

Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students for Collaboration

Tool 2: Table of Contents

- [Tool 2.1: Collaboration Routines for Developing Collaborative Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.1B: Form Agreements, Norms, Contracting, and Roles](#)
- [Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.2A: Cooperation Activity vs. Collaboration Activity](#)
- [Tool 2.1B Humanities Class Team Roles and Norms – Psychology Version](#)
- [Understanding Psychology Team Contract](#)
- [Tool 2.2B: Discussion Prompts for Practicing Collaboration](#)
- [Tool 2.2.C: Sentence Starters for Preparing Students to Communicate in Collaboration](#)
- [Tool 2.2D: Preparing Students to Communicate in Collaboration](#)
- [Tool 2.3: Debriefing Activities for Developing Collaborative Decision-Making and Problem Solving Resources](#)
- [Tool 2.3B: Three A's Shout-Out, Grades 6-12](#)

TOOL 2:

Preparing and Supporting Students for Collaboration

How can I prepare students to:

be accountable to their group;
respect self and others;
share ideas openly;
ask questions;
listen carefully?



Why?

Clear guidance for students on how to work together in groups is essential so they know the expectations on how they will cooperate with others and be a collaborative member of the group. The tools below are designed to more deliberately instruct students in developing stronger collaboration skills.

When?



Building skills in collaboration should occur early and often in classroom instruction to set a tone and be revisited on a regular basis. The tools here can be used in an ongoing fashion and represent routines that will support strong collaboration experiences.

Where?



These tools are appropriate for all subjects and can be easily adapted for all grade levels..

Who?



Teachers introduce the key ingredients to collaboration and model effective use. Students gain familiarity with the procedures and then make them a part of their regular routines.

How?



The [Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#) table maps the ingredients for a high quality collaborative experience to the BEST collaboration rubric skills and focus areas and the toolkit resource that will help to prepare and support students during collaboration. Read through the table, identify the skill or focus area you are working on and select the corresponding resource link from the third column.



Tool 2.1: Collaboration Routines for Developing Collaborative Self-Awareness and Personal Responsibility Resources

Asking students to consider what collaboration looks, sounds, and feels like is a good way to set the stage for future collaborative activities. Consider asking students to develop their own lists or use the list provided in the table below.

Tool 2.1.A: Working with a Partner

Adapted from the New Hampshire Learning Initiative's Formative Assessment Teacher Leadership Series, developed by Margaret Heritage. Published with permission.

Looks like...	Sounds like...	Feels like...
Turning toward partner	Compliments	My thoughts are valued
Maintaining eye contact	Partner voice	Compromising
Staying on task	Asking questions related to task	Gaining a deeper understanding
Sitting close	Pleasant voice	



Tool 2.1B: Form Agreements, Norms, Contracting, and Roles

- Be deliberate in asking students to commit to behaviors that will support collaboration and what each student brings to the agreement.
- Having a specific role helps team members to focus and guide their contributions and interactions with one another. Consider these examples of roles from a [humanities class](#).
- For long-term groupings, use this [sample team contract](#) to support students in recognizing what they bring to the collaborative situation and encourages the development of agreed-upon team norms.

Tool 2.2: Collaboration Practice Activities for Developing Collaborative Communication Resources

Scenarios for practice: Learning to collaborate takes time and directed effort. The tools in this section are designed to support students in developing collaborative skills and promote self-awareness and personal responsibility. They offer opportunities to practice collaboration, specifically decision-making and problem solving, outside of the demands of a specific task related to the curriculum. These scenarios can support students learning with and from one another. When using these tools, the teacher should direct students in debriefing the experience. Some questions to consider are:

1. What did you notice about the interactions you had in your discussions?
2. What went well in your discussions?
3. What was challenging in your discussions?
4. What might you do differently next time you are working in a similar situation?

Tool 2.2A: Cooperation Activity vs. Collaboration Activity

Consider the following scenarios. For each, determine whether it is a cooperation activity or collaborative activity.

- Dividing and conquering an assignment given to a group
- Partnering and working together to complete a project through sharing ideas, compromising, and contributing to the final product
- Solving a math problem together by discussing the options of visual models, choosing a method to go with, and discussing the reasonableness of the answer
- Discussing how to solve a problem and then completing it on your own
- Organizing work together so everyone is on the same page and dividing up a task so that each person plays a role



Tool 2.1B Humanities Class Team Roles and Norms - Psychology Version

Created by Jessica Wallace 2021 Reprinted with permission

Adapted from Souhegan Math Department Team Roles and Norms - based on the College Preparatory Math Program (cpm.org)

Asking students to consider what collaboration looks, sounds, and feels like is a good way to set the stage for future collaborative activities. Consider asking students to develop their own lists or use the list provided in the table below.

Resource Managers:

Resource Managers get necessary supplies and materials for the team and make sure that the team has cleaned up its area at the end of the day. They also manage the non-material resources for the team, seeking input from each person and then calling the teacher over to ask a team question. Typically, a teacher could expect to hear a resource manager asking:

- “Does anyone have an idea?”
- “Who can answer that question? Should we send out a scout?”
- “What supplies do we need for this activity?”

Facilitators:

Facilitators help their teams get started by having someone in the team read the task aloud. They make sure each person understands the task and that the team helps everyone know

how to get started. Before anyone moves on, the facilitator asks to make sure each team member understands the team’s answer. Typically, a teacher could expect to hear a facilitator asking:

- “Who wants to read?”
- “Does anyone know how to get started?”
- “What does the first question mean?”
- “I’m not sure – What are we supposed to do?”
- “Do we all agree?”
- “I’m not sure I get it yet – can someone explain?”

Recorder/Reporters:

Recorder/Reporters share the team’s results with the class (as appropriate) and serve as a liaison with the teacher when s/he has additional information to share with the class and calls for a “huddle” with all of the recorder/reporters. In some activities, a recorder/reporter may make sure that each team member understands what information s/he needs to record personally. Typically, a teacher could expect to hear a recorder/reporter asking:

- “Does everyone understand what to write down?”
- “How should we show our thinking on this task?”
- “Can we describe this in a different way?”
- “What does each person want to explain in the presentation?”



Success Criteria Quality Checker

The Success Criteria Quality Checker tracks the team's progress toward the learning goal and ensures that every member is learning according to the success criteria. Typically, a teacher could expect to hear a success criteria quality checker saying:

- “Ok, let’s get back to work!”
- “Let’s keep working.”
- “What does the next question say?”
- “Explain how you know that.”
- “Can you find some evidence of that?”
- “Tell me why!”
- “Has everyone recorded their evidence of success criteria?”

Team Norms

- No talking outside your team.
- Discuss questions with your team before calling the teacher over.
- Within your team, keep your conversation on the task.
- Explain and justify your ideas; give statements and reasons.
- You must try to help anyone in your team who asks. Helping your teammate does not mean giving answers. Help by giving hints and asking good questions.
- No one alone is as smart as all of us together. Do not leave anyone behind or let anyone work ahead. Your team is not done until everyone is done.
- Clear off desks before getting to work so you can see everyone’s paper.
- You must use study team voices.



Understanding Psychology Team Contract

Created by Jessica Wallace September 2021 Reprinted with permission

Adapted from a Study Group Bill of Rights developed by D. G. Longman and published in The Teaching Professor, 1992, 6 (7), 5. Modified by Schaffeld.

During the course of this year you will be tasked to work with psychological content both as an individual and within your team. This contract will help you process the significance of your team and will give you the tools and confidence to commit to the system that we run in our class.

Be honest. Be open to dialogue. Commit to the process. Please make a copy of this document and share it with each person on your team so that everyone can see/edit at the same time. Everyone should fill this out.

Step 1: Get To Know Each Other and Share Some Info

Name	What makes you a successful student? List 5 ways that your skills can help your psych team THRIVE this semester!

Step 2: Team Member Responsibilities

Your team needs to work together every time you meet. Every team member needs to contribute. Thus, each team member will have a formal role to play.

The facilitator ensures that everyone participates equally and keeps time. Facilitators help their teams get started by having someone in the team read the task aloud. They make sure each person understands the task and that the team helps everyone know how to get started. Before anyone moves on, the facilitator asks to make sure each team member understands the team's answer.

Facilitator: _____

The success criteria checker is tasked with tracking the team's progress toward the learning goal and ensuring that every member is learning according to the success criteria. This means helping to keep everyone on track (this person should be strong in time management) and focused on the task at hand. They remind everyone to contribute, keep cameras on, stay focused, etc. They are NOT responsible for doing all the work! They do have a strong and direct personality that is beneficial for keeping the team moving forward and staying productive.

Success Criteria Checker: _____

The team technology master is an individual that believes they are “super techy”. They feel the most comfortable navigating various apps and technology tools that we will need to be successful this semester and will take the lead when it comes to this need. When tasks are low tech, the team member will help organize the materials/resources.

Team Technology/Resource Master: _____



The communicator shares the team's results with the class (as appropriate) and serves as a liaison with the teacher when s/he has additional information to share with the class and calls for a "huddle" with all of the communicators.

Communicator: _____

Step 3: Team Motto or Mission Statement

Please create an academic motto or quote that will drive/inspire/unify your team for the semester/year.

Step 4: Create Your Team Norms and Expectations

In order for your team to function effectively you need to establish norms. Norms of any particular group should be defined by the group itself. Norms are the accepted standards of behavior for any given group. We pledge to follow the following guidelines in an effort to have a fully functioning team.

1.



2.

3.

4.

Step 5: Making It Official - We VOW To...

- engage in all prepwork and show up prepared.
- participate actively in all team activities both during class and prepwork.
- be equitable in participation (watch airtime, encourage others to participate).
- contribute to task completion and challenge team members who are not contributing.
- provide constructive feedback on the work of other members.
- participate in a team that works cooperatively and handles disagreements constructively.
- limit the amount of time devoted to socialization or the discussion of extraneous topics.
- help each other stay on task.
- listen to each other respectfully.

Step 6: Signatures

By signing this document you agree to the norms and expectations decided upon by your team. You promise to keep the vows stated above.

Step 7: Take a Team Picture

Please take a group selfie and insert it in this document.

Step 8: Turn This IN

Your facilitator should turn in this completed document and the team picture. You can share the document with me or attach one to the google classroom activity for today.

Please submit one document and pic per family.

Tool 2.2B: Discussion Prompts for Practicing Collaboration

Use any combination of the following discussion prompts to have students practice how to have collaborative conversations. *Note: Students may need to discuss the goal of having collaborative conversations and how it is a different skill than debating or being right in a conversation (compromise, consensus).*

Discuss any of these topics:

- Whether or not a hot dog is a sandwich
- The process of making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich
- How the world would change if some people could use magic spells and some people could not
- Why some people prefer cats, some prefer dogs, and some don't like either type of pet
- Characteristics important for a role model to possess

After students have an opportunity to engage in these discussions, ask them to reflect (individually or as a group or whole class) on their process. What element of collaboration did they demonstrate most fully? What element of collaboration do they need to work on moving forward? (Students could use the rubric to answer the above questions or complete this activity just before asking students to do the self-assessment task in this toolkit.)

Tool 2.2C: Sentence Starters for Preparing Students to Communicate in Collaboration

Conversation stems: This tool provides suggestions for how to engage in the essential dialogue of student teaming. Whether students are working together to solve a problem or providing feedback to one another, the tool offers language for students to engage in collaborative conversations. The sentence starters provide an entry point for all students regardless of their prior experience with collaboration. Encouraging students to use them when collaborating helps create a more equitable experience.



Tool 2.2.C: Sentence Starters for Preparing Students to Communicate in Collaboration

Agree	Respectfully Disagree	Clarifying Questions	Yes, and ...	Next Steps in Learning
I agree with you because... That answer makes sense because... I agree with your reasoning of...	I respectfully disagree with... and I think... I have a different point of view ... I agree with... but... That's a good point, and it makes me wonder how it might look/sound if... I disagree with your reasoning, and I think... I know where you are coming from, but I want to offer a different perspective.	What do you mean by...? Why do you think that? How do you know? Will you explain that again in other words? I have a question about... I don't quite understand. Can you explain it a little bit more? If I understand you correctly, your opinion is that...	I think you are on the right track, and I also think... I agree with... When they said... But I also want to add... Yes, and what is our evidence? Yes, and why is this important?	Would you consider changing...? A next step for you could be... Do you think you could...? Would you consider adding...? During revision you might consider...



Additional Resources:

“Let Them Talk,” a presentation given in June 2018 at the National Charter Schools Conference by Tarkan Topcuoglu and Robyn Nelson, the CEO and director, respectively, of the Hampden Charter School of Science in Chicopee, Massachusetts; [see the slides from the presentation here](#).

- “Talk Moves: Students Learn to Own Learning Conversations,” blog by John McCarthy
- Iowa State Education, “Accountable Talk: Student Conversation Starters”

Tool 2.2D: Preparing Students to Communicate in Collaboration

Protocols: Framing collaboration as a process can provide students with guardrails for having conversations and prompt them to engage in equitable ways. Protocols offer step-by-step guidance to students in sharing their observations, reactions, and feedback with one another, an essential part of successful collaboration. These tools also support students when challenges arise. Using already agreed-upon language and processes to support difficult conversations helps students to modify and adapt their behaviors while collaborating.

Collaboration Protocols:

1. [Cult of Pedagogy](#): 15 formats for structuring class discussions

2. [School Reform Initiative](#): Protocols grouped by theme and topic; designed for adult learners, they work well with students as well
3. Harvard Teaching and Learning Lab: Discussion protocols

Tool 2.3: Debriefing Activities for Developing Collaborative Decision-Making and Problem-Solving Resources

The following are suggestions for how to create a collaborative culture by debriefing interactions among students.

Tool 2.3A: Peaks and Valleys Activity

Created by Irene Stinson, 2021

This activity can be used to help students respect one another by working through struggles. It can be done at any time but works well on Fridays as a way to resolve conflicts that might arise from collaborative efforts or just normal day-to-day schooling. The activity helps students develop a means of expressing their feelings and using careful listening develops skills that they can subsequently use in the course of their days. This tool develops the key elements of communication and guides students to strengthen their supporting and contributing skills.

Method: Students sit in a circle, and one person speaks at a time, first sharing “valleys,” and then “peaks.” Valleys are something that is bothering the speaker; students can take a pass and decline



to share a valley. Any student who is singled out in a valley can respond only by saying, “Thank you for sharing,” or by apologizing in a way that seems appropriate. (No student may be the subject of a valley more than once.) Once everyone has shared, the students move on to the peaks, with each student sharing at least one positive message about another student or students. There is no passing in the peaks round.

Students remain in the circle for discussion.

Tool 2.3B: Three A’s Shout-Out, Grades 6-12

From Edutopia.org and the George Lucas Educational Foundation

This activity gives students a chance at the end of the class to share either an “appreciation,” an “apology,” or an “a-ha”—the three A’s. Students stand in a circle and take turns sharing things openly with the learning community in order to build bonds and strengthen collaboration.

An appreciation is recognition of someone who helped the speaker in some way. An apology acknowledges a mistake that the speaker made. An a-ha is a “light bulb moment” when something clicked for the speaker in a new way.

