

11. Cooperation between pupils, a comparative view: Spain, France and Italy¹

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Abstract

One of the distinguishing features of the cooperative movement and, in general, initiatives linked to the social and solidarity economy is the importance attributed to education. To the extent that they share the aim of a more or less profound social transformation, they consider that education that improves people's participatory and critical capacity plays a fundamental role.

As described below, in recent decades proposals for implementing cooperative learning in schools have substantially increased in many countries, but the predominant trend is not connected with projects for social change. Such projects do not identify significantly with cooperative learning practices that do not fully incorporate cooperative values.

Within this general framework, we aim to reflect on the conceptualisation and impact of the Anglo-Saxon concept of “cooperative learning”, which clearly predominates in Spanish and Italian schools that apply cooperation between pupils, and contrast it with the francophone concept of “pédagogies coopératives”. To conclude, we will examine areas in which cooperative learning could converge with the social and solidarity economy.

1. Introduction

The current competitive and unequal system of neo-liberal hegemony is advancing, endangering the good of the majority (standard of living, rights and freedoms) for the benefit of a few, while justifying austerity, injustice and precariousness as lesser evils of infinite progress.³ We live in a “burnout society”, where we are saturated by multitasking, overexposed, prisoners of social media and disproportionately concerned

¹ This text is part of the research project *Historia de la Catalunya Subalterna Contemporánea: alternativas solidarias y cooperativas* (History of Contemporary Subaltern Catalonia: Solidarity and Cooperative Alternatives), PID2019-109560GB-I00, funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation of the Government of Spain.

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³ Josep FONTANA: *Capitalismo y democracia. 1756-1848. Cómo empezó este engaño*, Barcelona, Crítica, 2019.

with immediate performance and constant activity, leading to the self-exploitation of the individual.⁴ In short, the social, political and economic situation exposes the limitations of the capitalist system,⁵ and reveals the need for a social system based on cooperation, responsibility and generosity.

In this context, if the cooperative movement hopes to develop new economic and social relationships, it must transcend the economic and social order so it can play its part in education, fostering cooperative education as a driver of change. One of the distinguishing features of the cooperative movement and, in general, initiatives linked to the social and solidarity economy is the importance attributed to education. To the extent that they share the aim of a more or less profound social transformation, they assign a fundamental role to education that also contributes to this transformation and improves people's participatory and critical capacity. This desire has often been manifested in schools through activities related to the organisation and management of cooperatives, or to educational projects dealing with social justice and environmental sustainability.

As we discuss below, in recent decades there has been a substantial increase in proposals for implementing cooperative learning in schools in many countries. However, although the predominant version allows pupils to work on values, it is not related to projects for social change. It has no relationship with the foundations of the social and solidarity economy.

And these social movements in turn do not identify with cooperative learning practices that do not fully incorporate cooperative values, but appear closer to other traditions such as the critical didactic model or libertarian pedagogy.

Within this general framework, we aim to reflect on the conceptualisation and impact of the Anglo-Saxon approach to cooperative learning (CL), which clearly predominates in Spanish and Italian schools that apply cooperation between pupils, and contrast it with the francophone concept *pédagogies coopératives* (PC). To conclude, we will examine areas in which cooperative learning could converge with the social and solidarity economy.

⁴ Byung-Chul HAN: *La sociedad del cansancio*, Barcelona, Herder, 2022; Sebastian FRIEDRICH, Felix KLÖPOTEK, Lars DISTELHORST, Detlef HARTMANN, Greta WAGNER, Mark FISHER, Sarah DIEHL, Volker SCHÜRMAN: *La sociedad del rendimiento. Cómo el neoliberalismo impregna nuestras vidas*, Pamplona, Katakarak Liburuak, 2018.

⁵ Eric HOBSBAWM: *Historia del siglo XX*, Barcelona, Crítica, 2011.

2. The expansion of cooperative learning in recent decades

Although its increasing importance in recent years may suggest otherwise, cooperative learning (CL) is not a new concept in education. It can be traced back to the early and mid-twentieth century and the work of John Dewey and Morton Deutsch, and has been the subject of research⁶ that demonstrates its effectiveness for performance, motivation, self-esteem, critical thinking, social skills and social cohesion in pupils compared with competitive and individualistic structures.⁷ More specifically, one of these studies, involving an in-depth review of the scientific literature concludes that CL: 1) helps to increase pupils' level of achievement; 2) contributes to improving intrinsic motivation towards learning; 3) helps to create a positive attitude to learning; 4) has a positive correlation with higher levels of self-esteem; 5) makes pupils responsible for their involvement in learning; 6) improves group cohesion and treats differences as a positive aspect of heterogeneous groups; 7) facilitates social integration and the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs; 8) reduces aggressive behaviour by providing democratic mechanisms for decision making; and 9) promotes independent, responsible critical thinking, thus increasing pupil satisfaction.⁸

In order to understand the conditions under which CL has the aforementioned positive effects, in 2014 Slavin proposed that four mutually complementary theoretical perspectives should be taken into account:⁹ 1) the motivational perspective, which focuses on the goal structure developed by teachers in the tasks assigned, as this is what

⁶ The benefits of cooperative learning have been demonstrated in seven theoretical reviews conducted by the University of Minnesota, which identify the most significant advances in research in this field in the twentieth century. For an analysis of these reviews, see M^a del Mar GARCÍA CABRERA, Ignacio GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ & Rosario MÉRIDA SERRANO: "Validación del cuestionario de evaluación ACOES. Análisis del trabajo cooperativo en educación superior", *Revista de Investigación Educativa*, 30 (2012, 1), pp. 87-109, <https://doi.org/10.6018/rie.30.1.114091>

⁷ David W. JOHNSON & Roger T. JOHNSON: *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*, Interaction Book Company, 1989; Robyn M. GILLIES: "Developments in Cooperative Learning: Review of research", *Anales de Psicología*, 30 (2014, 3), pp. 792-801, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201191>; Eva KYNDT, Elisabeth RAES, Bart LISMONT, Fran TIMMERS, Eduardo CASCALLAR & Filip DOCHY: "A meta-analysis of the effects of face-to-face cooperative learning. Do recent studies falsify or verify earlier findings?", *Educational Research Review*, 10 (2013), pp. 133-149; Robert E. SLAVIN: "Cooperative Learning and Academic Achievement: Why Does Groupwork Work?", *Anales de Psicología*, 30 (2014, 3), pp. 785-791, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201201>; José Manuel SERRANO & Rosa M. PONS: "Cooperative learning: we also do it without task structure", *Intercultural Education*, 18 (2007, 3), pp. 215-230, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980701463562>

⁸ M^a del Mar GARCÍA CABRERA, Ignacio GONZÁLEZ LÓPEZ & Rosario MÉRIDA SERRANO. "Validación del cuestionario...", pp. 87-109, <https://doi.org/10.6018/rie.30.1.114091>

⁹ Robert E. SLAVIN: "Cooperative Learning and ...", pp. 785-791, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201201>

motivates pupils to learn;¹⁰ 2) the social cohesion perspective, which suggests that the relationships established among the members of the group enable them to help each other to learn;¹¹ 3) the cognitive perspective, which claims that to learn pupils need to carry out a cognitive restructuring of new content and CL helps in this process;¹² 4) the developmental perspective, according to which the interaction between pupils with different levels of development in different aspects stimulates the ability of individuals more than if they work alone.¹³

CL is thus currently seen as a methodological tool that can meet the differing needs of twenty-first century individuals.¹⁴ This also applies to university education, where an appreciation of the importance of cooperative work for the development of competencies has led to an increase in the use of cooperative group work as a basis for learning.¹⁵ It must be understood that cooperating is not a simple action: learning cooperatively requires the teaching-learning situation to be designed with the context in mind,¹⁶ especially if we are to train teachers so they can apply it in their future classes.

Finally, we should note that CL is not the only way for pupils to cooperate in class. In recent years, in France *pédagogies coopératives* (PC) have become very influential. They constitute a concept of cooperation between pupils more in line with the French *Éducation nouvelle*, an approach that is now beginning to take off in small pockets in Spain and Italy.

3. Semantic clarification and approaches to cooperation between pupils in Spain, Italy and France

There are various concepts of cooperation in learning and numerous ways of implementing it. Since the early twentieth century different cultures of application have emerged, which can be grouped under two main headings: *cooperative learning* (CL),

¹⁰ David W. JOHNSON & Roger T. JOHNSON: "An educational psychology success story: Social interdependence theory and cooperative learning", *Educational Researcher*, 38 (2009), pp. 365-379.

¹¹ Elizabeth G. COHEN: *Designing groupwork: Strategies for the heterogeneous classroom* (2nd ed.), New York, Teachers College Press, 1994.

¹² Dale H. SCHUNK: *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (6th ed.), Boston, Allyn and Bacon, 2012.

¹³ William DAMON: "Peer education: The untapped potential", *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 5 (1984), pp. 331-343, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973\(84\)90006-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0193-3973(84)90006-6)

¹⁴ David W. JOHNSON & Roger T. JOHNSON: "Cooperative Learning in 21st Century", *Anales de Psicología*, 30 (2014, 3), pp. 841-851, <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.30.3.201241>

¹⁵ Dolors CAÑABATE & Jordi COLOMER (coord.): *El aprendizaje cooperativo en la universidad del siglo XXI. Propuestas, estrategias y reflexiones*, Barcelona, Graó, 2020.

¹⁶ Rosa COLOMINA & Javier ONRUBIA: "Interacción educativa y aprendizaje escolar: la interacción entre alumnos", in César COLL, Jesús PALACIOS & Álvaro MARCHESI (comps.): *Desarrollo psicológico y educación*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2004 (vol. 2), pp. 415-436.

which has Anglo-Saxon roots, and *pédagogies coopératives* (PC), which has francophone roots.¹⁷ These approaches do not conflict or compete with one another but are systems based on different traditions for promoting learning that, in some ways, complement each other.¹⁸

3.1. The concept of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning, so called since its origins in the United States and known internationally by this term, is a widespread approach to classroom work. It has been translated into Spanish as *aprendizaje cooperativo* and into Italian as *apprendimento cooperativo*, using a similar form and structure. However, in Italy “cooperative learning” is often used untranslated, to distinguish this specific way of working from the Italian expression *apprendimento cooperativo*, which is considered to have a more general meaning.¹⁹

In France, publications about cooperation between pupils are not altogether clear, as “cooperative learning” has been translated into French as *apprentissage coopératif*, but also as *pédagogie coopérative*.²⁰ Of the two possible French translations, Rouiller and Howden adopt the second, *pédagogie coopérative*.²¹ Lerhaus and Rouiller argue that this translation of “cooperative learning” makes it possible in Europe to establish links with Freinet’s approach and complement it in areas it did not initially consider.²² For their part, Connac and Irigoyen use *apprentissage coopératif*, which is closer to the forms used in other Romance languages, avoiding the suggestion of a direct relationship between Freinet and cooperative learning,²³ and distinguishing it clearly from *pédagogies coopératives* (in the plural).²⁴

¹⁷ Albert IRIGOYEN & Sylvain CONNAC: “L’aprenentatge cooperatiu i les “pédagogies coopératives”: dues concepcions diferents de treballar en grup cooperatiu”, *Comunicació Educativa*, 36 (2023).

¹⁸ Sylvain CONNAC & Albert IRIGOYEN: “Apprentissage coopératif ou pédagogies coopératives ?”, *Éducation et socialisation*, 67 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.4000/edso.22840>

¹⁹ Mario MARTINELLI: *In gruppo si impara*, Turin, SEI, 2004, p. 66; Mario COMOGLIO & Miguel Angel CARDOSO: *Insegnare e apprendere in gruppo. Il Cooperative Learning*, Rome, LAS, 1996, p. 4.

²⁰ R. LOUIS: “Les facteurs qui influent sur l’adoption par l’enseignante d’une nouvelle approche pédagogique : le cas de la pédagogie coopérative”, *Vie pédagogique*, 96 (1995), pp. 47-50; Jim HOWDEN & Marguerite KOPIEC: *Ajouter aux compétences : enseigner, coopérer et apprendre au secondaire et au collégial*, Montréal, Chenelière Education, 2000; Yviane ROUILLER & Katia LERHAUS: “Pédagogie coopérative : de l’expérience et de la science”, *Éducateur*, 5 (2003), pp. 24-26.

²¹ Yviane ROUILLER & Jim HOWDEN: *La pédagogie coopérative. Reflets de pratiques et approfondissements*, Montréal, Chenelière Éducation, 2010, p. 13.

²² Katia LERHAUS & Yviane ROUILLER (dir.): *Vers des apprentissages en coopération : rencontres et perspectives*, Peter Lang, 2008.

²³ We should point out that Freinet did not implement cooperative learning, but cooperation in school.

²⁴ Sylvain CONNAC & Albert IRIGOYEN: “Apprentissage coopératif...”

Cooperative learning has a long history, dating back to the work of Dewey,²⁵ Lewin,²⁶ and Thelen.²⁷ Lewin influenced Deutsch,²⁸ and subsequently Deutsch influenced Aronson and Johnson. Elliot Aronson created the Jigsaw classroom, while, starting in the 1970s and 1980s, David W. Johnson and his brother, Roger T. Johnson, laid the foundations of social interdependence theory and established the theoretical and practical principles of the Learning Together, the essential basis of CL. Studies by researchers such as Slavin, Sharan and Sharan, and Kagan and Kagan appeared in the same period. All of them argue for a series of cooperative methods and simple techniques. The theory constantly evolved and the approach was increasingly applied in the United States and Canada, while the study and practice of cooperative learning also began to grow in Israel, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom, each with its own specific characteristics, and subsequently spread on a smaller scale to Italy, Sweden and Spain.

But what exactly do we mean by cooperative learning? CL is a generic term, an umbrella concept that includes a range of methods and simple techniques that originated in Anglo-Saxon countries and that organise teaching in schools implemented via cooperative interaction between pupils, most of whom work in groups. The most widely used cooperative methods include: Learning Together, developed by David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson; the Jigsaw classroom, developed by Elliot Aronson; Jigsaw II, developed by Robert E. Slavin; Student Team Learning, developed by David De Vries, Keith Edwards and Robert E. Slavin; Group Investigation, developed by Shlomo Sharan and Yael Sharan; the Structural Approach developed by Miguel Kagan and Spencer Kagan; Complex Instruction by Elizabeth G. Cohen; and the Collaborative Approach developed by Helen Cowie. All these cooperative methods differ in practical aspects and their organisational structure, but they share some essential features and are designed to transform group work into a cooperative activity.²⁹ They all reject

²⁵ John DEWEY: *The school and society*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1915.

²⁶ Kurt LEWIN: (1945). "The research center for group dynamics", *Sociometry*, 8 (1945, 2), pp. 126-136. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2785233>

²⁷ Herbert THELEN: *Dynamics of groups at work*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1954.

²⁸ Morton DEUTSCH: "A theory of cooperation and competition", *Human Relations*, 2 (1949), pp. 129-152; Morton DEUTSCH: "Cooperation and Trust: Some Theoretical Notes", in Marshall R. JONES (ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, Lincoln, Univer. Nebraska Press, 1962, pp. 275-320.

²⁹ Neil DAVIDSON: "L'apprentissage coopératif et en collaboration - une tentative d'unification", in Jacqueline S. THOUSAND, Richard A. VILLA & Ann I. NEVIN (eds.): *La créativité et l'apprentissage coopératif*, Montréal, Les Editions Logiques, 1998, pp. 63-101.

competitive and individualistic learning.³⁰ However, it should be pointed out that views on the links between cooperation and competition vary, as some of the proponents of CL defend competition between groups, while others maintain that it should be avoided. The myth of competition, which has a strong presence in the United States, has led these proponents to tend, to a greater or lesser extent, to introduce a competitive aspect in their models.³¹

Generally speaking, the programmes designed to apply CL and proposals for assessing its implementation adapt the ideas put forward by Slavin and his associates in “Learning to cooperate, cooperating to learn”. CL serves two purposes: 1) pupils will learn more and better (cooperating to learn: cooperative group work as a resource); 2) they will learn to work as a team (learning to cooperate: cooperative group work as another part of course content that they must learn).

Important studies from French-speaking countries include the research published by Buchs, Howden, Rouiller, Lerhaus and Baudrit. Cooperative learning features strongly in the scientific literature in Spanish thanks to publications by researchers such as Ovejero, Rué, Pujolàs, Lago, Zariquiey, Duran, Iglesias, Fernández-Río, Gavalda, Torrego, Negro, Serrano, Cañabate and Colomer, and many others.³²

Spanish authors all refer to the Anglo-Saxon approach (cooperative learning), taking Johnson and Johnson as a model. Pere Pujolàs, for example, structures

³⁰ David W. JOHNSON, Roger T. JOHNSON & Edythe J. HOLUBEC: *El Aprendizaje cooperativo en el aula*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1999.

³¹ Alain BAUDRIT: *L'apprentissage coopératif – Origines et évolutions d'une méthode pédagogique*, Brussels, De Boeck, 2005, p. 23.

³² Alain BAUDRIT: *L'apprentissage coopératif...*; Céline BUCHS: “Preparar a los estudiantes para cooperar y organizar interacciones para apoyar el aprendizaje en la universidad”, in Dolors CAÑABATE & Jordi COLOMER (coords.): *El aprendizaje cooperativo en la universidad del siglo XXI. Propuestas, estrategias y reflexiones*, Barcelona, Editorial Graó, 2020, pp. 51-59; Dolors CAÑABATE & Jordi COLOMER (coord.): *El aprendizaje cooperativo en la universidad del siglo XXI. Propuestas, estrategias y reflexiones*, Barcelona, Graó, 2020; David DURAN GISBERT & Carles MONEREO FONT: *Entramado. Métodos de aprendizaje cooperativo y colaborativo*, Barcelona, Horsori editorial, 2012; Antoni GAVALDÀ (coord.): *El treball cooperatiu. Una estratègia per ensenyar i aprendre des de les ciències socials*, Tarragona y Vic, Universitat Rovira i Virgili i Universitat de Vic, 2016; Jesús C. IGLESIAS MUÑIZ, Laura F. GONZÁLEZ-GARCÍA & Javier FERNÁNDEZ-RÍO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo: Teoría y práctica en las diferentes áreas y materias del currículum*, Madrid, Pirámide, 2017; Katia LERHAUS & Yviane ROUILLER (dir.): *Vers des apprentissages en coopération : rencontres et perspectives*, Peter Lang, 2008; Anastasio OVEJERO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo crítico. Mucho más que una eficaz técnica pedagógica*, Madrid, Pirámide, 2018; Pere PUJOLÀS & José Ramón LAGO: *Aprender en equipos de aprendizaje cooperativo. El Programa CA/AC (Cooperar para aprender/Aprender a cooperar)*, Barcelona, Octaedro, 2018; Yviane ROUILLER & Jim HOWDEN: *La pédagogie coopérative. Reflets de pratiques et approfondissements*, Montréal, Chenelière Éducation, 2010; Yviane ROUILLER & Katia LERHAUS: “Pédagogie coopérative : de l'expérience et de la science”, *Éducateur*, 5 (2003); Joan RUÉ: *El treball cooperatiu. L'organització social de l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge*, Barcelona, Barcanova, 1991; José Manuel SERRANO & Rosa M. PONS: “Cooperative learning: we also do it without task structure”, *Intercultural Education*, 18 (2007, 3), pp. 215-230, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980701463562>; Juan Carlos TORREGO & Andrés NEGRO (coords.): *Aprendizaje cooperativo en las aulas*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2012; Francisco ZARIQUIEY BIONDI: *Cooperar para aprender. Transformar el aula en una red de aprendizaje cooperativo*, Spain SM, 2016.

cooperative learning teams by developing notebooks and team plans as a mechanism for configuring the team and for its self-regulation, adapting the TAI (team assisted individualisation) technique, developed by Slavin in 1984, which combines individualised, or rather personalised, work with teamwork. There is no inter-group or inter-individual competition of any kind and emphasis is placed on cooperative strategies, such as Jigsaw classroom (developed by Aronson). David Duran is a member of the *Grup de Recerca sobre Aprenentatge entre Iguals* (GRAI), which conducts research and trains teachers with the aim of introducing peer learning as a standard methodological practice on three levels: 1) among pupils: promoting teaching by peers and enabling pupils to learn based on their differences; 2) among teachers: by forming pairs in the same school who learn from each other, putting new ideas into practice together; 3) among schools: through encounters between pairs of groups from different schools, support via an online classroom and exchange visits. Antoni Gavaldà is interested in transmitting the principles of cooperativism to schools and specifies what cooperative values are essential to tackle and structure learning-teaching situations in class. Cooperative group work thus not only ensures the assimilation of knowledge but also the acquisition of social competence in the learning process, maintaining the cooperative groups used in the cooperative learning, but based on the principles of cooperativism.

In Italy, where translations of the seminal studies (Johnson brothers, Slavin, etc.) are available, the most notable researcher is Mario Comoglio.³³ This highly respected researcher has attempted to synthesise the trends in cooperative learning, as reflected in the innovative educational projects undertaken in Turin, which treat cooperative learning as more than a simple teaching method.³⁴ He admits that cooperative learning is not a “thing” that can be defined precisely, although in very general terms it could be understood as a form of learning achieved through cooperation with other members of the class (and not excluding individual work or competitive activities).³⁵

³³ His key works include Mario COMOGLIO and Miguel Ángel CARDOSO: *Insegnare e apprendere...*; Mario COMOGLIO: *Il Cooperative Learning. Strategie di sperimentazione*, in “Quaderni di Animazione e Formazione – Animazione Sociale”, Turin, Edizioni Gruppo Abele, 1999; and, above all, ID.: *Educare insegnando. Apprendere ad applicare il Cooperative Learning*, Rome, LAS, 1998.

³⁴ <http://www.apprendimentocooperativo.it>

³⁵ Mario COMOGLIO & Miguel Angel CARDOSO: *Insegnare e apprendere...*, pp. 5-6. In the same year, Comoglio suggested a more precise definition: “È un metodo di apprendimento-insegnamento in cui la variabile significativa è la cooperazione tra gli studenti. È un metodo di conduzione della classe che mette in gioco, nell'apprendimento, le risorse degli studenti. Così inteso, si distingue dai metodi tradizionali che puntano invece sulla qualità e sull'estensione delle conoscenze didattiche e di contenuto dell'insegnante. Infatti, diversamente da questi ultimi, questo metodo permette di gestire e organizzare esperienze di apprendimento condotte dagli stessi studenti e, insieme,

For practical reasons, Italian schools tend to adopt the most readily applicable and more technical approaches from the Anglo-Saxon tradition, and there is a remarkably extensive bibliography in Italian, apart from the key works of Mario Comoglio,³⁶ as well as specific studies of the usefulness of cooperative learning in tackling the challenges of cultural diversity.³⁷ However, in Italy, as in France, there is also a tradition that is more concerned with examining the critical sense that education should have, with a more social and psychological component (for example, the *Movimento di Cooperazione Educativa*, which follows the work of Célestin Freinet).³⁸

In Italy as a whole, the relationship between cooperative learning and the cooperative movement (and initiatives related to the social and solidarity economy) is not as close as one might have expected, and support from the cooperative movement for educational projects is relatively limited considering its strength in certain regions.

There are notable precedents, such as Comincioli and Gheza, who significantly referred to the “didactics of cooperation” in a project promoted by the cooperative movement, which aimed to educate young people about the cooperative way of life and cooperative values.³⁹ But educational initiatives coming from the cooperative world are usually limited to activities designed for pupils to form cooperatives or prepare sustainable cooperative projects. It would seem that schemes that are politically and socially more ambitious, with a stronger desire to bring about change, are normally associated with another type of institution or cultural cooperative: the FARE cooperative in Umbria, for example, does not even mention cooperative learning.⁴⁰

3.2. The concept of *pédagogies coopératives*

sviluppare obiettivi educativi di collaborazione, solidarietà, responsabilità e relazione, riconosciuti efficaci anche per una migliore qualità dell'apprendimento” (Mario COMOGLIO: “Verso una definizione del cooperative learning”, *Animazione Sociale*, 4 (1996).

³⁶ For example, Alberto AGOSTI: *Gruppo di lavoro e lavoro di gruppo. Aspetti pedagogici e didattici*, Milán, Franco Angeli, 2006; Giorgio CHIARI, *Il Cooperative Learning nelle scuole italiane: Apprendimento e Democrazia*, Trento, Università degli Studi di Trento, 2003; A. GARDIN, M. AZZINI and R. VERRI: “Il Cooperative Learning: teoria e prassi di insegnamento attraverso la cooperazione”, *Psicologia e Scuola*, 86-89 (1997-1998); Anna LA PROVA: *Apprendimento cooperativo in pratica. Proposte operative per attività di gruppo in classe*, Trento, Edizioni Centro Studi Erickson, 2015; ÍD.: *Apprendimento cooperativo e differenze individuali*, Trento, Edizioni Erickson, 2008; Claudia MATINI: *Cooperative Learning: istruzioni per l'uso*, Perugia, Editrice La Fonte, 2019; Rinaldo RIZZI: *La cooperazione nell'educazione*, Bari, Laterza, 1991.

³⁷ Stefania LAMBERTI: *Apprendimento cooperativo e educazione interculturale. Percorsi e attività per la scuola primaria*, Trento, Erickson, 2010; Isabella PESCARMONA: *Innovazione educativa tra entusiasmo e fatica. Un'etnografia dell'apprendimento cooperativo*, Rome, CISU, 2012.

³⁸ www.mce-finem.it This group, which is more involved in school teaching than academic research, has published documents of great interest such as the journal *Cooperazione Educativa*. See: Rinaldo RIZZI: *La “cooperazione educativa” per una “pedagogia popolare”*. *Una storia del MCE*, Parma, Edizioni Junior, 2021.

³⁹ Giacomo COMINCIOLI & Franco GHEZA: *Didattica della cooperazione*, Brescia, Editrice La Scuola, 1989.

⁴⁰ <https://www.cooperativafare.it/>

Pédagogies coopératives (PC) are mainly the work of educationalists and educational movements associated with the *Éducation Nouvelle* and scientific research into the social dimension of learning. They do not promote the acquisition of cooperative skills or cooperative values but correspond more closely to the principle of “cooperating to learn”. This is the axiological framework in which leading French educationalists have presented cooperation between pupils, including Célestin and Élise Freinet with school cooperation, Roger Cousinet with free work in groups, Barthélémy Profit with school cooperatives, Fernand Oury with institutional pedagogy, and Philippe Meirieu with differentiated pedagogy and group learning. They have all contributed to the development of different approaches to education, encouraging cooperation between pupils in different forms and for different reasons. All these studies have become available thanks to educational movements such as ICEM-Pédagogie Freinet, the OCCE, the AGSAS, the GFEN, the AVPI, the CRAP, the RERS, the ICEM-34 group and the PIDAPI teaching association.⁴¹

In addition to these developments, university disciplines such as educational science have explored the social dimension of learning.⁴² They are generally based on constructivist theories of learning, which see cognitive obstacles as sources of epistemic development. In the PC framework, therefore, interpersonal relationships are regarded as vectors of three types of cooperative interaction: support in dealing with a problem, diversification of individual ideas, and inter-personal conflict (through the expression of differing opinions).⁴³

The *pédagogies coopératives* are consolidated today thanks to the tireless work of Sylvain Connac, who brings together under the PC umbrella a wide range of variants of cooperating to learn, including help (*aide*), mutual help (*entraide*), tutoring (*tutorat*), group work (*travail en groupe*) and team work (*travail en équipe*), plus other forms of

⁴¹ ICEM: Institut coopératif de l'école moderne, <http://www.icem-pedagogie-freinet.org/>
OCCE: Office central de la coopération à l'école, <http://www2.occe.coop/>
AGSAS: Association des groupes de soutien au soutien, <http://agsas.fr/>
GFEN: Groupe français d'éducation nouvelle, <http://www.gfen.asso.fr/fr/accueil>
AVPI: Association vers la pédagogie institutionnelle, <http://avpi-fernan-oury.fr/>
CRAP: Cercle de recherche et d'action pédagogiques, <http://www.cahiers-pedagogiques.com/Presentation-du-CRAP>
RERS: Réseaux d'échanges réciproques de savoirs, <https://www.rers-asso.org/>
ICEM34 – Pédagogie Freinet: Institut Coopératif de l'École Moderne de l'Hérault (34) – Pédagogie Freinet: <https://www.icem34.fr/>
PIDAPI: Parcours Individualisé des Apprentissages in Pédagogie Institutionnelle, <https://www.pidapi-asso.fr/>

⁴² Alain BAUDRIT: “Le tutorat : un enjeu pour une pratique pédagogique devenue objet scientifique ? (Note de synthèse)”. *Revue française de pédagogie*, 132 (2000), pp. 125-153; Céline DARNON, Fabrizio BUTERA & Gabriel MUGNY: *Des conflits pour apprendre*, Grenoble, Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2008.

⁴³ Sylvain CONNAC & Albert IRIGOYEN: “Apprentissage coopératif ou... ”, 67 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.4000/eds0.22840>

cooperation to build together, such as cooperative councils (*conseils coopératifs*), discussions with democratic and philosophical purposes (*discussion à visée démocratique et philosophique*), cooperative games (*jeux coopératif*), balances (*bilan*) and knowledge markets (*marché de connaissances*).

4. A comparison of cooperative learning and *pédagogies coopératives* in Spain, Italy and France

These two forms of cooperation between pupils, cooperative learning and *pédagogies coopératives*, both contribute to academic success and the well-being of pupils, although they generate different pedagogical paradigms. For the purposes of this study, we examine them from three perspectives: axiological, epistemological and praxeological:⁴⁴

- The axiological aspect of cooperative organisations emphasises the philosophical and political purposes they pursue.
- The epistemological aspect focuses on the theories on which the approach is based and its historical origins.
- The praxeological aspect deals with the practical realities of the classroom. We shall try to show how these cooperative practices apply to pupils and examine the positions taken by teachers.

4.1 Axiology: the values of cooperation

Cooperative learning (CL) is not merely a teaching resource but a type of content that pupils learn.⁴⁵ It allows equal rights to become equal opportunities, revealing the value of working and engaging together in a setting that promotes cooperation.⁴⁶ Cooperative groups have a dual purpose: 1) to teach pupils course content; 2) to teach teamwork as part of the course content. Participants also have two responsibilities: they have to learn themselves and they have to help their fellow pupils to learn.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Philippe MEIRIEU: *La riposte – Pour en finir avec les miroirs aux alouettes*, Paris, Editions Autrement, 2018.

⁴⁵ Clara MIR (coord.): *Cooperar en la escuela. La responsabilidad de educar para la democracia*, Barcelona, Graó, 1998; Pere PUJOLÀS: *9 ideas clave. El aprendizaje cooperativo*, Barcelona, Graó, 2008.

⁴⁶ Ramón FERREIRO & Margarita CALDERÓN: *El ABC del aprendizaje cooperativo. Trabajo en equipo para enseñar y aprender*, Méjico, Editorial Trillas, 2006; Anna LA PROVA: *Apprendimento cooperativo in pratica. Proposte operative per attività di gruppo in classe*, Trento, Edizioni Centro Studi Erickson, 2015, pp. 17-22.

⁴⁷ Pere PUJOLÀS: “Cooperar per aprendre i aprendre a cooperar: el treball en equips cooperatius com a recurs i com a contingut”, *Suports: revista catalana d’educació especial i atenció a la diversitat*, 12 (2012), pp. 21-37; Pere

Many researchers identify CL as a specific way of developing a cooperative climate in the classroom and fostering social skills such as sharing materials and resources, the ability to ask for and offer help, the ability to listen to others and respect them, etc.⁴⁸ Values are thus transmitted through positive interdependence, shared leadership, and individual responsibility combined with group responsibility.⁴⁹ CL is therefore backed by values such as solidarity, mutual help and respect for differences.

Howden and Rouiller refer to a precise matrix of values that are developed: respect, mutual help, commitment, openness to others, the right to be different, solidarity, trust, sharing, pleasure, autonomy, equity and empathic listening.⁵⁰

The Spanish “Cooperar para Aprender / Aprender a Cooperar” (“Cooperating to Learn / Learning to Cooperate (CA/AC)”) programme, created by Pere Pujolàs and José Ramón Lago in 2018, focuses on the development of two conditions: 1) recognising and connecting with people who are very different at a cognitive-emotional level;⁵¹ 2) ensuring that those whose inclusion is assured are not indifferent to exclusion and the suffering of those who are at risk of exclusion.⁵² The cooperative structure of these activities focus, therefore, on inclusion and equity.

In the French-speaking world, *pédagogies coopératives* (PC) have various educational purposes. First, they accommodate pupil diversity, considering their differences an asset that can help them to succeed. The class is organised along cooperative lines to allow differentiated teaching approaches to be applied, based on personalised designs.⁵³ Working in groups or teams, pupils can take part in collective activities and benefit from a common effort and the exchange of ideas. With assistance,

PUJOLÀS & José Ramón LAGO: *Aprender en equipos de aprendizaje cooperativo. El Programa CA/AC (Cooperar para aprender/Aprender a cooperar)*, Barcelona, Octaedro, 2018.

⁴⁸ Mario COMOGLIO: “Che cos’è il Cooperative Learning”, *Orientamenti Pedagogici*, 43 (1996), pp. 259-293; Mario COMOGLIO & Miguel Angel CARDOSO: *Insegnare e apprendere...*; Maurizio GENTILE & Carlo PETRACCA: *Apprendimento cooperativo: Spunti per l’innovazione didattica*, Turin, Elmedi; Anna LA PROVA: *Apprendimento cooperativo e differenze individuali*, Trento, Erickson, 2008; Anna LA PROVA: *Apprendimento cooperativo...*, 2015.

⁴⁹ Philip C. ABRAMI, Bette CHAMBERS, Catherine POULSEN, Christina DE SIMONE, Sylvia D’APOLLONIA & James HOWDEN: *Classroom connections: Understanding and using cooperative learning*, Toronto, Harcourt-Brace, 1995; Robert E. SLAVIN: *Aprendizaje cooperativo. Teoría, investigación y práctica*, Argentina, Aique, 1999; David W. JOHNSON & Roger T. JOHNSON: “Theoretical approaches to cooperative learning”. In Robyn M. GILLIES (ed.), *Collaborative Learning: Developments in Research and Practice*, New York, Nova Science Publishers, 2015, pp. 17-46.

⁵⁰ Yviane ROUILLER & Jim HOWDEN: *La pédagogie coopérative...*, 2010.

⁵¹ Roland G. THARP, Peggy ESTRADA, Stephanie S. DALTON & Lois A. YAMAUCHI, L. A: *Transformar la enseñanza. Excelencia, equidad, inclusión y armonía en las aulas y las escuelas*, Barcelona, Editorial Paidós, 2002.

⁵² Roger SLEE: *La escuela extraordinaria. Exclusión, escolarización y educación inclusiva*, Madrid, Ediciones Morata, 2012.

⁵³ Sylvain CONNAC: “Pour différencier : individualiser ou personnaliser ?”, *Education et Socialisation*, 59 (2021), <https://journals.openedition.org/edso/13683>

mutual help and tutoring, they have various ways of working and learning: alone, with others dealing with the same problem, asking for help when they are stuck, offering help (and, by so doing, reusing what they have learnt), working in a small group, or even individually, with the teacher.⁵⁴ The wide range of options available in PC means pupils can choose what seems most suitable for them, and teachers are no longer the only human resource available in the classroom to meet individual needs.

Another educational aim of cooperative organisation is to promote human and civic values. Three of them feature in the motto of the French Republic: liberty, equality and fraternity. By cooperating at school, pupils learn how to use freedoms that end where those of others begin. They work together so that they can all make equal progress: nobody gets left behind or becomes discouraged. This way of working turns the class into a community where the strengths of some are drawn on to help overcome the difficulties of others, so that the group becomes a structure characterised by appreciation and mutual support.⁵⁵ A cooperative classroom (one where the pupils can learn with, from and for others) is thus a space where values are put into action, where pupils experience values rather than just hearing about them.

These values are closely related to the ideals of fraternity, and in this sense, cooperation can contribute to pupils' well-being, ensuring they do not feel isolated. This form of cooperation is not so much about solidarity, which is based on the cold logic of well-understood mutual interests,⁵⁶ but is more closely related to the idea of collaboration.⁵⁷ The humanistic aspect of fraternity makes it richer and also more demanding, as it requires giving unconditional attention to others.⁵⁸ Cooperation between pupils is not, therefore, based on solidarity but on generosity, understood as disinterested giving of oneself.⁵⁹

In an interview published in the journal *Comunicació Educativa*,⁶⁰ Sylvain Connac argued that educational research into cooperation is fundamental: 1) to allow for

⁵⁴ Sylvain CONNAC: *La coopération entre élèves*, Futuroscope, Editions Canopé, 2017.

⁵⁵ Sylvain CONNAC & Albert IRIGOYEN: "Apprentissage coopératif ou..."

⁵⁶ Sylvain CONNAC: *La coopération, ça s'apprend*, Paris, ESF Editeur, 2020.

⁵⁷ Eloi LAURENT: *L'impasse collaborative – Pour une véritable économie de la coopération*, Paris, Les liens qui libèrent, 2018.

⁵⁸ Christian BUDEX: *Éduquer à la fraternité par la pratique de la philosophie à l'école (primaire et collège) : enjeux et conditions de possibilités*, Doctoral thesis, Université de Nantes, 2020.

⁵⁹ Abdennour BIDAR: *Quelles valeurs partager et transmettre aujourd'hui ?*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2016; Nicolas GO: "Approche coopérative et complexe en éducation", in Malini SUMPETH & François FOURCADE: *Oser la pédagogie coopérative complexe*, Chronique Sociale, 2013, pp. 47-80.

⁶⁰ Albert IRIGOYEN: "Entrevista a Sylvain Connac", *Comunicació Educativa*, 34 (2021), pp. 7–51. <https://doi.org/10.17345/comeduc20217-51>

diversity; 2) to study how and in what areas a cooperative organisation can advantageously replace normal practices of educational differentiation, which tend to discourage pupils and increase distances within the class.

4.2 Epistemology: theories of learning

The basic theories on which cooperative learning and *pédagogies coopératives* are based are widely known. In recent decades, the most prominent psychological and pedagogical theories highlight the benefits and effectiveness of interaction with others for learning, albeit from various perspectives.

Pédagogies coopératives (PC) have been influenced by various sources. Firstly, the *Éducation Nouvelle* movement, particularly the ideas of French educationalists such as Célestin and Elise Freinet, Roger Cousinet, Barthélémy Profit, Fernand Oury and Philippe Meirieu. The Freinets were the source of major developments in education, leading to the creation of the *Institut Coopératif de l'École Moderne* (ICEM). The Freinet approach is founded on five pillars: pupils' freedom of expression, experimental trial and error, educational techniques, democratic participation, and cooperation.⁶¹ Roger Cousinet developed a "free group-work method",⁶² which tended to encourage, through mutual help in the class, the moral development of pupils, based on rejecting blind obedience to the binding forms of solidarity imposed by communities. Barthélémy Profit, motivated by the idea of mutualism as an educational tool for civic commitment, was one of the founders of the *Office Central de la Coopération à l'École* (OCCE), promoting the creation of school cooperatives, democratically organised and managed by and for children.⁶³ Fernand Oury and his brother Jean Oury were at the forefront of educational groups based on the Freinet movement, but they emphasised the unconscious dimension of educational relationships,⁶⁴ thereby developing the institutional pedagogy movement. For example, we might consider the cooperative life of a class within a pupil council, a structure empowered to establish rules and create

⁶¹ Sylvain CONNAC *et al.* : *Les Pédagogies Freinet - Origines, concepts et outils pour tous*, Paris, Editions Eyrolles, 2019.

⁶² Louis RAILLON: "Roger Cousinet". *Perspectives : revue trimestrielle d'éducation comparée*, vol. XXIII, 1-2 (1993), pp. 225-236.

⁶³ Jean VUILLET: *La coopération à l'école*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1968.

⁶⁴ Jacques PAIN: *Pédagogie institutionnelle*, Encyclopedia Universalis, 2005, http://www.jacques-pain.fr/jacques-pain/Definition_PI.html

new educational institutions.⁶⁵ Philippe Meirieu's contributions in the field of differentiated instruction and group learning, for example, also inspired various educational reforms.⁶⁶

Secondly, the development of PC was based on theories of learning explored through numerous works on psychology, initially based on research carried out by Jean Piaget. They were then further defined by the social constructivist school of thought.⁶⁷ Mugny, Doise and Perret-Clermont have described how disagreements between pupils' ideas (social-cognitive conflict) could develop into states of doubt and uncertainty (cognitive conflict).⁶⁸ These questions are the source of a need to learn that can be satisfied by a formal relationship with the content of teaching (like an answer to the questions pupils ask themselves). Vygotsky drew attention to the importance of the social dimension of learning in his definition of the zone of proximal development. The concept was further explored by Bruner through different approaches to scaffolding and through giving the pupils themselves a role in teaching.⁶⁹ Another aspect of social learning was identified by Bandura: vicarious learning. He pointed out that we can learn through a double process of observing and then imitating a third party.⁷⁰ All these approaches have been extensively studied in the field of educational sciences, which examine them in the light of sociological and philosophical concerns.

Cooperative learning (CL) is also based on theories built on the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, and Mugny, Doise and Perret-Clermont. The neo-Piagetian notion of "socio-cognitive conflict", i.e., cognitive imbalance and restored balance, brought about by social interaction,⁷¹ is as important as the notion of "shared intentionality" in cooperation,⁷² and the role of (interdependent) dialogue – but not conversation – as a vehicle by which to generate the above phenomena.⁷³ And the contributions of Bruner and Bandura should not be disregarded.

⁶⁵ Maria PAGONI: "Conceptualisation des règles scolaires et éducation à la citoyenneté au sein des conseils de coopérative". *Carrefours de l'éducation*, 31 (2011, 1), pp. 177-192.

⁶⁶ Website of Philippe Meirieu: <http://meirieu.com/>; Albert IRIGOYEN: "Entrevista a Philippe Meirieu", *Comunicació Educativa*, 35 (2022), pp. 9–57. <https://doi.org/10.17345/comeduc20229-57>

⁶⁷ Willem DOISE & Gabriel MUGNY: *Le développement social de l'intelligence*, Paris, Interéditions, 1981.

⁶⁸ Céline BUCHS *et al.* : "Conflits et apprentissage : régulation des conflits sociocognitifs et apprentissage", *Revue française de pédagogie*, 163 (2008), pp. 105-125.

⁶⁹ Jerome BRUNER: *Savoir faire, savoir dire*, Paris, PUF, 2011.

⁷⁰ Albert BANDURA: *L'apprentissage social*, Brussels, Editions Pierre Mardaga, 1976.

⁷¹ Gabriel MUGNY & William DOISE: *La construcción social de la inteligencia*, Méjico, Trillas, 1983.

⁷² Michael TOMASELLO: *A Natural History of Human Thinking*, Harvard University Press, 2014.

⁷³ David H. JONASSEN (2009). "Reconciling a human cognitive architecture", in S. TOBIAS & T.-M. DUFFY (eds.): *Constructivist Theory Applied to Instruction: Success or Failure?*, London, Routledge.

Even so, unlike PC, the origins of CL are to be found in John Dewey's work on learning as a social and democratic process and Kurt Lewin's studies of group dynamics, followed by Morton Deutsch, who defined it on the basis of social relationships and the theory of social interdependence. In the 1970s and 1980s the Johnson brothers gave further support to the theory of social interdependence, as described in the work of Morton Deutsch and Kurt Lewin.⁷⁴

The theory of social interdependence holds that the way it is structured within the group determines the interaction between members and the results of learning. According to the type of interaction, there are three types of interdependence:

- Positive interdependence (cooperation)
- Negative interdependence (competition)
- Absence of interdependence (individualistic efforts)

Setting the goal for pupils to both learn themselves and to ensure that the other members of the group learn gives rise to positive interdependence.⁷⁵ To promote positive interdependence it is therefore necessary to establish group objectives or goals (interdependent goals) as well as other forms of interdependence: tasks, roles, resources, etc.⁷⁶ But it is important to point out that interdependence is not the only element that needs to be present for cooperative interaction to work. Scientists agree on the five essential elements for any work structure in a cooperative group. They come from the Learning Together Method, proposed by Johnson and Johnson, which is the model most often applied by teachers.⁷⁷ These are: 1) positive interdependence; 2) individual accountability; 3) promotive interaction; 4) social skills; and 5) group processing.

However, other authors have added further criteria. For example, in the Spanish literature, Ovejero includes equitable participation, equal opportunities for success, heterogeneity and shared leadership.⁷⁸ In the Italian literature, La Prova refers to

⁷⁴The Johnson brothers claim that the theory of social interdependence dates back to the early twentieth century and the work of Kurt Koffka, one of the founders of the Gestalt school. Koffka's colleague, Kurt Lewin, further refined his ideas in the 1920s. Deutsch is considered a disciple of Lewin and continued his work on social interdependence, and David W. Johnson is considered a disciple of Deutsch. Information taken from the Johnson and Johnson website: <http://www.co-operation.org/what-is-cooperative-learning>

⁷⁵ Jesús C. IGLESIAS MUÑIZ, Laura F. GONZÁLEZ-GARCÍA & Javier FERNÁNDEZ-RÍO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo: Teoría y práctica en las diferentes áreas y materias del currículum*, Madrid, Ediciones Pirámide, 2017, p. 46.

⁷⁶ David W. JOHNSON, Roger T. JOHNSON & Edythe Johnson HOLUBEC: *El Aprendizaje cooperativo...*, pp. 73-80; Pere PUJOLÀS & José Ramón LAGO: *Aprender en equipos...*, pp. 71-77.

⁷⁷ Anna LA PROVA: *Aprendizaje cooperativo...*, p. 11.

⁷⁸ Anastasio OVEJERO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo crítico. Mucho más que una eficaz técnica pedagógica*, Madrid, Pirámide, 2018, pp. 67-70.

Johnson and Johnson's five characteristics but adds two more: contemporaneous actions and distributed leadership.

In the literature in French, Buchs argues that positive interdependence and individual responsibility are the keys to cooperation and that a small number of pupils per group (two to five) makes individual face-to-face interaction possible.⁷⁹ Staquet lists six principles for CL: 1) a climate favourable to cooperation; 2) work teams; 3) positive interdependence and empowerment; 4) social and cognitive skills for cooperation; 5) consideration of group dynamics; 6) a teacher who can be consulted and acts as a facilitator.⁸⁰ Connac, meanwhile, defines Learning Together as: 1) working in small teams; 2) individual responsibility; 3) positive interdependence.⁸¹

So, it is clear that merely putting pupils together and allowing them to interact is not enough to automatically obtain favourable results,⁸² and it is also clear that the decisive factor is not the amount of interaction, but rather the nature of that interaction.⁸³ Increasing awareness of this reality has led educationalists to intensify their efforts to identify forms of social organisation in learning activities that favour interaction between pupils.

4.3 Praxeology: the most common cooperative practices

Cooperative learning (CL) is an effective approach to ensuring that pupils acquire the specific and generic competences defined for each level and subject area and to establish a way of doing, being and living together in class. It is not only an end in itself, it is also a way of supporting learning: pupils learn through cooperation and learn to cooperate, while the teacher oversees “the conditions for constructive interaction”.⁸⁴ It also involves training pupils in the social skills necessary for their school work.⁸⁵

But it is important to recognise that developing cooperative structures (methods and simple techniques) is a complex process, and one which is even difficult to

⁷⁹ Céline BUCHS: “Preparar a los estudiantes...”

⁸⁰ Christian STAQUET: *Une classe qui coopère – Pourquoi ? Comment ?*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2007, p. 17.

⁸¹ Sylvain CONNAC: *La coopération, ça...*, pp. 69-70.

⁸² Albert IRIGOYEN: “Entrevista a Philippe Meirieu...”

⁸³ César COLL: “Estructura grupal interacción entre alumnos y aprendizaje escolar”, *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, 27/28 (1984), pp. 119-138.

⁸⁴ Céline BUCHS: “Preparar a los estudiantes...”, p. 52.

⁸⁵ Christian STAQUET: *Une classe qui coopère...*, 2007; Yviane ROUILLER & Jim HOWDEN: *La pédagogie coopérative...*, 2010; Céline BUCHS, Ingrid GILLES, Jean-Philippe ANTONIETTI & Fabrizio BUTERA: “Why students need training to cooperate: A test in statistics learning at university”, *Educational Psychology*, 36 (2016, 5), pp. 956-974.

classify.⁸⁶ Although teachers can use CL according to their teaching philosophies and practices, each has its own features and peculiarities and uses specific cooperative strategies. It therefore seems fundamental that teachers should know some of these structures well, and especially understand the conceptual principles on which CL is based, so they can choose the option that best suits their circumstances.

Over the years, to assist in the implementation of CL, much advice has been given and many programmes have emerged within major research projects that promote CL as a tool to improve learning, increase social cohesion and foster inclusion. Generally, they view cooperation both as educational content (learning to cooperate) and as a resource for learning (cooperating to learn). For example, the schemes proposed by Pujolàs and Lago in Spain and by La Prova in Italy pay special attention to inclusion, equity, social cohesion and harmony in the school.⁸⁷ We thus see that these educational approaches can be directed towards the contributions that cooperation makes in building learning, not only as a strategy for cognitive development but also as a methodology for interaction, a way of organising work that favours metacognitive habits and self-assessment, and a strategy for socialisation.⁸⁸ By and large, the principles of cooperative learning are applied in schools: pupils work in small groups (from two to six members, although four heterogeneous members is the recommended number for the creation of stable groups) with specific responsibilities (coordinator, spokesperson, organiser and secretary, for example) and with common objectives for which the members depend on each other. In these small groups, with the guidance, support, instruction and assessment of the teacher, pupils help each other, evaluate ideas, discuss, reach consensus and break away from traditional individualistic and competitive teaching-learning models.

Cooperating to learn through cooperative methods can be a complex and often difficult task. Because cooperating is not a simple action, learning through cooperation requires the design of the teaching-learning situation to take the context into account. This demands rigour in the conditions under which it is applied. Teachers cannot be mere technicians who apply a method. They must internalise the method and adapt it to the real situation in the class, modifying the organisational structure if necessary and

⁸⁶ David DURAN GISBERT & Carles MONEREO FONT: *Entramado. Métodos de aprendizaje cooperativo y colaborativo*, Barcelona, Horsori editorial, 2012.

⁸⁷ Pere PUJOLÀS & José Ramón LAGO: *Aprender en equipos...*, 2018; Anna LA PROVA: *Apprendimento cooperativo...*, 2015.

⁸⁸ Joan RUÉ: "El aula: un espacio para la cooperación", in Clara MIR (coord.): *Cooperación en la escuela. La responsabilidad de educar para la democracia*, Barcelona, Graó, 1998, pp. 17-50.

designing cooperative techniques to guide learning.⁸⁹ The role of the teacher is fundamental for guaranteeing the participation of all the pupils and cooperative activities must be structured so as to promote simultaneous interaction between pupils and ensure they participate on an equal footing. The teacher is also responsible for explaining the reasons for cooperation and clarifying the nature of interdependence.⁹⁰

Although these approaches call for the application of highly structured cooperative programmes, it must be pointed out that research into cooperation in education and its practical application are at an early stage and, while we are seeing progress in schools, it is not always along the right lines.⁹¹

In the case of *pédagogies coopératives* (PC), we need to specify the nature of the (very diverse) organisations involved and, for each type, determine what specific measures are necessary for cooperation to contribute to their progress. It is in this sense that didactic techniques of cooperation between students are currently being developed,⁹² detailing practices such as help, mutual help, peer tutoring, group work, team work, workshops, games, cooperative advice and knowledge markets. These can be presented in two ways: the requirement to cooperate (as a formal teacher initiative or an informal pupil initiative) and their relationship with knowledge (symmetrical or asymmetrical).

These first forms of PC are intended to help pupils to succeed academically. Other forms pay more attention to their well-being and the conditions in which they learn, by constructing a non-threatening work environment, where pupils feel relaxed. They include cooperative councils,⁹³ cooperative games,⁹⁴ knowledge markets (or

⁸⁹ Albert IRIGOYEN: “El treball cooperatiu en l’educació: peça clau per a la construcció d’un futur més democràtic i de participació responsable”, in Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS (coord.), *Ciutadania compromesa i educació. Propostes per al foment de la memòria democràtica*, Tarragona, Publicacions URV, 2021, pp. 11-26. <http://llibres.urv.cat/index.php/purv/catalog/book/483>

⁹⁰ Céline BUCHS: “Comment organiser l’apprentissage des élèves par petits groupes?”. En *Conférence Différenciation pédagogique: comment adapter l’enseignement pour la réussite de tous les élèves?*, Paris, Conseil national d’étude des systèmes scolaires (Cnesco)/Institut Français de l’Éducation (Ifé), 2017.

⁹¹ Albert IRIGOYEN: “Entrevista a Antoni Gavalda”, *Comunicació Educativa*, 33 (2020), pp. 7–28. <https://doi.org/10.17345/comeduc20207-28>

⁹² Sylvain CONNAC: “L’école française et les pédagogies coopératives pour apprendre”. *Revue Internationale d’éducation de Sèvres – CIEP*, 90 (2022), pp. 53-62, <https://journals.openedition.org/ries/12745>

⁹³ Jean LE GAL: *Les droits de l’enfant à l’école, pour une éducation à la citoyenneté*, Brussels, De Boeck et Belin, 2002; Claude LAPLACE: *Pratiquer les conseils d’élèves et les assemblées de classes*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2008; Claude PIÉTRONS: *Pratiquer les conseils de la classe*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2022.

⁹⁴ Mildred MASHEDER: *Jeux coopératifs pour bâtir la paix*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2005.

knowledge exchange networks),⁹⁵ and democratic discussion (especially of a philosophical nature).⁹⁶

5. Possible areas of convergence between cooperative learning and the foundations of the social and solidarity economy

There is substantial evidence to suggest that social alternatives based on the social and solidarity economy are viable and that cooperative systems are often more stable and effective than those based on individual interest.⁹⁷ Cooperatives are an alternative to capitalist corporations that can operate and succeed in a market economy, and they have a positive influence on the well-being of societies.⁹⁸

However, Ovejero points out that the original purpose of CL was exclusively to increase the efficiency of American schools and improve pupils' learning so that they could compete more effectively with other countries. He adds that, even today, Johnson and Johnson do not see a single criticism of an economic, social and cultural system that makes people individualistic, selfish and competitive.⁹⁹

However, when CL is applied with a view to introducing pupils to cooperative principles, it cannot be entirely divorced from the ideologies of associationism and cooperativism. In recent years cooperative learning has evolved from being a method for teaching and learning to a much wider, richer educational movement that respects cultural and educational diversity and points towards greater social justice and increased opportunities together with an ethical, sustainable view of life.¹⁰⁰

As Ovejero has stated, teachers should not be mere technicians who apply cooperative learning methods, but engineers who are familiar with their foundations and the reasons for their effectiveness. Nor should teachers limit themselves to working with a particular technical content. They should have a social purpose: cooperative learning should not be merely an educational technique and its aim should not only be for pupils to learn more and better, but also to learn to think for themselves, independently and

⁹⁵ Claire HÉBER-SUFFRIN: *Apprendre par la réciprocité – Réinventer ensemble les démarches pédagogiques*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2016.

⁹⁶ Michel TOZZI: *Nouvelles pratiques philosophiques*, Lyon, Chronique Sociale, 2012.

⁹⁷ Yochai BENKLER: *El Pingüino y el Leviatán. Por qué la cooperación es nuestra arma más valiosa para mejorar el bienestar de la sociedad*, Barcelona, Deusto, 2012.

⁹⁸ Stefano ZAMAGNI and Vera ZAMAGNI: *Cooperative Enterprise. Facing the Challenge of Globalization*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2010.

⁹⁹ Anastasio OVEJERO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo crítico...*, pp. 56-63.

¹⁰⁰ Dolors CAÑABATE & Jordi COLOMER (coord.): *El aprendizaje cooperativo...*, 2020.

critically. Schools should lead the way in developing relationships based on cooperation and mutual help, to help build a society that is more cooperative, more democratic and more supportive. This approach has been referred to as “critical cooperative learning”.

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The need to establish the link between cooperative values and cooperative learning can thus be seen as essential and urgent, if we do not want to distort the meaning of cooperation.¹⁰² There are specific approaches that do create this link for schools. A good strategy is to base teaching on the traditional values of the cooperative movement as expressed by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA): 1) Bring the Social Economy into the classroom; 2) Democratic management; 3) Economic participation; 4) Autonomy and independence; 5) Education, training and information; 6) Cooperation among cooperatives; 7) Concern for community.

Seeking to incorporate these values in education, Antoni Gavaldà established nine cooperative reference values for schools.¹⁰³ They are: 1) valuing divergent ideas; 2) the need for dialogue and consensus; 3) commitment to freedom; 4) sharing in equality; 5) responsible participation; 6) contributing to democracy; 7) a desire to learn; 8) social regulation of the economy; 9) constant, persistent reflection. In the following table we give a definition for each of them:¹⁰⁴

TABLE 1. Cooperative values for schools

1. Valuing divergent ideas	The social context influences ideas that are being developed and we must accept that differences will arise if we want to improve and advance. This means we must look for solid foundations to justify our convictions and be able to contrast our ideas with others.
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¹⁰¹ Anastasio OVEJERO: *Aprendizaje cooperativo crítico...*

¹⁰² Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS & Albert IRIGOYEN: “¿Aprendizaje cooperativo sin valores cooperativos? Análisis de manuales escolares”, in Juan Carlos BEL MARTÍNEZ, Juan Carlos COLOMER RUBIO & Nicolás DE ALBA FERNÁNDEZ (eds.), *Repensar el currículum de Ciencias Sociales: prácticas educativas para una ciudadanía crítica*, Valencia, Tirant Lo Blanch, 2022, pp. 889-897.

¹⁰³ Antoni GAVALDÀ: “Com abordar valors cooperatius a l’ensenyament?”, *Cooperació Catalana*, 226 (2000), pp. 14-17.

¹⁰⁴ Irigoyen and Pons-Altés have studied how these values are structured in the teaching of social sciences in: Albert IRIGOYEN & Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS: “Formación de docentes, didáctica de la historia contemporánea y aprendizaje cooperativo” in Francisco ACOSTA, Àngel DUARTE, Elena Lázaro & María J. RAMOS ROVI (eds.): *La Historia habitada. Sujetos, procesos y retos de la Historia Contemporánea del siglo XXI*, Córdoba, UCOPress Editorial, Universidad de Córdoba, 2023b, pp. 1687-1697; Albert IRIGOYEN & Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS: “Aprendizaje cooperativo y Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS): formación de docentes a partir de problemas sociales relevantes”, in María E. CAMBIL HERNÁNDEZ, Antonio R. FERNÁNDEZ PARADAS & Nicolás DE ALBA FERNÁNDEZ (coords.): *La Didáctica de las Ciencias Sociales ante el reto de los ODS*, Madrid, Narcea, 2023c, pp. 779-787; Albert IRIGOYEN & Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS: “Els valors cooperatius: àncora de la cooperació entre alumnes a l’aula”, in T. ABELLÓ *et al.* (coords.): *Herències/Legacies*. Secció d’Història Contemporània i Món Actual de la UB i Ventall Edicions, 2023, pp. 336-347; Josep M. PONS-ALTÉS & Albert IRIGOYEN: “¿Aprendizaje cooperativo sin...”, 2022, pp. 889-897; Albert IRIGOYEN: “El treball cooperatiu...”, 2021, pp. 11-26.

2. The need for dialogue and consensus	When a group has thought about and discussed an issue, the members need to seek agreement. They need to understand the difficulty of defending absolute truths and accept the changing nature of ideas and the possibility of revising previous, possibly conflicting, opinions.
3. Commitment to freedom	This implies that individuals have a right to express opinions and make decisions, without coercion. This right has been fought for historically and must still be defended against threats of erosion.
4. Sharing in equality	This is not uniformity. The equality of human rights and duties is a fundamental achievement in a democratic society, although it is difficult for the principle to be fully implemented, as legal equality and real equality are not equivalent. To avoid an excessively rigid interpretation, the concept of “equity” is needed.
5. Responsible participation	This implies that assuming responsibility is a sign of democratic and civic maturity. Schools must foster this sense of responsibility and combat nihilist and passive attitudes.
6. Contributing to democracy	This is fundamental in the cooperative and social solidarity movements through values that involve negotiation and the ability to handle possible rejections of what one believes and defends.
7. A desire to learn	This implies that there is an imperious need to instil in pupils a demand for knowledge and foster their intellectual curiosity, so that they can progress individually and socially.
8. Social regulation of the economy	This is indispensable to prevent greater social inequality and to ensure certain elites and businesses do not abuse their privileged status in free markets.
9. Constant, persistent reflection	This is necessary to access knowledge and construct sound projects. In pupils it is fundamental to emphasise personal effort as a way of achieving goals.

Nevertheless, these nine values do not constitute an educational panacea. The frantic pace of day-to-day classroom activity, a fear of tackling topical issues and the uneasiness that criticism can cause may inhibit efforts to introduce the values we want to pass on to pupils. There may also be reticence about, firstly, the implications of cooperative values that question individualism and selfishness as drivers of social development and as the basis of our social and economic system, and, secondly, about the need to decode power structures and make them intelligible to improve the quality of our democracies.

Teachers must therefore equip themselves with arguments and be able to explain the advantages of applying these values. And be able to show, without prioritising work on the values of cooperation, cooperative learning is practically a contradiction in terms. Teachers not only need to teach pupils so that they do well in society, they also need to teach them to improve it. Pupils need to be taught about and involved in the

transformation of society in order to promote the values of freedom, responsibility, equality and generosity.

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