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ARTICLE

Collaborative Learning Techniques for teachers

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Introduction

Roots of Education are bitter but fruits are sweet.

- *Aristotle*

Collaborative learning is said to acquire higher level thinking and preserve information for longer times than students working as individual. Why is this so?

Groups tend to learn by “discussion, explanation of ideas, and assessment of other’s ideas.” Perhaps information that is discussed is remembered in long-term memory. Research direct those students who worked collaboratively on problems obtained significantly higher achievement than those who worked as individual. Plus, students who performed lower levels of achievement extended when working in disparate groups.

Many consider Vygotsky the father of ‘social learning.’ Vygotsky was an education mutineer in many ways. Vygotsky controversially argued for educators to assess students’ ability to find solution of problems, rather than acquiring knowledge. The idea of collaborative learning has a lot to do with Vygotsky’s idea of the “zone of proximal development”.

Ways to include best practices for collaborative learning in our classroom

1. Establish clear group goals

Effective collaborative learning intent to establish group goals, as well as individual responsibility. This keeps the group on task and establishes an unagreeable purpose. Before beginning an assignment, it is best to define goals and objectives to save time.

2. Keep groups midsized

Small groups of 3 or less lack enough diversity and may not allow divergent thinking to occur. Groups that are too large create 'freeloading' where not all members participate. A small size group of 4-5 is ideal.

3. Build trust and promote open communication

Successful interpersonal communication relationship must exist in teams. Building trust is essential deal with emotional issues that arise at present and any interpersonal problems before moving on. Assignments should encourage team members to explain concepts properly to each other.

4. Create a pre-test and post-test

A suitable way to ensure the group learns together would be to engage in a pre and post-test. In fact, many researchers use this method to see if groups are learning. An assessment gives the team a goal to work in favour and sure that learning is a priority. It also allows instructors to refine the effectiveness of the group. Changes can be made if differences are seen in the assessments over time. Plus, you can use Bloom's taxonomy to further hone in on specific skills.

5. Consider using different strategies, like the Jigsaw technique.

The jigsaw strategy is said to improve social interactions in learning and support diversity. The workplace is often like a jigsaw. It involves separating an assignment into other small work, where individuals research their entrusted area. Students with the same topic from different groups might meet together to discuss ideas between groups.

This type of collaboration suggests students to become "experts" in their assigned topic. Students then return to their primary group to educate others. There are other techniques discussed here, such as using clusters, buzz groups, round robin, leaning cells, or fish bowl discussions.

6. Allow groups to reduce anxiety

When working on difficult concepts, group learning may provide a source of support. Groups often use humour and create a less anxious learning atmosphere that allow for

positive learning experiences. Allow groups to use some stress-reducing actions as long as they stay on task.

7. Establish group interactions

The quality of discussions is a fore teller of the achievement of the group. Instructors should provide a model of how a successful group function. Shared leadership is best. Students should work together on the task and maintenance functions of a group. Roles are important in group development.

8. Keep in mind the diversity of groups

Mixed groups that involve a range of talents, backgrounds, learning styles, ideas, and experiences are best. Studies have found that mixed aptitude groups impose to learn more from each other and increase achievement of low performers. Rotate groups so students have a chance to learn from others.

9. Be wary of “group think”

While collaborative learning is an effective tool, it is always important to consider a balanced approach. At times, group harmony can override the necessity for more critical thinking. Some new research suggests that groups favoured the more confident members. Changing up groups can help counter this problem.

10. Value diversity

Collaborative learning trusts on some buy-in. Students need to respect and appreciate each other’s viewpoints for it to work. For exemplar, class discussions can emphasize the need for different perspectives. Create a classroom environment that encourages independent thinking. Teach students the value of multiplicity in thought. You may want to give historical or social illustrations where people working together were able to reach finite solutions.

Implementation of specific CoLT in classroom

Fish Bowl

In fish bowl an outer circle of students sits around a smaller, inner circle of students. Students in the inner circle engage in an in discussion, while students in the outer circle consider what is being said a how it is being said. This CoLT has been called Inside

Outside Circles. Inner circle students are challenged to participate in a high-level discussion while outer circle is able to listen to the discussion and evaluate content, logic and group interaction.

Decide whether you want to facilitate the inner-circle discussion, sit with the outer circle, or separate yourself so that you can observe both circles.

Preparation

In class, preparation time involves having students move into circles and giving students instructions. You will need movable chairs and sufficient classroom space to form the circles. If the physical constraints of the classroom do not allow movement of chairs into circles, consider having the inner circle of students simply sit in chairs and participate in the discussion at the front of the classroom.

Procedure

1. Ask a small group of students to make a circle in class, and ask remaining students to form a larger circle around the first circle.
2. Give students the following guidelines: Only inner circle students will speak outer circle students will be observers and take notes on both content and group process, although observers will not speak the fish bowl discussion, they will have the opportunity to address any issues that arise in the follow-up discussion. Give the students prompt questions for discussion. Ask students to report out in a whole class discussion requesting that they address the content issues that arose and they comment in group processes.

Test Taking Teams

Students work in teams to prepare for instructor-created exams and then take the exams first individually and next as a group. This CoLT thus involves three steps:

1. **The group studies for the exam together.**
2. **Individual takes the exam.**
3. **The group takes the exam.**

By working together to prepare for the exam students has each other deeper their understanding of the content. Because each student first takes the test as individual

gathering, this collaborative learning techniques emphasizes individual accountability. By retaking the test as a team, individual students benefit from the collective knowledge of the group. Since the group scores is generally superior to the individual scores, test taking team is useful for demonstrating the value of CoLT. This collaborative learning techniques may be used or short quizzes within a single class period or for tests covering large amounts of material.

Preparation:

Once you have fixed the content that students should master and have presented it in lecture, reading assignments, or other activities, the preparation for this CoLT is the same as preparing a good examination for individuals. Consider creating a test study guide to provide students with a focussed frame work for preparing for the test.

Procedures:

1. Ask students to form groups of 4 to 6. Consider one of the instructor stratification methods for forming group described in part to ensure that each team contains diverse or ability balanced membership.
2. Depending on the size and complexity of the material to be creator, the groups may meet for 15 minutes, a full class session, or longer.
3. Apply the test for students to complete individually and to submit to the instructor for grading.
4. Before returning the graded individual tests, ask students to re-join their groups to reach unanimity on the answers and submit a group response to the test.
5. Consider averaging individual test grades and group test grades to determine individual grades. Weight scores, for example, two - thirds for individual plus one-third for group.

Think - Aloud Pair Problem - Solving: TAPPS

In Think - Aloud Pair Problem - Solving: TAPPS, student pairs receive a series of problems as well as specified rolls - problem solver- and listener - that switch with each problem. The problem solver thinks aloud, talking through the steps of solving a problem. The partner listens to the problem solver, following the steps attempting to understand the reasoning behind the steps and offering suggestions if there are missteps.

Articulating one's own problem-solving process and listening carefully to another's process helps students practice what they have read about or heard in a lecture. This

CoLT places the emphasis on the problem-solving process rather than the product, helping students diagnose errors in logic. Depending on the problems used, it can also help increase student awareness of the range of possible successful (and unsuccessful) approaches to problem solving. TAPPS improves analytical skills by helping students to formulate ideas, rehearse concepts, understand the sequence of steps underline their thinking, and identify errors in someone else's reasoning. Since it requires students to relate information to existing conceptual frame works and apply existing information to new situations, it can also promote deeper understanding.

Preparation:

To prepare for these CoLT spent sufficient time developing and appropriate set of field related problems that students can solve within a limited time frame. The problems should engage students in basic problem-solving skills such as identifying the nature of the problem, analysing the knowledge and skills required to reach a solution, identifying potential solutions, choosing the best solution, and evaluating potential outcomes. To be most effective, the problem should challenge students, requiring them to concentrate and focus their attention, whether they are solvers or listeners.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to form pairs and explain to student's duty of problem solver and listener. The role of the problem solver is to read the problem aloud and talk through the reasoning process in attempting to come out from the problem. The role of the listener is to encourage the problem - solver to think aloud, describing the steps to solve the problem. The listener may also ask directive questions and offer suggestions but should repretend from actually solving the problem.
2. Ask students to solve set of problems, alternating roles with each problem.
3. Call completion when students have solved all problems.

Conclusion

In present paper researcher has suggested specific techniques and way to implement in the classroom. By use of CoLT teacher will improve achievement of the students and establish students' bondage with subjects. CoLT will create healthy climate in the classroom for teaching. Teachers can apply suggested techniques and establish more for the beneficial of students learning.

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