

Applying the Elements of Cooperative Learning: Reported Influence on Self-directed Learning and View of Cooperative Learning

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ABSTRACT This research explored the influence of incorporation of the five elements of effective cooperative learning on students' views of cooperative learning and their level of self-directed learning (SDL). A class group consisting of seven second-year Information Technology education students was involved. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. A questionnaire was used to determine the students' levels of self-directed learning in a pre-test and a post-test, while individual feedback and open-ended questions were used to determine their views of cooperative learning. The students' views and experiences regarding incorporation of the five elements of effective cooperative learning are reported and discussed, as well as changes in their self-rated level of self-directed learning. The results show that structuring of cooperative learning activities to include the five elements changed students' views of group work, and at the same time enhanced their level of self-directed learning in the areas of use of appropriate learning strategies, evaluation of own learning, and interpersonal skills.