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Social interaction inhibitions of students and its effect on academic and sports life

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Abstract

To assess the growth of a country's population, employment, utilization of capital, social and political factors are taken into consideration, and education is foremost among them. Several studies have been made in the area of education, and one of the main outcomes is the importance of social interaction in academic progress. In most schools even today there is very little social interaction within classrooms right from the early years and throughout their school life. With classrooms 'dominated' by teachers the students sitting through listening to their lectures every day, there is very little room for group activity or even recess. Lack of leisure games and sports results in very little peer interaction, and most communication is one-way, between teachers and students. This results in decreased social interaction and ultimately impacts academic as well as sports performance. Ancient philosophies suggested that the educational quality, measured by the learning outcomes, depended critically on the quality of discussion and the teacher's ability to engage participants creatively in the educational process, known as Socratic method, that developed critical thinking and brought about new ideas and thoughts in learning. This paper strives to throw light on the factors influencing social interaction in school academic and sport life with interactive learning in context of classroom dynamics.

Keywords: Family, school, student-teacher learning, outdoor games, social interaction

Introduction

Childhood is a stage when every child aspires to be expressive and playful. They learn things by observation, playing, laughing and interacting with members of the family, their friends as well as other members of society. Learning takes place as they explore their environment and society around them, and as they grow older they automatically involve in various cognitive and social activities that expand their knowledge of the world around them. Motor skills also develop to a great extent as they grow. After their toddlerhood at home, children spend considerable part of their childhood in school, and a major part of their personality is shaped during this time. Personality is the result of the interaction of the biological self with the socio-cultural environment. Just like other abilities, children show various levels of forming friendships and to gain peer acceptance. By engaging themselves in groups, they slowly climb the social ladder and achieve a social status that is relative to the other members of the group. According to a study, it was concluded that physical fitness was strongly and significantly related to academic performance, appearing to be peak in late middle to early high school. Games they play in groups at school not only build up their physical fitness but also develops effective interactive abilities and mental prowess too. But when discussing about children's overall social interaction, it should be borne in mind that parents at home play a pivotal role in building the personality of child and aiding in their unbridled social interaction and social acceptance. Children from chaotic and dysfunctional homes will experience violence, rejection within their family structure, and unrealistic rejection in other aspects of their lives as well. An early childhood filled with uncertainty will have important implications for their later years. Chaotic experiences in the home environment appear to have more influence on their development than chaotic preschool experiences (Bobbitt, K. C, & Gershoff, E. T., 2016) [3]. Families from disadvantaged communities will have very volatile home environments, and as a result children will suffer from insecurity. Girls from these families exhibit more emotional disturbances and lesser interactions than in other communities. Research has indicated females are more likely to experience shyness, especially in early adulthood, than males (Kasper, Alex

G, 2012) ^[12]. Shyness was shown to be elevated in children whose mothers have high levels of neuroticism and over protectiveness (Coplan & Arbeau, 2008) ^[5]. Most adults who have social anxiety disorders reported being shy throughout their childhood (Volbrecht & Goldsmith, 2010) ^[17]. Economical dependency, cultural and social factors add up to the problem of social inhibition, creating an atmosphere of fear and self rejection especially in a male dominated situation. For young children, during their pre-adolescence and puberty period, biological and physiological changes alter the thinking pattern and cognitive behavior. As a result, confusion or doubts about personal hygiene and arise. It is observed that there have been links between mental health problems and low socio-economic status. Factors like malnutrition, disease, inferior living conditions, inadequate sanitation and many other hardships affect their openness with immediate family members.

Observation

Study of several relevant literatures have revealed that in a school setting, many aspects of the effective learning environment are dependent upon social interaction with peers and teachers. Generally teachers perceive less interactive pupils as being less intelligent than interactive ones. This can be harmful to these students, and may cause more severe aversion symptoms. School authorities have the responsibility to identify these shy students, develop a better understanding of their individuality, and provide an effective environment in which they can suitably grow and learn. Children are born with innate strengths and weaknesses in abilities such as memory, attention, motor skills and language. If any of these skills is found lacking, it can be detrimental to the child's social competency (Candy Lawson, 2003). They may develop a tendency to feel awkward, worried or tense during social encounters, and in turn will be consciously cautious about new social situations, may perceive them as socially threatening, and the individual may experience high levels of social anxiety (Coplan & Arbeau, 2008) ^[6]. Social inhibitions can result from several other psychological factors, like inferior feelings, poor self concept and low self esteem to induce a state of worthlessness and may force the individual to adopt a protective shield by avoiding social situations. Lack of social skills is also a common problem for such children, where they fail to express themselves in a social setting. Fear of being negatively evaluated, reviewed and rejected, also may lead to actively avoiding social situations or withdrawal (Volbrecht & Goldsmith, 2010) ^[17]. When parents or teachers start comparing the individual's lack of ability to other successful children, the individual may become socially anxious and underperform even more.

Several researchers assume that emotional disorders also can manifest from social factors, such as personal experiences, traumas, conflicts, and environmental conditions. Young pupils who engage in groups learn how to resolve petty arguments as well as making rapid progress in academics. Knowledge transfer in most schools is one way, with teachers doing all of the talking in classrooms. This is in direct contrast to the philosophy that learning is primarily a social activity (Lindeman, 1926) ^[13]. Teachers spend maximum energy by reading texts, writing notes, to deliver the information for students, who sit passively – without listening anything. Teachers have to make social interaction as a part of the classroom dynamics, and make them interesting for learning because there is very little effective group work in many schools, making the learning process difficult (Darling-

Hammond, McLaughlin, Ed Baines, 1995). According to constructivist view, information must be absorbed mentally to have meaning for the learner (Piaget, 1979). Studies have found that pupils who worked together in groups progressed well in academic and social life. It was recommended that teachers should encourage pupils to get over their personal difficulties by not dominating a group but by encouraging them to work through problems together (Ed Baines, 2006). Study on school pupils which included academic grades, work-habit ratings, and discipline records revealed that relational negativity in early school, marked by conflict and dependency, was related to academic and behavioral outcomes, due to teachers' perceptions of their relationships with students. It was also found that gender difference perception of teacher-child relationships showed boys with teachers support had low levels of conflict as better long-term outcomes, and girls with close relationships with teachers had fewer behavioral difficulties in their later years. (Hamre, B. K., Pianta, R. C., 2001). Another study examined teacher-child relationship as closeness, dependency, and conflict were related to various aspects of children's school adjustment, including academic performance, as well as teachers' ratings of school liking and self-directedness (Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W, 1997). Children showed larger gains in self-regulation when they experienced closer teacher-child relationships (Cadima, J., Verschuere, K., Leal, T., & Guedes, C., 2016) ^[4].

Popular methods for overcoming social Inhibitions

1. Using cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), people with poor social skills are taught methods to help identify their social inhibition so that they learn ways in which they can overcome their social averting behaviors (Hirshfeld-Becker *et al.*, 2010) ^[11]. But CBT is mainly available only outside of school and requires longer time, and its expensive treatment makes this method unattainable for many (Scott, 2006).
2. Self-help guides also do not come from any evidence based research, and at times may be harmful to the user (Norcross, Santrock, Zuckerman, Sommer, & Campbell, 2003) ^[14].
3. With medications, many side effects such as insomnia or suicidal idealization is observed (Gibbons *et al.*, 2007) ^[13].

Sport and team games as remedy

Decreased leisure time and more study time reduces peer interactions and makes the school an uninteresting atmosphere where learning becomes a burden for the student. School-based recess with outdoor fun games where there are no rules or boundaries, can be used to make them enjoy academic life. Studies have suggested that students need physical activity such as outdoor games and recreation in order to release pent up energy and interact with each other in a conducive environment, in order to grow socially. In addition, free outdoor play allows them leisure time in which cognitive skills also can develop. Moreover, the foundation for social adaptability and development of phenotypes takes place as expansion of the individual's current and subsequent environments provide better and effective communication with their peers (Pellegrini A, 2009). With team games, students learn resilience, social skills, sportsmanship and accepting failure as normal, which otherwise may not be possible to inculcate by any other means throughout life.

Conclusion

According to many studies related to school life, group work, team games or interacting in groups can be effective methods to engage students in a positive environment. Involvement in outdoor team games influences their cohesiveness and interactions among their peers. A happy atmosphere not only creates co-existence and cooperation among students, but helps to erase their withdrawal mindset. Games and sports are the gateways to showcase their talents, physical prowess, and to gain the much needed recognition and attention in their peer group. Friendly debates, adjustments and a prosocial nature would be nurtured by playing games. Thus if children learn in groups consistently, they really can learn to work together (Ed Baines, 2006). Regular social interactions initiates verbal clarity, expression and regulation of situational anger and 'coming back to terms' within a short time with increased cognitive ability and assertiveness, and effectively face adverse situations. Group discussions and positive talks in open environment can be adopted to bring in some differences in their attitudes. Studies have revealed that dropouts among girls from economically weaker sections are on the increase. Even if cultural and social demands forces girls or boys to discontinue education at school levels, participation in sports and games can enhance their personal identity and self worth and reduce the dropout rate. Such self appraisals and self acceptance are necessary for leading a normal, contented and dignified life.

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