

COOPERATIVE LEARNING: AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM STRATEGY

by:

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“Without the member’s cooperation, society cannot survive, and the society of man has made survival possible because of the cooperativeness of its members It was not an advantageous individual here and there who did so, but the group. The best individuals who are enabled to do so by their group are most likely to survive in human societies.”

In past classroom situations, how students interact with one another is a neglected aspect of instruction. Most of the time is spent on teacher-pupil interaction or between them and materials like books. But nowadays, cooperative learning is accepted and widely used in schools for better learning.

Cooperative Learning is a successful teaching approach in which pupils will work together in small groups to help one another learn to achieve a common goal which is to understand the subject. In this environment of strategy to instruction, pupils sink or swim together. In order for this approach to be successful, we must organize the classroom in such a way that cooperation is not only for academic success but builds camaraderie within the class as well.

Thus, effective cooperative learning situations naturally have structures such as these:

Small, heterogeneous groups. Mostly comprised of two to six learners with different educational abilities, including boys and girls but we should not let students choose their own group.

Clear goals. Give groups clear goals toward which to work. They might be asked to solve a difficult Mathematical problem or identify the characters of a particular story.

Interdependence of group members. Mutual interdependence can be accomplished when each group member has a unique and essential function within the group. The pupils will be assigned different roles.

Teacher as a monitor. The teacher monitors each group to be sure that interactions are productive and socially appropriate. Do pupils trust and support one another? Are they actively participating?

Individual accountability. Each pupil should demonstrate individual mastery or accomplishment of the group's goals. This can be done by answering questions in class or in a written test.

Rewards for group success. Group members are rewarded for the success of the group as a whole. This could be intrinsic such as praises or applauses and/or extrinsic like candies or additional points.

Self-evaluation. Ask each group to identify ways in which it has functioned effectively and ways in which it needs to improve.

Varying duration. Some groups are formed on a short-term basis to accomplish tasks whereas others are formed to work toward long-term classroom goals. Vary the duration depending upon the particular tasks to be accomplished.

The responsibilities of teachers and students in the classroom are altered through cooperative learning. Groups of students now share ownership of teaching and learning; the teacher is no longer solely responsible for it. All have equal power over establishing objectives, evaluating student progress, and facilitating learning. Students now have more chances to engage in active learning, challenge one another, share and discuss their ideas, and assimilate what they have learned. Cooperative learning enhances academic

performance, fosters meaningful discussion and the examination of many viewpoints, and has been shown to raise students' self-worth, motivation, and empathy.

Research conducted by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) about Classroom Instruction that Works cited that organizing students when learning in groups cooperatively may result in elevated percentiles in assessment.

Other researchers stated that cooperation in the higher group as well as an individual achievement, vigorous relationships with colleagues, extra metacognition, and added psychological well-being and self-esteem (Johnson and Johnson 1989).

When employed well, cooperative learning promotes achievement, student discussion, active learning, student confidence, and student motivation when it is properly applied. The abilities that students acquire through group projects are distinct from those that they acquire through solitary work. The abilities required to be a "team player" (such as verbalizing and defending ideas, handling disagreements, collaborating, forging consensus, and disagreeing gracefully) are becoming more important and practical as more firms arrange personnel into teams and task groups. Students are given an opportunity to grow their interpersonal skills as well as real-world experiences that will help them succeed in their future occupations when they work in cooperative groups to complete academic projects.

Have you been in a cooperative learning situation? Is it effective in the learning and development of your pupils? What was the result?

References:

<http://www.co-operation.org/what-is-cooperative-learning/>

<https://www.teachervision.com/professional-development/cooperative-learning>