According to Johnson, Johnson, and Holubac (1993), for a lesson to be cooperative, five elements must be included: individual accountability, social skills, positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, and group processing. Components of cooperative learning are complimentary to the goals of elementary education. For example, a cooperative learning activity involves interdependence with other students and individual accountability. In order for cooperative learning instruction to be successful, each student must also learn the interpersonal skills needed for the group to accomplish the assignment (Featherstone, 1986).

In an elementary art classroom, cooperation can provide opportunities for sharing ideas, learning how other students think and react to problems, and allowing students the opportunity to practice their thinking skills in small groups. Based on my experiences as both a researcher and educator, there are various ways to integrate cooperative learning into an art education curriculum. I have composed recommendations for elementary art teachers and for preservice teaching programs that would like to include cooperative learning in their curricula.

Recommendations for Elementary Art Teachers
Art teachers who wish to implement cooperative learning into their classrooms should consider the following ideas:

- Prior to the start of the cooperative art experience, present an outline, budget, strategies for assessment, and a lesson plan to the school's administration. If the plan contains a studio component, establish storage and a permanent location for the completed activity.
- Make parents aware of the experience by sending home a letter that defines cooperative learning, explains its value, and lets them know that their child may not be bringing home the results of the cooperative art activity but that instead the finished work will be permanently displayed in the school or community.
- When asking volunteers to help with the cooperative learning activity, provide specific guidelines and expectations involving volunteering in the art classroom.
- Before attempting a large-scale cooperative art experience with a class of students, design and teach them a small group project as an introductory activity. This will provide the opportunity for the art teacher to learn about
the student dynamics in the class and allows the students to become familiar with the concept of cooperative learning.

- Depending on the cooperative learning experience, consider varying how the groups are formed. When students know they will have some opportunities to choose their groups, they are often more willing to accept groups whose members are selected by the teacher (Gillies, 2007).

- As the cooperative art activity occurs, the art teacher should provide opportunities for students to have their voices and choices heard. This can include allowing students the chance to vote on key themes or ideas relating to the activity.

- When displaying the results of a cooperative art experience, provide a written explanation about the activity and credit the students involved by name and grade level. Consider documenting varying stages of the project as part of this display.

- Conduct both group and individual student assessment.

- Reflect upon and document cooperative learning experiences. The reflections may include: addressing the curriculum development, classroom layout, areas that were successful or that need improvement, and student response.

- Allow students to keep a journal during the cooperative art experience. The journal can be shared with parents.

**Recommendations for Preservice Teaching Programs**

Universities should include cooperative learning in the art education curriculum taught to preservice teachers. This will allow students the opportunity to become familiar with cooperative learning before attempting an activity in their own classrooms. Art teacher education programs can further assist preservice teachers by helping them translate cooperative learning theory into the reality of classroom practice. For example, preservice teachers could learn about cooperative learning through hands-on experiences and ways to assess individual students who participate in the activity. Also, art teacher education programs need to identify appropriate methodologies for instruction and assessment of cooperative art education. This will help preservice teachers develop strategies for planning and implementing instruction that accommodate and utilize cooperative learning.

**REFERENCES**


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