

Special Education Cooperative Learning Strategies

Communal Teaching

Communal teaching uses assigned roles to help with vocabulary comprehension. Reading material needs to be at learning level of all students in the group. Each role is described and modeled for every student. Roles include predictor, clarifier, summarizer and questioner for the teaching roles. Communal teaching encourages independent usage of comprehension within a cooperative framework.

How to Use

1. The teacher assigns each group an instructional-level passage to read.
2. The students read the first part.
3. The summarizer restates the part in his or her own words.
4. The questioner creates questions for their group.
5. The clarifier focuses on any misunderstandings about the comprehension of the vocabulary.
6. The predictor makes predictions about the next part.
7. Roles are rotated with each student taking a part in each role.

When to Use

- Introduce new vocabulary before a unit to test their knowledge.
- Write test questions that will be on the next unit test.
- Use to assess their knowledge before they start a new chapter.
- This could be used as preparing for a book report after reading a book.
- Use in science or social studies when learning a new concept.

Variations

- The teacher can intentionally assign the reader role, so that readers will have an instructionally appropriate section to read.
- A struggling reader may read a section of comfortable text, using high-frequency words or a smaller part of the text.
- Have students read silently and then discuss the part.

Cooperative Learning Roles

Cooperative learning roles are meant to increase engagement and participation for everyone in the team. Examples of roles include reporter, recorder, timekeeper, leader, and encourager.

How to Use

1. Each team member performs a specific role to make effective use of the team's time collectively.
2. Roles are taught directly to students, and suitable tasks are modeled to help with social skill development.

3. The students then communicate with questions like, “What did you mean by ____?” or “That makes me think of ____?”
4. Roles are rotated to encourage leadership and teamwork skills.

When to Use

- Use this when teaching elements of drama by creating a skit.
- Prepare the questions for the reporter that will be on a unit test.
- Check their understanding before you start a new unit in science or social studies.
- Use this at the beginning of the week to promote and encourage subject content about feelings and emotions.
- Have skits ready for the students about anti-bullying by having the reporter discuss bullying incidents and what students should or should not do.

Variations

- The teacher can purposely assign the roles to match students’ strengths.
 - Have students rehearse with each other in their group then present in front of the class.
 - Record the learning strategy so the students can see and hear themselves on tape.
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Clock Partners

Clock Partners is a method for assigning students to work together. This structure saves instructional time and provides for organized progress within the classroom.

How to Use

1. Teacher distribute the “[My Clock Partners](#)” [graphic](#). A clock with lines pointed to different time slots on the clock.
2. She then tells them to go around the room and ask classmates to sign up for a time on the clock.
3. Upon completion each student should have 12 different partners that line up to each hour on the clock.
4. When the teacher wants to add differences to partner work, she calls out, “Find your 12:00 appointment,” students travel through the classroom until they find their assigned partner.

When to Use

- This could be used before putting them in groups to complete an assignment.
- Before you start on a group project this could be used to promote teamwork.
- This could be used with younger students during Math for telling time.
- Use during peer editing an essay, paper or report to get different views from partners.
- A lesson on trusting and working with everyone.

Variations

- The teacher could add additional spots to sign up for slots for extra points of views.
- Could use as a “life-line” when taking a quiz.