Chapter 12: Effectively Managing the Cooperative Classroom

In this Chapter

- Designing an Effective Cooperative Learning Activity
- Assessment Options for Cooperative Activities
- Managing Cooperative Learning Effectively
- What to Do when Groups Cannot Function Successfully
- Transformative Ideas Related to Cooperative Learning

"I try cooperative learning and it just turns into free-for-all social time."

"I want to do more cooperative learning, but I have too much to cover."

While a cooperative learning context does introduce unique management challenges, it *can* be managed as effectively as independent activities and offers a series of benefits that are impossible to achieve by other means--including higher levels of academic achievement (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006; Slavin, 1994; Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). Moreover, the reasons teachers are resistant to the idea of incorporating cooperative learning in their classrooms are typically founded in misconceptions. Most of the causes of failure when implementing cooperative learning are explicable and largely avoidable. It is important to note that to successfully implement cooperative learning we must decide that it is worth making a commitment to doing it well, and we must set about learning the skills to manage it effectively (Gettinger & Kohler, 2006).

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

What is Cooperative Learning and Why Should I Use It in My Class?

Technically, cooperative learning includes any form of instruction in which students are working together for a purpose. As we will examine in this chapter, the effects will be more powerful to the extent that certain ingredients are present. The more any activity requires mutual interdependence, collective problem solving, and striving for a common goal, the better chance it will have at achieving the potential that cooperative learning offers (Johnson, et al, 1998; Webb et al, 1995).

There are many reasons to decide that cooperative learning is worth the effort. First, it has been shown to have a positive effect on student learning when compared to individual or competitive conditions (Johnson & Johnson, 1999; Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). Second, cooperative learning has the potential to meet more learning style needs more of the time than individualized direct instruction (Shindler, 2004). Third, the interpersonal and collaboration skills that can be learned in a cooperative learning activity teach skills that are critical for later personal and professional success. Fourth, it has the potential to produce a level of engagement that other forms of learning cannot (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). Fifth, it can be a powerful tool toward several transformative goals including building communal bonds, learning conflict resolution skills, learning to consider others' needs, and learning to be an effective team member (Watson & Battistich, 2006).

What Makes a Cooperative Learning Activity Effective?

As we seek to create the most valuable, engaging and productive cooperative learning experiences for our students, consider how learning within a social context is different from learning independently. Recall our discussion of the social learning theory in the previous chapters. The key to a successful collaborative effort will be to use the social aspect of the activity to the class' collective advantage. This will be true for

both instructional and managerial goals.

If you are incorporating cooperative learning because you think your students need a break from the routine and you want to try something a bit more social, you may be missing the purpose and the potential of this teaching strategy. Having students simply work in groups may be a nice change of pace and can be inherently more engaging for some students, but group work only scratches the surface of what is possible when students learn within a cooperative context. While this chapter will address how to manage any form of group learning, it is suggested that one consider tapping as much of the potential as possible that cooperative learning has to offer.

Chapter Reflection 12.a: Recall situations in which you were asked to work with others. Brainstorm a quick list of elements that were present in situations in which you felt motivated and ultimately successful.

As we explore the practical aspects of effectively managing the cooperative learning activity throughout the chapter, you will undoubtedly develop a set of your own principles for an effective cooperative learning activity. The goals of effective management will be inherently relative to what each reader wants to achieve. Teachers using both the 1-Style and 2-Style approaches reading the chapter will likely differ in their management and instructional goals related to effective classroom management. Figure 12.1 offers a comparison of elements that will either lead to a greater opportunity for achieving what could be considered *transformative* results, and those that will limit our ability to obtain such results.

Figure 12.1 Comparison of Elements in More Effective vs. Less Effective Cooperative Learning Activities

More Effective	Less Effective
Activity has a psychological movement toward a goal and meets many basic needs in the process. Students feel that they are "going somewhere."	Students feel that the activity is a formality and/or may recognize that the task could be done more effectively as an independent exercise.
Emphasis on the quality of the process.	Emphasis on the quality of the final product.
Structure supports the cohesion and social development of group members.	Structure is either accidental or flawed and results in the perpetuation of the current social structure and/or reward the advantaged students.
Expectations are clear on both the implicit and explicit levels -- leading to focused effort, and low student anxiety.	Expectations are untaught or left vague and result in confusion of frustration.
Teacher interventions lead to the development of clarity and learning with the goal of tomorrow being better than today.	Teacher interventions are reactive and only act to solve problems in the short-term, if at all.
Leadership is defined by either: 1-Style teacher -- promotes an ever-increasing level of self-directed effort or 2-Style teacher -- promotes an ever increasing level of efficiency.	Leadership is defined by either: 3-Style teacher -- maintains an accidental climate defined by Social Darwinism or 4-Style teacher -- maintains a level of threat in the room that provides the occasional

	illusion of order.
Students are able to share their outcomes with others -- resulting in pride in their accomplishments and reinforcing the ethic that learning is a constructive process rather than merely a process of fact retention.	Students work to please the teacher, and the learning process is defined mainly by each students' being required to guess what the teacher wants and will think is "good."

How to Begin

The starting point for building cooperative learning into our curriculum should be an examination of our learning targets (e.g., standards, aims, goals, objectives), and our management goals. Those teachers who suggest that they have "too much to cover" to include cooperative learning are likely working from the assumption that cooperative learning will need to be an add-on to their curriculum. Making this assumption is much like suggesting that a social contract is an add-on to one's rules and management procedures. Cooperative learning, like the social contract, is simply a tool to achieve one's teaching goals (Slavin, 1994).

A few questions to ask yourself before you begin:

- What are my learning targets? Can the objectives that I am trying to reach be accomplished in a collaborative format?
- What benefits will the cooperative aspect bring to the learning?
- What will I need to change about my approach to teaching and management?
- Am I doing it haphazardly, or am I able to commit to developing a system for incorporating cooperative learning and making it work?

Use your answers to these questions to make choices related to what you want to achieve in the area of cooperative learning. In the following sections you will be asked to consider a number of options related to the following:

1. Designing your CL activity
2. Managing your CL activity
3. Dealing with problems that arise
4. Using CL to achieve your long-term management goals

DESIGNING YOUR COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

Once we have identified learning targets that can best be taught within a partial or fully cooperative context, we need to make a number of design decisions. These will include 1) selecting a learning activity structural design/format, 2) deciding on the best group structure, 3) developing an effective assessment system that aligns with the goals of the activity.

Selecting an Appropriate Cooperative Learning Environment/Exercise Format

The first item when endeavoring to introduce a cooperative exercise is determining which structural format is best suited to our learning targets. There are several types of format options (Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Each of the different activity designs will have different benefits and involve different challenges. For our purposes, we will reduce them here to a few general types: a) group projects/performances; b) inquiry-based learning in teams; c) collaborative content processing; d) jigsaw model; e) graffiti model; f) collaborative assessment; and g) collaborative group work. A brief description of each of these formats is offered in Figure 12.2.

Figure 12.2 Condensed List of Cooperative Learning Activity Format Options, with Benefits and Management Challenges

CL Activity Format	Benefits	Challenges

Group Products/ Performance. The group works together to create a product or performance that meets certain criteria.	The finished product is motivational. Provides the feeling of winning as a group. True interdependence is often required. Has a built-in quality of "going somewhere."	High stakes create increased chances for conflict and therefore need for conflict resolution skills. Assessment choices will have a dramatic influence on the way the project proceeds.
Inquiry-based/Discovery/ Lab activity. The group takes part in collaborative research using an inductive or deductive process.	Inquiry-based learning is inherently authentic as well as engaging. The skills learned in this kind of activity lend themselves to real life applications, and meet many learning style needs.	Inquiry-based learning may be unfamiliar to some students, and will need to be well structured. The process will need to be taught before it can be assumed that students will be able to apply it effectively. It is possible that students can be left behind in the process if they are neglected.
Collaborative Content Processing. Students examine information together and discuss it; then report their findings.	The quality of thinking is better as a result of having more perspectives and the opportunity to process verbally rather than just mentally (Slavin, 1994).	It is difficult for the teacher to be sure that the groups are discussing the academic content rather than something else. Having effective expectations in place is critical, especially for such things as noise level, how to take turns, and listen effectively.
Jigsaw Model. Students are divided into like-sized groups. Those students learn a topic or skill; each group is then divided into new groups so that each group has a representative who can teach each topic or skill.	This method can be an effective way to present content. Students learn to become experts and to teach to others. With large numbers it can be more efficient than presentations.	The mechanics of the jigsaw are rather tricky at first, and will always require precise coordination of the teacher. Assessment is difficult in that the teacher cannot observe each presentation of content, so must use some other means to ensure quality (Gunter et al, 2007)
Graffiti Model. Groups are given a question or topic. For a set amount of time each group writes answers to the question on a sheet of paper. Groups then rotate to the next sheet of paper. When all groups have completed each station, the original group summarizes the findings for their question or topic.	Groups are exposed to each question in the process. Insights from other groups help reinforce the benefits of working collaboratively. Each answer is completed with a depth that no single group could have accomplished.	Logistics need to be clearly established or groups may be confused. Groups need to be encouraged to think independently, or they tend to replicate the comments of previous groups (Gunter et al, 2007).
Collaborative Assessment. Groups are given a task and can work together to produce one product or independent products depending on the choice of the teacher.	The quality of the outcome is usually better. The process itself promotes learning and deeper processing of the material. Can be done soundly and reliably (Shindler, 2004).	Collaborative exams are only recommended for groups who have demonstrated advanced cooperative learning skills and levels of responsibility. Having individuals turn in independent products can be a useful compromise design.
Collaborative Group Work. Students complete independent assignments, but are allowed to talk to one another and give and receive assistance and peer tutoring.	Students learn how to teach one another and explain material in their own words. Students are free to interact as much or as little as they need to in an attempt to meet their goals and needs.	Some students may use the time to socialize rather than attend to the academic task. Expectations need to be in place for what qualifies as an appropriate noise level, what constitutes cheating, and what actions qualify as an abuse of the privilege.

When deciding which cooperative learning activity format is the best fit, reflect on your desired learning targets. Does the learning lend itself to inquiry (i.e., can it be discovered inductively)? Is there a product or performance that would logically come out of the activity? Would processing the content collectively bring added benefits when compared to having students process on their own?

Chapter Reflection 12.b: React to the teacher who says "Anything that I can teach inductively I will, and anytime I can incorporate cooperative learning into the unit or lesson, I will." Do you agree?

Design an Effective Task Structure
To be effective, cooperative learning activities need to be approached intentionally. When we prepare a group of students for a cooperative learning activity, we are in essence preparing a team for a game. A famous saying among coaches is, "Failure to prepare is preparing to fail." Those (like the teacher quoted in the chapter introduction) who lament that their cooperative learning activity descends into a free-for-all are likely underestimating the requirements of the role of leader and the need to take an intentional approach.

A useful principle to keep in mind is the following: introduce only one new variable at a time. Never ask students to process substantially new content and a new process at the same time. Pick one or the other. Let the students work with content that is at least a little familiar and not too threatening when you ask them to focus primarily on developing cooperative learning skills. When the students have grown comfortable with the dynamics and expectations of cooperative learning, they will be ready to work with content of any kind. Getting there should not take long.

The task design elements to determine include: a) the size of the group, b) the completion of the group, c) potential roles for group members.

Creating Groups
Upon examining the many factors involved in creating groups, it becomes readily apparent that this task needs to be undertaken thoughtfully. A good portion of potential management problems will stem from careless group development (Lotan, 2006; Rubin, 2003).

What is the optimal size for a group? Two students do qualify as a cooperative group, but if possible, consider creating larger groups. Three or four members are typically optimal. Groups greater than four are typically problematic. In almost every case of larger groups there are students who end up being spectators and/or marginalized by the others (Slavin, 1994).

Chapter Reflection 12-c: When you have been part of groups larger than four, was it the case that all members were active participants? Were there members who were spectators?

Group Composition and Selection of Group Members
There are several configurations that we could choose to use for grouping students. Our choices will include having students self-select, choosing groups by random, grouping by similar ability or mixed ability, or using a systematic method such as combinations of learning style types or manufacturing groups that we think will produce optimal results. They will each produce dramatically different outcomes. Figure 12.3 compares the advantages and disadvantages of each of the options.

Figure 12.3: Comparing the Advantages and Disadvantages of Some of the Common Cooperative

Learning Grouping Techniques

Grouping Format	Advantage	Disadvantage
Random – students number off in a fixed pattern producing groups that have a random composition.	Most likely creates mixed ability, mixed learning style and mixed social group groupings. Can be done easily. Students see it as fair.	There is no control over the composition of the group. Groups may or may not be equal or desirable.
Similar Ability -- teacher selects students, or students self-select into high, middle and lower levels depending on the activity, skill or subject. Groups are made of students with like levels.	Students can move at a pace that fits their natural inclination. Students who are low ability can be in a position to be leaders or major contributors. High ability students may feel more challenged.	Group outcomes will vary widely. Students of all abilities will miss the opportunity to work with some students. It can create a climate of haves and have-nots. High ability students lose the opportunity to be leaders to some degree, and lower ability students lose the contribution and modeling of the high ability students.
Mixed Ability -- teacher selects students who represent different levels of ability and creates groups that consist of students of all levels.	Sends the symbolic message that the class is egalitarian and classless. Higher ability students are in a position to be experts, leaders, models and teachers; lower ability students get the benefits of having higher ability students in their group.	Higher ability students may not experience the stimulation or challenge that they would with other higher ability students. Lower ability students may feel perpetually in need of help rather than experiencing the role of leader or expert relative to the others in their group (Rubin, 2003)
Situational Leadership Type -- teacher groups students based on profiles in three factors: a) level of buy-in; b) ability level; and c) level of political capital in the group. (Appendix C).	Considers the dimensions of buy-in level and social inclusion, otherwise largely ignored. Offers a systematic way to approach leadership needs of groups. Can lead to getting the most productive combinations of students.	More complicated and requires a significant amount of analysis to apply.
Learning Style Similarities -- teacher creates groups that have like personality types, cognitive styles, learning styles or kind of intelligence.	Students feel a greater affinity for one another. Thinking may be more harmonious and familiar to each member.	Products may lack evidence of other types of thinking. Creative groups may lack practical ideas for execution. Practical groups may lack creative energies that would help generate ideas.
Learning Style Mix -- teacher selects students from a variety or learning styles to comprise each group	Groups will have a greater balance of types of intelligences and styles. Products will show evidence of more skills and perspectives.	Groups will inherently have different ways of approaching the task and assigning value to ideas. Requires tolerance and some degree of appreciation for the fact that students will have different learning styles.
Self-Selected Groups -- teacher allows students to make their own groups.	Relatively easy for most students to find a group. Students will prefer this option and will be pleased that it was chosen.	Can lead to cliques and the maintenance of the social hierarchy and political structure in the class. Difficult to use other systems after students have gotten comfortable with this (Lotan, 2006).

It will be tempting to give in to the students' desires to make their own groups. It is usually easier and most students will be happier. However, when making choices here, consider how our choices work to promote the social frame: "when you (students) demonstrate responsibility, you will be given freedom." In the short term, allowing students to self-select their group may seem innocuous; however, over time it will likely lead to clique formations and entrenchment of the social structure (Lotan, 2006). With each successive exercise in which self-selected grouping is allowed, our students will become more accustomed to the process and increasingly develop a sense of entitlement that it is their right. A common resulting phenomenon is the teacher's eventual determination that there are too many negative effects from the policy of self-selected grouping. At that point they decide to begin the process of re-assigning groups, not anticipating the strong and defiant reaction of the students. This reaction is especially forceful from those students who feel that they have the most to lose by a new arrangement. For example, a student who unconsciously believes that they are "too good" for other members of the group to which they have been assigned may act this out in ways that appear immature and inappropriate. These types of displays can take us by surprise. They can be spiteful and expose the lack of community and egalitarian socio-politics in the class. While the temptation is to be angry toward the student who displays the sense of entitlement or discrimination, the fault actually lies with the choice made weeks earlier to allow self-selection of groups. The event could have been prevented. Moreover, it represents evidence that instead of cooperative learning activities promoting community, they have actually been undermining the democratic values in the class (Rubin, 2003).

Chapter Reflection 12.d: Recall groups that you would consider to be "evolved" or that have developed the qualities of a genuine community. Do you see much evidence of cliques and a social hierarchy within the group? Why do you think this is the case?

A good standard to use in these cases is students stop caring about who is in their group they are ready for the privilege of choosing their own. You could counter, "My students will always be concerned with who is in their group." Be assured, you may be surprised at their ability to grow out of their recalcitrance. One of the transformative effects of a high quality cooperative learning process is that it helps students get past their pre-formed perspectives of one another. In observing those teachers who have mastered this process, it is evident that students of every social sub-group work together in their classes. In secondary schools, it is common to observe a class of students look past social class and personality one period, and then go right back to using the same forms of prejudice and narrow mindedness the next. What this says is that attitude is context-specific to a great extent. Progress toward egalitarianism and equanimity may not occur quickly, but effective teachers show that it is possible eventually.

When in doubt, default to mixed ability groups. Ability grouping has its place, but it has some serious disadvantages. It can quickly define a culture of haves and have-nots. The effect of this will be to undermine the sense of community in the class. Mixed ability groups have many advantages including providing opportunities for stronger students to take on the role of peer tutor and weaker students to benefit from having the stronger students in their groups. If you do feel the need to ability group, try to limit it to situations in which the ability level is mostly related to previous experience rather than students' perceptions of innate intelligence. For example, if we created groups of experienced computer users and groups of less experienced users and had students self-select, in this case it is less likely that students will feel stratified than if we placed them into high and low ability groups in an area that they felt represented a fundamental aptitude.

Random grouping often produces relatively desirable results and can be done rather efficiently. For example, with a little practice (but we do need to practice), our students can get used to numbering off into groups in a matter of a minute or two. The following sequence can be effective. First, count the students. Second, mentally divide the number of students by the number that you want to have in each group; that is your count-off number. Third, instruct them to count off. Be sure that the students say their group

numbers out loud. This will save you the trouble of learning that when you say the numbers, the groups often end up with disproportionate sizes. Having students say their numbers promotes both memory and honesty. Another system is for you to create random groups before the event and then simply read them off.

Numbering off -- sample direction sequence:

1. Cue -- wait for 100% attention.
2. "We are going to number off into seven groups of four for the next activity. When we get into groups, I will explain what we are doing."
3. "Let's begin counting by sevens. When we are done the ones should go (determine spot), the twos should go (determine spot)," etc.
4. Students count (and stay put until they are all done).
5. a) Early in the year, or if the students have taken a long time to get into groups on their previous effort, say, "Ok it should take us about 30 seconds to get into groups, ready Go!" b) When students have learned to move with urgency and efficiency to their group. "Ready, Go!"

It is best when grouping by learning style to use mixed-style groups. To create the most heterogeneous combination in terms of learning style, first identify each student's preference on the Extroversion/E vs. Introversion/I and Concrete (Sensate/S) vs. Abstract (Intuitive/N) scales. This can be done in a variety of ways including administering the Paragon Learning Style Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or the Kolb Learning Style Inventory. Once you have determined each student's style preference, try to create groups that include all four type combinations,
e.g., IN, EN, IS and ES (Figure 12.4). Refer to the previous chapter for more ideas related to how to translate your knowledge of learning style into student success.

Figure 12.4: The Cognitive Dimension Factor Combinations that Most Significantly Influence Academic Orientation/Style

The two factor dimensions that most affect how one acts and learns in school are those of introversion/extroversion and sensation/intuition. Introverts may be more reflective while extroverts may be more outgoing. Practical skills may come more easily to sensates, while intuitives may be more comfortable with imagination. When considering learning style as a means to creating heterogeneous groups, teachers may be most successful in their efforts by attempting to find students for each group from each of the four academic types described below. The chart below shows the four possible combinations or academic types.

	Extroverts (E)	Introverts (I)
Sensates (S)	**ES Action Oriented Realists (@40%)** This type loves action and things happening. They like to get practical results from their work and like to work in groups. For them too much watching is a waste of time, they want to do. They like to share what they are doing and thinking. They get impatient when things are too slow, complicated, or abstract.	**IS Thoughtful Realists (@25%)** This type is the most careful and steady. They don't mind working alone or with one other. They like practical results and are good with details and technical things. They are often the least expressive; they see much but usually share little. They don't like careless ideas, plans, or too many new things at once.
Intuitives (N)	**EN Action Oriented Innovators (@25%)** This type is really motivated and likes to make things happen. They like to work in groups on new and interesting things. They like to take their theories and apply them with others. They share easily, especially what's inside. They don't like details, routines, or the same old thing for too long.	**IN Thoughtful Innovators (@10%)** This type is the best at solving problems. They like to work at their own pace on their own ideas. They like to make creative and scientific things. They would rather express themselves through their thoughts, instead of socializing with lots of others. They don't like doing busy work or things that don't make sense

Grouping using the principles prescribed by the Situational Leadership Model (Appendix E) will involve the

highest level of complexity and the lowest level of convenience but will bring other less obvious variables into the equation. It has the potential to have a substantially positive effect on the social dynamics in the class. Moreover, it has the added benefit of maintaining our level of awareness on valuable ingredients such as each student's investment level and the political dynamics in the group.

It may seem like the process of grouping is a formality. To us it may simply represent a line on our lesson plan and a procedural necessity. But to students it is significant (Lotan, 2006; Rubin, 2003). The make-up of their group is the major defining factor in their experience. During this process it will be essential to mirror the affect that will be the most beneficial for our students to take on. If students are tentative about their team, we need to mirror to them optimism about how great the groups look and how we see great combinations. If the groups look a bit unhappy about their membership we need to send the message, "in this class, we have only great team members and it is a certainty that we are all going to be highly productive and supportive quickly if not immediately." No matter what we are confronted with as far as student complaints or requests to be traded to other groups, we need to project a positive expectancy. If we buy in to the temptation to make changes and adjust groups based on friendships or who is or is not getting along, we: 1) send the message that we believe that some students are not capable of getting along with others; and 2) put ourselves a position to be asked to do so in the future because we have just reinforced that behavior (re: the social learning model). No matter the reality with which we start, we need to project implicitly and explicitly: "in this class, we all get along, we all like each other, we can all trust each other to do our part, and as the teacher I believe in you."

As a matter of protocol, it seems to be a more effective practice to create groups first and then give out the task and directions. It may not make a great difference, but in some cases students may be preoccupied with the "who" rather than the "what," and miss what we are saying about the task. Doing things in this order will help students be in the moment and attentive when we explain to them the task they are about to undertake.

Student Roles within the Group

Assigning students roles within the group has many advantages (Johnson & Johnson, 1999a; Slavin, 1994). First, it provides students a clearer sense of what to do in the process. Second, assigned roles make it more likely that the necessary roles and duties will ultimately be performed. For example, if there were no designated manager or recorder, the function of a group may be limited and certain tasks may never get performed. Third, students learn that roles are useful in the accomplishment of collective efforts. They come to understand that those who can fulfill a certain role within a group can often be more valuable than those who are highly talented but provide a less focused contribution. Fourth, if roles are rotated regularly, students have the opportunity to take on roles that they may not otherwise have taken on normally. Some students will feel very comfortable taking the role of recorder but may never volunteer to be in a leadership position unless that role has been assigned to them. On the other hand, the student who has an expressive persona and comfort with a leadership role may always find themselves taking over unless they are expected to fulfill another role that requires other skills. While it may not be entirely comfortable for students to work outside their natural strength areas, it provides them an opportunity to develop areas that could use growth. An added consideration is the opportunity to learn appreciation for effective performance in roles previously avoided. This contributes to admiration for others when they perform those roles.

Chapter Reflection 12.e: Reflect on your own experience in groups. If you had your choice would you take the same role each time? Have you experienced growth when required to take on roles that were not your first choice?

In the early stages of development, it is usually most effective to assign roles to group members. This can be done randomly or purposefully. If different roles are assigned often and randomly, this usually ensures

that all students will have the opportunity to take on multiple roles. However, if you are concerned that all students may not have the opportunity to take on each role -- or you simply do not want to take chances -- you may want to keep records and be purposeful about rotating roles.

A simple technique for assigning roles is to use physical objects on the four walls of the room or yard. We can simply assign certain roles to those closest to certain objects. For example, one possible scenario may play out in the following manner; “Ok, is everyone ready? I will pass out the directions shortly. But now that we are all sitting in our groups let’s designate roles. Those closest to the clock are the managers (wait for reaction to die down if there is one; and a reminder that everyone is going to get to serve in a leadership role at some point in the quarter/year). Those closest to the window are the recorders. Those closest to the board are researchers, and those closest to the door are the mediators/consensus builders.” However, as with the membership, there may be some students who are happier with the role that they have been assigned than others. Resist the temptation to feel sorry for students who did not get a role they wanted or apologize to them. Instead, project the message: “Remember, all roles are really important. Do your best to do a great job of your role and help your group. What’s important now? (i.e., WIN) What do you need to do to help your group succeed?” Raise their level of awareness of the possible resentment or passive aggressiveness they may be feeling and challenge them to rise to the occasion.

Chapter Reflections 12-f: When would you choose to assign roles and when would you let the students do what comes naturally?

When do we let the groups work without roles? A useful principle may be when students have shown that they have the skills to execute the task without them, or roles are really not applicable to the task. This requires your judgment and depends on the situation. Even when they have shown the ability to work without roles assigned, there are other benefits to incorporating roles in the future to some extent. Students may slip back into entrenched patterns or may lose sight of the value of clarifying responsibilities. A transitional step is asking the groups to select roles internally. In this case, we might offer them a simple system such as numbering off if they cannot easily decide by a more democratic method.

What are some typical roles students can take to contribute to the group’s capacity to reach its goals most effectively? The answer is -- whatever roles the activity requires. It can be counterproductive to be too tied to any established roles that you or others have used. Examine the task and ask yourself what jobs are needed for the success of that particular task. The most meaningful roles should emerge. Here are some typical roles that can be useful in various cooperative learning activities (Johnson & Johnson, 1999a).

- Manager
- Reporter
- Reader
- Consensus Builder
- Recorder
- Researcher
- Leader
- Mediator
- Monitor

It may be helpful to create an evolving written catalogue of roles and their descriptions you can print for each substantive cooperative activity. Pasting that list into the assignment sheet will bring another level of clarity to the assignment. Later in the chapter we will discuss an effective method for making the job description of each role more concrete and meaningful and encouraging students to value the importance of their role.

Time Frame and Nature of the Task

Defining the time frame of the task may seem like common sense, but it is a critical factor in the process (Slavin, 1994). Whether the activity is three days or 30 minutes long, students must be able to pace their efforts and adjust to the level of urgency or reflection required. What are the priority tasks that need attention? What needs to be done carefully? How much time is there for brainstorming or discussion? In most classes there will be groups who tend to oversimplify the task and do it quickly. These efforts are usually missing something that the teacher thought would be included, or do not reflect the kind of deeper processing that we were looking for. There will be groups who may want to over-complicate a task that was intended to be straight forward. These groups can become paralyzed by the idea-generation process and never get to the execution of the process. Especially early in the year, you may want to give timeframes for the duration of each piece of the process. You may suggest that groups be patient and not simply take the first idea that comes to them. You may want the students to engage in formal brainstorming (see Figure 12.6). Conversely, you may want to offer a timeframe for when certain aspects of the process need to be complete, so that the group will have sufficient time for the later portions of the task.

Figure 12.6: Brainstorming Rules (Baumgartner, 2008)

1. Quantity is the point. Don't get hung up on quality. The whole point of brainstorming is the flow of ideas is not immediately separated into good and bad ones. Obviously, your chances of finding good ideas increase if you have a really long list of ideas to choose from.
2. Free-wheeling is necessary. You can't generate a good number of ideas if you restrict them in any way. Don't worry about saying something "silly." So say anything that pops into your head; say variations on what other people have said; just say things!
3. Defer judgment. Don't be critical of any of the ideas presented -- yours or others.
4. Build on other people's ideas. Often an idea suggested by one person can trigger a bigger and/or more developed idea by another person. Or a variation of an idea on the board could be the next 'velcro' idea. It is this building of concepts that leads to out-of-the-box and high quality thinking.

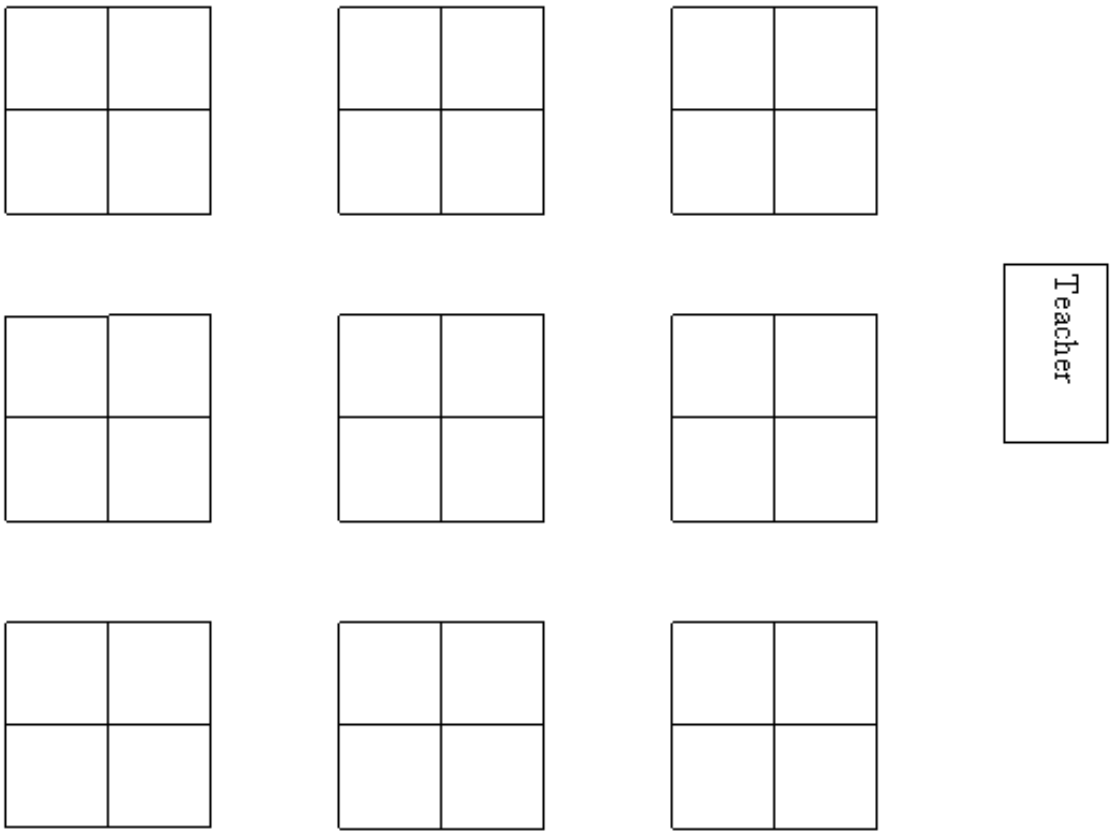
A useful tool in the effort to structure the task and timeframe is to have students develop benchmarks for the product at intervals along the way. These provide the students with concrete stages of completion that can be motivating and reassuring. They provide the teacher evidence that the group is on track as well as offering a convenient venue for giving formative feedback. For example, if the assignment is a group research project, the teacher might ask to see evidence, ensuring progress by all groups, of the following components, on paper, at pre-determined points:

- A draft of a proposal with a clearly articulated idea
- Research from at least a minimum number of sources that will be used to inform the effort
- A rough draft of the project with an explanation of how each member has and will contribute to the overall effort
- Presentation of the project to the class

Arrangement of desks/workspaces

It will be necessary to structure the room physically so that students can easily interact with their fellow cooperative group members. We will also want to make sure that we are able to move easily within the room. Four chairs placed around medium sized tables provided one solution; however this option is not available to many of us. Placing four desks into pod shapes is a configuration that many teachers use. This configuration is depicted in Figure 12.6.

Figure 12.7: Possible Configuration of Student Desks in the Cooperative Classroom



EFFECTIVELY ASSESSING THE COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITY

As we discussed in the previous chapter, the relationship between assessment and classroom management is a powerful nexus that is given a fraction of the attention it warrants. It is especially significant when it comes to cooperative learning. Again, how and what we assess will define for the students "what is important" in the experience and shape the learning environment as much as anything else we do. What we assess tells the students what to care about and what constitutes success. We might begin by asking ourselves a few defining questions. Do we want to assess formally or informally? Do we want our unit of analysis to be the individual student or the group as a whole? Do we want to focus more on the final product or on the process and level of investment the students make along the way? Each of these choices will have a significant effect on the way that students approach the task and what they will infer to be a successful performance. Figure 12.8 outlines the various advantages and disadvantages of each method of assessment.

Figure 12.8: Cooperative Group Assessment Options

Type	Individual Accountability	Group Accountability
No Formal Assessment	Fine, as long as the task is inherently engaging and you want to promote internal LOC. May not provide enough motivation for tasks that are less inherently interesting, or for students who need a little external incentive.	
Formal Self- Assessment	Good for having the students reflect on their process effort. Shifts the LOC of assessment to students. Problematic when trying to promote accountability.	
Peer Assessment	Can be effective in that those doing the rating are in the best position to	

	judge the quality of the other students' performance. However, this method often leads to one of the following problems: 1) the reliability of the ratings are usually suspect due to social dynamics; and 2) putting students in the position of rating one another is often perceived as unfair or uncomfortable.	
Process Assessment	Helps motivate the student to put forth full effort and be cooperative. Does not penalize students for others' lack of effort	Helps motivate the group to work through problems, collaborate and use the prescribed process format.
Product Assessment	Rewards students for their personal contribution and does not penalize them for others' lack of quality. Does not readily promote cooperation skills.	Helps motivate students to create a quality outcome, but may lack the ability to reward effort and desired process along the way.

While all options have their benefits, some options will contribute to more desirable results (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003). Using no assessment is clearly less trouble, however, it makes the statement that every effort is the same as every other effort. If this is true, incorporating no formal assessment is a valid option. However, if we are assessing other areas of achievement (e.g., tests of knowledge, homework assignments, etc), but not the cooperative learning activities, we make the statement, in a very real and material way, that the quality of effort during the cooperative learning has little importance, regardless of what we may say. Self-assessment can be an excellent tool for groups who have demonstrated a high level of responsibility and skill at the cooperative learning process. It can also be a useful adjunct assessment system to teacher-based assessment as a way of promoting more self-reflection. However, translating it into a grade is extremely difficult and should be avoided. It can be a valuable process for students to informally self-evaluate the quality of their performance and the performance of those in their group, yet when that evaluation is then translated into a grade, it typically leads to a great deal of damage. Our efforts to promote cohesion and trust within the group will be undermined as a result of students' feeling vulnerable and resentful of one another's ratings when including any feature of peer-based assessment. Moreover, it is likely that popular students will be graded more favorably by their peers than students who do not possess the same level of political capital. Typically, many students are honest when there is no cost but much less honest when they recognize that they will be penalized for being self-critical.

Chapter Reflection 12-g: In your experience, would you say that when students fully invest in the process the products usually work out pretty well? Conversely, would you say that a good product assumes that a group of students has invested in the process fully?

When we assess process outcomes, we typically find that it has the effect of promoting a greater level of student investment in the process. Moreover, when students invest fully in the process, the products they produce usually reflect their high quality investment. Chapter 20 outlines a detailed system for assessing the quality of student participation and process. Many of our learning targets during cooperative learning activities will be in the areas of processes, skills and dispositions. If we have learning targets and goals in these areas but do not use an assessment system that supports them, then we have in essence built failure into our instructional design. Many teachers who do not currently incorporate process assessment into their teaching dismiss its potential, yet teachers who do incorporate some process or behavioral level assessment recognize the powerful effect it can have to positively shape the quality of the student performance.

There are many benefits to having the individual as the unit of analysis of process assessment. First, students will feel that it is fairer. They will be less likely to feel that they are in a position to be penalized by the actions of others. Second, because it is possible to define cooperation skills into a high-quality level

individual performance, it has the capacity to promote cooperative behavior as well as individual responsibility and effort. Third, it is cleaner and easier to manage. Individual grades produce a more reliable set of data for us to process aggregate daily grades into a unit grade. Whatever system we decide to use, we will need to commit to it. Can you honestly say that you will give the same process or participation grade to a student who has done little and one who has made an exceptional effort as a result of their being in the same group?

That being said, while there are several disadvantages to a group level grade, it does have the power to contribute to the development of interdependence among group members that an individual grade does not. For that reason, it is recommended that one use primarily individual level-assessment systems for process in the formative stages of a group's development, and transition over time to a balance of group- and individual-level assessments as the situation allows.

Chapter Reflection 12-h: Reflect on your experiences as a student in cooperative groups. How did you feel when you were graded on the performance of the whole group? Do you see the advantages and disadvantages of both individual and group grades for collaborative efforts? How will this affect your decisions as a teacher?

Some readers find competition to be undesirable for any reason. Others find competition raises the level of interest and motivation of students and can turn a cooperative learning activity into a team competition. If you choose to avoid using competition, your students are likely not missing anything. If you have a desire to use it, then be cautious. Strictly avoid mixing competition into your assessment of the process or the product. Take care that the students understand that the competition is a separate variable. Moreover, make sure that the students understand that the purpose of competition is fun, and the outcomes that you value and reward are the quality of effort and learning. This is true for every subject and every grade. In Chapter 18, we will discuss the use of competition in the classroom in detail.

Chapter Reflection 12-i: Reflect on your experiences in situations in which you were part of a group that was competing with other groups. What affect did the competitive element have on the group? How did it change your values and focus?

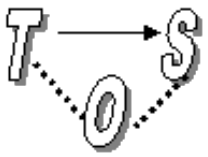
MANAGING YOUR COOPERATIVE EXERCISE

If we have designed an effective cooperative learning activity, much of our work will be done. The task itself will create much of the energy and define the focus. So how do we manage it? Here are three principles to guide our thinking:

1. At any time, but especially in the early stages of developing a climate supportive of successful cooperative learning, make the social frames very explicit (recall Chapter 3). It is important to promote in the minds of our students the cause-and-effect relationship related to: "when you (the students) are ready for ...you will be able to..." Cooperative learning is just another teaching strategy; but it is also a privilege. Keep the students mindful that they need to continue to earn this privilege.

2. Assume that students need a great deal of support and structure until they show that they can succeed with less. To be effective, cooperative learning will require a very deliberate use of technical management and skills development (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). One of the benefits of cooperative learning is that if done well, increasingly less management will be necessary over time.

3. Be ever aware of the presence of social/indirect learning when you make management choices.



When students are working in groups, messages sent to one group will affect the other groups as well. The actions that we take with one group tell the other groups what to expect. When we publicly recognize the successes of one group, the other groups will become wiser as a result (Bandura, 1986; Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003).

The effectiveness of our management will be related to our ability to do the following:
1) develop a culture of listening and provide clear directions; 2) be an effective leader and teacher during the activity; 3) teach the skills necessary for groups to function effectively; and 4) respond effectively to behavioral problems when they arise.

Developing a Culture of Listening and Providing Good Directions
Recall our discussion of technical management in Chapter 5. A successful cooperative learning environment requires a culture of listening. We need to be sure the students understand the directions before they begin, and we need to have an efficient, painless way to get 100% attention for short periods of time. It will be difficult to be fully effective managing our cooperative groups without the use of a well established cue. The nature of cooperative learning requires us to frequently add information, process ideas, check for understanding and/or ask questions quickly without being too disruptive to the process, or requiring yelling or nagging (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003). Being a master of technical management in the development stages of the process will be essential.

When giving directions at the start of the activity:
- Be clear, get 100% attention, check for comprehension and have students wait until all is understood before any group begins. Be sure that 100% is 100% (Recall the 50% or 100% rule described in Chapter 5).
- Expect 100% comprehension before starting (if they do not understand the directions, what are they going to do?)
- Do not enable groups that take a careless approach to listening to the directions. Promote a culture of listening in which students feel responsible to listen, or to clarify and ask questions when they do not understand.

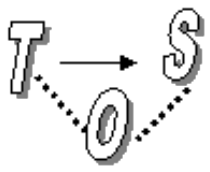
When possible, provide written directions and/or guidelines. It will save both you and the students time, create another level of clarity, and improve the quality of the students' performance. Information to include in written directions and/or guidelines:
1. Step-by-step procedures for the task
2. Roles and role descriptions*
3. Explanations of cooperative group skills that may need attention*
4. Assessment Instruments for either the process and/or the product*

*(These features can be pasted into each new set of guidelines.)

Chapter Reflection 12-j: Recall cooperative learning activities you have observed. What portion of the activity "problems" would you say related to technical management issues? What technical management strategies would have helped those teachers?

Being an Effective Leader and Teacher during the Activity

One of your most important roles as leader of the cooperative learning effort is that of the "link among the groups." Your words and actions act as the mode of communication between each group. Without your words, each group is essentially working in isolation (Johnson & Johnson, 1999a; Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain, 2003). A powerful principle to keep in mind related to the social learning model is: "What can be communicated to one group that will inform or improve the performance in the other groups?"



When we examine the social learning diagram within the context of cooperative learning, we notice that most often the S represents entire groups. One of the monumental instances of a missed teaching opportunity is observing something good (i.e., valuable, effective, innovative, efficient, creative, etc) that one group is doing and keeping it to ourselves. This is especially true when we are in cooperative groups. Too often as we walk around from group to group, the teacher is the only person benefiting and getting more informed. If we simply take the opportunity to communicate in a publicly positive manner what we have observed, each group will have the opportunity to learn from the other groups.

Principles to keep in mind in the process of providing feedback and direction during the cooperative group activity:

1. When you recognize that, for the good of all, providing additional information or clarification would be valuable, stop the whole group with a cue. Wait for 100% attention, and then provide the information in as few words as possible, and as clearly as possible. Be sensitive to maintaining momentum within the groups so do this as little as possible. Also, it will be easier to maintain attention when the information that you share is valuable and concise. Test their patience at your own risk.
2. When you wish to share valuable information that is not necessary for every student to have, simply speak at a slightly higher volume (but watch your pitch, students tend to turn off messages that are spoken in a high or panicky register).
3. Move from group to group. Make sure that you get around to each group during each phase of the task. Don't take over when you are there. In fact, the less you need to intervene, the better.
4. Be concrete and specific (recall Chapter 4 related to personal recognitions vs. positive recognitions). You may find yourself saying "Good job!" a great deal, which is fine. However, try to include specifics as well. For example, a more effective statement would be, "Great job staying with it. See, when you are persistent, the ideas do eventually come." Or, "Great idea! I see one group decided to make three columns on their paper and list ideas for each category."
5. Make positive recognitions public, but make negative recognitions, criticisms, and consequence implementations private. Build the vision of a successful performance with your words, but use actions to change behaviors that are need to change.

Chapter Reflection 12-k: Reflect on the instinctive words that come out of your mouth when you recognize a student's efforts. Are they encouraging and educational? What habits could you adopt to make your feedback more effective?

Teach the process skills that you want to see performed. In almost every case, teachers whose students succeed at executing effective cooperative learning activities have taught their students the skills

they need to do so (or have benefited from teachers who have done so previously). Teachers who assume their students have the skills to participate in cooperative learning activities without being taught those skills are usually disappointed. Put simply, we reap what we sow. Recall the discussion related to technical management. When we observe performance that lacks the quality we feel is necessary, we have three choices: 1) we can live with it; 2) we can be disappointed and get negative; or 3) we can change it.

Instead of starting off the year allowing students to fail and then being disappointed, it may be a better idea to start the year by building the skills that are necessary for success (Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007; Slavin, 1994). Once students show the ability to demonstrate these skills we can move on. Moreover, this investment of time and effort early in the year will pay back many times over the course of the year in efficiency and positive emotion.

The cooperative group skills that students will need to master include how to listen, how to resolve conflict, how to communicate concerns, how to make decisions, how to perform a role, how to execute the necessary learning process, and how to share. Below are descriptions of each of these skills.

How to listen. Students typically assume they know how to listen. In fact, most of our students will consider it silly to reflect on the quality of their attention. But in a cooperative learning effort it is not sufficient to be a selective listener. Success requires collective understanding. It is necessary to be an *active listener*. To accomplish this, students need to learn to listen for the essence of what is said and get in the habit of using clarifying questions. These questions will need to help clarify both the conceptual issue (e.g., “I heard you say that you think our group should take the position that….”), and the practical issues (e.g., “So we just decided to make a poster depicting our idea; are we all going to need to do the artwork, or should some of us work on the content while the others draw?”). Making eye contact with the person talking and showing recognition that one understands is also part of active listening. So students need to get used to asking other students to repeat what they have said, or re-explain it when they have not understood. This may sound like a simple skill, but it is surprisingly unpracticed outside the classroom.

Chapter Reflection 12-I: Observe a typical group of young people talking. How would you characterize their communication pattern? How much defensiveness is taking place? How much active listening? It may be useful to bring to mind the paradigm of fixed vs. incremental progress view of intelligence. For whatever reason, most students view their level of ability as fixed and what they say as who they are. The result is a constant defense of their ego and a feeling of comparison with their peers. So instead of listening, they spend a lot of mental energy trying to feel adequate and relatively intelligent. What can we do as teachers to help students make the shift from communicating for the purpose of not looking dumb to communicating to learn and grow? What message to we want to send to them?

How to resolve conflict. The next chapter outlines an extensive system for resolving conflict. The skills of conflict resolution will be essential to moving the relationships in the class past the common reactivity and unconsciousness. The cooperative learning activity offers both unique challenges as conflict is more likely when students are asked to work together. Yet it offers unique opportunities in that the conflict that arises in the artificial context of the cooperative learning exercise may be less emotionally loaded, and thus offer a venue for students to practice those skills in a situation in which the emotional stakes are not as high as they can get in the real world. Successful conflict resolution will include a few fundamental ingredients. First, students will need to be aware of their level of emotion. Second, they will need practice using I-messages instead of personal attacks. Third, students should increasingly see the need and value of being in the habit of thinking win-win rather than win-lose when conflict arises.

How to communicate concerns and opinions. Part of effective communication will include finding a constructive way to express one’s concerns or opinions. Very few students of any age have learned to do

this effectively. The typical unconscious behavior for most students who are unhappy with group decisions is to: 1) withdraw and hold their resentment inside; 2) make a non-constructive negative judgment about the idea (e.g., “that idea is stupid.”); or 3) make a statement that makes the idea personal (e.g., “You guys always want to do that kind of thing.”). To express their concerns with more positive effective, students need to learn to use a combination of the skill of using I-messages and maintaining the focus on the quality of the ideas rather than the person who came up with the ideas. I-messages make the statement that any idea by definition comes from an individual’s personal perspective. Most students state their subjective opinions as objective facts. The result is that too often the intent is missed and the statement fosters defensiveness. It will be useful to help students learn to begin to phrase opinions with I-message language (e.g., I think, I feel, my idea, this is only my opinion, etc.).

How to make decisions. It may seem like common sense, but making decisions as a collective is often a problematic task. One of the first things that the class should recognize is that in a group of four there may be times when one or more students are not going to like the direction the group takes. We will need to help our very young students to be prepared for the times when their ideas are not chosen. We might ask the question proactively “So when each group is engaging in the process or picking a topic, what are we going to do if our topic is not chosen? Are we going to take it personally, quit and pout, or are we going to let it evaporate and stay 100% invested in the effort, and do what is best for the group as a whole?” Even if this question sounds a little pedantic and patronizing, it will be a helpful point on the emotional compass. In fact, it is validating the difficulty of the act of letting go of the disappointment that the idea was not used.

We will want to offer the students a concrete process for making quick democratic decisions. We might suggest that the leader or manager of the group open the floor for some period of discussion and when all sides have been heard, call for a vote. We can also walk the students through the process of developing a compromise position. One possible process for doing this would be again that the leader open the floor to all ideas and then ask if it would be okay to combine them in a way that includes more students’ desires. The result may be three choices: that of student A, that of student B, and a compromise synthesizing the two. But the leader or manager should maintain the role of mediator and not decision maker. Those in leadership roles should limit their decisions to issues of efficiency and procedure. Decisions related to the essential elements of the task should be made democratically.

How to perform a role. While again this may seem like common sense, few students know what constitutes the successful execution of their role. Giving a student a title is not sufficient preparation for their job. It will be helpful to create a written job description for the common roles that you find yourself using during cooperative learning. A written explanation is useful on many levels. First, it provides the clarity that only words can. Second, it helps the student who would rather read the information privately than have to ask. Third, it gives the members of the group a tool for cases in which they need to remind a member of their group what it means to perform his/her role. Four, it saves us a great deal of verbal explanation over time. However, we will also want to take opportunities to clarify what it means to do each role effectively. An effective means will be our own positive recognitions. In our process of offering feedback we can stop the group and mention a behavior that we have just seen to clarify quality. For example, imagine that we notice a student who is in the role of the recorder, who takes the opportunity to read back to the group what they have written once in a while, and we recognize that it is effective action. It may not have been something we have included in the written job description (it will next time now that we have seen it), but we want others to be aware of it to improve the quality of the other groups as well. We might say something such as “I noticed that in this group, Javier has taken the opportunity to read back to the group what he is writing as the recorder. Do you feel like that is helpful? (We ask Javier’s group, who responds affirmatively). That may be an effective technique for recorders in any group to try.” Recall our guiding principle related to making positive recognitions public and negative recognitions private.

How to execute the necessary learning process. Procedures such as inquiry-based learning and jigsaw are difficult procedures to learn. They will require practice. We will want to initially teach these

procedures in a low threat context until there is evidence that they have been mastered to a sufficient degree before we want to use them in a high anxiety context (e.g., graded work, public presentation or accountability, limited time frame, etc.).

How to share. Until students show us that they are capable of sharing effectively, we will need to help them practice asking nicely, taking turns, looking for others who might need the thing that they have just finished using or have been using for a long time, conserving limited resources, etc. This is an area that will be a reliable indicator of the quality of the social and communal bonds in the class. If the students demonstrate the ability to share we will know that we are making progress toward becoming more intentional and aware. When we see evidence that they are being selfless and considerate, we point it out to help them recognize that they are making progress toward becoming a functional community.

Teaching Our Cooperative Group Skills

There are many ways to teach these foundational skills, but it may be most effective to teach them within the context of an actual task after explaining them briefly (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). Remember, avoid teaching a new skill/procedure and new content at the same time. We cannot hold students simultaneously responsible for both. Therefore our first foray into cooperative learning may involve a task that is relatively simple and/or inconsequential. Taking part in a craft project or the processing of some familiar content may be good initial venues.

Before we begin the activity, we might select one or two skills that we judge are the most critical given the needs of our class, and have a brief discussion of what that skill looks like in a group context. It is highly recommended that the students are enlisted in this effort. It will be useful to keep in mind that when we teach skills to be successful within cooperative learning, we are creating a series of concepts: What is an I-message? What is it to be cooperative? What does a good listener do? The skills we teach are built on abstract concepts. If we do not make those abstractions practical, they will remain abstractions and never be translated into behavior. It therefore makes sense to teach them in mini-concept attainment exercises (Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007). These can be as simple as a 20-second question-and-answer, or as involved as a formal concept attainment building activity. In a concept attainment exercise we are asking the student to provide us with examples and non-examples of the concept. For example, we could ask, what are examples and non-examples of “active listening?” If we depicted the exercise it would look like this:

Examples of Active Listening	Non-Examples of Active Listening
• Eye contact • Clarifying points • Waiting until they are done • Paraphrasing what you heard • Et cetera	• Looking away • Daydreaming • Getting lost in one idea • Making assumptions • Et cetera

Success will come from our ability to translate the concepts fundamental to effective cooperative learning from abstractions into practical recipes and then finally into behavioral habits.

The most powerful tool for helping students grasp the concept within practical behavior is to see it firsthand in themselves or one of their peers. Too often students do not recognize quality behavior unless it is pointed out. It is essential that we are intentional about verbalizing examples of high quality behavior. For instance, if we observed students who had just successfully resolved a conflict, we might share what we observed with the other groups. It is not important to congratulate the group; the positive recognition will be praise enough. Instead, emphasize what they did that was effective. The subtext of our message is if you make similar behavioral choices, your efforts will be more effective in the future.

What is the role of the teacher?

The role that we choose to take in the process will depend to a great degree on our personal goals and teaching style orientation. Teachers using both 1- and 2-Style approaches must be intentional about the process of creating clear expectations and taking on the role of the "communication link" among the groups. Either style will need to be an effective technical manager with groups new to cooperative learning. However, there will be differences, and those differences will likely widen as time goes on. A 2-Style orientation will achieve increased efficiency and as a result the level of comfort and enjoyment will increase along with it. The 1-Style orientation assumes that as efficiency is attained, the skills of self-direction are increasingly introduced. The ultimate goal of the teacher attempting a *transformative* effect will be cooperative learning that runs itself. The stages of evolution from a group new to cooperative learning to a group who can self-direct their own efforts is outlined as a three-stage process in Figure 12.9.

Figure 12.9 Stages of 1-Style Teacher Involvement on the Path to Student Self-Directed Cooperative Learning

Stage #1 -- Creating the Foundation for Success and Teaching Skills
Be very clear about the vision. Create a clear set of expectations, protocols, and procedures for each type of cooperative learning.
Be intolerant of behavior that will undermine the process -- carelessness, abuse in any form, put-downs, helplessness, selfishness, game playing.
Explain to the students about if..., then... cause-and-effect. If they grow in their ability to self-direct, then they will be given more freedom and autonomy.
Limit opportunities when the effort is not present, and don't hesitate to practice procedures, repeat an activity, or stop if the students abuse the privilege of cooperative learning.
Defining the purpose clearly. This is done by the following means:

- A clear assessment system for each type of process
- Use of deliberate feedback
- Clear directions, guiding questions, and expectation mantras

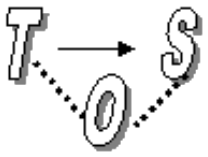
Stage #2 -- Developing Self-Direction Capacity
Shift focus from what you think should happen to the students' perceptions of support of their effectiveness and their needs.
Recognize and encourage innovation in the procedures.
Use fewer concrete explanations, and more expectation cues.
Reinforce the cause-and-effect -- their ability to self-direct will lead to more freedom and autonomy by recognizing what they are doing and what they are getting as a result (and, if you feel it would be effective, what they are not doing, and what would happen if they did).

Stage #3 -- Guide the Self-Directed Effort of the Students
Encourage students to rely on their own interpretations of what constitutes success and quality, and allow them to solve their own problems.
Use more self-assessment instruments and fewer teacher assessment instruments, or allow the students to use the assessment instruments to self-assess.
Offer more resources and fewer answers.
Offer fewer judgments and opinions and ask more questions.
Encourage more creativity and risk taking.
Take time for student recognition of what went well (on all levels) and what they assess might need modification in the future.
(Also, do a project yourself along with the students, be a peer.)

EFFECTIVELY MANAGING BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

No matter how effective we have been at designing an effective activity and teaching the necessary skills,

we may have students who violate expectations and exhibit problem behavior. Therefore, we should ensure that our social contract includes expectations, rules and consequences related to cooperative learning contexts.
When dealing with contract violations and small scale dysfunctional behavior it will be essential to keep the social learning model in mind, i.e., making tomorrow better as a result of what you do today (Lotan, 2006).



Our management actions are teaching lessons. What we do today will define what happens tomorrow. This is especially true early in the year. So before we choose to act reactively or do the first thing that comes to mind, we may want to ask ourselves, “What am I encouraging tomorrow, if I take this action today?” Figure 12.10 outlines some common management strategies to avoid and replacement strategies in managing the cooperative group context.

Figure 12.10 Things to Do and Avoid Doing When Managing Behavioral Problems in the Cooperative Group Context

Things to avoid doing when possible	Things to do when possible
Don’t reward with inactivity or punish with more activity. When we give activity as a punishment, we create a disincentive to perform the activity in the future. So laps, standards, more work, a more difficult assignment, etc., will lead to unwanted negative consequences in the long-term. Likewise, giving inactivity as a reward makes the statement that the goal in the class is to get to do nothing.	Use the principle that inactivity is the negative consequence and activity is the positive consequence. So when a group is done early, give them a more interesting or challenging piece of work, or allow them to finish something else. Even playing a game is something, not nothing. Likewise, when a group does not demonstrate the ability to live up to their responsibility to cooperate and function as a collective, the best consequence will be the loss of privilege.
Hovering. Don’t stand over a group struggling to perform or get along. It sends the message that they are incapable of solving their own problems and that the teacher gives attention to those who are misbehaving (and as a result creates the likelihood that more students will misbehave or become helpless to get attention.)	Put your energy into the groups that are on task and making a quality effort. This sends the message that when students are trying, the teacher will give you attention.
Nagging. Don’t complain about what should be happening. It sends a negative passive message.	Take action if the students are not being responsible. Give consequences, problem-solve and/or teach the necessary skills.
Public shaming. Public negative recognition toward a group that is off-task is not effective. It is passive and hostile, and encourages students who tend to game-play and engage in power struggles.	If you identify a problem, engage the group of students privately. Be constructive, and release the disappointment. Send the implicit and/or explicit message that you know the group is going to fix their problem and you are willing to help them do so.
Don’t react to internal group complaints (tattletales or passive aggressive complainers). If there are members of the group who are unhappy with what is going on, taking the side of the displeased	When a group is unhappy or has members who are unhappy about the group dynamics, help them shift their attention away from the pettiness and intolerance to: 1) what they should be doing at that

student will: 1) reinforce the behavior and therefore make it more likely in the future; 2) limit the potential for conflict resolution by maintaining focus on the interpersonal dramas and personality clashes and away from the task and the skills needed for getting past the pettiness to improved group function.	point; 2) the skills (e.g., conflict resolution, active listening, raising the level of personal awareness, etc.) that would help improve the situation.
Perpetuating group drama. If the group has developed a negative dynamic, don't contribute to the reinforcement of that dynamic. For example, if the group calls themselves the "idiots in the class," don't allow that label or you will be enabling their problematic definition of their ability to succeed. If they have defined the situation as the "boys are being bad," don't buy into the roles that they have given themselves. If you do, the drama will undermine the success of their effort and inhibit growing out of their limited thinking.	Use affirming language and the language of responsibility to all group members. No matter what they say is happening, define the situation as one in which they are capable, trustworthy, and responsible. It will be useful to be specific about situations in which you have seen them persist and solve problems. Help them raise their level of awareness about what is going on internally or externally. It can be helpful to simply tell them to "lose the drama" and think of ways that they can make the whole group better (this message will need to be worded differently for different age groups).
Fixing the group's problems. It is tempting to allow students to find an easier path to comfort than being patient and working together and to do what it takes to find solutions. But if we do, we often enable students and make them dependent.	Support the students with ideas and strategies but allow them to work through things. As opposed to coming to the group and making judgments about what is happening, it is usually more helpful to ask questions and guide them to solutions.
Removing students from the group. It is tempting to relieve the discomfort of some students by removing a group member whom they dislike or want to work with. For the troublesome group member, it may be a convenient way to get out of having to look dumb, or having to work with others to become bothersome enough that the teacher comes to and removes him or her from the group. But examine these dynamics from the social learning model. If we allow students to dictate who they want in their groups by pouting, complaining or being passive aggressive, we: 1) reinforce that behavior in those students; and 2) teach the rest of the class that if they do the same thing, we will come to their aide and enable their intolerance as well. If we continue to remove students we quickly create pariahs.	It may be necessary to remove a student who has become extreme in behavior, but unless there is real abuse involved, help students recognize that it is their job to support one another and get along. It will be useful to change groups often and resist the students' desire to choose their groups for a while. When there is individual process grading it can help each student feel less penalized by the others as well as encouraged to show excellent level cooperation skills. It is a powerful lesson that we sometimes have to work with people who are difficult, and when we succeed at working together in the end we all feel like winners. We resisted our temptation to quit and have shown ourselves and one another that we can come out the other side better. And the community is stronger for it.

Chapter Reflection 12-m: Many of the ideas in Figure 12.10 above could be considered counter-intuitive. As you read the list of "strategies to avoid" in the table, what was your reaction? If it included a great deal of resistance to the ideas, why do you think this was? Explore your emotions and practical concerns.

If we design a sound exercise and offer the kinds of support described above, we should experience an ever-decreasing number of problems during cooperative group activities (Slavin, Hurley, & Chamberlain 2003). Each intervention will lead to further clarity of the expectations, new skill development, and higher levels of collective group functioning. In fact, problems early in the year might best be viewed as teaching opportunities. Groups who experience conflict provide a concrete set of circumstances to examine within the lens of our conflict resolution principles. Groups who struggle with ideas of self-direction or investment

in the process offer the opportunity to reinforce the structural components of the activity that support and require these. For example, when faced with a problem that appears to result from a lack of understanding of what constitutes "quality cooperative group process," we might take the opportunity to ask our students to assess their current level of performance on a group process assessment rubric (Figure 20.B). This type of intervention will have a couple of effects. First, it supports the group members' recognition that there is actually a system in place for assessing quality process, which may be new to them. Many teachers come into a school where there has been little effective cooperative learning and introduce it to their students. Even if the teacher designs a perfect exercise, success will not come immediately. Too often the teacher creates clear and conspicuous expectations and then is impatient when the students do not respond immediately. It may be useful to assume that nothing in your system will have an effect until it has had a real and material impact on the students' lives. If we have consequences in place, we may need to implement them before they are taken seriously. If we are assessing process, we may need to take students through a number of activities start to finish in which we assess process before they respond. Second, asking the students to self-assess will have the effect of promoting self-reflection. Early in the year they may or may not take the rubric seriously, but until they use the values assumed in it to made judgments of quality regarding their own performance, the rubric will remain an abstraction and a formality. In other words, students will invest in the process to the degree that they value it and believe that doing so will benefit them. This perceived benefit can be either manufactured (i.e., their grade will be positively affected) or organic (i.e., they experience a greater level of satisfaction and level of function).

One intervention that can have a powerful effect, but should be used sparingly and avoided if possible, is to withhold the privilege of the cooperative context if a whole class does not approach it with the necessary sense of care, responsibility, and appreciation. Consider a scenario in which we develop a cooperative inductive science lesson incorporating group investigation. If it is early in the year and the majority of the students in our class approach the lesson with a careless, entitled, and/or irresponsible attitude, we might make the decision to withhold the lesson until they could approach it with the sense of value it warrants. After assessing the situation and deciding to take remedial action, we might want say to the class: "I can see that some of us were taking this assignment seriously, but many were not approaching the task responsibly. We can learn science in a number of ways. This way takes a lot of time to prepare and design and involves materials that need to be treated with care. I did not see evidence that we were ready for this kind of activity at this time. So I want you to put away these materials, move your seats back into their rows and take out your textbooks. I am sure that we will be ready for an activity like this in the future; today we weren't."

An intervention such as this will likely succeed at building the cause-and-effect between the level of freedom given and the level of responsibility shown. However, make a substantial attempt to build the foundation of functional behavior with positive recognitions and skill practice before you take such a dramatic step.

Chapter Reflection 12.n: Put yourself in the position of a student who was being careless in the scenario above. How do you feel after the teacher takes away the materials? Who do you hold responsible? How will your behavior change in the future?

Intervening with Poorly Functioning Groups

Very often we find that all groups but one or two are on task and functioning effectively. It will be useful to keep in mind that there are three important things going on at that moment: 1) on-task groups who need reinforcement from the teacher as encouragement; 2) a group or two who are off-task and need help; and 3) an entire class who is watching and learning how you deal with both the groups who are off-task as well as those on task. Sometimes a group's problems are cause by a dysfunctional group dynamic; other times the problem will be primarily initiated by a single group member. Below we examine an intervention

sequence for each scenario.

Problem Scenario #1: When the problem is the whole group dynamic
If a whole group is having trouble working together, keep the ownership of the problem on students, and provide interventions that provide choices and consequences. All the while keep your intervention anger-free and constructive.

Intervention 1 -- What is the problem? (clarify any misunderstanding)
Our first intervention should assume that the students can succeed if they just have a better sense of what they are doing. It may be helpful to begin each interaction with a sense of the result we need to achieve before we walk away.

What do they need? -- Support to help them accomplish their task.

What do we need as a result? -- Recognition from them that they have what they need to accomplish the task with an implicit commitment that they can do it now.

What we need to do:
- Support the process – e.g., "What do you need? What can I help you understand?"
- Communicate the score at this point -- i.e., "I must not have done a good job explaining the directions, let me try again, and help me if you still do not understand."

Do not hover. Send the message that we trust that students can find a way to function more effectively, and then we put our energy into the students who are on task and investing in the process. We give the group time to fix "their problem."

If we look over at the group again and notice that they are still experiencing dysfunction and their efforts have not produced sufficient change we need to intervene once again.

Intervention 2 -- What are you going to do fix your problem? (troubleshoot and gain commitment)
What do they need? -- Strategies that they must agree to that will support their collective functioning. Also, they need to be concrete and specific about what should happen and who is going to do what to make the situation better. They need to acknowledge a clear understanding of the consequence if they do not achieve this.
What do we need as a result? -- An assumption that the group has the strategies needed to solve their problems; the group's commitment to work together on the task and to overcome the dysfunctional dynamics. We need an explicit assurance that they can do it. And a clear sense that the group understands the consequences for not demonstrating that they can function, e.g., "When I come back what will I be seeing from this group?"

Again we send the message that we believe in the group (no matter their history) and we assume that it is just a matter of time before they will get on track. So move away from them, let them solve their problem or at least own their problem, and put our energy into the other groups. It is really important to keep our energy supportive and positive and not let our disappointment sour our interactions with each of the groups. Those who are high functioning need the mirror of positive energy and enthusiasm to take them to the next level. Those who are struggling need our trust, supportive attitude, and absence of negativity. Our negativity will only magnify any negativity in the group.

In nearly all cases, these first two interventions will have helped resolve any problems; over time even these interventions will become less necessary as our process becomes more familiar and more functional, and as a result more satisfying. What happens when we look over at that group and observe that they still can not get past their dysfunctional dynamics?

Chapter Reflection 12-o: -- What is your instinct telling you to do at this point? What does common sense tell us to do? What does the social learning model tell us to do?

Questions to ask ourselves at this point.

- What can I do in an intervention to make tomorrow better as a result of what I do today?
- What have the members of the group agreed to, to this point? What expectations have been put in place? What are the logical consequences?

Intervention 3 -- Follow-through and promoting accountability
What do the students need? Acknowledgement of their choices and accountability for their actions.
What do we need as a result? Evidence that we have followed through and held the students accountable for their actions and the implementation of a consequence that will make tomorrow better as a result.

Given that the students have expressed commitment to having a clear understanding of the task (Intervention 1) and a have received a second opportunity to get it together (Intervention 2), we can assume that the problematic behavior was a function of their collective choice to perpetuate the dysfunction. As a result, we are in the position of following through with a consequence. We need to send the message to the rest of the class that when a group chooses to hold on to their self-centered attitude rather than do what is best for others and themselves, they need a concrete reminder that it will not work in the future. We can send this message in a number of ways. One consequence would be to withdraw the group's opportunity to further take part in the activity. In addition, group members might be asked to write down ideas for how they are going to keep this kind of problem from happening in future situations. It is critical to implement a consequence that is active but keeps all judgment and shame out of the equation. The loss of the right to participate should be left on its own to teach the lesson. Moreover, our interactions with this group need to be private. The hint that we are disparaging the members of this group to others will have a profoundly negative effect on our relationship with them, and likely undermine any value our disciplinary action might have. Optionally, if we notice that after a few minutes the group seems to show evidence that they have learned their lesson, we may want to give them a second chance.

At some point in this process, our inclination might have been to split up the group. The effect of this choice will usually be that we feel better and it will stop the conflict. But examined from the perspective of the social learning model, it will become apparent why it may not be a good idea. If the students learn that we bail out groups by splitting them up when they don't get along, we will get more groups asking us with their words and/or actions to split them up and free them from a group of students they did not want to work with in the first place.

Problem Scenario #2: When it is only one student who is instigating the problem
Often we have a student or two who struggle within the group context. It is likely that they have struggled in the past and have gotten used to being "the problem student." We examine students who have developed a pattern of negative identity in Chapter 16. As we address what to do when one student causes problems for a cooperative group, you should find that the intervention strategies discussed here will work for students with genuine negative identity patterns and those who misbehave for less deeply conditioned reasons.

Intervention #1 -- we can do this, how can I help?
What do they need? -- Information and clarity of the task. But it will be even more critical in this situation to clarify each student's role. The student experiencing the problem needs to hear a clear and positive message: "I know you can do this, I expect you to do this, you are capable of doing this, so stop the game you are playing and contribute to your group."
What do we need as a result? -- To make sure that the group has all the resources that it needs, to send the message to the whole group that "you are going to have to make this work," and to send the message

to the challenging student that they are going to get it done.
This student may have gotten used to either: 1) having a whole group and the teacher threaten and complain for the duration of the activity because of his or her actions; or 2) being removed from the group. They need to understand that neither of those things is going to happen today. The group may entreat you to make the students work on their own and/or send them away. They must accept that while they may not have caused the problem, they need to do their best to work with it. Once the other members recognize that you will not bail them out nor shame the student, their attention will shift from thinking like victims to taking responsibility. We send the message to the rest of the members of the group (and indirectly to the class) that this student is capable of making an important contribution to the group and being a top level cooperative group member, and we believe they will choose to do so.

It will be helpful to get close to the student presenting the problem and connect with them for a short while. What they expect is our buying into their role (e.g., inadequate, a clown, defiant, too cool, dizzy, incommunicado, beyond hope, or nothing to lose, etc.). We communicate that we see through this game to a student who really wants to feel competent and loved, and who really wants to take advantage of the work that is in front of them. It may be helpful to remind the student of instances in which they were able to do quality work or work cooperatively with others. This helps shift the locus of control to the student and empowers their choice at this moment.

This intervention should have a powerful effect but be ready for any eventuality. What happens when we come back to the group and it has not gotten better?

Intervention #2 -- help the group cope with their trauma and implement consequences.
What do they need? Group members need our sensitivity to the fact that this student is making their job more difficult. We need to let them know they are not going to be penalized for the fact that the student was placed in their group and that they still must find ways to work with the student. The student needs to realize that what they have done violates the social contract and therefore they need to accept the consequence. If they can do better from this point on, the consequences will not get any more severe.

What do we need as a result? To be empathetic and tuned in to all the group members and get recognition that this is acknowledged by the group. To know that they have the tools to succeed, and are not just left to fail. To have the student acknowledge that they have made a choice to violate the social contract.

The message sent to any student who seems to be exhibiting a habit of problem behavior is: the class needs them to solve their problem, we will support them in their efforts, evidence of the solution needs to be apparent, and we believe that they can do it. In this student's case, we need to send the message that they will get better at being in groups, we will help them with the new skills they will need, and we are not going to be dealing with this problem in the long term. The appropriate consequence for violating their social contract agreement will depend on the contents of the contract that we have developed with our students. As we have discussed, avoid the use of punishments with this student; they will be especially counter-productive. Instead, have the student write a contract (see Ch. 14) for how they will behave in cooperative groups, and include things they will give up if they are not able to live up their agreement. It is common for those students who are comfortable in the role of "trouble maker" to exhibit an external locus of control and avoid responsibility. Behavioral contracts help students shift the locus of responsibility internally (Glasser, 1975).

TRANSFORMATIVE IDEAS RELATED TO COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative Learning is a strategy that has the potential to have a powerful transformative effect on a class. In fact, it may be impossible to achieve a significant level of community or a psychology of success without incorporating some form of collective effort. Among the cooperative learning strategies that will have the most transformative effects will be:

Egalitarian Grouping Strategies (whether grouping is done purposefully or randomly). There is a powerful effect on a group when they stop being concerned with who is in their group and become fully present to anyone with whom they are teamed.

Moving Toward Self-Direction (depicted in Figure 12.9). When our students demonstrate the capacity to take on greater levels of responsibility and self-direction, it reflects the transformative effects of our efforts to support a new level of functioning.

Self Assessment. Help the students get used to making their own judgments about the quality of their effort. This has to come after they have nearly all demonstrated a mastery level in relation to your assessment criteria or as defined by your participation quality rubric.

Assess the Quality of the Investment and Process. Chapter 20 outlines a system for assessing process. The ability for a well-crafted system to create a concrete and behavioral definition of quality participation and/or process translates into higher quality student investment on the part of the student. These systems have a liberating effect on students who engage in dysfunctional behavioral patterns. Most of the time students are unconscious to the reality that they are operating with a set of dysfunctional patterns keeping them from experiencing a deeper level of satisfaction from their work and their interactions with others. Clarifying what functional behavior looks like can be all it takes for most students to achieve it. Once they do, they find that it is much more satisfying than what they have defaulted to in the past.

Debrief the Process after the Activity. One of the most powerful and simple yet underused strategies to support the transformation of a group from egocentric and dysfunctional to a raised level of awareness with qualities of a community is to use a purposeful debriefing process (Stolovitch, 1990). Our goal this time is to create or reinforce our concept of “a good group member” and raise the level of motivation for all students at all ability levels. It can be accomplished in just a minute or two, but it is well worth the time investment.

- Addressing the class as a whole, ask students for examples of other students in their group they have observed doing a good job of those things in the “good group member” concept (things that you consider important to making a successful group, e.g., positive attitude, consistently making an effort, being cooperative, performing their role, working through conflict, working through a problem, or whatever you think makes a group learn, succeed at the task, and function well).
- Ask for one specific area at a time and encourage students to give specific examples of what they saw that was valuable. If a student says something vague and general, help them clarify what they observed specifically. For example, if one student says, “I saw Colby being a good group member,” we might ask the student to tell us what Colby did that demonstrated he was being a good group member.
- Expect that the first time you do this the students will look at you blankly. Give them time to think. The second time you will get a better set of responses, and eventually you will see all the hands up.
- As we examine the mechanics of the strategy, the reason that it is so effective becomes more evident. When students hear one student positively recognizing another student, they are given a positive and concrete behavioral indicator of what constitutes high quality effort. This can have a powerful effect on making the abstractions in our concept for “quality participation or process” very practical. In addition, since students know these behaviors may result in positive recognitions by the teacher or other students at some point, there is a greater incentive to demonstrate them.

Imagine the thought process within a group after we have incorporated this strategy a few times. Most students now are looking for and recognizing high quality examples of good group effort. Likewise they are aware that others may recognize their efforts. Moreover, with each iteration of the process the students gain a greater number of concrete and personal examples of recognized behavior. Implementing the strategy provides the students with opportunities to compliment one another, which makes both complimenter and complimented feel good and builds community in the class. Imagine the transformative effects on the climate of the class when students are constantly attentive to opportunities to compliment

their classmates and ways to “put each other up.”

Chapter Reflection 12-p: Put yourself in the role of recognizer. How does it make you feel? Now put yourself in the role of being recognized. How does this make you feel?

Much of the power and transformative influence of cooperative learning, when done effectively, is that it naturally creates a success psychology and has a “psychological movement” to it. Recall the three factors that form the foundation for a psychology of success (Chapter 7). As we examine cooperative learning in relation to how it relates to these factors, its potential becomes even more apparent.

- **Locus of control**. In cooperative learning students have greater control over their learning outcomes. Often the end result is the creation or synthesis of something meaningful and original. Students are asked to make countless decisions of real consequence and as a result learn how to take greater responsibility for those decisions.
- **Acceptance and belonging**. In cooperative learning students learn to work in teams to meet a goal. They come to recognize that they need one other in order to be fully successful. Groups who accomplish goals and overcome challenges together bond in a significant way.
- **Mastery orientation**. In cooperative learning we can make the process itself is the primary goal and help students recognize that it is about what they put into the effort rather than simply what they bring to it. The structure of knowledge itself promotes a focus on what is possible rather than preoccupation with a fear of failure.

Chapter Reflection 12-q: Recall life situations in which you would say that you felt psychological movement and that things were “going somewhere.” Did the context involve collective accomplishment?

CONCLUSION

While creating an effective system for managing cooperative learning takes time and intention, the rewards are well worth the effort. Cooperative learning contexts provide benefits of which no other context is capable. In the next section we will explore how to deal with conflict and students who have more substantial behavioral problems than others. Conflict need not undermine our progress toward our transformative goals. Likewise, taking a constructive approach with more substantive problems allows us to maintain our overall vision for success without reverting to interventions that perpetuate power struggles and negative behavior patterns.

Journal Reflections

1. Which types of assessment formats do you find most personally motivational? What formats have you observed are the most effective in the classes that you have observed?
2. When you envision leading cooperative activities, do you feel more inclined to take a more teacher-centered or 2-Style approach with the students you will teach, or a more student-centered or 1-Style approach? Why were you drawn to that approach?

Chapter Activities

1. In small groups, brainstorm a list of the most common problems that teachers you have observed have when implementing cooperative learning strategies. What are some of the ideas that you would suggest to them to help them solve these problems?

2. In groups of three to five, develop a cooperative activity for a grade level and subject(s) of your choice, and later share your creation with the class.

A. Brainstorm some activities that would fit well into a cooperative structure, then select one around which you want to construct an activity.

B. Decide on the structure of the activity:
- Process and Goal
- Roles
- Incentives
- Assessment

C. How are you going to communicate your expectations to your students on functioning in a cooperative group?

D. What do you plan to do if there are groups who are not on task or are in conflict? What if it is ...
- One student in the group who is the problem?
- A whole group mired in conflict?

E. Present your idea to the other groups.

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