

Contributing Positively to Group Meetings

Group meetings serve as an important way for students to share the information collected by various members in the group and require all group members to be effective in his or her positive contributions to the meetings. As well, group members need to reflect on their own learning and using the information gained from others within the group.

Time: two sessions of 25 minutes each

Materials:

- sample class list of Norms and Expectations from [Setting Inquiry Group Norms and Expectations](#)

- chart paper and markers, or interactive whiteboard

Grouping: whole class and/or inquiry groups

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that an effective part of any inquiry is to come together as a group to share findings and learn from one another. Just like any other group coming together for sharing and learning, certain behaviours are important to allow everyone to contribute positively to group meetings.
2. Refer students to the class list of Norms and Expectations that they created previously. Then ask students to turn to a partner and share what they think is important behaviour when contributing positively to group meetings. Generate a list of ideas based on their responses. Review this list as a whole class. (E.g., make contributions to group work, appreciate the contributions of others in the group, resolve conflict in a positive way, stay focused on group tasks, and share and take turns.)

Teaching Tip: If many ideas are generated, narrow down the list to the top three or four ideas. Provide students with three stickers or dots. Tell students that they will use the three dots to vote for the top three items that they feel are the most important behaviours to positively contribute in a group meeting. The dots can be placed on three separate items or all three dots can be placed on one list idea. All three dots must be used. When students have used all of their dots, analyze the data either through visual representation of dots or by counting to determine the top three behaviours that the class can agree upon. Discuss as needed.

3. Create a chart entitled “Ways to Contribute Positively to Group Meetings” and record the top three or four ideas. Post the chart where students can see it and revisit it periodically to add new student suggestions.

4. Tell students that another aspect of contributing positively to their group meetings is to share information. Each

By setting a meeting time and providing an agenda, you are provided with a timeline for which you have to have your material ready and so that you know what will be discussed at the group meeting. It is important to always be prepared.

group meeting should have an agenda—a plan for what the group will do or discuss during that meeting. Before the end of each meeting, a future group meeting date should be set and an agenda should be discussed.

5. Ask students how each group will keep track of the information collected by the group. Who keeps the information? Generate a list of possibilities. Some groups may use one idea while another uses another idea.
6. You might wish to role-play a good group discussion versus a bad group discussion, for example:

Good Discussion	Bad Discussion
Saba: Everyone in the group got some great information. How should we keep all of the information together so it doesn't get lost?	Saba: Everyone in the group got some great information. How should we keep all of the information together so it doesn't get lost?
Kathy: Does anyone have some ideas?	Kathy: My information never gets lost.
Vineet: Could we make a folder for our group so that what we have can be put in there?	Vineet: I know that if I keep stuff, the pages will get bent and stuff always ends up in my desk.
Ryan: Sounds like a good idea to me. But where will we put it?	Ryan: You guys need to learn how to keep track of your stuff.
Saba: We could put it in the bin where we are keeping our books and stuff for research.	Saba: Right, Ryan. But it is not just my stuff or your stuff. We need to keep everyone's stuff because of all of the good information.
Everyone: That's a great idea. Let's do it.	Ryan: Well then, you better keep it safe.
Kathy: I can get a folder so we can put all of the information together.	Larry: Let's ask for help.

7. Contributing positively to group meetings also requires time for group member to reflect on their own learning. This reflective thinking allows group members to pull together what they know at this point in time, using the information gained from others in the group. Reflection may take place in either oral or written form. An example of a reflective piece might be:

At first I thought...	Now I am thinking...

Teaching Tip: Another method for student reflection based on a group meeting might be through the 3-2-1 Process. This process prompts students to recall 3 important ideas that they learned during the group discussion, identify 2 ideas that would like to explore further, choose 1 idea that they will take back into their own work (e.g., a search strategy).