

Using Collaborative Learning in Teaching

The art of teaching should include strategies intended to make the learning process both easier and more educational for students. Introducing the element of fun inside the classroom is very important to every learner. **Collaborative** learning is one such strategy in teaching where lessons and subjects are made easier for the learners in order to increase their learning curve.

Collaborative learning allows students to work in small groups, pairs or even in teams. Students are allowed to work together with their fellow team members to achieve a common goal or to accomplish a common task. Research and studies have shown that using this type of active learning technique is fun for the students and it promotes a high level of retention. As students work together to accomplish goals, each learner is responsible for the amount of knowledge that their co-learners are able to gain. This means that as they research, experiment, and explore other educational activities, teachers should direct them to discuss and analyze their individual findings and reach a unified conclusion regarding the activity.

For the **collaborative** learning strategy to work, teachers should facilitate the activities well and ensure that each of the team members are cooperating and working equally with each other. This is the best way to ensure students create solutions to problems or present accurate findings as they collaborate. Collaboration is not only limited to experiments and group work, but it can also be a group effort to finish a specific project or a collaborative effort to write reports for the class. Debate teams and study teams are also great examples of active collaboration.

Experts believe that this learning method can improve students' interest in various subject matters. Because this method involves exchanges of ideas and personal discoveries or findings, collaboration can also aid in developing students' critical thinking skills. As interest increases, students tend to engage in discussions and debates with their co-learners to qualify their own opinions or verify their personal findings. This process allows them to develop their critical thinking skills. Studies have also proven that students engaging in **collaborative** learning methods get better retention rating compared to those students studying and attempting to learn on their own.

Sources: <http://www.educating-online.com/collaborative-learning.html>

<http://www.gdrc.org/kmgmt/c-learn/index.html>