

Strategies to Support Collaboration

Purpose:

To allow students to pursue academic goals through collaborative learning.

Jigsaw Groups:

Jigsaw groups can have three to six members. Each member becomes an expert on a subtopic of the material being studied then teaches the material to the rest of the group. Group members who have the same subtopic meet in “expert” groups to discuss what they are reading and learning. They use resources provided by the teacher to help them in their exploration of the material. When the members of the expert groups have learned the material, they return to their original groups to share what they have learned. Each group member is responsible for listening and taking notes on the information being presented.

Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD):

This strategy combines whole class discussion with small group activity. The teacher presents new information to the class then divides the class into teams. Each team should contain students of different levels of ability. The team members help each other learn the new material through discussion, problem solving and using guide materials provided by the teacher.

Learning Circles:

Learning circles are similar to STADs in that whole class discussion is followed by small group activity. Learning circles are suitable for brainstorming, prediction, problem solving, and mapping.

Group Investigation:

Teams of two to six students work together to find information on a topic of interest to them within a thematic unit. Each group plans the inquiry in consultation with the teacher. Group members need to decide how to investigate the topic, which tasks each member will be responsible for, and how the topic will be reported to the rest of the class. The teacher’s evaluation can include individual performance as well as the overall quality of the group performance.

Group Retellings

Each member of the group reads a different text on the same topic. The difficulty of the material can be matched to the level of the student. After reading, each member shares what she/he has read. The other members listen and share additional information and insights based on their reading.

Adapted from Content Area Reading: Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum by Richard T. and Joanne L. Vacca