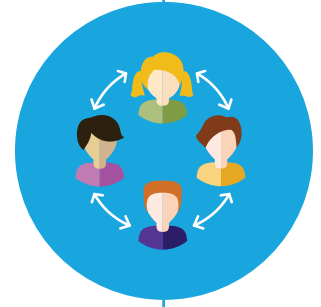


# Collaboration



## What is collaboration?

Nobody ever did anything alone. If our pupils are to be able to think creatively, and live fulfilling lives as democratic citizens, they must learn to receive the ideas of others and share their own.

Collaborative learning approaches are as much about developing the core skills of collaboration as they are about developing understanding of subject matter. As such, our concept of collaboration focuses on pupils experiencing the perspectives of others, not just on “group work.”



## Where can it go wrong?

Without the proper routines, classroom culture and accountability, collaborative learning can be ineffective. Group discussions can descend into idle chatter. For collaboration to be effective, pupils must be individually and collectively accountable for their efforts.

Additionally, pupils should have the opportunity to develop their own thoughts properly, before discussing them with others. This ensures that pupils head into paired discussions with something to say. If group tasks are being done, consider carefully the composition of groups. Use your knowledge of the relationships between pupils to make the right choice for your class.



## How can it be done well?

Mini whiteboards are versatile tools for facilitating collaboration between pupils and for rendering their thinking visible, providing accountability. When reviewing the discussion as a class, a skilled teacher can weave the ideas of pupils together or contrast them, using effective questioning to deepen the level of discussion.

Various forms of whole-class collaboration can also be effective, including using technology through media such as Google Docs or Jamboards. Effective collaboration should empower pupils to learn from others, and others to learn from them.

## Revolving whiteboards

Whiteboards moving around the room so that pupils are collaboratively working together on the same skill.

### What you could do:

- Pre-plan groups of four to include a mixture of abilities.
- To create headings of recall tasks – this example demonstrates knowledge recall of reactions.

### What pupils need to do:

- Pupils are given one mini whiteboard (MWB) each with one of the four headings on (therefore there will be 4 MWB per group). They are given a specific amount of time to 'brain dump' all the knowledge that they have on that subheading, in silence.
- After the timer has finished, pupils pass their MWB to the left. The new pupil can now add to the knowledge already written or change any misconceptions. All pupils will be working on one of the boards. The boards will move around until a pupil has added to each of the 4 MWB.

### When to try it:

- Using as a recall task for learnt material.
- For building inquisitive thought through already acquired knowledge of a task.
- For an assessment for learning tool to be able to address any learning gaps of either specific pupils or as a whole class.

### What to avoid:

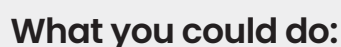
- Pupils not working in silence and focusing on their own MWB.
- Pupils not having a correct understanding of the concept and writing down wrong information. This can then be taken as fact by other peers and lead to misconceptions.

### How do I know that it has worked?

- All pupils are able to write answers on the MWB, to some extent.
- Pupils can actively build on others' work.



Using whole group mindmaps to recall key knowledge.



- Plan mixed groupings, prior to the lesson, with key quotations from a text allocated to them.
- Set up an online, interactive mindmap, such as on Mindmeister, for pupils to be able to use in the lesson. This can also be completed on A3 paper, with headings already written to guide pupils, if they do not have access to technology such as iPads.
- If needed, give pupils a success criteria of what the expectations are for their strand.
- As the pupils are completing their work, the teacher should develop pupils' thinking through questioning.

- Once put into each group, for this English example, pupils focused on a chapter and a character's presentation within that chapter. They were asked to then add their ideas to an online version of a mind-map.
- Pupils must build ideas from each other by either adapting, developing or creating a new strand.

- As a recap or revision tool.



### What to avoid:

- Pupils not being given a clear guideline, through success criteria – this could mean they give very little information and do not build on each other's work.
- Pupils not having prior understanding of the focus of the mindmap, meaning they are unable to add detail to the mindmap. Teachers can plan scaffolded questions to help the recall of key information to allow for this misconception to be addressed.



### How do I know that it has worked?

- Pupils have created an in-detail mindmap.
- All pupils are participating in the task – this can be tracked online, while they are completing the work.

## Rules and accountability – silent debate

Using rules and accountability for pupils to be able to collaborate as a class effectively and efficiently.

# SILENT DEBATE!

### The aim:

To have a debate in groups of four in complete SILENCE.

### The task:

1. You will be given a statement.
2. Write whether you agree or disagree.
3. Explain your reasons.
4. Respond to other people's comments by asking questions, responding to questions.

### THE RULES

NO TALKING.

You must write your ideas down.

No doodling/silly comments. Your responses must be relevant and structured.

Five minutes per statement.

You must write your initials, for each idea that you write.

## What you could do:

- Pre-plan open ended questions that are linked to the learning. Write these questions on different A3 sheets/MWB. In this example, pupils were studying the Hunger Games – the questions were: ‘Do you agree or disagree that reality TV is an exciting form for entertainment? Explain your views.’ ‘Do you agree or disagree that if the government is wrong, people in that country need to do something about it? Explain your views.’ and ‘Do you agree or disagree that having children is always a good decision? Explain your views.’
- Establish the rules of a silent debate with the class – this includes not talking for this activity and pupils being asked to add or develop a comment for each question.
- Teachers can also model an example of an effective silent debate so that pupils have expectations of outcome also modelled to them.
- This can also be set up on ‘Kialo’, if pupils have access to online platforms.

## What pupils need to do:

- Pupils circulate the room, silently, and answer the questions given. Pupils must either build on another’s point, argue against it by adding their own point of view, or create their own strand of argument.

## When to try it:

- When getting pupils to think hard about their learning by linking to wider context or past knowledge.
- At the start of a lesson, when pupils are exploring and investigating.

## What to avoid:

- Expectations for pupils not being explicitly established, including expectations for behaviour or expectations for output of learning.
- Pupils not building on other work and only giving basic answers – using a model to show the pupils should combat this.

## How do I know that it has worked?

- All pupils are following the rules of the silent debate.
- All pupils are adding or developing ideas (different coloured pens or asking pupils to write their initials will allow for accountability).
- Pupils are able to use their learning in the next independent task. This may be a written piece of work, and the teacher will be assessing if pupils are linking their analysis to wider perspectives that are linked in the silent debate. The teacher can ask pupils to highlight where they have included this work, once they have finished, for a clear visual.



## Differentiation in group work

Group work that allows for pupils to problem solve by using different scaffolded questions.

### What you could do:

- Pre-plan different scaffolding questions that are developing in skill level as they go. The question needs to be differentiated to the class accordingly.
- In this example, there will be five different equations, which will then develop to five different whiteboards that are placed around the room. The whiteboard questions will increase in challenge and pupils are explicitly told this.

### What pupils need to do:

- Select a whiteboard, placed around the room, that corresponds to the skill level suited to the question. Pupils have the opportunity to challenge themselves by picking the whiteboard they want to use.
- Pupils are given a certain amount of time to complete the equation as a group. All pupils must write on the whiteboard with reasoning and workings out.
- Pupils feedback to the rest of the class on their working out and findings. The teacher then holds a discussion with the class for each question to allow for any misconceptions to be addressed.

### When to try it:

- When solidifying pupils' knowledge through recall.
- Through exploration of a different level of equation.

### What to avoid:

- Pupils not being accountable for their learning or being placed in too large a group. Different coloured whiteboard pens allow for accountability and the teacher will need to interject if the group numbers need decreasing.
- Pupils selecting a harder whiteboard to try and challenge themselves but then finding the equation too hard so they cannot access their learning.

### How do I know that it has worked?

- When all pupils are actively engaged within the learning, using the whiteboards.
- When pupils can give feedback to the rest of the class.