

Repo-Kaarento, Saara 1994. **Theoretical background to cooperational learning.**

– The article deals with the theoretical and historical background to co-operational learning, especially its socio-psychological connections. The term co-operational learning is usually applied to the method developed by the Americans David and Roger Johnson in which the teacher constructs a learning situation in such a way that positive interdependencies are formed between the learners. Learning takes place mainly in groups of 2-4 persons with the teacher's function being mainly that of study guide. The method is based on the theory of social interdependence developed by the American social psychologist Morton Deutsch. Earlier, Deutsch was a member of what may be called the group dynamics school of research established in the 1940s by Kurt Lewin, the grand old man of social psychology. According to Morton Deutsch, there are two kinds of social interdependence: positive and negative. If the goals of the members of the group exhibit positive interdependence, then the group's functioning is characterised by cooperation. If, on the other hand, the interdependencies between the individuals are negative, then competition between individuals becomes emphasised. When people work as individuals there is no interdependence between them, they are independent, but alone. Finally, the author considers what is required of the teacher in applying co-operational learning.

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