

Practical Cooperative Learning Skills in Secondary Schools

- Not to teach but to participate -

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- (1) I. Why Use Cooperative Learning?
- (2)



In *Nobody Left to Hate*, leading social psychologist Elliot Aronson argues that the negative atmosphere in our schools makes school an unpleasant experience for most normal students. To avoid this kind of problems, we need to have strategies for creating a more supportive, stimulating, and compassionate environment in our schools. Then the students can learn how to control their own impulses, how to respect others, and how to resolve conflicts amicably. In this way, teachers can promote cooperation rather than competition without sacrificing academics.

- (3) II. What Is Cooperative Learning?

Cooperative learning was proposed in response to traditional curriculum-driven education. In cooperative learning environments, students interact in purposely structured heterogeneous group to support the learning of oneself and others in the same group. Cooperative learning explicitly builds cooperation skills by assigning roles to team members and establishing norms for conflict resolution via arbitration. Cooperative learning should also provide the means for group reflection and individual self-assessment.

It is only under certain conditions that cooperative efforts may be expected to be more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. Those conditions are Positive Interdependence; sink or swim together, Face-to-Face Interaction; promote each other's success, Individual & Group Accountability; no hitchhiking! no social loafing, Interpersonal & Small-Group Skills, Group Processing.

When teachers make groups, it is very helpful to use Excel making the group members heterogeneous regarding race, gender, ability, etc. First, make a list based on their grade. Second, make a group who is the highest student, the lowest

student and two mid-level students. And then make the other groups in the same way.

(4) III. Cooperative Learning Skills

1. Jigsaw Reading

The jigsaw classroom is very simple to use. If you're a teacher, just follow these steps.

- 1) Divide students into 5- or 6-person jigsaw groups. The groups should be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and ability.
- 2) Divide the day's lesson into 5-6 segments.
- 3) Assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment.
- 4) Form temporary "expert groups" by having one student from each jigsaw group join other students assigned to the same segment. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their segment and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
- 5) Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups.
- 6) Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group. Encourage others in the group to ask questions for clarification.
- 7) Float from group to group, observing the process. If any group is having trouble (e.g., a member is dominating or disruptive), make an appropriate intervention. Eventually, it's best for the group leader to handle this task.
- 8) At the end of the session, give a quiz on the material so that students quickly come to realize that these sessions are not just fun and games but really count.

2. Jigsaw Writing - Making a story using pictures

- 1) Get into groups of four people, and get a letter A B C D
- 2) Find all the people who have the same letter as you- eg, all A's together.
- 3) You will be given a picture - all the same.
- 4) Talk in your group about what is happening in the picture.
- 5) With the help of the group, write some notes about what is happening in the picture.
- 6) Go back to your original group. You will now have four different pictures in the group.
- 7) Take turns to tell your group what is happening in your picture.
- 8) Now your group has to make a story which has all four pictures. You have to agree on the order of the pictures and on the story. Use the expressions to help

you in this discussion.

- 9) Write down your part of the story to read to the class.
- 10) Your whole group presents their story to the class.
- 11) In your group, together edit your story as good as you can—correct errors, use interesting words, linking words
- 12) Publish your story.

3. Brainstorming

Brainstorming can be an effective way to generate lots of ideas on a specific issue and then determine which idea – or ideas – is the best solution.

4. Grammar Dictation or Dictogloss (by Ruth Wajnryb)

The dictogloss is a teaching procedure that involves the speedy dictation of a short text to a group of language students.

5. Discovery Listening by Mugnus Wilson

Discovery listening tries to achieve a focus on sound and word recognition by adapting the dictogloss approach, making it much more text-focused. The main goal is to guide students towards noticing the differences between their reconstructed text and the original, and then discover the reasons for their listening difficulties.

6. Strip Story

Teachers will give each group a set of strips, each student given a strip of paper. Each strip will contain a line from a story. The students will read their lines to their group and then discuss where the strips are located in order to put the strips in the correct order.

7. Sentence Auction

Holding 'Sentence Auctions' is a fun way to help students review key points in grammar and sentence construction while having some good fun. Basically, students in small groups are given some 'money' with which to bid on various sentences. These sentences include correct and incorrect sentences, the group which 'buys' the most correct sentences wins the game.

8. Betting Game

This is very interesting and helpful technique when checking the comprehension of the text.

9. Six Thinking Hats by Edward Bono

One thinking style(hat) is not inherently better than another. A full, balanced team recognizes the need for all hats in order for the team to consider all aspects of whatever issues they are facing.

10. Dynamic Words

Teachers can use this technique when having the students memorize the words in a short time.

(5) IV. Conclusion

Cooperative learning is a successful learning strategy which promotes student learning and academic achievement, increases student retention, enhances student satisfaction with their learning experience, helps students develop skills in oral communication, develops students' social skills, promotes students' self-esteem, and helps to promote positive race relations

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