

WHY COOPERATIVE LEARNING ??

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- students can learn from each other
- promotes deeper understanding
- ownership of content
- articulation within group structure => greater student comfort
- modeling of different problem-solving methods
- resembles real-world working environment
- better learning efficiency (effective increase in the number of "teachers")
- breaks up routines
- leverages students' strengths
- representative of a democratic process in action
- forces students to communicate
- pleases administrators

DISADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- can be inefficient
- space and furniture constraints
- groups can be dysfunctional
- teacher control can be lost
- more work for the teacher (preparation, additional scaffolding required)

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- facilitator: guides, coaches, provides focus
- encourages student discourse
- defines roles/responsibilities of group members
- ensures student buy-in
- gives direction
- provides students with cues (without telling them exactly what to do)
- establishes ground rules for group operation
- serves as referee, resolving group conflicts (related to facilitator role)

GROUPING ATTRIBUTES

- different abilities (though maybe there are a few occasions when grouping students of similar abilities may be appropriate)
- groups should be changed regularly
- random (using roll book, calling sticks, or other approach)
- based on existing seating assignments
- pairing English language learners in the same group (so that one with better language proficiency can assist the other)
- avoid conflicting behaviors and personalities

WHEN CAN YOU USE COOPERATIVE LEARNING?

- multi-step problems
- review homework assignments
- discovery activities & extension activities (both for proving and disproving conjectures)
- to show evidence of understanding (moving from teacher-centered to student-centered/group-centered learning)
- tests
- competitions within groups