

Further, the raft method applies as an important tool in teaching the students on...

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Reflection Paper

Introduction

Working in a group is one of the strategies that the teachers can apply in developing teaching programs for their classes. This method has the obvious advantages that it draws input from a wider resource pool in terms of views and perspectives from the different participating group members. This paper evaluates both the negative and positive sides of working in a group that I personally experienced when we were creating a whole unit of lessons in history, English and science classes with two native students.

One of the advantages that one experiences by working in a group is that a group provides the members with diverse options on the completion of task due to multiple contributions. I personally experienced this advantage. It was easy to complete the task as we had diverse options that helped in simplifying the task.

In addition, through working in a group, I was in a position to identify as well as correct errors in the strategy we had identified. This made it possible for us to come up with high quality lesson plans since we easily recognized and corrected the errors in our identified strategy .

Moreover, through working with my group members, I felt relieved from the pressure of working alone. Some tasks were difficult and I could not individually complete them hence through working in a group helped to simplify them.

In working with a group of the native speakers to make a complete unit of the lessons in history, English, and science classes, I personally experienced some challenges. For one, I was completely lost as well as confused since the

idea of teaching a novel in the classrooms was totally new. The other challenge that I faced was brought about of the strategies, which we learned. These strategies were new and I had never applied or used any of them earlier. Additionally, I have never been a formal teacher and I had an experience of only 3 months. This therefore presented some challenges. What's more, the format of the lesson plan was completely different from the one in my country. It was also hard for me to get the samples of lesson plans, which would provide me with an example of what we were required to write.

Furthermore, it was difficult to feel included in the group, as the other group members were able to communicate among each other far more easily than I could with them due to my accent. The other members therefore, inevitably developed a stronger sense of association among themselves to my exclusion. This also made it difficult for me to ask a question or seek a clarification from the other group members as I felt that they were not willing to help.

Additionally, Lack of flexibility in the conduct of group affairs meant that I had to miss some sessions as I have a child to take care of. Use of technology, such as emailing to liaise on progress, to circumvent this hurdle was not keenly appreciated in my group.

Besides, we had all agreed to meet at the same time, but my group members met earlier without even informing me about the change of meeting time. This inconvenienced me a lot, as I went to the campus on the previously agreed time and found nobody. When I enquired why they did not inform me through email, they said that they had forgotten since they had a

lot to do. Since I was not that useful to the group, my group members were completely unsupportive and they did not even answer my questions. They wanted the group paper to be completed without sharing any information, experiences, or knowledge hence this was very discouraging.

For the apt understanding of the material under study, the novel 'A journey into the centre of the earth' by Jules Verne and the whole subject of exploration, we chose to employ largely inclusive methods. This required the students to immerse themselves into the subject matter as a matter of interest rather than as a mandatory task that had to be accomplished. In making our lessons more learners friendly, we chose to employ the jigsaw teaching method, the RAFT method of writing, and The ReQuest strategy. In terms of the jigsaw teaching method, we agreed that for the apt coverage of the book, the students stood a chance of learning all about the book within the shortest possible time if they worked together in groups of preferably three to four. The use of groups in learning of the book aimed at sharing of knowledge on the book between the group members rather than depending on the individual understanding of each student. This method proves to be a time saver considering the limited number of lessons available for the covering of such an expansive text.

The RAFT method of writing was another tool that the group members felt would be of importance in training the students on appropriate manner of disseminating information to its various users. This method emphasizes the use of consideration of all the players in the creation of a piece of writing. The consideration of the role played by the writer in this novel is expected to differentiate the learning points in each of the three classes in history,

science and English. The lessons intended for each of these classes are entirely different and an evaluation of the role the writer in the novel using this method is an invaluable resource.

The ReQuest strategy allows the students to engage the teacher on the text. In this regard, the roles are turned, and the students generate questions which are posed to the teacher which they then answer. This strategy seeks to involve the students in learning the relevant information in the novel which relates to their subject. It is also a great substitute for research as the student extract the information they require from the teacher rather than having to conduct long hours of research which would be time consuming given the limited time at our disposal.

The manner in which consensus was reached on the appropriate strategies to apply was arrived at after a consensus among the group members. Each group member was assigned the task of finding the learning points that would be relevant to their class and enumerate on the strategy they feel would best suite them in developing their lesson plans. Further, the group members met and discussed each member's proposed strategy outlining forecasted weaknesses and strengths in the chosen strategy. Members would propose improvements and amendment unto each individual strategy, after which they were aggregated and a middle ground found that suite all the classes well.

The negative sides of working in a group that I experienced were very demoralizing. For this reason, there is a great necessity for the professor to give us the freedom to choose members that we are comfortable working

with. This will essentially help to make the experience better.

It would actually be easier for me if I were in a group of my fellow international students. Working with this group had proven to be of great effect in the past, as we had a better chance of encouraging one another and we even asked our professor various questions without any fear.

In addition, if we had the freedom to choose the group members to work with would have been better because this would have given us an opportunity to pick the group members we knew as well as group members we would feel comfortable communicating with.

Lastly, if we had the chance to work with our fellow international students, we would have provided lesson plans that would resemble the ones we had provided in our countries. In fact, this would have been great, as we would have the idea of what was required from us and more so, we would have given each other the chance to see how the teaching process was conducted in our different countries. With the feedback as well as comments of both the professor and student in our class, we would have improved our areas of weaknesses and add to our experience through observing ways of teaching of our peers.