



Best Practices Try It (Collaborative Learning); You'll Like It!

Carol Galbus

Tired of lecturing? Do you often feel that your students are "tuning you out"? Did you know that collaborative learning promises more learning retention than other teaching methods? Collaborative learning works and most students enjoy it. However, planning and directing is necessary for it to be successful and effective. Good teachers are not "off the hook" or taking the easy way out when they use it properly.

Collaborative learning involves small groups of students, usually 3 or 4, working together (often within the classroom setting) according to specific guidelines to achieve identified goals.

In writing classes, collaborative learning can be used for a variety of purposes: inventing/brainstorming for topics and topic development, peer critiques of drafts, researching and writing collaborative papers, collective interpretation and evaluation of published writing, quizzes, and oral presentations.

The benefits of group learning are endless. First, in most situations, better solutions are possible when more than one person seeks them; in other words, the cliché "two heads are better than one" applies. Also, group learning offers diversity within the classroom, and provides the opportunity for students to learn from each other and to share their

writing and ideas with each other rather than receiving reactions and suggestions only from their teacher. It teaches leadership, cooperation, initiative, and responsibility to group members as well as to self, and it helps to develop students' self confidence. Finally, it offers students a chance to get to know each other better on a learning level as well as a social one.

For further reference

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✱ Carol Galbus is assistant professor of English at Winona State University.