

## Types of Cooperative Learning Groups

Johnson, Johnson, & Kolubec (1998) identify three different kinds of cooperative learning groups. Each type of group has a different purpose- no single one is intrinsically “good” or “bad.”

### Informal groups

- Last only brief periods of time, from a few minutes up to a whole class period
- Usually ad hoc, formed rather quickly and without requirements
- Groups have little structure and may be homogeneous or not
- Members are revolving
- Provide a variation on lecture-based classes
- Require little or no planning
- Help set expectations about the content of the class
- Can help bring closure to a session

### Formal groups

- Interactions among the members of the group are longer in duration (over one class period)
- Group members remain consistent
- Involve considerable planning regarding the formation of the group
- More structured
- Have a particular goal and task to accomplish (a product must be generated)
- Assignments must be structured and organized
- “They are the heart of using cooperative learning” (p.17)

### Base groups

- Long term: can last the entire semester (or even several semesters),
- Get together on a regular basis
- Involve considerable planning regarding the formation of the group
- Assignments and tasks must be personalized to the group. This can be done by providing structure and assistance mechanisms to the group members
- Work towards a specific purpose
- Members are constant

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Source:

Johnson, D., Johnson, R., & Holubec, E. (1998). *Cooperation in the classroom*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.