# COOPERATIVE LEARNING: PLANNING AND EXECUTION

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**Abstract:-** Co-operative learning is an important group teaching approach which describe a situation in which elaboration, interpretation, explanation and argumentation are integral to the activity of the group and where learning is supported by other individuals. There are the three situations which can be used to promote cooperative learning approach in teaching and learning – Highly structured and skill building tasks, ill-structure, conceptual and problem solving tasks, social skill and communication tasks. We can prepare cooperative learning environment through positive interdependence, promotion interaction, individual accountability, social skills and group processing. The article also deals the various acts on activities to imply cooperative learning as a teaching approach.

**Keywords:** Cooperative learning, Jigsaw, Reciprocal questioning, Skill building task, ill structured tasks, Collaboration.

### Objectives:

1. Describe the meaning of cooperative learning.
2. Explain the different tasks can be used in cooperative learning.
3. Identify the steps involves in the preparation for cooperative learning.
4. Evaluate the cooperative learning as a teaching approach.
5. Apply cooperative learning in classroom practice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Constructivist is the view of learning which emphasizes on the active role of the learner in building understanding and making sense of the information. There are the two theories of constructivism first, promoted by Piaget who emphasized on the Internal Psychological Processing of the child and second theory of constructivism is given by Lev Vygotsky who advocated the role of social interaction of the student in learning. Modern cognitive psychologist discovered so many approaches to learn according to constructivist theory in which inquiry and problem based learning, cognitive apprenticeship and cooperative learning are main in the practice. Constructivist approach mainly focus on the collaborative and group work of the students as a form of cooperative learning.

## Meaning of Cooperative Learning :

"Cooperative learning is a situation in which elaboration, interpretation, explanation and argumentation are integral to the activity of the group and where learning is supported by other individuals."

The term collaboration, group work and cooperative learning often use as they have the same meaning but they have different meaning. Collaboration means how people relate to others cooperation. On the other hand is a way of working with others. Group work is simple mean when several students working together.

Group work is useful in the cooperative learning but it requires much more than putting the students in the groups for a common goal. Root of cooperative learning tied with the work of John Dewey

and Kurt Lewin's work. But in modern Psychology, David and Roger Johnson (2009)known as the founder of cooperative learning in United States of America. They defined cooperative learning as "Students working together for one class period to several weeks to achieve shared learning goal and complete jointly specific task and assignments." Cognitive Psychology and different learning theories specifically Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky support cooperative learning.

**Preparation for Cooperative Learning :**

Teaching is a science as well as art to promote learning. David and Roger Johnson (2009)explains the five elements that define true cooperative learning. The brief introduction of the five elements as given below:

1. Positive Interdependence
2. Promotive Interaction
3. Individual Accountability
4. Collaborative and Social Skills
5. Group Processing

(i) Group members experience positive Interdependence. The member believe they can attain their goals only if the others in the group attain their goals as well so they need each other for support, explanation and guidance.

(ii)Promotive interaction means that group members encourage and facilitate each other effort. They usually interact face to face and close together not across the room but they could interact through digital media.

(iii) Individual accountability means a feeling of responsibility to the group to work together and help each other. Students must ultimately demonstrate learning on their own. They are held individually accountable for learning, often through individual test or other assessment.

(iv) Collaborative and social skills are necessary for effective group functioning, often these skills such as giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, and involving every member must be taught as practiced before the group tackle a learning task.

(v) Finally, members monitor group process and relationships to make sure the group is working effectively and to learn about the dynamics of groups.

**Group Formation for Cooperative Learning :**

In cooperative learning, setting up group is very important task for the teaching. The learning group is depends upon the nature of learning goals. If the goal is review or rehearse information or practice 4-6 students should be included. But if the goal is to encourage each student to participate in discussion, problem solving or computer learning then the group of 2-4 student is best suited. If often make sense to balance the ratio of boys and girls in the groups. If group include some students who are perceived as different or who are often rejected then it make sense to be sure that there are group members who are tolerant and kind.

**Explanations and Role Assignment:**

Learning in a group depends on the participation of the students. Students who ask questions, get answers and attempt explanation are more likely to learn comparative to others. Research explains that the more a student provides elaborative, thoughtful explanation to other students in a group. The more the 'explainer' learns. Giving good explanation appears more important for learn than receiving explanation. Good explanations are relevant timely, correct and elaborated enough to help the listener correct misunderstandings, the best explanations tells why?

Assigning role according to the ability and interest of the students, support learning. The role focus on social skills, listening encouragement and respect for differences. In the group that focus on higher order problem solving or complex learning role should encourage thoughtful discussion, sharing of explanation and insight, probing brain storming and creativity. Some examples of roles are as follows:

- To encourage reluctant and shy students to participants – Encourager.
- To show appreciation to the others – Praise, cheer leader.
- To equalize participation and make sure no one dominate – Gate keeper.
- To help with the academic content explain concepts – Coach.
- To make sure all students questions are asked and answered – Question commander.
- To check the group understanding – Checker.
- To keep the group task – Task master.
- To write down ideas, decisions and plans – Recorder.
- To keep group aware of process – Reflector.
- To monitor noise level – Quiet captain.
- To pick up and returns the material – Materials monitor.

**Designing for Cooperation:**

To developing deep understanding in cooperative groups all group members participate in high quality discussion. Discussions that support learning include talk that interpret, connect, explains and use evidence to support arguments. We use reciprocal questioning, jigsaw, and structured controversies.

- Reciprocal Questioning: Reciprocal Questioning means students work in pairs or trades to ask and answer question about lesson material. After a lesson or presentation by the teacher, the teacher provides questions stems and then students are taught how to develop specific questions on the lesson material using the generic question stems. The students creates questions and than take turns asking and answering. This process has proved more effective than traditional discussion groups because its seems to encourage deeper thinking about the material.
- Jigsaw: It is a learning process in which each students is part of a group and each group member is given part of the material to be learned by the whole group. Students become 'expert' on their piece and thus teach it to the others in their group. This method was introduced by Elliot Aronson and his graduate students in University of Taxas. In this classroom every ones contribution is important. The students truly are important. A more recent version of Jigsaw II adds expert group in which the students who are responsible for the same material from each learning group confer to make sure they understand their assign part and thus plan way to teach.

- Structure Controversies: Constructive conflict resolution is essential in classroom because conflicts are inevitable and even necessary for learning. Piaget theory tells us that developing knowledge require cognitive conflicts. Structured controversy means students work in pairs within their four person cooperative group to research a particular controversy. A study of $10^{th}$ grade students who were wrong but for different reasons, were sometime able to correct their misunderstanding if they argue together about them conflicting wrong answers. Individual trying to exist in group will have interpersonal conflicts, too, which also can lead to learning. Researchers demonstrate that constructive controversy in classroom can lead to greater learning, open mindedness seeing the perspective of others, creativity, motivations, engagement and self esteem.

In addition to these approaches, Spencer Kagan has developed many cooperative learning structure designed to accomplish different kind of academic and social tasks.

**Implication of Cooperative Learning:**

Cooperative learning always benefits from careful planning, but sometime including students with special need require extra attention to planning and preparation. For example, cooperative structure such as scripted questioning and peer tutoring depend upon a balanced interaction between the person taking the role of questioner or explainer and the students who answering or being taught. Many students having learning disabilities have difficulties understanding new concepts, so both the explainer and the students can get frustrated. So when you are teaching new or difficult to

grasp concepts cooperative learning might not be the best choice for learning disabilities.

Gifted students also may not be benefit from cooperative learning when groups are mixed in ability. The pace is too slow, the task is to simple and just too much repetition. If we use mixed ability groups and include gifted students the challenges are to use complex tasks, that allow work at different level and keep gifted students engaged without losing the rest of the class.

'Cooperative Jigsaw' structure is especially helpful to language students. The Jigsaw approach was developed in response to the need to create high independence in diverse groups. Cooperative learning is only as good as it design and implementation. Cooperative method probably are both misused and underused in schools, in part become using cooperative learning well required time and investment in teaching students how to learn in groups.

**Delimitation of Cooperative Learning:**

There are many varieties of constructivist approaches (e.g. Cooperative Learning) using by the teacher to upgrade the level of learning and all teaching today happens in a context of high-stake testing and accountability. In these situations cooperative teachers face many challenges. Mark Windschiff identified four type of dilemma of cooperative practices – Conceptual dilemma, Pedagogical dilemmas, cultural dilemmas, Political dilemmas. The fist is conceptual: How do make sense of cognitive versus social conception of constructivist. The second Pedagogical: How do I teach in truly constructive way. Third are cultural: What activities and cultural knowledge will build a community and last fourth are Political : How can stretch for deep understanding and critical thinking?

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