Teams-Games-Tournament (TGT)

Why Is This Strategy Useful?
The purpose of the Teams Games Tournament Strategy (TGT) is to create an effective classroom environment in which students are actively involved in the teaching process and are consistently receiving encouragement for successful performance. The TGT structure encourages competition and cooperation in a way that promotes peer group rewards for academic achievement. This strategy is appropriate for secondary school students of all abilities.

Description of Strategy
Teams Games Tournament (TGT) is a cooperative learning technique that enhances students’ academic achievement and attitudes towards the content material. TGT has three basic elements: (1) teams—students are assigned to equal teams categorized by equivalent academic levels, (2) games—skill exercises relating to content material are played during weekly tournaments, (3) tournament—students represent their teams and compete individually against students from other teams. The winnings are brought back to their teams. Total winnings are tallied across teams and team champions are announced. Not only is TGT a fun activity, it helps students review what they have just learned in the unit for a future test. There is an incentive for playing the game. The team that wins the tournament gets a reward. For example, stickers or extra time to play outside.

Research Evidence
At least two studies support this strategy. One field investigation done in Montreal Canada, observed the effects of the TGT technique on students’ individual outcomes, team outcomes and academic achievement perceptions of students. Researchers observed third-grade classes, one fourth-grade class, two fifth-grade classes, one sixth-grade class, and one seventh-grade totaling in 190 students. This field investigation found that students who were members of successful teams performed better on the individually completed test and rated their ability and luck higher than did members of unsuccessful teams.

Also, a pretest–posttest experimental study supports this strategy. This experiment examined the effects of game playing (TGT cooperative game playing, interpersonal competitive game playing, and no game playing) on two criterion measures (standards-based math exam performance and attitudes). After experimenting with 125 fifth grade students, results showed that math game playing did promote test-based cognitive learning achievement.

Sample Studies Supporting this Strategy


This field investigation examined the relationship between prior achievement (high vs. average vs. low), individual outcome (success vs. failure), team outcome (success vs. failure) and students’ achievement and academic perceptions. One hundred and ninety students in 7 elementary school classes learned mathematics for 5 weeks with the Teams-Games-Tournaments cooperative learning strategy. Team outcome was significantly related to achievement and academic perceptions and was independent of prior achievement and individual outcome. Members of successful teams attributed their team’s performance more to
ability and luck than did members of unsuccessful teams, believed themselves to be more successful, more deserving of reward, and happier about their team outcome. Alternatives such as criterion-referenced team goals and between-team cooperation are recommended.


This pretest—posttest experimental design study investigated the effects of game playing on fifth-graders’ mathematics performance and attitudes. One hundred twenty five fifth graders were recruited and assigned to a cooperative Teams Games-Tournament (TGT), interpersonal competitive or no game playing condition. A state standards based mathematics exam and an inventory on attitudes towards math were used for the pretest and posttest. The students’ gender, socio-economic status and prior maths ability were examined as the moderating variables and covariate. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) indicated that game playing was more effective than drills in promoting math performance, and cooperative game playing was most effective for promoting positive math attitudes regardless of students’ individual differences.

**Additional Resources**


Micro-Teaching TGT. Available at: http://www.cust.educ.ubc.ca/cust565-05/seeds/2006/213_06/CADIZ/TXT/MicroteachingTGT.pdf

**Sample Activity**

See: Teaching Strategies. [http://www.udel.edu/dssep/teaching_strategies/tgt_coop.htm](http://www.udel.edu/dssep/teaching_strategies/tgt_coop.htm)