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## Unlocking Collective Intelligence: The Economic and Social Returns of Embedding Peer Learning in Educational Policy

Neeraj Saxena\*

In the age of information abundance and AI-assisted cognition, the single most undervalued component of learning in formal education is peer learning. While conventional education systems prioritise individual performance, isolated assessment, and competition, the real-world calls for collaboration, co-creation, and collective problem-solving. Peer learning—especially when linked to formative and co-assessment practices—is central to building these capacities. This article argues that peer learning is not merely a pedagogical technique but a foundational element of heutagogy (self-determined learning), particularly when integrated with models like SPRINT, which aim for the highest levels of Bloom's Taxonomy—Evaluate and Create.

### The Lost Dimension

Traditional education systems were designed during industrial times and still revolve around rigid structures: teacher-led instruction, standardised testing, and content memorisation. Collaboration is seen as potential cheating, feedback is limited to teacher comments, and evaluation is summative and terminal. Such structures make peer learning virtually invisible, suppressing opportunities for students to learn from each other, debate ideas, or co-develop projects.

### Example: The Missed Opportunity in Mathematics Education

Consider a conventional mathematics classroom where students independently solve equations, receive grades, and move forward without discussing problem-solving approaches. Compare this with a collaborative mathematics environment where students:

- Explain their reasoning processes to peers,
- Debate multiple solution methods,
- Identify and correct each other's misconceptions, and
- Co-construct visual representations of abstract concepts.

Research by Boaler (2015) demonstrated that mathematics classrooms implementing peer discussion and collaborative problem-solving saw not only higher achievement scores but significantly deeper conceptual understanding and greater mathematical identity development.

### The Paradox of Professional Reality

An illuminating contradiction exists between educational practice and professional reality (Table-1).

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