

# Study of College English Reading Teaching Based on Cooperative Learning Theory

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**Keywords:** Cooperative learning, Reading teaching, Teaching model.

**Abstract.** Cooperative learning is used in the practice of college English reading teaching as a teaching theory. On the basis of explaining the rationality of cooperative learning and the use of cooperative learning in English reading teaching, this paper explored the concrete approach of applying cooperative learning to the teaching mode of English reading comprehension teaching. This teaching model improves the students' academic achievement and teaching quality, and enhances the students' cognitive ability and cooperation consciousness.

## Introduction

In our country, English learners lack the real language environment, so that reading becomes one of the most effective ways of language acquisition. Reading is not limited by time and space, but it is conducive to the development of English comprehensive skills[1]. However, for a long time, the focus of reading teaching had focused on the semantic relations between discourse analysis, analysis of sentence grammatical structure and explanatory language, and neglected discourse analysis and overall understanding, and students' actual language ability to cultivate[2]. Teachers are the center of classroom teaching, so that the classroom teaching shows a "one-way communication" trend.

This traditional single teaching method can not take into account the students' differences in English language proficiency, which results students losing their interest in learning English[3]. Cooperative learning is based on learners, and based on mutual cooperation and participation among students. It is emphasizing group learning, and focusing on learners' self-practice, personal responsibility, intrinsic motivation and the cultivation of initiative, creativity and cooperation[4].

Cooperative learning requires team members to share the target resources, to participate in the task, and takes the overall performance of the group as a reward basis. Group members are solidarity, and you can success only when the whole group members are successful. Cooperative learning has become a universally accepted teaching theory and strategy, and adopted by many countries in the teaching practice. The fundamental reason is that the emergence and development of cooperative learning have a solid and scientific theoretical basis.

## Basic elements of cooperative learning

### Preparation of cooperative learning

In the experiment, all students who study English are very familiar with traditional teacher-centered teaching, but know very small amount about cooperative learning. In group learning, first of all, you should fill in the reading report carefully. The reading report contains new words, new phrases, a summary of the article, and a sense of what the article is about. New words should be marked with phonetic symbols and written in English. The new phrases should be written in examples. The summary and the comprehension should be expressed in English. Second, the teams are required to take turns in the class for about 10 minutes of the week's readings (a Monday group), which can be varied in forms[5].

Table 1 Reading task

Name	Questions
Subjects 1 _____	What kind of attitude is it that results people committed to researching, experimenting and exploring? What is the main idea of the last paragraph?
Subjects 2 _____	What is likely to be a foreigner's first impression of the Chinese? How does the writer describe country people? What is the writer's advice if you "want to change job, and do not have enough money"?
Subjects 3 _____	Why do new arrivals in America miss about business calls? What examples does the writer give to show that Chinese work hard at the task of making money?
Subjects 4 _____	What is the main idea of the second paragraph? How do Americans view the impersonality of machine intelligence?

For example, the researchers provide a definition of cooperative learning and describe the characteristics of cooperative learning. They explain how the cooperative learning course is organized, and how students will score. They also explain the reason that students learn cooperative learning methods and the potential benefits for their learning.

### The implementation of cooperative learning

Puzzle is a cooperative learning model involving 5-6 students in group teaching. They become experts, and rely on student cooperation to succeed[6]. The reading materials that are used in the experimental study emphasize language knowledge and understanding based on difficult parts. These students have received expert themes and related worksheets to understand the concepts and ideas in the distribution of information. In other words, the teacher chooses each team's participant to become a different expert for different tasks. For example, some students may focus on keywords, useful expressions and phrases, and some students may focus on the organizational processes and text structure, and when some students may focus on part of the understanding. All types of learning aids are encouraged to use, such as books and dictionaries.

## Results and discussion

### Class observation results and analysis

Compared with the "self-exploring group learning", 88% of the students prefer the "guided group learning" (see in figure 1). Although the ability of self-exploration team learning cultivated innovative students, but the majority of the team used the traditional grammar translation method in the study. They over reliance on search words, syntactic analysis and translation. Once the words and more complex sentences increase, students will feel overwhelmed.

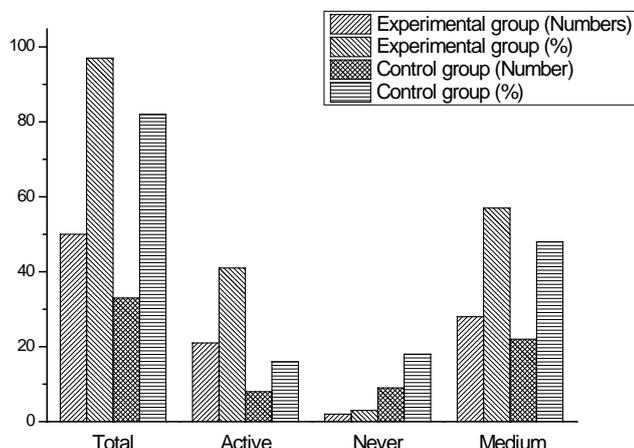


Figure 1 Students of two groups participating in class activities

The researchers found that about two-fifths of the students in the experimental group actively

participated in classroom activities. While in the controlled group, more than 7 students actively participated in the classroom, and 8 people have never participated. The analysis results show that most of the students in cooperative learning group held a positive attitude. But we can also find some problems from the survey. Such as 26.7% of the students think in group learning, and cannot feel the love between members of the group. This infers that students also not do enough in mutual concern and solidarity, and teachers should strengthen guidance, and cultivate students' spirit of solidarity. The different questions of the group let the students feel shouldering the important mission to report the results of their perception. The students in the course of the discussion had to listen carefully to the views of others, and this expands the participation of students.

### Group independent learning

After students are sweeping reading, some activities are chose to help students decide whether they really understand the articles. Such as: fill in the chart through the discussing, clarify the material context, deepen the comprehensive understanding of the article. Discuss a sentence or a paragraph according to the clues, and predict the next paragraph that may occur. Speculate the author talked about what content in the last paragraph.

25 (48%) of the 52 students in the experimental group expressed positive views on cooperative learning. Only 7 (13%) expressed purely negative comments, and the results are shown in figure 2.

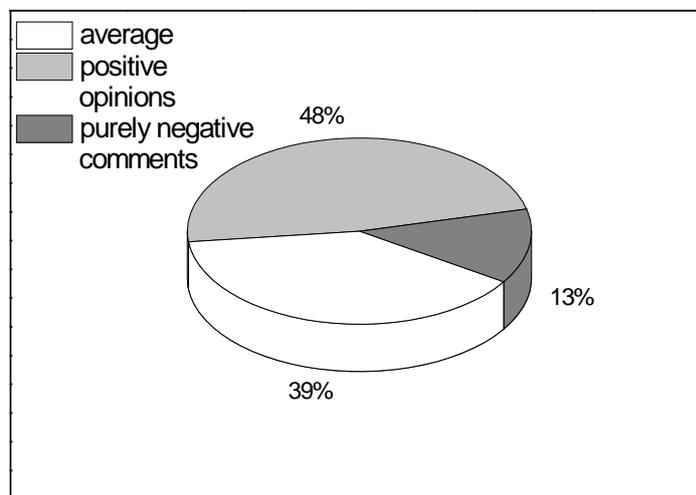


Figure 2 Investigation of students' attitude

Positive comments show that nearly half of the students like to cooperative learning because they are very fond of the close interaction between their teammates and team discussions. A typical comment is, "I like working in a group, and when you have three people working with you, it's easier to understand every part of the lesson". Our team members do not hesitate to provide assistance when we have questions. We learn faster and more. In fact, this is not a thought of just one people, but the whole team.

Cultivating students' autonomous learning ability is one of the most important goals of teaching. Teaching students how to learn by themselves is a problem that has been paid attention to in English teaching for a long time. Teachers should not only pay attention to students' in class learning, but also pay attention to students' extracurricular learning. Cultivate students' ability to organize simple learning activities. Teachers give each group the opportunity to carry out their learning activities freely. The students, in the cooperative learning group, look for materials for reading and study independently, make their own study plans, study their own time and solve the problems together. Each team is required to make a record of the activities and to evaluate it. This activity will enable students to play more initiative and creativity in after-school learning.

## Summary

Cooperative learning follows the cognitive law of students. It takes reformed interpersonal relationships within the teaching as a breakthrough, and focuses on mobilizing students to take the initiative to participate in learning. However, when using cooperative learning method in the actual English reading teaching, teachers need to do the following works: careful pre-class preparation activities including the rational allocation of members of the group and the selection of articles, fully considered students' language cognitive level and social cognitive ability when selection of the article. At the same time, the main body of cooperative learning is students, and teachers should participate in the cooperative learning model. Only the participation of teachers and students in the cooperative learning, the advantages of cooperative learning can fully play.

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