

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING: THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATORY EXAMINATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes the advantages students receive from a cooperative learning environment. Students in two Principle of Marketing classes at a small, liberal arts state college in the West, experienced a participatory examination procedure.

A plan for cooperative learning called for tests to be administered twice. First, students took the class examination in the traditional manner. At the next class meeting, students, unaware of their individual test scores, were grouped into heterogeneous teams of four members. The teams were composed of students whose scores on the first test ranged from high, medium, and low. The group examination, a repeat of the first exam, was administered. The teams discussed the examination questions and tried to reach consensus. They filled out group and individual answer sheets. Individual answer sheets were collected. The instructor read the correct answers, and a class discussion of misunderstood or misinterpreted questions ensued. This procedure was repeated two more times during the course.

A study was conducted to answer the question: Does experiencing participatory examinations increase learning? The results of matched pair T-tests indicated that the scores of stu-

dents in the Principles of Marketing classes changed from pre-test to post-test significantly. In addition, scores on the post-test increased significantly from the first post-test to the last post-test.

In addition to increased learning, other benefits of the cooperative learning procedure were apparent. Students used marketing vocabulary confidently, interacted with different types of people, used assertiveness techniques, practiced decision-making, became actively involved in their learning, and developed critical thinking skills. Clearly, the participatory examination process is a promising interactive design.