

Elements of Effective Cooperative Learning

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Five essential elements that distinguish cooperative learning from ordinary group work

1. Positive Interdependence

Students understand that they are mutually dependent on one another for success - "We succeed together."

2. Individual Accountability

Each student is responsible for contributing and demonstrating their own learning. Group work does not replace individual responsibility.

3. Promotive Face-to-Face Interaction

Students actively support one another through explaining, questioning, discussing, encouraging, and providing feedback.

4. Interpersonal and Small-Group Skills

Students intentionally use collaboration skills such as communication, active listening, leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, and trust-building.

5. Group Processing

Students reflect on how effectively the group worked, identify what helped or hindered learning, and determine how to improve future collaboration.

A Simple Classroom Framework

Depend on Each Other → Be Accountable → Interact → Collaborate → Reflect

Cooperative learning is more than putting students into groups. These five elements make the collaboration intentional and instructionally effective.

Based on the cooperative learning framework developed by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson.