

TOPPING, K., BUCHS, C., DURAN, D., & VAN KEER, H. (2017). *Effective peer learning: From principles to practical implementation*. Londres: Routledge. 186 pp. ISBN: 9781138906495.

For some years now, cooperative learning has emerged as a methodology willing to transform educational practices and to contribute to the development of cooperation, core competence for the knowledge society –according to UNESCO and OECD. Numerous research studies support its potential, but there are still multiple barriers that hinder its widespread application in practice. Although a multitude of methodological proposals have been developed, it is easy to drift in a wide sea of methods and techniques. With the book *Effective peer learning: From principles to practical implementation*, Topping, Buchs, Duran and van Keer come to rescue, offering a guide that aims at helping practitioners establish well-structured and effective peer learning projects using a variety of methods.

The book is organised into four sections. In the first section, peer learning is introduced, describing mutual interactions –cooperative and collaborative learning, in chapter 1– and directional interactions –same-age and cross-age peer tutoring, in chapter 2. In the second section, the general principles for peer learning are presented, focusing both on preparing learners for constructive interactions –chapter 3– and organising peer interactions in academic tasks –chapter 4. In the third section, practical propositions for the classroom are shown, in cooperative learning situations –chapter 5–, same-age peer tutoring situations –chapter 6– and cross-age peer tutoring situations –chapter 7. Finally, in the fourth section –corresponding to chapter 8–, conclusions and onward directions are gathered, pointing out the advantages, problems, potential and challenges of cooperative learning, and advice to maximise benefits and reduce difficulties is given.

This organisation, as the authors suggest, allows each chapter to be read separately with different purposes, focusing on cooperative learning or peer tutoring. Far from adopting a prescriptive tone, the authors manage to link theory and practice to invite the reader to reflect. A coherent and careful itinerary progressively takes us from the conceptual delimitation of cooperative learning to the practical level, through an exquisite clarity of exposition that allows integrating a wide variety of bibliographical sources and methodological proposals. The closure section puts the finishing touch, summarising the main learnings and

explicitly stating their usefulness to carry out peer learning programmes successfully.

Focusing on the examples of peer learning projects, gathered in the third section of the book, it is important to highlight the wide variety of the twenty proposals, which come from different countries –United States, United Kingdom, Spain, Scotland, Mexico, Belgium, Israel, Canada, France and Switzerland– and aim at different educational stages –primary education, secondary education and university– and disciplines –reading, foreign languages, mathematics, psychology, statistics, physical education, argumentation, educational sciences and medical training. As in the other sections, it is worth mentioning the clear presentation and organisation of the content –using tables and figures to facilitate the reader’s understanding–, as well as the link between educational research and practice, which in this case takes form at the end of each proposal in a subsection which gathers scientific evidence that supports it.

In conclusion, this book is highly recommended for a wide variety of audiences: from those educational professionals who want to start using cooperative learning at any educational stage, to those who already use it and want to improve their practices, and even for those who are not convinced about its application in the classroom yet. As the authors warn, the book may have –desirably– a potential impact on the reader’s environment, since the reader becomes a model for helping other people learn to use cooperative learning. In short, Topping (University of Dundee), Buchs (University of Geneva), Duran (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) and van Keer (Ghent University) present a work with international projection that masterfully linking theory and practice gets to answer many professionals’ concerns and encourages us to row together to progress with the implementation of cooperative learning in our classrooms.

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