

A Review on the Benefits and Limitations of the Cooperative Learning Model on School Achievement

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Abstract

In today's world, education is being reshaped to help individuals adapt to rapidly changing conditions, think independently, and develop lifelong learning skills. In this context, teaching models that enhance students' sense of personal responsibility and enable them to effectively use the knowledge and skills they acquire take center stage. The collaborative learning model stands out as an effective method to achieve these objectives. Collaborative learning is an approach that encourages students to share information and work together toward common goals through group activities. This study delves into the theoretical foundations of the collaborative learning model, its application processes, and its role in education. The advantages of the model, particularly in foreign language learning, as well as the potential limitations, are highlighted. Research demonstrates the positive effects of collaborative learning on student motivation, communication skills, and social interaction. Furthermore, it is noted that this method may yield varying results depending on factors such as individual differences and group dynamics. In conclusion, the collaborative learning model is regarded as a powerful pedagogical tool that not only enhances students' academic success but also supports their social and emotional development. However, for the method to be implemented effectively, teachers must understand the fundamental principles of this model and develop suitable strategies for classroom practices. This study aims to guide educators who wish to better understand the potential of collaborative learning in education and apply this model more effectively.

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1. A Brief History of Cooperative Learning Model

One of the most important models for education developed in the past two centuries is coming of age – again! It is education based on cooperation. (Samples, R. 1992: 99)

Cooperative learning has a long history. For hundreds of years, various philosophers and educators have been concerned with this notion, but as the quotation shows, this interest has come and gone – it has not been a history of uninterrupted interest and continuous development. Before World War II, social theorists such as Allport, Watson, Shaw, and Mead began establishing cooperative learning theory after finding that group work was more effective and efficient in quantity, quality, and overall productivity when compared to working alone.

But it wasn't until 1937 that researchers May and Doob discovered that people who cooperate by helping one another to reach their mutual goals are more likely to achieve those goals than people who work independently toward the goal on their own. Additionally, they observed that individuals high in achievability were more likely to engage in competitiveness. American philosophers and psychologists John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Morton Deutsch influenced the theory of cooperative learning as it is practiced today. Dewey felt that students should learn the knowledge and social skills they could actually use outside the classroom, in the democratic society.

This theory views students as active participants in the learning process, emphasizing group discussions to exchange information and find answers collaboratively, rather than being passive listeners during teacher-led instruction. Lewin's contributions to cooperative learning stemmed from the importance of fostering relationships among group members to effectively achieve shared learning objectives. Similarly, Deutsch introduced the concept of positive social interdependence, which underscored each student's responsibility for enriching the group's collective knowledge.

Building on these foundations, David and Roger Johnson have significantly advanced cooperative learning theory. In 1975, they discovered that this approach fostered mutual respect, stronger communication, greater acceptance and support within groups, and an enhancement of diverse thinking strategies among members. In contrast, students who focused on competitive behaviors showed less interaction, lower levels of trust, and limited emotional engagement with their peers.

2. Key Elements of Cooperative Learning Model

Cooperative learning constitutes an instructional approach that has consistently demonstrated positive outcomes in diverse educational contexts (Tengku Nor Rizan, 2007). This method not only supports enhanced academic performance and achievement across various disciplines and dimensions of language learning but also fosters constructive social interactions among students (Slavin, 1995).

Contrary to widespread assumptions, cooperative learning transcends the conventional concept of group work. While traditional group work is often marked by uneven participation, with some members contributing minimally or not at all, cooperative learning demands equitable engagement and clearly defined roles for all participants. Each group member is tasked with specific responsibilities essential to the accomplishment of the collective objective, creating a structured learning framework. Teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring that the core elements of cooperative learning are embedded within the instructional process. By doing so, they guarantee that interdependence among members becomes instrumental in achieving group goals.

A common misconception among educators is equating the mere formation of small student groups with the implementation of cooperative learning principles. However, successful cooperative learning necessitates deliberate adherence to its foundational elements rather than simply assigning tasks to groups. Slavin (1999) cautions against this oversimplification, highlighting potential pitfalls. He warns that within unstructured group work, dominant individuals might undertake the majority of the task while others assume passive roles. Furthermore, there exists a risk that lower-achieving students may be sidelined or excluded from meaningful participation.

Such dynamics fundamentally undermine the philosophy underpinning cooperative learning and diminish its pedagogical efficacy. Although group work is not entirely irrelevant to educational practices, it lacks the structured robustness and transformative potential associated with cooperative learning. To distinguish cooperative learning from group work, scholars such as Dr. Spencer Kagan, a prominent contributor to the field since 1968 and a leading authority on related pedagogy, have offered precise definitions.

Kagan (1994) articulates cooperative learning through four foundational principles: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, and Simultaneous Interaction. He posits that authentic cooperative learning frameworks seamlessly integrate these principles, collectively referred to as PIES, into classroom activities.

In contrast, typical group work does not inherently embody these guiding principles. According to Kagan, the defining characteristic of cooperative learning lies in its alignment with PIES components, distinguishing it from generic group-based educational approaches. Positive Interdependence ensures mutual reliance among participants; Individual Accountability holds each student responsible for their contribution; Equal Participation guarantees active involvement from all members; and Simultaneous Interaction promotes dynamic engagement concurrently among participants. Incorporating these principles elevates classroom practices from rudimentary group tasks to sophisticated cooperative learning activities.

Complementing Kagan's contributions, Johnson and Johnson (1999) further refine the conceptual framework of cooperative learning through a detailed set of criteria. They propose five essential components that define genuine cooperative learning environments: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Promotive Interaction, Social Skills Development, and Group Processing. These criteria serve as benchmarks for assessing the authenticity and effectiveness of cooperative learning strategies.

Kagan (1994) identifies six key concepts of cooperative learning. Those concepts include teams, cooperative management, will to cooperate, skill to cooperate, basic principles, and structures. He notes that, "Not all cooperative learning lessons implement all six concepts, and some aspects of cooperative learning may include none. Competence in following the six key areas define a teacher's ability to successfully implement cooperative learning" (Kagan, 1994, p.4:1).

Cooperative learning, as a theoretical framework, is notably distinct from other pedagogical models, as it is firmly grounded in the theory of social independence. This concept, originally articulated by Koffka, Lewin, and Deutsch, has been further elaborated in the works of Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998b). Additionally, cooperative learning draws on cognitive learning theory, particularly the contributions of Piaget (1954), who underscored the role of intrinsic motivation in shaping student-centered knowledge construction.

Within a cooperative learning environment, students engage collectively in the process of constructing knowledge, which promotes both resource interdependence and role interconnectivity. Moreover, behavioral theory serves to underpin the structured nature of group-based tasks, ensuring they incorporate elements of rewards and goal orientation, thereby providing extrinsic motivators for academic engagement (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998a).

The principles of cooperative learning, as articulated by the Northern Province Department of Education (2001:20), center on two key aspects: classroom organization and learner skills. Classroom organization involves creating favorable conditions, such as fostering positive interdependence, encouraging face-to-face interactions, and ensuring individual and group accountability. On the other hand, learner skills emphasize the ability to effectively contribute within a cooperative learning environment. These include proficiency in small-group social interactions and group processing abilities, such as active listening, initiating discussions, facilitating participation (gatekeeping), and providing constructive evaluations.

Since learning takes place in a social context, knowledge is co-constructed among learners. For cooperative learning to be effective, certain guidelines—summarized by the Northern Province Department of Education (2001:18) should be followed during group activities:

- All group members should participate equally, avoiding domination by any single individual.
- Each member must contribute a fair share to the workload.
- The group should stay focused on the assigned task.
- Progress on the task must remain consistent throughout.

Mashile (2002:73) highlights the diverse methodologies inherent to cooperative learning, noting that each method has its distinct characteristics. Nonetheless, several core elements are fundamental to its successful implementation:

1. Teachers must outline clear and specific learning objectives.
2. Students should actively accept these objectives as their own.
3. Positive interdependence must be cultivated, creating a sense of “sink or swim together.” This ensures every member learns the assigned content and assists fellow group members in achieving mastery as well. Techniques for fostering positive interdependence include setting mutual goals, dividing labor to complete tasks collectively, allocating unique resources across members for collaborative problem-solving, assigning roles (e.g., recorder, researcher, organizer), and offering joint rewards for group accomplishments.
4. Face-to-face interactions are essential for discussing study material, explaining concepts and procedures, critiquing ideas and performances, and providing feedback, support, and encouragement.

5. Each student needs to be individually accountable for their portion of the work and their understanding of the outcomes. Cooperative learning is not intended for uneven workloads, such as one person completing a report for an entire group. The goal is for all members to learn collectively while being assessed for their individual contributions.

6. Public acknowledgment or tangible rewards for group success reinforce collaboration. Without such incentives, students may revert to working independently, diminishing the benefits of social learning.

7. Teachers should form small groups of three to five members with intentional heterogeneity regarding academic abilities, ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic levels, and gender.

8. Group members must engage in interaction skills such as leadership, negotiation, compromise, and clarification to fulfill their tasks effectively. To foster these behaviors and attitudes—such as trust-building, conflict resolution, constructive criticism, and encouragement—students often require formal instruction since these skills are not always innate.

9. Post-group reflections (debriefing sessions) provide students an opportunity to evaluate group dynamics and identify behaviors that either supported or hindered success at both the group and individual levels.

10. Adequate time for completing tasks is necessary; limiting time diminishes the academic and social gains of cooperative learning activities.

3. Types of Cooperative Learning Models

Johnson, Johnson, and Kolubec (1998) identify three types of cooperative learning groups, each with distinct purposes and no inherent superiority over others:

3.1. Formal Cooperative Learning Groups

Formal cooperative groups consist of students working together for durations ranging from a single session to several weeks. The aim is to achieve common learning goals tied to specific tasks or assignments. Formal groups can be applied to any subject or course assignment and serve as the foundational structure for all other cooperative learning approaches. Activities in these groups actively engage students in intellectual processes such as organizing material, explaining it to others, summarizing information, and integrating new concepts into their existing knowledge frameworks.

According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1998), formal groups represent the central mechanism for utilizing cooperative learning effectively.

In formal cooperative-learning groups, instructors guide learning in a number of ways:

1. Instructors make a number of preinstructional decisions. An instructor has to decide on the academic and social-skill objectives, the size of groups, the method of assigning student to groups, the roles students will be assigned, the materials needed to conduct the lesson, and the way the room will be arranged.

2. The instructor explains to students the task and the concept of positive interdependence. An instructor defines the assignment, teaches the required concepts and strategies, explains positive interdependence and individual accountability, gives the criteria for success, and specifies the expected social skills.

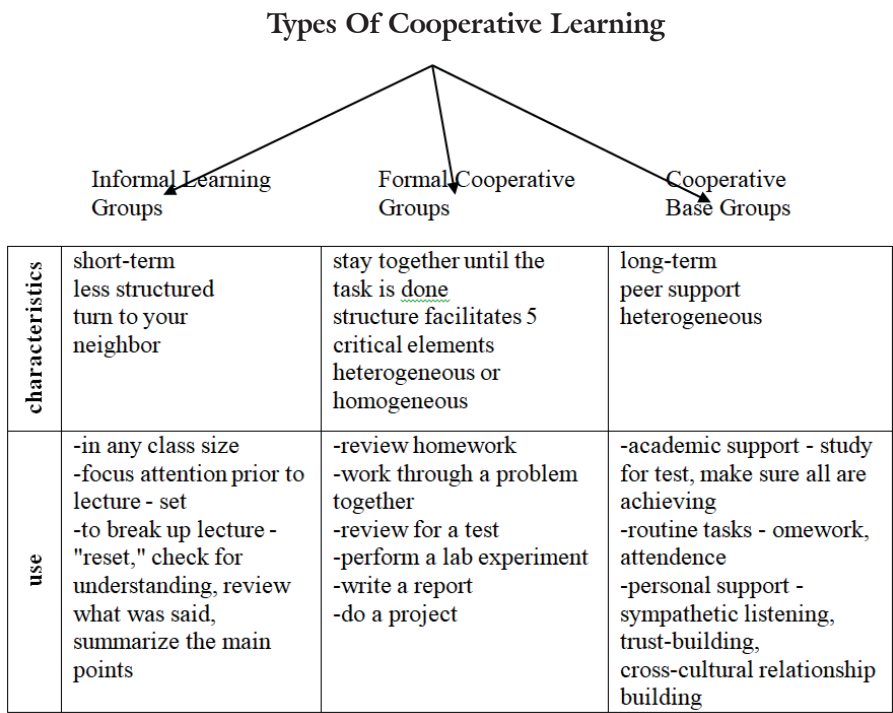
3. Instructors monitor students' learning and intervene to assist students with tasks or with interpersonal and group skills. An instructor systematically observes and collects data on each group as it works. When needed, the instructor intervenes to assist students in completing the task accurately and in working together effectively.

4. Instructors play a key role in assessing and evaluating students' learning, guiding them in analyzing how effectively their groups functioned. Each student's learning is thoroughly assessed, and their individual performance is carefully evaluated. Following this, members of the learning groups reflect on how well they collaborated and worked together.

3.2. Informal cooperative learning groups

As described by Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998b), these groups are primarily employed to support direct instruction methods such as presentations, demonstrations, or media-based teaching (e.g., films or videos). These groups are generally temporary and ad hoc, often designed to last only a few minutes during a class session. For example, instructors might ask students to pair up with a nearby classmate to briefly discuss a question or summarize recent lecture content. This approach serves to focus students' attention on the material being taught while also ensuring they process it cognitively.

3.3 Cooperative base groups are "long-term (lasting for at least a year), heterogeneous groups with stable membership whose primary purpose is for members to give each other the support, help, encouragement, and assistance each needs to progress academically. Base groups provide students with long-term, committed relationships." (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998, p.1:8). The three types are shown as in Figure 2.4.



The three types of cooperative learning methods are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. In practice, instructors might employ all three in a single class session (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998b), modifying their use according to the needs of the class. A range of strategies has been designed to implement these cooperative learning approaches effectively (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998a). For instance, when utilizing informal cooperative learning, instructors can enhance lectures at regular intervals of 10 to 15 minutes using techniques such as:

- Focused discussion pairs
- Question-and-answer pairs
- Advanced preparation papers
- Turn-to-your-neighbor summaries
- Cooperative note-taking pairs
- Read-and-explain pairs

Ultimately, cooperative learning succeeds only when every group member and the instructor fulfill their respective roles. As one of the most thoroughly defined group-learning methodologies, it incorporates five key elements that set it apart from other methods. It can be applied to any subject

matter, adapted for individual or blended strategies, and used with groups ranging from small classes to very large ones. Moreover, a wide variety of cooperative learning techniques caters to students across all age groups.

4. Cooperative Learning Strategies

Cooperative learning is highly beneficial for all student populations, including academically gifted students, mainstream learners, and English-language learners (ELLs). By fostering mutual respect and collaboration among diverse groups, it helps students build friendships while promoting active learning. Increased diversity within groups often enhances the benefits for participants, as students learn to rely on each other constructively for various tasks.

Typically, students work in teams of four, allowing them to split into pairs for specific activities and reconvene as a team to complete others seamlessly. However, achieving success requires clear classroom norms and protocols that encourage students to:

- Contribute meaningfully
- Stay focused on tasks
- Support each other
- Offer encouragement
- Share resources and ideas
- Solve problems collaboratively
- Provide and receive constructive feedback

Several popular cooperative learning techniques are versatile enough to support content-based subjects like science, math, social studies, language arts, and foreign languages. These strategies are particularly advantageous for ELLs as they integrate English language proficiency with content mastery. The following six approaches are particularly effective in small teams of four students:

4.1. Jigsaw

Teams of five are assembled, with each member assigned a portion of the material to learn and teach to their teammates. Students assigned the same topic form “expert” groups to discuss key concepts and teaching strategies. Once prepared, they return to their original groups to share their expertise. Assessments and tests typically follow this collaborative exercise.

4.2. Think-Pair-Share

This straightforward technique begins with an instructor posing a question. Students are given time to think about their response before pairing up to exchange ideas with a partner. The process enables students to organize their thoughts while the “pair” and “share” phases encourage them to refine their understanding by comparing perspectives. It also allows them to practice articulating their thoughts in a low-pressure environment before addressing the whole class.

4.3. Three-Step Interview

Each team member pairs up with another for an interview-style exchange. In the first step, one partner interviews the other using clarifying questions. Roles are reversed in the second step, and during the final step, partners share their counterparts’ responses with the rest of their team.

4.4. Round Robin

This brainstorming technique ensures every student participates by taking turns answering a question with brief responses like words or phrases without elaboration or critique. The rotation continues until all students have contributed. This approach encourages idea generation through equal participation while minimizing interruptions or inhibitions. The gathered ideas can then be synthesized into cohesive written pieces.

4.5. Three-Minute Review

At any point during a lesson or discussion on topics such as letter writing or report formatting, teachers can pause for three minutes to allow teams to review what has been covered. During this break, members can ask clarifying questions or provide answers, enhancing understanding and retention.

4.6. Numbered Heads

In this method, teams of four assign each member a number (1 through 4). After collaborating to ensure everyone understands the material, the instructor poses a question and randomly selects a number (e.g., 3). Members with that number in each group must then answer on behalf of their team, ensuring active engagement and accountability from all participants.

4.7. Buzz Groups

Buzz groups consist of small teams of four to six students formed spontaneously and quickly. These groups engage in informal discussions

on a specific topic or topics assigned to them, facilitating the exchange of ideas in a free-flowing manner. Buzz groups act as an effective warm-up activity for larger class discussions, helping to generate insights and ideas within a short amount of time. This approach can be particularly useful when preparing students to write essays on contemporary issues.

4.8. Talking Chips

In this strategy, students participate in group discussions using tokens (chips), surrendering one whenever they contribute. This ensures everyone has an equal opportunity to speak, fostering balanced participation within the group. By limiting how often each member can talk, this technique motivates less vocal students to engage and addresses challenges like dominant or conflicting personalities in the group.

4.9. Critical Debate

This activity is ideal for developing argumentative essays. Students take a stance on an issue that opposes their personal beliefs, form teams, and engage in discussions, presentations, and debates with an opposing group. This technique provides the class with an in-depth, multifaceted analysis of issues, encouraging students to move beyond simplistic viewpoints. It enables them to deepen their understanding of complex topics and appreciate diverse perspectives. This method is particularly effective for students at the tertiary level.

4.10. Write Around

This technique is suited for creative writing or summarization exercises. Teachers provide a sentence starter (e.g., “If there were no plants on Earth...” or “A man met an alien on the seashore...”), and each team member completes the sentence individually. Papers are then passed to the right, with each student building upon the previous work. After several rounds, the group will produce four cohesive summaries or stories. Students are then given time to refine or conclude their preferred version and present it to the class.

4.11. Praise-Question-Polish

In this approach, group members take turns reading their written work aloud while others follow along with printed copies. The process includes identifying strengths in the work (Praise), pointing out areas of confusion (Question), and providing constructive suggestions for improvement

(Polish). This collaborative evaluation helps students enhance both their own writing skills and their ability to critically analyze peers' work.

5. Benefits of Cooperative Learning Model

Cooperative learning fosters greater academic success for all students compared to individualistic or competitive models, where many students may lag behind (Slavin, 1967). Competitive environments often reward high-achieving students at the expense of those performing at average or low levels. In contrast, cooperative learning (CL) promotes an inclusive atmosphere where all participants benefit. Students assist one another, creating a supportive community that elevates everyone's performance (Kagan, 1986). This cooperative dynamic leads to improved self-esteem for all students (Webb, 1982). Human nature gravitates toward activities that validate individual abilities and promote participation in collective endeavors. Effective collaborative teams take ownership of both the process and outcomes when members are encouraged to work jointly toward shared goals.

This approach is especially transformative for individuals with a history of underachievement (Turnure & Zeigler, 1958). In contrast, passive educational models—where students simply absorb information from teachers—offer limited satisfaction or engagement. Cooperative learning not only enhances overall student performance but also bolsters critical thinking skills, knowledge retention, and interest in subject matter (Bligh, 1972). When students achieve success as part of this learning model, they develop a more positive outlook on the material and increased self-confidence. This creates a virtuous cycle: academic success strengthens self-esteem, which fuels greater enthusiasm and even better performance in the subject area. Furthermore, sharing individual achievements within a group amplifies positive outcomes for both individuals and the team as a whole. Some cooperative learning frameworks formalize this effect by acknowledging progress through certificates, awards, or group recognition for improvement.

5.1. Key Benefits of Cooperative Learning

Academic Achievement: Over 500 research studies affirm that cooperative learning yields significant academic benefits across all grade levels and content areas. It proves effective for diverse student groups, including those with special needs, high-achieving individuals, gifted learners, and students from urban or rural settings of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds. Cooperative learning consistently stands out as one of the most

thoroughly researched and effective educational innovations for producing positive academic and social outcomes. Its impact touches various aspects of individual and group development, making it an invaluable approach in modern education.

Consistency in Achievement: Research has shown that cooperative learning consistently leads to achievement gains, making it a powerful tool for enhancing academic performance.

Ethnic and Race Relations: Heterogeneous cooperative teams are especially effective in transforming race relations. In classrooms without cooperative learning, polarization along racial lines tends to grow over time. However, cooperative learning fosters cross-race friendships and mutual understanding, creating a more inclusive environment.

Self-Esteem: Cooperative learning enhances students' social and academic self-esteem. These boosts in confidence are supported by tangible academic improvements and greater peer acceptance.

Empathy: Students involved in cooperative learning teams develop a stronger ability to understand others' perspectives and emotions, improving their empathetic skills.

Social Skills: Team-based learning provides students with a platform to cultivate essential social skills such as active listening, taking turns, resolving conflicts, exhibiting leadership, and working collaboratively. As a result, they become more polite and considerate of others.

Social Relations: Cooperative learning fosters a sense of belonging and mutual care among students. This leads to increased feelings of acceptance and friendship, as cooperative structures promote genuine connections.

Class Climate: Students in cooperative learning environments show greater enthusiasm for school, class activities, academic content, and their teachers.

Responsibility: Participation in cooperative teams enhances students' internal sense of control, initiative, and accountability. They feel more effective and take ownership of their outcomes, thanks to the active role they play in decision-making and learning processes.

Diversity Skills: Interacting within diverse teams equips students with the ability to collaborate effectively with peers who differ from themselves. These skills are increasingly crucial in a society that continues to grow in diversity.

Higher-Level Thinking Skills: Exposure to diverse perspectives within cooperative teams challenges students to synthesize information more critically, fostering advanced thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Individual Accountability: Cooperative learning ensures every student actively contributes. Structures such as RoundRobin require each team member to participate, eliminating the possibility of passive behavior within the group.

Equal Participation: Unlike traditional classroom activities where participation can be uneven, cooperative learning employs strategies to ensure all students are equally engaged. In formats like Timed Pair Share, everyone has an equal opportunity to express themselves.

Increased Participation: Pair-based sharing maximizes participation compared to one-at-a-time classroom approaches. Cooperative learning structures make use of time efficiently, involving students in meaningful interactions at a higher rate.

Social Orientation: In traditional classrooms, competition often prevails, with students viewing peers as rivals. Cooperative learning shifts this mindset, encouraging students to see their teammates' success as beneficial to their own growth, fostering a spirit of collaboration over competition.

Learning Orientation: The focus in cooperative learning shifts from grades to intrinsic motivations—students engage in tasks for the joy of working together, achieving shared goals, and contributing value to their team.

Self-Knowledge and Growth: Interactions within cooperative teams facilitate self-discovery. Feedback from peers enables students to identify personal traits and behaviors, such as dominance or shyness, leading to growth and self-realization.

By comprehensively addressing academic, social, and emotional development, cooperative learning offers a transformative approach that equips students for success in both education and life.

Workplace Skills: Students are trained in teamwork, equipping them for the collaborative and interconnected environments of the 21st-century workplace, where advancements in technology and increasing complexity necessitate a stronger reliance on interdependent teams.

6. Limitations of Cooperative Learning

Although cooperative learning has been widely endorsed and implemented as an effective educational strategy, it is not a universal solution to all educational challenges. Like any teaching method, it comes with its own set of limitations. These include:

6.1. Role of the Teacher

The teacher plays a pivotal role in ensuring the success of cooperative learning. For it to work effectively, teachers must possess a thorough understanding of their students. Forming groups requires careful consideration of various factors such as learning abilities, cultural backgrounds, personalities, and even gender dynamics. Designing cooperative lessons demands significant time and effort, but once implemented, the teacher's role evolves into that of a coach, facilitator, or even observer. A well-executed cooperative lesson empowers students to learn from their peers and fosters independence, reducing reliance on the teacher for direction and support.

6.2. Organization of the Classroom

An organized classroom is essential for fostering self-reliance and initiative among students. The availability of materials is crucial to enable students to work independently without seeking the teacher's assistance. Students function better in a well-organized environment as opposed to one cluttered with distractions. If the physical setup lacks organization, it contradicts the expectation placed on students to be orderly themselves.

6.3. Group Size

Unlike traditional methods where students sit in pre-arranged rows in large classrooms, cooperative learning thrives in smaller groups. Ideally, classrooms should have 15 to 20 students divided into clusters of 3 to 5 members. Larger groups present challenges in task management, skill coordination, and achieving consensus. However, achieving optimal group sizes often proves difficult due to class size constraints, leading to unevenly distributed groups.

6.4. Group Spacing

Proper spacing within groups ensures productive interactions by allowing students to maintain eye contact and share materials without interference. Groups must be positioned so they can communicate effectively without disrupting others. Cooperative learning often requires students to move

around the room to collect information, so barriers should be minimized. Sufficient spacing also allows teachers to support and monitor group activities while ensuring visibility and audibility of instructions from all workstations. Additionally, classrooms should remain flexible enough for students to switch between group projects and individual tasks as needed.

6.5. Personal Needs

Each student in a group requires personal space to perform their tasks effectively while contributing to the group's objectives. This sense of personal space helps maintain autonomy within collaborative environments. Furthermore, students need designated storage areas for books and materials, ensuring accessibility without obstructing workflow during tasks.

6.6. Comfort

Uncomfortable furniture can distract students and hinder their focus. Many middle school students are still growing and vary in size, making standardized seating arrangements inadequate for sustained comfort. Frequent classroom transitions exacerbate this issue since providing individually customized seating configurations is generally impractical.

6.7. Physically Disabled Students

Cooperative learning can serve as an effective tool for integrating physically disabled students into mainstream classrooms. Working toward shared group goals allows them to contribute meaningfully and feel a sense of belonging within their peer group. Accommodations should be tailored to ensure an inclusive learning environment that addresses their needs.

6.8. Safety

The classroom should be arranged to ensure students can navigate freely without risk of injury or disruption. Furniture placement should mitigate any destructive behavior while maintaining an overall safe learning environment.

6.9. Cost and Quality

Budget constraints often limit schools' ability to invest in high-quality furniture or specialized equipment. Regular classroom furniture must endure heavy use while meeting comfort and functionality requirements within these financial restrictions. --- While cooperative learning offers many advantages, its success depends on addressing these limitations effectively,

ensuring both an inclusive and productive environment for students and teachers alike.

7. Conclusion

As the global education system continues to evolve and diversify, it is essential to implement learning strategies that effectively address the needs of varied student populations. Educators play a crucial role in engaging students to ensure they not only grasp the subject matter but also develop social skills vital for success outside the classroom environment. One such method that fosters both academic and interpersonal growth is cooperative learning.

The foundation of cooperative learning lies in respecting students regardless of their ethnic, intellectual, economic, or social backgrounds and believing in their academic potential. This approach celebrates diversity, formalizes peer support, and encourages meaningful connections among students. It provides an environment where individual strengths are acknowledged, and specific needs are catered to within a supportive community—allowing students to feel secure enough to take risks and explore their abilities.

Furthermore, cooperative learning nurtures a sense of shared community. Learning is inherently social, much like life itself. Through structured interactions in classrooms, students receive support and encouragement, fostering intellectual collaboration and strengthening relationships. This approach transforms learning into an active and constructive process, offering opportunities for students to engage deeply with content through problem-solving tasks, group discussions, case studies, simulations, role-playing, and other interactive activities. By actively applying concepts and reconciling different viewpoints, students produce new knowledge instead of passively absorbing information. Third, cooperative learning is predicated on the premise that learning is an active, constructive process. Such learning provides opportunities for students to talk and listen, read, write, and reflect as they approach course content through problem-solving exercises, informal small groups, simulations, case studies, role-playing, and other activities, all of which require students to apply what they are learning. As a result, learning is not passively absorbed, nor are facts simply added systematically to existing knowledge. Students often take new material, including conflicting viewpoints, and integrate, reinterpret, and transform it until new knowledge is forged. Thus, learning is produced, not reproduced.

Furthermore, cooperative learning nurtures a sense of shared community. Learning is inherently social, much like life itself. Through structured interactions in classrooms, students receive support and encouragement, fostering intellectual collaboration and strengthening relationships. This approach transforms learning into an active and constructive process, offering opportunities for students to engage deeply with content through problem-solving tasks, group discussions, case studies, simulations, role-playing, and other interactive activities. By actively applying concepts and reconciling different viewpoints, students produce new knowledge instead of passively absorbing information. Given the highly interdependent nature of life, striving for maximum effectiveness without collaboration can be counterproductive—akin to attempting to play tennis with a golf club. Interdependence and teamwork provide a profound avenue for individuals to share ideas meaningfully while tapping into the collective resources and strengths of others.

Cooperative learning embraces these instincts for cooperation, leveraging psychological principles of teamwork and competition to enhance educational experiences. In this method, students work collaboratively in small groups and are rewarded for their collective achievements. Cooperative learning has been widely adopted within educational systems globally due to its ability to extend traditional classroom boundaries. This process not only facilitates effective subject mastery but also enables students to practice vital interpersonal skills. Its inclusive nature demonstrates positive impacts on students—both those with disabilities and their peers—with improvements reflected in academic achievement and social behavior alike.

The fundamental principle underpinning cooperative learning is teamwork aimed at achieving common goals, ensuring that every participant gains value from the activity. While educators may need extra preparation to design group materials or monitor activities, the substantial rewards—improved academic performance and a healthier social climate—make these efforts worthwhile. In addition to academic benefits, cooperative learning also fosters cognitive and social development. Working toward mutual objectives helps students acquire crucial social skills such as collaboration, compromise, teamwork, and relationship-building. These abilities are increasingly relevant in today's evolving job market where employees frequently engage in collaborative tasks with colleagues. Cooperative learning thus equips students not only for success within academic settings but also prepares them for long-term professional growth and social interaction.

In many classrooms, interactions often revolve around teacher-student dynamics, which can inadvertently foster a competitive atmosphere among students seeking the teacher's approval. Cooperative learning offers a solution by promoting collaboration among students to achieve shared learning objectives, thereby creating a more balanced environment. As school systems become increasingly diverse, the need for cooperative learning grows more pressing. Students from various cultural and social backgrounds enrich the classroom by introducing new perspectives and approaches to problem-solving. Cooperative learning helps highlight the value of integrating diverse opinions, fostering a sense of mutual respect and teamwork among students. Additionally, classrooms today host a broad spectrum of students with special needs, each contributing unique strengths to a cooperative learning environment.

It is essential to ensure that every student, regardless of ability or background, is given a fair opportunity to excel academically while also developing critical social skills. Cooperative learning stands out as a powerful educational strategy that engages all students, leading to tangible academic improvements across different demographic groups, subjects, and classroom settings. Adopting this approach is crucial for modern education systems, as its benefits are urgently needed in schools. Failure to implement or properly execute cooperative learning risks perpetuating challenges for students, denying them the enriching experiences and successes they deserve.

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