

Effectiveness of Collaborative Learning on Loneliness Among Children With Disability in Inclusive and Special Schools of Faridabad

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Abstract

The Collaborative Classroom is an intentionally designed environment in which academic learning is blended with cooperation and social development activities. Collaboration extends beyond traditional cooperation and compliance in Collaborative Classrooms, where students work together to solve problems. The purpose of this article was to investigate the impact of collaborative learning on loneliness among children with disabilities who attend both inclusive and special education settings. The research team used a control group design that included a pre-test and a post-test. The sample consisted of 120 children with disabilities ranging in age from 8 to 11 years' old who attended schools in Faridabad. A loneliness assessment measure was employed in this study. The 2x2 ANCOVA and the t-test were utilised to analyse the data in this study. Loneliness was found to be reduced more effectively in inclusive settings than in segregated ones following the implementation of a collaborative learning intervention. In inclusive schools, collaborative learning has proven to be more fruitful in terms of all of the dependent variables.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, Loneliness, Children with Disability, Inclusion, Inclusive schools, Special schools

We all have basic needs that need to be met in order to feel fulfilled, regardless of whether we are disabled or not. We cannot live without meeting our most basic needs of food, drink, and a place to call home. Even if you don't think about it, poor nutrition and exercise can have a negative impact on your overall health and ability to perform in other areas of your life. Inspiration comes from knowing why you do what you do and who you are. Motivation and self-esteem suffer when we are forced to deal with feelings of insignificance or futility. Our lives are richer when we feel like we belong, are appreciated, and are connected to others through relationships and friendships. It is possible that the unpleasant effects of loneliness and alienation might be felt in every aspect of our daily lives. Educating oneself can enable one's desire to always improve one's knowledge base is satiated. However, if we focus on one need at the expense of the others, it does not maximise the total quality of life. When all of these requirements are accomplished, the overall capacity to achieve fulfilment is boosted.

The most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all are conventional schools with an inclusive orientation. Furthermore, conventional schools with an inclusive orientation provide effective education to the vast majority of children while improving the efficiency and, ultimately, the cost effectiveness of the entire education system. UNESCO (1994) in Salamanca stated: One definition of inclusion, as put forth by Loreman and Deppeler

(2001), is to include students with various skills (giftedness and disability) in all elements of education that other students can access and enjoy. Normal classrooms and school buildings must really adapt to the needs of all students, while also recognising and appreciating the value of differences. One of the most important characteristics of a successful inclusive learning community is that it allows students with exceptional abilities to progress at their own pace, students who are slower than the average to progress at their own pace, and those with specific learning challenges who need creative and effective support to maximise the success of their learning.

Collaborative Learning

In inclusive schools, teachers and students can collaborate and consult with each other, which gives psychological support. Teachers' abilities are enhanced by teamwork and consultation amongst their colleagues. Teachers who work in inclusive schools have the opportunity to have a voice in the day-to-day operations of their institutions. Meaningful inclusion necessitates teamwork. Collaboration is simply a process in which teachers who are involved build and share meaning and agendas before working together to put those agendas into action. Through constructive interactions, consultation, and communication, this can be attained. Both indirect and direct collaboration can be used in a project. Working with the instructor in an out-of-classroom setting to prepare for specific student needs is known as indirect cooperation. Peer and teacher collaboration are examples of direct forms of collaboration (Dash, 2006). Two or more people working together to gain knowledge is what is meant by the term "collaborative learning." Collaborative learning is different from solo learning in that it takes advantage of each other's resources and talents (e.g., asking each other for information, analysing each other's ideas, etc.). When students work together in groups on the same task, they think together about the challenges and difficulties they face. According to the reviews, studies show that collaborative learning is beneficial for students' academic performance, problem solving abilities, and creative output (Natasi and Clements, 1991). This means that the benefits of collaborative learning include critical thinking, problem-solving, group process and mutual support and motivation as well as a laboratory for real-life knowledge work and a reflective view into the learning process. Smith & MacGregor (1992) defined collaborative learning by describing seven shifts that students must make in order for it to take place. Collaborative and cooperative learning are distinct because of a shift in the perceived authority and source of information. A class becomes more collaborative when students stop perceiving teachers and books as the only sources of authority and knowledge and instead begin to see their classmates, as well as the collective thinking of the community, as essential sources of authority and information.

Loneliness

People's lives revolve around their social connections, and it's well understood that the kinds of experiences children have in their early dating relationships have an impact on their ability to form healthy expectations and frameworks for their future relationships with others and with adults. Developing social skills begins as early as the toddler years. Preschool is a critical time in a young person's life when they begin to form friendships with their peers and develop their

social skills (Guralnick & Groom, 1987). While loneliness can be influenced by several aspects of one's social life, it should not be confused with any specific external situation. More individuals than not experience loneliness at some point in their lives, which makes it a common occurrence. Humans, as social creatures who engage in a lot of social interaction, are vulnerable to feelings of loneliness. Even when people have meaningful relationships that turn sour, such as when a friend is unavailable to play or moves away, loneliness can emerge as a response to the loss of contact. Loneliness that lasts only for a few days or weeks should not be reason for alarm. As a worldwide measure of discontent with personal social connections, loneliness reveals a person's overall dissatisfaction (Asher, Parkhurst, Hymel, & Williams, 1990). Loneliness in childhood can be regarded a long-term emotional ailment that is frequently overlooked or misunderstood. Loneliness, in general, can be defined as a sensation of being unable to connect with others, a feeling of social isolation, a lack of interest in making new acquaintances, and a feeling of social distraction. Loneliness has been defined by researchers as an unpleasant and stressful sensation for the individual. Dissatisfaction with social connections is frequently the root cause, and it can range from a brief and fleeting experience to one that is continuous and life-disrupting (Peplau & Perlman, 1982; McWhirter, 1990). Children with special needs, such as those who have learning or mental retardation issues, are more likely than their typically developing peers to experience loneliness (Luftig, 1988; Williams & Asher, 1992; Margalit & Levin-Alyagon, 1994; Pavri & Luftig, 2000). According to research, 10 to 16 percent of children without disabilities feel lonely (Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984), while 25 percent of mentally retarded children report feeling lonely (Luftig, 1988). Other disabilities are likely to cause comparable feelings of isolation in youngsters. Most studies on childhood loneliness have focused on the importance of children's social acceptance, rejection, victimisation, quality of relationship, and social network to their emotions of well-being at school (Asher & Paquette, 2003; Ladd & Troop- Gordon, 2003). According to Qualter and Munn's (2002) findings on the findings of three different groups of children, rejected children who did not feel lonely, children who felt lonely but were not rejected, and rejected children who reported loneliness, loneliness appears to be associated with emotional distress. Children who are lonely are more likely to have poor peer interactions, which can lead to feelings of loneliness. They may suffer from low self-esteem as a result of feeling left out. As a result, they may experience feelings of despair, malaise, boredom, and estrangement. Lonely youngsters value their relationships with their peers just as much as their peers value their relationships with them (Ramsey, 1991). Because loneliness is a common social phenomena, it is regarded as painful, upsetting, and troubling. Loneliness is often associated with deviance, with being pampered or just plain unlikable (Perlman and Joshi, 1989).

In the Present Day's Research

Children with special needs have been around for a long time but educational programmes have never been enough to suit their demands.

Disabled children in India are still popularly believed to have been caused by God's fury, ancestors' displeasure, or a sin committed at some point in the past. Many parents of impaired children still feel guilty and blame themselves for their child's disability. In some families,

children with disabilities are viewed as useless and a burden. In the case of the crippled girls, the situation has gotten even worse. The majority of educational institutions do not have a positive outlook toward students with disabilities. A good attitude toward inclusion is not shared by all parents of nondisabled children. There are still a few parents who oppose the idea of their children attending an inclusive school where disabled and non-disabled students learn together. When a child is in a special school, they are surrounded by other children and adults who are like them, which makes parents and children alike feel more secure. They may not realise how important inclusive education is to them.

Because no kid should be devalued or discriminated against because of their disability or learning challenge by being excluded or sent away, inclusive education is essential. It is essential that all children receive an education that allows them to make friends and prepares them for life in society. In order to meet the current needs of society, it is important to promote education that is more widely accepted and accepted by society. The idea that diversity are embraced and appreciated is conveyed through inclusive practises. Additionally, children with impairments have to deal with all of the physical changes, emotional worries, and interpersonal problems that their non-disabled peers do. Additionally, individuals are subjected to a variety of forms of discrimination ranging from economic, educational, social, legal, and health-related. Disability myths and misconceptions persist, leading to exclusion, isolation, and marginalisation for the disabled. Many children with disabilities have a low self-esteem and self-perception from an early age. Dealing with kids with disabilities as well as typically developing peers is a major challenge in today's classrooms. Schools must ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to the general curriculum and can meet the same academic standards as their peers. Educators will have a difficult time maintaining high standards for all children while also meeting the individual needs of each one. These objectives don't have to be seen as mutually exclusive, but as a means of working together to benefit all students. As a result, students with disabilities need to learn in a collaborative manner in order to overcome their feelings of social isolation and rejection from their peers and to improve interpersonal relationships and a feeling that they belong in general education classrooms, leading to better shared understanding with their peers. Research that shows that children with impairments perform better academically and socially in integrated settings originates primarily from nations outside the United States. Different cultures have varying degrees of social awareness. A phenomenon's effect on society might vary greatly depending on one's cultural values. Benefits conferred to disabled children in inclusive settings, as proven by studies previously presented, are yet to be seen in Indian contexts. It is only when these two goals are met that disability will signify as much or as little as black hair or brown eyes. Only when these two goals are met will disability mean as much or as little as brown eyes. Special education is a necessity, not a luxury, in today's society. Children with disabilities in India will eventually attend conventional schools because of the country's legislation. Our goal is to make it a success. There are enormous classrooms taught by Indian teachers. They aren't quite ready to deal with youngsters who have special needs yet. The instructor can benefit immensely from include the child's peers with impairments in numerous activities. Collaborative learning has a wide range of applications in this context. Children with disabilities may benefit psychologically from teamwork and dialogue that are made possible by inclusive classrooms.

Peer collaboration and consultation aid teachers in their professional development and provide students with numerous possibilities to participate in forming and changing their everyday lives.

Collaborative learning in children with special needs is the focus of this study, which aims to determine if it reduces loneliness and improves classroom behaviour for children with disabilities. As a result, it's safe to assume:

- There is no significant effect of Treatment, Types of School and their interaction on Loneliness by considering Pre- Loneliness as covariate.
- There is no significant effect of Treatment, Types of School and their interaction on Loneliness by considering Post- Loneliness as covariate.

Method

Participants

The research we're doing now is purely experimental. Pretest and posttest control groups were used in this work as an experimental approach. Two groups were included in the experiment, and the other two served as controls. The study included 265 participants, both boys and girls, ages 8 to 11 years old, who were in grades III, IV, V, and VI who had disabilities that were manifested in both inclusive and special schools. Faridabad's schools were sampled for this study. Because of a decrease in the number of children with disabilities, two schools were axed in this area. Finally, a sample of eight schools, four inclusive and four special, was chosen for the research. The teachers' referral form was used to select a total of 265 participants aged 8 to 11 years old as a sample of study. 72 children with significant disabilities were removed from the group of 265 others. Raven's coloured progressive matrices were administered to a total of 193 children in order to choose 120 for the final sample (CPM). Excluded from the sample were 73 children with an I.Q. of less than 65 As a result of this, 120 people were identified Two experimental groups, one in an inclusive school (EI) and the other in a special school (ES), and two control groups, one in a CI and the other in CS, were randomly assigned.

Instruments

To identify subjects, a form produced by the investigator and used in conjunction with the teacher's response was utilised. • Teacher Referral Form: The teacher referral form informs the researcher about the subjects' disabilities and behaviours.

The investigator employed Colored Progressive Matrices (CPM) to identify the participants who made up the final sample. It was used to assess the IQ of youngsters (Raven, Court, & Raven, 1977) The same criteria were applied in both inclusive and special education settings.

Researcher-created Loneliness Scale: This scale was standardised by the researcher herself. The 40-item scale included a wide range of topics, including social networks, interpersonal relationships, emotional distress, and loneliness. The measure includes both positive and negative factors. Twenty-one of the positive items had a five-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," while the negative items had a five-point scale ranging from

"strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." When compared to youngsters with higher scores, those with a low score report feeling lonelier. Cronbach's alpha was 0.85 (n=100, p.01), and the test-retest reliability for the current scale was 0.69 (n=100).

Procedure

To begin, a representative sample was chosen from among teachers with at least a year of experience teaching the subjects in question, and information on the children's disabilities was gathered using teacher referral forms. Loneliness, classroom behaviour, and coherence were assessed in all four groups, which included two experimental groups EI (in an inclusive school) and ES (in a special school) and two control groups CI (in an inclusive school) and CS (in an inclusive school) (in special schools). Cooperative learning was employed as a remedial tool in this study. Various academic and non-academic activities, such as Poshampa Bhai Poshampa, Ghora Chala Bhai, Hide and Seek, Number Heads, Dumbcherades, Flying Dutchman, short stories, daily routine activities, drawing, environmental and hygiene issues, etc., were included in the collaborative learning process for students. In order to build trust, researchers talked with students informally about their assignments, hobbies, social interactions, favourite games, and other aspects of their academic routine before offering intervention. After that, the researcher delivered a collaborative learning technique to the subjects in the experimental groups. After two days of treatment, all of the dependent variables, such as loneliness and classroom behaviour, were given to the subjects. It was decided to conduct a follow-up post-test to see if the intervention technique (collaborative learning) had any effect on the test group. In order to assess the long-term impact of the intervention technique, a delay posttest was conducted three months later for all variables across all groups.

RESULTS

- **Effect of collaborative learning on Loneliness**

There were two levels of treatment: treatment and school, with the former utilising a collaborative learning approach and the latter used a more traditional approach. As a result, 2X2 Factorial Design ANCOVA was used to analyse the data (analysis of Co-variance).

Table 1: Summary of 2X2 Factorial Design ANCOVA of Loneliness by taking

Post - Loneliness as Covariate						
Source of variation	df	SSy.x	MSSy.x	Fy.x	Remark	
Treatment	1	65.95	65.95	36.9	p<.01	
Types of School	1	26.27	26.27	14.70	p<.01	
Treatment * Types of School	1	1.61	1.61	0.903	p>.01	
Error	115	205.54	1.79			

Table values of t at .05= 3.93; at .01=6.88; for df=116

Using Post-Loneliness as a covariate, we may examine the effect of treatment on loneliness. A look at Table 1 reveals that the adjusted F-value of the treatment is 36.9, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level and has an error rate of 1/115. Children in the Collaborative Learning Group have considerably lower adjusted mean scores of Loneliness than those in the Traditional Method Group when post-Loneliness is taken into account. When Post-Loneliness was included as a covariate, Treatment had a substantial impact on student loneliness. Because of this, the null hypothesis that there is no substantial effect of treatment on loneliness when post-loneliness is taken into account is rejected. Collaborative Learning Group's adjusted mean of Loneliness is 118.0, whereas Traditional Method Group's adjusted mean of Loneliness is just 116.5. Students in the Traditional Method Group were shown to be much more lonely than those in the Collaborative Learning Group.

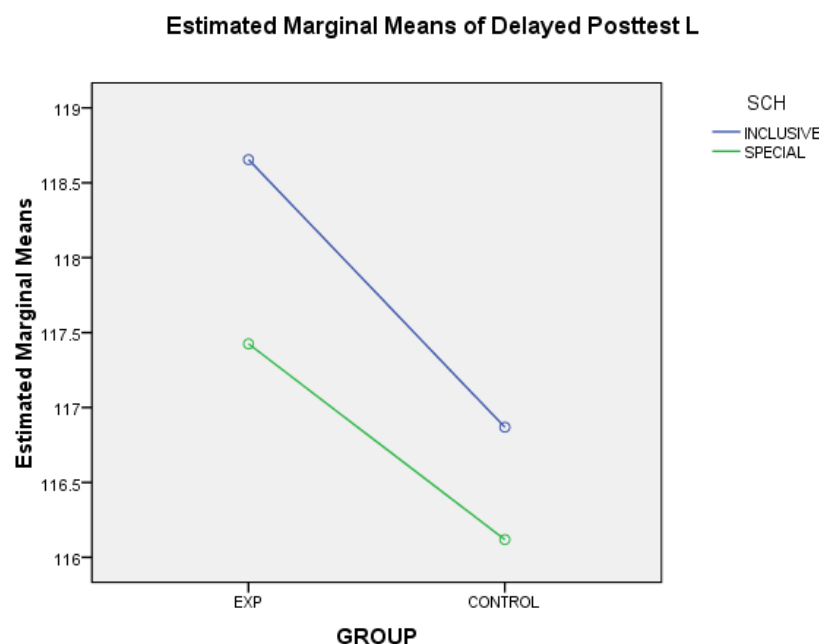
Effect of Types of School on Loneliness by taking Post-Loneliness as covariate

Table 1 shows that Types of School has an adjusted F-value of 14.70, which is significant at a $df = 1/115$ level of significance. Using post-Loneliness as a covariate, it shows that the adjusted mean Loneliness scores of students in Inclusive Schools differ considerably from those in Special Schools. So, when Post-Loneliness was considered as a covariate, Types of School had a significant effect on Loneliness among students. Taking Post-Loneliness as a covariate, we can rule out the null hypothesis that school type has no effect on loneliness. Additionally, the adjusted mean Loneliness score for kids in Inclusive Schools is much higher than the adjusted mean Loneliness score for students in Special Schools, which is 116.8. Students at Special Schools were shown to be much more lonely than those in Inclusive Schools, according to this study.

Effect of post-loneliness as a covariate on the interaction between treatment and school type on loneliness

Table 1 shows an adjusted F-value of 0.903, which is significant at the 0.01 level with a $df = 1/115$ for the interaction between treatment and school type. It shows that, when post-Loneliness is included as a covariate, the adjusted mean scores of children studying in inclusive and special schools, but taught using the Collaborative Learning Method and the Traditional Method, differ significantly. As a result, when Post-Loneliness was included as a covariate, the interaction between Treatment and School Type had a substantial impact on student loneliness. No significant interaction between Treatment and Types of School and Loneliness was found when Post-Loneliness was used as a covariate. Graph 1 has been created to show the relationship between the treatment and the different types of schools.

Graph 1: Effect of Interaction between Treatment and Types of School on Loneliness by taking Loneliness as covariate



All subjects in the experimental group (EGT) showed a substantial increase in their loneliness scores from pre-test to post-test. An increase in the EGT group's mean of 3.5 was noticed between pre- and post-test. According to the results ($t= 7.26$; $p=0.01$), this difference is significant. According to the null hypothesis 1, collaborative learning among children with disabilities has no significant influence on loneliness. This suggests that fostering a sense of community among children with disabilities can be accomplished through the use of collaborative learning methods. Other research backs up this finding. In their research, Slavin (1990) and O'Donnell (2006) found that students' social and emotional well-being improved when they worked together to attain shared meanings and goals.

From pretest to posttest, the experimental group in inclusive schools (EI) showed a maximum change of 6.47. A significant difference ($t=11.93$; $p<0.01$) was detected between the two groups. This finding disproves null hypothesis 2, which asserted that inclusionary schools would have no influence on the loneliness experienced by students with disabilities. Students' learning experiences are transformed when peer learning takes place, and interpersonal and intergroup ties are strengthened as a result. The mean difference between the pretest and posttest scores of students in the experimental special schools (ES) group was just 0.53 points. This difference ($t=1.72$; $p>0.05$) was deemed to be inconsequential. This contradicts null hypothesis 3, according to which there will be no effect on loneliness in special schools of collaborative learning among children with disabilities. Collaborative learning strategies in minimising loneliness are particularly beneficial for children with disabilities in inclusive schools as opposed to special schools, where they are more likely to interact with other students and benefit from their experiences.

Discussion

In the current study, the collaborative learning technique was found to be an effective intervention strategy in which all children work together to better address problems of their

classmates, perform better in particular life circumstances, and enhance their classroom behaviour. In the experimental groups, the significant differences between the pre- and post-test scores show conclusively that the collaborative learning intervention was effective in reducing loneliness. Children with disabilities who attended inclusive schools reported less loneliness than those who attended special schools. Due to the fact that children with disabilities have a limited range of interaction with their peers in special education classrooms compared to regular classrooms, there are fewer opportunities for natural interactions in special education classrooms than there are in inclusive classrooms, where regular children are more active and thus create more opportunities for natural interactions.

Loneliness is inevitable if the underlying set of social needs isn't met through interpersonal connections, as the social need theory posits. For example, according to Sullivan (1953), social inadequacies in connections other than caregiver-child ties might cause a person to feel lonely because of the connection between the two. If you don't have a supportive social network, you'll experience social isolation. Relationships other than those between caregivers and their children improved as a result of collaborative learning.

Children's sense of coherence improved significantly from the pre- to post-test stage in the experimental group in inclusive and special schools, but the results were not conclusive for special school children. Special schools may offer a narrower spectrum of opportunities for students with disabilities than do inclusive schools. Coherent children are less prone to perceive stressful events and are better equipped to handle themselves in the classroom and in other areas of their lives, such as at home. In inclusive schools, children with disabilities are exposed to coping with stress in a variety of ways due to the large number of students.

By denying all kids the chance to interact with and learn from one another, segregation undermines classroom collaboration and depletes the educational resources available to all pupils. Teachers who are new to collaborative teaching are often surprised by the revelations that their purportedly poorer pupils make. The results of this study appear to confirm theories of social cognitive learning, according to which pupils benefit more from social learning than from individualised instruction. When students work together in groups on the same task, they think together about the challenges and difficulties they face.

According to the findings of this study, a socio-constructivist approach emphasises the importance of one's relationships with others over one's own activities. Through the use of a shared environment that focuses on the social plane where emergent conceptions are examined as group products, this method encourages students to interact with and coordinate their interactions with their peers, which leads to better post-test performance on individual tasks than individual training. To combat discrimination, build welcoming communities, and create a more inclusive society, regular schools with an inclusive focus were found to be the most effective method of providing an effective education for the majority of students while also increasing the efficiency and, ultimately, the cost-effectiveness of education as a whole. Students with impairments receive an education in a different classroom from their typically developing peers. It is common in segregated education for pupils to get a curriculum and assessment techniques that are wholly different from their peers, rather than being taught the same curriculum as their classmates. Often, the divisions created in school spill over into other aspects of life as well. Because of this, there is a lack of resources, opportunity, and action due to a lack of exposure to the social environment. By sharing information with each other,

inclusive education in the classroom improves social relationships, which is beneficial for students with disabilities because it provides them with more opportunities to interact with the outside world, resulting in better social skills and better social interactions.

The collaborative learning strategy was more successful in reducing the isolation of children with disabilities in inclusive schools than in special schools, according to the researchers. Generalizations should be taken with a grain of salt because the study was conducted on only one group of students and a lengthier therapy may have been more successful.

RECOMMENDATIONS • Children with disabilities in the experimental group who improved considerably from pre- to post-test benefit greatly from the collaborative learning intervention technique. However, intervention strategies are more effective in reducing loneliness in inclusive schools than in special schools, in part because children in inclusive schools were exposed to and received greater benefits from ordinary classrooms.

To sum up, the term "collaborative learning" is everywhere these days.

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