

Team Roles

ROLES, (Scribe, Captain, Planner, Tester, Public reporter,)

Create a set of questions and activities for each of the roles the students will choose

Role: Scribe	Record important decisions, actions that the group makes; tracked by date in a note book
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Questions:

- Will what is said effect future action of the team?

Role: Captain	Provide overall direction to the group to achieve their stated goals
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Questions:

- Are we following our goals?
- Are we working as a team?

Role: Planner	Develop a plan and keep the team on schedule working with the team captain
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Questions:

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Role: Tester	Provide feedback to team on direction they are taking. Use questions of progress and decisions
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Questions:

- Does what we decided make sense?



- How could we validate what we did?
- Do we need a discuss about this?

Role: Public-reporter	Keep track of important activities that will be included in your public presentation
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Questions:

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Informal Cooperative Learning

Informal cooperative learning consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2008).

During a lecture, demonstration, or film, informal cooperative learning can be used to focus student attention on the material to be learned, set a mood conducive to learning, help set expectations as to what will be covered in a class session, ensure that students cognitively process and rehearse the material being taught, summarize what was learned and precue the next session, and provide closure to an instructional session.

The teacher's role for using informal cooperative learning to keep students more actively engaged intellectually entails having focused discussions before and after the lesson (i.e., bookends) and interspersing pair discussions throughout the lesson. Two important aspects of using informal cooperative learning groups are to (a) make the task and the instructions explicit and precise



and (b) require the groups to produce a specific product (such as a written answer). The procedure is as follows.

1. **Introductory Focused Discussion:** Teachers assign students to pairs or triads and explain (a) the task of answering the questions in a four to five minute time period and (b) the positive goal interdependence of reaching consensus. The discussion task is aimed at promoting advance organizing of what the students know about the topic to be presented and establishing expectations about what the lecture will cover. Individual accountability is ensured by the small size of the group. A basic interaction pattern of eliciting oral rehearsal, higher-level reasoning, and consensus building is required.

2. **Intermittent Focused Discussions:** Teachers divide the lecture into 10 to 15 minute segments. This is about the length of time a motivated adult can concentrate on information being presented. After each segment, students are asked to turn to the person next to them and work cooperatively in answering a question (specific enough so that students can answer it in about three minutes) that requires students to cognitively process the material just presented. The procedure is:

- a. Each student formulates his or her answer.
- b. Students share their answer with their partner.
- c. Students listen carefully to their partner's answer.
- d. The pairs create a new answer that is superior to each member's initial formulation by integrating the two answers, building on each other's thoughts, and synthesizing.

The question may require students to:



- a. Summarize the material just presented.
- b. Give a reaction to the theory, concepts, or information presented.
- c. Predict what is going to be presented next; hypothesize.
- d. Solve a problem.
- e. Relate material to past learning and integrate it into conceptual frameworks.
- f. Resolve conceptual conflict created by presentation.

Teachers should ensure that students are seeking to reach an agreement on the answers to the questions (i.e., ensure positive goal interdependence is established), not just share their ideas with each other. Randomly choose two or three students to give 30 second summaries of their discussions. Such individual accountability ensures that the pairs take the tasks seriously and check each other to ensure that both are prepared to answer. Periodically, the teacher should structure a discussion of how effectively the pairs are working together (i.e., group processing). Group celebrations add reward interdependence to the pairs.

3. Closure Focused Discussion: Teachers give students an ending discussion task lasting four to five minutes. The task requires students to summarize what they have learned from the lecture and integrate it into existing conceptual frameworks. The task may also point students toward what the homework will cover or what will be presented in the next class session. This provides closure to the lecture.



Informal cooperative learning ensures students are actively involved in understanding what is being presented. It also provides time for teachers to move around the class listening to what students are saying. Listening to student discussions can give instructors direction and insight into how well students understand the concepts and material being as well as increase the individual accountability of participating in the discussions.

