Assignments and Activities
Topic 9: Group Interaction Models

Activity 9.1: Comparing Group Interaction Models

Learning Outcomes
Learning Outcome 1: Students will identify reasons for using group interaction models and the similarities and differences among cooperative learning structures, discussion models, and the role-playing model.

Standards:
INTASC Standard 5: Motivation and Management: The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
   5.1 encourages clear procedures and expectations that ensure students assume responsibility for themselves and others, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities.
   5.4 organizes, prepares students for, and monitors independent and group work that allows for full and varied participation of all individuals.

INTASC Standard 9: Reflective Practice: Professional Development: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
   9.1 Uses classroom observation, information about students and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for experimenting with, reflecting on, and revising practice.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council's website at http://www.ccsso.org.

http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf.

Assignment Introduction Text: In this case study, a sixth grade teacher has decided to use group interaction models in her classroom. To prepare the students for using social and emotional skills along with academic content, she will first use cooperative learning, Socratic seminar, and role playing to teach foundational social skills. She discusses the different models with her mentor teacher as she plans her instruction. As she develops her plans, she is focusing on the differences between the models. Read the case and then answer the following questions.

Asset: Group Interaction Case
http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ab/ab_ab_mymducationlab_1/casestudies/Case_Study_Group_Interaction_Case.pdf
Question 1 Text: Wolfson is spending time and energy in preparing her classroom, students, and her own professional practice to use group interaction models in the classroom. Why is she bothering to do this?

Question 1 Hint: Given what is known about early adolescent development and how we learn, why might group interaction models help with the problems she has encountered in her classroom?

Question 1 Feedback: Some of Wolfson’s students are struggling academically. She also noticed conflicts among different groups of students. Since group interaction models address social, emotional, and academic skills, she feels it is worth her time and energy to provide a new aspect to her classroom’s learning environment. Wolfson is using what she knows about students to reflect on and change her instructional practices.

Question 2 Text: Why do you think that Wolfson has chosen to use group interaction models to teach social skills before academic content?

Question 2 Hint: What might happen if teachers asked students to participate in an unfamiliar group interaction model without a discussion of or practice in the needed social skills?

Question 2 Feedback: Wolfson is attempting to enhance the success of using group interaction models. Group skills are critical to the success of these models for both classroom management and academic learning; students need to know such skills and must have practice in demonstrating them. Without the skills, the opportunity for learning academic content is decreased.

Question 3 Text: Given Wolfson’s reasons for choosing group interaction models, her list of applicable social skills, and her list of steps for the group interaction models with which she will work, what can you say these models have in common?

Question 3 Hint: Teachers understand that a strong learning environment encourages social interaction among students to increase social, emotional, and academic knowledge and skills. How do these models promote a strong learning environment?

Question 3 Feedback: Each of the models requires (1) the organization of student groups; (2) explicit instruction in social skills; (2) organization of physical space and materials to meet instructional objectives; and (3) a student-centered focus that allows for student talk about the knowledge and skills being studied.

Title of Activity 9.2: Positive Interdependence and Individual Accountability

Learning Outcomes
Learning Outcome 2: Identify two essential elements of cooperative learning and discuss how they are used or not used in a cooperative learning lesson.
Standards:

INTASC Standard 4: Multiple Instructional Strategies: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.

  4.1 selects and uses multiple teaching and learning strategies (a variety of presentations/explanations) to encourage students in critical thinking and problem solving.
  4.2 encourages students to assume responsibility for identifying and using learning resources.

INTASC Standard 7: Planning: The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.

  7.2 develops plans that are appropriate for curriculum goals and are based on effective instruction.

INTASC Standard 9: Reflective Practice: Professional Development: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

  9.1 Uses classroom observation, information about students and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for experimenting with, reflecting on, and revising practice.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council’s website at http://www.ccsso.org.


Assignment Introduction Text: In the video you will be watching, two social studies teachers are preparing students for a cooperative learning activity about the Reconstruction period following the Civil War. The teachers prepare their students by describing the task, dividing students into groups, providing assignment sheets, and setting a 20-minute time limit. You will be asked to consider two essential elements of cooperative learning—positive interdependence and individual accountability in relation to the video. Positive interdependence is when students perceive that they all need to work together to solve the problem or complete the task. Individual accountability means that all students are held accountable for what they contributed to the group or what they learned while working in the group.

Video Asset: Cooperative Learning: Reconstruction


Question 1 Text: As the teachers explain the cooperative task to students, do they address either positive interdependence or individual accountability in their directions?
**Question 1 Hint:** If students believe that each member of the group is important and necessary to completing the task, there is positive interdependence. Each student would be held accountable for the group task for individual accountability to occur.

**Question 1 Feedback:** The teachers divide the students into groups and explain the task. One of the teachers sets the stage for discussing Reconstruction, the other teacher discusses the task in more detail—explaining the scenario and roles. In neither case do the teachers specifically mention either why groups are working together on the task (rather than alone) or how they will each be held accountable for the task. Having a single group product (the plan) encourages positive interdependence, but does not promote individual accountability. However, we do not know what the directions on the assignment sheet said, so it is possible that these elements may have been addressed in the written directions.

**Question 2 Text:** What might the teachers have done to promote more positive interdependence in the task?

**Question 2 Hint:** How can the students feel obligated to help the group complete the task?

**Question 2 Feedback:** Students might have been assigned group roles (facilitator, recorder, checker, time keeper, materials manager, presenter). They may have provided specific information to individual students. Groups could put the information together to help solve the problem. The teachers may also have reminded students that good plans rely on many different ideas and that each student needs to support the group by sharing ideas and providing feedback on the ideas of others.

**Question 3 Text:** What might the teachers have done to promote more individual accountability in the task?

**Question 3 Hint:** How will the teachers discover what individual students have learned from the task?

**Question 3 Feedback:** Students can be required to present their plan to the group and can be evaluated by a rubric that requires all group members to participate in their solution for uniting the nation. Once the plan is presented, individual students can be asked what they learned about Reconstruction during the activity. Or, students might be given a short-answer or essay test about the problems that policy makers faced during Reconstruction.

**Question 4 Text:** What advantages to individual students do you notice as they participate in the cooperative learning activity?

**Question 4 Hint:** What do you know about student learning?

**Question 4 Feedback:** The students in this class have the opportunity to work together in solving a difficult problem. They can discuss possible solutions together and receive feedback from both other group members and the teachers. This allows for social interaction, the practicing of critical social skills, and the chance to develop sophisticated problem-solving skills.
Activity 9.3: Comparing Discussion and Cooperative Learning

Learning Outcomes
Learning Outcome 3: Describe the similarities and differences between the way students and teachers interact in a cooperative learning lesson and a discussion lesson.

Standards:
INTASC Standard 4 Multiple Instructional Strategies: The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage student development of critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
   4.1 selects and uses multiple teaching and learning strategies (a variety of presentations/explanations) to encourage students in critical thinking and problem solving.

INTASC Standard 5: Motivation and Management: The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
   5.1 encourages clear procedures and expectations that ensure students assume responsibility for themselves and others, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning activities.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council's website at http://www.ccsso.org.


Assignment Introduction Text: Discussion and Cooperative Learning
In this activity, you will watch two videos to look for commonalities and differences between two group interaction models—discussion and cooperative learning. The purpose is to have you closely examine the different ways that students can engage in social interaction instruction.

Video Asset #1: The Discussion Model in High School English
http://abavtooldev.pearsoncmg.com/educationlab/singleplay.php?projectId=eggen&clipID=scarlet_letter_high_school_english.flv

and

Video Asset #2: Cooperative Learning: Reconstruction
**Question 1 Text:** What are the teachers doing in the discussion and cooperative learning lesson? Are their roles the same or different?

**Question 1 Hint:** Think about how the teachers’ behaviors stay the same or are different throughout the lesson and compared to the other lesson.

**Question 1 Feedback:** The teachers in the cooperative learning lesson direct the conversation at the beginning of the lesson by providing information. The task sheet they provide also directs student activity throughout the lesson. But once the students form into groups, the teachers act as monitors as they check for understanding with each of the groups. The teacher in the discussion lesson directs the large group of students throughout the entire lesson. The video does not show the teacher checking in with groups during their short group activities. She doesn’t walk around the room. In fact, she stays in the same place for most of the video footage. All the teachers have organized the instruction and made decisions about the tasks in which students are engaged.

**Question 2 Text:** What are the students doing in the discussion and cooperative learning lesson? Are their behaviors the same in both settings?

**Question 2 Hint:** Pay attention in the videos to how much time students are working in groups and to whom they are speaking.

**Question 2 Feedback:** Students in both classes are working in groups. In the cooperative learning lesson, the group work is the lesson—the group structure and academic goals are aligned and fill the entire period. Students in the cooperative lesson discuss the problem in their small groups. In the discussion lesson, students have short group activities that allow them to activate background knowledge so that they can contribute to the larger group discussion. In both cases, students are using social skills and critical thinking.

**Question 3 Text:** What do you think were the similarities and differences in the goals or objectives of the cooperative learning and discussion lessons?

**Question 3 Hint:** Lesson objectives can be focused on academic content, skills, or feelings.

**Question 3 Feedback:** Both of the lessons require students to interact with each other to meet goals that are academic and social. Students are asked to work in groups that require pro-social skills, and the generation, sharing, and critiquing of ideas, along with being able to summarize their work. In addition, the cooperative learning lesson requires students to problem-solve, while the discussion lesson asks students to show understanding and empathy for the main characters in the text.

**Question 4 Text:** If you were going to teach a lesson that emphasized solving an ill-structured problem—a complex problem with a number of possible solutions—would you prepare a discussion lesson or a cooperative learning lesson? Why?

**Question 4 Hint:** Think about the kinds of objectives that the teachers appeared to have in the two videos.
**Question 4 Feedback:** Complex problems require a number of viewpoints and ideas to solve. A cooperative learning lesson provides students the opportunity to work in small groups and share ideas and solutions. Small groups allow more student ideas to be heard and examined. Small groups also permit other students to provide missing information/background knowledge when necessary. Once the solutions are identified and supported, a large group discussion may be used for sharing the work of each group.

**Activity 9.4:** Social and Emotional Skills in Group Interaction Models

**Learning Outcomes**

**Learning Outcome 4:** Explain the social and emotional skills that are necessary for the success of group interaction models.

**Standards:**

**INTASC Standard 2: Student Development:** The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development.

- **2.3** provides opportunities for students to assume responsibility for and be actively engaged in their learning.

**INTASC Standard 5: Motivation and Management:** The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

- **5.5** analyzes classroom environment and interactions and makes adjustments to enhance social relationships, student motivation/engagement and productive work.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council’s website at [http://www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org).


**Assignment Introduction Text:** In this video, an elementary class is getting started on a group activity. The teacher provides students with some preliminary directions and students are supposed to situate themselves in familiar groups to answer an open-ended question. In order to accomplish this task without causing classroom management problems, students will need to demonstrate strong social and emotional skills including: recognizing and managing their emotions; self-management of goals, impulses, and stress; respecting others; identifying problems and making reasonable decisions; and communicating with and cooperating with others. In this video, you will be asked to apply your knowledge of these skills to what you see happening in the classroom.

**Video Asset:** Working in Groups
Question 1 Text: Social and emotional skills include self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision making, self-management, and relationships management. What assumptions about the social and emotional skills of his students does the teacher in this video make as the students begin to move into their groups?

Question 1 Hint: Students have to find their group quickly, make sure that the correct materials are collected, and come up with a plan to answer their question. What skills do they need to complete these tasks effectively and efficiently?

Question 1 Feedback: Students need to be able to manage their stress and focus on responsible decision making while working cooperatively with others. They also have to be able to solve conflicts about what the group will be working on.

Question 2 Text: In what ways is the teacher in the video providing opportunities for students to assume responsibility?

Question 2 Hint: For what things are students responsible in this lesson?

Question 2 Feedback: The teacher does not list the groups; students need to find their group. Students need to make sure that the correct materials are collected and they must come up with a plan for answering their question.

Question 3 Text: How does this group activity provide students the opportunity to work on relationship skills?

Question 3 Hint: Relationship skills include clear communication, working cooperatively, managing conflict, and providing help, when necessary.

Question 3 Feedback: Students need to talk to each other about a plan for answering the question that requires clear communication. They must work on this question cooperatively—each student should have input. Along such lines, these elementary students will need to manage any conflicts about which problem to chose or how the plan for solving the problem is framed. If a group member is having difficulty in understanding or completing the task, it is important for other group members to provide assistance.

Question 4 Text: In what ways can any group interaction models increase student motivation?

Question 4 Hint: Student motivation can be impacted by everything we do in the classroom. Motivation is enhanced with a supportive classroom environment, and a focus on challenging, but achievable and meaningful learning goals. The use of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies is also important.
Question 4 Feedback: Group interaction models can be motivating because students interact with others while working on challenging assignments. Students are supported by each other in small groups and can use their social and emotional skills to enhance the learning environment for everyone. Group interaction models also allow for active student engagement.

Activity 9.5: Anticipating Problems

Learning Outcomes
Learning Outcome 5: Reflect on the problems that can occur in classrooms when teachers use group interaction models.

Standards:
INTASC Standard 9: Reflective Practice: Professional Development: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his or her choices and actions on others and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.

9.1 Uses classroom observation, information about students and research as sources for evaluating the outcomes of teaching and learning and as a basis for experimenting with, reflecting on, and revising practice.

The Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers and member states. Copies may be downloaded from the Council’s website at http://www.ccsso.org.

http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/corestrd.pdf.

Assignment Introduction Text: In this video, a first-grade teacher organizes a cooperative learning activity to avoid possible problems that could cause classroom management issues in her class. She anticipates the problems that could occur and implements strategies to make sure that these problems do not happen. Return to this exercise to answer the questions once you have finished watching the video.

Video Asset: Avoid Problems in Group Work

Question 1 Text: Why doesn’t this teacher typically use cooperative group work when her first graders come to school in the fall?

Question 1 Hint: What are the characteristics of first graders in terms of pro-social behavior and academic skills?

Question 1 Feedback: Young children may not have had the opportunity to work in groups before, so they do not have experience with practicing pro-social skills. In addition, their academic skills may be too weak, so using other instructional models makes more sense.
**Question 2 Text:** What evidence is there in the video that this teacher reflects on her practice?

**Question 2 Hint:** In her comments, what does the teacher say about using group roles?

**Question 2 Feedback:** The teacher comments on why she only has two group roles for her students. These comments indicate that she has thought about suggestions related to group work and sifted that information through what she knows about her own students.

**Question 3 Text:** What specific negative behaviors were avoided during group work because the teacher anticipated possible problems?

**Question 3 Hint:** Think about the comments the administrator made about how she conducted cooperative group work.

**Question 3 Feedback:** The teacher anticipated that there could be problems with the students moving into groups, knowing what to do, moving around the class, and being developmentally ready for cooperative learning. She addressed each of these problems by her decisions regarding when she used group work and for what, clear directions, and praising students for appropriate behavior.