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THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATIVE AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN TEACHING LANGUAGES

Annotation

The current article aims at providing general information about the importance of Collaborative and Cooperative learning and methods of using them in teaching different skills effectively. Suggestions and solutions by leading experts and how Collaborative and Cooperative learning is important in teaching and learning foreign languages are also discussed and proved in this article.

Key words: Collaborative learning, cooperative learning, cognitive activity, educational approach, discourse, digital curriculum, learning environment, a challenge, interaction, to communicate.

BIRGALIKDA VA HAMKORLIKDA O'RGANISHNING TIL O'QITISHDAGI AHAMIYATI

Аннотация

Ushbu maqolada birgalikda va hamkorlikda o'rganishning ahamiyati haqidagi umumiy ma'lumotlar va ularni turli ko'nikmalarni samarali o'rgatishda qo'llash usullari yoritilgan. Ushbu maqolada etakchi mutaxassislarning takliflari va yechimlari, hamda chet tillarni o'rgatish va o'rganishda birgalikda va hamkorlikda o'rganishning qanchalik muhimligi muhokama qilinadi va isbotlanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: Birgalikda o'rganish, hamkorlikda o'rganish, bilishga oid faoliyat, pedagogic yondashuv, so'zlash qobiliyati, raqamli o'quv rejasi, o'rganish muhiti, da'vat, o'zaro munosabat, muloqot qilmoq.

ЗНАЧИМОСТЬ СОВМЕСТНОГО И КООПЕРАТИВНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ ПРИ ПРЕПОДАВАНИИ ЯЗЫКОВ

Аннотация

Целью данной статьи является предоставление общей информации о значимости совместного и кооперативного обучения и методах их использования для эффективного обучения различным навыкам. В статье также обсуждаются и доказываются предложения и решения ведущих экспертов, а также то, насколько важно совместное и кооперативное обучение в преподавании и изучении иностранных языков.

Ключевые слова: Совместное обучение, кооперативное обучение, познавательная деятельность, образовательный подход, дискурс, цифровая учебная программа, среда обучения, вызов, взаимодействие, общении;

Introduction. Language is considered the most important means of communication since the prehistoric time of humanity. Language is the key to students' intellectual, social and emotional development and the successful learning of all subjects. English became the dominant language of the world as it gained widespread power. The process of learning English requires a great deal of attention to the development of all skills, as English is a global language and is used for interpersonal communication. For this reason, many changes have been taking place in the teaching of foreign languages in most countries of the world for the last few years. The main goal is to improve the quality of foreign language teaching, to form and develop a culture of communication of students, to demonstrate the effective use of technology to improve the practical training of foreign languages.

One of the most pressing issues today is the effective use of modern pedagogical technologies in the teaching of the English language at higher institutions, the development of students' knowledge and skills, mastery of the language and its use in oral speech. So "Collaborative and cooperative learning" is really relevant and important to develop all language skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Speaking English is especially important for language learners. For many years, no special attention was paid to speech development. Many language learners have difficulties expressing their opinions orally.

However, today it is clear that the need to improve students' communication skills in order to improve speech is a

vital issue. Because only in this way students can express themselves freely.

Low English language proficiency is observed in most students. This is because students try to master vocabulary and grammar while learning English. This results in some difficulties for example, students use their mother tongue instead of English when thinking, are afraid to make mistakes when speaking English, use incorrect listening strategies. It is the responsibility of English teachers to address this shortcoming. To do this, you need to pay special attention to such aspects as pronunciation, sentence structure, vocabulary.

The task of the teacher is to create conditions for each student to learn a practical language, to increase the knowledge and creativity of each student in learning foreign languages, to choose teaching methods that allow students to increase their cognitive activity. The use of modern tools such as computer software, Internet-based technologies, as well as collaborative or cooperative learning and project technologies can solve these problems. So collaborative or cooperative learning is really important to improve all skills especially speaking skills of the learners.

Literature review. What is collaborative learning? Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product. According to Gerlach, "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." [1]

There are many approaches to collaborative learning. A set of assumptions about the learning process (Smith and MacGregor, 1992) underlies them all:

1. Learning is an active process whereby students assimilate the information and relate this new knowledge to a framework of prior knowledge.

2. Learning requires a challenge that opens the door for the learner to actively engage his/her peers, and to process and synthesize information rather than simply memorize and regurgitate it.

3. Learners benefit when exposed to diverse viewpoints from people with varied backgrounds.

4. Learning flourishes in a social environment where conversation between learners takes place. While doing such intellectual gymnastics the learner creates a framework and meaning to the discourse.

5. In the collaborative learning environment, the learners are challenged both socially and emotionally as they listen to different perspectives, and are required to articulate and defend their ideas. In so doing, the learners begin to create their own unique conceptual frameworks and not rely solely on an expert's or a text's framework. [2]

Thus, in a collaborative learning setting, learners have the opportunity to converse with peers, present and defend ideas, exchange diverse beliefs, question other conceptual frameworks, and be actively engaged.

Collaborative learning processes can be incorporated into a typical 50-minute class in a variety of ways. Some require a thorough preparation, such as a long-term project, while others require less preparation, such as posing a question during lecture and asking students to discuss their ideas with their neighbours.

As Smith and MacGregor state, "In collaborative classrooms, the lecturing/listening/note-taking process may not disappear entirely, but it lives alongside other processes that are based in students' discussion and active work with the course material." Regardless of the specific approach taken or how much of the ubiquitous lecture-based course is replaced, the goal is the same: to shift learning from a teacher-centered to a student-centered model. Cooperative learning is the process of breaking a classroom of students into small groups so they can discover a new concept together and help each other learn. [2]

What is cooperative learning?

Cooperative learning is an educational approach which aims to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. There is much more to cooperative learning than merely arranging students into groups, and it has been described as "structuring positive interdependence." Students must work in groups to complete tasks collectively toward academic goals. Unlike individual learning, which can be competitive in nature, students learning cooperatively can capitalize on one another's resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another's ideas, monitoring one another's work, etc.). Furthermore, the teacher's role changes from giving information to facilitating students' learning. Everyone succeeds when the group succeeds. Smith and MacGregor describe successful cooperative learning tasks as intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended, and involve higher order thinking tasks. Cooperative learning has also been linked to increased levels of student satisfaction. [2]

The following five essential elements are identified for the successful incorporation of cooperative learning in the classroom:

- positive interdependence
- individual and group accountability
- promotive interaction (face to face)

teaching the students the required interpersonal and small group skills

group processing.

According to MacGregor's meta-analysis, students in cooperative learning settings compared to those in individualistic or competitive learning settings, achieve more, reason better, gain higher self-esteem, like classmates and the learning tasks more and have more perceived social support. [3]

Research Methodology. Different methods of cooperative and collaborative learning

What teachers soon observe when working with cooperative learning strategies is that working together will offer students the chance to know their classmates better. It also helps to create a better community and therefore a warmer atmosphere in the classroom. Cooperative learning, reducing students' disengagement and favoring the natural need of students for social interaction instead of contrasting it, helps also minimize classroom management issues. Moreover, cooperative learning strategies often offer students a break from the lesson, giving them also the possibility to move around in class.

"Schools on the move" – The Finnish programme

The Finnish programme "Schools on the move" with 90 percent of Finnish schools participating, has proven that implementing short active breaks during the lessons improves the health and wellbeing of students, as well as school enjoyment. And cooperative learning strategies are a great opportunity to engage students in active learning methods involving movement as well.

Are they time consuming?

Cooperative learning strategies are not only very scalable but most of the time they require very little to no preparation. And some of them last less than 5 minutes, having in this short period of time all students in class being challenged and engaged. Teachers can start by implementing one single strategy in their own lesson and then evaluate the outcomes in different school classes[4].

Strategies like Think-Pair-Share or Circle-The-Sage, for example, are not time-consuming at all and do not require a long preparation either.

Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share is the solution to the situation every teacher encounters when asking a question in class: having the same student(s) answering every single time.

Most of the students do not even feel challenged to think of a possible answer, not to mention speaking up. This happens for many reasons, probably not only due to a lack of knowledge or preparation, but also due to a lack of self-confidence. Moreover, research on "wait time" reveals that most teachers provide an average of only one second of think time after they ask a question. Cooperative learning strategies also engage introspective and slower students, who need time before they feel ready to answer.

In Think-Pair-Share the teacher asks a question to the whole class, as he or she would do at the beginning or at some point of the lesson. Depending on the age and on the level of the students, it could be something that requires personal interpretation at some point or not. Students get some solo time to think about a possible answer- or to write it down- then they turn to their classmate sitting next to them and get some pair-time to share and discuss what they have just found out.

At the end of this activity, the teacher randomly chooses two or three pairs and asks them to briefly share their answers or responses. Pairs will most of the time succeed where single students would have probably failed.

Think-Pair-Share can also be used to have students reflect on a topic, even when no right interpretation is needed,

and, being the simplest and most famous cooperative learning strategy, can be the first one to be implemented.

Circle-the-Sage

Another very effective strategy for engaging students in answering a question is Circle-the-Sage. The teacher asks a question in class, and then asks every student who can answer it to stand up. All the other students can now choose a classmate and listen to the explanation. Peer tutoring has proven to be very effective for both sides: high achievers, who are already familiar with content, get the chance to prove it and learn valuable communication skills at the same time. And teachers surely don't need to be told how much you can learn by teaching! Students who missed a concept get the chance to listen to another peer explaining.

For English language learner cooperative learning is especially effective when students of contrasting abilities work together in groups. Students learn to depend on each other to complete a task on not just on one strong leader who is advanced in level. Students are individually responsible for their tasks, and they work together to create a finished product in the group by contributing their pieces. Cooperative learning and English language learners go well together; students learn to be confident in their abilities to use English to contribute to a larger group as well as to communicate on a person-to-person basis. [4]

Analysis and results. Where can you start with cooperative learning? Cooperative learning is just one part of a well-rounded and diverse classroom experience. If you want to add cooperative learning to your curriculum – along with blended learning, differentiated instruction, and collaborative learning – you need a digital curriculum! A digital curriculum is an entire system of teaching, grading, and assessing your students that comes packed with incredible features like automatic grading and pre-made materials. Plus, a digital curriculum exists solely online, meaning you can access it with any Internet-connected device via your web browser.

Personal Interdependence

In common we talk about positive interdependence when a gain for one is a benefit for the other. Pair and group members experience themselves as a team and are on the same side working toward the same goal. To ensure positive interdependence while working with cooperative learning, two requisites must be met: students should feel on the same side and the task should require working together.

Individual Accountability

In the cooperative classroom, students work together as a team to create and to learn, but ultimately every individual student is responsible for his or her own performance. It is exactly to fulfill both positive interdependence and individual accountability that in each cooperative learning strategy students are given both- time to think/work alone and to interact with peers. In this way students' autonomy and cooperation are improved.

Equal Participation

Pair and group work is usually very well welcomed by students, but the problem is that it is difficult to check whether students are equally working. Cooperative learning strategies instead make sure every student in each team or pair is equally contributing to the final achievement. They are actually designed to make students interact and to have everyone at every step of the activity fulfil a specific task.

Simultaneous Interaction

In sequential interaction, when only one student at a time is engaged, the teacher talks (at least) twice for each time

a student talks. And when the teacher is the most active participant in the classroom, students are obviously disengaged (and most likely bored as well). Cooperative learning strategies on the contrary are designed to produce simultaneous interaction, so to engage as many students as possible simultaneously. [3]

Conclusion. /Recommendations. To sup up, it is important to mention that communicative competence has become a major aim for foreign language learning and its models have been developed to include various aspects of language such as linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, strategic, language macro skills. The study recommends employing communicative language teaching approach and its activities, together with modern technologies and cooperative learning as ways for achieving a good level of communicative competence in English as a foreign language at educational institutions.

Here are some recommendations for a successful EFL learning process:

a) Cooperation in work, appropriate communicative activities, authentic tasks and shared knowledge make a rich environment in oral production which encourage students with all levels to progress; b) It is advisable for teachers to include all students in every speaking activity aiming to test different ways from students' participation; c) It is preferable for teachers to reduce their talk time in order to increase speaking time of students. This will help learners to progress and teachers to observe; d) Teachers should diagnose students' difficulties in expressing themselves to find then effective ways to help them overcome these problems; e) Learners are advisable to develop vocabulary over time in different learning context; f) Practice some activities at least 30 minutes every day and prepare others with peers before the session to perform them in front of class; g) Self-evaluation is very important so that students can know their gaps and try to progress.

This process can be a long journey which start at classroom where students can take a lot of practice, motivation to speak and self-confidence. The readiness of students to improve and think beyond the box and the awareness of teachers about the educational environment is a good mixture which may give skilled students and achieve almost all the communicative goals[5].

The teaching and learning process should be learner-centered. The teacher should give more chances for students to speak up. The use of English has to be maximized, since the only chance for students to speak English is in the classroom. The English teacher should create meaningful learning situation in which students can communicate with their friends as if they communicate in real life situations. Therefore, they can use English not only to complete tasks, but also to communicate.

The activities that the teacher conducts should be fun, various, interesting, and challenging. The English teacher can conduct communicative games. Moreover, to make communicative games run well, the English teacher is also suggested to conduct pronunciation drills, conduct vocabulary practices, use classroom English, give handouts, give rewards, display pictures and videos, improve classroom management like the researcher did when doing this research. As the result, students will not get bored and the speaking activities are fruitful.

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