



PUBLISHED  
BY  
LAUSD  
DIVISION OF  
ADULT AND  
CAREER  
EDUCATION  
CURRICULUM  
AND  
INSTRUCTION  
UNIT

ALMA  
PENA-SANCHEZ,  
INTERIM EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR

KIT BELL,  
SUPERVISOR

DAVE COLEMAN,  
EDITOR

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Cooperative Learning:  
An Introduction 1

Getting Started 1-2

# Learning Together

An ongoing guide to grouping students and implementing cooperative learning strategies to maximize student engagement and achieve learning objectives in all program areas

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

SEPT. 1, 2013

## Cooperative Learning: An Introduction

This year the Curriculum and Instruction Unit will be providing tools to support you in the implementation of the Division objective of using cooperative learning strategies in every classroom. *Learning Together* will share information, resources, pictures, quotes and stories of your success across all program areas.

**What?** Cooperative learning is an instructional approach in which learners work in groups to complete a shared task that has a specified time limit. Students benefit by learning to work in teams. They use interpersonal skills that are required in the workplace

and the community.

**Why?** Over 1000 studies have proven that cooperative learning maximizes student engagement and boosts achievement.\* We are social beings and our basic nature is active and interactive. Students want to “do” and talk. ESL students gain fluency and comprehension more readily when learning cooperatively than when they only listen to the teacher model accurate speech.

ABE, ASE and CTE students also benefit from cooperative learning strategies. They learn from peers as they receive multiple chances

to explain their thinking processes and work procedures. Students get input as they solve problems and use critical thinking and reasoning skills.

**How?** Cooperative learning works through: Simultaneous and equal interaction: There is equal time for each student to share, and as many students as possible talk and listen at once.

Interdependence: The success of one student produces benefit for all, and each one’s contribution is necessary to complete a task.

Accountability: A public performance by each student is required.

## Getting Started

Set your students up for collaborative ease and success by creating the right environment in your classroom.



“Face Partners” John Finley and Jenny Moreno (rear) confer, as do their “Shoulder Partners” Laura Vasquez and Monica Braunstein at the ESL Summer Institute earlier this year.

# Getting Started (continued)



ESL Summer Institute team members Matthew Horowitz and Angelica Juarez

**“It seems like more learning is going on in my classroom. The students can feel it. The environment has changed.”**  
**—Maria Sanchez, ESL Teacher**



Investigating a common concern are teachers Bill Hrycyna, Steve Seidman, Angelica Suarez, and Javier Soto (clockwise from top)

1. Group desks or tables and chairs in teams of four. If tables are bolted to the floor, have students move chairs or stools around the end of a table.
2. Assign students within teams: Partner A and Partner B for partner work; Team members A1/B1 and A2/B2 for partners to partners; and Team member 1, 2, 3, 4 for round-table tasks.
3. Create a safe place for interaction by regularly using class and team building activities.
3. Introduce cooperative activities using simple tasks so students learn

**YES**



**NO**



the process before applying it to harder content or skills.

5. Use a quiet signal to stop group work for instructions or sharing. Only speak when all students are quiet.
6. Use a large and, preferably, audible timer to keep student interaction equitable and moving along.

7. If at first you don't succeed, reflect, talk with colleagues to receive their input, and then try the strategy again. Don't give up.

**\*References and Resources:**

1. Slavin, Sharan, Kagan, Hertz-Lazarowitz, Webb, Schmuck. Learning to Cooperate, Cooperating. New York, NY, Plenum Publishing, 1985.
2. Kagan, S., Kagan Cooperative Learning. San Clemente, CA, 2009,
3. Cooperative Learning, CALPRO Fact Sheet, No. 6. Sacramento, CA 2009

In the next issue, we will continue to discuss ways to group students. We will also look at the cooperative learning strategy of “Think-Pair-Share” and provide examples for using it that increase engagement and equity in every classroom.



**DACE Objectives for Systemizing Quality Instruction**  
 Long-Range Lesson Planning | Agenda and Objectives | Cooperative Learning Strategies