

Cooperative Learning

* Ted Panitz (tpanitz@capecod.net) on February 27, 2000:

I have been asked from time to time for information on my list of benefits for cooperative learning. Below, I have provided an outline of benefits by topic. The expanded descriptions and bibliography can be found at my web site at:

<http://www.capecod.net/~tpanitz/tedspage/tedsartiCOLLABORATIVELEARNINGes/coopbenefits.htm>

A short explanation will put this in perspective. Several years ago, I started collecting artiCOLLABORATIVE LEARNINGes, documented by research papers, on cooperative learning benefits. I noticed that most authors focused upon a few items. I began a list of benefits, and as the list grew, I became more and more impressed with the research base on cooperative learning; I kept building my list. The last time I published the list, I had 47 benefits. My list is now up to 67 benefits. It seems almost too incredible to believe, but if you read through the explanations, each one is backed by research studies and a strong rationale based upon psychological, social, and biological concepts.

I would love to add items to this list but I have run out. Please e-mail me if you can think of anything I have left off. If you can, please provide any citations you may have to justify the benefit.

67 BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

(The capital letters describe the benefits; the small letters give the outline topics.)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING promotes critical thinking skills.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DEVELOPS HIGHER-LEVEL THINKING SKILLS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STIMULATES CRITICAL THINKING AND HELPS STUDENTS COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGARIFY IDEAS THROUGH DISCUSSION AND DEBATE.
- SKILL-BUILDING AND PRACTICE CAN BE ENHANCED AND MADE LESS TEDIOUS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN AND OUT OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGASS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DEVELOPS ORAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOSTERS METACOGNITION IN STUDENTS.
- COOPERATIVE DISCUSSIONS IMPROVE STUDENTS' RECALL OF TEXT CONTENT.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING involves students actively in the learning process.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CREATES AN ENVIRONMENT OF ACTIVE, INVOLVED, EXPLORATORY LEARNING.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENCOURAGES STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEARNING.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING INVOLVES STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING CURRICULUM AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGASS PROCEDURES.
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROVIDES TRAINING IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES TO THE NEXT GENERATION OF TEACHERS.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING HELPS STUDENTS WEAN THEMSELVES AWAY FROM CONSIDERING TEACHERS THE SOLE SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FITS IN WELL WITH THE TQM AND CQI MODELS OF EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT.
COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES A LEARNING GOAL RATHER THAN A PERFORMANCE GOAL.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FITS IN WELL WITH THE CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ALLOWS STUDENTS TO EXERCISE A SENSE OF CONTROL ON TASK.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING **classroom results are improved.**

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES HIGHER ACHIEVEMENT AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASS ATTENDANCE.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SUBJECT MATTER.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING INCREASES STUDENT RETENTION.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENHANCES SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING INCREASES STUDENTS' PERSISTENCE IN THE COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS.
- STUDENTS STAY ON TASK MORE AND ARE LESS DISRUPTIVE.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM TECHNIQUES.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING **models appropriate student problem-solving techniques.**

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOSTERS MODELING OF PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUES BY STUDENTS' PEERS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ALLOWS ASSIGNMENT OF MORE CHALLENGING TASKS WITHOUT MAKING THE WORKLOAD UNREASONABLE.
- WEAKER STUDENTS IMPROVE THEIR PERFORMANCE WHEN GROUPED WITH HIGHER-ACHIEVING STUDENTS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROVIDES STRONGER STUDENTS WITH THE DEEPER UNDERSTANDING THAT COMES ONLY FROM TEACHING MATERIAL (COGNITIVE REHEARSAL).
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING LEADS TO THE GENERATION OF MORE AND BETTER QUESTIONS IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASS.
- STUDENTS EXPLORE ALTERNATE PROBLEM SOLUTIONS IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ADDRESSES LEARNING STYLE DIFFERENCES AMONG STUDENTS.

Large lectures can be personalized.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES CAN BE USED TO PERSONALIZE LARGE LECTURE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASSES.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CAN BE ADAPTED TO LARGE LECTURES INVOLVING STUDENTS IN INTERACTIVE, CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES DURING COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASS.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING is especially helpful in motivating students in specific curriculum.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IS SYNERGISTIC WITH WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC).
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IS ESPECIALLY USEFUL IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND ESL COURSES WHERE INTERACTIONS INVOLVING THE USE OF LANGUAGE ARE IMPORTANT.
- JIGSAW IS AN IDEAL STRUCTURE FOR LABORATORY AND DESIGN PROJECTS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING IS ESPECIALLY BENEFICIAL IN MATHEMATICS COURSES.

There are social benefits.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING develops a social support system for students.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES STUDENT-FACULTY INTERACTIONS AND FAMILIARITY.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING DEVELOPS SOCIAL INTERACTION SKILLS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES POSITIVE SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO PROBLEMS AND FOSTERS A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH TO MANAGE CONFLICT RESOLUTION.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CREATES A STRONGER SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOSTERS AND DEVELOPS INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS.
- STUDENTS DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING builds diversity understanding among students and staff.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING BUILDS MORE POSITIVE HETEROGENEOUS RELATIONSHIPS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENCOURAGES DIVERSITY UNDERSTANDING.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOSTERS A GREATER ABILITY IN STUDENTS TO VIEW SITUATIONS FROM OTHERS' PERSPECTIVES (DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY).
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING HELPS MAJORITY AND MINORITY POPULATIONS IN A COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASS LEARN TO WORK WITH EACH OTHER (DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, MEN AND WOMEN, TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS).

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING establishes a positive atmosphere for modeling and practicing cooperation.

- ESTABLISHES A SCHOOL-WIDE ATMOSPHERE OF COOPERATION AND HELPING.
- STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT HOW TO CRITICIZE IDEAS, NOT PEOPLE.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CLASSROOMS MAY BE USED TO MODEL DESIRABLE SOCIAL BEHAVIORS NECESSARY FOR EMPLOYMENT SITUATIONS WHICH UTILIZE TEAMS AND GROUPS.
- STUDENTS PRACTICE MODELING SOCIETAL AND WORK-RELATED ROLES.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING FOSTERS TEAM-BUILDING AND A TEAM APPROACH TO PROBLEM-SOLVING WHILE MAINTAINING INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROCESSES CREATE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE STUDENTS CAN PRACTICE BUILDING LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING INCREASES LEADERSHIP SKILLS OF FEMALE STUDENTS.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING develops learning communities.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROVIDES THE FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPING LEARNING COMMUNITIES WITHIN INSTITUTIONS AND IN COURSES.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES PROMOTE SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC RELATIONSHIPS WELL BEYOND THE COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGASSROOM AND INDIVIDUAL COURSES.
- IN COLLEGES WHERE STUDENTS COMMUTE TO SCHOOL AND DO NOT REMAIN ON CAMPUS TO PARTICIPATE IN CAMPUS LIFE ACTIVITIES, COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CREATES A COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGASSROOM.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING HELPS TEACHERS CHANGE THEIR ROLES FROM THEIR BEING THE FOCUS OF THE TEACHING PROCESS TO BECOMING FACILITATORS OF THE LEARNING PROCESS.
- THEY MOVE FROM TEACHER-CENTERED TO STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING.

There are psychological benefits.

Student-centered instruction increases students' self-esteem.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING BUILDS SELF-ESTEEM IN STUDENTS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENHANCES STUDENT SATISFACTION WITH THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROMOTES A MASTERY-ATTRIBUTION PATTERN RATHER THAN A HELPLESS-ATTRIBUTION PATTERN.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO SEEK HELP AND ACCEPT TUTORING FROM THEIR PEERS.

Cooperation reduces anxiety.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNINGASSROOM ANXIETY IS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED WITH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING.
- TEST ANXIETY IS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING develops positive attitudes towards teachers.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CREATES A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND OTHER SCHOOL PERSONNEL BY STUDENTS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING CREATES A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE BY TEACHERS TOWARD THEIR STUDENTS.
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SETS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING allows for alternate student and teacher assessment techniques.

Collaborative teaching techniques utilize a variety of assessments.

- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROVIDES A BASIS FOR ALTERNATE FORMS OF ASSESSMENT (SUCH AS OBSERVATION OF GROUPS, GROUP SELF-ASSESSMENT, AND SHORT, INDIVIDUAL WRITING ASSESSMENTS).
- COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROVIDES INSTANTANEOUS FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS AND THE TEACHER ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EACH COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ASS AND THE PROGRESS STUDENTS ARE MAKING (BY OBSERVING STUDENTS WORKING IN GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALLY).
- GROUPS ARE EASIER TO SUPERVISE THAN INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS.