

Three Different Ways Student Learn

One Is Clearly the Most Productive

There are three recognized styles of learning: individualized, cooperative and competitive. Each of the styles is clearly distinguishable from the others.

For many years, competition has been used in motivating schoolchildren to learn. It is distinguished by the rivalry that results from a contest between students.

Competitive grading, tests, quizzes, contests, and games have served as

primary tools of teachers for a long time. If handled properly, competition can teach responsibility and determination. Teachers use it to help students develop a healthy attitude toward self-improvement. Competition allows students to compare their improvement to that of their classmates. And, when competitive activities are managed well, students tend to focus on

positive aspects of competition's built-in win/lose feature.

The individualized learning style, like the competitive learning style, involves the student's self-improvement – but with more of an emphasis on personal goal setting. Here the interests of the individual are of major importance.

Individualization encourages the student to, in essence, compete with himself or herself in an effort to raise the standard or quality of his or her own performance – apart from the rest of the class.



In individualized instruction, the teachers adapt to an individual student's special abilities, needs or interests.

Even though both the competitive and individualized learning styles have clear benefits to students, teachers realize that one other learning style may prove equally or more beneficial; the cooperative learning style. As a matter of fact, the cooperative

learning style not only stresses self-improvement, but also teamwork. Cooperation is the act of working with another or others in a common effort for some mutual benefit. Cooperation is highly productive because it shows students that the most gratifying form of self-improvement is achieved as a member of a team.

Within family units, we most often attempt to foster cooperation among siblings. Getting along, working together, sharing, and engaging in mutual problem solving are valued on the home front. Therefore, it seems ironic that some parents want their child to be the best math student, a member of the top reading group, the first-chair trumpet in band, or the quarterback of the football team. It also seems ironic that some schools use competition to prepare students for the “competitive world of work.”

But what about the world of work? Although competition is a real and vital part of the business world, manager of businesses, like parents of children, value cooperation. In order for businesses to be ultimately successful, employees must be willing to work with one another for

the common good. In other words, businesses want employees who are cooperative. Competitive employees are not in demand.

Cooperative one are.

Businesspeople realize that without cooperation, little can be

accomplished by any organization.

In our schools, we recognize that we need to use all three styles of learning in order to reach every child. At the same time, we realize our emphasis should be on cooperative strategies. Those students who tend to lose frequently in competitive situations often end up not competing anymore. Our task becomes one of balancing competition, individualization, and cooperation in order to motivate all students. We realize that if students feel good about themselves, feel that they belong, and feel that they have a sense of ownership in their school and in their education; we can motivate them to learn. In the realm of competition, there are winners and losers. In our schools, it is our mission to help all students win.

**Cooperation
is valued
in the
world of
work.**