

A Study of problems faced by students of CBSE Schools in Group Project Work

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Abstract: The spotlight of school education is child centered education and always an overall development of the child by all possible ways of using various methodologies of teaching. Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world (Caruso & Woolley, 2008; Mannix & Neale, 2005). The project work is one of the methods to promote various skills related to their leadership qualities, communication skills, team work efficiency, research and innovation, creativity and management. Positive group experiences, moreover, have been shown to contribute to student learning, retention and overall college success (Astin, 1997; Tinto, 1998; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2006).

Students really enjoy doing the project work but they go through various difficulties in the completion of the same. The present research paper is throwing light on the problems in the completion of the group project work of the students of class 5th of CBSE schools of Noida City.

Keywords: Group project work; CBSE Schools

Introduction

Project-based learning (PBL) is considered an alternative to paper-based, rote memorization and to teacher centric classrooms. Proponents of project-based learning quote numerous benefits to the implementation of its strategies in the classroom including a greater intensity of understanding of concepts, wider knowledge base, better communication and social skills, enhanced leadership skills, increased creativity and superior writing skills. Project-based learning was most remarkably propounded by John Dewey. He proposed that learning by doing has great benefit in shaping students' learning. PBL is an effective approach and is in line with Dewey's philosophies, to which many educators have attributed for enriched learning (Dewey 1938). The core idea of project-based learning is that real-world problems capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students attain and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving situation.

The National Policy on education (NPE) 1986 and Programme of Action (POA) 1992 recommended the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in schools. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) as the name implies is a developmental process of assessment which emphasizes on two fold objectives - continuity and evaluation on the one hand and assessment of broad range of instructional outcomes on the other. It has been realized with two means; Formative and Summative Assessment. The formative assessment is a tool for a teacher to continuously monitor the progress of a student. In primary classes the formative tests will be in the form of –Dictation, oral test, class test, home work, class work, assignments, **Project & Group projects (III to V), (CBSE Guidelines 12th April, 2005 Circular No: 21/2005). (Effandi, 2007).**

The teacher plays the role of facilitator working with students to frame meaningful questions, structuring significant tasks, checking the progress of development of knowledge and social skills, and vigilantly assessing what students have learned from the experience. Project-based learning isn't a new phenomenon – it was popular at the beginning of the 20th century.

Definition of Key Words

Group project work: In Group Projects students have to work in a small assigned group of 5 to 8 members. It creates excellent opportunities for students to engage in problem solving with the help of their group members

CBSE Schools: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) established in the year 1929, the oldest and largest Board of Secondary Education in India. Research supports that students using project based learning perform better on both standardized assessments and project tests than students in traditional direct instruction programs, and that they learn not only real-world application of skills, but also analytic thinking (Boaler 1999). It has more than 16,000 affiliated schools in India and across 24 other countries of the world. The CBSE affiliated schools follow a uniform curriculum with a flexible scheme of studies suitable to the needs of each and every student.

Significance of the study:

CCE is being implemented and practised completely in almost all the CBSE schools. Schools are emphasising on all kind of formative assessment tools and group project work is one of the most popular forms. The potential learning benefits of group work are significant but simply assigning group work is no guarantee that these goals will be achieved. In fact, group projects can – and often do – backfire badly when they are not designed and supervised. Parents and children face so many problems during the course of group projects as they require movement, communication, contribution, collaboration, domineering personalities, Conflict between team members and time. Present study reveals the needs of group projects and provides views of different stakeholders.

Objectives

1. To identify the interest of students of class 5th towards group project work
2. To identify the difficulty faced by the Class 5th students in the completion of the Group Project Work.
3. To underline the problem faced by the students in understanding the concept of the assigned Group Project.
4. To find out the difficulty faced by the students in getting guidance from the parents and teachers.
5. To highlight the problem faced by the students in coordinating and communicating the group members.

Tools and techniques

To know the challenges faced by the students in completion of the group project work. A self made questionnaire was developed. Some open ended questions were also kept to know the opinion of students and the parents. Questionnaire includes questions concerning different aspects of the subject of the study.

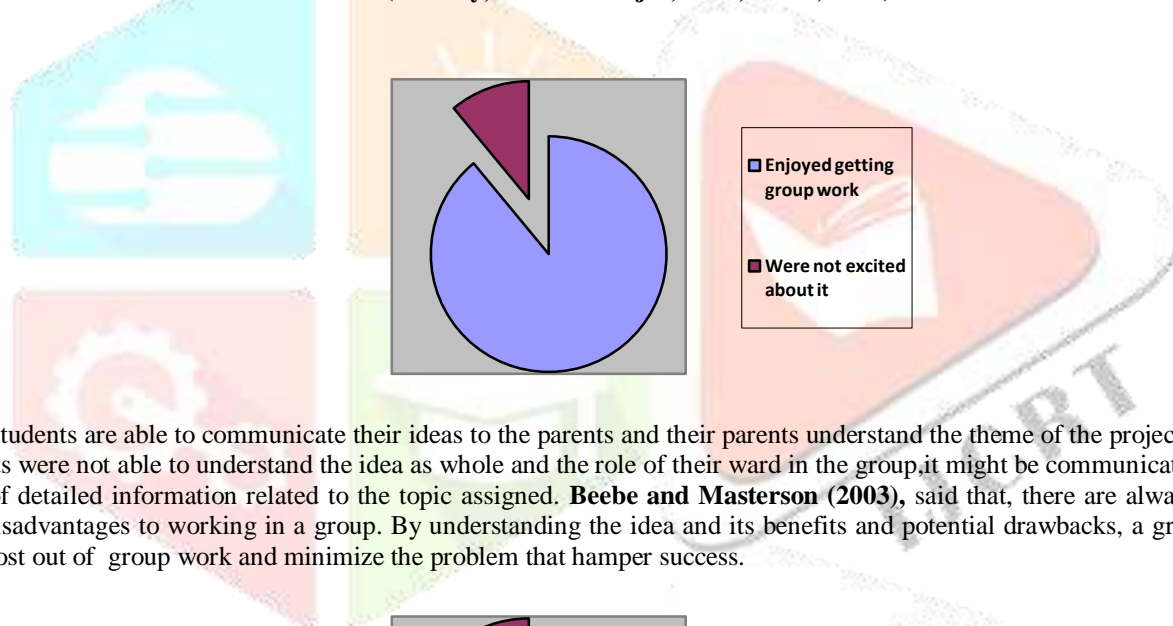
Sample of the study

The data has been collected randomly from 100 students of class 5th CBSE schools of Noida. The questionnaire was distributed to the students and their parents. The questionnaire was explained and filled up within the specified period.

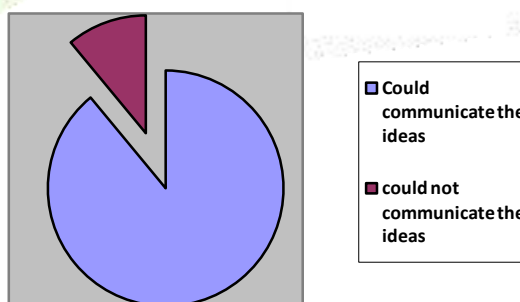
Findings

Responses in the questionnaire were recorded in yes or no. Students of class 5th had given their responses in yes or no. They also expressed their views in open ended questions.

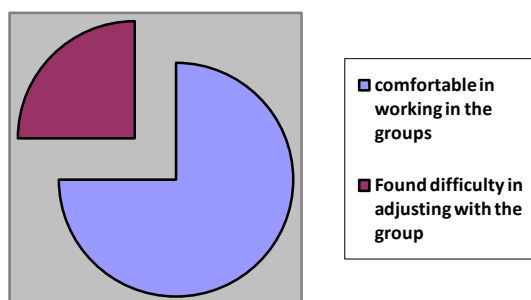
81% students responded that they really enjoyed on getting the project work. 19% don't feel excited on getting it. Study reveals that students working in groups have a tendency to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same material is presented in other instructional formats (**Barkley, Cross & Major, 2005; Davis, 1993**).



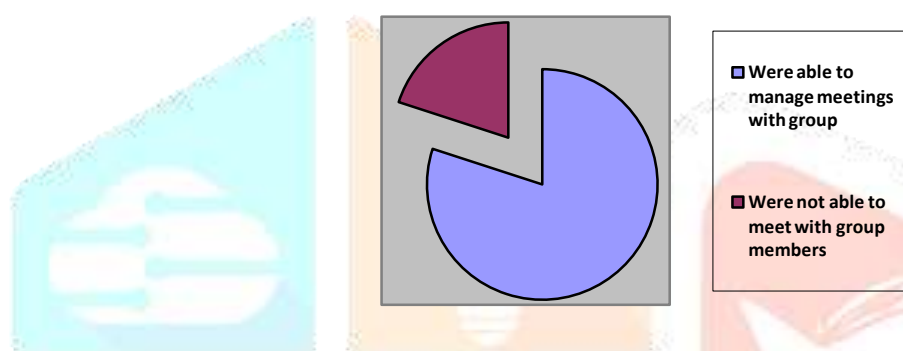
89% students are able to communicate their ideas to the parents and their parents understand the theme of the project. Some of the parents were not able to understand the idea as whole and the role of their ward in the group, it might be communication gap or the lack of detailed information related to the topic assigned. **Beebe and Masterson (2003)**, said that, there are always advantages and disadvantages to working in a group. By understanding the idea and its benefits and potential drawbacks, a group can make the most out of group work and minimize the problem that hamper success.



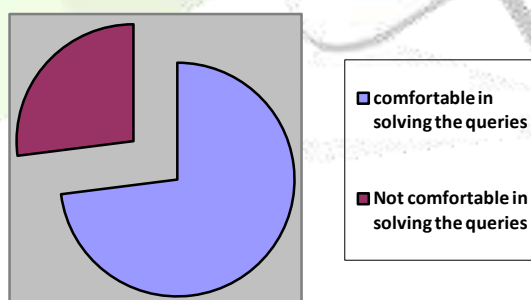
Sometimes they get group project work and they are comfortable in expressing their views in the groups formed by the teachers and they are able to perform the tasks assigned by the group leader. 85% students are comfortable in working in the groups assigned by the teacher. Remaining 15% find difficulty in adjusting with the group members. 77% students are able to coordinate their group members. Many students believe that they can complete assignments better by themselves rather than in a group (**Elgort, Smith & Toland, 2008**).



83% really enjoy meeting friends by the way of doing the project work. 80% students agreed that their parents cooperate in dropping and picking them from group leader's house. 20% parents were not able to do this because of lack of time and feasibility. Working parents or other reasons of busy schedules were the reason of lack of time for meetings of children group. A number of members might depend a lot on others to do the work. This is one of the most prominent problems that face by groups. Some members do not pitch in and help and do not adequately contribute to the group (Freeman & Greenacre, 2011).



Children expressed that their teacher check the progress in the work. They get proper teacher's guidance after the assignment of the project. 27% students are not confident to ask the teacher any question in reference to the project. Remaining 73% are comfortable in solving the queries. (Giraud, 1997) Stated that, advantage of group learning is idea transfer the interactions among members allow for an exchange of ideas much faster and effectively. (Elgort, Smith & Toland, 2008). Discovered that many a times a group does not itself produce critical thinking outcomes. and the instructor is must to facilitate effective group learning environments.



68% are aware that material used in the project work like gum, paints, glitter, crayons causing environmental pollution and rest are ignorant about the fact.

64% believe that time allotted to them is sufficient in the completion of the project work and remaining 37% finds scarcity of time. Normally students get 1week to 2 weeks time to complete the group project. 48% students feel anxiety in finishing the project work and rest of them do it with ease. Apart from the excitement in the completion of the project work 92% students are afraid of losing marks in case of non-submission of project.

57% believe that project assignment disturbs the routine studies and rest of them believe it helps in better understanding of the particular subject .

Parents outlook towards the Group Project work

Around 75% parents feel excited when their children get the Group Project. All the parents are able to understand the underlying concept .They believes that it enhances the creativity of the child.

All the parents are able to arrange the material required for the project work. 27% parents get stressed on not understanding the topic of the project. They find difficulty in explaining it to the children. 29% find financial constraints in buying the materials for the project. 85% were found able to guide their children in completion of the project. They upgrade knowledge for doing the project work. They agree that children learn faster by way of doing the project. They encourage children for taking up the projects. 80% parents are able to devote time for the project work from their busy schedule. 73% take part in the project discussion with the children. All the parents don't think that doing project work is simply waste of time. 64% agree that material used in the project like colours, paint, crayons, etc is polluting the environment. 76% don't think that students ignore their regular studies because of project work. 90% believe that project work helps in the better understanding of the topic.

Students' recommendations

In open ended questions students have expressed their views on the kind of projects they should get like; they are interested in making working models in projects related to Science and Maths.

They would like to do the creative projects in Art & Craft. Some wanted to do the projects related with space and plants. Some of them recommended giving projects in social studies to make it more interesting. Students wanted to have projects on the topic of environment, water, pollution, electricity, water cycle etc.

Parent's Recommendations

Parents have recommended some suggestions to overcome the difficulties faced during the completion of a group project like; Group projects should be completed during the school hours as it is inconvenient to arrange the meeting of the students after the school hours. Some of them believed that assigned projects should be in the capacity of the child and should not be very difficult. Parents suggested that projects should be given after class 7th. They suggested for giving power point presentation in computers. Parents appreciated the concept of doing by themselves as it helps in longer retention of knowledge in the memory. The topics of projects should be relevant with the syllabus.

Recommendations

Major concern of parents and students were analysed and it is recommended that, The project work should be given during vacations as it helps to keep the children engaged in challenging task. It should be related with their day –to- day life and associated with the concept in the subject which they are studying currently. Students should be encouraged to use the books for the given topic. Projects should be cost effective. Teachers should guide the students properly to avoid confusion among the students. Social media can be intelligently and judiciously used for the communication and coordination among all. Each student should be well aware about the delegated work. Group members should be residing in nearby places to facilitate easy communication and completion of the group project.

Conclusion

Project Base Learning (PBL) approaches help make learning significant and are useful to students by establishing connections to life outside the classroom. This study has highlighted the benefits and some disadvantages of the project work assignment in the schools. These assignments can be more interesting after incorporating the needs of the students and parents. This study is limited to the challenges faced by the students and parents during the completion of project work in the CBSE schools in Noida. This study is useful for other regions too since it provides insights for understanding the difficulties faced by the students in accomplishing the project work.

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