

## Chapter Two: Cooperative Learning

Introduction.....	38
1. Definition of Cooperative Learning.....	39
2. CL Advantages.....	40
2.1. CL Importance.....	41
2.1.1. Positive Interdependence.....	41
2.1.2. Individual Accountability.....	41
2.1.3. Promotive Face-to-face Interaction .....	42
2.1.4. Interpersonal and Small Group Skills.....	42
2.1.5. Group Processing.....	42
2.2 .Some CL Activities.....	43
2.2.1. Think /Pair /Share.....	43
2.2.2. Jigsaw.....	44
2.2.3.Roundation / Roundrobin.....	44
2.2.4. Numbered Heads Together.....	44
2.2.5. Group Investigation.....	45
2.3. Strategies for Facilitating CL.....	45
2.4. Preparing Learners for Cooperative Tasks.....	45
2.5. Assigning Learners to Specific and Meaningful Tasks.....	46
2.6. Debriefing Learners on their Experiences with Cooperative Learning.....	46
2.7. Socially Conscious CL.....	46
3. Cooperative Work Internal Dynamics.....	47
3.1. Effect on Motivation .....	47
3.2. Motivational Theories.....	48
3.3. Development Theories.....	49
4. CL Methods.....	49
4.1. Class Presentations.....	50
4.2. Teams.....	51
4.3. Assigning Teams.....	51
4.4. Quizzes.....	52

5. Ledlow’s Models.....	52
5.1. Climate Setting .....	52
5.2. Team Formation.....	53
5.3. Team Building.....	53
5.4. Cooperative Skills Development.....	54
5.5. Lesson Design.....	54
5.6. Class Management.....	55
5.7 .CL and Inclusions.....	56
5.8. Inclusive Principles.....	56
6. CL and Supportive Heterogeneous Groups Relationships.....	56
7. CL Thinking Creativity.....	58
8. Vygotsky’s Theory in Teaching .....	58
Conclusion.....	59

## **Introduction**

To discuss the role of CL, we should first introduce its concept. We shall first give a definition of CL and why we use this approach. We will, then, make a detailed description of CL and its importance, the internal dynamics that make cooperation work, different theories and its relation with cooperation. Finally, we shall show what CL requires in the classroom.

### **1. Definition of Cooperative Learning**

Slavin (1992) states that: "Cooperative learning refers to instructional methods involving small heterogeneous groups working together, usually toward a common goal". He (*Ibid*) adds that this approach to learning involves changes to both task structure and incentive structure. The task structure refers to the ways in which the teacher or students set up activities designed to result in student learning where a cooperative structure involves students working together to help one another. The incentive structure moves away from one individual to general i.e. the success of one student is positively related to the success of others. Johnson & Johnson (1994) highlighted the importance of how students interact, arguing that it can affect learning, liking of school and other students, as well as self-esteem. As Johnson & Johnson (1994) pointed out, however, it is not enough to just put students in groups and tell them to work together for CL to work. How such groupings are structured will largely determine whether or not they will be more effective than competitive or individualistic groupings. CL is important for creating inclusive classroom environments that meet the needs of all students because it takes the heterogeneity into account, encouraging peer support and connection. Given that most classrooms are heterogeneous, it only makes sense to use an approach to teaching and learning which accounts for this heterogeneity.

As university moves closer to the goal of providing education for all students within inclusive classrooms, increasing the amounts of attention and energy are being devoted to developing pedagogical approaches that are appropriate in heterogeneous classrooms. Cohen et al (2001) state that: "Teachers must structure the educational

and social environment so that students develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to interact across both perceived and actual differences and disabilities".

CL encourages mutual respect and learning among students with varying talents and abilities, languages, racial, and ethnic backgrounds Sapon-Shevin & Duncan, (1992:34) report that: "Cooperative learning is effective in reducing prejudice among students and in meeting the academic and social needs of students at risk for educational failure". All students need to learn and work in environment when their individual strengths are recognized and individual needs are addressed.

If teachers or students are uncomfortable with CL, it is often because they have adopted a particular technique without a firm understanding of the underlying principles and do not have sufficient support to implement creative, multilevel CL activities that allow students to participate at different levels, with differential goals and varying levels of support.

## **2. CL Advantages**

Richards (2002) states that teachers are generally left alone with their inner speech regarding the hundreds of decisions they need to make daily, as Jackson (1968) observed addressing such feelings with colleagues is rare. Besides reducing the isolation of teaching, there are several (other advantages of collaborative exploration of teaching, it can exclude the evaluative component of observation characteristic of the usual top down, hierarchical, supervisory model, (Slavin 1995:31) states that "professional development is seen as something that is evaluated with little attention paid to ways teachers-evolve expertise in the practice teaching".

Another advantage of collaborative exploration is that, according to Richardson (1994),"Leads to shared or mutual reconstruction that is agreed upon by both practitioner and researcher", and although it "Is not conducted for purposes of developing general laws related to educational practice. Slavin (1995).

## **2.1. CL Importance**

Johnson & Johnson (1994) outlines five important elements for effective CL; positive interdependence, individual accountability, promote face to face interaction, small group skills, and group processing.

### **2.1.1. Positive Interdependence**

It is very important for students to perceive themselves as interdependent, sharing a mutual fate which is mutually caused. This creates a "sink or swim" mentality where the success of the group is dependent on the success of all the group members, ensuring a social interdependence in the group. Students come to perceive that they are linked with group mates in such a way that they can not succeed unless their/ groupmates do and vice versa. (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). Cooperation allows for positive interdependence where all group members work together to accomplish shared goals. Thus, individuals seek outcomes that are both beneficial to themselves and to the group members cooperation and promotes goal, interdependence which are positively linked in such a way that the probability of one person obtaining his / her goal is positively correlated with the probability of others doing so. It also rewards interdependence where all members in the group are given the same reward.

### **2.1.2. Individual Accountability**

Slavin (1995) argues that when CL is poorly constructed, its methods can allow for the "free rider effect "in which some group members do all or most of the work (and learning ) while others do little or nothing. Key to eliminating this is to create individual accountability to ensure that all students learn and that no members in the group are ignored. This is possible by having both groups' goals and individual accountability, students are provided with an incentive to help each other and to encourage each other to put forth maximum effort...Johnson & Johnson (1994) argue that individual accountability can be achieved through the use of individual assessment which is then used to determine the success level of the group as a whole. Individual accountability can be achieved by frequently highlighting the contributions of each member. Teachers need to assess how much effort each member is contributing to the group's work, provide feedback to groups and individual students,

help groups avoid redundant efforts by members, and ensure that all members are responsible for the final outcome. Johnson & Johnson (1994) highlight how to structure individual accountability through:

- Keeping the group size small.
- Giving students individual tests where they can not seek help from others.
- Randomly choosing students to answer questions
- Observe the group and record the frequency on contribution of each member.
- Assigning one member to be a "checker" who asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rational underlying group answers.
- Having students teach what they learned to someone else.

### **2.1.3. Promotive Face-to-face Interaction**

They physical arrangement of small heterogeneous groups, encourages students to help, share, and support each other's learning. By working closely together, students can promote each other's success through explanations, teaching, checking for understanding, discussions, connecting old and new learning. Slavin (1995)

### **2.1.4. Interpersonal and Small Group Skills**

Johnson and Johnson (1994) argue that the more socially skill students are and the more attention teachers pay to teaching and rewarding the use of social skills. In this respect, higher the achievement that can be expected within CL groups. Students need to learn interpersonal skill such as active listening, staying on task, asking questions, conflict management and resolution and so forth.

### **2.1.5. Group Processing**

Johnson and Johnson (1994) believe that group processing takes place on two levels, in small group and the whole class. To allow for group processing at the group level, they argued that teachers should allow time and the end of each class for groups to process how effectively the members work together. Doing so, they argued, would:

- enable learning groups to focus on maintaining good working relationships among members.
- facilitate learning of cooperative skills.
- ensure that students think on the met cognitive as well as meta cognitive level, and
- provide a means to celebrate the success of the group and to reinforce positive behaviours.

Processing at the class level can be done by having the teacher occasionally observe groups, analyse problem and then provide feedback to the whole class. CL promotes effective and social benefits such as increased student interest in and valuing of subject matter, and increases in positive attitudes and social interactions among students who differ in gender, race, ethnicity, achievement levels and other characteristics.

CL also creates the potential for cognitive and metacognitive benefits, by engaging students in discourse that requires them to make their task. Students are likely to show improved achievement outcomes when they engage in certain forms of co-operative learning as an alternative to complete assignments on their own. Johnson & Johnson (1994).

A number of books have appeared in the last few years which provide hundreds of cooperative activities either designed for language classroom or easily adapted for language learning. These include: Kessler (1992), Kolb (1983), and Nunan (1999). What follows is a selection of cooperative activities which the author has used most effectively in language (as well as in teacher education) classrooms.

## **2.2. Some CL Activities**

CL can be applied in different ways and methods, the following structures will show clearly how it works:

### **2.2.1. Think /Pair /Share**

Perhaps the most basic cooperative activity or structure is think /pair /share, developed by Kagan (1994). In this activity, a question is posed or an issue is presented (by other learners or the teacher), and learners are given some time to

reflect, take notes or engage in free writing before turning to another learner and sharing what they have just thought and written about. After sharing in pairs, the members of the pair share their ideas with the larger group. The focus of the sharing can be something as simple as thinking about all the things that one reads and writes in one day, or something as complex as the causes of homelessness, the qualities of a good teacher or the alternatives to burning wood for fuel.

### **2.2.2. Jigsaw**

Jigsaw, developed by Aaronson (1987), is perhaps the most widely known CL activity used to create a real ‘information gap’ in the classroom and encourage communication. In Jigsaw activity, each member of the group has information which the others need in order to complete the puzzle and develop a report or complete a task. But before students are asked to share that information, they are given the opportunity to work in ‘expert groups’ with others researching the same topic or discussing the same text. When they feel sufficiently able to explain their portion to the rest of the group, they return to their ‘home’ group and serve as the expert on their contribution.

### **2.2.3. Roundation / Roundrobin**

Roundtable and Roundrobin are two activities from the structural Approach of Kagan (1994). Students take turns giving answers, providing information or sharing ideas. In a Roundtable, students offer written contributions, sharing one piece of paper and a pencil and passing them so that each student provides a written contribution. In Roundrobin, the contributions are spoken. In both, turns continue until everyone has run out of ideas or time is called. Students ‘pass’ (yield their turn) when they wish to contribute.

### **2.2.4. Numbered Heads Together**

In this activity Kagan (1994) members of a group count off. Then a question is posed for the entire group to discuss. When they have developed a team answer and are certain that each member knows that answer, a number is called and students with



that number are expected to answer the question. Each member of the group is expected to help the others to understand and be able to answer appropriately.

Numbered heads together is particularly appropriate for reviewing grammatical structures, vocabulary or factual items from a reading or audio-visual text. For example, students may be given an infinitive and asked to form the past tense or a word and expected to provide an appropriate definition (Kagan 1994).

#### **2.2.4. Group Investigation**

Developed by Sharan and Sharan (1992), Group of investigation involves the distribution of tasks across a classroom so that different groups study different aspects of the same topic for an extended period of time. These groups are responsible for doing their own planning, carrying out the study, developing reporting mechanisms and presenting their findings to the class. As students plan, research, develop their reports to the class, they engage in a variety of socio-affective, cognitive and metacognitive strategies as well as in academic language development that is more commonly reserved for the teacher. Arnold (1999) states that it is not surprising that the characteristics of CL, which foster positive effective environment for language learning, can also lead to enhanced language learning. While not all attempts at incorporating cooperative language learning are effective, there is evidence that when done well, there are a number of important benefits.

#### **2.3. Strategies for Facilitating CLL**

Arnold (1999) says if CLL is to be successful, teachers need to be adequately prepared, and interesting, relevant topics and materials must be available. In addition, a number of strategies can be employed to facilitate cooperative language teaching.

#### **2.4. Preparing Learners for Cooperative Tasks**

According to Arnold (1999), the greatest mistakes teachers make in initiating CLL is failing to prepare the learners for the new approach, especially in an educational context with teacher-fronted classrooms and a knowledge dissemination model of teaching.

## **2.5. Assigning Learners to Specific and Meaningful Tasks**

The quality of the tasks is central to the success of cooperative activities, topics must be genuinely interesting. In this instance, we need to follow Gardner & Lambert's (1993) 'multiple intelligence'- spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and interpersonal, as well as the more common linguistic and logical mathematics in their language learning, if they are to appeal to, support and provide opportunities to learn different learning styles and strategies.

## **2.6. Debriefing Learners on their Experiences with Cooperative Learning**

To help students understand the social, cognitive and linguistic skills being developed through CL, it is important to plan some time for reflection and debriefing, not only what was learned about language or content, but also on what was learned about social interaction and how it was learned, problems that arose, and ways that either the problems were addressed or could be addressed in the future. Few researchers like Slavin (1994), Johnson & Johnson (1994) or teachers advocate full time use of cooperative learning in any classroom; rather, they suggest regular and significant use of these activities. The learning of simple facts or the acquisition of simple skills may best be done individually, especially when a student's achievement is independent of other students Johnson and Johnson (1994). But the cooperative activity may be the appropriate way to practice the skills, to review the facts that have been learned, or to apply what has been learned to a new context.

## **2.7. Socially Conscious CL**

Socially conscious cooperative learning is an approach that introduces educators to cooperative learning pedagogy and teaches about cooperation as an idea and value. It links cooperative learning in the classroom to the broader goal of building a more cooperative and just society. (Sapon – Shevin et al, 1992).

### **3. Cooperative Work Internal Dynamics**

Tinzman & McCutchen (1990) state that there are seeds that lie in the desert for years, waiting. Only under the right conditions will they grow and flourish. When the rain comes, the temperature is right, or the seed carried to fertile earth, then its potential is unleashed and it grows. The same is true of cooperation. Whenever two individuals interact, the potential for cooperation exists. But it is only under certain conditions that cooperation will actually exist. As the research on cooperative efforts has evolved over the past four decades, five key elements have emerged as critical to actual cooperation: positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, social skills, and group processing.

#### **3.1. Effect on Motivation**

Student's sense of self-esteem can have a strong effect on motivation; this variable has been examined in several cooperative-learning studies Kagan (1994), Hawkins (1998). The results are encouraging. Slavin (1992) found that in eleven of fifteen studies, cooperative learning produced bigger increases in some aspect of self-esteem (general self-esteem, academic self-esteem, social self-esteem) than the non cooperative method with which it was compared. Another way in which CL contributes to high levels of motivation is in the pro academic attitudes that it fosters among group members. Slavin (*Ibid*) cites several studies in which students in cooperative-learning groups felt more strongly than did other students that their groupmates wanted them to come to school every day and work hard in class. Probably because of such features as promotive interaction and equal opportunities for success, cooperative learning has been shown to have a positive effect on motivation inducing attributions. Students in cooperative-learning groups were more likely to attribute success to hard work and ability than to luck (Slavin, 1992). A strong indicator of motivation is the actual amount of time students spend working on a task. Most studies have found that cooperative-learning students spend significantly more time on-task than do control students (Johnson et al., 1995). The various features of cooperative learning, particularly positive interdependence, are highly

motivating because they encourage such achievement-oriented behaviours as trying hard, attending class regularly, praising the efforts of others, and receiving help from one's groupmates. Learning is seen as an obligation and a valued activity because the group's success is based on it and on one's groupmates.

### **3.2. Motivational Theories**

Slavin (1992) argued that there are three goal structures: cooperative, competitive and individualistic. In a comparative classroom, students compete for success with the success of one student being negatively related to the success of another.

In individualistic classroom, no relationship exists; cooperative goal structures ensure that the success of the group is dependent on the success of all members. As such, it is in the personal interest of each student to help the other students and they will likely show more positive responses to individuals who show improvement. This leads to students encouraging one another and expressing norms which reward academic success.

The interaction among students on learning tasks will lead to increased achievement. As students interact with one another, Cognitive conflicts arise as inadequate reasoning is exposed, resulting in an increased learning (Slavin, *Ibid*). As Johnson & Johnson (1994: 85) state:

"There is an intrinsic state of tension within group members which motivates movement toward the accomplishment of desired common goals. This is based on the assumption that, because outcomes are dependent on each student's behaviour, students will be motivated to help the group to be rewarded"

In other words, the group incentive induces students to encourage goal – directed behaviours among group mates. Because students work towards common goals, it can be expected that they will be more motivated to reward academic within the group (Slavin, 1993). One may assume that if students are rewarded for their improvement

from previous performance, they will be more motivated to do so in the future. In discussing motivation, it should be pointed out that there are two types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation causes students to engage in learning for their own sake. They come to feel that learning is important with respect to self-images, and seek out learning activity for joy learning .Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, comes from an external source such as the avoidance of punishment or the attainment of a reward.

### **3.4. Development Theories**

Slavin (1995: 17) states that: "the fundamental assumption is that the interaction among children around appropriate tasks increases their mastery of critical concepts". Theories from this tradition have been heavily influenced by the work of Vygotsky, particularly Vygotsky's concept (1962) of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This refers to the gap between what students can do on their own and what they can potentially do under the guidance of more capable individuals. The notion is that children of similar ages are likely to be operating within one another's ZPD, modeling in the collaborative group behaviours more advanced than those they could perform individually (Slavin ,1993).

## **4. CL Methods**

Cooperative-learning methods have proven effective in increasing motivation for learning and self-esteem, redirecting attributions for success and failure, fostering positive feelings toward classmates, and increasing performance on tests of comprehension, reasoning, and problem solving (Johnson et al., *Ibid*). Accordingly, one may want to try one or more of the cooperative-learning techniques described by Johnson et al (*Ibid*). To familiarize these methods, we will briefly describe the Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) method devised by Slavin (1994).

Once assignments are made, a four-step cycle is initiated: teach, team study, test, and recognition. The teaching phase begins with the presentation of material, usually in a lecture-discussion format. Students should be told what it is they are going to

learn and why it is important. During team study, group members work cooperatively with teacher-provided worksheets and answer sheets. Next, each student individually takes a quiz. Using a scoring system that ranges from 0 to 30 points and reflects degree of individual improvement over previous quiz scores, the teacher scores the papers. Each team receives one of three recognition awards, depending on the average number of points earned by the team. For example, teams that average 15 to 19 improvement points receive a good team certificate; teams that average 20 to 24 improvement points receive a great team certificate, and teams that average 25 to 30 improvement points receive a super team certificate. The cooperative methods developed by Johnson & Johnson (1994) are similar to those developed by Slavin (*Ibid*), but with two exceptions: these methods place a greater emphasis on teaching students how to productively work together, and they recommend using team grades, rather than certificates or other forms of recognition, as positive reinforcers. CL is more than simply asking students to get in a group and work on an assignment together.

Slavin (1995) outlines four key components in the implementation of STAD in the classroom; class presentations, teams, quizzes and team recognition. These components work on a repeated cycle of about three – five days (or class periods).

#### **4.1. Class Presentations**

The key things that teachers should stress during the lessons include (Slavin, *Ibid*) the following:

- tell students that what they are about to learn and why it is important,
- briefly review any presentation skills or information,
- stick close to the objectives,
- focus on the meaning of the content rather than memorization,
- actively demonstrate concept of skills,
- frequently assess student comprehension,
- call on students at random to answer questions,
- explain why an answer is correct or incorrect,

- move rapidly from concept to concept, and
- maintain momentum and use short assignments with one or two problems for students to work on.

## **4.2. Teams**

Student's team achievement division is comprised of four (or five) members who are mixed in level, gender and ethnicity. It is important for teachers to stress students that their work as a group is not finished until all individuals in the group have a firm grasp of the material. Slavin (1994). Individual accountability is ensured because the success of the team depends on the learning of all the members where: each team is given two worksheets and answer sheets to work on together, which can be done either by working with all members together or sub-divided into pairs. It is the responsibility of students to tutor each other until every student in the group is able to get a perfect score on the quizzes Slavin. Students should be taught to know and how to seek help from each other and how to provide effective explanation. Teachers can help to facilitate this process by circulating from group to group, asking questions, and encouraging students to explain their answers to gain a deeper understanding of the content Hassard (2000). Slavin (1992) suggests keeping teams together for about five to six weeks and then making new teams to give members of low performing teams a new start.

## **4.3. Assigning Teams**

Teachers should begin by making one summary sheet for each group of students and ranking students from highest to lowest on previous performance. Teachers go down the ranking list assign each student in order with a different letter according to the total number of teams (eight teams would be A/H). Once the teacher gets to the last letter used, they start over in a reverse order (A/H and then H/A). The teacher should ensure that each team is equally divided according to gender and ethnicity. (Slavin 1995).

#### **4.4. Quizzes**

After each team has had one or two periods to work together to learn the content, they are tested individually (no help from team-teammates). The purpose of this is to ensure individual accountability for learning the material. The key component of students' score is the individual improvement which is the degree to which a student improves from his/her own previous scores. This allows for equal opportunity for success where as Slavin (1992:42) states: "high, average and low achievers are equally challenged to do their best, and the contributions of all team members are valued". Any student, regardless of his/her level can contribute equally to the team score, each student begins with a base score calculated from an average of grades on previous work, and are awarded points according to how well they can improve on this base score.

#### **5. Ledlow's models**

Ledlow (1999) suggested different models of how to work in team. They focus on six different areas: climate –setting; team formation; team building; cooperative skill development; lesson design; and classroom management.

##### **5.1 Climate Setting**

While many of the students are enthused about the opportunity to learn with and form their peers, it is not uncommon to encounter students who are reluctant to participate in any sort of group activities. The following steps would help on creating a class climate that encourages cooperation.

- Communicate clear expectations to students about CL on the first day of class. Then informing students that you plan to use CL, why we use it? And what it means to them? Will they be graded on class participation? What happens if they come to class unprepared?

- Provide a non-threatening, hand -on, introduction to CL that students can easily accomplish.



- Put students into teams and have them do a simple, well structured cooperative activity.
- Personalize the learning environment .people in a learning community know and use each other's first names.

## **5.2. Team Formation**

There are different approaches to forming teams. They can be, formed randomly or by the instructor .They might be large or small. Most CL teachers can agree on the following principles that Ledlow (1999) states below:

- Teams in CL classroom are formed by the teacher, rather than self selected. Self selected teams may be composed of groups of students who all have similar skills and are lacking the requisite skills to complete particular tasks or assignments. They may be composed of groups of friends who share similar opinions, when they might benefit them to work with students whose ideas are different from their own.
- Teams are heterogeneous on the basis of achievement, skills, ethnicity, gender and experience. There are many classes in which teams should be heterogeneous by academic performance, but often the type of heterogeneity you desire depends on your content.
- Teams are small, composed of no more than five members. It's easy to wide in team of eight, but if you are in group of two and do not participate, it is not noticeable.
- Teams are stable (they change no more than twice during the semester).

## **5.3. Team Building**

Team building may be defined as «the process needed to create, maintain, and enrich the development of a group of people into a cohesive unit (Smith 1992), Team building exercises are very important in the development of teams that will work together for an extended period of time on a complex project or series of activities. These exercises should revolve around four needs:

- The first step team building is simply getting acquainted and becoming socially cohesive, team building exercises that have a component of fun or play are useful in

allowing social cohesiveness to develop. Teams need to develop roles and norms. An example of a teambuilder who would help teammates to develop effective norms would be to ask them to develop team ground rules or a "Code of Cooperation" A team builder who would help teammates use roles effectively might ask them to select the roles which are most needed to accomplish the task at hand and to assign those roles to team members

- Effective interpersonal communication is vital to the smooth functioning of any task group. Norms will develop governing communication - do those norms encourage everyone to participate, or do they allow one or two dominant members to claim all the "air time"?

-Teams need to be able to process or reflect on how well they are working together with team members to give and receive constructive feedback (both positive and negative), and allowing them time in class to do so helps focus their attention on their interdependence.

#### **5.4. Cooperative Skills Development**

Cooperative skills development is one of the concepts that distinguish CL from traditional group work. There are a number of approaches for helping students develop these skills. Most faculties rely heavily on one or two of these strategies. You may choose directly teaching cooperative skills. One approach is that of Johnson & Johnson and Smith (1995). Who use a T.Chart to have students brainstorm the nonverbal and verbal components of a particular social skill.

#### **5.5. Lesson Design**

Ledlow (1999) states that well designed CL lessons and assignments give students a specific task, such as solving a problem, creating a model, or comparing and contrasting. To a certain extent, they also provide a set of instructions that describe how students should work together. They are listed below:

- You might consider using or adapting a pre-existing structure or procedure like Jigsaw, Academic Controversy, Think-Pair-Share, or Formulate Share-Listen-Create.

In choosing a structure, consider whether you want one answer or multiple answers to accomplish the task.

- If you cannot find a pre-existing structure that you can use or adapt, create your own. Decide upon your academic and cooperative skills objectives. Then rough out a series of steps that you can have students go through to accomplish the task. Check to see if you have incorporated the basic principles of cooperative lesson. Then write a series of instructions to your students explaining how they should accomplish the task.

### **5.6. Class Management**

A cooperative learning classroom means that your management strategies will be different. In addition to paying attention to organizing your power point slides and lecture notes, the preparation small groups will be ensured in order to be able to work relatively independently while staying on task and getting along. Ledlow (1999) reported the following:

- Before teaching a class that relies heavily on CL, it is often useful to assign homework or prepare a quiz to ensure preparation. If you have a well-designed activity that relies upon having already read an article or chapter, it can be a complete waste of everyone's time if they have not.

- Planning ahead and preparing materials and agendas for your teams really pays off.

- Give instructions in writing and clearly specify the academic objectives for the assignment.

- During teamwork, monitor the teams. You can intervene when teams get off track or stuck. Do not desire them to be unable to complete an assignment because they misunderstood directions or got off on the wrong foot. And do not want them getting off task. Sitting down next to a team to remind members to stop talking about the latest movie or last weekend's basketball game.

- After team work, it is very important to brief the assignment. Check randomly with groups to see that they "got it". Good ideas can be shared from the team to whole class, and misunderstanding can be corrected before students go home to study or work on individual assignment.

- Successful CL requires balancing all of these areas, while still covering content (and publishing, and writing grants, and serving on committees). Consider, but do not obsess over them, when planning.

### **5.7. CL and Inclusions**

As University move closer to the goal of providing education for all students within inclusive classrooms and schools, increasing amounts of attention and energy are being devoted to developing pedagogical approaches that are appropriate in heterogeneous classrooms. Johnson & Johnson (1994) agree that it has become clear that physical inclusion of students with disabilities in the classroom is not sufficient to ensure they will develop meaningful relationships with others. Teachers must structure the educational and social environment so that students develop the skills and attitudes required to interact across perceived differences and disabilities. Teachers who are working in inclusive classrooms are eager to develop modes of instruction that do not isolate and stigmatize learners with different needs.

### **5.8. Inclusive Principles**

Sapon- shevin and Duncan (1992) stated that, once teachers have decided that they will begin to implement formal cooperative group lessons in their classrooms, there are many decisions that must be made. Teachers must decide how they will incorporate cooperative learning lessons within their classroom structure, how they will decide the content to be taught using cooperative learning, how they will form groups, how they will ensure active participation for all students, and how they will evaluate students' learning.

## **6. CL and Supportive Heterogeneous Groups Relationships**

Ayres et al., (1992) state that in classrooms where teachers are working to communicate norms of cooperation, students can work together in a number of different ways. In many cooperative classrooms, students sit in heterogeneous base groups so that teachers can structure both informal and formal opportunities for

cooperation between students throughout the day. For example, students can start their day with an informal group activity at their desk clusters; complete class jobs with a partner from their group; and engage in formal, structured cooperative learning activities with group members. In most classrooms, teachers leave cooperative learning groups together for 1 month or 6 weeks so that students have an opportunity to get to know and work together with group members, but then also have an opportunity to learn to work with other classmates throughout the year. The goal is for students to have worked in cooperative groups with all their classmates by the end of the year.

Ayres & Slavin (1992) report that one important aspect of creating CL groups is maximizing the heterogeneity of the students within the small groups. Students should be placed in groups that are mixed by academic skills, social skills, personality, race, and sex. It is often helpful for teachers to work with others who are familiar with their students when groups are being formed. With all of the different aspects of student diversity that need to be taken into consideration, forming groups can seem like an onerous task that will be too difficult for any one person. Many teachers structure cooperative groups very deliberately. In classrooms where students are functioning at different levels in regard to academic and social abilities, it is important that the teacher structures the groups to ensure heterogeneity, particularly in the beginning of the year or when new students enter.

In forming groups, some teachers focus on student choice, asking students who they would like to work with. Although it makes sense for teachers to provide students with multiple opportunities to choose within the school day, student choice may not be the best way to form groups. Sharan et al (1984) report when students choose their own groups and work only with others they already know, the groups often tend to be of same gender, race, and ability. These more homogeneous groups work against the broader goals of CL in which teachers are striving to help the students learn to value the diversity that exists in the classroom and in society. There are ways, however, that teachers can incorporate some aspects of student choice into group formation.

## **7. CL Thinking Creativity**

CL is believed to promote thinking and creativity ways (Johnson et al., 1995; Webb, 1989), including:

1. Compared to a whole class format, in CL, students have more opportunities to talk and to share ideas. This interaction with groupmates encourages students to restructure their ideas. For instance, they may need to summarize, elaborate, exemplify, defend, and explain their.

2. Disagreement, if carried out constructively, pushes students to clarify and rethink their ideas, potentially leading to cognitive restructuring.

3. By working in groups, students enjoy more opportunities to see how their peers think and create new ideas. Witnessing this process can provide useful models.

4. Discussing, creating, and thinking in a group, rather than in a whole class context, can provide a less anxiety-producing context. If groupmates feel positively interdependent with one another, a supportive atmosphere can develop. In such an atmosphere, students may feel more free to try out new ideas.

5. The multiple perspectives of others in their heterogeneous groups may spark new ideas in students' minds. The greater achievement that CL can foster provides students with a stronger knowledge base from which to explore concepts.

## **8. Vygotsky's Theory in Teaching**

There are two major implications of Vygotsky's theories for education (1962). One is the desirability of setting up CL arrangements among students, so that students can interact around difficult tasks and be exposed to effective problem-solving strategies within each other's ZPD. Second, a Vygotskian approach to instruction emphasizes scaffolding, with students taking more and more responsibility for learning. For example, in Reciprocal Teaching, teachers lead small groups of students in asking questions about material they have read and gradually turn over

responsibility for leading the discussion to the students. A teaching method called “assisted discovery,” which emphasizes scaffolding, calls for explicitly teaching students to use private speech to talk to themselves through problem-solving.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, it may be said that CL is good for all students and that it is part of comprehensive technique. To achieve this, teachers must work together to build networks within their curriculum. Teachers must also establish a cooperative classroom ethic that emphasizes overall community building, open communication about differences and classroom practices, and reciprocal helping relationships.

Meaningful content in cooperative lessons is critical for the success of all students. For students to succeed within their groups, careful consideration regarding group heterogeneity must be given in conjunction with roles that ensure active, equal participation by all students. Creative assessment practices must be developed to document achievement of meaningful outcomes for students. All of these considerations require planning and structure in order for the teaching to be successful. CL offers many positive, affective futures which encourage language learning, while also supporting development of prosocial, academic and higher order thinking skills. While it may be difficult for learners with a history of more competitive and individualistic language learning activities, it is worth the effort to introduce CL, and gradually, over time, to support learners as they work interdependently in groups and move to greater interdependence as language learners.

CL and pairing of students to achieve an academic goal has been widely examined in higher education. It is, in fact, what we are hypothesizing through work aiming to confirm to deal with cooperative writing, being the most important technique for teaching the writing skill. The coming chapter will focus also on group work and its management in teaching the writing skill.