

Directions and Ideas for Cooperative Learning Structures in Adult Education Classes

Cooperative Learning

Instruction incorporating cooperative learning has been shown to increase academic achievement, self-esteem, communication skills, teaming skills, and learning enjoyment. Often, however, Instructors find it chaotic, unfair, and unproductive. Cooperative Learning Structures offer guidelines for flexible activities that are inherently cooperative. They can accommodate many different types of subject matter and different activities can accommodate groups of varying size. They can be broken down into smaller steps or grouped into larger ones depending on the level of “structure” your learning group needs.

When implementing cooperative learning structures look for the following four elements:

- ❑ Positive Interdependence – *“Is a gain for one a gain for all?” “Is help necessary to complete the task?”*
- ❑ Individual Accountability – *“Is individual, public performance required?”*
- ❑ Equal Participation – *“How equal is everyone’s participation?”*
- ❑ Simultaneous Interaction – *“What % are overtly active at once?”*

In addition, try to teach the structure with very easy content first, then try it with the content you want students to learn.

Below, we list the structures used during this workshop. For more information, please consult the resources listed on the back.

Rotating Review

1. Topics are written on pieces of chart paper and posted around the room.
2. Each group/team is given a marker.
3. Designate each team to go to one of the papers.
4. Teams are given one minute (+/-) to write on the paper about the specific topic.
5. Time is called and teams rotate to the next piece of paper.
6. Teams are given one minute (+/-) to read what was written by the previous team.
7. Teams put a question mark next to anything they have a question on or disagree with.
8. Team has an additional minute (+/-) to write any other information.
9. Repeat steps 4-8 until all teams have rotated to each piece of paper.

Ideas

- * characteristics of animal classification/species
- * things you know about individual states in the midwest region

Roundrobin

1. In groups of four, students sit in a circle (or as close to each other as possible).
2. Teacher poses a question.
3. One by one, students take turns (in a circle) giving a possible answer to the question.
4. Continue until time is called.

Ideas

- * discuss classical composers and their works
- * use this word in a sentence

Directions and Ideas for Cooperative Learning Structures in Adult Education Classes

Corners

1. Teacher poses a problem with 4 choices (corners – may also use 2, 3, or 5).
2. Students record their answers
3. Students move to the corner that matches their answer (designated by teacher).
4. In corners, students pair up and compare/discuss answers.
5. Class discussion (optional).
6. Repeat steps 1-4.

Ideas

- * 4 characters in a story- “Which is most like you?”
- * What mathematical operation does this word problem require?

Find Someone Who

1. Using a worksheet, People Hunt, or other information gathering tool, students move about the room, talking to peers.
2. Each student is looking for someone who knows one answer on their sheet.
3. Students write the answers they are told by peers.
4. Peers sign off that the answer is written correctly.
5. Repeat steps 2-5 until worksheets are complete. Students may not sign off on any answer on their own sheet – only on others’.

Ideas

- * any worksheet/handout
- * continents - “Find Someone Who Knows..”

Guess the Fib

1. Teams must tell three outrageous truths and one fib on a topic or theme.
2. Teams discuss and determine each member’s role (who is going to tell the truth and who will tell the fib).
3. Each team stands and presents their truths and fib to the class.
4. Class tries to determine who is telling the fib on each team.

Ideas

- * facts about historical figures.
- * math facts

Line Up

1. Teacher presents a topic (birthdate, events in civil war era).
2. Each end of the room should be designated according to topic (Jan.- Dec., 1840-1890).
3. Students find where they fit and line up.
4. Teacher checks the line for accuracy.

Ideas

- * sequence historical documents
- * value statements- “I think capital punishment should be banned,” agree-disagree.

Directions and Ideas for Cooperative Learning Structures in Adult Education Classes

Mix 'n' Freeze

1. Mix- Students walk around the room.
2. Freeze- Teacher tells students to freeze in place.
3. Group- Students group according to teacher question (the answer must be a number).
4. Left over students go to "Lost and Found".

Ideas

- * number of nouns in this sentence[...].
- * number of years for a presidential term.

Mix 'n' Match

1. Each student receives a card with a word, picture, or symbol on it.
2. Students walk around room until they find the person who has a match to their card.
3. Each person stands next to his/her "matching" partner at edges of classroom.
4. After time is called, class reviews answers for accuracy.
5. Cards are mixed (trading or by instructor) and repeat steps 2-5 as desired.

Ideas

- * Spanish words/English words
- * pounds/ounces

Numbered Heads Together

1. In groups of four, students number off (1-4).
2. Teacher poses a question.
3. Students put their heads together (physically draw in close and use low voices) to discuss the question and come up with an answer. All students in the group must know the answer.
4. Teacher calls a number (1-4).
5. Designated numbers may be asked to: a) stand to give the answer, b) go to the board to give the answer, c) write the answer on slates or a piece of paper and hold it up, or raise their hands, and when one is selected to answer, the others with that number give a thumbs up or down as to whether or not they agree on the given answer.

Ideas

- * "Make sure everyone on your team can name at least 5 confederate states."
- * "Make sure everyone on your team can explain the water cycle."

Pairs Check

1. Students pair up.
2. Designate an A and a B.
3. "A" works problem while "B" coaches and "B" praises or corrects when "A" is finished.
4. "B" works problem while "A" coaches and "A" praises or corrects when "B" is finished.
5. Pairs celebration after four problems.

Ideas

- * main idea of a paragraph
- * math problems

Directions and Ideas for Cooperative Learning Structures in Adult Education Classes

Rallytable

1. Within groups of four, students get into pairs. Each pair has a one piece of paper and two different colored pens/pencils/markers.
2. Designate an A and a B.
3. Teacher poses a question/topic.
4. Student A writes an answer on the piece of paper and passes it to B.
5. Student B writes an answer on the piece of paper and passes it to A.
5. repeat steps 4-5 until teacher calls time.

Ideas

- * List all prime numbers up to 100
- * List as many synonyms for the word [...]

Who Am I?

1. Assign identities (name tags) on learner backs.
2. Students find a partner and ask yes/no questions to determine “Who Am I?”
4. Students may not ask more than 3 questions of each other.
5. When a person guesses their own identity, he/she places name tag on their front and moves to the sidelines/chair.
6. Those still asking questions may ask those on sidelines/sitting down for hints. These may be any kind of question (i.e. What state do I border? or What pro team did I play for?)
7. Continue until everyone is seated or designated time has expired.

Ideas

- * characters in a recently read story
- * body organs

Directions and Ideas for Cooperative Learning Structures in Adult Education Classes

Roundtable

1. Groups of 3, 4, or 5 have one piece of paper and different colored writing utensils.
2. Groups determine who will start.
2. A question/problem is posed.
3. Learner writes down an answer/idea to the question posed.
4. Learner passes the paper and pencil to the person on his/her left.
5. Continue steps 3 and 4 until time is called.

Ideas

- * worksheets (each person do a problem)
- * name the steps to writing an essay

Think- Pair-Share

1. Students get into pairs.
2. Pose a problem/question.
3. Think time (students are silent and think on answers to the question).
4. Pairs discuss/work on the problem until time is called.
6. Pairs share answers with the entire class.

Ideas

- * writing/essay topic ideas
- * generate 3 things you know about prenatal care

Timed Pair Share

1. Students get into pairs.
2. Within pairs, designate an A and a B.
3. Pose a question/problem.
4. Think time (students are silent and think on answers to the question).
5. A's speak, B's listen. (can use Gambits "Thank you for listening." "Thank you for sharing.")
6. Reverse, B's speak, A's listen (Gambits again).
7. A's report B's response to class and B's report A's response to class.

Ideas

- * What do you think it would be like to live in the 1600s?
- * Why was JFK assassinated?

From Kagan, Spencer (1994). Cooperative Learning, Kagan Cooperative Learning, San Juan Capistrano, CA.

References/Resources:

Kagan, Spencer, (1994). *Cooperative Learning*, San Juan Capistrano, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning. <http://www.KaganCoopLearn.com>

Kagan, Spencer, (1995). *Cooperative Learning Structures for Classbuilding*, San Clemente, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.