



Opinion of B.Ed. Students regarding Cooperative learning.

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Abstract

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Many researches have shown the success of cooperative learning for increasing student achievement and motivation in the classroom. However, the present study investigates the opinion of the B.Ed. students regarding cooperative learning on their personal qualities. The responses of the B.Ed. students showed that cooperative learning helped in developing personal qualities like appreciation for others and communication skills among other qualities.

Key words: Cooperative learning, B.Ed. Students, personal qualities, opinion.

❖ Introduction:

‘You can do what I cannot do; I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things.’ Mother Teresa

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy. Cooperative learning groups encourage peer teaching through opportunities to clarify ideas, develop problem solving and decision making strategies and develop responsibility and gain independence. As students work together to explore and experiment, students assist one another and in doing so learn more from actively teaching others.

The National Curriculum Framework of 2000 talks about ‘The child as a constructor of knowledge’: The acquisition of knowledge through active involvement with content, and not imitation or memorization of the material, is at the root of construction of knowledge. The constructivist movement has re emphasized the active role children play in acquiring knowledge. The social construction of knowledge has been an important principle. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 highlights the value of interaction with environment, peers and older people to enhance knowledge, under the ‘Learning and

Knowledge' section of the document. The NCF states that, in this context collaborative and cooperative learning provides room for negotiation of meaning, sharing of multiple views and changing the internal representations of external realities.

❖ **Review of Related Literature**

❖ **The researchers reviewed the following research work:**

- A study on 'Increasing student effort in complex problem solving through cooperative learning and self recording strategies'(Brahmer K.,& Harmatys.J., April 10, 2009). A total of thirty eight 9th through 11th grade math and science students at two different sites were a part of the study. The teacher researcher concluded that cooperative learning and self recorded strategies did make a positive impact on student effort on complex problems in math and science classrooms.
- Teaching 'Image Formation' through Cooperative learning method. (Sandhya R. Badhe, 2010). The study concluded that Cooperative Learning method are effective for teaching the topic 'Image Formation' to D.Ed. students. Majority of the students showed positive responses towards Cooperative Learning method.
- Cooperative Learning Course Syllabus for Pre-Service Teachers. University of Arizona. (Akcan, S. 2000). This syllabus was designed for a 15-week, advanced level undergraduate course in foreign language teaching methods using cooperative learning. This research work helped in developing the programme on cooperative learning for the B.Ed. students.

❖ **Need and Significance:**

The theory behind Cooperative learning is based on **Lev. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory**. Vygotsky's Social Development Theory has also been termed **Social Constructivism**. The primary assumption of the social developmental perspective is that interaction among students increases their mastery of the concepts in the tasks. Theorists such as Vygotsky (1978) hold the view that learning first takes place in interaction among students before it becomes mental processes for the individual. (Allison, Chafe.,1998).

Researches in the past indicate that although cooperative learning has been used effectively in elementary, middle, and high schools for a number of years few studies have been done to demonstrate its effectiveness in the college classroom.(Nayak, A.K & Rao, V.K., 2004)

Many researchers have shown that cooperative learning is an effective method for increasing student achievement and motivation in the classroom (Slavin 1995), (Matingly & Van Sickle, 1992), (Sharan & Schacter, 1988). However, very little research is done on the opinion of students regarding the effects of cooperative learning on their personal qualities.

The researcher selected a study based on cooperative learning because, not only has it been emphasized by the NCF as stated above, but it is included in the B.Ed. syllabus (Revised 2008) under the second section of the theory Paper II i.e. 'Psychology of Development and Learning'. Moreover the researchers wanted to go beyond just theoretical study and give an opportunity to the B.Ed. students to actually experience cooperative learning in classroom situation as students.

This raised the following questions in the mind of the researcher:

- Will the B.Ed. students realize the benefits of using cooperative learning as a teaching strategy?
 - Will experiencing cooperative learning have an effect on the personal qualities related to communication skills?
 - Whether cooperative learning will help in increasing the tolerance of the B.Ed. for others and help in dealing with conflicts?
 - If cooperative learning make a difference in the self esteem among the B.Ed. students?
 - Whether cooperative learning will encourage the B.Ed. students to study in groups or alone?
 - Why do students prefer to study in groups or alone?
- ❖ **Statement of the problem:** To find out the opinion of the B.Ed. Students regarding the teaching strategy based on Cooperative Learning on their personal qualities.
- ❖ **Definition of Key Terms:**
- opinion: In this study it refers to the views expressed by the B.Ed. students about cooperative learning on their personal qualities.
 - B.Ed. students: Students perusing the Bachelors Degree in Education from colleges affiliated to the University of Pune.
 - teaching strategy: Ways of presenting instructional materials or conducting instructional activities.
 - cooperative learning: Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject.
 - personal qualities: in the present study it is related to communication skills, tolerance for others, dealing with conflicts and self esteem.
- ❖ **Objectives:**
- To develop a teaching strategy based on co-operative learning for teaching the subject 'Psychology of Development and Learning' to B.Ed students.
 - To find out the opinion of the B.Ed. students about cooperative learning as a teaching strategy.
- ❖ **Population and Sampling Procedure:**
- **Population:** All the students of Adarsha Comprehensive College of Education & Research, (ACCER) Pune, affiliated to University of Pune.
 - **Sample:** Fifty six English medium students of Adarsha Comprehensive College of Education & Research, (ACCER) Pune.
 - **Sampling Procedure:** Purposive sampling technique was used for the study.
- ❖ **Scope:** The present research focuses on the use of cooperative learning as a teaching strategy for B.Ed. students and their personal qualities.
- ❖ **Limitations:** The motivation levels, fatigue, mood, past experience of the B.Ed students which may affect their responses are beyond the control of the researcher.
- ❖ **Delimitations:** The study was limited to
- B.Ed. colleges in Pune city.

- English Medium Students.
- Units from Paper II, Section I - Psychology of Development and Learning from the B.Ed. syllabus. (Revised 2008) of University of Pune.

❖ **Research Design/ Methodology:**

Multi method research: the methods selected for the study were:

- For Objective 1: Product Development
- For Objective 2: Descriptive Study: Programme Evaluation (Best, J., & Kahn, J. V., 2005)

❖ **Tools:**

- A programme consisting of teaching strategy based on cooperative learning prepared by the researchers for objective 1.
- Feedback sheets for B.Ed. students to get their opinion about the developed programme. The feedback sheet had a total of 6 close ended items in a rating scale and 3 open ended items.

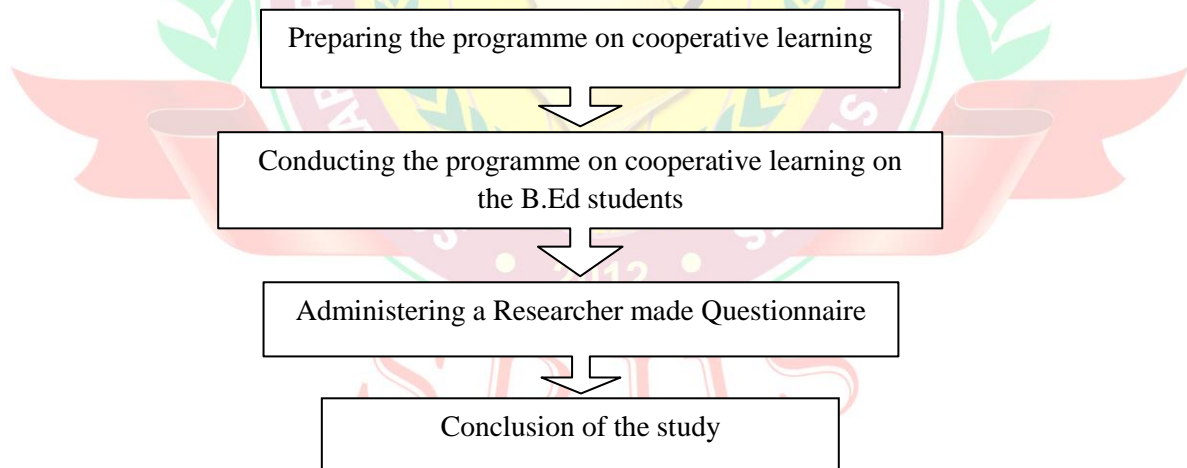
❖ **Tools for data analysis:**

- Percentage for analysing the data collected regarding the opinions of the B.Ed students after the implementation of the programme.

❖ **Tools for data representation:**

- Tables and graphs were used to represent the data.

❖ **Procedure:**



❖ **Analysis of the Responses:**

Analysis of their responses to the close ended items is as follows:

Table No. 1.

**Personal Opinion of the Students after using Cooperative Learning techniques
(response in percentage):**

Sr. No	Items	SD	D	A	SA
1.	I learnt to encourage others in their learning	0	0	82	18
2.	Helped me learn how to communicate accurately and clearly	0	0	24	76
3.	I learnt how to deal with conflicts constructively.	0	10	71	19

4.	Improved my tolerance and respect for other's opinions	0	14	43	43
5.	The environment was free so I learnt to share my opinions without fear of rejection.	0	0	34	66
6.	Improved my self esteem when my group achieved the goals.	0	0	40	60

Observation:

Majority of the students felt that using cooperative learning techniques helped them learn how to communicate accurately and clearly. A very few of them felt that it did not help them to become tolerant and respectful towards other's opinions.

Interpretation:

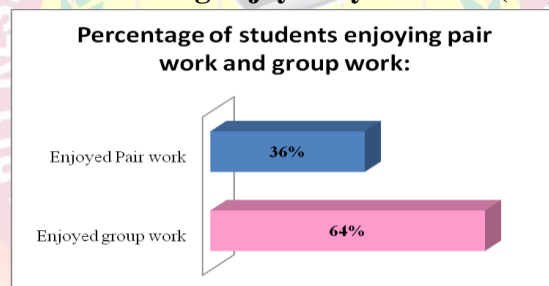
It appears that cooperative learning techniques helped the students improve their personal qualities like encouraging others and communication.

Analysis of the responses to the open ended questions in percentage are as follows:

Q1. Which cooperative learning techniques did you enjoy?

Graph No. 1

Techniques of Cooperative learning enjoyed by students (response in percentage):



Observation:

A Majority of more than 50% of the students enjoyed working in groups as compared to pair work.

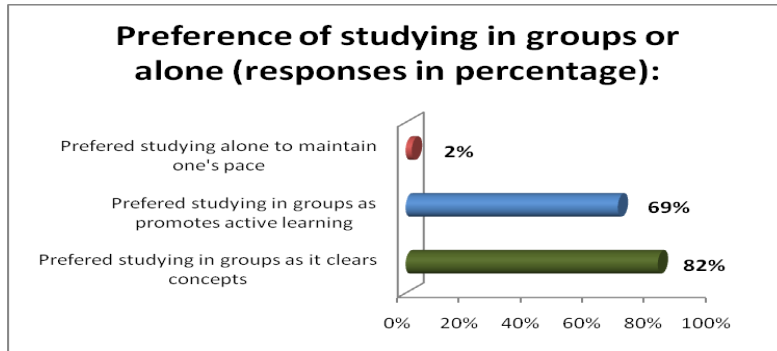
Interpretation:

Most of the students seemed to have enjoyed working in groups rather than in pairs.

Q2. Did you like working and studying with others or would you prefer to study alone? Why?

Graph No. 2

Preference of studying in groups or alone (response in percentage):



Observation:

A large majority of 82% of the B.Ed. students preferred to study in groups as it helped to clear concepts and share ideas. Around 70% of the students preferred to study in groups as it helped them to remain active in class. Only 2% of the students preferred to study alone as they felt others slowed their pace of learning.

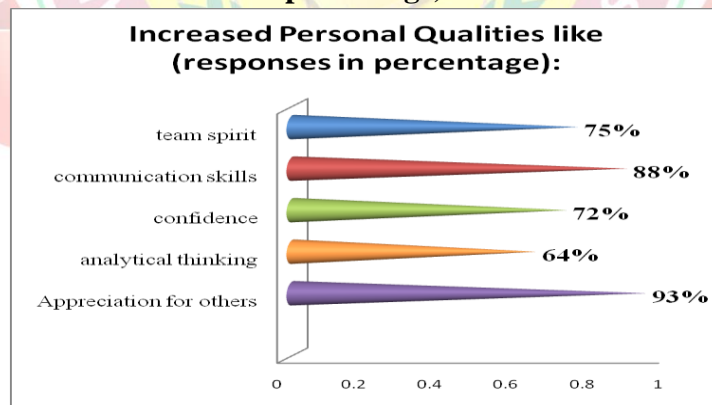
Interpretation:

Most of the students enjoyed working in groups as it kept them active and they were able to clear their concepts and share their ideas.

Q3. Which Personal qualities and skills were developed while working with others?

Graph No. 3

Personal qualities and skills developed while working with others (response in percentage)



Observation:

A large majority of 93% responded that it helped them to develop appreciation for others, followed by helping them improve their communication skills. A little under 65% felt that learning through cooperative learning helped in their analytical thinking.

Interpretation:

The above data shows that learning through cooperative learning techniques helped student develop social skills related to appreciation for others, communication, team spirit and confidence as compared to the development of analytical thinking, which is more related to cognition.

Major Findings:

- ✦ A high majority of the B.Ed. students responded that engaging in cooperative learning helped them develop personal qualities like appreciation for others, communication skills, team spirit, confidence and analytical thinking.
- ✦ Students preferred to learn through Cooperative learning techniques as it helped students to remain active in the class.
- ✦ Most of the students enjoyed the group work; however a few students enjoyed the pair work.

Conclusion:

Earlier researches have highlighted the success of cooperative learning in increasing the achievement level of students in a particular subject. In the present study the responses of the B.Ed. students showed that using cooperative learning as a teaching strategy also helped in developing personal qualities like appreciation of others and communication skills. These personal qualities are nothing but social skills. In today's life style these social skills are given a lot of importance in order to communicate information properly.

The citizens of a Knowledge Society are those who can cooperate, collaborate to construct knowledge and share it through clear communication. Thus cooperative learning teaching strategy becomes an important tool to shape the new generation- the Knowledge Society.

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