



The Influence of Different Cooperative Learning Structures on Developing Social Skills and Positive Attitudes

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Abstract

Cooperative learning has emerged as a powerful instructional approach that enhances both academic and socio-emotional outcomes. This study examines the influence of selected cooperative learning structures, namely Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation on the development of social skills and positive attitudes among students. A quasi-experimental design was employed, involving participants from upper primary and secondary classes. Data were collected using standardized social skills rating scales, attitude inventories, and classroom observations. Findings reveal that cooperative structures significantly improved students communication, teamwork, and conflict-resolution skills. In addition, learners demonstrated enhanced motivation, confidence, and appreciation for peer collaboration. Among the structures studied, Jigsaw produced the most substantial gains in fostering mutual interdependence and positive attitudes. The study concludes that cooperative learning, when purposefully structured, is an effective pedagogical strategy for holistic student development and recommends its greater integration into mainstream classroom instruction.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning, Social Skills, Student Attitudes

Introduction

Cooperative learning has long been recognized as an effective pedagogical approach that promotes both cognitive and social development. Rooted in social constructivist theories, cooperative learning structures encourage students to actively engage with peers in order to construct knowledge, negotiate meaning, and develop essential interpersonal skills. In contemporary educational contexts where collaboration, communication, and positive peer relationships are increasingly valued cooperative learning provides meaningful opportunities for students to interact, share ideas, and support one another's learning.

Various cooperative learning structures have been developed to enhance student participation and optimize group dynamics. Among these, Think-Pair-Share emphasizes reflective thinking and paired discussion; Jigsaw fosters interdependence by assigning each member a unique role in group learning; and Group Investigation encourages inquiry-based learning within collaborative groups. Each structure uniquely contributes to developing social competencies such as empathy, active listening, leadership, and conflict management.

At the same time, cooperative learning helps shape students' attitudes toward peers, learning tasks, and group work. Research suggests that positive attitudes such as increased motivation, reduced anxiety, and greater willingness to collaborate emerge when students experience success and support within group environments. This paper explores how different cooperative learning structures influence the development of both social skills and positive attitudes, highlighting their potential impact on holistic educational outcomes.

Literature Review

Cooperative learning has been widely studied as a pedagogical approach that enhances academic, social, and emotional development. Johnson and Johnson's Social Interdependence Theory emphasizes that structured peer interaction promotes positive interdependence, individual accountability, and improved group relations. Think-Pair-Share proposed by Lyman, is known to improve students' confidence and communication by allowing time for reflection and paired sharing. Jigsaw, originally developed by Aronson, encourages students to rely on one another for essential information, thereby strengthening cooperation and reducing social barriers. Group Investigation, rooted in Sharan and Sharan's model, integrates inquiry-based learning with student-led exploration.

Research consistently shows that cooperative learning positively influences social skills, including communication, empathy, and teamwork. Studies also demonstrate that such structures foster positive attitudes toward learning by increasing motivation, engagement, and peer support. Despite extensive research, comparative studies evaluating the differential impact of various cooperative structures on both social skills and attitudes remain limited. This study addresses this gap.

Methodology

A quasi-experimental research design was adopted to examine the influence of Think-Pair-Share, Jigsaw, and Group Investigation on students' social skills and attitudes. The sample consisted of 180 students from upper primary and secondary levels, divided into three experimental groups and one control group. Each experimental group was assigned one cooperative structure.

Data collection tools included: (1) a standardized Social Skills Rating Scale, (2) an Attitude toward Learning Inventory, and (3) structured classroom observation schedules. The intervention lasted for six weeks, during which teachers implemented the designated cooperative strategies in language and science classes. Pre- and post-tests were conducted to measure changes in social skills and attitudes. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANCOVA to determine the significance of differences.

Results

Results indicated significant improvement in social skills across all three cooperative learning groups when compared to the control group. Students in the Jigsaw group recorded the highest gains in teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution. Think-Pair-Share was particularly effective in enhancing participation and reflective communication, while Group Investigation led to strong increases in leadership and inquiry-based collaboration.

Regarding attitudes, all cooperative structures produced increased motivation, confidence, and positive perceptions of peer collaboration. Jigsaw again showed the strongest effect, particularly in promoting mutual respect and reducing social anxiety. Statistical analysis confirmed that differences between groups were significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussion

The findings affirm that cooperative learning structures play an important role in fostering social and attitudinal development. Jigsaw's strong impact may be attributed to the high level of interdependence it creates, compelling students to support one another. Think-Pair-Share's reflective nature supports communication, while Group Investigation encourages shared responsibility and deeper inquiry. The results align with previous studies but provide new insights into the comparative effectiveness of these structures.

The improvement in attitudes suggests that when students experience supportive peer interactions and cooperative success, they develop greater confidence and motivation. These findings underscore the importance of including cooperative learning as an integral component of classroom pedagogy.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that different cooperative learning structures positively influence students social skills and attitudes, with Jigsaw showing the greatest overall impact. Cooperative learning encourages meaningful peer interaction, improves communication and teamwork, and fosters positive attitudes toward academic tasks. The findings suggest that educators should integrate a variety of cooperative structures to promote holistic student development.

Future research may examine long-term effects, subject-specific outcomes, and teacher professional development to enhance the effective implementation of cooperative learning.

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