

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is cooperative learning?

Cooperative learning is a learning and teaching method where students work in heterogeneous groups to achieve a common academic goal.

2. Why should I use cooperative learning? Cooperative learning has been proven by numerous educational studies to provide an effective learning environment for all students. Regardless of a student's race, ethnicity, language efficiency, or achievement level, cooperative learning promotes academic and social success.

3. Does cooperative learning work for all subject matter? Yes, cooperative learning has been proven to produce higher achievement scores, higher academic test scores, and greater comprehension of all subject matter.



References

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Simple Cooperative Learning Steps For The Busy Teacher



Before The Assignment

Teacher Role:

- Find a lesson that facilitates group work.
- Structure the task to promote interdependence among students.
- Create a clear outcome of objectives as to what the groups and individual students must accomplish upon completing the assignment.
- Divide the class into heterogeneous groups containing students who are likely to work effectively with one another.
- Delegate which students will fulfill a particular role (recorder, scribe, timer, and leader) and when the students should switch roles.
- Create an individual accountability component to the lesson. **This is a key factor.** Ways to assess individual: individual tests, random selection of a group member to explain the final product; have each student explain verbally and/or in writing what they learned.
- Design an evaluation plan that allows each student to evaluate his or herself and all other members. Areas of evaluation should cover participation, academic, and social success of all members.

During The Assignment

Teacher Role:

- Serve as a resource and as a monitor.
- Provide guidance to the groups about appropriate behavior.
- Do not overpower the group.
- Further the groups process by asking guiding, open-ended questions.
- Provide rewards for group success.

Student Role:

- Work collaboratively and encourage other group members.
- Perform in a manner that facilitates the success of all group members.
- Display the following social skills: leadership, decision-making, trust building, communication, and conflict management.



After The Assignment

Teacher Role:

- Review the students' evaluations and individual accountability results.
- Assess individual, group evaluation, and final product.
- Create a file for each student's individual accountability results and group evaluations in order to improve future lessons to fully encompass cooperative learning.
- Consider regrouping individuals for future cooperative learning lessons by students' gender, race, ethnic background, academic and social achievement, personality type, and learning style.

Student Role:

- Assess learning on an individual level as well as have group accountability evaluation.

