

Tips for Collaborative Learning Success!

- Always include a success criteria that details how students should behave in their groups. 'i.e. All students must remain on task. All students will contribute to the activity. All students will behave in a polite and respectful manner to the other members of their group.' etc.
- Have a way of assessing how well students have worked in their groups
- Appoint a team leader who's responsible: who can settle any disputes in the group, keep group members on task and ensure that all students work within the time limit that has been set.
- Give roles: To ensure that everyone is on task, give each member of the group a different role and responsibility.
- Differentiate: To ensure every member of the group can contribute to the activity make sure that the different roles are differentiated.
- Groupings: Make sure that groupings are of mixed ability, challenge students by ensuring they work with a variety of people and ensure students who do not collaborate well are separated. Varied groups so students are constantly challenged and engaged by various students.
- Delegates: Mid way through an activity, select a 'delegate' from each group to travel to different groups to see how they have worked and report back to their group.
- Learning Spies: To help feedback and improve collaborative learning, appoint 'student spies' who will watch groups and feedback on the collaboration.
- Reflect/Remind: At the end of a collaborative task reflect and feedback on successes or areas for improvement. Remind students of these prior to subsequent collaborative tasks.



- **Student interviews:** Works as a good plenary, ask students to interview each other about what they have learnt.
- **Corners:** Ask students a questions and they must go to one of the statements in the corner of the classroom. Alternatively use **Continuum line** ask students a question and ask them to stand where they feel on a continuum line.
- **Find the fib:** students are given cards on with 2 truths one fib. They must read all of them out as convincingly as possible and the group must find the lie.

Starters and Plenaries:

- **Peer assessment/ DIT another's work**
- **Question/Answer:** Give half the students questions and the other half answers. Students must talk and find the corresponding question/answer.
- **Taboo:** Students are given a character/case/term etc and a list of related words, they must try and get the other person to get it without saying any of the words on the cards.
- **Pictionary:** Draw a series of images that relate to a key theme/ character/case/term and your partner must guess it etc.



Main

- **Carousel activity:** On a selection of tables around the classroom there will a different question or discussion point. Each group will go around and complete the activity.
- **Lessons:** Ask students in groups to create a lesson complete with starter, learning objectives, main and plenary that they will deliver to the class.
- **Debate:** In groups students will prepare for a debate of an issue.
- **Mind mapping:** Group mind mapping can be a good revision lesson, where a group must summarise a topic or theme into a mind map. As a variation, students can be shown a mind map for 20 seconds. Each member of the group is responsible to remember a specific part of it, they must then recreate the mind map. Also, class mind maps can be used, students are given different roles i.e. 'Researchers' who will look for quotes, others for key themes etc, others will then be the 'Arrangers' who will collect information from the 'Researchers' and categorise it and 'presenters' will create the mind map and deliver it to the class etc.
- **Speed dating:** Either give students a small topic to individually research (or ask students a general question to interpret etc) then ask them to speed date. Half the students will move round the other half of students. They are allowed 2 minutes on each 'date'. This is an effective way to share information and get students talking.

- **Home/Expert groups:** Students start off in their 'home' groups and are each given a different area to research students with the same research area will meet up in 'expert' groups and learn this information together. Experts will then return 'home' and feedback the information.
- **Pass the Buck:** Group for essay writing. Students write part of an essay, pass it on for the next person to read through and then continue, do this so that all students have done each paragraph.
- **Role Play/Freeze frames:** Students can present a scene of a play or interpretation of a book or idea in role play.
- **Reading/Memory challenge:** This is a good way to introduce new information to groups. Each member of the group will be given a different area to research. They will then have to go to an area of the room where the relevant information will be on the wall. They must read it, remember it and then go back to their group and explain it. This can be differentiated by having different levels of information so students can choose the complexity that is right for them.
- **Sage and Scribe:** 'Sage' is the thinker, 'Scribe' is the writer. An effective way to do exam questions. Sage can also be a researcher someone who reads information, condenses it and then vocalises it for their partner to write down.
- **Mysteries:** Mysteries can be a good way to introduce students to a new topic or text. A text where students are given key facts of the plot and must look through the evidence and try and decide what happened. For texts that involve a murder (i.e. An Inspector Calls/Of Mice and Men), a good group activity is to do a murder mystery where a crime scene is created with evidence around it and students must look through the evidence and decide what happened.
- **Go Ape:** Effective as a reflection tool, groups of 3 with a Presenter, (who must present their work to the group and explain why they chose to do it this way), Advisor (who, using the success criteria, must give constructive suggestions on how work could have been improved) Encourager (who, using the success criteria, must give praise on what the Presenter has done well)
- **Hot-seating:** Student(s) is placed at the front of the class and are asked questions from the class, can be done as a role play activity too.
- **Inside out circles:** Two circles are formed, the inner circle facing outward, the outer circle facing inward. Students are then able to discuss an issue, or question/ answer etc.

Collaborative Challenges

Collaborative challenges are a good way to assess how much students have learnt and a good way to allow students to recap key information in a fun way.

- **Relay races:** students will be put into teams, 1 student must be the 'runner' who will come to the front of the class, pick up a question and return to their group. Group will then answer the question and the runner returns it. A 'checker' (good extension role for G&T students) checks the answer and if correct will give the runner the next question. The team who finishes all the questions first, win.
- **Pass the parcel:** For a whole class challenge, create a pass the parcel, when the music stops the student holding the parcel must answer the question, if they answer correctly they get to unwrap the parcel (works best for smaller A Level classes). **musical chairs** also works, the student left standing after the music stops must answer a question to remain in the game. All students still in at the end get a reward.
- **Choice Challenge:** Each group is given an activity sheet with a selection of activities on all worth different amounts of points. Groups can choose which activities they do but must try and rack up as many points as possible in the time limit. The team with the most points win.
- **Games/Pub Quiz:** Ask students to design their own game or pub quiz (You can even give students power points for Who Wants to be a Millionaire) and ask them to create their own which they will swap with another group and play once completed.
- **Game Shows:** There are many game show power points available online on sites like TES including: Million Pound Drop, Who Wants to be a Millionaire, Pointless and Blockbuster. These work well as a plenary at the end of a lesson/topic.
- **Topic Team Challenge:** Create teams at the start of each topic, they will be awarded points as a team throughout the topic based on effort, questioning, homework, achievement in tasks. The team with the most points at the end of the topic win a reward.
- **Treasure Hunt:** A selection of educational clues will be left that students must solve to progress. The first team who finish, win!