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Integrating Cooperative Learning in the Classroom

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Integrating Cooperative Learning in the Classroom

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Questions:

- 1) How can we effectively integrate cooperative learning into the classroom?
- 2) In what ways will cooperative learning benefit the students in our classroom?

Definition:

For the purposes of this study, cooperative learning will be defined as a group of two or more students working together to achieve a common learning goal.

Data Collection:

lesson plans, field notes, reflections, photographs, student work, and literature

Partner Work

• **Definition:** Two students working together to reach a common learning goal.

• **Field notes:**

I paired up the class and had them create an invention. They were first to brainstorm, then draw their invention on a piece of paper. Once they were satisfied with their drawing, they were to trace the pencil markings with brown marker and write the name of their invention at the top of the page.

L and N-They both drew an invention on a piece of scrap paper, then they decided which one they were going to use. They decided to use L's invention. N was perfectly fine with this decision. He agreed that L's would work better for this project. At the end, they incorporated an idea from N's invention (small robot that fixed things). They demonstrated perfect teamwork.

N and J- They talked about their ideas and then agreed on a mobile tree house. They then each drew the invention they envisioned in their head. They used both drawings to create their final draft. They told me they used ideas from both drawings to make their final invention. They talked a lot and worked together.



Group Work

• **Definition:** Three or more students working to reach a common learning goal.

• **Field notes:**

On Tuesday, the students went geo-caching on the school grounds. The students were divided into groups of four and five. The students were given instructions not to shout or point out a canister because that would give away the location to another group. One group found their canister while another group was close by. The other group looked their way, but did not see the canister. The group tried to be sneaky and put the canister back in its place so that the other group would be able to locate it on their own. The group did a quick and quiet hand-off. Then, one of the out-spoken students in the group took the canister and bent down like he was trying to tie his shoe. He was actually hiding the canister in a small clump of grass. The other group was looking over, so I said, "Are you done tying your shoe yet?" He slowly got up and caught up with the rest of the group. The other group never did see us with the canister. When we got far enough away, the students gave each other high fives for not giving away the location of the canister.



• **Conclusion:** Through our field experiences and research, we found cooperative learning to be an effective and beneficial teaching method which promotes student learning.

• **Some benefits:** provides social benefits for students with special needs, fosters friendships, promotes positive interdependence, fosters leadership skills and higher order thinking skills, enhances the overall school experience for students

Whole Class Work

• **Definition:** All members of a class working together to reach a common learning goal.

• **Findings:**

My class had our own Olympic ceremony. We began the ceremony with a flag bearer. Each student colored an Olympic flag with the five rings and carried it to the front of the classroom. Then we had a parade of nations in which each student was randomly assigned to a country. The students designed a sign for their country, and then marched in alphabetical order around the room as if they were from all over the world competing at the Olympics in the United States. (Interestingly, each student was extremely excited to represent a different country. No one complained when they drew out their country from the jar. They were all eager to learn more about their country so they could represent it in the best way possible.) Mrs. S, my cooperating teacher, and I then demonstrated to the class how the torch was lit in Greece and carried to the country that was hosting the Olympics. We had a flash light covered in tissue paper represent the torch.

I printed off the Olympic oath that all the athletes say before the games begin. We read it together as a class. We then made up a classroom oath. The students voted on what they wanted to be in the oath. We wrote it all out and said it as a class before our classroom Olympics began. (The student took it very seriously and wanted it to be just right. I was impressed with their selection of words and their attitude towards having a positive learning environment.)

The best part about the unit was how well everyone cooperated. The students who were winning were congratulating each other as well as those they beat. There was no bragging. The students who were not winning were being good sports by cheering on the students still in the competition.

