



## Cooperative Grouping: Ideas for Effective Classroom Practice

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When students work together on an investigation, everybody should be responsible for their analysis of the results. Cooperative grouping and collaboration is essential to help students learn effectively.

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## Not all group learning is cooperative learning . . .



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Simply placing students in groups does not necessarily mean that they will learn together in a cooperative way.

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## Examples of Non-cooperative Groups

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- Group members argue and struggle for power.
- One member sits quietly, too shy to participate.
- One member does the work, while other members talk about other topics.
- The task is not completed because the person who normally works hardest doesn't want to do all the work again.
- A more talented member comes up with all the answers and ignores the ideas of other group members.



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Students may argue within the group and try to take control of the group or dominate the conversation. Other students may be reluctant to participate due to shyness.

Another common non-cooperative group situation is when one member ends up completing the work while the rest of the group chats about topics unrelated to the subject at hand.

Tasks may not remain unfinished because the student who normally works the hardest does not wish to end up with all of the work load again. In other situations, one member may come up with all of the answers and ignore the suggestions of the rest of the group.

It is important for students to learn how to cooperate in groups as it is a skill that will come in handy later on in life, as even adults must at times collaborate together.

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## Effective Cooperation

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- Does not occur by chance.
- Cannot be based on the assumption that all students possess strong social and learning skills.



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Effective cooperation needs to be planned and students must be taught how to work cooperatively.

It is important to practice cooperative learning with students and realize that not all students have the same level of social or learning skills.

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## Why Use Cooperative/Collaborative Learning?

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- Works well with the 5-Es inquiry model.
- Promotes social development.
- Assists with classroom discipline.
- Provides for more than one “teacher.”



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Cooperative learning fits in the 5-E inquiry model of learning which is used in the classroom setting.

Collaborative learning also promotes development of appropriate social skills and the use of small groups assists with discipline in the classroom.

Students also have the opportunity to teach fellow classmates and take on the role as teacher.

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## Why Use Cooperative/Collaborative Learning?

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Industry wants:

- Teamwork skills
- Communication skills
- Negotiation skills
- Conflict resolution skills



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Teamwork, communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills are all not only in other academic areas, but in the workforce as well.

It is imperative that students learn these skills at an early age to lay a good foundation for future collaborative learning.

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## Why Use Cooperative/Collaborative Learning?

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Provides support system for students.

- More learning styles can be reached.
- Higher levels of learning are possible.



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When using collaborative learning, it is possible to reach students using more learning styles as they are engaging in an exchange of ideas within the group, and not just between student and teacher.

Through the compilation of group ideas, higher levels of learning are also possible.

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## Positive Interdependence

- Students have two responsibilities:
  - Learn the assigned material; and
  - Ensure that all members of the group learn.
- Each student makes a unique contribution.
- Interdependence occurs when students cannot succeed unless their fellow group members also succeed.



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Students are responsible for not only their learning, but also making sure that the rest of their group understands the concepts being taught.

Each student is important to the group and is responsible for making their own unique contribution.

It should be emphasized that students will be held accountable for their work in the end and they cannot succeed individually unless their entire group succeeds.

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# Grades

- Group grades
- Individual grades

WEEK OF \_\_\_\_\_ DAY: M Tu W Th F DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> - \_\_\_\_\_

5<sup>th</sup> - \_\_\_\_\_

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
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1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

4<sup>th</sup> - \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> - \_\_\_\_\_

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		

Absent:	TABLE	SET-UP	CLEAN-UP
	1		
	2		
	3		
	4		
	5		

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
6. \_\_\_\_\_  
7. \_\_\_\_\_  
8. \_\_\_\_\_

K - \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> - \_\_\_\_\_



An easy way to distribute group grades is to check-off when a group successfully sets-up or cleans-up their table. Give students a time limit for clean-up and set-up, about five minutes is suggested.

At first students, especially younger ones, may need more time, but try to improve very day until students are able to rapidly perform these actions.

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## Individual Accountability

The teacher must:

- Assess each student's effort.
- Provide feedback to groups and to individual students.
- Ensure that every member is responsible for the final outcome.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	3rd Grade	4th Grade	1st Grade	Kinder	2nd Grade
100 = Excellent					
✓ = 95					
✓ = 90					
✓ = 75					
75 = Minimum					
00 = Not Done					
1st					
1					
1					
1					
1					
2					
2					
2					
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2					
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3					
3					
3					
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5					
5					



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Each student must be made accountable for their contribution to their group.

It is important to assess each individual's understanding and provide each group member with feedback.

Each student can be given a grade depending on how involved they were in the activity, how much they understood and learned the concepts, or any other means of assessment.

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## Group Processing

- Students reflect individually to determine which members' actions were helpful and which actions need improvement.
- Students make decisions about which actions to continue, change or delete.



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Students should be able to reflect on the work their group did and decide which members' actions were helpful and which need improvement.

Students can also make decisions as to how they can alter the way they conduct their investigations to make it more efficient.

Depending on the length of an investigation, group processing or reflection can be done on a separate day.

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## Social Skills

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By working in collaborative groups, students will:

- Get to know and trust one another.
- Communicate accurately.
- Accept and support each other.
- Resolve conflicts constructively



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By working in collaborative groups students will be able to develop social skills.

Students will get to know and trust one another, accept and support each other, and resolve conflicts.

They should also develop the ability to communicate with others accurately and they will learn that certain language should not be used when working in a group if they want to maximize their learning experience.

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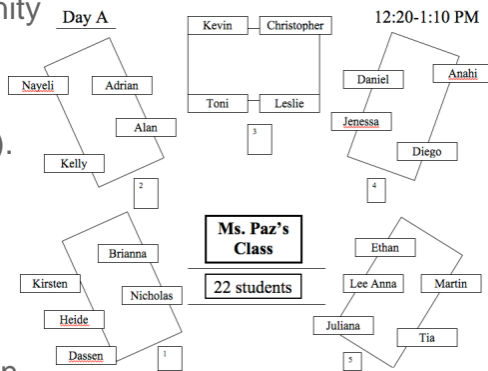
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## Face-to-Face Interaction

To maximize opportunity for success:

- Keep groups small (3–5 students).
- Provide guidelines for interaction.
  - Respect and support
  - Sharing information
  - Motivating each other



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To keep the classroom more orderly and facilitate successful group interaction, it is best to keep students in small groups, usually consisting of 3-5 students.

Creating a seating chart may also be useful in helping students remember where they sit and prevent possible squabbles over who gets to sit where.

It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the students respect and support each other, share information within their group, and motivate each other to do better.

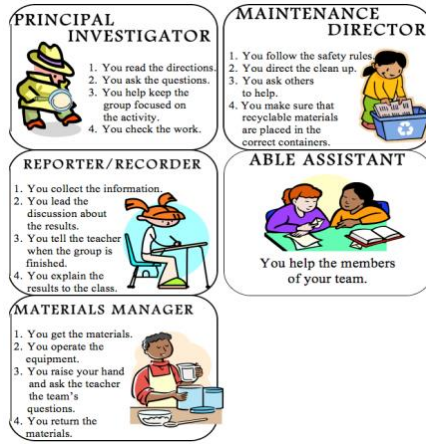
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## Job Descriptions

- **Principal Investigator.** Asks questions and makes sure the group follows instructions.
- **Reporter/Recorder.** Takes down notes as they work.
- **Materials Manager.** Collects and returns materials to the proper place.
- **Maintenance Director.** Directs clean-up.
- **Able Assistant.** Assists other group members.



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Job descriptions can be assigned to each student, and it may be helpful to create color-coded badges which students can wear depending on their assigned job for that day. For younger students a poster with simple descriptions or pictures can be placed somewhere within the classroom.

It is the duty of the Principal Investigator to make sure the that group knows what they re doing and are following steps accordingly.

The Reporter/Recorder takes down notes for the group as they are working.

The Materials Manager collects and returns materials to the proper place.

Maintenance Director makes sure that the group cleans up while the Able Assistant helps out any and all of the remaining group members as needed.

The Able Assistant assists other group members. This position is optional. It may be used with groups of 5 or more.

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## Job Assignments for Groups of 5

Students can be assigned their particular jobs at the beginning of the semester and rotate between jobs every month until the next semester, at which point they start over again.

**Job Assignments**  
Homeroom: **McLemore** Grade: **5<sup>th</sup>**

5 person teams

Table 1	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Anthony</b>	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant
<b>Johnathan</b>	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator
<b>Carlos</b>	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager
<b>Joseph</b>	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director
<b>Gabino</b>	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter

**Job Assignments**  
Homeroom: **McLemore** Grade: **5<sup>th</sup>**

5 person teams

Table 2	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Lupe</b>	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant
<b>Courtney</b>	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator
<b>Samantha</b>	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager
<b>Gabrielle</b>	Recorder Reporter	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director
<b>Madison</b>	ABSE Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder Reporter



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The length of time that student has an assigned job can vary depending on the time that the teacher will have a group of students.

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## Job Assignments for Primary (K-1)

- For younger students the job assignments may be kept for a longer time to make job transitions easier.
- Color-coding the jobs also makes it easier for the students to determine what their responsibilities are.

Job Assignments

Homeroom: **Ancira** Grade: **Kinder**

5 person teams

Table 1	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Jaden</b>	Principal Investigator				
<b>Ezra</b>	Materials Manager				
<b>Alana</b>	Maintenance Director				
<b>Lucia</b>	Recorder Reporter				
<b>Kaitlyn</b>	Able Assistant				

Job Assignments

Homeroom: **Ancira** Grade: **Kinder**

5 person teams

Table 3	January	February	March	April	May
<b>Giovanni</b>	Principal Investigator				
<b>Melody</b>	Materials Manager				
<b>Keja</b>	Maintenance Director				
<b>Kobe</b>	Recorder Reporter				
<b>Taylor</b>	Able Assistant				



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For younger students the job assignments may be kept for a longer time, such as an entire semester, to make job transitions easier.

Color-coding the jobs also makes it easier for the students to determine what their responsibilities in the classroom are.

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## Job Assignments for Groups of 6

### Job Assignments

Homeroom: Smith Grade: 5th

Table 3	August	September	October	November	December
Mia	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder	Able Assistant
Richard	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Recorder	Reporter	Principal Investigator
David	Maintenance Director	Recorder	Reporter	Able Assistant	Materials Manager
Cameron	Recorder	Reporter	Able Assistant	Principal Investigator	Maintenance Director
Jacqueline	Reporter	Able Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Recorder
Concha	Able Assistant	Principal Investigator	Materials Manager	Maintenance Director	Reporter



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In case there are too many students and groups of five or smaller are not an option, then the recorder/reporter job can be separated into two different job assignments.

The recorder will collect the information as the investigation occurs while the reporter will present the results to the teacher and the rest of the class.

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