

CIRCLE OF COOPERATION

Purpose: This lesson emphasizes the importance of cooperation, especially in classroom groups. The importance of respect, cooperation and involvement of ALL students in learning groups is stressed. Students engage in self observation as well the observation of others as they work in groups.

*PSC NOTE: If you haven't already, you are urged to develop a conceptual understanding of the difference among the terms "group work/group counseling", "working in groups" and "cooperative learning in classroom groups". Being able to work cooperatively in classroom task groups is not a natural process; in fact, naturally learned group processes **may hinder** students' ability/willingness to **work cooperatively** in groups. For example, territoriality and fight or flight mechanisms are natural and have to be unlearned and the skills/attitudes of cooperative learning taught as a replacement. "Working in groups" as it is often used, may be a way for some students to hide behind the more assertive/aggressive students' active engagement. Some students learn to "do" group work and actually do nothing to help the group. Teaching students **HOW** to work cooperatively in groups is vital to everyone's learning. This lesson provides a good-start.*

Time: 30-45 minutes (depending upon students' developmental level)

Group Size: whole class (could be modified to serve as a small group counseling session)

Grade Level: 1-3

Materials: Student Thinking Paper: [Learning and Application: Circles of Cooperation](#) (optional for older students)

A gallon-sized (or larger) storage bag and 4 or 5 sandwich bags, 4 or 5 different puzzles with large pieces (i.e., puzzles designed for pre-K/K youngsters)—enough for each learner to have one puzzle **piece** (some may receive more if there is not an equal number of puzzle pieces and students)—take puzzles apart; put puzzle pieces in the large bag. Poster board, markers

Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program (MCGP) Strand/Big Idea/Concept:

Strand: Personal And Social Development (PS)

Big Idea: PS 2 Interacting With Others in Ways That Respect Individual and Group Differences

Concept: PS.2.B. Respect for self and others

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Domain/Standard:

Personal Social Domain

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B: Students will make decisions set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Link to Sample MCGP Units/Lessons (Note: The Unit listed does not include all possible related MCGP Units/Lessons—it is merely an example of how activity fits with the MCGP Guidance eLearning Units/Lessons)

Kdg CD 9 Unit: [Working Together](#)  

This stand-alone lesson (Circles of Cooperation) can enhance any MCGP Units/Lessons requiring students to work in small groups. Searching the pdf file (mcece.org) of all K-5 units/lessons will link you to lessons in which "cooperative learning" or "cooperative groups" are used. The "Circles of Cooperation" activity can be expanded to include several lessons that intentionally teach students **HOW** to work in cooperative learning groups (see **Follow-up** section).

Show Me Standards: Performance Goals (check one or more that apply)

X	Goal 1: gather, analyze and apply information and ideas
X	Goal 2: communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom
	Goal 3: recognize and solve problems
X	Goal 4: make decisions and act as responsible members of society

This lesson supports the development of skills in the following academic content areas.

Academic Content Area(s)	Specific Skill(s)
X Communication Arts	CA6: Participating in...discussions of issues and ideas.
Mathematics	
Social Studies	
Science	
Health/Physical Education	
Fine Arts	

Enduring Life Skill(s)

X	Perseverance		Integrity	X	Problem Solving
X	Courage	X	Compassion		Tolerance
X	Respect		Goal Setting	X	Patience

Assessment: acceptable evidence of what learners will know/be able to do as a result of this lesson:

Students collaborate to develop a list of at least 4 reasons teachers (and you, the PSC) want students to learn the skills of working cooperatively in groups and to complete the sentence: “We learned that when we learn in a circle of cooperation with others, we ____.” Spokesperson from each group will read his or her group’s list of reasons and “We learned...” sentence.

Observe: Students’ level of engagement in process (e.g., leader, bossy leader, follower, silent observer); completed sentences include a minimum of one (1) element of working cooperatively in groups (e.g., taking turns, listening, asking questions).

Lesson Preparation/Motivation

Essential Questions: Why do people work together in small groups? Do adults have to work in groups? It is not easy to work in groups—or is it? Cooperation is the key—what does that mean?

Engagement (Hook): See Procedures

Procedures

Professional School Counselor Procedures:	Student Involvement:
<p><i>During “Hook”, systematically observe processes students use. Passive? Aggressive? Cooperative? Who emerged as leaders? As followers? As active observers? As clowns? As “sulking” observers. Be aware of students who have learned to “hide” in the classroom—those who appear to be engaged in task, but are not—e.g., a visor pulled over the eyes allows student to look like he or she is working in the group, student may pick up a puzzle piece...and do nothing with it.</i></p> <p><i>Hook:</i> Distribute puzzle pieces (see Materials) to students—each student will receive at least one puzzle piece (depending upon total number of puzzle pieces—some may have more than one piece). Tell students they have four (4) minutes to put puzzles together—without talking—they may move around the classroom and look at each others’ pieces.</p>	<p>Students: During this lesson, courageously volunteer and be sure to speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone to hear your great ideas. Use complete sentences and conventions of standard English in speaking and writing.</p> <p><i>Hook:</i> Look for students who have pieces that fit with your puzzle piece. When your school counselor says “Freeze” freeze.</p>

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<p>At the end of four (4) minutes, say “FREEZE”.</p> <p><i>Continue to systematically observe students as they participate (don’t participate) in each task. Make note of students who persistently/consistently interfere with successful completion of group tasks—passively OR aggressively.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> While students are “frozen” (Hook), tell them to think about what happened. Put the small sandwich bags in areas where students have been working (anticipating that several puzzles will have been started). <p>Tell students to “thaw”, put the puzzle pieces that fit together in one of the small sandwich bags and return to their desks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Invite students to talk about what they observed and what they did: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was it frustrating? What made it so? What would have made it easier/better/more successful? Using their comments and your observations, segue into groups being circles of cooperation—cooperating with each other in a circle. Emphasize that each person has a responsibility to help all members of the group learn as well as complete tasks (cooperate for the good of all). <p><i>Listen systematically for misconceptions about working in groups.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Divide the class into learning circles of four—2 girls & 2 boys in each group. Review the lessons learned from the puzzle <i>Hook</i>. Stress the importance of cooperation and sharing during the following activity. Explain that they will be drawing a picture on poster board and they must cooperate, share the markers and share space on the poster board. <p>Distribute a piece of poster board and markers to each learning circle. Explain that they will draw a picture representing him or her on the poster board.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Instruct students to identify “their” space and draw pictures of themselves or things such as their favorite sport or favorite animal. Emphasize that they may use only the materials you gave them. Invite clarifying 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> While you are “frozen”, think about what happened when the class tried to put puzzles together. <p>When you “thaw”, put puzzle pieces that fit together in the sandwich bags your school counselor put on your table. Give puzzle bags to him or her, follow directions about what to do with un-matched puzzle pieces and return to desk.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to discussion with descriptions of what you did and what others did. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Quietly/orderly get into assigned circles of cooperation. Volunteer to contribute to review by telling the class something learned/remembered from the puzzle activity. Listen as your school counselor explains your group’s task; in your circle of cooperation and using only the materials supplied. Follow your school counselor’s instructions; complete your task with integrity.

Professional School Counselor Procedures:	Student Involvement:
<p>questions.</p> <p>Allow 7 minutes for students to complete their drawings. Give a 1-minute warning.</p> <p><i>As you walk around to offer encouragement for their cooperation in learning circles, systematically observe students' behavior in the groups.</i></p> <p>7. Tell groups to take their posters to the gathering place and sit together (if room arrangement allows). Ask groups to show their posters, make appropriate comments and place posters in designated place so all can still see it.</p> <p>8. When everyone is back in the gathering place, invite students to respond to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did it go? What did you do to help the group learn and accomplish the task? • Is it easy or hard to work with other students in a group? • Do adults work together in groups? When? What rules should they follow? • Why do we want you to learn to work cooperatively in groups? <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: Students' developmental and maturity levels will determine the procedures for the assessment of content. Your knowledge of your students will determine the type of assessment.</p> <p>Older Students will benefit from completing the <i>Student Thinking Paper Learning and Application: Circles of Cooperation</i> ; it provides a more comprehensive assessment of content and personalization of content.</p> <p>If students are completing the thinking paper, explain that they are to work in the same learning circles, and, together, complete the tasks. Invite clarifying questions.</p> <p>Younger Students: Following is an alternative assessment suggestion for younger students. Write the following group tasks on the board; students work in their groups as you guide them to complete the tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a group list of at least 4 reasons your teachers and school counselor want you to learn to work in groups. • We learned that when we work with others in a circle of cooperation, we ____." <p>At the end of approximately five (5) minutes, ask a</p>	<p>7. Take group poster to gathering place; show your poster and make comments as school counselor guides your discussion; place poster in designated place.</p> <p>8. Volunteers respond to questions with appropriate answers. When appropriate, add to something someone else said. If you are "frequent commenter" exhibit patience by waiting/ encouraging others to contribute to the discussion. Encourage those who do not usually contribute to discussions at least one thought about the circles of cooperation.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Content: In original circles of cooperation, collaboratively complete either the thinking paper <i>Learning and Application: Circles of Cooperation</i> or the tasks your school counselor writes on the board.</p> <p>Each circle of cooperation identifies two (2)</p>

<i>Professional School Counselor Procedures:</i>	<i>Student Involvement:</i>
<p>spokesperson from each group to read his or her circle's 4 reasons to learn to work cooperatively and another spokesperson to read the "We learned..." statement from each group.</p> <p>For older students: If using the thinking paper <i>Learning and Application...</i>, allow 7-8 minutes for completion of both sections and process in a similar manner as above.</p> <p>Before collecting their thinking papers, inform students that you will be reading their papers and returning them to their classroom teacher; he or she will return papers to students. The classroom teacher might read the papers. Is that OK?</p> <p>If not "OK," write "PLEASE DO NOT SHARE" at top of papers. Collect papers.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Invite several volunteers to identify one idea they will remember to do the next time they work in a cooperation circle.</p> <p>CLOSURE: Connect students' responses to both parts of the assessment. Stress the essence of working together: RESPECT, i.e., everyone having a say, listening to each other, sharing with and helping everyone, working cooperatively toward the common goal.</p> <p>Ask for volunteers to put puzzles back together and put the pieces for each puzzle in the sandwich bags.</p> <p><i>After this lesson, review thinking papers for (age appropriate) level of knowledge about the benefits of working together in circles of cooperation and their awareness of personal application of content to their work with others in circles of cooperation. Review writing for age-appropriate command of conventions of standard written English and the ability to articulate thoughts and feelings in 1st person.</i></p> <p><i>Return thinking papers to classroom teacher for distribution to students. Honor the privacy of students who write "PLEASE DO NOT SHARE" on papers. Personally deliver papers to those students after your review.</i></p>	<p>spokespersons--one to read your circle's 4 reasons and another to read your circle's "We Learned___" statement.</p> <p>Older students: If you completed the thinking paper, follow your school counselor's instructions for processing it.</p> <p>If you want your responses to be private between you and your school counselor, write "PLEASE DO NOT SHARE" at top of paper. Give school counselor your paper.</p> <p>ASSESSMENT: Personalization of Content: Volunteer to tell classmates one idea you will remember about learning in circles of cooperation.</p> <p>CLOSURE: Listen with intentionality—the intent to connect what he or she is saying to your working in groups—cooperatively and RESPECTFULLY.</p> <p>As many students as are needed, volunteer to put puzzles back together and put the pieces in sandwich bags.</p>

Classroom Teacher Follow-Up Activities (Suggestions for classroom teacher to use to reinforce student learning of Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum concepts)

Provide classroom teacher with an overview of the lesson and a copy of the thinking paper, *Learning and Application...* (if you use it) or a sample of the group assessment tasks younger students completed.

Summarize systematic observations of individuals and of the group as a whole—e.g., did one person hi-jack the learning of everyone else by doing the tasks while others were talking with each other or doing nothing? Was there moaning and groaning (overt or covert) each time students were asked to get into pairs or groups? In addition, make note of students who had difficulty with other aspects of lesson. Consider persistent misconceptions about working in groups as well as individual students who consistently had difficulty participating in specific aspects of lessons, for example, students who were unable to identify benefits of cooperation in groups, were hesitant to express ideas during whole class conversations and/or with partners, appeared to lack confidence in their own thoughts, consistently attempted to take over group collaboration, repeatedly engaged in distracting behaviors, rarely (if ever) voluntarily contributed to class conversations or individual responses to thinking papers were inappropriate or lacked depth/sincerity.

Consult with classroom teacher about your systematic observations of students as a group and individually. Does he or observe these or similar behaviors in the classroom?

Collaborate with classroom teacher to plan appropriate interventions. Interventions might include (and are not limited to) additional classroom guidance lessons specific to “learning to work cooperatively in groups”. There are a number of cooperative learning resources available via the internet--*Google®: Cooperative Learning in Elementary Schools*).

Additionally, implement Responsive Services for individuals or a group of students who seem to need more intense and intentional involvement in the “will and skill” (desire and ability) of cooperation (e.g., individual/group counseling or parental involvement).

LEARNING AND APPLICATION: CIRCLES OF COOPERATION

Learning and Application: Circles of Cooperation

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Follow your school counselor's instructions for complete each section.

Section I: Work cooperatively with all members of your learning circle to complete the tasks

Section II: Work independently to complete the Reflection/Projection/Application sentences.

I. Learning (work as a group—everyone writes the agreed-upon responses):

- List at least 4 reasons your teachers and school counselor want you to learn to work in groups. Write the name of the group member who contributed each reason.

	REASON	CONTRIBUTOR
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____

Does everyone in your group agree with the reasons listed? YES NO

- We learned that when we work with others in a circle of cooperation, we

II. REFLECTION/PROJECTION/APPLICATION (complete independently):

- Rate your learning circle's cooperative work on the lesson's tasks.

- 1 _____ 5 _____ 10

Awful/No Cooperative Work

Wonderful/We Fully Cooperated

- How did you help the group learn and accomplish its task? _____

- Is it easy or hard to work for you to work with other students in a group? Easy Hard

Explain your response: _____

- One personal cooperative group skill I need to improve is: _____

- To improve this skill, I _____.