**Some tips and strategies for effective group work**

- Think-pair-share, write-pair-share, and think-pair-square (Prahl, 2017)
    - One way to begin establishing a culture of productive group work is to have students engage in a think-pair-share. While the think-pair-share is a classic strategy, it has less well-known variants. Write-pair-share replaces the thinking phase with writing. The think-pair-square replaces a whole group sharing by making a group of four (making a "square").
- Assign group roles (Cohen & Lotan, 2014)
    - Teachers can assign group roles such as recorder, group reporter, facilitator, materials manager, and timekeeper. Importantly, not all roles are necessary for every task and students should have opportunities to be in multiple roles over time. As students gain experience working as a group, the need to assign roles may be less necessary.
- Use writing strategies to facilitate group discussions (Edgerly, Wilcox, & Easter, 2018).
    - In this article, we describe a 3-2-1 strategy (Zygouris-Coe et al., 2004) to promote student discussion when then talk in small groups. Often, a quick writing prompt can give students time to formulate ideas to discuss when they enter small or large group discussions.
- Gallery Walks and student presentations (Francek, 2006)
    - Teachers can use gallery walks and student presentations to give students the opportunity to talk in front of their peers. For middle school, we often use gallery walks more frequently because we find students listening pay closer attention and the students presenting don't get quite as nervous.
- Jigsaw
    - In this article, we describe how we used a jigsaw method to have students explore different natural hazards and then communicate what they learned to other groups.
- Hands-on, Minds-on activities (Wilcox, Kruse & Clough, 2015)
    - Engaging students in meaningful hands-on activities that require students to be mentally engaged often facilitates authentic dialogue amongst the students.
- Listen carefully to how the groups are interacting and check-in with students (Edgerly, Wilcox, & Easter, 2018).
    - If group work issues arise, it's best to catch them early on and work with the group to find an equitable solution.
    - Listening to how the group is interacting can provide the teacher early clues as to how well the group is functioning.

    - Exit slips that provide anonymous feedback on group dynamics can be a good way for the teacher to detect issues early.
- Attempt to mix up groups on occasion (Cohen & Lotan, 2014).
    - Ensuring students get the opportunity to work with other peers throughout the course of the school year ensures that student dynamics are mixed up and students get experience working with a variety of people.

**References**


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