



Cooperative learning

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Bunkyo University Trainee Teachers

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WARWICK

APPLIED LINGUISTICS



Aims

- To develop our understanding of what cooperative learning is, and how it differs from collaborative learning
- To become familiar with a range of cooperative learning activities and strategies
- To provide an opportunity to experience a cooperative learning activity as 'students'
- To provide practical suggestions for implementing cooperative learning gradually and critically
- To review the research evidence for cooperative learning

Let's explore...

- Please discuss and be ready to tell Jason:
 1. What stage are you at in your training?
 - Have you had any classroom observation or teaching experience?
 - If so, what are your impressions?
 - If not, what are your concerns?
 2. Which is most common in Japan and why:
 - Lecture style teaching?
 - Interactive teaching?
 - Groupwork learning?

What are the advantages of getting students to work together in Japanese classrooms?

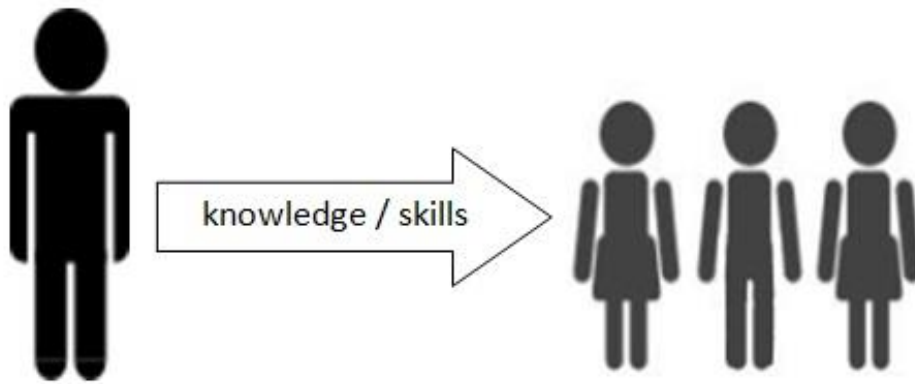
Possible answers:

- motivation: cooperative learning can **motivate** students
- integration: cooperative learning was developed to **bring students** from different backgrounds **together**
- interaction: cooperative learning promotes **real communication**
- critical thinking: cooperative learning naturally promotes higher order **thinking skills**

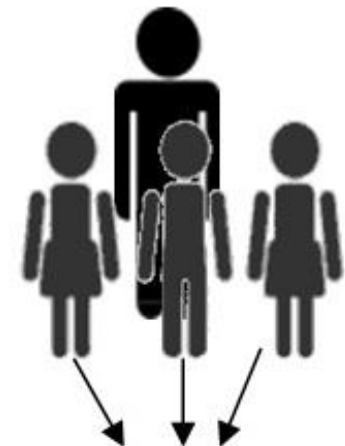


Teacher-centred and learner-centred approaches

What's the difference?



Teacher-centred approach



Child-centred approach

‘cooperative’ and ‘collaborative’ – what’s the difference?

- Both are common terms used to talk about ‘child-centred’ learning.
- ‘collaboration’ or ‘collaborative learning’ refers simply to how we might do an activity: in pairs or groups.
- ‘cooperative learning’ was an important methodological movement in mainstream education: it has historical roots, principles and extensive research evidence supporting it.

Brief history of cooperative learning

- Cooperative learning evolved in mainstream education in the USA, reaching its peak of popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- It has roots in the work of educator John Dewey, and psychologists Kurt Lewin and Morton Deutsch.
- It became prominent in the early 1970s, after desegregation in the USA, when teachers looked for ways to integrate and build rapport among previously segregated groups with very different prior educational experiences in the same classroom (Anderson 2019).
- As such, it is a methodology developed in and for **heterogenous** classes.



Key principles of cooperative learning

- **Positive interdependence:** For an activity to be truly cooperative, learners must work as a team, not in competition with each other (although inter-team competition is recognised by some cooperative writers as acceptable).
- **Individual accountability:** To ensure that each learner works hard and contributes, her team-mates need to depend on her in order to succeed. Success may be interpreted as completion of a task, answering of a review question, or success in a class quiz, taken individually after the team has prepared together.

(see, e.g., Slavin 1995, Johnson & Johnson 1994, Kagan & Kagan 2009)

Groups in cooperative learning

- **‘Home groups’** or **‘base groups’** The most typical format for cooperative learning is small, stable, heterogenous home groups of 4-5 learners (e.g., Kagan & Kagan 2009). Learners do the majority of groupwork in home groups.
- **‘Expert groups’** Homogenous grouping (e.g. of similar academic ability) for learners to interact with new content, complete exercises, etc.
- Individual work and pairwork are also important. Both of these can happen (usually) within home groups.

Quick recap - Discuss in pairs: What can you remember about...?

- possible advantages of getting students to work together
- child-centred vs. teacher-centred learning
- cooperative vs. collaborative learning
- history of cooperative learning
- key principles of cooperative learning



‘Pure’ cooperative learning activities

- **Jigsaw:** Each student in the group gets a (short) text. They can’t show it to each other, but must summarise the content. This enables them to complete a task. (see, e.g., Aronson et al. 1978).



Let's do a jigsaw!

4 different texts about people's work (A2-B1 level)

Student C

1. Read the text. Can you guess what Matt's job is?

I'm originally from an international NO managing a team c school early, to ge and their families

When people ask evening most day per month, but I s I do the job. The j graduate from sc

2. Sit with student answer these qu

1. Who w
2. Who m
3. Who d
4. Who is
5. Which

5. Which of the 4 j



Carla

Student D

1. Read the text. Can you guess what Matt's job is?

Just the job!

I hated my last job! I worked from 9-5 in an office and lived in the city. So two years ago I started my own business, and now I work outside in the fresh air. I work hard each day, especially during the summer. I usually start at 8am, and finish when it gets dark, but I'm very healthy and I sleep very well. Most days I have 2 or 3 jobs, sometimes at private homes and sometimes doing parks or flower displays in my local town. The thing I like most about my job is watching the trees and plants develop through all 4 seasons of the year. Each year every garden gets a little bit more beautiful.

The only problem with my job is the salary. It's very unpredictable. Some months I can make £30,000, other months it can be double that! But I don't mind. My wife is a vet, so together we have a very good income. We live in a beautiful little village with our two children and three dogs. At the weekends we like to go for long walks in the national parks. I'm so much happier now I've got out of the city!

2. Sit with students who read about a different person. Tell each other about your person, and together try to answer these questions, comparing all 4 people:

1. Who works hardest?
2. Who makes the most money?
3. Who do you think has the most difficult job? Why?
4. Who is happiest? Why do you think this?
5. Which of the 4 jobs would you prefer? Why?



Matt



Let's do a Jigsaw

Get into **home groups** of 4. Decide who is A, B, C and D in your group.

Warming up

In your groups ask each other:

- What job would you like to do in the future? Why?





Expert group stage

Now the teacher sends different group members to their **expert groups**.

Jigsaw stage

Now return to your home groups. Discuss the 5 questions below the text. Don't show your texts.

Student D

1. Read the text. Can you guess what Matt's job is?



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A different type of jigsaw: Text division jigsaw

Group C



Gawain's Choice

Arthur was put in prison by the king of Scotland. The king liked Arthur, so he decided to give him a year to save his life. He told Arthur that he would free Arthur if he could answer a very difficult question. A question about women that all men should know the answer to.

The question was: "What does every woman want?" He gave Arthur one year to bring him the answer. If he failed, he would lose his kingdom. The question was difficult, but he had no choice: Arthur

Synthesis question:
What is the correct order
for your 3 extracts?

friend, Gawain. Arthur told him about the question. Together they went to find the answer to the king's question.

They found an old witch called Ragnelle, who lived in the mountains. She might know the answer. With no other options, Arthur and Gawain went to see the witch. She said: "Yes. I know the answer to your question. But before I tell you, you must accept my price."

----- CUT HERE -----

Group B



Gawain's Choice

Ragnelle wanted to marry Gawain. But she was ugly, with no hair and only one eye. Her teeth were brown, and she had a terrible smell! Arthur refused: "Your price is too high!" But Gawain disagreed with Arthur. He was ready to marry Ragnelle to help his dear friend. So they agreed to her price, and she answered Arthur's question: "Every woman wants to be in control of her own decisions."

"Yes, of course!" Arthur said, "So simple, but true!" They went back to Scotland to tell the king, who was happy with the answer. "Well done!" he said, "You and your kingdom are free. You may go." Arthur was

‘Pure’ cooperative learning activities

- **Student team achievement division (STAD):** (Slavin, 1995) Lesson framework with five stages:
 1. teacher presentation (of lesson content);
 2. teamwork in which homegroups check that they all understood the presentation;
 3. individual quiz to check what students have learnt;
 4. individual improvement scores, in which learners measure their own progress (rather than competing with classmates);
 5. team recognition, through praise, mention in a newsletter, or, sometimes, rewards.

Other cooperative learning activities

These ones are less 'pure', but also embody some of the key principles of cooperative learning:

1. Find someone who (especially if they do it in groups)
2. Describe and draw (can be done in pairs or groups)
3. Line stand (can involve very large groups)



Tools and strategies for cooperative learning

- Random nomination
- Think, pair, share
- Pass the pen
- Mini-whiteboards
- Padlet



Cooperative Listening: The Old Woodcarver

woodcarver (n)

carve (v)

carving (n)

log (n)

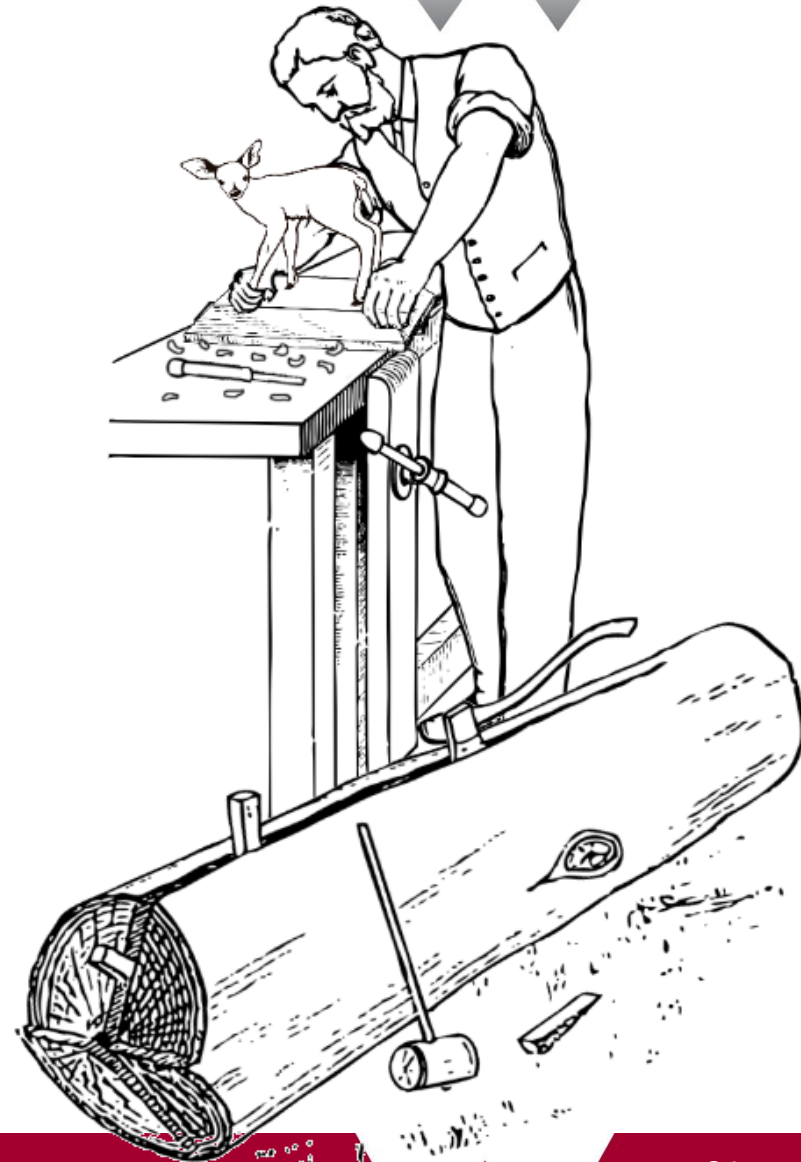
coin (n)

nightmare (n)

flood (n, v)

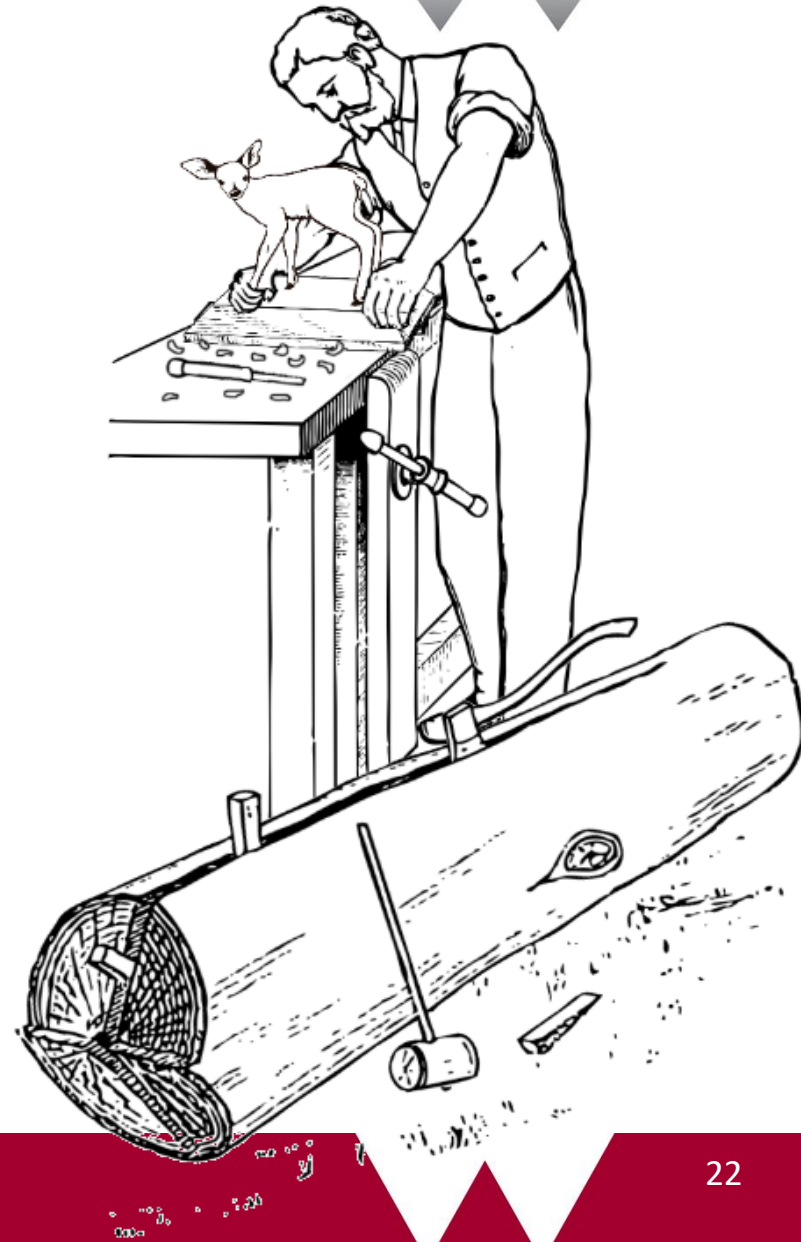
share (v)

escape (v)



The Old Woodcarver

1. Why was the woodcarver rich?
2. What did his coins say to him in the nightmare?
3. Where did he hide the coins after the nightmare?
4. How did his nightmares come true?
5. What is the moral of the story?



Research evidence: How do we know cooperative learning works?

- Over 1,200 studies have been conducted on it (Johnson & Johnson, 2009)
- John Hattie's meta-analysis (2008) noted: "There seems a universal agreement that cooperative learning is effective..." and his and Marzano's (1998) meta-analyses, drawing on over 1,000 separate studies scored it 0.41-0.59 and 0.73 in effect size respectively, among the highest effect sizes noted for teaching approaches by both authors.
- Some 'anecdotal' reports of the positive impact of cooperative learning from a range of English language learning contexts around the world (e.g., Ning 2010, Panhwar 2016).

But...

- Over 90% of the 156 studies that Johnson et al. (2000) included in their meta-analysis were conducted in North America.

Implementing cooperative learning

- Are you interested in trying out co-operative learning in your (future) classroom? Why? Why not?
- What problems / challenges do you think you will face?
- Do you think it is suitable for Japanese classrooms? Why? Why not?
- What adaptations may be necessary for Japanese classrooms?

Implementing cooperative learning

- **Start gradually:** Choose an activity that you like and try it out with a 'favourite' class.
- **Prepare the learners:** First time, explain carefully to your students what you're going to do, and what you expect from them (in Japanese if necessary). Explain why you think it will be useful.
- **Choose and adapt materials as required:** Search for 'cooperative' and 'jigsaw' activities online. Change the length, vocabulary, difficulty, etc. to suit your learners.
- **Keep groups simple to start with:** Try pairwork first, or convenience grouping. When you feel it's working, then try creating stable 'home groups'
- **Manage noise and language choice patiently:** Especially in large classes, noise levels will increase. If learners really enjoy it, they will speak Japanese. Manage each group separately. Praise groups who do it well at the end of the activity.

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**Any
questions?**

See my forthcoming book:

