

Group Investigation Strategy: A Social Model of Teaching English as A Second Language in Senior Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This paper examined the concept Group Investigations strategy as one of the families of the social model of teaching which place much emphasis on leadership role and social interactions among learners with a view to develop creativity among the learners. It also identifies the objectives of the model which is effective participation of every learner in the learning activities among their peers in the classroom. The paper highlights on the orientation of group investigation model, analyzes the basic components of the model, how it can be applied to the teaching of English as a second language, the effects of using the G I model on the learners, and conclude with recommendations for further use.

Keywords: Group, Investigations, Strategy and Social-Model.

Introduction

Group investigations are also known as the GI model. Is one of the effective strategies of teaching in English language and other subjects Group investigation is based on Shlomo Sharan (1998) a collaborative learning CL which has direct involvement of the learners: it's a learner-centered activity with the teacher playing the role of an effective guide to help the learners develop their cognitive, creative and other skills of learning. What is Group Investigation? In GI, students form their interest groups within which to plan and implement an investigation, and synthesize the

Findings into a group presentation for the class. The teacher's general role is to make the students aware of resources that may be helpful while carrying out the investigation. GI includes four important components: investigation, interaction, interpretation and intrinsic motivation. Investigation refers to the fact that groups focus on the process of inquiring about a chosen topic. Interaction is a hallmark of all cooperative learning methods, required for students to explore ideas and help one another learn. Interpretation occurs when the group synthesizes and elaborates on the findings of each member in order to enhance understanding and clarity of ideas.

Orientation of the Group Investigations Model

What is Group Investigation? Arends (2008) states that Group Investigation (GI) originally designed by Herbert Thelen. More recently, this approach is extended and enhanced by Sharan and his colleagues at Tel Aviv University, In GI, and students form interest groups within which to plan and implement an investigation, and synthesize the findings into a

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Analogy of the group investigation model to the teaching of English language

It is important for teachers to understand how groups work so they can facilitate interaction among the students. For example, seminal work by Tuckman (1965) identified four important stages in the development of both social and task behaviors. In the social realm, the stages are testing-dependence, conflict, cohesion, and functional roles. In the task realm, the stages are orientation, emotionality, relevant opinion exchange and emergence of solutions. Evidently, debate and argument in the second stage of group development is simply indicative of natural group processing.

Statement of the Problem

Many teachers find it difficult to introduce new strategy in teaching and learning for students to comprehend new concepts and ideas. Direct involvement of the learners to form cooperative learning skills has been an age long difficulty to the teachers. Group dynamics encompasses the study and solution of problems that occur when people work in groups. It makes a distinction between people simply working in the same place, and actual groups.

Objective of the study

This paper identifies the impact of Group Investigation strategy as a social model of teaching English as second language in senior secondary schools.

Theoretical Framework: Constructivist Psychology of Cognition

According to, the constructivist perspective asserts that knowledge is acquired through a person's interactions with the social and material environment". As already noted, interaction is a key component of all CL techniques, including GI. Students guide their own learning as they investigate a topic of interest to them. This can be contrasted with direct teacher instruction, where there is very little interaction; instead, knowledge is transferred directly from the teacher to the student. Motivation Theory It has been argued that standard classroom instruction depends largely on extrinsic motivation: the students learn material not because they want to, but because it leads to attainment of grades and other awards. By contrast, the goal of GI is to have students learn because they are genuinely

interested in the material. Decisions for the Teacher the fact that intrinsic motivation is so central to GI highlights the importance of the task that the group is to work on. While each group does choose of work on their own subtask, the overarching teacher-chosen task does determine the extent to which students can work on something they fine along.

There is thus an important decision to be made here | choosing a topic that is broad enough comp ass all students' interests, but not so general as to fail as an initial motivator or guide. Examples include: what makes a poem a poem? How did explorers change the world? How does speaking more than one language affect us? Additionally, teachers must choose topics that are relevant to students' lives, and that increase their understanding of the world. Group formation is also import ant for GI, as it is for most CL methods. The steps of GI implementation essentially result in interest groups, since students with similar interests will choose the same subtopic. This is central to the idea of letting students guide their own learning. However, interest groups may end up being friendship groups in disguise. Since teacher-selected groups are generally recommended when implementing CL, it's interesting to think about alternate group formation strategies that maintain the remainder of GI unchanged. One idea would be to limit the number of subtasks available, so that each receives 8-10 students. Then, within the chosen sub- task, teachers may \"randomly\" assign the students to two groups of four students. Done carefully, this may not hinder motivation, and gives some level of group formation control back to the teacher.

The size of groups must also be governed by the teacher. Group sizes from two to six have been recommended, but teachers must also decide what to do if students are not dispersed equally among the subtopics. Certainly, arbitrarily moving people between groups is to be discouraged. However, some students may have two equally appealing interests, and this is a choice the teacher can make based on group formation criteria. Further, groups should be ethnically and academic ally, heterogeneous, but this may interact with the chosen topic or available subtopics. For exam pie, if one subtopic is more challenging than others, perhaps an academically homogenous group will result. In this case, the teacher could try to deliver the message that all subtopics require varying skills in order for a group to successfully investigate the issue.

Syntax of the Group Investigations Model

The syntax of the GI model to the teaching of English language and literature depends on the take at hand and the teachers' ability to break the topics at hand into sub-task. A teacher can use the GI model as a teaching strategy to teach reading comprehension in a class room as follows:

The teacher should identify the topic of learning at hand and presents each to group Implementation of GI proceeds in six steps. First, the teacher presents a multi-faceted problem to the class, and students choose an interest group. The problem posed is particularly important, as a variety of re-actions from students is necessary for appropriate group formation. Teachers 1 should avoid giving their own ideas or rejecting ideas from

students. Second, groups plan their investigation | the procedures, tasks and goals consistent with the chosen subtopic. Third, groups carry out the investigation as planned in the above step. The teacher's role at this step is to follow the investigative process, offering guide when required: suggesting resources, ensuring a variety of skills is being used, etc. Fourth, groups plan their presentation. They evaluate what they have earned, and synthesize it into a form that can be understood by the class. Fifth, groups conduct the presentation. Finally, the teacher and students evaluate the investigation and resulting present actions. Throughout the process, group representatives often make reports to the class, helping group members appreciate that they are part of a larger social unit. As is generally found with CL techniques, research consistently finds higher levels of achievement from GI activities as compared with whole-class instruction, particularly on matters of higher-level cognition. It has also been found that GI improves positive inter-ethnic relations and enhances intrinsic motivation. Compared to other CL methods, GI has strong roots in giving students control over their learning. Origins of the Model According to, GI has at least four theoretical origins.

Dewey's Educational Philosophy for Dewey (1897), the goal of education is to develop socially responsible citizens who understand how to work together to solve problems and construct knowledge. Thus, educational environments should mirror real-world democracies in that the students have the opportunity to make choices and discuss ideas and thoughts. These criteria were present in Dewey's classrooms of the early 20th century and continue on in today's GI: students get to choose the subtopic of study, then are free to explore their own ideas and the ideas of their group mates in order to arrive at a consensus. This is to be contrasted with traditional teaching in which this horizontal flow of information is replaced by a vertical command-and-control philosophy that runs against the core of what Dewey believed. For example, as part of his pedagogic creed, Dewey stated "The teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child, but is there as a member of the community to select the influences which shall affect the child and to assist him in properly responding to these influences.

Group Dynamics and principles of social reactions to the group investigations model

Group dynamics encompasses the study and solution of problems that occur when people work in groups. It makes a distinction between people simply working in the same place, and actual groups the latter characterized by goal interdependence and sharing of resources. It is important for teachers to understand how groups work so they can facilitate interaction among the students. For example, seminal work by Tuckman (1965) identified four important stages in the development of both social and task behaviors. In the social realm, the stages are testing-dependence, conflict, cohesion, and functional roles. In the task realm, the stages are orientation, emotionality, relevant opinion exchange and emergence of solutions. Evidently, debate and argument in the second stage of group development is simply indicative of natural group processing.

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The group vs individual grading question has also been raised about GI. Group grades resonate with the key ideas of GI, where a component of evaluation is the process of interaction itself.

However, in the absence of competition and within-group evaluation, a grade based in part on individual performance may increase individual accountability.

Impacts of the GI model on the Learner Various

GI classrooms have been found to perform better on high-level questions and those requiring elaboration of responses or the use of problem-solving. Interestingly, GI does not have an adverse effect on low-level (information retrieval) questions, which might be surprising due to the lack of the fast one-way teacher delivery of information. In fact, sometimes GI has been found to be advantageous for this type of learning as well. Students from GI classrooms have also shown to be more cooperative and altruistic, even when

interacting with students outside of their team or in situations outside of the classroom. When data of student perceptions was collected, themes raised about GI included being able to express themselves, greater independence and responsibility, and a sense of being accepted. In terms of the affective domain, GI has been found to promote interpersonal liking, trust, and more positive attitudes toward school and learning.

GI also produces gains in inter-ethnic relations. For example, one study in Hanna Shachar and Shlomo Sharan (1995). Used GI groups consisting of grade 7 and 8 white, black and Mexican students, and found that white children's attitudes improved toward the Mexican students. Unfortunately, white children did not change their attitude towards the blacks who, in turn, chose other blacks as friends. Interpersonal conflicts between members of different ethnic groups were also reduced in GI classrooms. In Israel, Junior High Schools are very heterogeneous, including students of high- and low-socioeconomic status; teachers often point to this fact when explaining their teaching difficulties. For example, with high- and low achieving students in the same class, at what pace should direct instruction proceed? Of course, GI is directly suited to heterogeneous classrooms, so we might expect significant gains from its use here. GI promotes open verbal interaction and enables students to become resource persons for other students, highlighting the individual strengths of students from different ethnic groups. CL methods (including GI) have been found to improve the learning of English, including comprehension and knowledge of grammar rules. Most importantly, no interaction was found between ethnicity and achievement. Other studies have found similar effects in subjects such as history and geography, and GI has also been helpful in increasing cross-ethnic cooperation. In particular, one study found that students in GI settings expressed themselves more frequently, and turn-taking among ethnic groups was symmetric (Yael Sharan 1998). This is to be compared to direct instruction classes, where western students dominated the students of Middle Eastern backgrounds in terms of the number of turns of speech. This is interesting, especially in light of previous studies that concluded that middle-eastern students' language abilities were not as advanced as their western counterparts. It appears that other studies cited here are more accurate: they claim that Eastern students simply express themselves in nonstandard fashions that are not appreciated in schools. It may be that GI fosters this appreciation and enables Eastern students' perspectives to be fairly heard. GI also resulted in both ethnic groups expressing more positive statements toward Middle Eastern students. Finally, Student achievement scores were higher when GI was used. GI can also have negative impact on some students, evident when student perceptions are obtained following a GI experience. Categories of negative responses include not wanting to research information on their own, feeling that GI wastes more time than direct instruction, not learning about other areas of the overall topic, not possessing required research skills, and dissatisfaction with lack of cooperation. Implementation Issues As discussed in teachers' training does not adequately prepare them for implementing GI, therefore substantial training is required. In preparation for the GI experiment of teachers

participated in GI training, which stressed the differences between GI and direct instruction, preparation of students for effective CL, features of GI, analysis of obstacles and difficulties, and practical experience planning a group investigation. Teachers must model thoughtful reactions to student questions, contributing to the creation of an environment that welcomes diversity in personal opinion. They should also anticipate the central issues of the chosen problem, in order to uncover sensitive areas and generally prepare for student responses.

Another impediment to implementation involves student resistance. When students have been exposed only to the direct method of instruction, GI comes as a surprise in various ways. For example, students may be uncomfortable not being told precisely what to know by the teacher. They may not be prepared for the types of evaluation GI entails, coming to prefer the usual tests and exams. This is especially true when only one or two classes use GI, so that students remain with direct instruction for the rest of the day. If school expectations do not change, and GI is used in a direct instruction world, students may see it as just a distraction from getting high grades (which are what really counts).

Application of the Group Investigation model to the teaching of English language

To teach English language effectively, the teacher is expected to introduce variety in the teaching and the learning process to enhance performance among the learning. Cognitive development and students' performances can best be achieved where the learners participate actively in learning and teaching environment. To teach aspect of grammar (argumentative essay) effectively using the group investigations model, teacher is expected to place the students into group of 8-10 students, each group must choose a leader among their peers, the teacher should identify the task for each group, the part of the larger task should be subdivided into sub-task where each member of group should directly be involved in the groups' task at hand, the teacher should thereafter, presents the topic as follows:

Group 1. Should write an essay for the motion that global economic meltdown would have great impact on the education systems of the underdeveloped countries.

Group 2. Should write to oppose the motion that global economic meltdown would have strong impact on the education systems of the underdeveloped countries.

Group 3. members of this group should form the chairman of the debate, moderators, and time keepers.

Group 4. members of this group should form the audience who will also be active participants in the ongoing debate, the members will be actively involved in the evaluation of the debate by filling in the assessment form to be given by the teacher.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper therefore, examines the concept Group Investigation as a social model of teaching much especially English language and literature and other arts and the

social science base subjects, the analogy of the Group Investigation method is based on a collaborative learning environment which is highly learner centered in a democratic means, the teacher's role is that of a guide to the learners to unfold their creative ability and enhance performance through cognitive development, the objective of the strategy is to encourage cooperative learning.

Recommendation

This paper highly recommends that:

1. Teachers at secondary schools and primary schools should always introduce variety in the teaching and learning processes by use of different methods of teaching at various levels of the learning activities,
2. Teachers should use methods that is learner-centered because students learn better by doing, this has a long-lasting memory effect on the learners

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