

Team Building

There are many ways in which we can actively intervene to promote cohesiveness.

1. Open discussion that promotes understanding of sociological factors that create barriers to cohesiveness.
2. Regularly change the membership of small co-operative groups.
3. Promote the establishment of groups that are heterogeneous with regard to gender, ability, and cultural background.
4. Establish activities in which the whole class is involved and where everyone has a role to play, e.g. class newspapers, plays, murals, whole class discussion like class meetings.
5. Play co-operative games and co-operative sports activities.
6. Participate in activities that aim to build trust between individuals in the class.

Interview - A View of Us

	Self	Partner	Partner
1. Your birthplace			
2. Country you would like to visit			
3. Favorite Bible character			
4. Favorite ice cream flavor			
5. Best school memory			
6. Favorite time of day			
7. Favorite season of the year			
8. Favorite recreational activity			
9. Favorite chorus			
10. Favorite spiritual activity			
11. A special friend			
12. Favorite book			
13. Most respected world leader			
14. Favorite food			
15. Most important world issue			
16. Favorite local place to visit			

What Do We Have in Common?

Make a list of things you as teammates have in common. List as many items as you can discover. Here are some questions to get you started:

- ! Do you all like pizza? Other foods?
- ! Do you share the same hobby? Other interests?
- ! Do you like the same type of music?
- ! Are you all involved with athletics?
- ! Is there a particular weekend activity that you all like?
- ! Do you like to read the same type of books?
- ! Do you have the same type of pets at home?
- ! Are your favorite colors the same?
- ! Others...

Next Step... Based on what you have in common, agree on a team name and logo!

Personal Storytelling

Questions that promote storytelling about personally significant events, experiences, or concerns can be powerful for teambuilding. Teammates often listen more carefully and respectfully to one another when interesting personal stories are shared. Questions to initiate personal storytelling include the following:

1. What is your favorite place in the whole world? Why?
2. Where do you go to "re-energize" yourself? What makes it revitalizing?
3. Think back to kindergarten. In what ways are you still the same? How have you changed?
4. What is the story behind your name? How did you get your name? Have you ever had a nickname? What was it? Did you like it? What name would you have chosen?
5. Have you ever been in danger? Did you know it at the time? How did you survive the situation?
6. Think back to special celebrations in your early childhood. Which celebration is particularly memorable? What made it so special?
7. Who is your all-time favorite teacher? Why?
8. What was your favorite toy or activity as a kid?
9. What is the most difficult thing you've ever done?
10. What has been the proudest moment in your life? What led up to that moment?
11. Who is someone you trust? What did that person do to win your trust?
12. What is your favorite holiday? Why?
13. What are three of your all-time favorite songs? What makes those songs personally significant?
14. What is the most frustrating experience that you have had with a computer? What is the best discovery you've made with a computer?

15. Who is your favorite hero or heroine? What qualities do you admire in that person (or character)?
16. What leader do you most admire? Why?
17. What would you look for in a "best friend?"
18. Who in history would you most like to meet? Why? What would you like to ask that person?
19. If you could visit or live anywhere (besides here), where would it be? Why?
20. If you could witness (or take part in) any event in history, what would it be? Why?
21. If you could change one event in history, what would it be?
22. Do you believe in "love at first sight?" What makes you believe or disbelieve?
23. Can money buy success (or happiness)? Explain your rationale.
24. What would you do with one hundred dollars?
25. If you could go "back to the future," where would you go? What time period would you choose? What social changes would you make?
26. What is your favorite spiritual activity?
27. Who is your favorite Bible character?
28. Tell about an answer to prayer.
29. _____
30. _____
31. _____

What questions can you add? Use the blank spaces above to write additional questions for use in your teaching situation. Try to develop questions that are interesting, relate to lesson objectives, and will be "taken to heart" by students.

When Students Don't Cooperate

1. Keep in mind that a student's self-image affects his/her social interactions. Low self-esteem will be changed only through positive experiences with peers.
2. Continue to develop a cohesive classroom that encourages a sense of trust and a feeling of belonging to a group. Don't give up. Collaboration is learned from many experiences.
3. Have a whole class discussion about tolerance. Everybody in the class can try to mention something about themselves that is hard to tolerate. This shows socially isolated students that behavior problems are not confined to them.
4. The skill of "including other" should be discussed by the whole group. The students can be asked to brainstorm specific things they can do and say to include others.
5. Students who need to practice social skills benefit from plenty of experience working in pairs or groups of three. Ideally pair a non-cooperative student with a socially competent student who will provide a good model. Working in pairs is less demanding than working in a larger group.
6. Playing the role of observer in a cooperative group provides a student with an opportunity to observe others without demanding active participation. Having to observe the positive social behavior of others and then provide feedback is an important learning experience.

When Students Don't Cooperate²

7. Role play activities can be useful. The key to maximizing the effectiveness of role plays is the discussion afterwards. After students act out a theme then it should be discussed with questions like, "What would you do in this situation if it were you?" or "How would your father respond if you...?"

Role plays can include situations like these:

- ! Being the new person in the group
- ! Being made fun of
- ! Being rejected
- ! Everyone talking at once and not listening
- ! Being a teacher with a class that doesn't listen
- ! Hurting someone's feelings
- ! Making someone happy
- ! Communicating with someone who cannot speak English

8. Discuss the problem of behavior at the class meeting.
9. A cooperative classroom is built on trust and not on coercion. A student's wish to separate from a group must be honored. However, every effort should be made to include the student in upcoming activities.

Adapted from Hill, Susan and Tim. The Collaborative Classroom: A Guide to Cooperative Learning

When Students Don't Cooperate³

10. Negotiate a resolution to a conflict of interests (Teach the process):

Jointly define the conflict (what we want and how we feel).

Exchange reasons and the rationale for their positions (our reasons why).

Reverse perspectives (my understanding of you, your understanding of me).

Invent options for mutual benefit (three possible plans).

Reach a wise agreement (let's shake).

- (Johnson and Johnson, *Teaching Children to be Peacemakers*, p. 3:8)

11. Formalize a divorce petition. (see next two pages)

Divorce Petition¹

Learning with a Cooperative Learning Team is one of the better ways to learn and to complete projects. Divorce signals troubled relationships, conflicts and deliberate acts of non-cooperation. (In the "real" work world, the individual or individuals causing the WORK TEAM to perform poorly would be fired immediately!) A small group of learning members or any individual may request a Divorce.

DIVORCE IS SERIOUS

It is imperative for those individuals filing the Divorce petition to provide "clear" and specific evidence of incompatibilities. Successful Divorce petitions will have:

1. Evidence that members of the learning team have sought cooperative solutions. (Complete the next page.)
2. The individual causing the difficulties lacks interest or motivation in the success of the group.
3. Assuming the Divorce is granted, both groups will be totally responsible for the entire assignment and will be graded as all other groups.
4. The results of the Divorce request will be shared with the Learning Team during the next class meeting.

The Divorce petitions will be denied when the instructor has reason to believe that:

1. The petition was completed improperly.
2. The reason for divorce is related to individual learning difficulty, communication difficulties, physical difficulties, or different learning styles.

WHEN THE DIVORCE PETITION IS APPROVED, ALL MEMBERS OF THE NEW LEARNING TEAMS AGREE TO:

1. Meet immediately with the instructor to determine a reasonable make-up schedule.
2. Complete the same assignments given to other teams.
3. Accept the grade earned by the new team.
4. CONSIDER LATER PETITIONS THAT WOULD RETURN THE LEARNING TEAM TO ITS ORIGINAL SIZE.

Dr. Larry K. Michaelsen, University of Oklahoma

Divorce Petition²

Date: _____ Learning Group # _____ Course _____ Section _____

Learning Team Members:

Petition to Remove _____ from the learning group.

Reasons for incompatibility listed below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Efforts to solve the difficulty:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Additional information: