

giving members the chance to share these experiences, in the target language, and promote learning within the group.

Finally, it actively encourages students to contribute more. When students are working as a class- perhaps in discussions, weaker students may shy away from getting involved. They may be too shy to answer questions or participate. Cooperative learning provides an environment where students can 'save face', so to speak, and be confident enough to participate when amongst a group of their close peers. They may even have other skills which directly benefit the group. An example may be a student whose English proficiency was low, but who is very talented at art. A simple project, such as creating an English comic, gives said student an opportunity to participate whilst that student's peers provide support in other areas such as writing.

III. DISADVANTAGES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Perhaps one of the biggest problems with cooperative learning is problems with the dynamics of a group. Cooperative learning places such high importance on the group to be able to work effectively and efficiently. Problems within the group such as arguments or power struggles can create conflict leading the group to break down and not commit set tasks effectively. Also, if students who generally misbehave are placed together, then it can also lead to little or poor work being produced. As one can imagine, a classroom in which students are given permission to speak to each other will inevitably grow increasingly louder eventually.

Another problem with putting students into groups is that a very strong student may not be challenged and stimulated if they are not placed among other strong students (Rubin 2003), and weaker students may find it too difficult if they are placed with only strong students. In fact, lower ability students may feel in constant need of assistance instead of tackling leadership roles or being given the opportunity to show off their own skills.

Finally, and understandably, cooperative learning can take a lot longer to prepare lessons. When a teacher is merely lecturing, said teacher only needs the material that they plan to regurgitate, but when a teacher facilitates student learning, they must prepare a lesson which cultivates this, and that can be difficult. Tasks must be carefully considered to ensure that they fit the needs of all students and all types of learners. They must enhance the learning experience and give students the opportunities to search for new information and to bring their own experiences to the tasks. Groups must be carefully considered as to not disrupt the class and ensure that groups work to an optimal standard.

IV. CONCLUSION

The thought of careful and time-consuming planning, that requires a lot of consideration, can be off-putting to many teachers, but if that is done well then the advantages are tenfold. It's clear that cooperative learning not only has its role in the classroom, but instead could be the shift most classrooms are in need of to successfully engage students, give them a passion for learning, and develop their skills as well as

introducing them to new ones indirectly via their peers. Whilst some students do work incredibly well individually, cooperative learning can be the boost other students need to bring them to new high levels within the class. If a group is well organized, the possibilities are endless for all students within that group; not only on an academic level, but on an interpersonal level as well. Quite simply, with a sink or swim together attitude to learning, teamwork is promoted. Helpful behavior is rewarded, and students are happier overall, leading to a happier classroom- and I think everyone can agree that a happier classroom is a better classroom.

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