BEST PRACTICES IN TESOL

# COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES

**Cooperative Learning Introduction & Worksheet**

**Instruction:** Take a look at the techniques listed on this handout. Think about the type of interaction (T-S, S-S or S-T) the technique requires. Make notes of your decision.

# Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals are low risk written communication between the student and the teacher. They provide a communicative context for language and writing development since they are both functional and interactive (Peyton & Reed, 1990). Students write on topics of their choice and the teacher responds with advice, comments, observations, thus, serving as a participant, not an evaluator, in written discourse. Dialogue journals can and should be used very early in the language learning process. Beginning students can start by writing a few words and combining them with pictures. This is a great technique for all levels.

# K-W-L (Know / Want to Know / Learned)

An introductory or pre-activity strategy that provides a defined structure for recalling and stating; What the student knows regarding a concept or a topic; what the student wants to know, and finally lists what has been learned and / or what is yet to be learned. To use this strategy, the student lists all the information he / she knows or thinks he / she knows under the heading “What We Know”; then, the learner makes an inventory of “What We Want to Know”, categorizing the information about the topic the student expects to use.

# Jigsaw

This is a cooperative learning strategy in which everyone becomes an “expert” about a topic or sub-topic, and shares his or her learning within a group setting so that eventually all members learn the content.

To implement this strategy, the students are divided into groups; each group member is assigned a section or a part of the material selected for study. Each student meets with the members of other similar groups who have similar assignments, forming a new group. This new group learns together, becomes an expert on their assigned material, and then plans how to teach this material to members of their original groups.

Students later return to their original groups (whose members each now represent one of the different areas of the topic being studies) and teach their area of expertise to the other group members. In this matter, a topic or subject of great length can be covered and learned in a fraction of the usual time. LEP students can learn the material must more effectively since they also must become teachers of the content they have learned to the members of their original groups. Jigsaw offers many opportunities for language acquisition, practice, enrichment and reinforcement.

# Think / Pair / Share

This strategy is well suited to help students develop their own ideas as well as build on ideas that originated from co-learners. After reflecting on a topic, students form pairs and discuss, review, and revise their ideas, and eventually share them with the class.

# Corners

This is also a cooperative learning strategy, designed to optimize the learning of the assigned task, and sharing that learning with other students. The teacher needs to assign small groups of students to different corners of the classroom. They discuss various solutions, perspectives and points of view concerning a pre-selected issue, and decide on a presentation format. Finally, small groups present to the class.

# Panel Discussions / Debate

This is also a cooperative learning strategy in which students organize planned presentations, where each member of the group takes one of the possible topic viewpoints. The individual presentations may have oral, written or multimedia components. Students form teams to

research, develop, and articulate their viewpoints. This strategy helps the students in developing the ability to organize information, to filter ideas and to draw conclusions. Click the following URL to assess an EFL Debate PowerPoint.

[http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/eflclassroom-74845-using-debate-efl-classroom-](http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/eflclassroom-74845-using-debate-efl-classroom-training-classrooms-education-ppt-powerpoint/) [training-classrooms-education-ppt-powerpoint/](http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/eflclassroom-74845-using-debate-efl-classroom-training-classrooms-education-ppt-powerpoint/)