

COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE ESL CLASSROOM

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WHAT IS COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- COOPERATIVE LEARNING IS A TEACHING STRATEGY BY WHICH STUDENTS LEARN CERTAIN INFORMATION AND SHARE IT WITH OTHER STUDENTS IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL

ADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- CAN BE USED AT ALL LEVELS
- INTEGRATES ALL SKILL AREAS
- ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE
- IT'S FUN – STUDENTS INTERACT WITH THEIR CLASSMATES IN A LOW STRESS ENVIRONMENT
- VERY ADAPTABLE: CAN USE ANY TOPIC YOU WISH
- STUDENTS USE TARGET LANGUAGE IN MEANINGFUL WAYS

DISADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

- TEACHER NEEDS PREP TIME TO RESEARCH A TOPIC AND CREATE A LESSON
- IN A MIXED CLASS, NATIVE SPEAKERS TEND TO DOMINATE THE INTERACTION

PRE ACTIVITIES

- FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE TOPIC THROUGH PICTURES
- K-W-L: ASK STUDENTS WHAT THEY ALREADY KNOW ABOUT THE TOPIC, WHAT THEY WANT TO LEARN, AND AT THE END OF THE ACTIVITY WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED
- ASK STUDENTS IF THEY KNOW THE ANSWERS TO ANY OF THE QUESTIONS ALREADY OR WANT TO MAKE A GUESS

SAMPLE LESSON

- PRE-ACTIVITY
- DIVIDE THE CLASS INTO TWO GROUPS
- HAND OUT THE QUESTIONS OR WRITE THEM ON THE BOARD
- EXPLAIN THAT EACH TEAM IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FINDING THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS FOR THEIR TEAM
- STUDENTS PRACTICE WITH A MEMBER FROM THEIR OWN TEAM ASKING AND ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS
- TEACHER CIRCULATES AND CORRECTS ANY PRONUNCIATION ERRORS AND MAKES SURE STUDENTS HAVE CORRECT ANSWERS

SAMPLE LESSON - CONTINUED

- STUDENT FROM TEAM A PARTNERS WITH STUDENT FROM TEAM B AND THEY ASK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS WITH EACH OTHER
- CONCLUDE BY TESTING FOR COMPREHENSION
- THIS COULD BE A QUIZ: MULTIPLE CHOICE, FILL-IN, SHORT ANSWER

POST ACTIVITIES

- ORAL PRESENTATIONS
 - ENDANGERED SPECIES IN MY COUNTRY
 - MY HOME CITY (CITY OF HARTFORD)
- FIELD TRIPS
 - MYSTIC SEAPORT (BLUE WHALES)
 - MARK TWAIN HOUSE (CITY OF HARTFORD)
 - NOAH WEBSTER HOUSE (CITY OF HARTFORD)
- ROLE PLAY
- FILM

VARIATIONS ON THE THEME

- HAVE STUDENTS MAKE UP THE QUESTIONS FOR THEIR TEAM
- TAPE RECORD THE TEXTS FOR LISTENING/SPEAKING CLASSES