

LESSON 3

TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONS

CO-OP CONSULTANTS



THE goal here is to demonstrate (in dramatic fashion!) just how beneficial it can be for businesses to collaborate and co-operate. The class divides into four groups, each one becoming consultants trying to save a fledgling business. What they (most likely) won't realize is that the answer involves collaborating with each other group. They all fit as pieces to a puzzle. And so, with this great "aha!" moment, students will be introduced to the co-operative enterprise model.

BEFORE THE CLASS

Photocopy pages 20 and 21 and cut it into four – so that each group will get one “case.” Photocopy Homework pages 22 and 23 for whole class.

LINKS TO LAST LESSON

As a class, go over some of the students' findings from their **Looking Back at Moving Forward** homework page.

LESSON

1. Divide class into four equal groups, and assign each group their own corner of the room (or separate working space).

Teacher Prompts for Homework Discussion

- Are there any major differences you've noticed between these cases?
- What do all these cases have in common?
- What are the key components to these cases? (possible answers: oppression, injustice, rich vs. poor, greed, exploitation, courage, collaboration, a concern for the community and the well-being of others, democracy, co-operation!)

2. Tell each group that they are now business consultants, and that each group will be given information about a different company that's in dire need of a new business plan in order to help them survive.

3. Give each group one **Co-op Consultant Case** to solve (one slip from the page you've cut).

4. They will now have 10 minutes to discuss and record their ideas. Then they will briefly present their ideas to the class. (They should assign someone to record ideas, as well as a presenter.)

5. While students are working in groups, draw the table below on the board – without filling in the columns yet. Have the students give you the following facts. This is your “cheat sheet” should they miss any facts.

Yoga Studio	Art Classes	New Parent's Centre	Tutoring Business
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon., Wed., Fri., 7:30 pm to 10 pm • Sat., 9 am to 11 am • Very busy studio at these times • Instructors too busy to do all administration work • Need someone to fill this role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classes only on Tues. and Thurs., 8 pm to 10 pm • Classes all day Sunday • Downsizing because one of teachers leaving business • Will have to fire secretary due to lack of business and high cost of studio rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Mon. to Fri., 8 am to 12 pm • Operates out of a member's house – but group getting too large for house • Need to find new space, but can't afford high rent, as it's a not-for-profit group • Amount of administration work growing due to grants, government funding, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon. to Fri., 3 pm to 6:30 pm • “Demand growing, but can only tutor one student at a time, as tutor travels to their homes” • In need of an inexpensive space where she could tutor a few students at once

Teacher Prompts

- If you stop focusing only on your business, what do you see?
- Is there a way that it can work for everyone?

“Aha!” Moment: Solutions!

The key to solving these cases is that each business needs to work in co-operation with all the others. For example:

- Look at the schedules. All four businesses could share the same space and split the rent four ways.
- Could share the cost of having one full-time administrator – so no one needs to be fired!
- Could share utility bills, cost of office supplies, advertising expenses.

HOMEWORK

Have the students complete the **Co-op Consultants** handout. They will need to go online to answer the questions.

MAKE a photocopy of these pages and then cut out the four cases so that you have four slips of paper. Give one case to each group. Do not allow the groups to see the other cases.

CASE #1

Soleil Yoga Studio

This yoga studio in downtown Milford was opened only a year ago by two brothers. They each had (and still have) other jobs in the health field, but they thought there was a need for a yoga studio in the downtown core. They were right! Some nights, the classes are packed – which is great. They’ve found that Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 7:30 pm to 10 pm and Saturday mornings from 9 am to 11 am are when almost all of their members attend classes. However, outside of these times, the studio is pretty much empty. This is obviously a problem, as the cost of renting this downtown space is quite expensive, and they need more revenue. Only thing is, they can’t fit any more people into their busy classes, and no matter what they do for promotion, they can’t seem to get people out to classes on their slow nights. On top of this, due to their other jobs, the brothers don’t have the time or energy to handle all of the administrative work (registrations, etc.) and promotion – which is almost a full-time job itself. However, at this point, they can’t afford to hire a full-time staff to take care of these areas.

With your consultant group, come up with some strategies on how to save this business.

CASE #2

Impress Art Studio

For the past 20 years, Caroline and Hannah have run the Impress Art studio in downtown Milford. They rent the small studio, where they share the duties of classes on weeknights and during the day on Saturday and Sunday (the studio sits empty during the day). Hannah has now decided to retire; however, Caroline wants to keep the studio running. Actually, not only does she want to, she *needs* to. This is her only source of income, and she can’t afford to retire yet. The problem is that Caroline doesn’t have the time or energy to teach all of the classes. She figures that the most she can do is keep teaching her classes on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 8 pm to 10 pm and all day Sunday. This is obviously a problem, however, as the cost of renting the studio is expensive – too expensive for it to be sitting empty and not bringing in money for most days of the week. There is also another problem. For the past 10 years, Caroline and Hannah have had their close friend, Sasha, work as their secretary. However, now with half the income leaving, there’s no way Caroline would be able to pay someone to do the administrative work (a job Caroline doesn’t know how to do!). Sasha needs the work, and Caroline is terribly upset with the thought of having to fire her longtime friend.

With your consultant group, come up with some strategies on how to save this business.



Tommy Douglas
(1904–1986)
Father of our public healthcare system, and voted Greatest Canadian of All Time in 2004 poll.



Agnes Macphail
(1890–1954)
Activist, journalist, first woman member of Canadian Parliament and voted Ontario's Greatest Female in 2005.

CASE #3

The New Parent's Place

Last year, four young parents decided to start their own group in the town of Milford. The four of them had found that meeting every day at one of their houses provided a great support system for each other – they would socialize and share tips on being new parents. They wanted to open up this wonderful environment to other young parents in town. And so, they formed The New Parent's Place as a drop-in centre in one of their homes. It ran Monday to Friday from 8 am to 12 pm. It was a fantastic idea, and word spread fast. So fast, in fact, that in a matter of weeks the group ran into a problem. So many young parents wanted to participate, that the little house wasn't big enough to accommodate everyone. This was a not-for-profit group that didn't have the funds to rent a bigger space. Also, as they became more sophisticated, they began doing some administrative work, such as applying for government grants, etc. – but they soon recognized that they would need to find somebody to do this work for them, as they were all too busy. They decided that this idea was too beneficial to not have it grow and be accessible to all who wanted to join. But how could a non-profit group find the money needed to rent a space and hire a secretary – especially when they really only operated for four hours a day?

With your consultant group, come up with some strategies on how to save this business.

CASE #4

Tarah's Tutoring Service

Last year, Tarah – a Grade 12 student in the small town of Milford – came up with a plan to help save for college: she decided to start her own math and science tutoring service. Little did she know that within only six months, her new business would grow to the point where she realized that she would soon have to start turning interested clients down. She just didn't have the time to accommodate all the requests! This really frustrated her, because although she was only one person and could only do so much, she saw the potential for her business to keep growing. She would tutor Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 6:30 pm, and sometimes on Saturdays. The problem was, she could only tutor one student at a time, and so the number of clients she could take on was limited. Or did it have to be, she wondered? How could she take on more clients while sticking to the same tutoring hours (as she still needed to complete her own work)? Did she have to tutor only in other people's homes? Her house was too busy and noisy to bring her clients to her place. How could she make this work and have her business reach its greatest potential?

With your consultant group, come up with some strategies on how to help Tarah's Tutoring Service grow.

LESSON 3

HOMEWORK

CO-OP CONSULTANTS



“Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable.”

Kenyan Proverb

IF at first glance co-operative business enterprises seem a little strange to you, it's okay – they are! To think that there's a whole business sector that follows a code of ethical principles – putting the needs of its community and members first – really is a little strange in a world where most corporations care only about defeating their competition at all cost and making as much profit as possible.

However, as the great rebel and social activist Bob Dylan sang, thankfully, “the times, they are a' changing!” As you will see when researching the questions below, the Co-operative Business Model is a key ingredient to building a sustainable world in which we *all* prosper. Want proof? The United Nations declared 2012 to be the International Year of the Co-operative!

Survival rate of businesses after...	5 years	10 years	Long Term
All co-operatives	64%	46%	30%
Private sector companies (Statistics Canada)	36%	20%	N/A

A 2008 report by the Quebec Ministry of Economic Development

Use whatever resources you can to answer the following questions. (Go straight to s.coop/coopsarecool for a headstart!)

What are the main differences between a co-operative enterprise and a private business?

What are the seven principles that all co-ops follow?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.
