An Overview of Peer-Based Learning

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon the principles of cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, cognitive distribution, social grouping, and peer groups, educators formulated the notion of peer learning as a pedagogical approach. When people of similar social standing interact, they learn from one another. The readiness of both students and their parents for peer learning is crucial to its success. Opportunities for peer learning and teaching that are guided by a competent educator are effective for students of varying abilities and backgrounds. The instructor has to understand the pedagogical principles at play here. The facilitator also needs to make sure they are well-versed in the various forms of peer tutoring. Both the teacher and the student in a peer learning situation should be conscious of this dual role. Peer learning and teaching opportunities have the potential to be a successful learning and teaching method when they are conducted correctly, with the necessary attention paid to avoiding errors. The primary objective of this work was to provide an outline of the peer learning strategy as it is described in the western perspective. Since this study is based on a literature review, we looked at books written about peer learning as well as related research papers and conference papers. The research strategy employed is content analysis. Content analysis-related data analysis takes place.

KEY WORDS

Peer-Based Learning, Opportunities, Students, Peer Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

"Peer learning" is defined as "an educational practice in which students interact with other students

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in order to attain educational goals." This definition comes from the field of cognitive psychology, and it is implemented within a framework that is considered to be "mainstream" education. Peer learning is described by some authors, including David Boud, as a means of progressing beyond independent learning to interdependent learning or learning that is mutual among peers. When viewed in this light, it is analogous to the activities that are collectively referred to as cooperative learning. Other current perspectives on peer learning, on the other hand, loosen some of the restrictions and regard "peer-to-peer learning" as a way of "learning for everyone, by everyone, about almost anything." Peer learning, whether it takes place in an informal or formal learning setting, in small groups or online, demonstrates features of self-organization that are, for the most part, lacking from pedagogical theories of teaching and learning.

Peer learning is based on the concept that individuals can learn a lot by exchanging ideas with others and engaging in activities that facilitate learning from their peers (Boud, 2001). This approach does not imply any hierarchical authority among students. By joining a group of peers with similar social status, one becomes part of a peer group (Falkchikov, 2001). Adolescence is a phase where social pressures have a greater impact on individuals. As a result, educators commonly use this technique in classrooms that promote a constructive learning approach.

Students are able to acquire knowledge on a variety of topics from one another through the process known as peer learning. This is often encouraged through various teaching and learning activities such as workshops that are led by students, learning partnerships, group projects, and studying in groups. Learning through interaction with one's peers is known as "peer learning," and it is a method of education that encourages collaboration and teamwork. In this method, students gain an understanding of a concept not from the instructor but rather from a fellow student in their class. Every single student is both a receiver and a provider of knowledge at the same time. Students engage in independent learning when they determine their own learning objectives and assess the extent of their academic progress in order to maintain a level of intrinsic motivation for studying. Students should put a large amount of effort into developing their capacity for independent learning because this ability encourages both aptitude and intellectual curiosity. Students should not just sit back and take in information; rather, they should be engaged in their own learning. Students should not wait to have their teachers give them instructions on what to do now; instead, they should think to themselves about what they should be doing at this point. Students should be responsible for planning their own activities and should look to one another for learning opportunities; in this way, a wide variety of subjects can be covered in a single school day. Students have the potential to become more responsible as they learn how to study independently from their peers, as the approach of peer learning is a very successful method of education. Students of the same or a different age can participate in peer learning together to broaden both of their skill sets and their perspectives. Students should make it a goal to pick up new information from their classmates on a daily basis; doing so will help them develop a wide variety of talents and capabilities.

Benefits of Peer Learning

It is difficult to list all of the advantages of learning from one's peers; nevertheless, some of the advantages include gaining fresh viewpoints, increasing one's social connection, and enhancing one's personal learning. Look down below for further information on these various topics.

Students have the potential to acquire new perspectives. If a student solely receives instruction from the instructor, it is possible that they will only acquire one new perspective. The knowledge that a student gains from their fellow students can enrich their understanding in a variety of ways, including adding new views, nuances, and layers.

Learning is more enjoyable when shared with other people because of the social nature of human beings. We have a deep desire to form relationships and become a part of a community. The inclusion of social interaction in learning from peers can be an interesting and enlightening addition to the experience.

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Students who have difficulty engaging in conversation with the instructor might be more comfortable doing so with their classmates.

Sharing others what they know is one of the most effective ways to help students improve their own knowledge since there is nothing that requires you to feel more secure in your own knowledge than sharing what you know to someone else. As was indicated, students can benefit from learning from their peers and can strengthen their own knowledge in the process. To be an effective teacher, one needs a more in-depth understanding of the material being taught.

Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this paper is to present a comprehensive summary of the peer learning approach.

Methodology

Since this study was based on a literary survey, secondary sources such as peer learning books, relevant research articles, and conference papers were investigated as part of this study. The investigation was done using a process known as content analysis. The data are analysed in a manner that is pertinent to the content analysis method.

Review of Related Literature

Learning from one's peers is not a novel idea. According to Briggs (2013), its history may be traced back to the time of Aristotle, the employment of Archons or student leaders, and even to a letter written by Seneca the Younger. Peer learning is a hypothesis that was first proposed in 1975 by a Scotsman named Andrew Bell. Ibid says that in the last 30–40 years, peer learning has emerged as a very prominent form of educational practice. According to Gogus (2012), peer learning is the process of acquiring information and skills through the provision of active assistance and support among peers who are of equal position or who have been matched companions. According to Topping and Ehly (1998), peer learning takes place when individuals from the same social groups, known as peers, who have not trained teachers work together to assist one another in learning, and in the process, they also learn. Individuals can teach and be taught by one another in a process known as peer learning. According to Damon Phelps (1989), this is a situation in which two or more people collaborate in order to share ideas and assist one another in mastering a task that each of them could not complete on their own.

In most cases, significant amounts of learning go place between students without the involvement of the instructor. However, learning opportunities provided by peers that are organised and facilitated by teachers would be more beneficial than those chances developed by peers themselves. A peer teacher is someone who is in the same position as the person being taught.

According to Bond et al., he or she takes on the temporary position of the teacher without earning any additional authority. In addition, the peer tutor has not had any prior experience in a classroom setting that was formally recognised (Topping, 2005).

Peer-supported learning has been given significant emphasis in academic institutions all over the world in the most recent few decades (Briggs, 2013).

Different types of peer learning include peer support groups, supplemental instructions, peer tutoring, peer teaching, and peer-assisted learning. Peer learning can also take the form of teaching. Learning from one's peers can take place both within and beyond the confines of a school setting. There are occasions when teachers choose to ignore it, regardless of whether or not the teachers are aware of it (Boud, 2001).

Theories behind the Peer Learning

Drawing upon the principles of cognitive constructivism, social constructivism, cognitive distribution, social grouping, and peer groups, educators formulated the notion of peer learning as a pedagogical approach.

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Constructivism is predicated on the idea that students learn best through active participation rather than passive observation. Dewey (2001) argues that teaching and learning are not a matter of doing and being seen. It is a productive and dynamic procedure. In order to critically analyse and assess the learning outcome, the student draws on prior knowledge and the context of the current learning experience. In its brief history, Constructivism has grown under the influence of both philosophy and psychology, resulting in two logical approaches: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. Cognitive constructivism is represented by Jean Piaget (1972), Bruner (1990), and Neisser, whereas social constructivism is represented by Lev Vygotsky (1978).

Individual agency in the formation of one's own mental frameworks is where cognitive constructivists put much of their attention. According to social constructivism, knowledge is constructed through the integration of the learner's social environment and cultural norms (Keerthirathne, 2018). As an extension of constructivism, Vygotsky's social constructivism holds that every aspect of a child's cultural development can be observed on both the interpersonal (inter-psychological) and intra-psychological (intra-psychological) levels of analysis. In addition, Vygotsky (1980) argues that the emergence of each higher function occurs in the context of a genuine relationship between the learner and his or her peers. According to Edwin Hutchins's (2020) Theory of Distributed Cognition, an individual's knowledge is not just located within themselves, but also in their surrounding social and physical contexts. The term "cognitive distribution" refers to the process through which a group's members pool their brainpower to solve a problem that no single member could solve on their own. In social learning, adults let kids experience with different things, make decisions, and play with real-world materials. Young people count on being able to socialise with adults and other kids without fear of harm (Evans, Meyers, & Ilfeld, 2000). When social learning theorists entered the picture, they expanded behaviourism's purview to incorporate not just observed behaviour but also how people's minds process data about their surroundings (Santrock, 2006). According to Bandura, information processing occurs during the process of observational learning (imitating others or modelling behaviour). Observational learning is the process through which a student acquires knowledge by taking in data from their surroundings and converting it into mental models. The data's cognitive process transformation then acts as a roadmap (Ibid). Individuals of similar social standing who often contact constitute a peer group (Falkchikov, 2001).

The morals, knowledge, clothing, and diet of a child can be shaped by their social circle. The members of a person's peer group typically share similar values, hobbies, and pastimes. A social group is a collection of people who feel a strong sense of belonging to one another and who engage in structured yet unofficial forms of interaction based on a common set of values, rules, and goals. Another definition of a social group is a collection of people that regularly interact with one another for some shared goal.

Types of Peer Learning

Peer learning can be thought of as a cognitive interaction between an experienced person and a less experienced person who acts as an apprentice. Peer tutoring may be broken down into five distinct categories, each of which is determined by the learning environment and the type of information being acquired. These categories are structured peer tutoring, same-age peer tutoring, cross-age peer tutoring, class-wide peer tutoring, and incidental peer tutoring. When referring to students of the same age, the term "peer" refers to a classmate.

According to Damond and Phelps (1989), one child is seen giving advice to another. On the other hand, in the practice of cross-age peer tutoring, the tutor is of an older age than the student being tutored (Gaustad, 1993). It is possible that the tutor is from a higher grade. A teaching technique that is founded on the concept of reciprocal peer tutoring is called class-wide peer tutoring. In addition to this, it is a group reinforcement in which the entirety of the student population in the classroom is actively engaged in the process of learning. In this setting, students are given the opportunity to exercise fundamental academic abilities in a manner that is both structured and enjoyable (Terry, 2000).

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Peer tutoring can take place anywhere, including the classroom, outside of the classroom, or even in the hallway. If one student assists another in the learning of mathematics in the classroom or if one player assists another in improving his or her performance on the playing field here, we say that this is peer assistance.

Peer Learning in the Western Approach

Learning from one's peers is helpful to both parties. Learners benefit from sharing their knowledge, attitudes, and abilities with one another inside the group. When there is a distinct understanding of what is to be learned, peer learning is at its most efficient.

Peer learning is an active component of the learning environment due to the fact that the learner is actively involved in the learning and teaching process throughout the entirety of the learning experience. The learner is not a passive participant who is on their own.

The student takes control of the learning circumstance and reflects on their own methods of education. The individual participates in the educational experience with at least two other people. The learners are able to teach one another as well as receive instruction from one another. As a result, the atmosphere conducive to learning is collaborative.

The learner has a deeper comprehension of the topics as a result of this setting, which is focused on teamwork. Last but not least, the collaborative nature of the learning environment would make it possible to construct a global network that exemplifies the traits of a student in the 21st century. According to the findings of Albert Bandura and Vygotsky, one of the psychologically significant aspects of this mode of learning is its role in fostering social learning. When learning is done with peers, the learner feels more at ease.

Students have a greater sense of ease since they are not as subject to the pressure of the teacher as they would be in a conventional classroom in which the lecture style predominates. Students are afforded the opportunity to have fun thanks to the incorporation of elements of nature into the educational process.

The fact that the learner can observe the chain of events that led to their own education is another advantage of learning from one's peers. There is the evaluation done by oneself as well as by peers. The learner receives feedback on their performance, either from the instructor or from their classmates. Because of the collaborative nature of peer learning, students should make it a point to regularly assess one another's progress in the subject.

In addition to this, they enhance and encourage positive interdependence. Students are able to see critical inquiry and reflection as a result of the independent learning environment that is incorporated into the instructional process. Learner demonstrates and supports their sense of personal accountability in relation to the learning and teaching process. The considerable improvement in motivation can be attributed to the elimination of the passive learning scenario brought about by peer learning. Students improve their communication abilities when they share their experiences of learning with one another. Peer learning has many beneficial aspects, including an increased likelihood of increased productivity. Because of the increased output, there are now more achievements to choose from.

Teacher's Role in Peer Learning

It is important for a teacher to understand the principles of peer learning and the nature of peer learning before establishing a peer learning environment.

When learning from peers, it is helpful to put in some prep time beforehand. When learning from peers, it's important that they feel secure in a setting where authority is shared. When learning takes place between peers, the instructor is not expected to exert authority.

Instead of actively participating in these sessions, the teacher here merely observes them. Peer learning encompasses more than just sharing information, however. The types of available resources at various

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educational institutions vary. Different types of peer learning situations, such as same-age peer tutoring, cross-age peer tutoring, class-wide peer tutoring, incidental peer tutoring, and structured peer tutoring, require the teacher to make strategic decisions about the physical and human resources available to students. Peer tutors should have complementary skills that they can freely exchange. It is very important to manage gifted pupils so that they and their teachers may relax and focus on the learning process.

When learning from peers, the ethical considerations of the instructor are given a higher priority. A teacher who has significant expertise in peer learning would typically hold the belief that each and every student is unique and that each and every student is capable of thinking and learning. It is important for both the instructor and the students to work towards cultivating positive characteristics such as truthfulness, mutual respect, and honesty. Each and every student ought to be dealt with in a just and considerate manner. When it comes to learning from one's peers, there should be no room for favouritism or prejudice, and equality should be emphasised heavily. In a classroom setting designed for peer instruction, it is important to value the openness of the environment, the individuality of each student, and the confidentiality of student information. Finally, the well-developed professional teacher who promotes peer learning and peer teaching as two key ways in the learning and teaching process feel that peer learning works well with a range of learners in a variety of classrooms. Peer learning and peer teaching are both significant methods in the learning and teaching process.

How to Succeed in Peer Learning and Peer Teaching

When it comes to scenarios involving peer learning, the responsible authority should make sure that the tutors are properly trained and that they are aware of the peer teaching procedure. They are able to control the learning and teaching settings without having a negative impact on the learner's personality. The learning that is experienced is organised by the learner themselves with the guidance of a teacher who is professionally qualified. As a result, pupils engage in a lot of activities. The reward system ought to be very robust, particularly the one that emphasises positive reinforcement. A sufficient amount of response time ought to be provided for the learner as he or she works to address the learning scenario on their own. The organisation of educational experiences should be done so with care and consideration. The facilitator has the ability to choose between many types of groups, such as buzz groups, affinity groups, solution groups, and critics groups. The facilitator is responsible for emphasising the significance of active learning and putting in place scaffolding where it is required.

It is vital to provide an explanation for the feedback that was supplied. The investigator believes that if parents and children were educated and convinced of the benefits of peer learning and peer teaching, they would join in large numbers in this sort of learning and teaching process.

Criticism Against the Peer Learning

Peer learning, in the opinion of some detractors, is nothing more than a frittering away of valuable class time. It's possible that the high level of student participation is to blame for this widespread critique, given that child-centered education includes elements like learning from one's peers. There would be less time wasted in the classroom if teachers were aware of the theories and ideas that underpin peer learning, the different forms of peer learning, the roles that teachers and students play in the process of peer learning, and how to successfully implement peer learning and peer teaching.

Students are considered novices when they are in settings that involve peer learning.

According to the assertions of a number of reviewers, an effective learning and teaching environment requires the presence of either an experienced facilitator or a guide. If, on the other hand, learning from and instructing one's peers is something that is routinely done in classrooms by teachers, then this type of instruction would continue to be effective even when the teacher is not present. If this is not possible, the instructor can

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design and organise training sessions for the peer tutors in order to make them aware of their role and responsibilities in the peer teaching process so that the students can make considerable progress. Peer learning is another key component that takes place not just in a formal classroom setting but also works even outside of the formal classroom setting, such as incidental peer tutoring. Peer learning takes place in both settings. As a result, the school will not always be able to supply knowledgeable facilitators for circumstances involving peer learning. Peer learning situations that develop on their own without the benefit of good instruction can often be more fruitful than those that have been carefully planned. A student's personal experience of gaining knowledge while playing on the playground is a good illustration of this argument.

Students may experience feelings of inferiority due to the fact that they are being guided by a more competent individual at times. As a component of collaborative learning, the teacher can facilitate the development of a deep relationship between the tutor and the tutee as a means of avoiding the type of mentality that can arise from such an arrangement. Two of the most fundamental tenets of peer learning are to become well acquainted with one another and to cultivate a robust sense of community. In addition to this, there are options to build peer groups out of a collection of students that have skills that are comparable to one another. They are very near to one another in terms of cognition. Students who struggle with feelings of inferiority would benefit most from receiving instruction from classmates of the same age. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to organise the classroom because the student will not constantly ask the tutor for assistance in this endeavour. Another response to the critique that was presented earlier can be found here. The instructor ought to impress upon the class that the students themselves are the ones who generate new information, and that the instructor or facilitator is merely there to assist the students in any way that is required.

To respond to those who criticise, if the learner is not committed to maintaining confidentially, the learning outcome will not be executed as the facilitator anticipates. In the process of peer learning, one of the primary responsibilities of the instructor is to assist the student in developing healthy levels of self-confidence. When a learner comes into the learning-teaching process with an attitude of self-confidence, peer learning is able to take place more effectively. A child who is secure in their own abilities will choose a course of action that is self-directed and founded on introspection.

Time constraints and conflicts with other commitments are two additional important concerns that are applicable to peer learning settings. This would not be a problem at all if the learning environment was carefully supervised and organised by an experienced professional in the field of peer tutoring.

In conclusion, the author concludes that when the opportunities for peer learning and teaching are appropriately implemented by avoiding errors, it has the potential to function as one of the successful learning and teaching methods due to its multi-purpose approach.

CONCLUSION

When two or more students have something in common, they are more likely to learn from one another. By the end of the lesson, the students have gained the skills necessary to complete a task that they could not have done alone. The preparation of both kids and their parents is crucial to the success of the peer learning process. Opportunities for peer learning and teaching that are guided by a competent educator are effective for students of varying abilities and backgrounds. The facilitator needs to understand the theory supporting this type of learning environment. The facilitator of such a learning environment would do well to familiarise themselves with the many forms of peer tutoring, such as those involving students of the same age, those of different ages, the entire class, those that occur spontaneously, and those that are planned in advance. It is important for both the teacher and the student in a peer learning situation to realise that they will be doing both roles. When implemented correctly, peer learning and teaching possibilities can be one of the most successful learning and teaching methods thanks to their multifaceted design.

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