Best Practices of Cooperative Learning

Teacher will use cooperative learning strategies and techniques effectively within the classroom.

**Critical Elements** - Evidence of all elements must be present within instruction and learning to be considered cooperative learning.
- Positive Interdependence
- Face to Face Interaction
- Individual Accountability
- Social Skills
- Group Processing (discussion of how well they achieved the goal - set new goal - teacher’s feedback - small group feedback).

**Ways to Provide Positive Interdependence**
Sink or Swim Together
- joint rewards
- task (assembly line)
- mutual goals
- reward (bonus points, grades, etc.)
- shared resource
- outside energy (groups compete against one another)
- assigned roles (reader, recorder)
- environmental (room arrangement, desks, chairs)
- identity (team building, name tags, logo, etc.
- synergy tasks

**Face to Face Interaction**
Knee to knee and eye to eye
- Sit facing one another.

**Ways to Provide Individual Accountability**
Evidence of individual work
- Bring individual work to group.
- Random check (pick one member of group randomly).
- Assign jobs.
- Bonus points if all do well individually.
- Individual performance.

**Social Skills**
Leadership, decision making, trust building, communication, conflict management are taught not assumed.
- Teacher must use observation forms for feedback. No more than two social skills are taught and reinforced during a year.

**Forming Skills**
- Moving into groups quietly.
- Staying with the group.
• Using quiet voices.
• Encouraging everyone to participate.
• Keeping hands and feet to self.
• Looking at the group’s paper.
• Using people’s names.
• Looking at the speaker.
• Using no “put-downs”.

Functioning Skills
• Stating and restating the purpose of the assignment.
• Setting or calling attention to time limits.
• Offering procedures on how to most effectively do tasks.
• Expressing support and acceptance verbally.
• Expressing support and acceptance non-verbally.
• Asking for help or clarification.
• Offering to explain or clarify.
• Paraphrasing and clarifying other members’ contributions.
• Energizing the group with humor, ideas, or enthusiasm.
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Formulating Skills
• Summarizing the material aloud.
• Seeking accuracy by correcting and/or adding to summaries.
• Seeking elaboration by relating to other learning or knowledge.
• Seeking clever ways of remembering ideas and facts.
• Asking members to plan verbally how to teach material to others.

Fermenting Skills
• Criticizing ideas without criticizing people.
• Differentiating where there is disagreement.
• Integrating different ideas into a single position.
• Asking for justification of others’ conclusions or ideas.
• Extending other members’ answers or conclusions.
• Probing by asking questions that lead to deeper analysis.
• Generating further answers.
• Testing reality by checking group’s work against instructions.

Group Processing
Ways to Process (orally or written)
• Teacher will provide feedback to entire grade or individual groups.
• Small group reflection.
• Teacher and small group observations.
• Goal setting for next working session on social skills.
Grouping Students

- base group (2 middle ability, 1 lower ability, 1 higher ability)
- random grouping strategies
  - numbering
  - birthday line up
  - puzzle pieces
  - playing cards
  - colored dots

Structures

The structures provide for the first three critical elements. Teachers must add a social skill and processing to be considered cooperative learning.

- think/pair/share
- think/pair/square
- inside/outside circle
- jigsaw
- carousel
- value line
- send a problem
- numbered heads
- roundtable/robin
- three step interview
- discussion web
- human graph