Developing Collaborative Capacity for Students in Vietnamese University

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Received March 15, 2018; Revised April 14, 2018; Accepted April 19, 2018

Abstract  Cooperation is the foundation of life and social progress. It is at the heart of interpersonal relationships, family bonds, economic and legal systems and other aspects. In this comprehensive partnership, with the purpose of equipping young generations with necessary skills during Vietnam’s comprehensive development, cooperative capacity is key to all success in work as well as life. This paper focuses on clarifying the rationale for collaborative capacity and measures to develop collaborative capacities for learners in teaching in our current universities.

Keywords: cooperation, collaborative capacity development, learners, universities


1. Introduction

Developing collaborative capacity of learners has been the main focus of attention and exists in a variety of organizational forms.

The early ideas of teaching appeared and the first form was the interaction between the teacher and the student of Khong Tu in China with the saying "three-friends going together, one of it is my teacher"[1]; Socrat - the masters of the query- searching for truth from the conversations of ancient Greece [2]; Marco Fabio Quintilian - the ancient Roman educator with "discussing about rhetoric"[1].

With the importance of interactive learning, the theory of collaborative learning was widely applied in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries - such as Georg Michael Kerschenteine's - German educator with self-directed learning [3]; Devri. D. and Edwards. K combine study- teamwork and applied learning games into practice [4]; Albert Bandura with "social learning theory" [5]; Brown and Palinscar, Roenshine, Meister, Slavin, Renkl focused on the model and group teaching strategies and different ways such as in W. Glasser's research promoted the use of cooperative relationships among students [4]; Jean Mare Denomme and Madeleine Roy investigated the relationship between learners, teachers and factors in learning environments in pedagogical activities.

In Vietnam, with the phrase "better learn your friends than your teachers" and especially the "popular education" movement after the August Revolution to eradicate illiteracy is the forceful evidence for interactivity – and long-lasting cooperation in teaching. When it comes to learning, Ho Chi Minh affirmed the close relationship between self-study and discussion: "Schooling, studying from books, learning from each other and learning from the people".

Up to now, few researches dealt with the development of collaborative capacity. In particular, Dang Thanh Hung referred to cooperative and collaborative teaching theory but did clarify the underlying principles of collaborative teaching. Nguyen Huu Chau presented collaborative learning in the way, process and note when organizing the learning group [10]. Thai Duy Tuyen systematized some basic theoretical issues of group teaching as the concept, importance and process of organizing group teaching. In addition, some young authors have also studied collaborative group teaching, such as Doan Thi Thanh Phuong [12], Nguyen Thi Thanh [13], Nguyen Phuoc Dung [14]…ect.

The practice of teaching and learning in Vietnam tertiary education shows that "the cooperative capacity of Vietnamese students in all activities from study to other organization activities". Thus, changing students' perceptions of cooperation values and mutual help in learning is considered the indispensable demand for the combination of applying the theory in the real world in any subject of social life. Moreover, to become qualified and qualified citizens and to meet the trend of integration and development of the society in the future, students must be trained and exercised in collaborative capacity [15].

In this article, we contribute to the dual system of collaborative capacity and develop the cooperative capacity of learners in teaching, on the basis of which propose a number of teaching methods and techniques for developing collaboration for learners in teaching at university in the 21st century.
2. Content

2.1. Some of the Cooperative Ability and Developing the Cooperative Capacity of the Learner in Teaching

2.1.1. Cooperation and Capacity for Cooperation

- Cooperation

Collaboration is an integral part of human labor, which occurs frequently in the family and society. Thus, "cooperation bring the natural nature of each human being". Based on research results of previous researches, we believe that "cooperation is the collective effort to accomplish a task in a certain field of activity to achieve common goals." Therefore, in order to cooperate, we need the following characteristics, which are having a common goal on the basis of mutual benefit; assigning work appropriate to the individual capacity; treating equally, trusting each other, sharing resources and information on a voluntary basis and helping, supporting, encouraging teamwork spirit and complementing in group work.

- Ability to cooperate

There are different views on the concept of competence. In this article we use the concept of "competence is the skills and cognitive abilities inherent in the individual or can be learned ... to solve problems setting up in life. Capacity also includes the willingness to activity, motivation, will and social responsibility to use successfully and responsibly utilize solutions ... in changing situations". We identify that the ability to use knowledge, skills and attitudes to solve a real-life situation is competence [16].

Thus, collaborative competence is the synthesis of the necessary skills for the cooperative process and the inherent cognitive ability of the individual in the learning process to solve the problems posed in learning and in life. Collaborative capacity consists of necessary skills and general knowledge, each individual can solve requirements in the content of the lesson and life. With this understanding, collaborative capacity consists of two components. That are the skills required for collaborative capacity to form and develop; with the cognitive ability, the knowledge of each other to solve rhythmic requirements in the lesson and life accordingly.

+ Co-operative skills are actions being implemented in a flexible, correct and effective manner based on the use of knowledge and experience in social activities in order to fulfill the objectives. In learning, collaborative capacity of learner showed through the fourth skill groups: 1) participation skill group in action (including master and self-awareness skills, creative thinking skill, taking on different roles, teamwork skill, persuasive and positive presentation skill); 2/ collaborative skill group (including listening and empathetic skills, communication and behavior skills, skills to build and maintain trust, skill to resolve conflict and disagreements; maintain relationships); 3 / group of skills to perform learning tasks (including observation skills, information seeking skill, active skill help and support friend, problem solving skills and make decision); 4 / Assessment and feedback skills (including self-evaluation skills, assessment skill, critical thinking skills, self-regulation skills).

These skill groups have a dialectical relationship with one another, varying depending on the environment and situation in the collaborative process. The development of this skill group is the basis for the formation of technical groups and vice versa.

+ The learner's ability to cooperate showed plainly the activities and tasks assigned and the ways to coordinate with others to perform tasks. Knowledge of cooperative relationships ensures successful co-operation and this system of cooperative activities is the basis for helping learners to effectively implement cooperative activities.

Through this, the values, attitudes and motivations of the learner are revealed through cooperative activities. Attitudes, motivations of the learner in the cooperative activities reflect the need to interact with others in the activities, the desire to cooperate with others, the cooperative initiative, positive and self-awareness with another and being responsible for common activities. Thus, the capacity for cooperation is a open, complex, multi-level and developmental system. In each approach, each task in each specific situation has different skills, levels and expression forms.

2.1.2. Develop Students’ Cooperative Capacity in Teaching

"Teaching is a system of structural elements in the interactive multidimensional, it’s reciprocal effect of relationships between teacher and student, learner with learner, lesson content and learning environment. These relationships will "create a process of teaching and learning integrity, constantly moving and developing in a determined way." [17], together with the cooperative ability of the learner more favorable.

Clearly, teaching is the clearest and most conducive environment for learners to interact, share information, interact with teachers, friends and the learning contents and colorful life environments. Therefore, developing cooperative capacity is one of the goals, the contents, and the educational approach in terms of the meaning of teaching, assessment criteria and procedures, respectively in Vietnamese education.

In order to develop collaborative capacity, especially at university, learners need to identify the purpose and mode of cooperation, define their responsibilities, activities and determine the cooperative person whose needs and abilities; organize and persuade others, and ultimately evaluate cooperation.

Therefore, in order to effectively develop learner’s capacity of cooperation in university teaching, the following issues should be:

- First, create a favorable learning environment to develop students' capacity for cooperation

At university, the most favorable environment for students to exchange, interact, exchange and practice their spirit of cooperation with other people is between the team members, the team and the members with others groups.

- Second, focus on developing collaborative skills of learners

The includes communication and behavioral skills, persuasion and problem solving skills, skill of conflict resolution, listening and empathic skills, teamwork skills, study and self-study skills. Learning skills influence each
directly and interactively in the learning environment; there is no clear separation of skills in the process of accomplishing common tasks.

- Third, exploit thoroughly the teaching content to develop learner's capacity

To foster and develop collaborative capacity for learners, tasks that meet the goal of the unit are indispensable because problematic situations which are the source of creativity and curiosity, sensitivity to the new trends. With the ability of self-awareness, knowledge, accumulated knowledge and experience life, students will actively, voluntarily participate in resolving the tasks assigned. In order to do that, teacher must be well prepared for the content and able to organize group activities, to cover the class to avoid unwanted situations.

- Fourthly, use a variety of appropriate teaching methods and techniques to develop the collaborative capacity for students.

In order to support the development of cooperative capacity to be practiced regularly and to promote effectiveness, teachers need to use clear and specific methods to create favorable learning environments for the students who need experience and training.

2.2. Some Teaching Methods and Techniques to Develop Cooperative Skills for Learners

2.2.1. Group Discussion Method

Learning is a specific activity with the purpose of being performed voluntarily. In the process of learning, there appears to be a link between members in groups, because group communication is a common form associated with the formation and development of learner personality. Therefore, group discussion is the advantageous learning environments in order to interactivity and cooperation of learners to be trained and fully developed.

Inheriting the research of previous scientists, we define group discussion to promote collaboration as teaching method in which the class is divided into small groups for students to exchange, discussion, interaction, and support to solve specific tasks related to the content of the unit. Through the concept of group discussion method, the nature of teaching method is the direct contact, free exchange of ideas and the active dependence of team members to solve common tasks.

During the discussion, participants freely exchange ideas, express their views, have respect among members. Opinions are given in the spirit of democracy, which can help members feel free to express opinions, share knowledge, propose options to solve problems. In the spirit of free exchange, the creativity of the members will be maximized.

The results of the discussion are the general idea of the group. In order to do this, all members of the team must work hard to accomplish their common tasks with each member being an important link in the group activities. The strength of group discussion is to sum up the power of each individual. Group work is a learning style that allows all team members to be describing clear job through close collaboration and group assignment. Therefore, each member of the group is aware of themselves, not only for personal accomplishments but also for the overall success of the group. On the basis of the general teaching process, the group discussion process for promoting cooperation is carried out in five steps, as follows:

Step 1: Prepare the discussion content is the most important step, affecting the quality and excitement of discussion students. Teachers need to prepare for the promotion as follows:

- First, select the topic of discussion. The basis for choosing topics for discussion is the learning objective of the lesson and the level of the learner. The content of discussion to develop learner capacity must have a connection between theory and practice, high practical, requiring learners to use knowledge to identify, explain and solve situations, phenomena of life and occupation. Thus, they can express their opinions and views on the issue of discussion.

- Second, study documents prepared for discussion: Learner's certain understanding of the subject of the discussion is the thread attaches to the members working closely together. This requires teachers to assign the task of prior research and direct students to collect the materials related to the topic discussed. Individual understanding of the issue is sure so the more active and active the dependence.

- Third, anticipate situations occurring during the discussion: the teacher needs to determine the goal of the students, what do students. The determination of time will shape the amount of work that students need to do and actively solve situations that may occur during the discussion.

- Fourth, prepare for group discussion: To enable students to perform their tasks in a clear and scientific way, the preparation of discussion materials is one of the essential requirements. The means richer there are, the more effective the discussion, the lesson deeper. Group discussions include study cards, specific situations, videos, pictures...

- Fifth, anticipate to discussion group. Splitting group can be done in different forms but it needs flexible use each content, objects discussed discuss. Depending on the topic of discussion, on the number of students in the class and on the time, teachers can classify the discussion to take place effectively. Teachers need to manage of each group's activities, supervise the members in the process of activities; splitting group should ensure that students develop both individual capacity and social capacity.

Step 2: Organize group discussions: This is an activity that takes place during the teaching process so the cooperative, interactive and active activities of learners are most clearly shown in the process currently assigned tasks.

Firstly: arrange group. The first group discussion occurred between the students sitting side by side and expanding, the teacher pairing pairs into groups of 4, 6 or 8. Team members face each other to perform common tasks. Each group will elect its leader and secretary to record and synthesize the general idea of the group.

Secondly, launch discussion. Through the preparation, teacher begins by clearly stating the topic and objectives so that students understand and take initiative in the implementation process.

Thirdly, conduct discussion. Teachers assign specific content to groups, and instruct students to perform tasks
and require independent workgroups. The team leader raised the issue, the members of the group expressed their opinions and unified opinion of the whole group, the secretary recorded the results of the discussion. When the groups perform their duties, the teacher acts as an observer, and approach groups to capture the performance of each group. In addition to remind, motivate, encourage and help the team encountered obstacles and difficulties.

Step 3: Report the results and summarize, evaluate

After solving specific tasks, each group will report their results to the class. Each topic with different content will have different reporting styles. The remaining groups may comment, add comments to the report team agree or disagree with the report team's views, and allow groups to debate to protect their opinions. Teacher evaluates the presentation of each group, generalizes and finalizes the issues that the group presents. Based on that, teachers commented, generally evaluated the progress of all groups, the advantages and disadvantages of each group, the spirit and the results of the discussion. At the same time, teacher suggested a number of issues to be continued in subsequent discussions.

For the group discussion method to maximize student collaboration, the teacher should note the following requirements:
- Lecturers need more time and effort to prepare the contents of discussion, group anticipation, assign tasks and unexpected situations before class for students.
- During the discussion, the teacher is a follower of each group, ensuring that all team members are active in their overall activity, responsible for their assigned tasks and group activities. There is also interaction and support among team members.

2.2.2. Principles of Project-based Learning

Project-based learning is a student – centered pedagogy approach in which learner performs a complex learning task, which is a combination of theory and practice, practice in or outside the classroom environment. This task is carried out with high self-reliance in the whole learning process, from goal setting, planning, project implementation, testing, adjustment, process evaluation and result completion by learner. However, when using project-based teaching to promote co-operation, it is still a complex learning task, combining theory and practice, but is accomplished through the combination of a group of learner. With a high degree of self-reliance, the members jointly define the purpose, learning tasks, planning, assigning specific tasks to each member to carry out the project, check, adjust and assess process and results of project implementation to achieve the highest results.

Inheriting the research results of American educators in the early twentieth century, when establishing the theoretical basis for this teaching method, has identified three core characteristics: action, practical and product orientation in which project teaching aims to promote collaborative learning in learners emphasizing action oriented characteristics in promoting interactions and support in the learning environment.

Based on the work of scientists in advance, teaching the project to promote cooperation among students is conducted in the following six stages:

Stage 1: Preparation phase:
- The pre-class preparation process: On the basis of the lesson content, the teacher selects, building the content and requirements for the project related to the content of the lesson to suit the level, awareness and excitement of the students, the facilities of learning in the classroom, the number of students ...

Stage 2: Choosing the topic and defining the purpose of the project: During this stage, the interaction and support between the lecturer and the student in proposing, identifying the topic and purposing of the project, discuss the project are. When selecting the content for the project, the teacher should prioritize a problematic importance situation or a task to be solved; in which teacher should be note the connection of social and life practice. Teachers can introduce some topics for students to select and specify the project content.

Stage 3: Formulation and implementation plan: Based on teacher’s orientation on the project content, students build the outline, plan and assign the members to implement the project. When developing the plan, it is important to identify the tasks to be done, the expected time, materials, funding, methodology and specific work assignments within the group. From this stage, the cooperative, interacting activities through communication and teamwork among the group members are carried out flexibly and positively in order to achieve the common goal.

Stage 4: Project implementation: The members carry out the work as planned for the group and the individual. In this phase, students have performed the intellectual and practical activities, practice alternating, students actively exchange, analyze, interpret even if resolve disagreements in the process of completing the project. Theoretical knowledge, problem solving methods tested in practice and product created are new information; the result comes from the collective effort.

Stage 5: Results collection and product announcement: Results of project implementation are reported in the form of harvesting, reporting, etc. Therefore, upon completion of the project, the groups present their products to the class to teachers and members conduct assessment of the project.

Stage 6: Evaluation of the project: teachers and students participate in evaluation of the implementation and the results obtained after the completion of the project, from which to draw experience for the implementation of subsequent projects.

To teach the project to promote the most effective cooperation, teachers and students should note the following requirements:
- In order to teach the project to promote the cooperation of students, teachers have to spend a lot of time preparing and selecting the content of the project in accordance with the level of awareness, while stimulating the desire to learn study needs of students.
- Teacher is a bridge, who guides, leads, triggers the process of decoding the project tasks through discussion.
within each group; build up the attitude of cooperation, forge the necessary skills and abilities; Sometimes the instructor is a referee, who decides the disagreements that occur during the discussion.

+ Besides, teachers need to coordinate many teaching method to perform well educational tasks.

2.2.3. Some Teaching Techniques Enhance Cooperation

Teaching techniques are teaching strategies. They are the smallest unit of teaching methodology and designed and implemented in the classroom, outside classroom and creative learning activities. Teaching techniques have a special meaning in promoting the active participation of learners in the teaching process by stimulating creative thinking and working cooperation of learners in each learning activity.

Teaching techniques are not intended to serve the purpose of teaching and learning directly but rather as means (ideas and material) to organize and implement the disciplines. Teaching methods and methods have been selected by teachers, developed and applied in teaching practice. Therefore, teachers use teaching techniques in accordance with the content of the lesson and the learners so that they have opportunities to interact, communicate, cooperate and learn from each other, under the orientation of teachers.

As a result, teaching techniques that promote cooperation need to be successfully implemented. The prerequisites are the instruction of the instructor with the methods and methods of organizing the classroom activities. Smaller situations and actions are exchanged, discussed and interacted with each other to accomplish specific tasks in the learning process. There may be some teaching techniques actively promote the cooperation of students such as tablecloth technique, graft technique and others. Specifically:

- Tablecloth technique: It is one of the collaborative teaching techniques, thanks to the combination of individual and small group activities. Each group uses A0 or A4 paper as a tablecloth. Groups divide themselves A0 or A4 into a central cell and outer cells according to the number of members of the group. Individuals of each group work hard to give their opinions on the issue to be addressed and to write in their "tablecloths". Based on opinions of each individual, members discuss together to make a general conclusion and write in the center of the tablecloth.

With the combination of independent work and teamwork, the tablecloth technology creates an environment that develops independence, the responsibility of the individual learner, and promotes active and creative engagement. of the members of the group; model development has the interaction between team members together, improve learning efficiency. From the results of activities of the groups, teachers easily monitor the activities of each student in the class, evaluate cooperative capacity of students in solving common tasks in group work as well as assessing the effectiveness of cooperate in groups.

- Technique of Pieces: The difference of this technique is not only the collaborative learning between individuals in the group, but also the interconnection between groups to solve a complex task. , stimulate the active participation of learners; enhance the role and responsibility of individuals in the process of cooperation. The linkage in the grafting technique is expressed through two stages:

Stage 1: Expert Group: Students are divided into groups and perform different tasks. Each individual works independently for a few minutes, thinking about questions, topics and recording his or her opinions. In group discussions, make sure that each member of each group answers all the questions in the assigned task and becomes the "expert" of the field and has the ability to present the content of their group.

Stage 2: Piece group: After completing the task in the first stage, from the expert groups, each member of each group together to form a new group called group of pieces. Each new team member will present all the content that the research team has studied, thereby forming an overview and synthesizing all findings from the expert group. Thus, each student is treated as a piece in the new group to complete the specific task of that group. From the understanding of content in the expert group will translate into a common understanding, expanding in the group of pieces.

When the design uses a teaching technique that promotes the cooperation of the learner, the teacher must perform the following basic tasks: 1/ Presenting and processing of learning information, supporting information, especially information manage; 2/ Using, operating the means, tools, materials, ideas to conduct teaching; 3/ Environmental organization and teaching methods; 4/ Conducting, dealing with situations and relations in teaching; 5/ Guiding, directing process and learning activities; 6/ Examining, monitoring, evaluating, adjusting the process and results of learning; 7/ Motivating learners and learners' activities.

Therefore, integrating technology in teaching in order to maximize the cooperation of students not only stops students sitting together mechanically but also help, share understand know, experience together. This must be enhanced on the basis of ensuring the following five elements, involving creating positive interdependence, creating face-to-face interaction in groups, classes, upholding personal responsibility and responsibility of the group, using collaboration skills and handling group interaction.

3. Conclusion

In the modern world, communities have ever more attached and interdependent, including Vietnam. In the digital era, young generations in Vietnam need to own collaborative skills in learning through the relationship between teachers and learners, learner with the content of the lesson and the surrounding environment. In a collaborative environment, the learner is the subject; the knowledge is the object. Knowledge is both the starting point of the teaching and the end point of the learner. The learner finds out and conquers it under the cooperation with their friends in group and class. Teacher is the agent, organizer, guide the learner to find and occupy the scientific knowledge through the process of "personalization" and "socialization". He is also the director, stimulates the
learner's activity, is the referee-mentor and concludes the knowledge learned by the learner who self-dominating under the cooperation with you before it becomes truly objective science..." [18]. To achieve that, teachers must carefully prepare the content of the lesson before class, they have to master the steps to implement, organize and control activities effectively. It is possible to cover the whole activities of students in the discussion process which contributes to the improvement of the efficiency in teaching and learning at tertiary level.

References