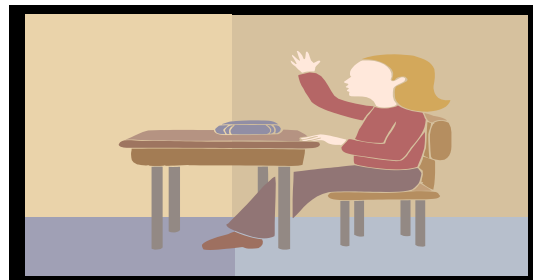




# Teaching Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms

## Part 1: Cooperative Learning





# SE2000

**“The Government’s aim is to achieve, over the next decade, a world class education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality for all students.”**

**(Policy p5)**

[Special Education 2000: Evaluation and Monitoring](#)

# Co-operative learning





# What is co-operative learning?

**“A set of teaching strategies in which students with differing skills and achievement levels learn together and take responsibility for both individual and group achievement.”**

**John Medcalf, 1995**

Medcalf, J. (1995). Cooperative learning and peer tutoring: Strategies for inclusive education. *Reading Forum*, 2, 11-19.



# Types of learning environment

- **Competitive**  
*“I swim, you sink. You swim, I sink”*
- **Individualistic**  
*“We are each in this alone”*
- **Co-operative**  
*“We sink or swim together”*



# Co-operative learning background

- **Pioneered by Roger and David Johnson – US in 1970s**
- **Used extensively all levels education system**
- **Large body of research investigating efficacy – predominantly positive results**



# Rationale

- **Co-operative group work accommodates different needs and values individuals' differences**
- **Directly fosters 2/8 essential Skills in NZ curriculum**
  - **Social and co-operation skills**
  - **Communication skills**



# Rationale

continued ...

- **Inclusive strategy — everyone in class a member of a group and everybody participates in some way**
- **Increases overall student involvement, ‘on-task’ rate**
- **Fosters teamwork and teaches ‘working together’ skills. Teamwork an important life skill eg, parenting, workplace ‘teams’**





# Comparison with traditional group work

## Traditional groups

homogeneous  
1 leader  
indiv' s own resources  
no interdependence  
group functioning not important  
no reflection

## Co-operative groups

heterogeneous  
leadership shared  
resources shared  
group interdependence  
group functioning important  
reflection important



# Five basic principles – Johnson and Johnson

- **Positive interdependence**    **P**
- **Individual accountability**    **I**
- **Group reflections**    **G**
- **Small group skills**    **S**
- **Face-to-face interaction**    **F**



# Positive interdependence

- Learning activity structured so that group cannot succeed without each member participating / succeeding
- Established through, for example:
  - group goal
  - group reward
  - shared materials/resources
  - assigned roles in group



# Face-to-face interaction

- **Students interact over shared learning activity**
- **Everyone included**
- **Active participation encouraged by:**
  - way in which activities are structured
  - way in which skills (for example, asking questions, giving or receiving explanations) are taught and monitored



# Individual accountability

- **Every member of group accountable for learning the material and/or understanding task and helping others to learn and/or understand too**
- **Established by, for example:**
  - **randomly selecting one member to report back**
  - **assessing individuals following group work**
  - **everyone a specific role**



# Small group skills

- **Training in how to work well together, how to collaborate**
- **Teach specific skills, for example:**
  - moving into groups
  - listening to others
  - encouraging others
  - resolving conflicts



# Group reflection

- **Reflecting on how well group is functioning achieving goals, working together**
- **Achieved by, for example:**
  - **group debriefing at end of activity**
  - **group rating quality of work/use of skills**
  - **teacher observing and giving feedback**
  - **student observers giving feedback**



# Role of teacher

- **Set objectives for lesson – task and skills**
- **Assign students to groups**
- **Explain the task – what want group to achieve**
- **Explain how group to work together, for example, specific roles, sharing of one resource**
- **Help groups with task and working together**
- **Evaluate students' learning and co-operation**





# Composition of groups

- **Teacher selected groups – ensure balance, inclusion and productivity**
- **Group should be no more than 4**
- **Can form groups around target students with supportive peers**
- **Change groups periodically but not too frequently**



# Roles in groups

- Participation encourager
- Materials manager / gopher
- Organiser
- Recorder
- Reader
- Speaker
- Observer etc



# Co-operative skills

- **Need to be**
  - taught
  - practised
  - monitored
- **Hierarchy of skills – *Johnson and Johnson 4 Fs***



# Co-operative skills

continued ...

- **Forming**
  - moving without noise
  - staying within the group
- **Functioning**
  - asking for help
  - expressing support



# Co-operative skills

continued ...

- **Formulating**
  - summarising
  - seeking elaboration
- **Fermenting**
  - criticising ideas, not people
  - solving conflicts



# Flexible formats

- **Co-operative activities can be brief, interspersed within lesson**
  - Think – Pair – Share
- **Whole lesson**
  - group sharing and recording of prior knowledge on new unit
- **Across lessons**
  - project teams for duration of unit



# Example

- **Inside / Outside Circle – two circles facing each other, talk in pairs, rotate one circle**
- **Can be used as a structure for**
  - **introductions, class building**
  - **personal news, sharing experiences**
  - **reviewing work (questions on cards or teacher calls out)**



# Example

- **Three-step interview – groups of four, 2 pairs. Individuals in pairs interview each other, four students share information in round robin**
- **Can be used as structure for:**
  - **sharing opinions**
  - **establishing prior knowledge re topic**
  - **reviewing learning etc**





# Co-operative learning – outcomes for students

- **Enhances academic learning**
- **Fosters active problem solving, use of higher level thinking skills**
- **Increases self-esteem**
- **Improves ability to view situations from others' perspectives**
- **Improves motivation / attitude to work / school**



# Outcomes

- **Increases on-task behaviour, decreases off-task behaviour**
- **Teaches skills and attitudes necessary to work effectively with others**
- **Fosters more positive, supportive relationships between peers**