



COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND EI

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Abstract

In this paper the researcher discusses the importance of Emotional Intelligence citing few research studies. The elements of emotional intelligence are explained. Different components of Cooperative Learning strategy is discussed and lastly observing the advantages of cooperative learning the researcher concludes that through this is one of the best ways to develop emotional intelligence in the teaching learning situation.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Cooperative learning, Self awareness, Self management, Inter-personal skills.*



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Traditional stereo-typed teaching makes education system boring. The number of absentees, inattentive students and lots of disciplinary problems are rampant in schools as well as in colleges. This is due to uninteresting teaching strategy and more importance on academic intelligence. Students having lower and average academic achievement are neglected in a general class room. They are bullied and humiliated. Thus, the recent status of education system is in a precarious state. One of the solutions to these problems is to change the teaching strategy and change the mind set from academic intelligence to emotional intelligence as emotional intelligence is an essential factor for successful life. Teaching emotional and social skill is important at schools, it can affect academic achievement positively. Emotional intelligence has a long term effect on achievement. D.Goleman (1991) , Pool (1997), Finegan(1998), Abi Samra(2000), and (Singh, 2001). Lower level of emotional intelligence has given rise to a number of problematic behaviour among the youth in Malaysia. Md. Aroff& Chang(1994). Emotional intelligence provides a deeper, fully formed understanding of oneself and those around us. Cooper and Sawaf (1997), and Finegan(1998).Emotional well-being is a predictor of academic achievement and job success. Pool (1997), and Finegan(1998). Students possessing emotional intelligence or even some of the emotional skill can lead to achievement from the formal education years of the childhood to the adulthood competency in being effective in work place and in society.

Finegan(1998). Emotional intelligence is what gives a person a competitive edge. There is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and intelligence. Kaur (2001). It is right time implement an emotional literacy curriculum in teacher education (Kassem, 2001). Emotional intelligence is a factor which is either developed or is destroyed depending upon environmental experiences provided by parents, teachers and society (Mangal, 2004). Numerous studies have shown connections between higher levels of emotional intelligence and better academic performance in adolescent students (Parker et al., 2004; Downey et al., 2008; Brouzos, Misailidi & Hadjimatheou, 2014). Moreover, EI appears to have a compensatory effect on school performance of lower cognitive ability students (Petrides, Frederickson & Furnham, 2004; Qualter et al., 2012). From the above studies, it is clear that emotional intelligence is an essential feature for academic achievement.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article "Emotional Intelligence," they defined emotional intelligence as, "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990). In mid-1990s, Daniel Goleman revealed findings in neuroscience and psychology that stressed the importance of Emotional Quotient (EQ). This makes us aware of our feelings and that of others. It gives empathy, motivation, compassion and an ability to respond skillfully to pleasure and pain. Goleman argued that EQ was a basic requirement for the use of IQ. If the areas of our brain that feel are damaged, our ability to think effectively is diminished. Gradually it is now clear that emotional intelligence should be inculcated through teaching learning situation.

Components of EQ:

Self-awareness - People with high emotional intelligence are usually very self-aware. They understand their emotions, and because of this, they don't let their feelings rule them. They're confident – because they trust their intuition and don't let their emotions get out of control. They're also willing to take an honest look at themselves. They know their strengths and

weaknesses, and they work on these areas so they can perform better. Many people believe that this self-awareness is the most important part of emotional intelligence.

Self-management - The ability to control impulsive feelings and behaviors, manage your emotions in healthy ways, take initiative, follow through on commitments, and adapt to changing circumstances.

Social awareness - The ability to understand the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people, pick up on emotional cues, feel comfortable socially, and recognize the power dynamics in a group or organization. Empathy is the ability to identify with and understand the wants, needs, and viewpoints of those around you. People with empathy are good at recognizing the feelings of others, even when those feelings may not be obvious. As a result, empathetic people are usually excellent at managing relationships, listening, and relating to others. They avoid stereotyping and judging too quickly, and they live their lives in a very open, honest way.

Relationship management - The ability to develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others, work well in a team, and manage conflict is a necessary component of emotional intelligence. It is usually easy to talk to and like people with good social skills. Those with strong social skills are typically team players. Rather than focus on their own success first, they help others develop and shine. They can manage disputes, are excellent communicators, and are masters at building and maintaining relationships.

One of the active learning methods is **cooperative learning** through which emotional intelligence can be inculcated.

Definition of Cooperative learning:

When learning goals are achieved cooperatively in a teaching learning situation, it is called cooperative learning. It is a successful teaching learning 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. 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 teacher during the instructional session. Each goal structure has its place

(Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 1999). 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 teacher decides which goal structure to implement within each lesson. The most important goal structure, and the one that should be used the majority of the time in learning situations, is cooperation.

Views on Cooperative Learning:

When compared to other forms of teaching, CL is said to provide a better foundation for achievement, better psychological health (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1984; Slavin, 1991; Stahl & VanSickle, 1992), increased motivation to learn (Sharan & Shaulov, 1990), improved inter-ethnic relationships (Sharan, 1980; Slavin et al., 1985), and positive peer relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Also reported are greater long-term retention of information and more creative thinking (Sharan, 1980). In 2010, researchers continued to affirm that CL allows for students to pursue “deep learning processes” recognizing the advantages of a “social approach” in the classroom which allows for active student engagement (Smith, 2010, p. 14). In cooperative learning, more students learn and remember material for longer periods of time, approach learning at higher cognitive levels, feel positive about themselves and the subject matter, and become more skillful in interacting with one another” (Glass & Putnam; In Watson, 1995, p. 209).

Elements of Cooperative Learning:

There are mainly five elements of Cooperative learning. These are

- Positive Interdependence
- Face to face interaction
- Individual accountability
- Inter personal and small group skills
- Group processing

Types of Cooperative learning:

Mainly there are three types of Cooperative learning. These are

- Formal group learning
- Informal group learning and
- Cooperative base Group

Advantages of Cooperative learning:

1. Increase in Academic Achievement

It is observed from various researches that the academic achievement of the students increases in the cooperative learning groups. They open up with their peers and clear their doubts and share their views.

"In extensive meta-analyses across hundreds of studies, cooperative arrangements were found superior to either competitive or individualistic structures on a variety of outcome measures, generally showing higher achievement, higher-level reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions, and greater transfer of what is learned from one situation to another." (Barkley, et al, 2005: p.17-18)

In Slavin, 1991 's review of 67 studies, 61% of the cooperative-learning classes achieved significantly higher test scores than the traditional classes. He notes that the difference between the more and less effective cooperative-learning classes was that the effective ones stressed group goals and individual accountability.

Slavin (1996) further argues that "cooperative learning has its greatest effects on student learning when groups are recognized or rewarded based on the individual learning of their group members" (p. 52).

2. Increase in Higher order thinking Skills

It is seen that by working in a group few higher order skills are improved like

- Decision making skill
- Conflict management skill
- Communication skill
- Leadership skill and Sharing a common goal skill

Cooperative learning exercises enhance important skills including (Barkley, Cross and Major, 2005):

- using the language of the discipline
- explaining, providing feedback, understanding alternative perspective
- discovering patterns and relationships
- organizing and synthesizing information
- developing strategies and analysis

3. Improve in Personal Responsibility

When students are in group, their responsibilities are assigned and they are accountable for their work. In this process their accountability as well as personal responsibility increases

4. Improve in Self Awareness

When participating in groups, students are able to discover their potentialities. These experiences also lead to improved self-esteem in students and feeling more confident in their own abilities.

5. Improve inter-personal skills

Compared to students learning on their own, students who are engaged in cooperative learning:

- Like the subject and college better (Johnson et al., 1998 , Lord, 2001 , Springer et al, 1999)
- Are more likely to make friends in class: they like and trust other students more than students who are learning individually (Johnson et al., 1998)
- Ethnically mixed cooperative-learning groups are more likely to result in inter-ethnic friendships than traditional learning techniques (Slavin, 1991 ; Wenzel, 2000 , Johnson et al., 1983)
- Have more self-esteem (Johnson et al., 1998 , Slavin, 1991): a very important consideration with female and minority students

By discussing the cooperative learning in detail we could easily visualize that all the components of emotional intelligence is satisfied here. Thus, It can be concluded that while teaching one should try to apply cooperative learning strategy to make the learning more meaningful and beneficial.

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