

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the development of using assigned roles within cooperative learning to foster critical thinking and understanding of texts. The study was completed in a large suburban high school about 60 miles north of Philadelphia, PA. The participants were 25 ninth grade students in an honors English class.

Methods of gathering data included whole group interviews, individual interviews, student work, observations and field notes, and group discussions. Students specific roles within cooperative learning groups and changed groups once during the study.

At the conclusion of this study, cooperative learning groups enhanced students' comprehension and higher order thinking. In addition, increased participation, motivation, and leadership was found while using cooperative learning groups.