

**ENHANCEMENT OF LIFE SKILLS THROUGH
COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN SOCIAL
SCIENCES AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

AN ABSTRACT

SUBMITTED

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ENHANCEMENT OF LIFE SKILLS THROUGH COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a crucial time when children grow into adults, experiencing both physical changes and mental challenges. They face stress from school, parents, and future decisions, and need support to handle these pressures. This period is marked by the search for identity, new friendships, and a mix of optimism and uncertainty. Adolescents often look to parents, teachers, and friends for help with everyday problems like schoolwork and peer pressure. Teaching life skills is essential to help them manage stress, resolve conflicts, and make good decisions. These skills, taught well, boost their confidence, problem-solving, and social abilities, preparing them for real-world challenges and personal growth.

2. DEFINING LIFE SKILLS

The World Health Organisation (1993) has described Life skills as “the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO, 1996, p. 3.). United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has defined life skills as “A behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills” (UGC, 2023, p. 7.). Life skills are the abilities we need to handle everyday problems and live happy and successful lives. They help us reach our full potential as people.

2.1 EVOLUTION OF LIFE SKILLS

Education in life skills had a long track record of supporting the development of children's and adolescent's mental health. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) observed Life Skills in context of making firm choices. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) linked Life Skills to education by stating that education should be directed towards the development of the child's fullest potential” (as cited in CBSE, 2010 p.5). The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All (1990) has considered life skill as basic learning content for survival to develop expertise, to upgrade the standard of living and to involve in advancement. The United Nations Inter-Agency Meeting held at WHO, Geneva in 1999 recognized the importance of life skills education in promoting healthy child and adolescent

development, coping with disability, preparing youth for changing circumstances in society, preventing some major causes of child and adolescent death and disease, and socializing the child. The Dakar framework for action (2000) in its third goal assure that the young people's and adults learning needs would be met through fair approach to life skills and sixth goal stated upgrading features of education and assure the quality so that significant educational outcomes are attained in life skills. Nowadays, life skills-based education is acknowledged as an approach to address a range of challenges related to the development of children and youth and thematic responses, such as those stated in UNGASS on HIV/AIDS (2001), UNGASS on Children (2002), World Youth Report (2003), World Program of Human Rights Education (2004), UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (2005), UN Secretary General's Study on Violence Against Children (2006), 51 Commission on the Status of Women (2007) and the World Development Report (2007) (as cited in CBSE, 2010, p. 6).

For the present study life skills as stated by WHO (1996) has been adopted.

1. Self-awareness
2. Empathy
3. Effective communication
4. Interpersonal skill
5. Critical thinking
6. Creative thinking
7. Problem solving
8. Decision making
9. Coping with emotions
10. Coping with stress

2.2 LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION INITIATIVES IN INDIA

Bharat & Kishore (2001) has developed life skills education model for India. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCERT, 2005) has identified the significance of linking education with life skills, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has introduced life skills an essential part in the curriculum through Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation from classes 6 to 10 and has issued teacher's manual on Life Skills. An International Workshop on Life Skill Education Concerning Youth Development was held in 2006 by the Department of Adult and Continuing Education in cooperation with the University of Madras and the University Grants Commission. UNICEF (2007) in collaboration with Rajya Shiksha Kendra carried out life skills

education project in Madhya Pradesh. Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development is running two years M.A in Life Skills since 2008.

2.3 LIFE SKILLS INITIATIVES IN GUJARAT

The Health Education and Life Skills Program (HELP), formerly known as the Adolescent Education Program, is being implemented with assistance from GCERT. It began in 2008 with 2500 schools spread across 4 districts, and in 2013–14, it covered 6365 schools spread across 18 districts. The program covers a number of topics, including balanced diets, mental health, drug abuse, infectious and non-infectious diseases and prevention, human body and health, reproductive health, and child protection. Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training has introduced Bal mela and Life skills as one its extension activity. This program aims to enhance children's hidden abilities. The GCERT organizes these kinds of Bal mela and Life Skills Mela in all Gujarat State government elementary schools, to improve the schools' reputation and stabilise their quality. Between December 2009 and March 2010, 150 experts received training at DIET Vadodara during four stages of the "Life skill through drama" program.

2.4 ROLE OF SCHOOL IN DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

Support for life skills education is needed from principals, teachers, and school education administrators. It is evident that schools continue to be an essential social institution for educating children and prepare them for adulthood. According to WHO (1997) “The school is an appropriate place for the introduction of life skills education because of:

- the role of schools in the socialization of young people;
- access to children and adolescents on a large scale
- economic efficiencies (uses existing infrastructure);
- experienced teachers already in place;
- high credibility with parents and community members;
- possibilities for short- and long-term evaluation.”

2.5 ROLE OF TEACHER IN DEVELOPING LIFE SKILLS

According to WHO (2020) manual on: Life Skills educations in school the following are the roles of the teachers to develop life skills among students:

1. Motivating youth to collaborate constructively.
2. Establishing a trustworthy environment in which youth feel free to express their

thoughts and emotions.

3. Encouraging every child to believe that they are improving.
4. Serving as a mentor rather than controlling the students.
5. Handling delicate matters.
6. Respecting each student's right to self-governance individually.
7. Having conversations with youth as equals rather than "at" them as superiors.
8. Promoting civility among youth.

2.6 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS

The WHO suggested using methods like group work, discussions, debates, storytelling, peer-supported learning, and community projects to teach life skills. Among these, cooperative learning is particularly popular because it has a strong theoretical foundation and offers many techniques. In cooperative learning, students work in small groups to help each other learn and understand instructions better. This method has been extensively researched in recent years. According to Johnson and Johnson in 1994, cooperative learning involves small groups of students working together to improve their own and each other's learning.

2.7 ORIGIN OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Till 1960 cooperative learning was not given due recognition, it was from the year 1961 various educationist started working on cooperative learning. Researchers and educational psychologists from the early to mid-20th century, including Kurt Lewin, Morton Deutsch, and John Dewey, are recognized in contributing to establish cooperative learning. However, throughout the second part of the 20th century, educators like Elizabeth Cohen, Robert Slavin, and David and Roger Johnson contributed to the development and popularization of today's concept of cooperative learning. (Davidson, 2021). Cooperative learning than started in the mid-1980s (Jacobs, 2008).

2.8 THEORIES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning is based on several key theories that explain why it works and how to apply it. Social Interdependency Theory, developed by Morton Deutsch, says that people achieve more by working together than alone. This theory highlights how positive cooperation among group members leads to better outcomes, while competition or working individually does not foster the same level of success. Cognitive Development Theory, proposed by Jean Piaget, emphasizes that learning is an active process where individuals build and adjust their knowledge through experiences. In a cooperative setting, students learn and grow by discussing and solving problems together. Social Cognitive Theory,

created by Albert Bandura, suggests that learning is influenced by cognitive processes, behaviors, and the environment. In cooperative learning, students learn by interacting with peers, observing, and participating actively in group tasks. These theories collectively support the idea that cooperative learning helps students understand topics better and develop essential skills through active participation and mutual support.

2.9 COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES

For the present study the below mention cooperative learning technique was used.

1. Round Table
2. Note taking pairs
3. Write around
4. Structured problem solving
5. Think pair share
6. Turn to your neighbors
7. STAD
8. Numbered heads together
9. Think write pair compare
10. Reciprocal teaching
11. Quiz-quiz trade
12. Group problem solving
13. Three step interview
14. Three stay one stray
15. Jigsaw II
16. Rally coach
17. Write pair share

3. MEANING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

As per J. F. Forrester the term Social Sciences as the name suggests stands for the type of sciences that deals with the study of the society and its functioning. It is much like the same as to interpret Natural Science as a science dealing with the study of the nature and its world of work (Physical as well as Biological). (as cited in Mangal, S.K, 2018).

3.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AS PER NCF-SE 2023

National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023) has mentioned the aims of social sciences in school education, which is presented below.

a. Understanding how society function

b. Capabilities for social science inquiry

4. RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED STUDY

Adolescence is a critical transitional stage that can lead to challenges and conflicts if not properly managed with adequate knowledge, supervision, guidance, and counselling. Given the significance of this developmental period, education must be continually updated to include essential knowledge and life experiences. The specific needs of young people necessitate incorporating life skills into education, as life skills education is one of the most effective preventive measures for addressing the challenges faced by adolescents globally. The CBSE has required its schools to incorporate Life Skills Education into the curriculum for classes VI-X to foster self-confidence, eco-sensitivity, and positive attitudes toward life among students. This implies that schools are the ideal place to achieve the most effective outcomes of life skills education at the elementary level. Schools, where students spend a significant portion of their day and much of their productive time, are well-positioned to promote holistic development by incorporating life skills education into the regular curriculum.

Life skills can be enhanced in a number of ways. Through this study, the researcher intends to make an effort to enhance life skills through cooperative learning as one of the methods of constructivism. Cooperative learning is one of the strategies which can be used in the daily teaching-learning environment. It is considered as one of the highly effective teaching strategies which helps in raising motivation, retention, raising self-esteem, increasing social skills, enhancing cognitive skills, increasing higher-level thinking among adolescents. Research indicates that cooperative learning methods improve student knowledge and academic achievement, increase student engagement with their learning, improve verbal communication skills, foster social skills, boost student confidence and contribute to positive race relations, along with positive outcomes in other areas. The findings from various studies provide strong support for the implementation of cooperative learning in educational settings.

Despite the numerous cooperative learning techniques proposed by various scholars, only a limited number have seen widespread use, as reflected in the literature review. This raises the question as to why other techniques have not been more commonly implemented. Therefore, the researcher aims to explore the effects of these less commonly used techniques to assess their impact on student enhancement. Therefore, for the present study, the researcher has taken cooperative learning as one of the strategies to enhance life skills. One of the solutions that can be made is teaching life skills through school subjects. WHO (1997) has suggested that a life skills programme can be designed in such a way that it can

be infused into other subjects and integrated either as a new subject, or withing the existing subject, this would offer greater potential for programme success. Therefore, researcher has taken social sciences as one of the subjects to enhance life skills. As social sciences is one of the scientific disciplines that focuses on the study of societies and the interactions between people within them. Young children can develop the ability to solve problems and become engaged members of their communities and beyond by participating in social sciences inquiry. Chetri (2020) suggested that “life skills should be taught in every regular school by a life skills trainer/teacher/counsellor so that students learn basic skills which are very much needed in the present society to enhance mental health, peace and adjust in the changing environment.”

5. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Enhancement of life skills through cooperative learning in social sciences among elementary school students

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

1. What is the level of life skills among elementary school students?
2. How can life skills be enhanced in social science class?
3. To what extent cooperative learning strategy will be helpful in enhancing Life Skills among elementary school students?

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the current level of life skills among elementary school students.
2. To design lesson plan using cooperative learning techniques.
3. To study the process of enhancement of life skills through cooperative learning among elementary school students.
4. To study the reaction of students on cooperative learning techniques.

8. EXPLANATION OF THE TERM

Life Skills: For the present study life skills are considered as the capabilities for dealing with the challenging situations of everyday life with positive behaviour. For the present study 10 core life skills as laid by WHO (1996) have been selected:

- (i) Self-awareness, (ii) empathy, (iii) critical thinking, (iv) creative thinking, (v) problem solving, (vi) decision making, (vii) interpersonal skill, (viii) effective communication, (ix) coping with stress, (x) managing emotions.

Cooperative learning: Cooperative learning is a teaching method where small teams of students, usually four to six works together to accomplish a common task. The students will be instructed through eight methods. These methods are:

(i) Jigsaw, (ii) Student Teams Achievement Division, (iii) Think-pair-share, (iv) Three step interview, (v) Round table or Rally table, (vi) Note taking pairs, (viii) Numbered head, (viii), Write around, (ix) Structured problem solving, (x) Turn to your neighbour, (xi) Rally Coach, (xii) Think, write, pair, compare, (xiii) Reciprocal teaching, (xiv) quiz quiz trade, (xv) Group problem solving, (xvi) Three stay one stray, (xvii) Write, pair, share.

Social Sciences: Social Sciences refers to the NCERT class VI text book of social science, which contain History, Geography and Civics text book.

9. DELIMITATION OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

The proposed study is delimited to class VI students (of one section) from a private unaided primary school in Vadodara district, affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education. (CBSE) for the academic year (2023-24).

10. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review has been categorized into three areas that has been presented in three sections.

Section 1: Research studies related to life skills education on adolescents

Section 2: Research studies related to developing of life skills through cooperative learning.

Section 3: Research studies related to effectiveness of cooperative learning on teaching of social sciences/ studies

10.1 IMPLICATION OF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The difference between studies conducted in India and those conducted abroad regarding life skills research have varied focus. Studies in India concentrate on the impact, effectiveness, and development of intervention programs and packages for life skills. Whereas, studies conducted abroad emphasize on effectiveness, development, incorporation, and perceptions, role towards life skills. While both areas explore life skills, the Indian context leans more towards practical application and program development, whereas international studies inquire into broader aspects such as perception and integration into various contexts.

When a new approach, program, or strategy is introduced in the classroom, it is crucial to observe the participants to record their reactions, attitudes, and behaviours in their natural environment. This type of observation provides a deep understanding of how well the

program is implemented and how participants respond. The studies mentioned above highlight a significant need for qualitative research, as it allows for a deeper understanding of experiences, phenomena, and contexts. It is evident that very little attention has been given to qualitative research in these studies. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to use case studies as a method to observe the enhancement of life skills through cooperative learning.

11. APPROACH BASED METHODOLOGY

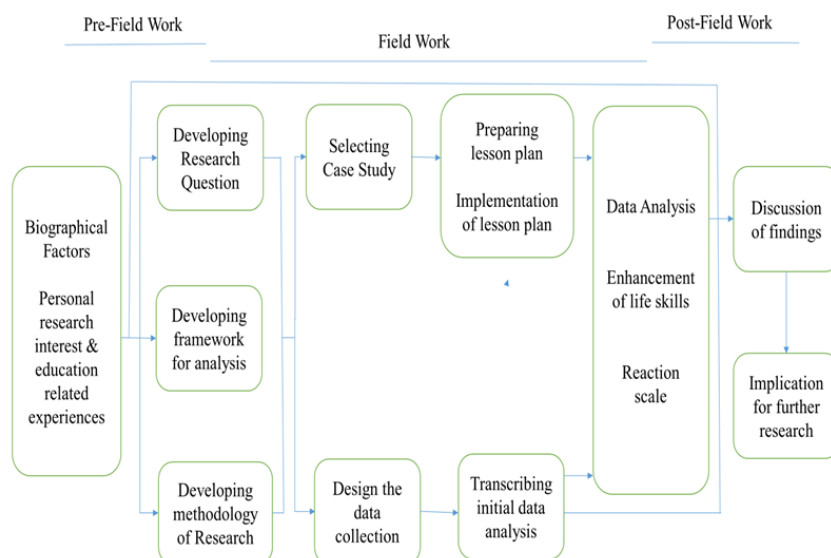
This nature of study led the researcher to adopt a methodology where the process of enhancement could be observed. Hence, the researcher has adopted “Qualitative Case study” an approach as a research strategy.

11.1 CASE STUDY AS A RESEARCH STRATEGY

From the review of studies, it is learned that cooperative learning techniques contribute significantly in the enhancement of life skills among school students. Although the fact cannot be denied but the large-scale dominance of quantitative studies has not revealed any significant findings pertaining to the process aspect which could be linked to the enhanced level of life skills in order to arrive at a conclusive understanding. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out such research that will reveal the process of enhancement of life skills among the students. Consequently, qualitative descriptive case study approach was selected to fulfil this requirement.

11.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

At the outset of study, the researcher started with preliminary research questions and a conceptual framework based on a literature review. Thus, the stages of pre-fieldwork, fieldwork, and post-fieldwork are interconnected and significantly overlap.



11.3 SELECTION OF CASE STUDY SCHOOL

Researcher was working as a coordinator one of the senior secondary school of Vadodara for past one year. Throughout this year researcher came to know about the environment of the school, curriculum and the students. Most of the time whenever students faced any difficulties, they directly approach to their teachers without putting any efforts to resolve on their own. Many a times students misunderstood at some point which led to a huge disagreement. Researcher had observed this behaviour of the students in the school which lacked basic life skills. As the students were occupied with their daily curriculum it was difficult to provide daily session to enhance the life skills. This gave an insight to the researcher to carry out a kind of work which will help the students in their daily life as well as in their future. Therefore, researcher has purposively selected this school as the case study school.

11.4 SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to improve life skills in elementary school students through cooperative learning in social sciences. The researcher focused on grade VI students, who are in the early adolescence stage (ages 11-12), an important time for developing life skills due to their unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth. The researcher had known these students for a year, which helped in understanding their progress. Since social science classes offer ample opportunities for extended engagement, the researcher, a social science teacher, chose this subject to enhance life skills. Accordingly, class VI students were chosen for the study.

11.5 ETHICAL PROCEDURE

Due to the nature of the current study researcher had to spend a significant amount of time (6 months) in the school interacting with a group of students on a daily basis. Researcher had to be honest with herself and other people in order to fulfil this need. Accordingly, researcher took permission from the school management to conduct the study. The school management was explained clearly about the purpose of study and assured them to maintain confidentiality of the information to be collected from the students. Parents of the students were also explained the same and their approval was obtained.

Researcher told students that she will be teaching them social sciences for six months using various cooperative learning techniques for carrying out the task, their active participation is required. Accordingly, students agreed to participate in the activities to be carried out by the researcher. During the execution of the activities, the regular teacher of the school too participated actively.

11.6 PREPARATION OF LESSON PLAN

As per the school's policy researcher had taught the chapters of social sciences that has to be covered in the first semester. For this researcher had selected sup topic from each chapter and identified life skills that can be enhanced from them. Researcher though taught all the topics of each chapter so that students can remain connected with researcher's teaching methodology. Following this, constructivist lesson plans were developed using seventeen cooperative learning technique from the content of social sciences textbook. The researcher had selected the topics from each chapter of history, civics and geography. All the ten life skills were covered in the topics, these skills overlapped in all the seventeen cooperative learning techniques.

11.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

To fulfil the requirements of objectives of the study various data collection methods were employed. These are

- *Life Skills assessment scale developed by A. Radhakrishnan Nair, R. Subasree and Sunitha Ranjan (2010) to check the pre and post status of life skills among students*
- *Situational Test to check the pre status of life skills among students*
- *Observation*
- *Video recording*
- *Rubrics on ten life skills*
- *Situational test to check the level of life skills among the students after the*

implementation of CLT.

- *Reactional scale on Cooperative learning techniques*

11.8 LIFE SKILLS ASSESSMENT SCALE (LSAS)

A standardised tool on Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) developed by A. Radhakrishnan Nair, R. Subasree and Sunitha Ranjan (2010) was used to check the initial level of skill present in the students and the same test was used at the end of the program too.

11.9 SITUATIONAL TEST (ST)

To check the initial level of life skills among student's and after the implementation of CLT situational test was developed and administered before and after conducting the activities. The situational test consists of ten situations where each situation covered all ten life skills. The situations were pertaining to their daily lives, which the students may have encountered in their lives. Each situation consists of 5 alternatives.

11.10 OBSERVATION

Daily observations were meticulously recorded in a diary, allowing the researcher to gain deep insights into the challenges students encountered while working in groups or pairs. The continuous nature of these observations also contributed to maintaining student engagement and focus on their tasks.

11.11 VIDEO RECORDING

The video recordings captured the students' discussions, peer interactions and their engagement during activities. This allowed for a more comprehensive and detailed analysis of the students' behaviours and interactions providing rich qualitative data. By using video recordings, the researcher was able to overcome the constraints of real-time observation and ensure that no significant interactions were missed.

11.12 RUBRICS ON TEN CORE LIFE SKILLS

Researcher wanted to observe the process of enhancement of life skills among students and thus rubrics on ten life skills were developed by the researcher. Therefore, Researcher has prepared rubrics on ten life skills. The rubrics were marked on daily basis after the completion of each activity to know the progress of the students in each activity. Each life skills rubric has four criterion which is assessed on a five-point scale, i.e. novice, approaching, emerging, developing and mastery.

11.13 REACTION SCALE ON COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES

The tool aimed to know the reaction of the students towards cooperative learning techniques, this scale was developed by the researcher. Researcher has prepared 5-point Likert scale. The scale consists of 30 statements. These statements were related to the component like the advantage of activity in their learning process, enhancement of skill through CLT, understanding of subject's content through CLT, environment during the CLT class.

11.14 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

The data collection process spanned four distinct phases, utilizing various tools mentioned above and was conducted during the academic session from April 2023 to October 2023.

Phase I: Collection of background information of students

Phase I was conducted in April 2023 at the beginning of the academic session. On day one students were instructed to bring background information such as educational qualification and occupation of parents. Next day background information form was given to students to fill their background information such as age, family structure and language spoken at home, educational qualification and occupation of parents.

Phase I: Administration of LSAS and ST before the execution of CLT

On third day first LSAS was conducted, the time allotted for the test was 80 minutes. Students were properly explained about the procedure of responding to the alternatives. Accordingly, the data was collected. The same procedure was followed for collecting data through situational test.

Phase II: Enhancement of life skills through the implementation of CLT

The In the first term of the 2023-24 academic session, Cooperative Learning Techniques (CLT) were introduced to grade VI social science classes with five 40-minute periods per week. The researcher also used other available periods, like assembly or extra-curricular periods to observe the students. CLT activities were done in groups and pairs. The researcher collected data through personal observations and video recordings to see how students were involved in these activities. When observing pairs the researcher recorded interactions row by row which took a lot of time. Video recordings of group and pair activities often needed to be completed over two different periods.

Phase III: Administration of LSAS and ST at the end of execution of CLT

Phase III was conducted in the month of November 2023. Both the test: Life skills assessment scale (LSAS) and Situational test (ST) were administered on two different days.

First LSAS was administered and then next day ST was administered. The time duration to conduct the test remained the same as of initial level test.

Phase IV: Administration of reaction scale

After the completion of all the activities including the administration of LSAS and ST, reaction scale was administered. The time duration allotted for the reaction scale was 40 minutes. Before administering the reaction scale, researcher had explained the purpose of the scale and had explained them about the statements and alternatives presented in the scale.

11.15 DATA ANALYSIS

Data collection and analysis is a simultaneous activity in qualitative research. Accordingly, data analysis began with the beginning of the test phase. The LSAS and ST were analysed quantitatively. The data obtained through observation, video recording and rubrics have been analysed through qualitative content analysis. The data obtained through reaction scale was analysed in the form of Intensity Index.

11.16 UNITS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The present study aims on the enhancement of life skills through cooperative learning among elementary school students. To achieve this aim researcher carried out activities among students of class VI to see the influence of cooperative learning techniques. Therefore, the students form an important unit or they form the entire case of class VI. Hence, the class VI A forms the case and its units are the thirty students (S1- S30).

11.17 PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected during the various phases was thoroughly examined and objectively analyzed. The data analysis was conducted in four distinct stages.

Stage 1: Administration of Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) and Situational Test (ST) before the execution of CLT

LSAS was analysed quantitatively. LSAS was analysed as per the manual. ST was analysed quantitatively. Students were score on the scale very high, high, average, low and very low.

Stage 2: Understanding the process of enhancement of Life skills

The data analysis involved several steps, starting with daily transcriptions of video recordings, which was a tiring and detailed task. To ensure no important observations were missed, the videos were replayed multiple times. After each activity, rubrics were filled out. The transcriptions were carefully reviewed with irrelevant information removed. To fully understand the enhancement of life skills, the video recordings, researcher's observations, and rubrics were combined. A coding framework was created to organize and analyze the

data systematically. The activities performed by different groups were then categorized using specific coding categories.

Stage 3: Administration of Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS) and Situational Test (ST) after the execution of CLT

LSAS was analysed quantitatively. LSAS was analysed as per the manual. ST was analysed quantitatively. Students were score on the scale very high, high, average, low and very low.

Stage 4: Knowing the reaction of the students towards cooperative learning technique

Data was collected using a reaction scale, assessing both positive and negative statements. Analysis involved calculating percentages, frequencies, intensity index and average intensity index.

11.18 ESTABLISHING VALIDITY OF QUALITATIVE DATA

At the end of data analysis triangulation was employed to support internal validity. Data from multiple sources including initial level test, video recordings, researcher's observations, rubrics and post status test were triangulated to strengthen internal validity.

11.19 CHALLENGES OF CASE STUDY RESEARCH

Using case study as a methodology presents several challenges for researchers during fieldwork. Initially, researcher struggled to balance both roles as a teacher and as a researcher. Managing video recording was particularly challenging due to the multitude of events occurring simultaneously. However, with time researcher was able to adapt and effectively observe and record the activities of the students.

Another challenge encountered by the researcher was the students' awareness during videography. Students often became cautious, exhibiting behaviours such as smiling at the camera or waving their hands. Additionally, when the researcher approached them to record their interaction, they sometimes remained silent. However, when they communicate with each other it was often in a casual manner.

Sometimes students use to discuss unnecessary talks which was not relevant to the task. During the observation the researcher noticed that some pairs or groups took longer time to complete activities than others. Those who finished before the allotted time often engaged in conversations that distracted other group members. Furthermore, while the researcher was video recording interactions of one group another group would frequently interrupt the researcher seeking her attention to listen them.

12 THE SETTING

The selected school is a private un aided English medium school. The school offers curriculum from CBSE and GSEB boards. The strength of the school consists of 2000 students which include students from pre-primary to class XII from both the boards. The staff comprises of 160 teachers, 12 administrative staff and 40 non-teaching staff. 70% of school student's parents are working in various fields and are salaried person. 20% of the student's parents have different businesses. 10% students belong to RTE family. The school offers facilities of Audio-visual room, music room, dance room, computer lab, AC classroom, auditorium, playground, and canteen facility. The school has both science and commerce stream.

Majority of the students of school comes from Nizampur, Gorwa, Chhani, Ranoli, Dashrath and GSFC area. Nizampura is a premium area in Vadodara that has reached full development. Gorwa is Vadodara's residential and business neighbourhood. Dashrath is the Vadodara city's rural administration. Ranoli is a village of Vadodara district. GSFC is an industrial township, it is a semi urban area.

For this study, grade VI students, typically aged 11yrs, 12yrs and 13 yrs. were selected as the case group. The majority of these students' fathers are salaried employees, while most of their mothers are housewives. However, five students' fathers who own a business and only a few students' mothers are working. Most of the students live in nuclear families and have siblings, though a few are single child. Approximately eighteen students attend tuition classes, whereas the majority receive help in their studies from their parents at home. The class has a higher proportion of boys than girls. Most of the students come from the Chhani and Gorwa areas, with a few from Ranoli, Dashrath, and the GSFC area.

13 MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The study revealed that implementing Cooperative Learning Techniques (CLT) significantly enhanced all ten life skills, including self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, coping with emotions, and coping with stress.
2. Group activities such as "Reciprocal Teaching," "Three Stay One Stray," and "Jigsaw II" promoted inclusive participation, thoughtful consideration, and constructive dialogue among students. Specifically, the dynamic interaction within the "Three Stay One Stray" technique demonstrated members' ability to support each other in navigating complex discussions and reaching consensus effectively.
3. The "Three Step Interview" activity significantly improved effective communication

among students. This method fostered a productive environment prioritizing understanding and clear communication.

4. "Write Pair Share" was found to enhance the creativity among students by fostering shared perspectives and understanding, allowing students to bring out their creative thinking skills collaboratively.
5. In the "Jigsaw II" technique, students exhibited a strong inclination to express their feelings and thoughts to their peers, reflecting enhanced empathy and self-awareness.
6. The cooperative decision-making process, characterized by active participation, open dialogue, and collective decision-making, was evident in the "Group Problem Solving" technique. This method showcased the students' abilities to engage actively and make decisions collectively.
7. Individual accountability emerged as a key factor, as students took responsibility for their contributions during discussions, ensuring that each member played an integral role in the group's success.
8. The cooperative nature of activities, where each member had the opportunity to both ask and answer questions, fostered engagement and interaction within the group. This was particularly evident in activities like "Numbered Heads" and "Three Stay One Stray," where students demonstrated excellent interpersonal skills, including active listening and making their peers feel heard and valued.
9. The cooperative learning techniques (CLT) offered students a fresh and engaging learning experience. They appeared to enjoy the various pair and group activities, each thoughtfully selected to align with different topics, adding an element of interest and variety to their learning process.

14 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

The present study found that using Cooperative Learning Techniques (CLT) effectively enhanced various life skills, such as self-awareness, empathy, effective communication, critical thinking and coping with stress. This supports the findings of Maryam et al. (2011) and Kaur (2022) who also found that well-structured life skills programs have a positive impact on students. The employment of techniques such as numbered heads together and jigsaw II was also found to increase the engagement of students as it made learning environment conducive. These methods are recognized in the research as being very effective for teaching life skills.

The enhancement of all ten life skills in the current study has pointed towards the interconnectedness between the life skills as supported by (Khera & Khosla (2012), Godi (2017) and Ezra (2018), who found that the growth of one ability positively impacts the development of another. This demonstrates a strong connection between various life skills. The process of improving students' life skills through Cooperative Learning Techniques (CLT) faced several challenges at the beginning. Students had trouble working together as a team, some didn't take the tasks seriously and there were issues with maintaining discipline and understanding the activities. These challenges show how difficult it can be to introduce new ways of teaching. Researchers like Amandeep (2016) and Saki & Darhour (2023) have pointed out that creating a supportive environment and providing clear instructions are crucial when teaching life skills. Amandeep (2016) study found that students needed a lot of guidance at first, but they gradually got better over time. Learning new skills takes time and practice and teachers play a key role in helping students improve. Additionally, other studies by Odja & Mursalin (2019) and Abdelgelil (2022) also show that cooperative learning is very effective in improving life skills. They found that using cooperative learning in different subjects like physics and swimming helped students think critically, solve problems and work well with others. These consistent results across different subjects suggest that cooperative learning is closely connected to developing important life skills.

The present study found that students got better at interacting with others, communicating effectively and showing empathy. This matches the findings of Roodbari et al. (2013) who showed that life skills training helps students develop socially and become more emotionally stable. The results also agree with studies by Godi (2017) who found that life skills education boosts emotional intelligence and helps students do better in school.

15 IMPLICATIONS OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The study's findings have significant implications for teachers, curriculum planners and policymakers.

I. Implication for teachers

For teachers the study offers a comprehensive overview of strategies for handling difficult content and creating new tasks that align with innovative learning methods. It provides insights and strategies for addressing difficult topics, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to handle complex material. It also highlights that the primary responsibility of teachers is to cultivate a supportive and encouraging classroom environment. Learning is a dynamic interaction where students' personal experiences and perspectives play a crucial

role in how they understand and engage with the subject matter. By introducing novel approaches, teachers can make the learning process more engaging, interactive and relevant to real-life situations.

II. Implication for curriculum planners

Various methods have proposed to teach life skills by WHO and CBSE. But with the daily teaching learning process it is difficult to incorporate these various methods. Therefore, curriculum planner should take into account on including life skills in the school subjects. Such curriculum should be prepared where skill-based activities are included in the textbooks that is used in both central and state government schools.

III. Implication for policy makers

It is important to include life skills education as a key part of the curriculum at all the level of school education. By integrating life skills into education, students will be better prepared for real-world challenges and job opportunities.

16 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

Based on the researcher's observations, experiences gained and through literature review, the researcher proposes the following research topic for future study.

- The case study can be conducted to enhance life skills at secondary stage students in central board and state board.
- A survey can be done to check the level of life skills among teacher educators all over India.
- A case study can be conducted to identify the various teaching methods adopted by teachers for the enhancement of life skills among students.
- An experimental study can be conducted to find out the alternative means of enhancing life skills among students.

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