

Tool 3: Supporting Student Groups During Collaboration

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TOOL 3:

Supporting Student Groups During Collaboration

How can students be supported during collaboration?

How can I manage group dynamics?

How can I support struggling students?

How can I help students revise their thinking?



Why?

Building skills in collaboration should begin early to set a tone in the classroom and then be revisited on a regular basis. When students are working on collaborative activities and tasks, it is important to guide them in when and how to modify their approach to benefit the group. The resources in Tool 3, below, are designed to support student groups during collaborative activities to troubleshoot and resolve conflicts, manage group dynamics, support struggling students, and help students revise their thinking based on learnings.

When?

Even when teachers have helped students build skills in preparation for collaboration, students still need ongoing guidance, tools, and support during collaborative activities to ensure that their collaborative experience is positive, equitable, and successful. The resources here can be used during collaboration to support strong collaboration experiences.

Where?

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

Who?

Teachers provide students with resources they can use on their own during collaborative activities. In addition, teachers should plan to check in on collaborative groups to ensure that they are sustaining a positive group culture, that all students are fully included in group activities and decisions, that groups can constructively resolve conflicts, and that students are revising their thinking based on what the group has learned.

How?

[Tool 3: Supporting Student Groups During Collaboration](#) offers selected resources for supporting collaborative groups in action. Teachers may also want to refer to [Tool 2: Preparing and Supporting Students During Collaboration](#) for additional resources that can support groups both before and during collaboration.

Tool 3.1: Our Team Is Off-Track—Now What?

Adapted with permission from Toth and Sousa.⁵

Problem	Solution
A team member is absent.	Agree on someone else to do the job or take turns.
Someone is not actively engaging in the work.	Remind the student of the engagement success criteria; ask if they need help.
A team member is off topic.	Remind the student of the partner work success criteria and that you count on them to do their part.
We are stuck or confused.	Send scouts to other teams.
We are arguing.	Take a one-minute break; give each person a turn to talk; decide or vote together.
We are done!	Check all success criteria; finish or fix problems; find ways to improve; reflect on your teamwork.



Tool 3.2: Team Wellness Check In Protocol

Created by Jessica Wallace November 2021

1. Review your previously established reflections (collaboration self assessment, team contract & class agreements).
2. Take the provided index card and create four quadrants. Label each quadrant with one of the following:
 - » something done well individually
 - » something done well as a team
 - » something that needs to be adjusted individually
 - » something that needs to be adjusted as a team.
3. Fill in your index card individually.
4. Team Success
 - » One at a time, a team member shares an idea about team success.
 - » Discuss the level of agreement of team success.
 - » On the back of your index card, record your notes from the discussion about team successes.
5. Team Adjustment
 - » One at a time, a team member shares an adjustment.
 - » Discuss the level of agreement of team adjustment.
 - » On the back of your index card, record observations about team adjustments.

6. Agree as a team on one action item for how your team will shift your work in the next unit. (Write it on the index card.)
7. Make sure your name is on your index card and turn it in.

Tool 3.3: Learning With Others Survey

Teachers can use selected sections of this student survey on collaboration to identify students who may be feeling excluded, disinterested, or insufficiently supported during collaborative group time.

For example:

- Section 1: Item 13 (a–f) assesses the extent to which students feel liked, accepted, and comfortable in their collaborative group.
- Section 2: Items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 8 assess students' perceptions of the learning climate and the extent to which they feel that they are supported by peers and their teacher, that learning is personalized, and that peers and the teacher help them learn.

