



Good Group Work

Introduction:

We always use this activity before students work on math together as it helps create an environment for productive group interactions. Teachers who have tried this activity have been pleased by students' thoughtful responses and found the students' thoughts and words helpful in creating a positive and supportive environment.

Agenda for the activity:

Activity	Time	Description/Prompt	Materials
Student think/write time	5 min	Prompts for students: 1. Reflect on the things you do not like people to say and do when you are working on math in a group 2. Reflect on the things you do like people to say and do when you are working on math in a group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper, pencil/pen
Group time	10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign or have each group choose a facilitator Facilitator makes sure that each person has a chance to share their ideas with their small group Then the small group comes to consensus on the order that they will share their ideas with the class 	
Students share out whole class	10 min	Record student ideas on posters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "What we don't like" list/poster and "What we do like" list/poster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-4 pieces of large poster paper to collect the students' ideas

Activity:

First we ask students individually to reflect on things they don't like people to say or do in a group when they are working on math together. Students come up with quite a few really important ideas, such as not liking people to give away the answer, or to rush through the work, or to ignore other people's ideas. After they think of a few of the ideas then we ask them to think of what they DO like



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people to do and say when working in a group.

When students had enough time in groups brainstorming we asked each group to pick a facilitator. This facilitator made sure that each student had a chance to share their ideas with their small group. Then the small group decided on the order that they wanted to share their ideas with the class. We then collected the ideas from each group and recorded them on a poster. We did this by making a “What we don’t like” list/poster and asking each group to contribute one idea, moving around the room until a few good ideas had been shared (usually about 10). Then we did the same for the “what we do like” poster/list.

We then presented the final posters to the class as our agreed upon classroom norms that we will refer back to throughout our work together. If you hear a comment such as “I don’t like waiting for slow people” do not put it on the poster, instead use it as a chance to discuss the comment. All comments should be respectful to all students and should not place labels on students. This rarely or never happens and students are usually very thoughtful and respectful in the ideas they share.