

Cooperative skills development⁽¹¹⁾

The cooperative skills required to perform the activities are both social and intellectual in nature. They are part of a spectrum, they are specific to the cooperative situation and they help all members of a group to learn more.

To facilitate the acquisition of these skills, we recommend the teacher translate them into verbal and image-driven language with the help of a “T” chart, which you can build with the students’ help. This chart allows you to break down the skills into words and actions, giving the students a specific model of the expected behaviour (page 126). In order to guide the teacher in this activity, there is a chart on pages 122 to 125 with examples of words and actions for each skill.

Based on the work of Johnson, Johnson and Halubec, we have divided the cooperative skills into four categories, each of which represents a different stage of learning. This classification, without being too definitive, will allow you to understand the skills, as they are defined below more clearly.

1. Management skills: encourage the establishment of minimum standards for group participation.
2. Gathering skills: promote inter-dependence by channeling efforts. Allow for smooth and effective group work.
3. Reflection skills (reasoning): stimulate reasoning strategies (thus improving comprehension) and maximize each and everyone's learning.
4. Problem solving skills (transformation, conceptualization): stimulate conceptualization through the confrontation of ideas. Enable the use of diverse thought processes to find alternative solutions. Encourage students to be open to other ways of thinking through the transformation of ideas. Make students reframe their way of approaching a problem.



11- Claudette Évangéliste-Perron, Martine Sabourin and Cynthia Sinagra, *Apprendre la démocratie : guide de sensibilisation et de formation à la démocratie selon l'apprentissage coopératif*, Montreal, Les Éditions de la Chenelière, 1996, pp. 305-307. Reproduced with the permission of Chenelière/McGraw-Hill.

REFLECTION SKILLS

| Skills | Actions  | Words  |
|--|---|--|
| Explain to others how to do it (help by explaining, use yourself as an example). | Students make drawings, outline steps, show details. | "Come here Myrlie, I will explain how I do this." |
| Ask questions. | Students come closer to show their interest; they show curiosity. | "Where? When? How? Why? With whom?" |
| Justify ideas or explain why. | Students think; their eyes open when they look at each other. | "Personally, I think that..." |
| Reformulate. | Students seek other means of expressing themselves. | "Can someone repeat in his or her own words what was just said?" "I will reformulate to see if I understood." |
| Summarize ideas out loud. | Students demonstrate, by nodding, that they have followed the progress of the discussion. | "What has been said up to now, is that..." "Valerie said..., but personally, I think that..." |
| Help others to remember ideas through imaginative ways. | Students demonstrate the models they use to memorize. | "Patricia, I will show you something..." |
| Respect the comments of others in a discussion. | One at a time, the students talk, listen and participate in choosing the best or most relevant ideas. | "This is my idea, I would like to hear yours." "Which idea seems the most effective?" |

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

| Skills | Actions  | Words  |
|---|---|---|
| Come to an agreement. | Students try to understand the ideas of others asking for further explanation. | “I agree with this idea but not with that one. What if we joined both? I accept your idea even though it is different from mine since yours explains a particular point. Does everyone agree?” |
| Integrate a certain number of different ideas in a single position (reach a consensus). | Students get together, bringing them closer. | “I suggest we put all similar ideas together. Now, are these ideas contradictory or different? Which ideas will we discard? Would another idea allow us to take into account all the details? We could ask for help.” |
| Complete other peoples' answers. | Some students listen and add ideas to those of others. | “Jean-François, what you are saying is interesting, and makes me think of...” |
| Enrich ideas. | Some students try to go further by adding or transforming ideas. | “It's a good idea but, could we also...” |
| Criticize ideas, not people. | Students think about the relevance of ideas put forward. | “This idea doesn't work because...” |
| Come up with new ideas. | Students suggest new ideas; they draw up lists of ideas without criticizing them. | “If we were to merge two ideas, would that do?... Super! That gives me an idea... what do you think of this?” |

MANAGEMENT SKILLS

| Skills | Actions  | Words  |
|---|---|---|
| Wait one's turn. | One person speaks at a time. | "It's your turn Francis." |
| Request the right to speak. | The person raises his or her hand or puts his or her pencil in the middle of the table. | "May I please say something?" |
| Ask others to express themselves. | The student turns towards someone to invite him or her to speak. | "Nathalie, would you like to tell us what you think?" |
| Communicate (share information in a clear and organized fashion). | The student looks at the people to whom he or she is speaking; he or she transmits the information in a clear and organized fashion. | "I have found the answer, here it is: 1. (...) 2. (...) 3. (...)" "Here is some important information" |
| Participate equally. | One person speaks at a time, the others pay attention. Students take turns to write. | "What do you think?" "Do you agree?" |
| Accomplish the function determined by the role. | Action related to the role of intermediary: go and ask the teacher for help. Action related to the role of facilitator: lead the discussion. | "I will ask the teacher, since we don't have the information." "We are talking together, would you like to help us?" |

GATHERING SKILLS

| Skills | Actions  | Words  |
|--|---|--|
| Be sensitive to the needs of others. | A student hands a pencil to the person who is in charge of writing. | "Mark, I believe you had something to say? Do you need something explained?" |
| Help each other. | Students get together; we notice they are looking at another student's paper. | "Would you like me to explain it to you in another way?" |
| Explain to others how to proceed (give direction to the work). | A student explains the guidelines; the others stop and pay attention. | "Everyone, can I have your attention? We must first read the text and then highlight the ideas." |
| Ask for help or further explanations. | A student gets the groups' attention; the other students pay attention. | "Can someone explain to me once again? I don't understand." |
| Encourage others. | No one is isolated. Students talk one at a time. Each student listens and watches the person who is talking. We notice friendly gestures. | "Super! Great! Good idea! I believe we are able to continue, let's try again." |

