

Cooperative Learning in a Multi-Cultural High School Classroom in Eastern Washington

A Special Project

Presented to

Dr. Gretta Merwin

Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirement for the Degree of

Masters of Education

Robert Gutierrez

Summer 2007

FACULTY APPROVAL

Cooperative Learning in a Multi-Cultural High School Classroom in Eastern Washington

Approved for the Faculty

_____, Faculty Advisor

ABSTRACT

This research project studied the effects on student achievement when cooperative learning was used as a teaching strategy in a secondary classroom. A high school in Eastern Washington was used to conduct research. Students were assessed and the results were informative regarding the use of cooperative learning in lower performing classrooms.

PERMISSION TO STORE

I, Robert Gutierrez, do hereby irrevocably consent and authorize Heritage University Library to file the attached Special Project entitled, Cooperative Learning in a Multi-Cultural High School Classroom in Eastern Washington, and make such paper available for the use, circulation and/or reproduction by the Library. The paper may be used at Heritage University Library and all site locations.

I state at this time the contents of this paper are my work and completely original unless properly attributed and/or used with permission.

I understand that after three years the paper will be retired from the Heritage University Library. If I choose, it is my responsibility to retrieve the paper at that time. If the paper is not retrieved, Heritage University may dispose of it.

_____, Author

_____, Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FACULTY APPROVAL.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
PERMISSION TO STORE.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1.....	1
Background for the Project.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Project.....	3
Delimitations.....	3
Assumptions.....	4
Research Question.....	4
Significance of the Project.....	5
Procedure.....	5
CHAPTER 2.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Current Practices.....	8
What Makes Cooperative Learning Work	9
Using Cooperative Learning to increase Knowledge of Social Skills.....	9
Cooperative Learning with Special Education Students	10
Students Response to Cooperative Learning by Gender, Grade and Nationality.....	10

Reliability of Cooperative Learning.....	11
Validity of Cooperative Learning.....	12
Summary.....	13
CHAPTER 3.....	14
Introduction.....	14
Methodology.....	14
Participants.....	15
Instruments.....	15
Design.....	15
Procedure.....	15
Summary.....	16
CHAPTER 4.....	17
Introduction.....	17
Description of the Environment.....	17
Research Question.....	17
Results of the Study.....	17
Findings.....	20
Discussion.....	21
Summary.....	21

CHAPTER 5.....	23
Summary.....	23
Conclusion.....	23
Recommendations.....	24
Appendices.....	25
Student Survey.....	27
Table 1.....	28
Table 2.....	29
References.....	30

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Traditional education encouraged individualized learning by providing an individual grade, individual classroom desks, and an individual teacher instructing in an individual manner. Such traditional individualized education has not met the needs of all students. According to the Washington State's standardized test, only 60% of students were meeting reading standards, 30% of the students were meeting math standards, 58% were meeting writing standards and 19% were meeting science standards.

In the secondary multi-cultural classroom in rural Eastern Washington where this study took place, standardized test scores indicated the traditional education was not working. The teacher needed to develop successful classroom strategies that would more appropriately meet the educational needs of the students. The teacher was aware that poverty had a serious effect on multi-cultural students (Bonilla, 1997). Many of the students in this study qualified for free and reduced lunch. The teacher was also aware that many of the students claimed that their parents worked in an agricultural setting. Such work was highly dependent on the ability to work cooperatively.

Group work was experienced by many of the students' parents as seen on a potato digger. A potato digger was a machine used to pull potatoes from the ground during harvest time. The digger was pulled by a tractor and was driven by a "tractorista" (tractor driver in Spanish). The tractor driver was dependent on the crew working the machine while potatoes were pulled out of the ground. The team working on the digger cleaned and ensured that the potatoes were properly dug from the earth and loaded onto a semi-

truck. According to some students, this basic agricultural work was an example of group work that many rural high school students and parents engaged in often.

In addition, many multi-cultural students tended to lack a positive self-concept and ethnic pride. These factors needed to be considered when new teaching strategies were selected.

Cooperative Learning was identified as the focus for intervention. Cooperative learning was accomplished when students worked together to accomplish shared goals. In cooperative learning students had two responsibilities: to maximize each individual student's learning and maximize the learning of all other group members. When students worked cooperatively the students worked and the entire group looked for outcomes that were beneficial to the team. As the students worked cooperatively the students discussed material, helped each other understand the work and encouraged each member. The important duties and parts of cooperative learning were that students discussed material, helped each other and made collective decisions. Cooperative learning was successful because the emphasis was on continuous improvement from all the students. In Johnson's study, the students performed better academically when the students worked cooperatively and in groups (Johnson, 1999). The strategy of cooperative learning was the research focus of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The students in the teacher's classroom were mainly Hispanic. They had low achievement scores on state standardized tests. They tended to be from low income families. When given individual assignments they shut down, refused to work, slouched down in their chairs, slept and generally talked to fellow classmates. They lacked a

positive self-concept. They lacked ethnic pride. They were defeated before they started. The teacher needed a different strategy to try to combat these problems. That strategy was cooperative learning.

The Purpose of Project

The purpose was to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning in a rural high school in Eastern Washington. If the research was successful, the teacher wanted to introduce cooperative learning to other teachers as an effective form of instruction for schools with a high minority population.

Delimitations

The data for the project was collected from a high school teacher’s class in a rural area in Eastern Washington. The teacher gathered demographics from classroom data and from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. According to the Office of Superintendent in the State of Washington the school’s demographics were (OSPI 2007):

Enrollment	
October 2005 Student Count	2,997
Gender (October 2005)	
Male	53.3%
Female	46.7%
Ethnicity (October 2005)	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%
Asian	1.5%
Black	3.3%
Hispanic	66.7%
White	28.0%
Special Programs	

Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2006)	61.0%
Special Education (May 2006)	11.6%
Transitional Bilingual (May 2006)	26.2%
Migrant (May 2006)	15.8%
Other Information	
Annual Dropout Rate (2004-05)	14.0%
On-Time Graduation Rate (2004-05)	50%
Extended Graduation Rate (2004-05)	56%

The demographics of the class were mainly Hispanic along with a Ukrainian, African and Vietnamese student. The grade level researched was 12th grade and the curriculum was Contemporary World Problems.

Assumptions

All teachers from the school in rural Eastern Washington were highly qualified, all students were treated equally and instruction was based on the Grade Level Expectations from the State of Washington. The students observed were mainly Hispanic students. The high school teacher instructing the class had worked in assisting the entire class to achieve good academic grades. The students' scores for the research data were achieved by modifying the lessons to fit the needs of the class.

Research Question

Will cooperative learning have a positive effect on student learning in a Sheltered English Teaching class?

Significance of the Project

Based on the results of the project, the value of using cooperative learning as an instructional tool in a small urban high school in Eastern Washington would be identified. If the research project proved successful, the hope of the teacher was to motivate other teachers to implement cooperative learning in the classroom.

Procedure

Data was gathered using three separate steps from a high school classroom in a rural Eastern Washington Sheltered English Teaching class. The students in the class were assigned to the class based on the students' language skills. The researcher chose the 7th period class because the class most represented the demographics of the school. The 7th period class from a rural high school in Eastern Washington was a Sheltered English Teaching course. A Sheltered English Teaching class was designed for students that recently transferred from English as a Second Language course. All of the students spoke a language other than English at home. The nationalities of the students in the class were Hispanic, Ukrainian, African and Vietnamese. The Sheltered English Teaching course was taught at a slower pace than a traditional Contemporary World Problems course and there was an emphasis on grammar and vocabulary building. All of the students were first generation students in the United States.

For step number one in gathering data, students were given an assignment. The assignment asked the students to respond to questions about a military person. The previous day, Gabreal Sanchez, a member of the U.S. Navy and an Iraqi war veteran, spoke to the class about experiences in the Iraq war. Mr. Sanchez spoke about the

military and gave advice about college. Then the guest speaker answered students' questions.

To prepare for Sanchez' arrival, the previous day the class read, discussed and answered questions about a newspaper article printed in the local newspaper about Sanchez' accomplishments during the war. The class was familiar with Mr. Sanchez's accomplishments because the students read the local newspaper article. While Mr. Sanchez spoke the class listened attentively. The students' interest was raised after Sanchez spoke about graduating from the same high school the students were attending. The military person talked about graduating from high school. Mr. Sanchez admitted that poor choices were made after graduating from high school. Mr. Sanchez explained that the choices led to the Navy and if the man could make the choice again Sanchez would have chosen college. The instructor's Sheltered English Teaching class responded positively to Sanchez's experiences and the following day the students did not have a problem doing the individual assignment.

The assignment for step number one consisted of ten questions about the presentation from Sanchez. Each question needed to be answered in complete sentences and a paragraph was needed to ensure full points.

The next day the instructor's 7th period CWP class was given the same questions as the day before. This time however the students were asked to read an article about a military person and finish the assignment in groups. This person's name was Captain Rozelle. According to the magazine article Rozelle was a member of the Army and had lost a leg in Iraq. Rozelle had trained rigorously after the injury and had been declared fit for duty and was returning to Iraq as an amputee.

For step number two in gathering data the class was asked to do a similar assignment as was done the day before. This time the class was able to work in teams. The same questions were asked of the students. While the class was working on the assignment, the atmosphere suggested that the students were engaged in discussing Captain Rozelle's situation and experiences. The difference between the two assignments was that the students completed one individually and the other assignment was done in student groups. The other difference was Sanchez spoke to the group. The students read about Rozelle in a newspaper article.

While the class was working on the assignment all groups had a person that acted as the leader. All the students created the groups by choosing partners. The groups ranged in size from three to four students.

For step number three in gathering data, five students were randomly chosen to participate in a survey. The students varied in academic abilities. Each student was asked to list nationality, discuss culture, learning styles, success with cooperative learning and the positive and negative aspects of cooperative learning. Each student was called to the teacher's desk while the rest of the class was working on an assignment. The students appeared comfortable and motivated to answer the questions.

The data gathered from each of the three steps was compiled and analyzed and became the basis upon which this project reached conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The teacher researched various sources related to cooperative learning. Many of the topics supported cooperative learning with middle and high school students, especially boys. Much of the literature went on to discuss the relationship of cooperative learning with middle school and high school achievement. There was a correlation between cooperative learning and higher achievement with students with learning disabilities because mainstream classrooms include students with learning disabilities (Sencibaugh, 2005). In addition, cooperative learning led to improved classroom behavior among middle school aged students and lower income elementary students (Krantz, 2005).

Current Practices

The teacher taught in a high school in rural Eastern Washington. The teacher had the students grouped in teams of four and the students were able to choose a team. The teacher explained that the classroom environment was modeled after life. In life, the teacher explained, students had the freedom to choose specific friends. In the classroom each group of desks represented a group of individuals. The instructor explained that at any time each student had the liberty to switch teammates. The teacher went on to explain that in life students changed friends all the time. The teacher was hoping to teach the students a valuable life lesson. The lesson was that student cooperative groups could help achieve better results for all students. The teacher was a supporter of cooperative learning and many of the assignments done in class were done cooperatively.

What Makes Cooperative Learning Work

Cooperative learning was accomplished when students worked together to accomplish shared goals. In cooperative learning students had two responsibilities: to maximize each individual student's learning and maximize the learning of all other group members. When students worked cooperatively the students worked and the entire group looked for outcomes that were beneficial to the team. As the students worked

cooperatively the students discussed material, helped each other understand the work and encouraged each member. The important duties and parts of cooperative learning were that students discussed material, helped each other and made collective decisions. Cooperative learning was successful because the emphasis was on continuous improvement from all the students. In Johnson's study, the students performed better academically when the students worked cooperatively and in groups (Johnson, 1999).

Using Cooperative Learning to increase Knowledge of Social Skills

Krantz (2005) claimed that cooperative learning affected more than simply the students' ability to learn content. According to Krantz's research in a middle school classroom, playground and lunchroom, the researcher noted that many young students did not know social skills. The researcher observed students interacting and noticed that the students' instructors did not teach the students social skills. The target group was middle to lower income Illinois students. The researcher noted that the high discipline rate was with students that had a high mobility rate and a low percentage of parent involvement. Krantz chose to implement social skills to students through cooperative learning so that the students were able to immediately practice the newly acquired skills. After 14 weeks the students had a lower amount of discipline referrals and student behavior was improved.

Cooperative Learning with Special Education Students

Sencibaugh (2005) conducted a study with special education teachers. The researcher aimed to see if a correlation existed between regular education teachers and special education teachers. In the study Sencibaugh learned that special needs students in mainstream classrooms struggled to learn with traditional teaching methods. The special needs students excelled when the students worked cooperatively with fellow classmates. The researcher discovered that students involved in cooperative learning were more actively involved, abstract concepts were presented in concrete form,

information was organized, and relationships between pieces of information were made explicit. Finally, important information was differentiated from unimportant information. The researcher concluded that special needs students learned best in mainstream classes when the students were taught cooperatively. The classes the students excelled in were science and social studies.

Students' Response to Cooperative Learning by Gender, Grade and Nationality

In 2005, the Miami-Dade County conducted a student survey to compare the attitudes and behaviors of middle and high school students towards other cultural groups (Miller-Whithead). The researchers investigated students' perceived differences in attitudes towards people from other cultures, gender, age, education, state of origin and ethnicity. Other cultures were experienced in working in groups. Students from other countries seemed more comfortable with cooperative learning than American students. The results were that many students in the researched high school were afraid of students who had different cultural backgrounds. In Miller-Whithead's research, traditional American students experienced initial native attitudes while working cooperatively.

The survey showed that students were more likely to work in gender groups. Females were especially more likely to know and participate in activities of multicultural organizations than males. Females were also more likely to have traveled outside the United States than males. The 18-23 year group was more likely to know about multicultural organization and events than any other age group. Most university students that were surveyed claimed to have never worked on a project with a person from another culture group. Resulting from the survey, Miller-Whithead said, "Results have implications for community outreach, textbook selection, and cooperative learning activities" (2005).

Reliability of Cooperative Learning

The reliability of teaching cooperative was questionable. Teachers had difficulty obtaining and comparing results between cooperative learning and individual learning. Many of the instructors that used cooperative learning stated that cooperative learning was used to teach life skills (Krantz 2005). However, many of the life skills were not taught or students did not have proof that they learned skills. One of the skills that students were supposed to learn was collaborative problem-solving. Collaborative problem-solving was an important skill to be considered successful in life (Chuang, 2006). The definition of collaborative problem-solving according to Chaung was problem-solving activities that involved interactions among a group of individuals.

Chuang's study attempted to gain feedback from students after working in groups. The study concluded a negative relationship with the outcome of group work. The students were not able to offer credible feedback because students did not work effectively in groups. The negative relationship between group work and problem-solving skills was attributed to the lack of collaboration between team members and individual students. Consequently, in Chang's study, the students did not learn problem-solving practices.

Students were less likely to step outside of the comfort zones in controlled groups (Jeong, 2007). A control group was a group of students placed together by an instructor. In a controlled group the students were less likely to challenge other students or respond to challenges from other students. In an environment that was controlled by the teacher, the students tended to shift attention periodically.

Validity of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning was validated by the Cultural Learning Environment Questionnaire which was used to evaluate culturally sensitive factors, such as gender, equity, collaboration, deference, competition, teacher authority and modeling (Dhindsa 2005). Each student was asked whether culture was being respected in class, whether the students preferred to work in gender groups and if the students felt gender equality. The study used 831 secondary students all working in cooperative groups. The results of the study showed that students believed both genders were treated equally in the classes. While working in teams the students viewed all students as dependant learners but were willing to give the students independent views in class. In Dhindsa's study, the data showed that students perceived that students were equally cooperative and competitive in learning while in teams.

Summary

Cooperative learning occurred when students worked together to accomplish shared goals (Johnson, 1999). Cooperative learning was especially beneficial for minority students, special education students and students from urban areas (Senibaugh 2005). However, when students were given the opportunity to work cooperatively, the young people tended to choose gender groups and were less likely to step out of the comfort zone (Miller-Whithead, 2005). The issue was that cooperative learning was difficult to measure. Studies have shown that feedback was difficult to gather when students worked cooperatively (Chaung, 2006).

Chapter 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The teacher set out to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning as a teaching strategy in a multicultural classroom in rural Eastern Washington. Most of the students came from Hispanic families and had scored low on state standardized tests. The data was gathered using three separate steps.

Methodology

For step number one, students were given an assignment and were asked to respond to questions about a military person. The assignment was completed individually. Each question needed to be answered in complete sentences and a paragraph response was needed to ensure full points. Data was obtained by recording the total number of students and the students' grade for the assignment.

The second step consisted of ten questions about a presentation given in class. The teacher allowed the students to work in groups for the second step. The assignment was similar to step one's assignment. The data was recorded using the same data recording methods in step one.

In the third step, five students were randomly chosen to participate in a survey. The students were called to the teacher's desk and asked multiple questions. The teacher wrote the students' responses as each student was talking.

Participants

All the students came from the teacher's class. The students were aware of the research conducted in class. The students were from a multicultural classroom in rural Eastern Washington. The ages of the participants varied from 15 to 18 years of age.

Instruments

The data gathering devices that were used were two separate assignments and one survey. The first assignment was done individually, while the second assignment was done in groups. The survey was conducted by the teacher and random students were selected to be interviewed. Both the reliability and validity were difficult to assess based on the teacher's perspective. In addition, it was difficult to control the validity and reliability of the results because of the teacher's potential bias.

Design

The research was conducted using a variety of designs. The data acquired from assignment one and two were quantitative data. The survey results were qualitative data.

Results were analyzed from assignments one and two. The survey was reviewed in depth to see if students believed that cooperative learning had an impact on their learning.

Procedure

The entire class of multicultural students in rural Eastern Washington was informed about the study. Each student was aware about cooperative learning and the teacher's desire to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning. After the teacher explained to the class about the study each student was given the assignment. During step one the students individually did the assignment. After the task was completed the

student worked on other homework until the entire class was completed with the assignment.

For step two, the class was again informed about the study. This time the students were able to participate in the assignment in teams. Each student did the assignment and when the task was completed each team was asked to be respectful until all teams were complete.

The third step was conducted during class time. While students were working on homework during the period, the teacher selected students to be interviewed. The selected students came to the teacher's desk and were interviewed individually. Each student was informed about the survey and while the student talked, the teacher wrote the responses.

Treatment of the Data

In the student surveys the questions that were asked were open ended. The open ended questions allowed for interpretation from the teacher. The teacher worked hard to be unbiased and to reach an objective conclusion.

Summary

The researcher was pleased with the results from both the assignments and the survey. Using both qualitative and quantitative assessment tools proved helpful in garnering results. Most of the students used for the research were from Hispanic families and had scored low on state standardized tests.

Chapter 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The purpose was to test the effectiveness of cooperative learning in a rural high school in Eastern Washington. If the research was successful, the teacher wanted to introduce cooperative learning to other teachers as an effective form of instruction for schools with a high minority population. The data for the project was collected from a high school teacher's class in a rural area in Eastern Washington. The teacher gathered demographics from classroom data and from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Description of the Environment

The research was conducted in a high school classroom in rural Eastern Washington. The majority of the students were from Hispanic families. Most of the students came from poverty. The classroom desks were set up in groups of four. Most of the students were accustomed to working in teams. The teacher was a facilitator to each group. While the students were working on the assignments the teacher was walking around the class and offering assistance to the students that needed help.

Research Question

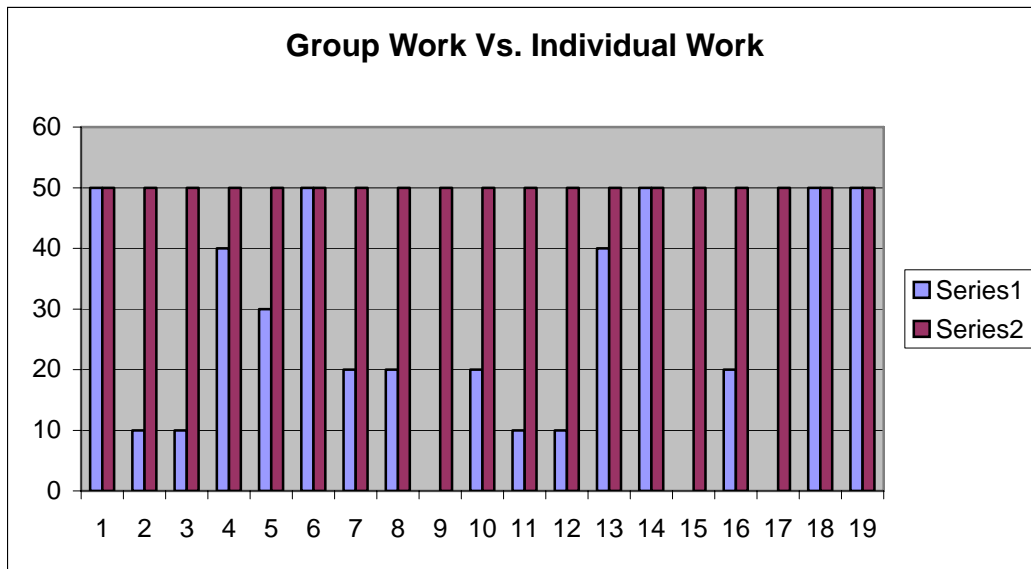
Will cooperative learning have a positive effect on student learning in a Sheltered English Teaching class?

Results of the Study

For the first assignment the total number of students in the class was 19 and out of the entire class three students did not turn in the assignment. The assignment was worth

50 points and eight students received less than 25 points while three students received between 40 and 30 points for the assignment. Out of 19 students five students received full credit for the assignment.

The second assignment was group work. The same questions were asked of the students as in the first assignment. This time however all 19 students received full credit.



The third step showed that most students expressed a desire to participate in cooperative learning. Not every student however said that they learned best by cooperative learning. The largest issue the teacher faced in cooperative learning was with the students that had poor attendance. When a student was inactive in the group or absent they were generally asked to leave the group. This had two effects. One, the students that had poor attendance did poorly in the class. Secondly, the students that came on a regular basis and participated with their groups tended to do very well in the class.

Student 1

Student one described himself as a Mexican. This student said that culture did not affect his learning. This student said that the teaching style that worked best for him was

when teachers talked to the students in front of the class. The student said that he did well using cooperative learning. This student believed that a positive aspect of cooperative learning was that people were able to participate in different things together. The student said that the negative aspect of cooperative learning occurred when team members would not show up to class.

Student 2

Student two described himself as a Mexican. He did not feel that culture played a role in learning. This student's favorite teaching style was when he got to work with other people in class. The student felt he did pretty well using cooperative learning and felt the positive aspect of cooperative learning was that the students were able to combine the workload. The negative part of cooperative learning was when team members did not complete their work and the entire group suffered as a result.

Student 3

Student three described herself as a Mexican. She did not feel that her culture played a role in her learning. Her favorite teaching style was when students looked at what needed to be done and then the teacher gave the students the opportunity to do the task. This student felt that she did pretty well using cooperative learning. The part of cooperative learning that she liked the most was when groups got different ideas from all the students. The negative part of cooperative learning was when group members did not do what the other team members were expecting them to do.

Student 4

Student four described herself as a Puerto Rican. She did not think that culture played a role in her learning. This student said she was a visual learner and did mostly

very well using cooperative learning. She felt that the positive aspect of cooperative learning was that the students were given the opportunity to be more social and allowed to work with fellow classmates. The negative part of cooperative learning was when people had different opinions and arguments would develop in the group.

Student 5

Student five described herself as a Mexican/Hispanic. She said that culture did not play a role in her learning. Her favorite learning style was when she was allowed to work in groups. She felt she performed well using cooperative learning because of the fact that she was receiving an “A” in the class. The positive aspect of cooperative learning for her was that it helped others if they did not understand the material and the group was able to generate more ideas. The negative part of cooperative learning was that some people took advantage and did not do their part in the group.

Findings

The teacher found that cooperative learning worked for high achieving students. These students however would have succeeded using any method of teaching. In reality some of the students were working harder because some of the group member would get lazy and rely on the high achieving students in the group. The teacher learned from the survey that students had fun but did not necessarily learn more. The survey also indicated that cooperative learning did not necessarily increase student achievement. The findings were disappointing to the teacher. In the end, cooperative learning did not work as well as was anticipated.

Discussion

The teacher was disappointed with the results of the data from the three studies. Prior to the study, the teacher was very optimistic about the result of cooperative learning on lower achieving students. The evidence was gathered by the three step process and each step played an important role in gathering evidence. Step one showed that the under achieving students did not work well with an individual assignment. Step two showed the teacher that all the groups in the class could work hard to turn in a cooperative assignment. Most of the hard work, however, was being done by the higher achieving students. Many of the low achieving students were dependent on their team members to complete much of the work. The third step showed the true thoughts of the students. This step was the most helpful in obtaining the true result of cooperative learning.

Summary

The teacher discovered that culture did not play a role in cooperative learning. In addition, some students did not perform well using cooperative learning. The students that had good attendance, got along well with others and had a good work ethic tended to perform well with cooperative learning. The students that had poor attendance did not work well with others and tended to perform poorly with cooperative learning. The students with poor attendance did not perform well because many times the absent students were asked to leave a group. This allowed the absent students to become isolated because they had no group to work with. Many of these students would become very defensive and many times they would stop coming to class altogether.

There were some positive parts of cooperative learning. Some of the students interviewed explained that they appreciated the different ideas that were introduced to the group by cooperative learning.

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary

The research conducted was very helpful in assessing the teacher's classroom. Prior to the research, tests and results, the teacher felt that cooperative learning was beneficial for every student. In fact, the teacher believed that cooperative learning was mostly helpful for lower achieving students because these students had the opportunity to work with peers. This, however, proved false. Lower achieving students tended to perform poorly because of the students' attendance. Other group members did not like students in the groups that did not perform well or that had poor attendance. In actuality, the lowest performing students with bad attendance were isolated more with cooperative learning.

In addition, the teacher believed that the Hispanic culture would favor cooperative learning because of cultural preferences. This proved inaccurate. Every student that was questioned said that culture did not play a significant role in learning styles. Based on the results from the survey, the teacher learned that cooperative learning did not necessary favor lower performing Hispanic students.

Conclusion

The students that benefited the most from cooperative learning were students that had a desire to perform well in the class. Students that had a desire were encouraged by their group members to participate and bring ideas to the group. Many of these students would perform well with any style of learning. In the surveys that were conducted throughout the research, students commented that they enjoyed cooperative learning

because the student was receiving a good grade in the class. The teacher originally believed that student achievement would increase as a result of cooperative learning.

In the end, the teacher's perspective on cooperative learning changed. At the beginning of the study, the teacher envisioned gathering data that was going to strongly favor cooperative learning. The teacher was going to share the findings with fellow colleagues in hopes of convincing others around the school to implement cooperative learning in the classroom. By the end of the study, the teacher was enlightened by data that cooperative learning has its short comings and not every student will benefit from cooperative learning.

Recommendations

Any teacher considering implementing cooperative learning in their class needs to evaluate themselves and see if they are prepared for such a task. Cooperative learning removes the teacher from the central figure in the class. In cooperative learning the teacher acts as a facilitator and the students are the ones driving their education. In some instances the students do not want any assistance while they are working on projects. Most of the students questioned commented that they enjoy a class where they could work with their friends. The risk that a teacher faces by implementing cooperative learning is that if the teacher's classroom management is not in place the classroom can be unorganized, noisy and difficult to manage. Prior to implementing cooperative learning, the teacher needs to know their student population and be attentive to each student's needs. The lower achieving students that have attendance problems need to be considered and a remedy needs to be in place for these students.

Appendix

Contemporary World History
Guest Speaker Assignment
50 Points

Individual Assignment

Answer the following questions based on the presentation by Gabriel Sanchez. You will be graded based on your content and the clarity of your answers.

1. What is the guest speaker's name and rank?
2. Why do you think he wanted to enlist in the armed forces?
3. Who were some of his inspirations?
4. Explain his service in Iraq.
5. If he had the opportunity to return to Iraq, do you think they would want to return? Explain why or why not.
6. How do you think fighting in Iraq changed this person?
7. What do you think they learned by serving in Iraq?
8. How was their life affected by war?
9. List five things you did not like about him and five things you liked about him.
10. Develop a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting his life as a military person versus a civilian.

Contemporary World History
Article Assignment
50 Points

Group Assignment

Today we will read an article about a person who served in the Iraq war. While you read the article you will take note on his experiences. You will be graded based on your content and the clarity of your answers.

1. What is the persons name and rank?
2. Why do you think he wanted to enlist in the armed forces?
3. Who were some of his inspirations?
4. Explain his service in Iraq.
5. If he had the opportunity to return to Iraq, do you think they would want to return? Explain why or why not.
6. How do you think fighting in Iraq changed this person?
7. What do you think they learned by serving in Iraq?
8. How was their life affected by war?
9. List five things you did not like about him and five things you liked about him.
10. Develop a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting his life as a military person versus a civilian.

Student Survey

Student Name _____

Grade Level _____

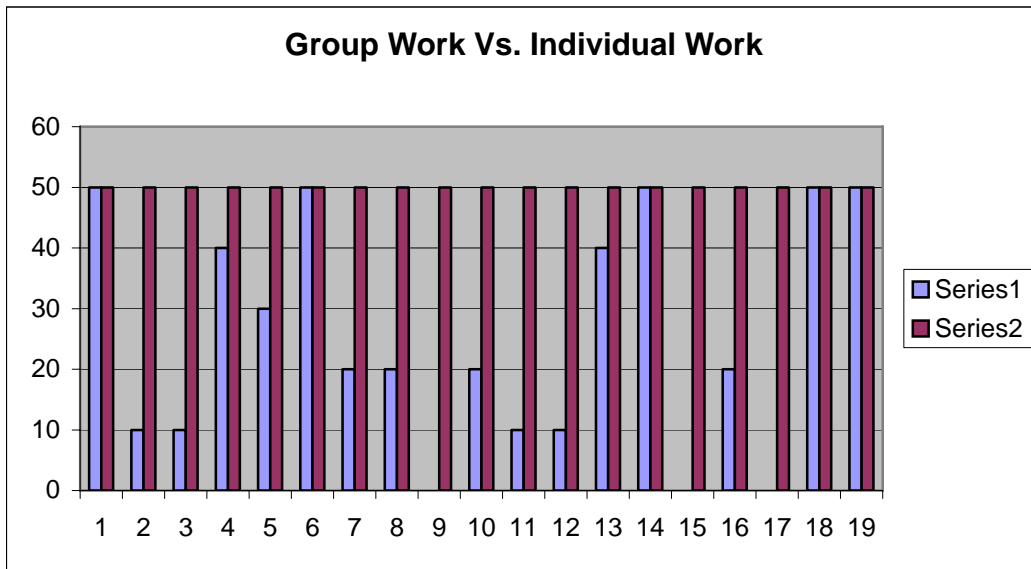
1. How would you describe your nationality?
2. Discuss how your culture leads to your learning in school?
3. In your high school classes you have experienced a number of different teaching styles. What style works best for you?
4. In this class we predominately use the teaching style of cooperative learning. How well do you perform using that method?
5. What do you believe to be the positive aspects of cooperative learning?
6. What do you believe to be the negative aspects of cooperative learning?

Table 1

**Comparison between Group Work and Individual Work
Gutierrez' 12th Grade Contemporary World Problems Classes
7th Period**

Student	Test 1 Individual Work	Test 2 Group Work	Student Average
1	50	50	100
2	10	50	60
3	10	50	60
4	40	50	90
5	30	50	80
6	50	50	100
7	20	50	70
8	20	50	70
9	0	50	50
10	20	50	70
11	10	50	60
12	10	50	60
13	40	50	90
14	50	50	100
15	0	50	50
16	20	50	70
17	0	50	50
18	50	50	100
19	50	50	100
Average	480	950	1430

Table 2



References

- Allen, R. (2006). Investigating culture through cooperative learning. *Foreign Language Annals*, 39. Retrieved March 13, 2007, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal;jsessionid=GVmYNFSJ7F2TShLhR51xZkpG9QtmqbcxPyYG2zy5TTTJ1kWH3yp!1330711995?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=Investigating+culture+through+cooperative+learning&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=ti&_pageLabel=ERICSearchResult&newSearch=true&rnd=1175791288881&searchtype=keyword
- Chang, S. (2006). Role of task specific adapted feedback on a computer based collaborative problem solving task. *National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing*, 3-5, 8-9, 15-18. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 346 082).
- Dhindsa, H. (2005). Cultural learning environment of upper secondary science students. *International Journal of Science Education*, 27. Retrieved March 16, 2007, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=Cultural+learning+environment+of+upper+secondary+science+students&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=ti&_pageLabel=ERICSearchResult&newSearch=true&rnd=1175792329381&searchtype=basic
- Gillies, R. (2004). The effects of cooperative learning on junior high school students during small group learning. *Learning and Instruction*, 14. Retrieved March 3, 2007, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=the+effects+of+cooperative+learning+on+junior+high+school+students+during+small+group+learning&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=ti&_pageLabel=ERICSearchResult&newSearch=true&rnd=1175792627982&searchtype=basic
- Hargis, C. (2006). *Teaching low achieving and disadvantaged students*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas Publisher Ltd.
- Jeong, A. (2007). Scaffolding collaborative argumentation in asynchronous discussions with message constraints and message labels. *Computers and Education*, 48. Retrieved February 28, 2007, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=Scaffolding+collaborative+argumentation+in+asynchronous+discussions+with+message+constraints+and+message+labels&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=ti&_pageLabel=ERICSearchResult&newSearch=true&rnd=1175793279863&searchtype=basic

- Johnson, D. (1999). Making cooperative learning work. *Theory into Practice*, 38.
Retrieved March 9, 2007, from
http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/Home.portal?_nfpb=true&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=Making+cooperative+learning+work&searchtype=basic&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=ti&_pageLabel=RecordDetails&objectId=0900000b8001b860&accno=EJ592334&_nfls=false
- Krantz, S., McDermott, H., Schaefer, L., & Snyder, M. (2003). Improving student social skills through the use of cooperative learning strategies. 7-10, 25-26, 28-32.
Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Xavier University of Chicago, IL.
- Miller-Whithead, M. (2005). A comparison of multicultural attitudes by gender, education level and state of origin. 1-3. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 346 082).
- Neal, K. (2004). Improving high school mathematics instruction: Using constructivist pedagogy, 3-4, 62-64, 74-76. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 346 082).
- Sencibaugh, B. (2005). A synthesis of content enhancement strategies for teaching students with learning problems at the secondary level. *Council for Exceptional Children International Conference*, 1-3, 4-5. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 346 082).