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COOPERATIVE WARNING: THE EXTENDED JIGSAW

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ABSTRACT

The presenters have been involved in using cooperative learning strategies in their organizational behavior, human resource management, finance and business law classes. During the session we will engage participants in an exercise involving a cooperative learning technique called the jigsaw. The exercise will introduce the formal requirements of the cooperative learning model we use while allowing those attending the session to practice a cooperative learning method.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The business environment of the 1990's is characterized by uncertainty as rapid technological and social changes continue. Many organizations are adopting flexible, organic structures characterized by flattened hierarchies and interdependent teams (Wagner & Hollenbeck, 595). A survey of major businesses and industrial firms conducted by the American Society for Training and Development and the U.S. Department of Labor concluded that employers want new graduates to possess characteristics such as:

- a) listening and oral communication skills;
- b) adaptability based on creative thinking and problem solving;
- c) personal management through self directed goal setting, motivation, and personal and career development;
- d) interpersonal, negotiation and teamwork skills. (1988)

In addition, work in the future will be redefined to center on "constant learning and more high order thinking" (Fortune, 5/17/93, 39).

The challenge for business educators is to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of business enterprises. One way to prepare students for the increasingly complex and interdependent economy is to use pedagogy that fosters the skills necessary for reducing and managing uncertainty. The cooperative learning model "ensures that students are cognitively, physically, emotionally, and psychologically actively involved in constructing their own knowledge . . ." (Johnson, Johnson, Smith, 1991). The results of numerous research studies summarized by Drs. David and Roger Johnson in their book Cooperation and Competition show that the learning outcomes from cooperative learning processes include:

- a) higher achievement and increased retention of subject matter;
- b) more frequent higher level reasoning, deeper-level understanding and critical thinking;
- c) greater intrinsic motivation to learn;
- d) greater ability to view situations from others' perspectives;
- a) more positive, accepting and supportive relationships with peers regardless of ethnic, sex, ability, social class or handicap differences;
- f) more positive self-esteem;
- g) greater social competencies (1989).

Many of these outcomes are congruent with the characteristics modern businesses are seeking in their employees.

Session Proposal

The presenters have been involved in using cooperative learning strategies in their organizational behavior, human resource management, finance and business law classes. During the session we will engage participants in an exercise involving a cooperative learning technique called the jigsaw. The exercise will introduce the formal requirements of the cooperative learning model we use while allowing those attending the session to practice a cooperative learning method.

After the exercise is complete, we will explain how we use a variant of this technique on a semester-long learning project in the human resource course. We will then open the session to a discussion of the model and techniques.

REFERENCES

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