



Constructivism: Collaborative learning Strategy in teaching of Social Sciences

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Abstract

In a global and knowledge based age, a teacher has to increase students' appetite for more knowledge and variety of skills to cater to global demands. For the Development of the Knowledge and skills in a teacher, required changes have to be made in the instructions, at the teacher training level. These instructions generate new ideas and abilities in a student trainee. The instructions have to be simple and practical and have to inspire Teachers, who are required to bring changes into classroom teaching and learning.

For this, the teacher educators must develop an environment to help the student trainees to construct the knowledge about various strategies which can be used to improve educational achievements of the pupils at secondary school level in different subjects.

Social Sciences as an important subject at the school level, needs new techniques for teaching and learning process. The educated world has begun to appreciate the enormous potentialities of the subject since, it enhances link between Social Sciences and social realities. So it is an energizing and rapidly evolving field which demands new strategies and skills for teaching and learning.

Introduction:

In a global and knowledge based age, a teacher has to enhance students' appetite for more knowledge and variety of skills to cater to global demands. For the Development of the Knowledge and skills in a teacher, required changes have to be made in the instructions, at the teacher training level. These instructions generate new ideas and

abilities in a student trainee. The instructions have to be simple and practical and have to inspire Teachers, who are required to bring changes into classroom teaching and learning.

During last few decades there has been a radical change in teaching approaches compared to earlier; as a result, today we are very much conscious of using various teaching strategies at **all the levels** to convince the learners and create interest in learning.

Project based Learning, Learning through Activity, computerized Teaching and Learning are recent techniques used in teaching-learning process. Similarly Teachers who are progressive always think of constructivist theories **in specific** for facilitating, guiding, managing the students in teaching-learning process.

At teacher education level, the teacher educators must develop an environment to help the student trainees to **construct the knowledge about various strategies** which can be used to improve educational achievements of the pupils at secondary school level in different subjects.

Under constructivist theories, the **collaborative Learning** strategy is an instructional method, in which the students work in small groups; **this strategy** can be a very good way of helping students to construct their own knowledge **cooperatively**.

Collaborative Learning speaks about **cooperative effort of students and teachers** in a learning process. The teacher becomes a facilitator who structures learning opportunities, serve as a knowledge resource and encourage the students to work together to build a common body of knowledge. This opines that the change in the student attitude is possible through various strategies in teaching. Slow and low achievers may also be attracted to this new strategy.

To achieve this, **teacher training institutions** should be equipped in such a way that teaching becomes **constructive and fruitful** and in turn provides a basis for the introduction of **various experiences** to the pupils.

Among all the other subjects of instructions, **Social Sciences** provide maximum scope for developing **human interaction** by dealing with social relationships. This develops subject matter as well as **skills** among the pupils to prepare them as **responsible citizens of the society**; and this subject **ensures intelligibility and also experience**, rather than the rote

memory amongst pupils. It is a very lively discipline with full of **imagination, creativity** as well as **controversy**. It is an academic discipline, which develops certain intellectual abilities, to inculcate **social and human values** in the learner and to make him understand the world in a better way.

In this context the researcher has **identified few concepts** from various topics, for these concepts various suitable collaborative learning **strategies** were selected and materials were developed to give practical experience to the student trainees to understand the subject and the strategies of teaching Social Sciences.

This try out is done by combining the theoretical and practical classroom foundations that are important during teaching of social science at school level. Main idea here is to integrate the knowledge and skills in a systematic way while guiding them to put into practice.

The following are the objectives for the Experimentation.

- To develop material on collaborative learning strategies for selected topics/concepts of Social Sciences for secondary school level.
- To construct and standardize the achievement test.
- To study the impact of the material developed based on collaborative learning **strategies** on achievement and to compare the achievement with that of traditional method.

Details of collaborative learning strategies used

- **Brainstorming sessions- Fundamental Rights and Duties**
- **Group discussions -Functions of Local self Governments**
- **Role Play sessions- Election Process-Role of Election Commissioner and others**

Steps involved in designing the collaborative learning strategies:

Step 1. Selecting content with scope

Step 2. Specifying Instructional Objectives

Step 3. Developing Learning materials by selecting appropriate Resources with rules and Constraints.

Step 4. Spelling out the procedure

Step 5. Revising (tryout)

Sample

- Since it is a small study, nearby school was selected. The total students selected are **80, 40** students for control group and **40 students** for experimental group, studying in **IX** standard in a state syllabus secondary school of Bangalore city.

Tools used

- Verbal intelligence test(PGTI)
- Achievement test (prepared by student trainees with the help of Researcher).
- Material based on Collaborative learning strategies (developed by the student trainees with the help of researcher).
- Observation Schedule (prepared by Researcher)

Research Design

- Verbal intelligence test was used to equate the groups.
- The Experimental post-test equivalent group design was adopted.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant difference in the achievement of IX Standard students of experimental and control group of the study.

Data Collection

- The students were selected on the basis of **verbal** intelligence test results (pre-test) and equated into two groups.

- The student trainees taught the selected units of Social Sciences by conventional approach to the control group and measured the achievement mean scores of the learners by administering achievement test.
- Collaborative learning **strategies** were used on experimental group for the selected units and the achievement mean scores were measured by administering the achievement test to the learners.
- The Researcher has also used observation schedule to collect qualitative data.

Statistical Analyses

The scores obtained by the two groups of students in the post test analyzed using appropriate quantitative statistical techniques. The marked hypotheses were tested through 't' test.

This instructional approach has some **key points** for the teacher trainee to keep it in mind while using:

1. Recognizing the knowledge and skills among students.
2. Coordinating suitable activities, projects and events.
3. Determining learner's responsibility for all tasks.
4. Combining team members by considering the learning styles.
5. Specifying team expectations.
6. Stressing the focal points during discussion.
7. Monitoring the team work.
8. Conducting meetings to clarify the doubts.
9. Consolidation of the facts.
10. Celebrating achievements.

The following tables speak about statistical analysis

Table-1: Table showing the distribution of students.

Group	Std	Girls	Boys	Total
Experimental	IX	18	22	40
Control	IX	16	24	40
Total		34	46	80

Table-2: Table showing the comparative Mean scores of achievement.

	Groups	N	Mean	S.D.	't'-value	Level of significance
Achievement	Experimental	40	40.17	3.20	6.41	S**
	Control	40	34.52	4.56		

S* Significance at 00.5 Level S** Significance at 00.1 Level NS Not significant

Table-2 shows the data of the Experimental and control group of students about the academic achievement in Social Sciences. It can be said that the academic achievement of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group. Hence the Hypothesis i.e. “There is no significant difference in the achievement of IX standard students of experimental and control group of the study”, is rejected. **The significant difference between the experimental and control group in the academic achievement in social sciences was accepted.**

Besides regular quantitative analyses the researcher also used qualitative analyses for studying the pupil’s behavior by using observation technique. This is to make the students trainees to understand that there are various kinds of qualitative assessing tools. Hence observation was done on following Concepts.

- 1 **Assertiveness:** The students were very active with lot of interest to speak about their rights. They expressed honest feelings comfortably.
- 2 **Empathy:** The students always tried to understand and experience the views of others.
- 3 **Communication:** They were listening, speaking, noting down the points and interacting with each other.
- 4 **Balancing Social behavior:** Sometimes they were expressing anger or displeasure with respectful behavior to others and building their knowledge.
- 5 **Negotiation:** They were also trying to find alternative solutions which are acceptable to group members.
- 6 **Social Responsibility:** They were sometimes admitting ignorance, realizing the mistakes sincerely.
- 7 **Cooperation:** They were adjusting with each other and actively participated, followed the rules and all the information was shared by co-operating with each other.
- 8 **Friendship Skills:** They were very friendly, appreciating each other's ideas in making decision etc.

The above observation says that the pupils of experimental group **achieved more** than the pupils of control group due to the **favorable impact** of collaborative learning strategies used in Social Sciences at secondary school level.

Conclusion:

This **Research paper** speaks about the major changes in pupils at secondary school level when **collaborative learning strategies** were adopted for **conceptual clarity in Social Sciences**. The student trainees were able to construct the knowledge about the usage of collaborative learning strategies.

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