

The Cooperative Link

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Greetings From The Johnsons

Happy Spring! We hope you are well. You have only a month or so left to try out all the new ways of using cooperative learning you have been thinking about all year. Do it now so you will be ready to use them with some skill next fall. But does piloting new uses of cooperative learning seem less important than dealing with your students' (a) lack of civility and decency in how they treat teachers, staff, and schoolmates and (b) failure to accept civic responsibility in the school? This newsletter should help. Children, adolescents, and young adults need to be taught values. Two of the ways of doing so are directly ("*give an honest day's work for a honest dollar*") and indirectly through the values underlying the way schooling and instruction are organized and structured. Everything students are required to do in school has an underlying value system that is a hidden curriculum. The purpose of this newsletter is to make more explicit the value systems implicitly taught by cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning.

The Lessons Of Competition

Alfie Kohn

Should values be taught in school? The question is about as sensible as asking whether students' bodies should be allowed to contain bacteria. Just as humans are teeming with microorganisms, so are schools teeming with values. We can't see the former because they're too small; we can't see the latter because they're too similar to the values of the culture at large.

Exhibit A on any list of values with which American children are socialized is the necessity of triumphing over others and being Number One. But what, in turn, is taught by this imperative? What are we encouraging children to do and to believe when we pit them against each other in spelling bees, debates, awards assemblies, subtle races to be the first with the right answer, and other contests? Here are five lessons that competition teaches.

1. Other people are potential obstacles to my success. Anyone even remotely familiar with cooperative learning knows that, descriptively speaking, this maxim is inaccurate: other people are, in fact, potential facilitators of my success, and I of theirs. Prescriptively speaking, this view of other people is pure poison. It leads children to envy winners, to disdain losers, and to look at virtually everyone through narrowed eyes: even if you're not my rival today, you could be tomorrow. So it makes perfect sense that a diet of competitive activities would strain and even rupture relationships.

That's exactly what the empirical literature demonstrates: competition is associated with less generosity, less inclination to take other people's points of view, less sensitivity to others' needs, less inclination to trust or even communicate accurately. Moreover, it isn't quite accurate to say that competition causes aggression. Competition is aggression. The only relevant question is whether this arrangement, which stipulates that I can succeed only if others fail, will lead to outright violence.

It is important to note that this lesson is not confined to the particular others whose defeat I must bring about (or at least desire) today if I want to be

the top scorer or the Artist of the Month. Competition leads me to associate others' disappointment with my own pleasure; this adversarial posture generalizes and becomes a habit.

2. My worth is contingent on my victories. We hope that children will grow up with a core of faith in themselves so that they know they are still good people even when they screw up. But competition promotes conditionality of self-regard: I am valuable only when I win. Far from helping kids to believe in themselves, win/lose activities create perpetual insecurity. One comes to ask "*What have I done for me lately?*" No wonder the research suggests that competition is to self-esteem as sugar is to teeth.

3. Success equals victory. Apart from its impact on how we feel about each other and ourselves, competition teaches that success or achievement is to be understood in terms of beating people. If this confusion persists, children grow up to prattle about the need to make our schools (or companies or country) more "competitive"--failing to see that competition and excellence are not only different ideas in theory, but actually pull in opposite directions in practice. Our schools (and companies and country) are in a mess partly because they are much too competitive.

4. Learning is just a means to winning. The inducement of trying to beat people, like other extrinsic motivators, has been shown to reduce our interest in whatever we had to do to win--that is, in the task itself. When

Editors

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there are no longer any prizes available for being the best at something, the mastery of a skill seems less appealing than it did before competition was introduced. Learning has come to be seen as a tedious prerequisite for being victorious. That is, of course, tied to lower performance, but it is also terribly unfortunate in itself.

Another way to think of this is in terms of our society's fixation with the bottom line. The goal of competing is, by definition, to win. The focus of a competitor is properly on the outcome, the product, the result; to attend to the process is a distraction. The value of learning, working, or playing eventually evaporates as these activities become means rather than ends.

5. I'm helpless...but responsible. Competition is associated with a fascinating paradox. On the one hand, educational psychologist Carole Ames has shown that children are likely to explain the results of a competition in terms of factors that are beyond their control, such as innate ability (or its absence) and luck, while success or failure in a noncompetitive context is more likely to be attributed to effort, which is presumably what we want.

On the other hand, competition is part of an ideology whereby individuals are held accountable for problems that are not really their fault. Even though win/lose encounters systematically sap self-esteem, undermine relationships, and interfere with learning, participants are encouraged to blame themselves for all of these results. The problem is said to be that they have the wrong attitude or they just don't know how to compete; the solution, therefore, is to adjust their mental state--as opposed to questioning the structure of competition itself. This, like hostility toward rivals, may well solidify into a reluctance to challenge structures in general.

One final point about all five of these competitive lessons: they are learned by, and thus do damage to, winners as well as losers. It takes no special powers of discernment to see what an adversarial approach does to those who are beaten. But once the heady triumph of victory has faded, that individual carries away these per-

nicious values as surely as do the vanquished.

After researching and reflecting on these issues for the last dozen years, I am unable to think of a single positive message promoted by competition to compensate for these disturbing lessons. In light of this, I think our obligation as educators is not to endeavor to establish contests under circumstances that will mute their destructive effects. It is not to replace competition among individuals with competition among groups. (Indeed, "us against them" can set into motion forces even more destructive than those produced by "me against you.") It is not to satisfy ourselves with reducing competitive structures in the classroom to say, 10 percent of the day.

Instead, we ought to be working for the *abolition* of activities that set children against each other and turn learning into a question for triumph. That position may seem immoderate--but it's nowhere near as extreme as the toll exacted by competition.

A revised edition of Alfie Kohn's first book, **NO CONTEST: The Case Against Competition**, featuring a new chapter on cooperative learning, was published in 1992. His most recent book is **PUNISHED BY REWARDS: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes**. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Values Education And Cooperative Learning

Howard Kirschenbaum

There have been four major movements in the field of values education in the twentieth century.

Values Realization: Developing the values and skills to find satisfaction, meaning, and success in life.

Character Education: Teaching young people the character traits and values that society associates with virtuous and responsible conduct.

Citizenship Education: Teaching the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to be effective citizens in a democracy; learning civic and democratic values.

Moral Education: Developing good, fair, and kind persons; enhancing moral thinking and moral and ethical behavior.

One or more of these trends in values education have been prominent at different periods in the twentieth century. Character education was widespread in the first two decades of the century and reemerged in the 1980's. Citizenship education was central to the progressive education period of the twenties and thirties, was subsumed in the social studies movement thereafter, and emerged again, briefly, as an explicit movement in the seventies. Values realization, including the popular values clarification approach, was most prominent in the mid-1960s to the early 1980's. Moral education, always a component of religious education, emerged with a new meaning in the 1970's, based on Kohlberg and others' research on moral development.

Values education in schools typically has been influenced by the political, economic, and social trends of the times. Today, with a growing concern about a decline of values and morality in society, it is being recognized increasingly that an effective values education must be comprehensive and include all these approaches for enhancing values, character, citizenship, and morality in young people. In **100 Ways to enhance Values and Morality in Schools and Youth Settings** (Allyn and Bacon, 1994), I describe over 100 methods and approaches drawn from the four values education movements. They are organized under the four major *delivery modes* of values education--inculcation, modeling, facilitation, and skill development.

Not only is cooperative learning one of those hundred ways to enhance values and morality in the schools, it is possibly the most important. Certainly no other single educational approach contributes as meaningful to all four types of values education.

Values Realization. Young people must learn to work with others in

order to achieve their values and get what they want out of life. The skills they learn in cooperative work groups will serve them well throughout their lives--in future employment, education settings, family, social groups, community organizations, and every other group in which they choose to participate. Unless they choose to be hermits, cooperative skills and attitudes will enhance their relationships, productivity and satisfaction in all these settings.

Character Education. Some of the most frequent character virtues which educators identify as "*target values*" today are: respect, responsibility, tolerance or acceptance of diversity, perseverance, and pride in work. All these values are fostered by participation in cooperative learning groups. Students learn to respect one another and understand that every person has a useful contribution to make. They learn to take responsibility for their part of the groups task; the group cannot succeed unless they fulfill their responsibility. They learn to work with and appreciate people of different races, religions, classes, abilities and disabilities. And when cooperative learning is effective, the students take pride in their groups successful completion of its task, teaching and reinforcing the values of self discipline and pride in work. Loyalty and helpfulness are two other character virtues which cooperative learning fosters. In addition, cooperativeness is a valuable character trait in its own right.

Citizenship Education. It is essential in a democracy that citizens be able to work together effectively. Cooperative learning teaches students to share, take turns, listen to one another, include and value the different contributions which each member has to make--in short, to work cooperatively. Students learn to care not only for their own success but for the common good, an essential democratic value.

Moral Education. The training students receive to work in cooperative groups is moral training. Cooperative learning teaches students to be less egocentric and to respect the rights of others. The ability to listen, be empathic, and take another's role contributes to moral thinking and behavior.

Understanding and practicing fairness in allocating work assignments, sharing materials, and taking credit for completed work is also a part of moral education.

Teachers who use cooperative learning, then, need not feel as though they must adapt their approach to get on the latest character education bandwagon. Implemented effectively, cooperative learning itself is one of the most versatile and important tools for teaching values and morality in schools.

To order **100 Ways To Enhance Values and Morality in the School** at the prepublication price, including postage, send \$22.95 (paper) or \$32.95 (cloth) per copy to **Values Associates**, 458 Whiting Road, Webster, NY 14580 (716--671-3377). The book will be mailed to you immediately upon publication in September 1994. Purchase orders over \$30 are accepted.

Cooperative Learning And American Values

David W. & Roger Johnson

The value systems underlying competitive, individualistic, and cooperative situations exist as a hidden curriculum beneath the surface of school life. This hidden values curriculum permeates the social and cognitive development of children, adolescents, and young adults. While it is difficult to attain agreement on which values should be taught to all students, it is possible to agree that the hidden value curriculum underlying instructional methods in the United States should promote the values described in the **Declaration of Independence** and the **United States Constitution**. In the **Declaration of Independence** the founders of the United States agreed that it was self-evident that all humans are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. To secure these rights, the founders proposed a democratic system of government based on the premise that if we jointly adopt the goal of achieving these rights for every Ameri-

can, then through working together we can succeed in doing so. The **Constitution** reemphasizes the need for joint efforts by stating that we, the people of the United States, commit ourselves to form a more perfect Union to establish justice, provide for the common defense, ensure domestic tranquility, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for all Americans currently alive and those to come in the future.

Which instructional method best teaches such traditional American values? **Competition** is based on negative interdependence that casts schoolmates as rivals and threats to one's success. Success is viewed as getting more life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness than anyone else. A person's worth is contingent on his or her "wins" (a person with a high IQ is viewed as more valuable than a person with a low IQ). Competition tends not to make it self-evident that everyone is equal or that we should work together to improve the well-being of all Americans.

Individualistic efforts are based on an absence of interdependence and casts everyone as separate individuals whose efforts are independent. It teaches students a strict self-centeredness while ignoring the plight of others. One's own life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness is viewed as important, but there is no commitment to ensuring others have these rights. The solitary calculation of personal self-interest is not what the founders had in mind while writing the Constitution.

Cooperation is based on a mutual responsibility to work for own success and the success of all groupmates. Success results from joint efforts. Since collaborators "*sink or swim together*," an "*all for one and one for all*" mentality is appropriate. One's efforts contribute not only to one's own well-being but also promotes the general welfare. Group members are personally responsible for doing their share of the work. A mutual identity with, loyalty to, and respect for others (as part of a group and community) naturally develop ("*E Pluribus Unum*"). Group membership carries an obligation to respond to others' needs with empathy and support. Members' diverse contri-

Course Descriptions

Cooperative Learning Foundation Course (Brown Book Training)

This course will provide a solid basis for the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the classroom and district. The concept as developed by David and Roger Johnson is currently being accepted and utilized in schools throughout the world. As demonstrated by the volumes of research conducted on this area, cooperative learning is no longer considered an educational fad, but a strong and bright method for improving today's education. Contents of the course include definitions of the goal structures, the research rationale for using cooperative learning, the teachers' and administrators' roles in its development, lesson plan adaptation, problem solving, and long-term goal setting. A unique characteristic of the course is that small groups will be used through the instruction, providing a working model of cooperation and serving as a strong collegial networking tool.

Creative Conflict (Red Book Training)

Teachers and administrators are constantly called on to be peacemakers. Much time is spent dealing with conflicts among students, between students and staff, between staff and parents, or even among staff members. Conflicts are inevitable whenever committed people work together to achieve mutual goals. Whether the conflicts are constructive influences that promote greater productivity and closer personal relationships, or destructive influences that create divisiveness and ineffectiveness, depends on how they are managed. This course addresses five components of constructive management: creating a cooperative context, structuring academic controversies, teaching and using negotiation skills; teaching and using mediation skills, and arbitrating conflicts.

Advanced Cooperative Learning (Green Book Training)

The advanced level training is intended for participants who have previously mastered the Cooperative Learning foundation (Brown Book) course. It is designed to further improve your use of cooperative learning in the classroom and to examine your skills in collegiality. It is not a leadership training in cooperative learning, but is a necessary step in that direction. It focuses on:

- Integration of appropriate competitive and individualistic work with cooperative learning for more complete classroom environment
- Return to teaching of cooperative skills in areas of leadership, communication and trust building
- Second agenda which goes beyond improving use of cooperation in classroom. Focus is to improve your own cooperative skills and more effectively model cooperation among staff.

Leading the Cooperative School: Shared Decision-Making (Silver Book Training)

[Designed for Administrators and Supervisors]

The course emphasizes the difference between leading and managing the cooperative school. Since relationships in schools are the key to improved school climate, shared decision making, site-based management and a cooperative school, the training features:

- Strategies for supporting, encouraging and appropriately supervising the use of cooperative learning in classrooms
- Strategies for building cooperation among staff in staff meetings, hallway conversations, task forces, and base groups
- A perspective on innovation and change in relationships in schools including building community advocacy for the cooperative school.

NOTE: A description of the Leadership Course and requirements for admittance may be found on attached sheets.

COOPERATIVE COURSE CALENDAR: Summer 1994

Dates	Site	Level	Contact	Phone	Prerequisite
June 6 - June 10	Myrtle Beach, SC	Foundation Advanced Creative Conflict	(Brown) Anne Ishler (Green) (Red)	(803) 734-8305	
June 27 - July 1	Snowmass at Aspen, CO	Foundation Advanced Creative Conflict Leadership	(Brown) Russ Fulton (Green) (Red) Coop. Lrng. Ctr.	(303) 223-6730 (612) 624-7031	None Foundation Foundation (Call for details)
July 10 - July 15	Sagamore, NY	Leadership	Coop Lrng. Ctr.	(612) 624-7031	
July 11 - July 15	Seattle, WA	Foundation Advanced Creative Conflict	(Brown) SPU Cont Ed (Green) (Red)	(800) 648-7898	None Foundation Foundation
July 18 - July 22	Toronto, Canada	Foundation Advanced Creative Conflict	(Brown) Norm Green (Green) (Red)	(416) 576-4600 ext. 231	None Foundation Foundation
July 18 - July 22	Corpus Christi, TX	Foundation Advanced Creative Conflict Administrators	(Brown) Thom & Jimmie (Green) Driver (Red) (Silver)	(512) 883-9288 ext. 2233 or ext. 2276	None Foundation Foundation Foundation
July 25 - July 29	Minneapolis, MN	Foundation Leadership	(Brown) Coop Lrng. Ctr.	(612) 624-7031	None (Call for details)
August 1 - August 5		Advanced Creative Conflict Administrators	(Green) (Red) (Silver)		Foundation Foundation Foundation
August 8 - August 12	Montreal, Quebec	Foundation/English Apprentissage Coopératif/ En Français Advanced Creative Conflict Administrators	(Brown) Sylvia Sklar (Brun) (Green) (Red) (Silver)	(514) 398-7044 (514) 398-7436 Fax	None None Foundation Foundation Foundation

If you have any questions, call the Cooperative Learning Center at (612) 624-7031.

butions are appreciated. Group members realize that, in the long run, everyone is of equal value and equally deserving of respect, justice, and liberty. Cooperation casts schoolmates as friends and colleagues who provide resources to help one succeed; caring and trusting relationships result. Finally, group membership obligates members to be good citizens and fulfill their civic responsibilities.

Cooperation is to American democracy what the wind is to a windmill. It provides the power that makes it work (actually, cooperation underlies all social systems, including the family). It is cooperative (not competitive or individualistic) efforts that makes self-evident the truths that all humans are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Cooperation is the heart of forming a more perfect Union, establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquillity, providing for the common defense, promoting the general welfare, and securing the blessings of liberty for our-

selves and our posterity. It is time to recognize the relationship between cooperative learning and commitment to the values underlying American democracy.

New Edition: Leading The Cooperative School

The second edition of **Leading the Cooperative School** is now available. Extensively revised, the chapters include *"creating the cooperative school, challenging the status quo and inspiring a mutual vision, making teams work, continuous improvement of expertise, empowering students through cooperative learning, providing high quality training, empowering faculty through collegial teaching teams, school-based decision making, leading by example, and encouraging the heart to persist in seeking excellence in teaching."* Even someone who has the old edition will wish to read this new and updated version.

The 1988 Green Book Special!

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! While they last, the 1988 edition of **Advanced Cooperative Learning** may be purchased for \$7.50 a copy! Anyone interested contact Interaction Book Company (612--831-9500).

The 1991 "Circles Of Learning" Special!

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! While they last, the 3rd edition of **Circles of Learning** may be purchased for \$5.00 a copy! Anyone interested contact Interaction Book Company (612--831-9500).

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