



ANDRAGOGY AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Minakshi Biswal, Ph. D.

Associate Professor, Dept. of Education, Vasanta College for Women, Rajghat, Varanasi

Abstract

The present formal education system of in India is often joyless and tedious. The present curriculum is isolated from life. The transaction method is limited to only traditional chalk and talk method. This stereo-typed method failed to develop in the students their independence of thought and initiative in action. The unnecessary weight age on the written examination compelled to curb the teachers' initiative, to stereotype the curriculum, to promote mechanical and lifeless methods of teaching, to discourage all spirit of experimentation and to place the stress on the wrong or unimportant things on education. This faulty process provides a lorry load of information to students without any concept clarity and problem solving ability. It is only trying to maintain the status quo, rather than leading to a dynamic transformation of the society. The dysfunctional aspects of education are becoming increasingly evident. Rather than preparing students for society, it alienates them from it. Now it is observed that students are not regular and sincere towards their regular studies. They are not attentive in the class room. They are very casual towards internal assessment. Their ideology is very different. They are not sensitive. Their attitude towards society has changed in a negative direction. This is a serious problem which needs attention. The present paper tries to find a solution to this problem in the form of cooperative learning.

Keywords: *Andragogy, Cooperative learning, principles of andragogy*

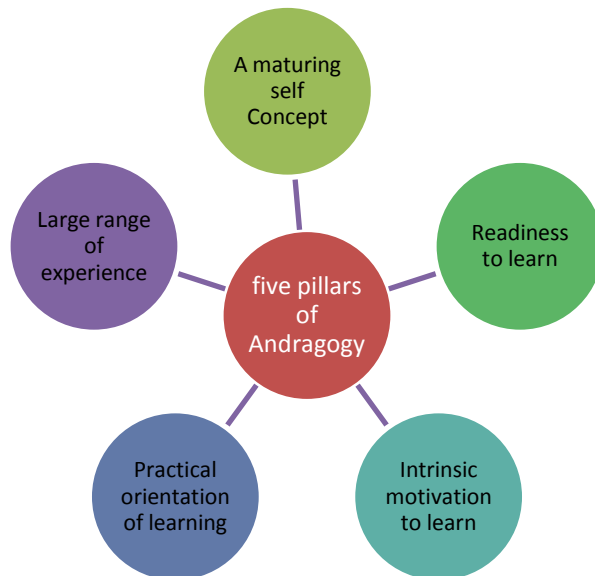


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The notion of andragogy has been found around for nearly two centuries. It became particularly popular in North America and Britain as a way of describing adult learning through the work of Malcolm Knowles. The term **andragogy** can be supposedly equivalent to the term pedagogy. Andragogy in Greek means man-leading in comparison to pedagogy, which in Greek means child-leading. However, it should be noted that the term pedagogy has been used since the Ancient Greek times, while Alexander Kapp, a German educator, first used the term **andragogy** in 1833. When adult education first became popular in the early 1900s, it was assumed that the same methods and techniques used to teach children could also be applied to adults.

Pillars of adult learning:

Adult learning is mainly based on five pillars.



Andragogical Principles:

In 1984, **Knowles** suggested **4 principles** which could be expanded and applied to adult learning:

- Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
- Adults bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences, experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for the learning activities.
- Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance and impact to their job or personal life.
- Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.
- Adults are internally motivated and self-directed
- Adults are goal oriented
- Adults are relevancy oriented
- Adults are practical
- They like activity based learning
- Adult learners like to be respected. (Kearsley, 2010)

From this it is clear that Adult learners are self directed, internally motivated, vocation oriented and having multiple responsibilities.

Keeping all these above principles in mind the educators has to decide an appropriate teaching learning situation. There are various Active learning methods. One of them is **Cooperative learning**.

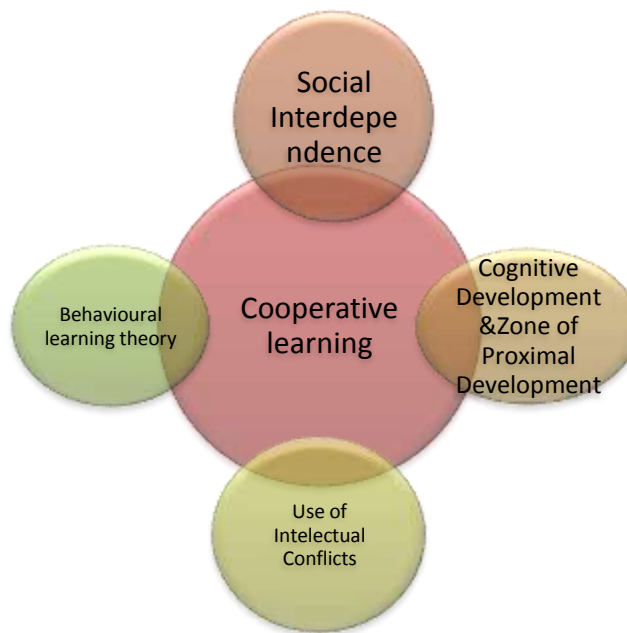
Definition of Cooperative learning:

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.

Psychological Principles of Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning has its roots on four fundamental psychological principles.

- Social interdependence by Kurt Kafka
- Cognitive Development and Zone of Proximal Development by Jean Piaget & Lev Semonovich Vygotsky
- Use of Intellectual conflicts by controversy theorists
- Behaviouristic Theory by B.F. Skinner



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 principles of adult learning is satisfied here. Thus, It can be concluded that while teaching adults one should try to apply cooperative learning strategy to make the learning more meaningful and beneficial. The problems seen regularly in traditional class room could be nullified to some extent.

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