James Bellanca and Robin Fogarty, *Blueprints for Achievement in the Cooperative Classroom*. (3rd edition) Illinois: Pearson Education, 2003, xxviii + 439 pp.

This is a three-in-one book with two major sections, namely *Draft* and *Blueprint*, alternating in the first 300 pages followed by appendixes of more than 100 pages. Each of the 10 chapters consists of a draft-blueprint combination. The *Draft* informs readers of the reasons that Collaborative Learning (CL) is relevant and crucial to classroom practice.   Each *Draft* builds upon the ideas of CL from basic team building to more complicated learning and organisational needs of a CL classroom. Each complementing *Blueprint*, on the other hand, provides the how-to structures in the forms of pedagogical manuals. The *Blueprint* sections become the scaffold to the collaborative lessons that are valuable for beginners.   These scaffolds offer pedagogical support as a major change of teaching repertoire is often an uncomfortable challenge to teaching.

In the Introduction, the five phases of CL are outlined. *Forming, Norming, Conforming, Storming*, and *Performing* are the processes that lead to a high content, high support, and high challenge lesson in CL. These processes are elaborated in the following chapters indicating their strengths and possible hick-ups that a teacher might encounter in a classroom.

The authors provide a clear survey of different models of CL in the first chapter. The gurus of CL include David and Roger Johnson, Kagan, Slavin, Sharans and the present authors (p. 6). The authors provide compelling reasons that CL should be the norm in current pedagogy. Of those mentioned, I find the need to foster interpersonal competence most convincing (p. 23). Whatever the importance of the1991 USA Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills used by the authors to support CL, all teachers know that the schools are proper socialising institutions for children and adolescents. CL makes a good way to stem out individualistic world views and selfishness among learning adolescents.

The second chapter begins the process of *Forming* in CL as various informal structures of cooperation in pedagogy are introduced, some of which include *Think-Pair-Share, Pair Review, Business Cards* (p. 45), which are familiar terrain to practising teachers. Interesting words are presented in a sample starter known as *The Jigsaw Portmanteau* (p. 50). One will find terms like *Aussification, Customerania, Acceleryeller* mind bogging enough to keep the students preoccupied in an informal structures of CL that will surely create bonding among group members.

Social discipline and group awareness are prerequisites to fruitful learning in CL. The third chapter is necessary to CL because it offers social skills for small group learning. This chapter pre-empts the possible rows that might arise in any cooperative endeavour among youngster. The need to observe group norms is paramount to a successful CL lesson. Any forms of individual gratifying behaviour will be a threat to the group. Should the process go in opposite direction a list of the dos about *Individual Misbehaviours* are provided (p. 81).

Norming in CL is further deepened in the fourth chapter with the "three-story intellect." The process of learning expands in complexity from gathering to processing and reaches its apex in application (p. 103). The very many verbs for *doing* are classified in these three clusters of learning process. The authors repeatedly stress the need for teachers to break away from the role as information providers in the traditional mould of teaching. This is quite true as students who are always seeking information from the internet will come with many new data that challenge the textbooks or the norm. One might want to ponder if Mt. Everest will remain the highest peak when the apex begins to melt as the world becomes warmer.

The fifth chapter brings upon more structured outcomes of CL in the *Conforming* phase. Cognitive organisers are introduced to categorise ideas where critical and creative thinking skills are fostered in the process of learning. Among some of the organisers provide

are *Attribute Web, T-Chart, Mind Map, Ranking Ladder, Hour Glass, Right Angle Thinking, Thought Tree* (p. 129). All these tools are reproduced in exploded versions in *Appendix C* (p. 377-391) as convenient ready-to-use materials for teachers.

In the sixth chapter, the authors point out that CL is an important approach that holds the opportunity for cognitive rehearsal. The authors adapt teaching techniques to support the process of cognitive rehearsal with cooperative strategies (p. 157). This deeper level of *Conforming* in CL should be the common target of the practitioners. The previous steps are inevitably the build-ups behind this flow of learning in CL. The small steps in CL that leads to cognitive rehearsals in the classroom form an interconnected framework. The planning is such that each lesson allows transfer of learning and at the same time becomes a foundation for the next advancement of CL.

In the seventh chapter the authors refer to the literature of education that requires the explicit teaching of thinking skills. The authors do not advocate this assumption into their CL approach (p. 190):

> "Blueprints takes a middle path between teaching the [thinking] skills separately and infusing them in the content. Blueprints sticks to the middle path and places a strong focus on the transfer of learning for all children…the separated model seems to reinforce students' perceptions that curriculum consists of unconnected little boxes of content."

The authors' CL version does not see thinking as an independent entity. Learning in CL reflects a consensus deliberated by many thinking heads. Although thinking can be independent of content as logic and mathematical equations show, for the purpose of primary and secondary education, thinking rests well as an inductive skill that encompasses gathering, process and applying information in group learning.

The eighth chapter expounds on the measures when group members disagree in the *Storming* phase of CL. *Tug'O War Thinking Creed* and mediation become the options to mitigate disagreement (p. 223). Singapore's educational drama group *ACT 3* has an

interesting sketch on *Mediation* performed in 2005. Mediating a conflict is not a simple process, as it requires proper turn taking and topic control, which is best shown in dramatic forms.

In the ninth chapter, the authors reinforce the idea that all learning is about transfer. A dichotomy of high and low transfer is outlined. The issue on whether transfer is best attained with generalised or content-specific teaching is explored in three views (p. 247). *PACTS* guidelines are provided as a relevant tool (p. 262):

    P: paraphrase
    A: affirm
    C: clarify
    T: test option
    S: summarise

In the last chapter the authors define authentic assessment as the evaluation of learning through a broad array of unquestionable evidence that may include portfolios, logs, student artefacts and test scores (p. 277). The *hows* are as important as the *whats* in CL. CL assessments profile the student's whole performance, not a single test score. This is interesting as the validity and reliability of testing in the conventional understanding of an authentic assessment gives way to the process of learning through planning followed by implementation and to the presentation of learning outcomes.

Users of this book should be aware that no mobile phone usage in the classroom is assumed. Those grappling with the threat of this digital gadget in the classroom should add social discipline to their CL practice. Second language teachers might require different regulatory measures when the CL discussion veers into English, which defeats the purpose of attaining linguistic intelligence in another target language.

I find the *Draft-Blueprint* combination in each chapter useful as often times a book on pedagogy is either a theoretical compendium or an anthology of manuals. The rationales in the drafts are necessary for practising classroom gurus to understand the process. A well-

informed teacher is a confident performer. The current CL approach is in line with making

thinking learners who require interpersonal intelligence.   Indeed, if school is to simulate

socialisation, CL is a powerful learning approach offering a metaphorical mediation between

the classroom and the real world.

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