

Ivan Franko Zhytomyr State University

Baida Maria, post-graduate student

COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES AS A FORM OF GROUP WORK IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The interest to cooperative learning in our country hasn't been very strong until recently. It is a form of a group work but it has more opportunities for the educational process. David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, and Mary Beth Stanne believe that the widespread use of cooperative learning is because of multiple factors. Three of the most important are that cooperative learning is clearly based on theory, validated by research, and operationalized into clear procedures educators can use. First, cooperative learning is based solidly on a variety of theories in anthropology (Mead, 1936), sociology (Coleman, 1961), economics (Von Mises, 1949), political science (Smith, 1759), psychology, and other social sciences. In psychology, where cooperation has received the most intense study, cooperative learning has its roots in social interdependence (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989), cognitive-developmental (Johnson & Johnson, 1979; Piaget, 1950; Vygotsky, 1978), and behavioral learning theories (Bandura, 1977; Skinner, 1968). It is rare that an instructional procedure is central to such a wide range of social science theories.

There are many definitions of cooperative learning nowadays. We base our investigation on the definition given by D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson. "Cooperative learning (CL) is an instructional paradigm in which teams of students work on structured tasks (e.g., homework assignments, laboratory experiments, or design projects) under conditions that meet five criteria: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills, and regular self-assessment of team functioning. Many studies have shown that when correctly implemented, cooperative learning improves information acquisition and retention, higher-level thinking skills, interpersonal and communication skills, and self-confidence (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, 1998)." A large and rapidly growing body of research confirms the effectiveness of cooperative learning in higher education (Astin, 1993; Cooper, 1990; Goodsell, 1992; Johnson., 1991; McKeachie,

1986). Relative to students taught traditionally – i.e., with instructor-centered lectures, individual assignments, and competitive grading – cooperatively taught students tend to exhibit higher academic achievement, greater persistence through graduation, better high-level reasoning and critical thinking skills, deeper understanding of learned material, more on-task and less disruptive behavior in class, lower levels of anxiety and stress, greater intrinsic motivation to learn and achieve, greater ability to view situations from others' perspectives, more positive and supportive relationships with peers, more positive attitudes toward subject areas, and higher self-esteem. Another nontrivial benefit for instructors is that when assignments are done cooperatively, the number of papers to grade decreases by a factor of three or four.

It's important to point out that in assessing the effectiveness of specific cooperative learning methods, there are a number of "researcher-developers" who have developed cooperative learning procedures, conducted programs of research and evaluation of their method, and then involved themselves in teacher-training programs that are commonly credited as the creators of modern-day cooperative learning. The following ten have received the most attention: Complex Instruction (CI) (Cohen, 1994b), Constructive Controversy (CC) (Johnson & Johnson, 1979), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) (Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1987), Cooperative Structures (CS) (Kagan, 1985), Group Investigation (GI) (Sharan & Sharan, 1976, 1992), Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978), Learning Together (LT) (Johnson & Johnson, 1975/1999), Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD) (Slavin, 1978), Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) (DeVries & Edwards, 1974), and Team Assisted Individualization (TAI) (Slavin, Leavey, & Madden, 1982).

We are studying different cooperative learning methods to select some of them for implementation into the educational process of language teacher training at the Ivan Franko Zhytomyr State University.