

How to develop cognitive skills education essay



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States, teachers can expect there to be a language barrier and they must therefore implement and use a variety of strategies to help that student overcome these obstacles. One of the best and most proven strategyrobert. askey2011-04-07T13: 41: 00

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that a teacher can use is cooperative learning groups. Research has shown there are several teaching strategies a teacher can use to help meet the needs of ELL students. The most effectrobert. askey2011-04-07T13: 42: 00

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of these strategies includerobert. askey2011-04-07T13: 42: 00

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realia in lessons, hands-on activities, and cooperative learning (or collaborative learning). Cooperative learning will be the basis of this article.

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Cooperative learning and English language learners go together. Cooperative learning promotes English language acquisition among ELL students by helping them become more confident in producing and using English while working in small groups, and students are able to pick up new learning methods by observing how their peers solve problems that involve learning English. robert. askey2011-04-07T13: 47: 00

This is a direct quote from...

<http://www.brighthub.com/education/languages/articles/99116.aspx>

New ELL students who work in cooperative learning groups learn English more quickly. They are forced to become an important part of the class. They can learn basic vocabulary of the unit you are teaching in order to become more active participants. robert. askey2011-04-07T13: 51: 00

This is a direct quote from...

http://www.unc.edu/world/2007_Latin_Amer/Materials/K-12%20LA%20Follow-up%20Info.pdf

They can also encourage other members of the group to help each other and themselves. Cooperative learning also helps students develop cognitive language skills as opposed to just the basic interpersonal communication skills.

BICS vs. Cognitive Skills

When working in cooperative groups, students need to know how to communicate with each other. One way of communicating is using the basic

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interpersonal communication skills. BICS is one of the first communication skills an ELL student learns, simply because they are the easiest. These skills are developed through day-to-day social interaction with other people.

(Cummins). An ELL student learns these skills when playing, during lunch and recess times, while talking on the phone, or any place else in a social, public situation. Learning BICS skills usually take place in areas where a child feels comfortable and the situation is not demanding cognitively. The student can communicate with others and not have to worry if they will be judged or graded based on what or how they say something. BICS skills are easy and can be learned in 6 months to 2 years. They are also very helpful for an ELL student that needs to work in cooperative groups to help them communicate with other members of their group. But, when working in cooperative groups in an academic setting, ELL students must also be able to communicate cognitively with each other. Though BICS is easier for ELL students, it's the cognitive skills that are needed to ensure a successful academic career.

We know all about BICS skills and how they are obtained, but I am not sure how many people actually know what cognitive skills are. Cognitive skills are the mental capabilities you need to successfully learn academic subjects. They are not to be confused with academic skills. Cognitive skills are the skills you need to read, think, prioritize, understand, plan, remember, and solve problems (www.learningrx.com/cognitive-skills-faq.htm). There are basically four cognitive skills students will need for successful learning and to work cooperatively in groups to help develop the language skills. The four

cognitive skills needed are: concentration, perception, memory, and logical thinking (www. audioblox. 2000. com/cognitiveskills. htm).

How to develop cognitive skills

When planning cooperative learning groups, teachers need to make sure they are also developing these four cognitive skills. When working in groups, teachers must model each of the four skills so that students can use them in their groups.

The first of these cognitive skills that need to be taught is concentration. Even though many may think it is hard to teach concentration, it can be done. Concentration does not take place automatically. Concentration is a cognitive skill that needs to be taught. We cannot assume every child knows how or even why they need to concentrate, therefore as educators we must teach it as a skill. Concentration is about focusing. A student (ELL as well) needs to be taught to “ focus” his or her attention for a period of time in order for them to truly understand and take in and use necessary information to complete many of the activities being taught in the classroom. Once concentration is taught, children can use it in all areas and if taught correctly, a child’s proficiency level should increase enormously.

Also when planning cooperative groups, teachers need to consider perception. Perception is teaching a child how to process and interpret what they see or hear. Students need to be taught how to use their senses. This is especially true for ELL students who need to see or hear things to help them understand or make connections. When a teacher teaches, they need to remember it is one thing to use your senses to understand something, but

the teacher must teach students how to interpret what is being sensed. For example, the physical things transmitted to the eye may be interpreted as a certain color, pattern, or shape. If a student is not taught how to interpret, this lack of experience may cause a person to misinterpret what they have actually sensed. Perception allows a person to make sense of the information while using senses.

Another area to consider when making cooperative groupings is how to increase memory. There are many types of memories such as: sequential, receptive, long/short term, and even rote. Teachers must teach memory so that students can recall information when working with others in their groups. When you teach children both long and short term memory skills, they will be able to use prior knowledge in a group setting. Without learning a way to remember information, most students will not be able to function in a regular classroom, or they will remain below their peers.

The last of the four cognitive skills one needs to teach if a student is to be successful when working in groups is logical thinking. Logical thinking is a learned mental process (Albrecht, Albert) This skill allows students to use reasoning to come to a conclusion. Children need to be taught that by thinking logically, they can arrive at conclusions, solve problems, make relationships, and overall, become brighter.

Overall, teachers need to incorporate the four cognitive skills as well as BICS is an ELL student is to be able to work in cooperative groups.

Beginning Cooperative Groups

Cooperative learning is a strategy that allows students to work together to achieve a common goal. The groups must be structured with everyone having a role to play. These groups allow students to use both cognitive and BICS skills. This leads to more interaction in a small group setting for ELL students. They are encouraged by other group members and can participate at the ability level. This is when the teacher must realize that ELL students must be given assignments at their own cognitive levels, that way they will feel successful.

Any easy way to begin introducing cooperative learning to students is by using simple activities such as “ Think-Pair-Share,” “ Jigsaw,” or even using graphic organizers. These are easy activities that allows for probing for information, expression, and problem solving (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Students will be able to see how they must think (cognitive) and interact (BICS) in order for their groups to work.

Benefits of Cooperative Groups

Overall, cooperative learning works because it promotes transfer from group to individual learning (Johnson and Johnson, 1989). It is a student-centered strategy that promotes independence by letting students learn from each other and not just from the teacher. Typically teachers do most of the talking in a classroom, but with cooperative learning groups, students have a chance to apply new information while using cognitive and interpersonal communication skills. Cooperative learning allows for social, cognitive, language development and content skills to be learned while students interact with each other.

The most important thing a teacher must remember when establishing cooperative learning groups is that they do work, but like everything else, it takes time to establish routines, build teams, and teach necessary skills in order for all students to be able to participate and become successful