Cooperative Learning Strategy

Share Results 1. Assign Groups 2. Provide Guidelines 3. Assign Task With Parameters 4. Assessment 5. Provide Assistance As Needed

Cooperative Learning For Grades 2 – 3

Debbie Silver, Ed.D.
www.debbiesilver.com
<dsilver@bayou.com>

What is Cooperative Learning?

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy that uses small groups of students working together and helping one another on specific learning tasks with an emphasis on group members supporting one another.
It is characterized by activities that:

1. **Require students to depend on one another for success**. Having students sit side by side working on something they could just as easily do by themselves in *not* cooperative learning. Students must be required to share materials, knowledge, time, talents, and effort (or any combination of these).

2. **Provide for individual accountability**. Group members share jobs and make group presentations. Group members are tested individually and/or as a group to ensure that each person has mastered the required learning.

3. **Utilizes face-to-face interaction among students**. For all group work students are arranged in close proximity of each other. They can be at tables, in desks or chairs pushed together, on the floor, or virtually anywhere they can do the task at hand separated from other groups.

4. **Focus on interpersonal and group skills**. Tasks are designed to include components of positive interpersonal communication skills such as active listening, building consensus, sharing, supporting, restating, using appropriate eye contact and gestures, and encouraging. Teams learn to stay on task and check each other for understanding.

Traditional Classroom	Cooperative Classroom
Learners are passive	Learners are active
Students work alone	Students work with 1 to 4 partners
Teacher directs work	Students direct work
Silence is valued	Learning noise is appropriate
Teacher initiates discussion	Students initiate discussion
Some students do not participate	All students participate
Individual accountability	Individual and group accountability
Independent learners	Interdependent learners
Affirmations come from teacher	Affirmations come from peers
Individual materials needed	Shared materials

Tips for Cooperative Learning in the Early Grades

• Think big, start small! Try short, easy activities at first.

• Children from three 1/2 to five years old work best in pairs. First and second graders work best in pairs.

• Third graders are usually ready to work in groups of four (if they work in "pairs within pairs"). Pairs can always work together for a while and then compare notes with another group.

• Partners may not change for several days or weeks in primary grades.

• Do not assign a cooperative learning activity that could just as easily (or more easily) be done alone. Be sure to create a *positive interdependence* in the way you structure the activity.

• Whole class group-building activities are used to build class morale, develop team spirit, and promote awareness of others in the class.
• Paired group-building activities are designed to bring students together in pairs to develop awareness of others, build communication skills, foster trust, and provide practice for interacting successfully with others.

• Participation can be encouraged by grouping reluctant students with more nurturing students.

• Competition between students should be discouraged because competition increases anxiety among some students and causes them to withdraw. Competition with last year's group or a previous personal performance may be appropriate.

• If the activity is fun, no other reward may be needed since intrinsic rewards are most fulfilling. However, teachers of young learners may choose to use:
    - verbal praise
    - food rewards
    - singing a favorite song

- an art activity
- game time
- other suitable reinforcers
- activities may be videotaped as a reward

JOB ASSIGNMENTS:

Group Leader
1. Reads all directions to group
2. Leads the discussions
3. Checks the data sheet
4. Helps with clean-up
5. Is the only one who can ask a question of the teacher

Materials Manager
1. Is responsible for collecting and returning all materials & supplies to the appropriate place(s)
2. Is the only one who can get up for materials and supplies
3. Makes sure the everyone in the group has equal access to the materials and supplies
4. Checks the data sheet
5. Helps with clean-up

Time Keeper
1. Holds the team stopwatch (or watches the clock)
2. Keeps group on task and reminds them about time
3. Is responsible for getting the group to finish on time
4. Checks the data sheet
5. Helps with clean-up

Data Collector
1. Collects the data for the activity
2. Records data on the appropriate form or sheet
3. Returns data sheet to teacher and/or records group data on class data sheet
4. Makes sure all other team members check the data sheet
5. Helps with clean-up

Since this is not a perfect world, and all class populations are not divisible by four, I have a fifth job that can be assigned in a group:

Encourager
1. Monitors other team members to make sure they do their own jobs
2. Takes responsibility for praising and affirming jobs that are well done
3. Records comments and actions that show positive interpersonal communication
4. Reports recorded data to group at de-briefing session
5. Helps with clean-up

If a group of four has one member absent, two of the jobs can be combined for that day.

Part of the group's participation grade is based on how well each team member performs her/his job. Points are deducted if one team member does another team member's assigned responsibility.

Cooperative Learning Jobs for Lower Elementary

Group Leader
1. Leads discussion
2. Only person who can ask questions of the teacher

Materials Manager
1. Gets materials out and puts them back
2. Responsible for taking care of materials

Time Keeper
1. Keeps group on task
2. Makes sure group gets done on time

Data Collector
1. Writes down information
2. Makes sure all teacher gets all forms and papers

Group Participation Number Line

Date: _____

Group Number: _____

Group Members Present: _____

_____

_____

100 95 90 85 80 75 70 65 60 55 50 45 40 35 30 25 20 15 10 5 0

Participation Points Earned: _____

Group Participation Number Line

Date: _____   Group Number: _____

Group Members Present:
_____

_____

+5	+4	+3	+2	+1

Participation Points Earned: _____

Group Participation Number Line

Date: _____   Group Number: _____

Group Members Present:
_____

_____

_____

There is nothing chaotic about cooperative learning that is well-planned and well-managed. Teachers should plan activities that are challenging and yet doable if the group members work together. Tasks should require the concentrated efforts of all team members doing their jobs and working with in the allotted time. Materials and supplies should be out and sorted before students arrive. During the cooperative learning activity it is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor the students and:

- Give immediate feedback and reinforcement for learning
- Re-teach certain concepts if necessary
- Clarify directions
- Encourage oral elaboration
- Affirm positive interactions and efforts
- Informally assess student learning and collaboration

Another way to ensure that the cooperative learning activity is organized and has a smooth closure is to allow time after clean up and whole group information sharing to ask the groups to evaluate how they interacted with one another. Either verbally or in their journals students can answer questions like these:

- Tell how involved each of your team members was in the decisions your group made.
- How do you feel about the work your group did today? Why?
- What would you would like to tell your teammates about how you felt during today's activity or the way you feel now?
- What could your team do to improve the way you get along and/or work together?
- What is your favorite thing about being on this team?

Teachers need to keep a close watch on the personal interactions going on within groups. Happy well-functioning groups matched with appropriate tasks and given adequate time constraints run smoothly.

Alternative Ways to Use Cooperative Learning

1. **Within a lecture or presentation:**
    The teacher is discussing, modeling, or explaining something. S/he pauses to ask small groups to summarize, categorize, debate, describe, or otherwise react to the presented material.

2. **With higher level questioning:**
    The teacher asks small groups to come up with a team consensus on something to do with analysis, synthesis, or evaluation of the concept being discussed.

3. **As practice reinforcement:**
    The teacher asks students to get with their groups to practice, memorize, or review the given concepts.

4. **Decision-making/problem solving:**
    The group is to reach a decision or solve a problem presented by the teacher. The teacher is leading a class discussion on the separation of church and state in the United States Constitution. She asks small "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. Groups are to figure out a way for students to say the Pledge without violating the spirit of the law.

5. **As a review:**
    The teacher asks a question. Team members put their heads together to discuss the answer. The teacher calls out a color, and the person who has that color dot will answer the question as the teacher whips through the groups.

6. **In a tournament or game format:**
    There are several models for using cooperative learning in a tournament or game format. Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) and Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT) are two of the more popular ones.

7. **With peer editing:**
    Team members proofread each other's work and offer suggestions for improvement. This practice helps both the "corrector" and the "correctee."
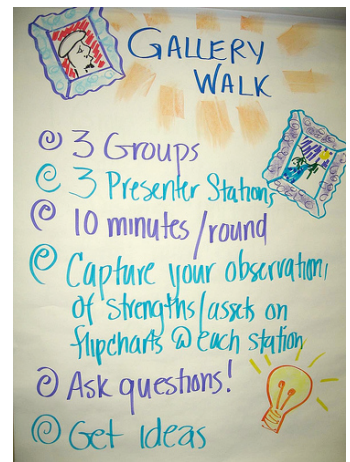
8.   **As an assessment:**
     A Gallery Walk (sometimes called Carousel Walk) is a way to assess students in groups. The teacher puts large pieces of newsprint around the room. On the top of each is a question for which there are several answers. Student groups are given different colored markers and asked to write one correct answer to each question. Answers cannot be repeated on a page. The teacher can informally assess student learning by listening to them as they "think out loud" in their groups (Slavin calls this *oral elaboration*). Or teachers can more formally assess the answers by noting the flow of answers used by each colored group.

9.   **Research projects or group investigations:**
     Group work on projects can promote sharing of the load and commitment to a time line. Often times students who are procrastinators when it comes to doing their own work will get motivated by their peers to finish their part of the assignment.

10. **Checking homework:**
     Even though homework is for independent practice, many teachers have limited time for checking and correcting it during a rushed day. Group members can check each other's work for accuracy.

Group Work Assessment Sheet
By Anna Chan Rekate and Martha Ehrenfeld

Student's name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Type of work or project: _____

_____

1.   Who did you work with in your group? Describe one thing that each person contributed to the group to make the project successful.

Name: _____

Contribution: _____

_____

Name: _____

Contribution: _____

_____

Name: _____

Contribution: _____

_____

Name: _____

Contribution: _____

_____

2.   Were there any conflicts that came up? Describe how you solved this problem. _____

_____

3.   How was doing this activity with the group different than if you were to do it alone? _____

_____

4.   List three suggestions about how the group could have done something differently.

     a. _____

     b. _____

     c. _____

5.   What did you do to contribute to the success of the activity for the group? _____

_____

6.   What would you change about your own contributions to the group? _____

_____

Cooperative Learning Activities

1. **Jigsaw** - Groups with five students are set up. Each group member is assigned some unique material to learn and then to teach to his group members. To help in the learning students across the class working on the same sub-section get together to decide what is important and how to teach it. After practice in these "expert" groups the original groups reform and students teach each other.

2. **Think-Pair-Share** - Involves a three step cooperative structure. During the first step individuals think silently about a question posed by the instructor. Individuals pair up during the second step and exchange thoughts. In the third step, the pairs share their responses with other pairs, other teams, or the entire group.

3. **Three-Step Interview** (Kagan) - Each member of a team chooses another member to be a partner. During the first step individuals interview their partners by asking clarifying questions. During the second step partners reverse the roles. For the final step, members share their partner's response with the team.

4. **Round-Robin Brainstorming** (Kagan)- Class is divided into small groups (4 to 6) with one person appointed as the recorder. A question is posed with many answers and students are given time to think about answers. After the "think time," members of the team share responses with one another round robin style. The recorder writes down the answers of the group members. The person next to the recorder starts and each person in the group in order gives an answer until time is called.

5. **Three-minute review** - Teachers stop any time during a lecture or discussion and give teams three minutes to review what has been said, ask clarifying questions or answer questions.

6. **Numbered Heads Together** (Kagan) - A team of four is established. Each member is given numbers of 1, 2, 3, 4. Questions are asked of the group. Groups work together to answer the question so that all can verbally answer the question. Teacher calls out a number (two) and each two is asked to give the answer.

7. **Team Pair Solo** (Kagan)- Students do problems first as a team, then with a partner, and finally on their own. It is designed to motivate students to tackle and succeed at problems which initially are beyond their ability. It is based on a simple notion of mediated learning. Students can do more things with help (mediation) than they can do alone. By allowing them to work on problems they could not do alone, first as a team and then with a partner, they progress to a point they can do alone that which at first they could do only with help.

8. **Circle the Sage** (Kagan)- First the teacher polls the class to see which students have a special knowledge to share. For example the teacher may ask who in the class was able to solve a difficult math homework question, who had visited Mexico, who knows the chemical reactions involved in how salting the streets help dissipate snow. Those students (the sages) stand and spread out in the room. The teacher then has the rest of the classmates each surround a sage, with no two members of the same team going to the same sage. The sage explains what they

know while the classmates listen, ask questions, and take notes. All students then return to their teams. Each in turn, explains what they learned. Because each one has gone to a different sage, they compare notes. If there is disagreement, they stand up as a team. Finally, the disagreements are aired and resolved.

List of Related Citations
SDE Cooperative Learning for Generation 2.0
Presented by Dr. Debbie Silver

Dettmer, P., Thurston, L. P., & Dyck, N. J. (2009). *Collaboration, consultation, and teamwork for students with special needs* (6th ed.). Columbus, OH: Pearson.

Gillies, R. M., & Boyle, M. (2008). Teachers' discourse during cooperative learning and their perceptions of this pedagogical practice. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 24,* 1333–1348.

Johnson, D.W. and R.T. Johnson. *Learning Together And Alone*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991.

Kagan, S. and Miguel Kagan. *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing, 2009.

Kutnick, P., Ota, C., & Berdondini, L. (2008). Improving the effects of group working in classrooms with young school-aged children: Facilitating attainment, interaction and classroom activity. *Learning and Instruction, 18*(1), 83–95.

Silver, D. (2005). *Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers: Finding the Rhythm for Differentiated Learning*. Nashville, TN: Incentive Publications.

Willis, J. A. (2009). *Inspiring middle school minds: Gifted, creative, & challenging*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Websites:

Cooperative Learning in the ESL Classroom
http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/kagan001.html

E-How
http://www.ehow.com/list_5933310_elementary-school-cooperative-learning-games.html

Instructional Strategies Online
http://olc.spsd.sk.ca/de/pd/instr/strats/coop/index.html

The Cooperative Learning Center
http://www.clcrc.com/