

FIVE ELEMENTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Positive Interdependence-

Students perceive that they need each other to complete the group's task ("sink or swim together"). Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals (learn and make sure all other group members learn), joint rewards (if all group members achieve above criteria, each will receive bonus points), shared resources (one paper for each group or each member receives part of the information), and assigned roles (summarizer, encourager of participation, recorder, time keeper etc.).

Face-to- Face Promotive Interaction-

Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee to knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment.

Individual Accountability-

Each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. Teachers may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each student or randomly selecting one member of the group to give the answer.

Interpersonal And Small group Skills-

Groups cannot function effectively if students do not have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Collaborative skills include leadership, decision making, trust building, communication, and conflict-management skills.

Group Processing-

Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions which helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group more successful tomorrow. Teachers also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together and the class as a whole.

Johnson, Johnson & Holubec (1991) have established a definition of cooperative learning which identifies five basic elements necessary for a procedure to be considered cooperative.