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Dear Colleagues,

IASCE is pleased to bring you the first member newsletter of 2015.

We begin by welcoming our new Newsletter Editor Jill Clark. Jill joined our board following our 2014 elections and has been interviewed by board member Don Plumb for our *Meet the Board* feature. At this time, we want to thank Lalita Agashe, who has stepped down as Newsletter Editor to work with Yael Sharan as our new Membership Coordinators. Thank you Lalita for your significant work on the newsletter and for your ongoing commitment to IASCE. We also welcome new board member Celine Buchs as our Secretary and thank Yael Sharan for her years of conscientious attention to this position. If you, our members, have ideas about ways IASCE might enhance your membership experience, please contact Lalita or Yael.

Now, for an update on our October 2015 conference in Odense, Denmark, *Cooperative Learning: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

- The Odense proposal review process is complete and every proposal has been reviewed by a minimum of three colleagues. We have accepted proposals from a wide variety of differing perspectives and from approximately 26 countries on six continents. Conference presenters will include international leaders in the field, emerging scholars, school-based practitioners and leaders, and individuals and groups from a variety of co-operative organizations and agencies.
- Co-president Maureen Breeze traveled to Odense in February and has shared her impressions of the city and conference venue in this issue. Our co-sponsors at University College Lillebaelt have organized (a) opportunities to explore the local area, (b) school visits on 30 September, and (c) a dinner to sample local cuisine on the evening of 3 October. The IASCE planning team promises to keep us all engaged throughout the conference, including an awards reception at a beautiful old building, the Odense City Hall, on 1 October.
- Remember, IASCE membership carries with it several advantages—including reduced conference fees. IASCE members may also apply for modest bursary funds to support their travel to Odense.

**How to  
Subscribe to the  
CL List**

Want to dialogue with others about your use of CL? Then, you might wish to join the CL List, an internet discussion group about cooperative learning.

Well-known CL experts as well as “just folks” belong. Currently, the CL List isn’t a busy group, but when discussions do take place, they are often enlightening.

Furthermore, you can receive updates on CL related events.

To subscribe, send an email to [CL\\_Listsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:CL_Listsubscribe@yahoogroups.com). You should very quickly receive an email reply with simple instructions. If that fails, just send an email to [george.jacobs@gmail.com](mailto:george.jacobs@gmail.com) and he’ll do the necessary.

Talk to you soon!

Applications are due **15 April**. Details at [www.iasce.net](http://www.iasce.net).

- The “early bird” reduced registration fees end **31 May**, so we urge you to register before then. When you plan your trip, we encourage you to attend the entire conference. IASCE conferences are a unique opportunity to learn, network, and have purposeful fun. Registration details can be found at <http://iasce2015.ucl.dk>.

As we have all come to expect, this issue of the newsletter includes a variety of abstracts that describe work from multiple continents and contexts related to cooperative learning. Also included in this issue is a review of a special edition of *Education 3-13*, guest edited by board member Wendy Joliffe. This is one of two volumes to result from the Scarborough conference and we anticipate that contributors Sharon Ahlquist, Wendy Joliffe, Yael Sharan, and Isabella Pescarmona will join us in Odense.

Also included in this issue is a review of *Designing Groupwork* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Elizabeth Cohen and Rachel Lotan. First published in 1986, this work has influenced many of us in the field. Those of you joining us in Odense will have the opportunity to work with Rachel Lotan. Special thanks to board member Celeste Brody for the review of this edition plus the historical context of this important work.

We want to take a moment to thank our Danish colleagues for their ongoing work to ensure the success of Odense 2015. Their commitment and creativity are apparent in everything they do. We feel very fortunate to be working with University College Lillebaelt and I know that I am getting quite excited about traveling to Denmark next fall.

We also want to thank you—our members and readers. Please share your newsletter with your colleagues.

We hope to see you soon.



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### Writing for This Newsletter

There are so many things happening world-wide related to cooperative learning! Help others find out about them by writing articles or short news items for inclusion in this newsletter, and by submitting abstracts of published work for inclusion in the *From the Journals* section of the newsletter. Short pieces (1000 words or less) are preferred.

The newsletter appears three times a year. Please email submissions or questions about them to the editor of the IASCE Newsletter, Jill Clark at [jilliandc@gmail.com](mailto:jilliandc@gmail.com). Put “IASCE Newsletter” on the subject line of the email, please.

Thank you for your submissions.

***Designing Groupwork. Strategies for the Heterogeneous Classroom, (2014, Third Edition)***  
**by Elizabeth G. Cohen and Rachel A. Lotan. Teachers College Press, NY.**

Reviewed by Celeste Brody with Lynda Baloche

When I was a teacher educator in the 1980s I began in earnest to integrate cooperative learning into my preparation of new teachers - both as a pedagogy for my interns to learn by, and as the most soundly researched approach to creating classrooms with engaging learning possibilities for all students. A colleague introduced me to the first edition (1986) of Elizabeth G. Cohen's *Designing Groupwork*. On first read I was hooked. But it was after observing a discussion by my interns that I developed what would become a lasting appreciation of what Cohen brought to the field of small groupwork.

In *Designing Groupwork*, Cohen introduced the interns to the impact that the relationships among students in groups have on learning. She described status, and its attending status differentiation—a deeply human drive to distinguish people from one another while ascribing value to these attributes. These ideas explain how people develop this hierarchy of influence (power) in group settings. We differentiate between people based on the value our society (or any subgroup) places on certain characteristics. These are often accompanied by unspoken expectations about anything, from how someone might perform in a job to understandings about who is intelligent, creative, athletic or capable of leading. The obvious characteristics we all recognize are gender, age and skin color. The value and expectations, however, that derive from these vary greatly within and between societies. In a school setting, however, academic status is particularly important. It may mean that a student who is perceived by other students (as well as the teacher) to read, write and compute the “best” in the group has fuller access to a group task. Or there are characteristics that can be more subtle, having to do with peer status—looks, athletic ability, popularity or even who is perceived as a teacher's favorite—that affect relationships in a group and thus, the group dynamic.

Once my interns began talking about status and the expectations that accompany these norms, it opened them to speaking honestly about their own experiences. Although these graduate students were obviously successful learners and in some cases, privileged adults, most of them knew first-hand the debilitating effects of being marginalized, ignored or bullied in school. They all had haunting memories of other students - or students in their current classrooms - who suffered unequal access to learning because of unspoken performance expectations that tend to become self-fulfilling, particularly in small group settings. These experiences shape a group member's confidence to offer task-oriented suggestions and the likelihood that they will be listened to or have a positive influence.

Because Cohen was an educational sociologist, she had a different view of the importance of relationships among students in groups than that of social psychologists (see Johnson and Johnson, 1989, for an example). Social psychologists made the important theoretical contribution to cooperative groupwork with the theory of social interdependence that explained the power of individuals working productively together towards a common goal. The theory of social interdependence grounds the concepts of goal and process for group productivity along with individual accountability for learning. But the early research and practice did not pay close attention to the dynamic of how students interacted in a group. Teachers knew that there were students reluctant to participate; some were known as loafers, while others had fewer academic skills and were often ignored. Teachers also know that individual students could dominate discussions and a few students did most of the work. But they did not feel equipped to deal with these issues. Cohen thought that the collection of research about cooperative learning that compared and contrasted cooperative with competitive and individualist learning, did not help define what actually happens among individuals in a group (Cohen, 1994 cited in Renard, p. 35-36, 2009) and it did not provide teachers with a useful framework for addressing the range of problems or variations of student participation in small groupwork. And so Cohen brought sociological theory to bear on practical strategies to address issues of inequality in participation of groupwork.

At the heart of this approach to groupwork is an abiding commitment to promoting equity in heterogeneous classrooms. Elizabeth Cohen (joined by Rachel Lotan, the co-author of the third edition) worked at Stanford University and conducted most of her research in California. It was, and still is, a mecca for immigrants and peoples of color. Cohen's interests are expressed early in this book: "There are unacceptable disadvantages of dominance and inequality in schools and classrooms" (p. 38-40, 2014). She found, for example that children with high peer and academic status did more talking and working together than those who had lower peer and academic status (Cohen 1984, cited in Cohen/Lotan 2014) and that these patterns of inequality perpetuated social and cultural prejudices as well as affecting the intellectual quality of group performance.

In this book, the reader will notice that Cohen does not call this approach "cooperative learning." She calls this "groupwork" but discusses in Chapter 4 how to ready students for the norm of cooperation. Cohen would say, "None of us are as smart as all of us." Her discussion about the practical nature of "norms" in a classroom is important (pp. 42-60). And all of this fits into the approach called "Complex Instruction."

At the heart of Complex Instruction is the task - structuring how students will work together towards intellectually rigorous inquiry and activity. The authors consider a groupworthy task to be one that is complex enough so that all the students cannot complete it without everyone contributing. This is also called the multiple-ability strategy (p. 148) and it is the primary way to ensure that all students, regardless of perceived academic ability, can show competence. (An aside: the Program for Complex Instruction, founded by Cohen at Stanford and directed by Lotan, addressed this central challenge for teachers: how to design open-ended, uncertain tasks with intellectually important content.) The classic complex task that comes to mind, and which cannot be done alone, is a dramatic play, even a skit—where not only are the actors dependent on one another for creating effective "dramatic tension" but the play could not be presented without the lighting, stage crafts, props and costume people.

The book details several other important components to effective groupwork. Chapter 10, for example, deals with treating expectations for competence. Teachers are encouraged to use their own position of power in the classroom to assign competence to low-status students. They learn not to give false praise but to observe group members carefully and identify student behaviors that actually do contribute to the completion of the task. When teachers can publicly assign competence to low status students, for example, students with limited English proficiency who are contributing to the learning goal, they often change the group dynamic by changing the expectations of peers towards the particular learner.

The third edition of *Designing Groupwork* retains the integrity of earlier editions with Cohen's wonderfully accessible prose. Lotan has added two new and essential chapters plus some general updating of language and organization. It is clear that Lotan's work as the Director of the Program for Complex Instruction coupled with directing the Stanford Teacher Education Program have informed her thinking in these new chapters. Lotan added a number of additional research findings from the 20 years since the publication of the second edition – not only from educators associated with the Program for Complex Instruction at Stanford but also by many others doing research around the world.

Chapter 6, "Crafting Groupworthy Learning Tasks" focuses on helping teachers develop the skills necessary to identify multiple and varied entry points within a lesson so that students can demonstrate competence. Chapter 7, "Groupwork and Language Development", is a particularly important addition to the book given the increasing number of language-minority students in classrooms across the globe

and in all levels of education. Lotan has considerable experience with the issues related to oral and written proficiency in a heterogeneous classroom. This chapter alone could constitute an all-day workshop within training in Complex Instruction!

I was pleased to see the familiar Appendices with the time-honored cooperative training exercises: Broken Circles, Jigsaw Puzzles and other group discussion tasks. John Goodlad's foreword written for the 1994 edition is as timely now as it was then. Linda Darling-Hammond, now a colleague of Lotan's at Stanford, stresses in her foreword the important practical value of Complex Instruction along with the solid theoretical insights and empirical evidence of this book.

It is significant that Teachers College Press requested the third edition of *Designing Groupwork*. It speaks to the power and timelessness of Cohen and Lotan's work. "Complex Instruction" is now internationally recognized. The work has taken seed in Italy, Denmark and Australia and other countries where researchers continue to apply this theory and its strategies to the conditions and issues related to making heterogeneous classrooms truly equitable. As Linda Darling Hammond says, "Complex Instruction is surely one terrific theory, and *Designing Groupwork* is certainly one terrific book" (p. xi, 2014).

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## Save the Dates!

### ***Cooperative Learning: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century***

Venue: Odense, Denmark  
Conference Dates: 1-3 October 2015  
School and Cultural Visits: 30 September 2015

Registration is open

If you register before 31st May 2015,  
you will receive an early bird discount on your conference fee

### **Bursary**

IASCE members are eligible to apply for a bursary to support  
attendance at the Odense conference.

Deadline for applications is 15 April 2015

Details at [www.IASCE.net](http://www.IASCE.net)

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### **IAIE International Conference: Cultural Diversity, Equity And Inclusion: Intercultural Education In 21st Century And Beyond**

The International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE) in cooperation with the  
University of Ioannina (UoI, Greece)

29 June - 3 July 2015 Ioannina, Greece

Conference strands:

- Intercultural, Multicultural Education and Diversity in a Global Era
- Intercultural Learning and Leadership in Multicultural Classrooms and other educational settings
- Citizenship and Social Justice Issues
- Anti-Semitism, Racism, Xenophobia, Islamophobia, Religion and Belief issues
- Theoretical and Practical issues in Intercultural and Multicultural Education: presentations in Greek language

For more details go to: [www.iaie.org/ioannina2015](http://www.iaie.org/ioannina2015)



**MEET THE BOARD**

*Jill Clark Interviewed by Don Plumb*



**This is the second of three interviews of new IASCE board members. Don Plumb interviews Jill Clark, who tells us about her explorations of cooperative learning in tertiary education in New Zealand.**

**Welcome to the board! Where are you currently working?**

I am currently an Honorary Research Associate with the Wellington Institute of Technology on the North Island of New Zealand.

**What's your teaching background?**

I began my teaching experiences as a pre-school supervisor with the New Zealand Playcentre Federation, an early childhood educational service run cooperatively by member families. In playcentres children choose their activities in a free play environment with adults supporting their play and extending their ideas and thinking. I progressed from this to specialise in pre-school music teaching, again working with small groups of children and parents in a cooperative environment. I also taught on

the Playcentre Federation's Adult Education programme which covers child development, play and learning, planning and delivering early childhood education programmes, group and facilitation skills and management skills.

**How did you come to cooperative learning?**

In 2002 I brought my passion for cooperative, interactive, student-centred learning in a safe learning environment to the tertiary sector and discovered that CL was the ideal way to bring this into the classroom. For the past 13 years I was a senior lecturer in business at Whitireia New Zealand, a technical institute with a diverse student population consisting of New Zealand European, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, and international students mainly from Asian countries. The institute caters for school leavers, second chance learners as well as mature students. I used CL techniques in class and CL, project-based learning and group investigation for group project work on certificate, diploma and undergraduate degree programmes in the business faculty. The use of CL techniques in the classroom was invaluable in creating an inclusive culture with such diversity among the students. I was able to develop classroom cultures where students could express their thoughts and ideas and where they could begin to understand and appreciate the different cultural, social, educational and work backgrounds and experiences among their fellow students. One of the main objectives in opening up our institutes to international students is to enrich the educational and life experiences of both New Zealand and international students and CL plays an important role in this.

CL was also a perfect fit for my preferred teaching style. I believe that the amount of information my students absorb from a lecture is limited and the effective use of experiential techniques increases interest, engagement and active participation and allows for in-depth discussion, critical analysis and the opportunity to question and challenge ideas and theories. It is a powerful way to give students more control over their learning by allowing them to engage actively with information and to understand different perspectives as they interact with their peers.

For the past seven years I have coordinated industry (capstone) project work where final year diploma and degree students work in groups over a semester to undertake a "real life" project for an industry client. These projects give students the opportunity to develop interpersonal, teamwork and

communication skills, to master problem solving and critical thinking skills, and to manage group processes and group dynamics. This provides students with valuable transferable skills as they transition to the workplace and life beyond study. All of these skills are derived from the CL aspects of the programme.

### **Why did you begin your research in CL?**

I have been involved in research into cooperative learning with my research partner Trish Baker since 2004. We initially became interested in this field because the documented benefits of CL appeared to be difficult to achieve in the New Zealand higher education environment after the influx of international students, mainly from Asia, who generally had no experience of working in groups in an educational setting. This, combined with the multicultural nature of the New Zealand domestic population, meant that CL was particularly challenging for tertiary tutors and lecturers. Over the years we have broadened our research to include status issues in CL, the use of CL in industry (capstone) projects and assessment of CL groups, including sustainable assessment. I have presented our research throughout New Zealand and Australia, in China (Beijing and Guanzhou), in Malta and Barcelona, at IASCE conferences in Turin, Athens and Scarborough and at a JASCE conference in Nagoya. Our work has been published in journals, book chapters and conference proceedings.

### **What are you currently working on?**

Trish and I were funded by Ako Aotearoa, New Zealand's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence, to produce a training programme in CL for tertiary tutors and lecturers. The programme is available on the Ako Aotearoa website (<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz>). Following the completion of the programme in 2010 we have run full day interactive workshops on CL around New Zealand. These workshops are available to tutors and lecturers from tertiary institutions as well as those in public organisations who want to learn more about CL, to expand their repertoire of CL techniques and to incorporate CL into their teaching programmes. Throughout the workshops we involve participants in CL activities that they can take back and use in their classrooms.

We have recently received funding from Ako Aotearoa to produce a publication on CL to support and supplement our ongoing workshops. The publication will be available in late 2015.

Trish and I run workshops and seminars in our respective tertiary institutions in Wellington for tutors and lecturers and we also introduce new tutors to CL on adult teaching courses.

I am currently Vice President of the New Zealand Communication Association, the national association for communication teachers, researchers and practitioners in New Zealand. In this role I have organised and promoted three national conferences, the latest in December this year. This is another forum where I promote the benefits of CL to tertiary lecturers.

### **Why did you join IASCE?**

I am passionate about CL and the benefits it can bring students. Trish and I presented at our first IASCE conference in 2008 at Turin and have continued to present at IASCE and JASCE conferences since then. I have found them to be an invaluable opportunity to network, share ideas and learn about CL and its application around the world in a very supportive environment. I always come away with a renewed enthusiasm for CL and new ideas to implementing CL in teaching and in our workshops. I was very happy to take part in a plenary session at the last IASCE conference in Scarborough.

### **What do you do outside of the classroom?**

I'm an avid reader and I travel a great deal, often to visit family around New Zealand as well as Australia, the USA and the UK.



**Voices from Scarborough: Review of a Cooperative-Learning  
Themed Issue of *Education 3-13***

Reviewed by Lynda Baloche

Scarborough conference organizer and IASCE board member Wendy Joliffe has recently guest edited an issue of *Education 3-13: International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education* (2015) 43(1). Each article was written by a participant in the Scarborough conference and the articles represent, either directly or indirectly, work presented at Scarborough in 2013. The abstract of each article (marked with an asterisk) is included in the *From the Journals* section. In this review, I will explore a few threads that I found particularly interesting—because they seemed to have been woven through multiple authors' work, or they stood out as interesting contrast and texture from the surrounding fabric, or for their overall utility.

Wendy “bookends” the journal with articles by Robert Slavin and Yael Sharan—both founding members of IASCE. Bob Slavin and Nancy Madden were recipients of the 2013 IASCE Achievement Award for Research and Yael is a current board member. In “Cooperative Learning in Elementary Schools,” Bob (USA and UK) identifies four theoretical perspectives (motivational, social cohesion, cognitive, and developmental) that have focused those who research and implement cooperative learning. With a focus of research on achievement, he briefly reviews select studies that he identifies as examples of each approach. I found his delineation of perspectives interesting and helpful, even when I sometimes found his characterizations of certain approaches necessarily incomplete. What I think is important about Bob’s framework is that it may offer, as Bob himself suggests, a tool to: (a) understand the complementary, rather than contradictory, nature of many research and implementation efforts; (b) sift through the tremendous body of research in cooperative learning to more clearly identify and appreciate “lessons learned”; and (c) identify worthwhile areas for future research.

Yael Sharan (Israel), begins “Meaningful Learning in the Cooperative Classroom” with a retrospective account of her first teaching position. She then examines relevant literature that relates to her quest to make learning “meaningful”—which she describes as a co-construction rather than a transmission of knowledge. Like Bob, she acknowledges that cooperative learning has never been a unified approach; she describes it as “born of several parents who nurtured it with ‘complementary’ theories” and she borrows from various perspectives in her exploration. While Yael clearly focuses on learning, the word achievement is found only once in her article. Her closing story suggests that success in teaching and learning, while perhaps measurable, is complex. She also reminds us indirectly that most “studies” are relatively short term and that meaningfulness often emerges over time and in ways we cannot readily predict.

Sharon Ahlquist’s (Sweden) article “The Storyline Approach: Promoting Learning through Cooperation in the Second Language Classroom” is exciting in many ways. The Storyline approach is complex, co-constructive, multi-disciplinary, and has the potential to develop meaningful learning with students. While Sharon does not reference the cooperative learning literature to any extent, the links are many. For instance, (a) the use of a frieze is reminiscent of the notion that large formats help to signal group ownership of ideas (Thelen); (b) the Storyline itself requires multiple abilities and opportunities for diverse contributions (Cohen’s Complex Instruction); (c) the notion that, in Storyline, “the teacher provides the line and the learners the content of the story” suggests both freedom and focused investigation (Sharans’ Group Investigation); (d) the importance of social skills (Johnson and Johnson); and (e) the value of students processing *how* and *what* they are learning.

Ed Baines, Peter Blatchford, and Rob Webster (UK) contributed “The Challenges of Implementing Group Work in Primary School Classrooms and Including Pupils with Special Educational Needs.”

They suggest that while children often sit together, they rarely work together and, when they do, it is often just to “share answers.” Since some of the evidence they cite for this observation would have been over 20 years old when this group began their work, I have to wonder if that is still true and for what settings. Never-the-less, their view that teachers need significant support to “use group work under everyday classroom conditions” is well documented and their five-year SPRinG (Social Pedagogic Research into Group Work) project is thoughtful, comprehensive and, with its multi-phased approach, has yielded a wealth of nuanced data. I was struck by their finding that students with special educational needs interact less frequently with peers and with their teachers; it suggests that the well-intentioned use of teaching assistants may have unintended consequences. Their observations that students need contextualized social-skills training and that teachers need to have confidence—both in themselves and in the students—in order to share influence and allow students to experience challenges, is well documented. The writers include excerpts of comments from both facilitators and teachers which help make issues vivid for the reader.

Katia Lehraus’ (Switzerland) article, “How to Integrate Cooperative Skills Training into Learning Tasks: An Illustration with Young Pupils’ Writing” focuses directly on the utilization of social skills within a curricular lesson. She references Baines, Blatchford and Webster and suggests that social skills training that is devoid of classroom content and context may be limited in transferability. Utilizing video to analyze the interactions of 7-8 year-olds—who are working in pairs, on a carefully designed writing task, without teacher intervention—Katia coded their interactions on social, cooperative, and cognitive dimensions.

Isabella Pescarmona (Italy), the 2010 recipient of the IASCE Elizabeth Cohen Award for Outstanding Dissertation, contributed “Status Problem and Expectations for Competence: A Challenging Path for Teachers.” I have enjoyed several of Isabella’s recent articles as she has examined, from a variety of perspectives, work to implement aspects of Complex Instruction (Cohen) in Italy. As the title suggests, in this article Isabella focuses on teachers and describes their excitements, struggles, and insights. As I have found to be the case in my own work, Isabella reports that the teachers were initially fascinated by the concept of status treatments and excited about the concept of equity. Isabella then chronicles the teachers’ post-fascination challenges—contextualizing the concepts of Complex Instruction without diluting them beyond utility, finding comfort between the values of equal and equitable, becoming confident in the distinction between assigning competence and evaluating students, and trusting that students can succeed in complex endeavors.

Isabella, Katia, Sharon, and Ed/Peter/Rob all discuss their research/observation methods and, when researching something as complex as cooperative learning, these are critical discussions. Isabella favors a sociological lens and, in this article, described the challenges of being both a supervisor and a researcher—the challenges of observing something in which she was participating. From my perspective, the rewards were well worth whatever challenges her embedded position created, as she has been able to report even conversations teachers had in their own homes. It is a perspective we don’t often gain. Katia used video to gather information from selected students within a class. She watched these videos to conduct both global quantitative analyses (including one adopted method from Blatchford and Baines) and in-depth qualitative analyses that required transcripts of the video material. She also accessed the students’ writing samples. Sharon experimented with video but abandoned the idea, and chose to rely on her observations, interviews with both teachers and

students, and artifacts such as student journals. Ed, Peter, and Rob, with the benefit of a large team of trained researchers and observers, utilized interviews with teachers, teaching assistants, and parents; they shadowed one student for an entire week; and they conducted minute-by-minute observations of students, both those identified with special educational needs and comparison students, over week-long periods. A massive endeavor indeed.

Wendy Joliffe's article, "Bridging the Gap: Teachers Cooperating Together to Implement Cooperative Learning," like Isabella's work, examines teacher professional development and implementation of cooperative learning. Wendy's focus is on institutional support structures and sustainability of efforts. As do several others, Wendy references Blatchford and Baines' work. She provides us with an interesting description of educational reform initiatives in the UK, a helpful literature review, and data about a well-thought-out implementation effort. In her review, she identifies themes that are essential for quality implementation of cooperative learning. Not surprisingly, these same themes are woven throughout this volume. For instance, Wendy identifies the need for teachers to "reconcile their existing beliefs"; this is clearly identifiable in the work of Ed and his colleagues, in Yael's account of her own journey, and in both Sharon's and Isabella's work. Wendy cites literature that recommends that teachers themselves experience (a) cooperative learning from the perspective of being learners, (b) teacher-to-teacher collaboration and coaching, and (c) the support of professional learning communities. She includes comments from facilitators and teachers that support the value of these experiences. What struck me about several of these comments is how similar they are to what students often report when they are asked to describe their work in groups. For instance, "you can discuss pitfalls and problems and things that people found useful" and "meetings provide an opportunity to discuss ideas and refine thinking." Issues of trust and support figure prominently in the teachers' comments. For instance, "discussion with colleagues is valuable, in a supportive atmosphere" and "suddenly [I] thought, well I don't know how to do this and [I] felt confident to phone somebody . . . and say 'I'm totally stuck'." As honest and hopeful as these comments are, for me the most poignant comment about trust and trustworthiness came from a young child, whom Sharon described as shy and less proficient than some of her classmates: "I dare to speak more now because nobody laughs at me when I get it wrong. They didn't before either, but now I know."

Taken together, the articles in this special edition provide a rich tapestry that speaks to the complexity, versatility, and beauty of cooperative learning. Bob Slavin, who reminds us to examine and value past research and build on what we know. Yael Sharan, who reminds us to examine our own experiences and professional development in light of theoretical constructs and research. Sharon Ahlquist, who explores a student-centered approach to integrated curricula. Katia Lehraus, who shares a study of a targeted intervention with young children. Isabella Pescarmona, who is spinning a long and intricate thread focused on equity and access. Ed Baines, Peter Blatchford, and Rob Webster, who engage in work that is both intricate and far-reaching. Wendy Joliffe, who seeks to understand and develop the sorts of collaborative teacher cultures and networks needed for sustainable implementation. Each contribution represents the interests and contexts of its author(s) and, at the same time, represents the overall value and commitment to the power of cooperation.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank Wendy Joliffe for bringing this volume to us. It is both a stimulating resource and a powerful reminder of the depth and breadth of cooperative learning in general and of IASCE conferences in particular.

### **Impressions of the Location for the 2015 Conference “Cooperative Learning: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century”**

I had the chance recently to get some insights into our forthcoming October conference in Denmark during a planning visit to Odense. I would like to share some of these with you, especially for those of you who might be travelling to Odense.

It was my first visit to Scandinavia so I was stepping into the relative unknown. The first thing that struck me, as a native English speaker, was how competently *everyone* speaks English. I had no difficulty communicating at any time, especially after I had learned to say Odense as the Danes do! This was the only Danish word I needed. You can check the conference web-site (<http://iasce2015.ucl.dk/>) to hear it spoken and to hear a few other basic words and phrases in Danish. Another aspect that made the trip pleasant was the friendliness and welcome with which I was greeted – I am sure it must be a trait within the Danish personality. The third impression was of the landscape. The country is very flat with the highest natural land mass at just over 170m. I made a mental note that I might hire a bicycle on my return.

Travelling around by public transport was easy, relatively inexpensive, with reliable services and comfortable trains and buses. Sometimes the signs and instructions were not obvious, but I learned just to ask! Eating out is different – as all new experiences are once you travel. There seemed to be a lot of fish, meat eggs and wonderful breads in the diet. As a vegetarian I was challenged a little. Eating out seemed expensive to me and I soon learned ways to have my daily coffee fix from the local bakery and to buy lovely baked goods there rather than be lured into a café.

Odense is an attractive city on the island of Fyn, Denmark’s largest island. It is the birthplace of Hans Christian Anderson, with lots of green spaces and an extensive pedestrianised shopping area. With a population around 170,000, it has the feeling of being intimate, even though it is the third largest city in Denmark. Everything seemed very accessible and possible to do on foot. The conference venue is only five minutes or so from the central railway station and just at the edge of the pedestrian area. The venue itself, I think, is perfect for our needs. Originally a number of buildings, these have been joined to make one and the inner courtyard has been covered over to make a lovely small piazza-style area. The whole building is ours for the conference, which gives us lots of flexibility to create a space that works for the conference.

The programme will allow lots of opportunities to get to know the city, with various optional walking tours planned. The IASCE Awards presentation reception, which will be open to all, will be at the Town Hall, an Italian-Gothic style building built next to the city’s cathedral in the nineteenth century. The conference dinner is being planned with a ‘twist’ and, although still being discussed, it is likely to be an informal event in another interesting venue.

I visited a Teachers’ Resource Centre on the edge of Odense. It was an impressive modern building (designed by the son of the architect who designed the Sydney Opera House) with meeting and training spaces, an extensive amount of support materials and resident advisors to support teachers. It is always fascinating to see how other countries provide education and support and this took me back to my days as a young teacher in England, when such facilities existed but are now long gone under the pressure of funding cuts. The conference has a pre-conference day of local school visits that all participants can join in and I would encourage you to take up the opportunity. I returned convinced that the choice of location and our partners, the University College Lillebaelt, will ensure another inspirational and unmissable conference and if you have not yet committed to join us, I urge you to do so!

## From the Journals

Contributors: Lynda Baloche and George Jacobs



\*Ahlquist, S. (2015). The storyline approach: Promoting learning through cooperation in the second language classroom. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 40-54. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961692

In the Storyline approach, a fictive world is created in the classroom, with learners working in small groups, taking on the role of characters in a story. The story develops as they work on a range of tasks which integrate the practical and theoretical content of the curriculum. This article reports on a study based on the syllabus for English, in which a class of Swedish 11–13-year-olds took on the roles of families who had moved into a new street in England, and highlights the role played by cooperative group work in the second learning process.

\*Baines, E., Blatchford, P., & Webster, R. (2015). The challenges of implementing group work in primary school classrooms and including pupils with special educational needs. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 15-29. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961689

Findings from two studies are discussed in relation to the experiences and challenges faced by teachers trying to implement effective group work in schools and classrooms and to reflect on the lessons learnt about how to involve pupils with special educational needs (SEN). The first study reports on UK primary school teachers' experiences of implementing a year-long intervention designed to improve the effectiveness of pupils' collaborative group-working in classrooms (the SPRinG [Social Pedagogic Research into Group-work] project). The second study (the MAST [Making a Statement] project) involved systematic observations of 48 pupils with SEN (and comparison pupils) and case studies undertaken in the context of primary school classrooms.

Berger, R., & Hänze, M. (2015). Impact of expert teaching quality on novice academic performance in the jigsaw cooperative learning method. *International Journal of Science Education*, 37(2), 294-320. doi:10.1080/09500693.2014.985757

We assessed the impact of expert students' instructional quality on the academic performance of novice students in 12th-grade physics classes organized in an expert model of cooperative learning ('jigsaw classroom'). The instructional quality of 129 expert students was measured by a newly developed rating system. As expected, when aggregating across all four subtopics taught, regression analysis revealed that academic performance of novice students increases with the quality of expert students' instruction. The difficulty of subtopics, however, moderates this effect: higher instructional quality of more difficult subtopics did not lead to better academic performance of novice students. We interpret this finding in the light of Cognitive Load Theory. Demanding tasks cause high intrinsic cognitive load and hindered the novice students' learning.

Casey, A., & Goodyear, V. A. (2015). Can cooperative learning achieve the four learning outcomes of Physical Education?: A review of literature. *Quest*, 67(1), 56-72.  
DOI:10.1080/00336297.2014.984733

Physical learning, cognitive learning, social learning, and affective learning are positioned as the legitimate learning outcomes of physical education. It has been argued that these four learning outcomes go toward facilitating students' engagement with the physically active life (Bailey et al., 2009; Kirk, 2013).

With Cooperative Learning positioned as a pedagogical model capable of supporting these four learning outcomes (Dyson & Casey, 2012), the purpose of this review was to explore the empirical research in the use of Cooperative Learning in physical education reported on the achievement of learning in the physical, cognitive, social, and affective domains (or their equivalents). The review found that while learning occurred in all 4 domains, the predominant outcomes were reported in the physical, cognitive, and social domains. Affective learning was reported anecdotally, and it became clear that more work is required in this area. The article concludes by suggesting that research into the outcomes of this and other pedagogical models needs to focus on learning beyond the initial instructional unit and extend over a period of years and not just weeks.

Cebrian-de-la-Serna, M., Serrano-Angulo, J., & Ruiz-Torres, M. (2014). eRubrics in cooperative assessment of learning at university. *Comunicar*, 22(43), 153-160.

Teamwork is one of the most widespread teaching methods used to achieve learning skills. Despite the difficulty of finding out the degree of individual learning taking place in each member of the group, these methods are having an increasingly greater importance in university teaching. The present article shows the results of an R+D+i project aimed at «analysing the impact of eRubrics electronic rubrics on the assessment of university learning in various forms». Likewise, it aims to show the scope of eRubrics in improving cooperative skills, which are achieved through teamwork and cooperative assessment of tasks in the computer lab. The experiment takes place in three groups selected from a total of six groups of students from the First Year of Primary Education Teaching during the 2011-12 academic year. From the three groups, one acted as the control group and the other two as the experimental groups in which eRubrics were used. Differences were found in students' results in a written test taken by all the groups, as the group using eRubrics achieved better results than the other two. Additionally, a qualitative analysis was conducted, by classifying the students' answers in the control group with regard to the evaluation criteria they used, in order to check for coincidences with the eRubric criteria used by students in the experimental groups.

Davison, H. K., Mishra, V., Bing, M. N., & Frink, D. D. (2014). How individual performance affects variability of peer evaluations in classroom teams: A distributive justice perspective. *Journal of Management Education*, 38(1), 43-85.

Business school courses often require team projects, both for pedagogical reasons as well as to prepare students for the kinds of team-based activities that are common in organizations these days. However, social loafing is a common problem in teams, and peer evaluations by team members are sometimes used in such team settings to assess individuals' contributions. We propose that high and



low team performers differ in terms of their ability and motivation to make distinctions in their teammates' performance, and consequently they differ in how they evaluate their teammates' performances. Specifically, we predict that high performers will provide evaluations of teammates that distinguish between those who did well and those who performed poorly, and thus high performers' ratings will exhibit greater variability. In contrast, we predict that low performers will fail to distinguish among teammates' levels of performance, and thus will provide evaluations that are lower in variability. Using latent growth modeling, we demonstrate that high and low performers do indeed differ as predicted in the variability of the points they allocate to teammates. The pedagogical implications of this positive relationship between team members' performance and variability in points allocated are discussed.

Fernandez-Rio, J. (2014, September). Another step in models-based practice: Hybridizing cooperative learning and teaching for personal and social responsibility. *JOPERD: The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, pp. 3-5. doi:10.1080/07303084.2014.937158

This article provides examples to advocate for a coalition between cooperative learning and the teaching for personal and social responsibility teaching models in order to teach responsibility to students in physical education.

Haiyan, H. (2014). Transforming EFL classes from lecturing to cooperative learning. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, 5(4), 948-952. doi:10.4304/jltr.5.4.948-952

It has long been acknowledged in China that the traditional frontal-lecturing approach in EFL classes prevents learners from developing their language competence because of the limited dynamic movements among students. The large size of classes makes classroom interactions and active learning extremely difficult. This paper integrates cooperative learning with EFL teaching with an attempt to explore why cooperative learning is effective to enhancing learners' academic achievement, and discuss its potential cumulative effects on students' moral growth as well as challenges in its implementation.

Hsiung, C., Luo, L., & Chung, H. (2014). Early identification of ineffective cooperative learning teams. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 30(6), 534-545. doi:10.1111/jcal.12062

Cooperative learning has many pedagogical benefits. However, if the cooperative learning teams become ineffective, these benefits are lost. Accordingly, this study developed a computer-aided assessment method for identifying ineffective teams at their early stage of dysfunction by using the Mahalanobis distance metric to examine the difference between the sequential test scores of the unknown team and the test scores of a reference group of functioning teams. The effectiveness of the proposed method was verified by conducting field experiments over an 18-week engineering course in Taiwan. Forty-eight students were randomly assigned to cooperative learning teams. The students' learning performance was evaluated by means of unit tests and homework tests. The functioning of the cooperative teams was examined at seven different points during the course of the study. The ineffective teams were identified with quantified type I errors. It was found that some teams failed persistently. Such teams require some form of external intervention to remedy the group dynamics.

The results also showed that teams can become ineffective at any stage of the cooperative learning process. Thus, continuous monitoring is required to ensure that appropriate remedial actions are taken in a timely manner.

\*Jolliffe, W. (2015). Bridging the gap: Teachers cooperating together to implement cooperative learning. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 70-82. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961719

Cooperative learning (CL), in spite of extensive research and documented benefits, is not widely used in England. A review of the literature shows that it requires a staged and sustained approach to implementation, which has led to a gap between its potential and actual use. The case study cited here provides one example of bridging that gap through schools working together, with a community of facilitators, or experts, to provide support. As interest grows internationally into teachers cooperating in professional learning communities, this article argues that collaborative cultures provide the key to implementing and sustaining CL. In other words: teachers cooperating together also support pupils learning together.

Ladd, G. W., Kochenderfer-Ladd, B., Visconti, K. J., Ettekal, I., Sechler, C. M., & Cortes, K. I. (2014). Grade-school children's social collaborative skills: Links with partner preference and achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 51(1), 152-183.

Little is known about the skills children need to successfully collaborate with classmates on academic assignments. The purposes of this study were to identify grade-schoolers' collaborative skills, evaluate the importance of identified skills for collaborative work, and determine whether differences in skill use were related to children's social and scholastic competence. Initially, third through fifth graders ("N" = 113) described attributes of "good" collaborators, and these attributes were distilled into distinct skill categories or "types." Next, third through fifth graders ("N" = 212) rated exemplars of each skill type as a basis for skill importance and peers' skill use and provided data that were used to construct measures of work partner preference and peer acceptance. Teachers reported on participants' achievement in multiple academic domains. Four categories of work-related and interpersonal skills were identified, and these skill types were differentially associated with children's work partner preferences, peer acceptance, and achievement. Overall, the findings help to specify the types of skills grade-schoolers need to relate effectively with classmates in the context of collaborative academic tasks.

Law, Y. (2014). The role of structured cooperative learning groups for enhancing Chinese primary students' reading comprehension. *Educational Psychology*, 34(4), 470-494. doi:10.1080/01443410.2013.860216

The present study aimed to compare the effectiveness of two types of cooperative learning groups used in reciprocal teaching (RT) classes (i.e. high-structured vs. low-structured groups) for enhancing students' reading comprehension. The participants were 235 Hong Kong Chinese Grade 6 students in nine classes. Reading comprehension tests and questionnaires were used to investigate students' reading comprehension, teachers' cognitive support and perceptions of cooperative learning. The findings indicate that high achievers from the low-structured RT group significantly outperformed

high achievers from the high-structured RT group in post-test reading comprehension, whereas low achievers from the high-structured RT group significantly outperformed low achievers from the low-structured RT group in follow-up reading comprehension. Students from the high-structured RT group reported higher scores for their perceptions of cooperative learning than students from the low-structured RT group.

\*Lehraus, K. (2015). How to integrate cooperative skills training into learning tasks: An illustration with young pupils' writing. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 70-82. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961719

This study explored how to integrate cooperative skills training into learning tasks in the area of writing. Cooperative learning sessions, aimed at developing both cooperative and cognitive skills, were created and conducted in two elementary school classes (Grade 2, age 7–8). Pupils' teamwork interactions were videotaped and analysed. Results show that young pupils were able to work cooperatively on writing tasks (WT) without teacher's help, advocating realisable teaching practices. Interactive dynamics likely to enhance pupils' involvement in constructive interactions and in WT are documented; this typology could be used as a heuristic tool in future qualitative research.

Nam, C. W. (2014). The effects of trust and constructive controversy on student achievement and attitude in online cooperative learning environments. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, 237-248. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.05.007

This study investigated the effects of trust and constructive controversy on student achievement and attitude in online cooperative learning environments. Students in one university course were randomly assigned to one of the two treatment groups after they took part in a common initial workshop on general cooperative learning skills. The "trust" and the "constructive controversy" groups received subsequent associated skills training. The overall results indicated that after each group received the treatment during online cooperative group activities, the "trust" groups had significantly higher achievement than the "constructive controversy" groups. In addition, the "trust" groups had significantly more positive attitudes toward online cooperative learning than the "constructive controversy" groups. Specifically, using "trust" building strategies was significantly more effective than using "constructive controversy" strategies for improving the 'openness and sharing' and 'acceptance and support' components of student attitudes in online cooperative learning environments.

Park, M., & So, K. (2014). Opportunities and challenges for teacher professional development: A case of collaborative learning community in South Korea. *International Education Studies*, 7(7), 96-108.

This study investigates how characteristics of a collaborative professional learning activity support and hinder teacher learning and growth by examining the experiences of three Korean secondary teachers who participated in a school-initiated collaborative teacher learning project. The findings demonstrated that this learning opportunity supported teachers in their learning and professional development in the following ways. First, teachers experienced professional growth through

collaborative learning with colleagues. Second, teachers learned to self-reflect on their classes. Third, the program fostered an inquiry stance toward teaching. Also identified are some of the obstacles encountered, such as time constraints, psychological barriers, and the lack of a discussion culture.

\*Pescarmona, I. (2015). Status problem and expectations of competence: A challenging path for teachers. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 70-82. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961719

Complex Instruction (CI) is a cooperative learning approach, which aims at improving the equal status interaction among students working in groups who may be at different academic and social levels. Based on an ethnographic research, the article examines how a group of Italian primary school teachers understand the status problem and how the finding from this research demonstrates a change in their expectations of competence through using CI. This research analyses to what extent these teachers meet the original goal of achieving greater equity, as well as discussing implications for teachers' professional development.

Ribeiro-Soriano, D., & Benavides-Espinosa, M. d. M. (2014). Cooperative learning in creating and managing joint ventures. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(4), 648-655. doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.12.017

This study examines how and under what conditions joint ventures facilitate cooperative learning. The study analyses how a joint venture approach facilitates initial learning in the cooperative process and considers to what extent inter-organizational factors such as commitment, trust, control and conflict resolution affect the partners involved. The study then compares these hypotheses based on a sample of 74 international joint ventures. The results proved empirical evidence to show that commitment is both a significant and essential variable, yet they also illustrate that this type of cooperation is not enough on its own for partners to learn how to cooperate effectively.

\*Sharan, Y. (2015). Meaningful learning in the cooperative classroom. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 83-94. doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.961723

Meaningful learning is based on more than what teachers transmit; it promotes the construction of knowledge out of learners' experience, feelings and exchanges with other learners. This educational view is based on the constructivist approach to learning and the co-operative learning approach. Researchers and practitioners in various countries and settings seek ways to incorporate these approaches to create meaningful learning in the multicultural classroom and in the co-operative learning classroom. This article presents some of the ideas, studies and methods that signal a major shift of emphasis in education from product to process.

\*Slavin, R. E. (2015). Cooperative learning in elementary schools. *Education 3-13*, 43(1), 5-14.  
doi:10.1080/03004279.2015.963370

Cooperative learning refers to instructional methods in which students work in small groups to help each other learn. Although cooperative learning methods are used for different age groups, they are particularly popular in elementary (primary) schools. This article discusses methods and theoretical perspectives on cooperative learning for the elementary grades. The article acknowledges the contributions from each of the major theoretical perspectives and places them in a model that depicts the likely role each plays in cooperative learning outcomes. This work explores conditions under which each perspective may operate, and suggests further research needed to advance cooperative learning scholarship.

Thomas, T. A. (2014). Developing team skills through a collaborative writing assignment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(4), 479-495.

Employers want students who are able to work effectively as members of a team, and expect universities to develop this ability in their graduates. This paper proposes a framework for a collaborative writing assignment that specifically develops students' ability to work in teams. The framework has been tested using two iterations of an action research project, with this paper focusing on the second iteration. The paper provides detailed information on how the framework was implemented, and then reports on the students' perceptions of their learning about teamwork.

Tucker, R. (2014). Sex does not matter: Gender bias and gender differences in peer assessments of contributions to group work. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 39(3), 293-309.

This paper considers the possibility of gender bias in peer ratings for contributions to team assignments, as measured by an online self-and-peer assessment tool. The research was conducted to determine whether peer assessment led to reliable and fair marking outcomes. The methodology of Falchikov and Magin was followed in order to test their finding that gender has no discernible impact on peer ratings. Data from over 1500 participants at two universities enrolled in four different degree programmes were analysed. The research indicates an absence of gender bias in six case studies. The research also found that women received significantly higher ratings than men.

Yang, J., Kinshuk, Yu, H., Chen, S., & Huang, R. (2014). Strategies for smooth and effective cross-cultural online collaborative learning. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 17(3), 208-221.

As the communication between different cultures is becoming more and more frequent, the competence of cross-cultural awareness and collaboration is emerging as a key ability in the 21st century. Face to face communication is the most efficient way to cultivate the competence of cross-cultural awareness and collaboration. However, there are very few opportunities currently available for university students to have such face to face communication. Therefore, cross-cultural

online collaborative learning utilizing web 2.0 technologies is proposed in this paper as a way to cultivate students' cross-cultural competence. The purpose of the study is therefore to elicit strategies for smooth and effective cross-cultural online collaborative learning through a pilot study between the West and the East. Students of a Chinese University and an American University took part in the study. A mixed method research approach using questionnaire, interview and content analysis was used. The findings of the study revealed that students from both sides were interested in each other's culture, their attitudes to cross-cultural online collaborative learning were positive, and culture had an influence on learning methods. Social interaction played an important role, and students preferred to have more prior knowledge of each other's cultures and backgrounds. They were also inclined towards more in-depth individual conversations. As a result of this study, several strategies are proposed to facilitate effective implementation of cross-cultural collaborative learning in typical higher education settings.

Yoshida, H., Tani, S., Uchida, T., Masui, J., & Nakayama, A. (2014). Effects of online cooperative learning on motivation in learning Korean as a foreign language. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, 4(6), 473-477. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJiet.2014.V4.453>

Previous studies highlight positive effects of cooperative learning on language learning motivation. Many attempts have been made to implement cooperative learning in language classes. Now with the use of computer-mediated communications tools, language learners can learn cooperatively online, out of class. Online cooperative learning provides language learners to communicate with native speakers of their target language, and leads to enhance their motivation in language learning. This study purposed to examine the effects of online cooperative learning on language learners' motivation in KFL. Results indicate that online cooperative learning promotes learners' intrinsic motivation in KFL.

\* These articles are referred to in Voices from Scarborough: Review of a Cooperative-Learning Themed Issue of *Education* 3-13.



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