence, teamwork, organizational skills, creativity, and communication skills. It was also found that non-cognitive skills support cognitive development and non-cognitive and cognitive skills are interdependent and cannot be isolated from one another.

Research evidence also suggests that non-cognitive skills are associated with higher productivity and earnings. A very important finding was that Non-cognitive skills are developed before and throughout children's school years. The development of these skills is dependent on family and societal characteristics and on school and teacher factors -particularly the instruction and social interactions that take place in school. A number of studies have identifies the interdependence between cognitive and non-cognitive skills which indicate that it is not possible to boost cognitive skills unless closer attention is paid to non-cognitive skills. Thus focusing on non-cognitive skills may actually further the performance of students in different subjects of the syllabus. It can be thus concluded based on the research findings that non cognitive skills matter greatly and can be nurtured in schools, developing them should be an explicit goal of education.

Meaning and significance of life skill Education

Throughout the past two decades life skills education has come to be seen as important for young people to negotiate and mediate challenges and risks and enable productive participation in society. Life skills includes a range of skills and knowledge. Important in its conception are the personal, interpersonal and cognitive psychosocial skills that enable people to interact appropriately, manage their own emotional states and make decisions and choices for an active, safe and productive life. World Health Organisation (WHO) has laid down Ten Core Life Skills which are Self-awareness ,Empathy, Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Decision making , Problem Solving, Effective communication , Interpersonal relationship, Coping with stress, Coping with emotions.

Life Skills Education has long term benefits to the society. These include educational, social, health, cultural and economic benefits.

(a)Educational benefits

- Strengthens teacher pupil relationship
- Leads to desirable behavior change
- Improves discipline in schools
- Reduces learner problems such as truancy, absenteeism drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies
- Helps learners to improve their performance

(b) Social Benefits

- Improves the socialization process among learners such as relating to others in a friendly way
- Enables learners to choose good and reliable friends
- Helps learners to use their leisure time properly
- assists learners to recognize and avoid risky situations
- Bring about meaningful interaction among learners, teachers and the school community
- Helps in character building.

(c) Health Benefits

- Leads to prevention and control of diseases such as STIs, HIV and AIDS
- Contributes to a person's general well-being (physical, mental, emotional and social)
- Leads to less strain on health facilities
- Helps people to be responsible for their own and other people's health

d) Cultural Benefits

- Enables people to adopt and maintain meaningful cultural practices and avoid practices that may put self and others at risk
- Promotes harmonious interaction between people of different cultures
- Helps in the clarification of values in the society

e) Economic Benefits

- It leads to high productivity due to a motivated, strong and energetic labour force
- Savings are increased as money used eg on management and control of HIV and AIDS can be invested elsewhere. Resources such as time and money are saved as learners acquire skills to manage themselves and their environment.
- rehabilitation of drug and substance abuses
- repair of damaged property

Education for development of Life skills

Today's youth is tomorrow's nation. And today's youth are the students. Students do play a vital role in the society and how a society is shaped generation after generations. The formative period of an individual is during the student phase and hence it is known to be the crucial time of life. Students act as bridges between two generations. They need to realize and understand the happening of today and eliminate the bad and extract the good and implement for tomorrow. For this understanding, the right education with the right involvement of the happening is a requirement and the education system should see to it that are being equipped for a better understanding rather than classifying education as elementary, secondary or

higher education. There is a need to frame the syllabus and the in a manner that it is interactive and interesting so that students understand and signify the importance of what they learn and the students develop these life skills. Only one particular strategy cannot be used in the classroom to develop all the life skills as laid down by WHO. The life skills can be developed one by one through pre-planned modules. For this, an experimental research study was conducted.

An attempt was made to develop Life skills such as Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship”in the students through the use of Co-operative learning strategies in day to day teaching in the classroom and thus an experimental research study was carried out for the same.

Co-operative learning is a systematic pedagogical strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve understanding of the subject. Each member of the team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping team-mates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment until all group members successfully understand and complete it. Co-operative efforts result in participants striving for mutual benefit so that all the group members Gain from each other's ' efforts. Recognize that all the group members share a common fate, Know that individuals' performance is mutually caused by self and team members and feel proud and jointly celebrate when the group member is recognized for achievement more over Diversity is celebrated, and all contributions are valued; Students learn skills for resolving conflicts when they arise;

There are a number ofco-operative learningstrategies that can be used in the classroom. Some of the strategies are: Learning Together, 3 Minute review, Brain storming, Think pair share, Group investigations, Numbered Heads, Jigsaw etc.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

“Effect of Co-operative Learning Strategies on Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship”

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

1. Effect:

For the present study, effect implies the impact of the Co-operative learning strategies on the Emotional Intelligence of the pupils, which is measured in terms of the difference in the scores obtained by the students on the test prepared by the researcher to measure the **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship.**

2. Co-operative Learning Strategies:

Co-operative Learning Strategies is defined as any classroom learning situation in which students of all levels of performance, work in structured groups towards a shared or common goal. For the present study, the following **six strategies were selected**. Learning Together, 3 Minute review, Brain storming, Think pair share, Group investigations, and Numbered Heads.

3. Empathy:

To have a successful relationship with our loved ones and society at large, we need to understand and care about other peoples' needs, desires and feelings. Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person.

4. Interpersonal Relationship:

Skills that help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This means being able to make and keep friendly relationships, which can be of great importance to our mental and social well-being. It means keeping, good relations with family members, which are an important source of social support. It means being able to end relationships constructively

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY:

The Independent Variable was the six Co-operative learning strategies and Dependent Variable: Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To develop lesson plans in Science for STD VII of Secondary school of SSC based on co-operative learning strategies.
- To study the effect of the pre-planned co-operative learning strategies on **Empathy Interpersonal Relationship**

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The Following Null Hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

Ho-1: There is no significant difference in pre -test and post test scores on the **Empathy** scale of the pupils taught by using the co-operative learning strategies.

Ho-2: There is no significant difference in pre -test and post test scores on the **Interpersonal skills** scale of the pupils taught by using the co-operative learning strategies.

Ho-3: There is no significant difference in **Empathy** the pupils taught by using the co-operative learning strategies as compared to the achievement of the pupils taught by using

traditional methods as reflected in their scores on the achievement test after the treatment. (Post test)

Ho-4: There is no significant difference in **Interpersonal Skills** the pupils taught by using the co-operative learning strategies as compared to the achievement of the pupils taught by using traditional methods as reflected in their scores on the achievement test after the treatment. (Post test)

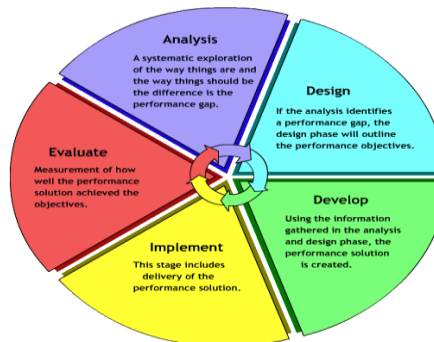
METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The present study is a developmental research as well as an experimental research.

The Research Methodology of the present study consists of **two parts**:

- 1. Development of lessons in science subject for Std. VII using cooperative learning strategies**
- 2. Study of the effect of cooperative learning strategies on**

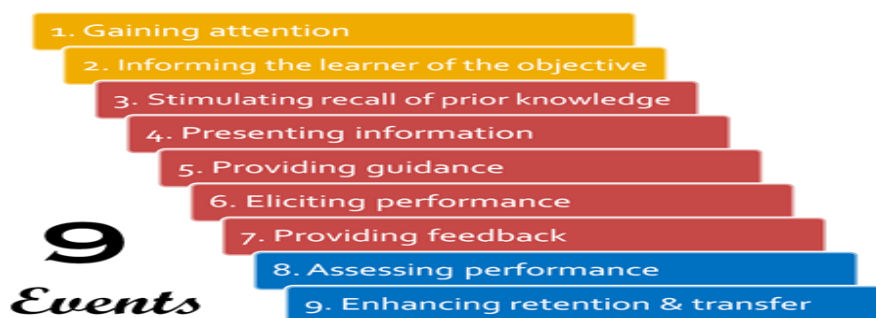
For the present study, each phase of the **ADDIE model** was considered in the preparation Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.



The lesson plans for each sub-unit were prepared incorporating **Gagne's nine events of instruction**.

The nine events are as follows:

- 1) Gain attention**
- 2) Inform learner of Objective**
- 3) Stimulate recall of prior knowledge**
- 4) Present the material**
- 5) Provide guidance for learning**
- 6) Elicit performance**
- 7) Provide feedback**
- 8) Assess performance**
- 9) Enhance retention and transfer.**



The **first three phases** of the ADDIE model were thus incorporated in the process of developing the lesson plans. This completed the first phase of the research study.

The next two phases of the ADDIE model are the implementation and the evaluation.

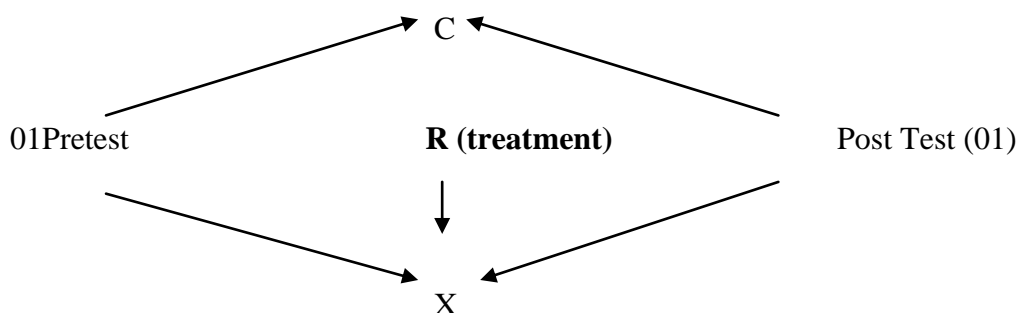
The quasi experimental design was used for the study considering the equivalence of geographical area, socio economic status, the type of management, and the level of the school in terms of the academic achievement of the school for the Experimental Group and the Control group. The total sample was 106 pupils of the seventh standard belonging to the SSC Board.

The following two research designs were used to study the effectiveness of co-operative learning strategies on empathy and Interpersonal skills.

1. Pretest Post test One Group Design



2. Pretest Post test Two Group Design



Where: **01** - Scales to measure **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship**

R Treatment - Lessons conducted by using co-operative learning strategies by the researcher for the **X (Experimental)** group and Conventional methods used by in-service teacher for the **C (Control)** group.

The self-prepared scales to measure- **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship** reliability 0.83 (Split Half method) with 15 in each area of **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship** was used for collection of data .

The methodology of carrying out the experiment

The researcher taught the pupils of the experimental group using the co-operative learning strategies. The control group was taught by the school teacher by the conventional methods.

The scale on **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship** developed by the researcher was administered to both the groups i.e. the experimental group and the control group, before beginning the treatment.

Before the start of the treatment, 7 heterogeneous groups were organized

The researcher implemented the planned lessons according to the schedule.

Formative evaluation was done during the treatment. The researcher evaluated the pupils individually as well as in the groups. The behaviour of the pupils in the group, the participation in the discussion in the groups, the contribution of each student was evaluated by the researcher. For this, the researcher observed the pupils by going around the class while they were working in the groups and noted down if specific students were not participating and then encouraged them to participate in the activities of the group the pupil was corrected, advised and appreciated for his/her efforts, by the researcher.

Worksheets were given to each of the pupils to solve and then checked by the researcher.

This gave an idea to the researcher about the performance of individual pupil.

The planned lessons were implemented. The scale on **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship** developed by the researcher was administered once again after the treatment to the pupils of the experimental group who were taught using the co-operative learning strategies and the pupils of the control group who were taught using the traditional methods of teaching by the school teacher. The scores obtained on the scale before and after the treatment were compared statistically to find out whether the co-operative learning strategies had any effect on the emotional intelligence.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA:

The data was subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis.

Hypothesis :1 and 2

Type of Life skill	Group	N	Mean	SD	σ_m	t
Empathy	Pre X	51	41.65	5.542	1.197	5.748* *
	Post X	51	48.53	6.513		
Interpersonal Skills	Pre X	51	39.37	5.706	1.131	8.997* *
	Post X	51	49.55	5.718		

** P <.01, * P <.05

The calculated 't' is significant at 0.01 level of significance i.e. **Self Awareness, Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship** It implies that the co-operative learning strategies were effective in increasing the. self awareness, empathy, Interpersonal Skills. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected

Hypothesis- 3 & 4

Type of Life skill	Group	N	Mean	SD	σ_m	t
Empathy	Post C	55	44.05	4.262	1.062	4.215**
	Post X	51	48.53	6.513		
Interpersonal Skills	Post C	55	42.53	5.734	1.113	6.308**
	Post X	51	49.55	5.718		

** P <.01, * P <.05

The calculated 't' is significant at 0.01 level of significance i.e. for The calculated 't' is significant at 0.01 level of significance i.e. **Empathy and Interpersonal Relationship**. It implies that the co-operative learning strategies were effective in increasing the Empathy, and Interpersonal skills. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected

Suggestions and Educational Implications:

The Present study has made an attempt to develop the life skills of empathy and interpersonal relationship of the pupils in the school using the different strategies in Co-operative learning for teaching science. These strategies were found to be very effective in developing the Life skills of Empathy and Interpersonal skills of the pupils while teaching the curricular subject science without spending extra time. This shows that co-operative learning has dual benefits of developing the cognitive as well as the Life Skills of the pupils. Teachers can implement such newer strategies or methods and pupils also will be exposed to new strategies and a lot of interaction will be developed in the classroom among the pupils. This will give scope for pupils to think, interact, help each other and understand each other's feelings and difficulties. This benefits them in all aspects.If these skills are developed right from the childhood years, the society will surely have good citizens in future years to come. This challenge to develop good citizens should be taken up by the schools. Strategies to develop the life skills of the pupils need to be developed and adopted in classroom teaching. Life skill education is a basic learning need for all young people. It will help the young people to empower in challenging situations.. Specific activities like leadership training,

communication, interaction, understanding self, making decisions, working with groups, socialization etc. added the quality of youth.

Conclusion

To conclude, In spite of teachers already faced with the challenges of dealing with the curriculum, monitoring the achievement of the pupils, and managing a class full of pupils with different academic and emotional needs so that they can learn, a good teacher cannot walk into a classroom and ignore the development of the Life skills of the pupils. Academics and Life skills education needs to go hand in hand. Promoting efficient life skills training programme in schools would thereby be an ode to the youth in the country. It would be a way of empowering youth to build their lives and their dreams. It would be a means of handholding them through the critical stages in their life and helping them tap their potential to the fullest. Thereby, it is hoped that the current education system with its oppressive rigidity would open up and make life skills education a part of its mainstream curriculum. This would enable the country to build individuals who believe in themselves, who are efficient leaders and administrators, who are able to understand their potentials and achieve them. The achievement of these goals will lead to a healthier and more fulfilling existence, further emphasizing the importance of the ideal society. Although individuals grouped together create the idea of society, it is solely the interactions of people, how they care for each other, and how well individuals adapt to different systems which will eventually dictate the overall success of an ideal society. Even though a perfect society is far from being achieved, stable and effective systems may be implemented until such a thing happens.

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