

Collaborative Learning

OLE.6

TIME

10 minutes, daily

OVERVIEW

Students experience collaborative group work and become familiar with the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of productive group members. They learn to identify differences between competition and cooperation. Students participate in setting ground rules for group work, which are used in collaborative learning situations throughout the year.

Working collaboratively to solve problems is an important life skill for students to experience and master. The process of learning and working collaboratively improves the acquisition and retention of both content knowledge and skills. By mastering collaborative learning strategies, students learn how to work both independently and as part of a team. It is understood that collaborative learning strategies are not suited to every learning situation students encounter in the classroom and that teachers sometimes need to set the groundwork of a learning experience or unit using other instructional strategies such as explaining, modelling, and demonstrating.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through this learning experience (LE), students will achieve specific learning outcomes (SLOs) in various subject areas. Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified.

English Language Arts

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- 1.1.2 *Consider Others' Ideas*—Explore connections between a variety of insights, ideas, and responses.
- 5.1.1 *Compare Responses*—Describe relationships between own and others' ideas and experiences.
- 5.2.1 *Cooperate with Others*—Appreciate that everyone in a group has to work together to achieve cooperative and collaborative group tasks, and act accordingly.
- 5.2.2 *Work in Groups*—Take roles and share responsibilities as a group member.
- 5.2.4 *Evaluate Group Process*—Show appreciation and offer constructive feedback to peers and seek support from group members; evaluate own group participation and adjust behaviour accordingly.

Mathematics

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve.

Science

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- SLOs related to Scientific Inquiry or the Design Process in Cluster 0: Overall Skills and Attitudes.

Social Studies

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which SLOs students may achieve.

ICT LITERACY SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Consider the intent of this LE and your choice of instructional and assessment strategies to determine which skills and competencies students may achieve, in addition to those identified below:

- basic operating skills

SUGGESTED LEARNING RESOURCES**Internet**

- IMYM Links Database. <www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/tech/imym/resources/links.html>.

Print

- Appendix C: Index of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Strategies
- Abrami, Philip, et al. *Classroom Connections: Understanding and Using Cooperative Learning*. Toronto, ON: Harcourt, Brace, 1995.
- Clarke, Judy, Ron Wideman, and Susan Eadie. *Together We Learn: Cooperative Small Group Learning*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1990.
- Dockterman, David A. *Cooperative Learning and Technology*. Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder, 1998.
- Kagan, Spencer. *Cooperative Learning*. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning, 1994.
- Manitoba Education and Training. *Kindergarten to Grade 4 English Language Arts: A Foundation for Implementation*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, 1998. (See Strategies That Make a Difference, 17–36.)
- ---. *Success for All Learners: A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction: A Resource for Kindergarten to Senior 4 Schools*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, 1996. (See Chapter 5: Flexible Grouping, 5.3–5.10.)

BLMs

- BLM OLE.6#1: Group Work Self-Reflection Log
- BLM OLE.6#2: Collaborative Group Work Reflection Log
- BLM OLE.6#3: Task Recording Sheet
- BLM OLE.6#4: Set Your Goal
- BLM OLE.6#5: We Reached Our Goal! Let's Review

TBLM

- TBLM OLE.6#1: Group-Participation Observation Checklist

Materials

- folder for each group
- chart paper, pads of paper, or pieces of scrap paper for recording ideas

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTION**Preparation and Set-up**

- Become familiar with collaborative learning and teaching styles (see print resources listed in the Suggested Learning Resources).
- Visit and observe a classroom in which collaborative learning groups are set up.

- Create student groups after beginning-of-the-year tasks are completed and students' work habits and academic abilities become easier to appraise. Refer to print texts listed in the Suggested Learning Resources for ideas on forming collaborative groups.
Note: Select collaborative learning groups in such a way that each group is formed of students with a mixture of academic abilities and social skills.
- Encourage students to work collaboratively as they are mastering the social and group skills required for successful collaborative group processes.
- Gather problems from current studies in English language arts, mathematics, science, and/or social studies. These can be solved during the five- to ten-minute collaborative group tasks that form OLE.6: Collaborative Learning.
- Arrange the desks or tables in the classroom to form groups of four.

Activating Strategies

- On the first day of school, or when students are ready to begin collaborative learning, students select their own seats, in groups of four. Explain that there will be some movement for the next week or two. Direct students to change groups every two or three days to observe their interactions.
- Students brainstorm a list of groups or teams with which they are familiar in the school or classroom (e.g., basketball team, book club, patrols, choir, student council). Discuss the criteria for membership in some of the groups listed.
- Students discuss various roles that group or team members might play, based on their prior knowledge and experience.
- Make a chart of the roles discussed. Ensure that "recorder" is one of the roles on the list.
Note: The list of roles will be added to and referred to later as the various roles are described.
- Assign a recorder to each collaborative group. One method of random role assignment is to use criteria such as the following:
 - The person whose birthday is closest to today.
 - The person whose name starts with a letter closest to the letter "___."

Acquiring Strategies

- Give each collaborative group a simple problem from current English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies work to solve, or a task to achieve, at the beginning of each day or within a given period of time. Discuss the answers of each group.
- Give each individual student a problem, with directions to solve it independently.
- Ask students to compare and contrast independent and collaborative problem-solving strategies. This metacognitive strategy helps students to think about their learning.
- After several days of working together to solve the problems, discuss which collaborative group strategies students find most useful. Make a chart of Collaborative Group Strategies That Work!
- Students use BLM OLE.6#1: Group Work Self-Reflection Log and/or BLM OLE.6#2: Collaborative Group Work Reflection Log to provide feedback about their group work.
- Using observations of group participation, noted in TBLM OLE.6#1: Group-Participation Observation Checklist, determine whether groups need to be rearranged. If so, identify how.

Applying Strategies

- Provide each collaborative group with a folder. Students discuss their group's strengths and the characteristics that contribute to making them a cohesive group. They decide on a group name and decorate a folder to symbolize their group's qualities. They use this folder to store tasks, assignments, and forms used for assessment or for setting group goals (such as BLM OLE.6#1: Group Work Self-Reflection Log, BLM OLE.6#2: Collaborative Group Work Reflection Log, BLM OLE.6#3: Task Recording Sheet, BLM OLE.6#4: Set Your Goal, or BLM OLE.6#5: We Reached Our Goal! Let's Review).
- Students work in collaborative groups throughout the year, as appropriate, to accomplish many tasks such as note making, searching Internet sites, solving problems, and peer coaching. Collaborative learning is also a key strategy in OLE.7: Speak Ye! Hear Ye!
- Students use BLM OLE.6#3: Task Recording Sheet to keep track of individual tasks and duties within their group.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ASSESSMENT

- Use TBLM OLE.6#1: Group-Participation Observation Checklist, BLM OLE.6#1: Group Work Self-Reflection Log, and BLM OLE.6#2: Collaborative Group Work Reflection Log to assess the performance and participation of students within each group. Use BLM OLE.6#3: Task Recording Sheet to provide feedback for students and parents when discussing student participation in groups.

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY AND DIVERSITY

- Students use collaborative learning strategies throughout the *Community and Diversity* interdisciplinary unit.

LEARNING CENTRE CONNECTION

- While no specific learning centre is suggested for this OLE, collaborative group strategies are used at all learning centres where students work in groups. The BLM suggested for each learning centre within this unit includes a section called Suggestions for Collaboration.
- Collaborative learning is used as a strategy in OLE.7: Speak Ye! Hear Ye!

BLM OLE.6#1: Group Work Self-Reflection Log

Name _____ Date _____

Group Members _____

Rate your group participation using the following rating scale.

Group-Participation Criteria	3 Always	2 Sometimes	1 Rarely
• I shared my ideas and answers with my group.			
• I asked questions when I did not understand something.			
• I helped people to understand when they had problems.			
• I tried to make people feel good in the group.			
• I stayed on the assigned task.			
• I tried to find out why I did not agree with someone else.			

Write brief comments about yourself as a group member.

In my group, I am good at . . .
Next time I will try to be better at . . .
I feel my group was . . . (Use one word to describe your group.)

BLM OLE.6#2: Collaborative Group Work Reflection Log

Recorder _____ Date _____

Group Members _____

Think about how your group performed. Read each of the following points and rate your collaborative group work using the rating scale provided.

Collaborative Group Work	3 Always	2 Sometimes	1 Rarely
• We listened to each other's opinions and ideas.			
• We gave appropriate time to allow others to think before they answered.			
• We contributed our own ideas and opinions.			
• We disagreed politely.			
• We were able to reach consensus.			
• We performed our roles in the group.			
• We completed the assigned task within the given amount of time.			
• We used our time effectively.			

Write a comment about how you or members of your group achieved group harmony.

What do you think your group needs to do to improve group harmony and your ability to complete the assigned task?

BLM OLE.6#4: Set Your Goal*



Group Members _____ Date _____

Our group goal is to:
Steps we need to take to reach our goal: <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
What help do we need to reach our goal? (Who or what?) <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
We will try to reach our goal by the following date:
Did we make it? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If not, why not? Try again!

* Source: Manitoba Education and Training. *Kindergarten to Grade 4 English Language Arts: A Foundation for Implementation*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, 1998. BLM-33.

BLM OLE.6#5: We Reached Our Goal! Let's Review*



Group Members _____ Date _____

<p>Our group goal was to:</p>
<p>The steps we took to reach our goal were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
<p>When we achieved our goal, we felt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
<p>We found this out about our group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">••••
<p>Signature of each group member:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

* Source: Manitoba Education and Training. *Kindergarten to Grade 4 English Language Arts: A Foundation for Implementation*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Training, 1998. BLM-34.

