

Collaborative Tools for Changing the Way We Work

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Students from early childhood through graduate school have come to expect that they will work alone, write alone, complete projects alone, and be tested alone. Traditionally, in educational settings there has been competition for what is perceived as a limited resource, good grades. This paradigm, which has dominated academia for ages, ignores the findings of hundreds of studies on cooperative learning. "More is known about the efficacy of cooperative learning than about lecturing, the fifty-minute class period, the use of instructional technology, or almost any other aspect of education" (Smith, 1996). Even so, many educators do not make use of cooperative learning strategies because they lack a complete understanding of the processes involved in collaboration. This presentation demonstrated how tools such as the telephone, e-mail, and document sharing can be used to increase creativity, productivity, and foster cooperation within small groups or large organizations in both educational and non-academic settings.

Smith, K. (1996) Cooperative learning: making "groupwork" work. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 67, 72.