

DEALING WITH UNCOOPERATIVE STUDENTS IN GROUP ACTIVITIES

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Abstract: *teachers can use the individual differences and use the range of skills, abilities and personalities in the class to everyone's advantage. One way of making it easier to distribute your time is to ask students to work in groups, according to their different abilities. To help the slower, weaker or less confident students you need to give these students more time to help them understand and be successful.*

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It is more of a challenge in a large class, so all the more important. The average and fast or strong students will need less of your time, so you can spend most time with students who need you most. If you call the groups A, B, C and D, or 1, 2, 3 and 4, it will be clear who is top of the class and who is bottom. Most students know how good they are, and realize who the weaker or slower students are, so neutral group names are more positive. Call the groups, for example, 'the Lions', 'the Tigers', 'the Giraffes' and 'the Leopards', or the 'Red/Blue/Green/Yellow' groups. You can give more time to the students who need more of your attention if you form separate groups of weak, average and strong students. To help the weak students, you can do some remedial work and give careful correction. At the same time, you need not ignore the students in the average and strong groups, but help them when they ask you [1].

Another way of forming groups which can help with different learning abilities is not put students in mixed ability groups. In these groups you can encourage the stronger students to help the weaker ones. If you encourage this peer teaching, or 'pair helping', as a positive thing to do, usually most of the stronger students are keep taking on this role. Self-access materials are not difficult or time-consuming to make. You could have a special self-access box in the corner of the room. In this box, students can find or make word games; for example, 'How many words can you make using the letter of the word "discipline"? Or there could be an English reading text for which the students have to make up questions for another student to answer. The idea is to keep all the class busy, interested in learning and quiet, and this is particularly important with a large class [2]. As a teacher doing group work, one of my most challenging experiences has been dealing with uncooperative students-passive learners/non participators and overactive students. Although their numbers are limited, their presence in the classroom is a nuisance to teachers. You can't force them to do things out of fear of injuring their self-respect, nor can you order them to stop their misbehavior, at the risk of confrontation with some of the bolder troublemakers. So I have taken great pains to find the following ways of dealing with these students. You may put the uncooperative students in different groups. Work activities that require them to do things without speaking, e.g. ask them to hold up a picture for others to discuss, or to take notes on the group discussion, or to write down answers given by the group. It is important to remember that you should work with the same student at most twice a week. There are several things you should consider before preparing your lessons. First, you should find out why these students are so inactive, so mischievous, or so timid. It is because they have been spoiled, or perhaps because they have no parents? You may also want to ask yourself if the group activity is so difficult, too simple, or perhaps not interesting or exciting. Here are some group activities that I have used with some success: A. Interviews between students. Topic: The last party. (Wedding, Picnic) I Attended. Instructions: A ask B to tell him/her something about the party, e.g. time, place, people attending, or the food and drink served. (This is a kind of free talk, the overactive students may like to do this.) or A asks B the following questions. These are written on a piece of paper to be distributed to students. This is a sort of controlled exercise that may be helpful to the quiet students.) when did you last attend a party? Who attended? Where was it held? What was the party for? Who was the host/hostess? What did you do at the party? What did you like the most about it? What impressions were you left with? Note: Students have two choices in pair work. They can either have a free conversation about the party or have a dialogue using the above sentence patterns. B. Solving problems. C. Ordering things. Note: Give passive students some simple problems to snappy ones. This applies to both solving problems and ordering things. For example, one student acts a secretary and records everyone's opinion. Another is appointed a chairman and guides the discussion. A third encourages each member to offer an opinion. Finally a competition is held between groups, with a reward given to the best group. Just put the uncooperative students in groups with other students, and pretend that you are unaware of their uncooperative behavior. As time passes, the non-participants may feel left out, they may become worried that they aren't learning and gradually try to take part in the activities. Troublemakers may become bored if the teacher fails to notice their misbehavior, thus, reducing the value of their mischief. Take the individual needs of your students into consideration. The six techniques discussed above may help you deal more effectively with those students who will inevitably give you headache.

References

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