

# Using Co-operative Learning in Biology Teaching

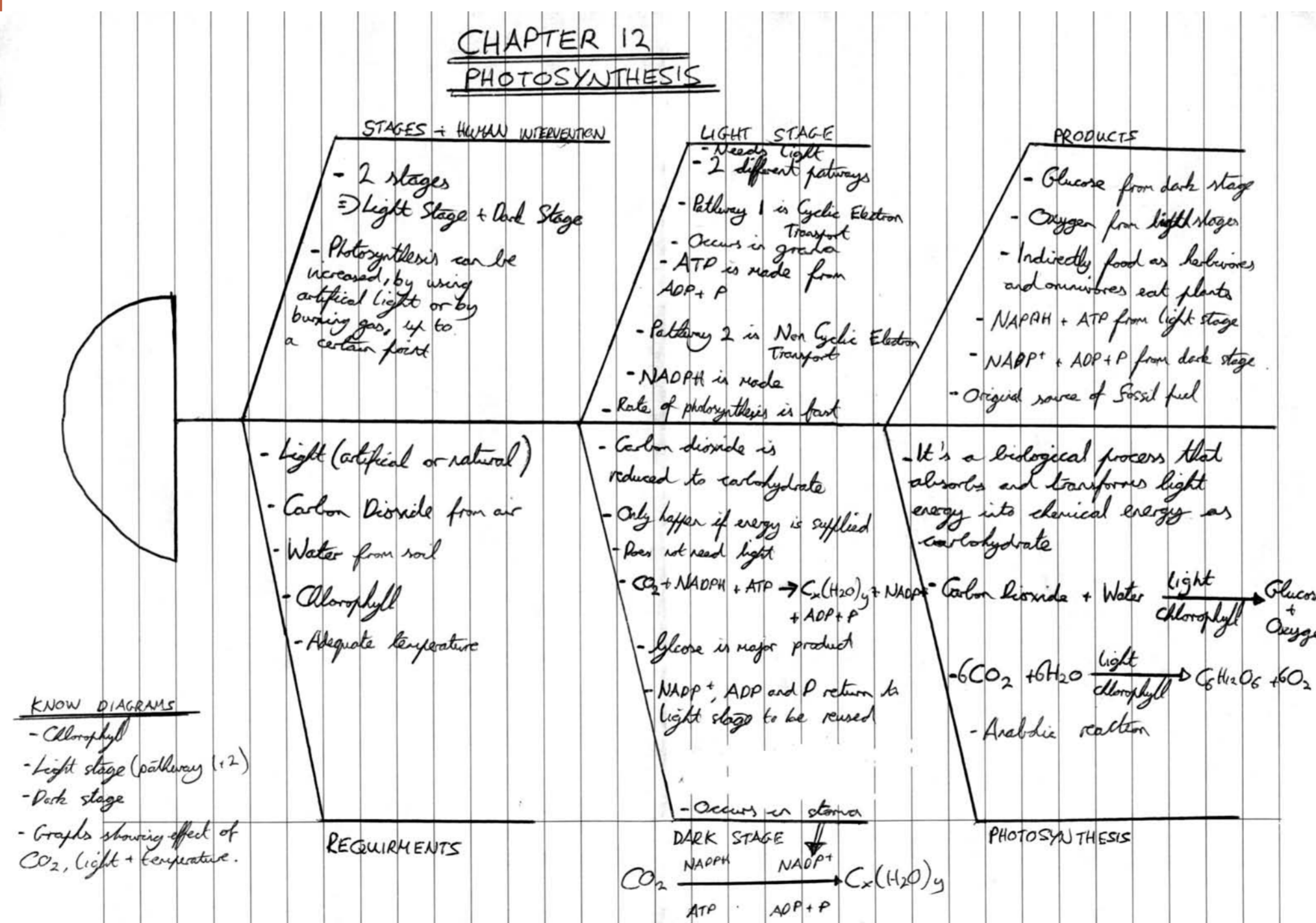
## Introduction

Co-operative learning involves students working in small groups and learning from each other and each person in the group taking responsibility for the learning of the whole group.

## Method

A fifth year group was divided into small groups of four students. Each group recalled the topic photosynthesis using the placemat technique and then summarised the topic on a fishbone diagram.

## Example of student work: Fishbone diagram



## Results

Student opinions on the use of this technique as a revision were elicited by means of a questionnaire. Students were asked to rate different learning techniques on a scale from 1 to 5 and comment on each rating. Co-operative learning got a rating of 4 or 5 from 74% of the cohort. Student comments were generally positive, e.g. "It's nice to learn, discuss, swap and confirm information .... It helps you to remember the information."

## Conclusions

- Co-operative learning techniques employed in this research were successful in getting the students to recap topics.
- Students were generally enthusiastic about using these learning techniques.
- I will use these and other co-operative learning techniques in my biology teaching.