

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

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Abstract :

This article deals with Collaborative learning. It includes What is Collaborative Learning ?, its approaches, its elements, strategies and benefits.

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product.

Key Words : Collaborative Learning, social environment

WHAT IS COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ?

Collaborative Learning refers to an instruction method in which learners at various performance levels work together in small group towards a common goal. The learners are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one learner helps other student to be successful. Active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increase interest among participants but also promotes critical thinking. There is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than learners who work quietly as individual. The shared learning gives learners an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility of their own learning and thus become critical thinkers.

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. Collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is

a naturally social act in which the participants talk among themselves. It is through the talk that learning occurs.

Approaches of Collaborative Learning :

1. CL is an active process whereby learners assimilate previous knowledge with current knowledge.
2. CL actively engages the learners, process and synthesize the information.
3. background.
4. CL flourishes in a social environment through which the learner creates a frame work and meaning to the discourse.
5. In CL learner begin to create their own unique conceptual frame work and not only rely solely on an expert's or a text's framework.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CL :

1. Learning is an active, constructive process :-

In CL situations, students are creating something new with the information and ideas. These acts of intellectual processing- of constructing meaning or creating something new are crucial to learning.

2. Learning depends on rich contexts :-

Learning is basically influenced by the context and activity in which it is embedded. CL activities frequently begin with problems, for which students must marshal pertinent facts and ideas. Hence rich contexts challenge students to practice and develop higher order reasoning and problem-solving skills.

3. Learners are divers :-

Our student bring multiple prospective in the classroom-divers background, learning style, experiences and aspirations. The divers perspectives that emerge in collaborative activities are clarifying but not just for us. They are illuminating for our student as well.

4. Learning is inherently social :

CL produces intellectual synergy of many minds coming to bear on a problem, and the social stimulation of mutual engagement in a common endeavor. This mutual exploration, meaning- making, and feedback often leads to better understanding on the part of students, and to the creation of

new understanding on the part of students, and to the creation of new understanding for all of us.

ELEMENTS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

1. **Positive interdependence** : Team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve the goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences.
2. **Individual accountability** : All students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned.
3. **Face-to-face promotive interaction** : Although some of the group work may be parcelled out and done individually, some must be done interactively, with group members providing one another with feedback, challenging one another's conclusions and reasoning, and perhaps most importantly, teaching and encouraging one another.
4. **Appropriate use of collaborative skills** : Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills.
5. **Group processing** : Team members set group goals, periodically assess what they are doing well as a team, and identify changes they will make to function more effectively in the future.

FOUR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES THINK-PAIR-SHARE :

(1) The instructor poses a question, preferable one demanding analysis, evaluation, or synthesis, and gives students about a minute to think through an appropriate response. This "think-time" can be spent writing, also. (2) Students then turn to a partner and share their responses. (3) During the third step, student responses can be shared within a four-person learning team, within a larger group, or with an entire class during a follow-up discussion.

THREE-STEP INTERVIEW :

Common as an ice-breaker or a team-building exercise, this structure can also be used also to share information such as hypotheses or reactions to a film or article. (1) Students form dyads; one student interviews the other. (2) Students

switch roles. (3) The dyad links with a second dyad. This four-member learning team then discusses the information or insights gleaned from the initial paired interviews.

SIMPLE JIGSAW :

The faculty member divides an assignment or topic into four parts with all students from each LEARNING TEAM volunteering to become "experts" on one of the parts. EXPERT TEAMS then work together to master their fourth of the material and also to discover the best way to help others learn it. All experts then reassemble in their home LEARNING TEAMS where they teach the other group members.

NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER :

Members of learning teams, usually composed of four individuals, count off : 1, 2, 3, or 4. The instructor poses a question, usually factual in nature, but requiring some higher order thinking skills. Students discuss the question, making certain that every group member knows the agreed upon answer. The instructor calls a specific number and the team members originally designated that number during the count off respond as group spokespersons. Because no one knows which number the teacher will call, all team members have a vested interest in understanding the appropriate response.

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING :

1. Develops higher level thinking skills
2. Builds self esteem in students
3. Encourages diversity understanding
4. Students explore alternate problem solutions in a safe environment
5. Fits in well with the constructivist approach
6. Students develop responsibility for each other
7. Builds more positive heterogeneous relationships

EPILOGUE :

Collaborative Learning is a relationship among learners that requires positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, and processing.

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