

Div Lit Week 3 - Co-operative Learning Process 1: **Setting up of base groups and co-operative learning process**

1. Objectives of class/es:

- Establish co-operative-learning base groups (Activity 1)
- Facilitate formation of group identity (Activity 2)
- Establish contract of participation for each group (Activity 3)

There are three activities involved in this class. The first is the *establishment of the base groups*, second the *formation of a group identity through the naming and design of group logo* and third the *drawing up of contracts of participation* for each group. Each has its own Materials and Method. There is only enough for time in a 45 minute session for two of these activities. You can ask students to complete the activity they have not completed for homework or you use another session to complete the task.

Establishment of Base Groups (15mins)

2. Material:

- Handout Section 1 - The Logic And Function Of Base Groups In Co-Operative Learning Processes

3. Method:

Pre-class preparation: Each Assistant Lecturer designates students to groups of 4 or 5 ensuring for as much heterogeneity (race, gender, faculty/degree, nationality, and any other relevant diversity) as possible.

In class: Explain to students the logic of their group constellation in terms of heterogeneity, and allocate students to groups. Allow time for questions.

Naming of group and design of logo (30mins)

4. Material:

- Flipcharts and coloured pens

5. Method:

- Students come up with a name and design a logo for their group. The name and logo should reflect 1) their collective identity and 2) diversity.
- Students present their name and logo to the class, explaining why they chose the name and logo they did.

Drawing up of contracts of participation (30-40mins)

6. Material:

- Handout Section 2 - The Creation Of Base Group Contracts

7. Method:

- Ask students to reflect on these two questions (you can write them on the board):
 - *What do I bring to this group (talents, skills etc.)?*
 - *What do I need from this group to make my best contribution?*
- Based on this reflection Explain to students they are now going to draw up contracts of participation for their groups. Explain that they will be completing three group assignments and one large group presentation at the end of the semester. Group work is therefore an important dimension of their course work, and it's important to ensure that the groups function smoothly. To facilitate this smooth functioning we draw up contracts to manage our participation and relationships. In this contract they must consider at least the following (you can write the main points on the board):
 - **Accountability** – *how will people be held accountable in the group? Will they, for example, not get the mark if they have not participated in a group assignment?*
 - **Preparation** – *what kinds of preparation does everyone need to do before the group meets?*
 - **Participation** - *how will you ensure everyone participates equally? What happens if someone does not participate in a group assignment? What recourse do you have a group?*
 - **Division of labour** – *who will do what? How will you decide this? Does anyone have any particular strengths?*
 - **Disputes** – *how will you resolve disputes?*
- When students have completed their contracts they must give the Assistant Lecturer a printed copy of the contract signed by ALL members of the group.
- The group must ensure that ALL the members get a copy of the contract.

1. THE LOGIC AND FUNCTION OF BASE GROUPS IN CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING PROCESSES

Base Groups:

- Are heterogeneous
- Last for the semester
- Meet regularly
- Create caring relationships to foster a better quality learning experience

Purpose of Base Groups:

- Provide each other with support, encouragement and assistance
- Hold each other accountable for academic progress

Types of Tasks:

- Academic support
 - Help each other
 - Share expertise
 - Help catch up
 - Monitor each other's progress
- Get to know each other
 - Provide positive feedback
 - Discuss questions raised by course work
 - Help each other deal with the pressures of study
- Lighten the load!

2. THE CREATION OF BASE GROUP CONTRACTS

Include in contract:

- Contract details
- General principles and conditions
 - Accountability
 - Preparation
 - Participation (including what happens if someone does not participate?)
 - Division of labour
 - Disputes
- **Each group must remember to print their name and sign.**