

Teamwork and Group Projects

Teacher's Guide

This is a supplementary guide for the use of educators in instructional circumstances.

Previous to watching the Student Toolbox module entitled 'Teamwork and Group Projects,' teachers are encouraged to begin with a class discussion on the topic. Invite students to contribute their thoughts and questions on the subject matter.

This information will reveal what the students already know about the topic. Teachers can affirm correct responses and prepare students for the reception of new information.

Create a list of ideas and concepts under a heading such as "What We Know Already." Invite further comment as this list is assembled. List student suggestions of what they expect or hope to learn from the video they are about to view.

Tell the students that this list will be revisited after viewing the video. Encourage students to view the video closely so as to determine which of their ideas or questions were adequately addressed or not presented within the module.

After watching the module, initiate a brief discussion. Ask your class to confirm whether the content of the module covered the items on the "What We Know Already" list. Ask the students for a new list of new things they learned and ask questions from the question list and initiate activity from the suggestions provided.

Urge students to do follow-up research using the suggested Internet links and by choosing to read from the titles offered.

Program Summary

Group projects build skills such as leadership, diplomacy, and problem solving. Working in a team can teach conflict resolution skills while increasing skill, motivation, work ethic and adding to experience. Everyone on a team should have a solid understanding of the objective and work should always be divided evenly. Everyone should participate in the decision making, contribute to each aspect of the project and know exactly what is expected of them. An initial 'getting to know you' meeting should be held to exchange contact information like email addresses and phone numbers. At this first gathering suggestions can be solicited as to how each can best contribute to the project. Determine what everyone already knows and make a list of suggestions for available resources like the library, the Internet, experts and exhibits. Team members must understand that it's very important to tell a teammate when unable to attend a meeting and any completed work should be passed along so as not to hold back progress on the completion of the project. Schedules and timelines should be established, starting with the due date and working back. The final meeting date should be set for a couple of days before the due date to give the team time to correct any final problems before submission. Decide how many meetings are likely to be required and then set a firm date for the next meeting. Determine what each team member should have ready for that meeting and for each meeting up until the project deadline. Shy members should be encouraged to have their say. Significant decisions should never be made by an isolated part of the group. A group leader can be elected to act as a coordinator but must not do an unbalanced amount of the work. A list of all of the elements that could be in the final

project should be constructed. An overall team approach should be agreed upon. All suggestions should be evaluated. Essential items according to the assignment criteria should then be identified. Optional ideas can then be considered and, when unwieldy or inappropriate, eliminated.

The remaining ideas should be listed in order of need for completion. First choice of tasks should be offered to team members who seem reluctant to get involved. Make sure everyone chooses their first job before the second tasks are allocated and so on. Make sure each team member gets a checklist that includes who is doing what job and when each needs to be completed. Everyone must do their best to make all team members feel equally important to the project. Share the decision making. Ask a reluctant team mate direct questions like, “What do you think we should do?” or “Can you think of a good way to get our point across?” If every team member shares equally in the group project then all will enjoy an equal share of success!

Vocabulary

- **Leadership** - Influencing and directing the performance of group members towards collective goals or achievement.
- **Diplomacy** - The art and practice of conducting negotiations between persons.
- **Timeline** - A management tool which details the schedule of project tasks to be accomplished, by whom, and over what period of time.
- **Brainstorming** - A learning technique involving an open group discussion intended to expand the range of available ideas.
- **Evaluate** - To ascertain, judge or decide the value or worth of something.
- **Checklist** - A list of action items, steps, or elements needed for a task. Each item is checked off as it is completed.
- **Illustrations** - Photographs, drawings, graphs, charts or tables used in an assembled work.
- **AV equipment** - Audio Visual equipment.
- **Lectern** - A stand, either stand alone or desktop, upon which a speaker may rest notes or books.
- **Flip chart** - Pad of large paper sheets on a stand for presenting information.
- **PowerPoint** - Presentation software that allows you to create slides, handouts, notes, and outlines.

Pre-viewing Discussion

Before the class assemble their list of “What We Know Already” about Teamwork and Group Projects activities, stimulate and focus their thinking by outlining the following questions designed to ready them for learning:

- What is teamwork?
- Why are some school assignments completed by groups?
- What are examples of teamwork to which you’ve contributed in everyday life?
- What important qualities can an individual contribute to the success of a group project?

After the class has assembled their list of “What We Know Already” ask for suggestions of what they expect or hope to learn from the video they are about to view. Tell the students that this list will be revisited after viewing the video. Encourage students to view the video closely so as to determine which of their ideas or questions were adequately addressed or not presented within the module.

Focus Questions

1. What careers require the efforts of teamwork?
2. What kinds of skills are useful for a person who is part of a team or in a group?
3. Why are ‘group projects’ part of learning in school?
4. Should bigger or smarter students do most of the work on a group project?
5. Which members of the team should make the decisions?
6. Why is it important to get to know your team mates in a group project?
7. What resources should a team use to obtain material and data for the project?
8. Why should you try to attend all group meetings and work sessions?
9. What should you do if you can’t attend a group meeting or work session?
10. Why is it important to encourage shy or reluctant team members to participate?
11. What role should a group leader fill?
12. Under what circumstances is it acceptable to criticize the contributions of a team mate?
13. Why should reluctant members get first choice of tasks?
14. What elements should the task checklist include?
15. What is a project timeline?

Follow-up Discussion

Following the viewing it is important to review the beliefs of the class versus the facts revealed by the presentation. Research has concluded that students will maintain their previous ideas and concepts until they specifically recognize and adjust their own mistakes. As such, it is important to guide students toward the correct answers and facts to the questions and issues that they contributed to the “What We Know Already” list.

An effective approach is to pose thought-provoking questions and concepts that lead to fresh thinking. A couple of examples are:

- Why is it important to develop skills for teamwork and group projects?
- What are the essential elements that make up a good team?
- What examples can you think of where teamwork has contributed to progress or success for society or the environment?

Follow-up Activities

Using the theme of teamwork, involve the class in a theatrical presentation. Describe the various jobs required and ask for volunteers. Explain how each person relies on each other person for the single result to succeed.

Have the class compile a list of various occupations or professional activities in which teamwork is essential. Have the class suggest various activities and how they contribute to the result.

Plan a class excursion to a TV station, factory or plant where there is an assembly line or a group effort to create an item or result. Introduce the class to team building activities such as games of trust, challenging jigsaw puzzles or group problem solving scenarios.

Suggested Internet Resources

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/pe/contents.htm>

Team building and other related activities for kids

<http://www.craftbits.com/viewCategory.do?categoryID=GRP>

Many craft ideas for groups

Suggested Print Resources

Jones, Alanna *104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, Coping Skills* Rec Room Publishing Richland WA 1998