



Cooperative Learning Can Promote a Motivational Learning Environment

What is this Research About?

Cooperative learning involves students working together to achieve a learning goal. Research suggests that cooperative learning can lead to higher student motivation than lecture-based teaching. Working collaboratively in groups can enhance relationships between students and improve their learning attitudes, self-esteem, self-belief, cohesiveness, and motives. In this study, the researchers compared student motivation between cooperative learning and lecture-based teaching.

What did the Researchers Do?

The researchers tested the effects of cooperative learning versus lecturing in two classes of 36 students each attending a university in Vietnam. Cooperative learning was used in the experimental class, while lecture-based teaching was applied for the control class. The same instructor was assigned to teach the two classes. In the cooperative learning class, the course instructor assigned students to groups, distributed learning materials for the week, and instructed the groups to work together to create a presentation to teach the course material to the class. In the control (lecture) class, the instructor presented the materials to the whole class via lecture. Students' motivation was assessed before and after the course in both classes using an adopted motivational scale that comprises three main elements: value elements (intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation, task value), expectancy elements (control beliefs, self-confidence, and belief for learning and performance), and affective elements (test anxiety).

What did the Researchers Find?

Students in the cooperative learning class demonstrated higher scores on the motivational scale than students in the lecture class. The researchers found that collaboration and interaction among students towards the shared goal of understanding and presenting the course material enhanced their motivation to complete the course work. Cooperative learning benefitted students because they could exchange resources and information, and support and influence one another. Furthermore, interaction among students in the cooperative learning class resulted in improved self-confidence and reduced test anxiety compared to students in the lecture class.

SoTL

Snapshot

A synopsis of a scholarship of teaching and learning journal article

➔ How to Implement this Research in Your Classroom

Cooperative learning, in which students work together to actively acquire and implement knowledge, can be used to enhance student motivation. Research at a Vietnamese university demonstrated that students assigned to a cooperative learning class had higher motivation scores than students assigned to a traditional (lecture) teaching class. The researchers concluded that cooperation increased student motivation. Cooperative learning allows students to contribute to the learning process. Instructors could incorporate cooperative learning as a pedagogical technique in their classes to improve students' learning motivation for better class environment and learning outcomes.

➔ Citation

Tran, V. D. (2019). Does cooperative learning increase students' motivation in learning? *International Journal of Higher Education*, 8(5), 12-20.

➔ Keywords

Cooperative Learning
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