

“Skilling Up for Academic Success: Integrating Life Skills effectively into your classroom Based on the *openMind* series”

by John Cruft

Activity Ideas for *developing ownership of tasks*

Envoys

Procedure

1. Divide the class into groups
2. Model and elicit ideas for one of the key areas to brainstorm on the board as a whole class (to set expectation)
3. Ask each group to choose one area to brainstorm advantages and disadvantages for and groups discuss and make notes. Set a time limit.
4. Groups nominate students as envoys. These envoys visit other groups and collect information about the other areas they don't have information for. They then report back to their group and gradually fill in the information for all the areas.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

By giving them choice as to which area they want to brainstorm we are giving students more ownership of the task. This will help motivate them to complete the task. The role of this 'jigsaw' type task is also to get students

communicating and collaborating together to gather all the necessary information. It's a good way to try and encourage those types of classes where you have a challenge to get students speaking.

Activity Ideas for *getting students working effectively in groups*

Designated group roles

Procedure

1. Write the following on the board: presenters, note-taker, group manager (you can add more roles here).
2. Explain that the students will be working in a group with the final aim of presenting back their work to the class. They have to choose a role for each member of the group from the list on the board.
3. In their groups they complete the task, performing their individual roles.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

The aim here is to focus students on their individual role to achieve a task together. This helps bring more structure to the group work. It can also help students use their particular skills e.g. some students are better presenters, some are happier writing, while others may be better at coordinating the group. The aim is that they choose a role that suits their skill set.

Group speaking: 'Coins' or 'Chips'

Procedure

1. Give each student in a group 3 coins or 3 chips.
2. Explain that during the group discussion they can only say something if they put one of their coins/chips on the table. Once they have placed down action/chip they can say or add something to the group discussion.
3. Once a student has played all 3 coins they can not say anything more. The aim is that those students who haven't said anything must then add to the discussion and play their coins/chips.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

If you are a teacher who has a challenge getting all students talking in groups this can help/motivate those quieter students take part, so that all students have the opportunity to share their ideas. The activity idea will help students understand key communication skills such as turn-taking.

Process language (Learning Support)

Procedure

1. Write on the board some key phrases or sentences that students could use in their group discussion e.g. What do you think? Do you agree? I agree but.... I think that is a good point but....
2. Challenge students to try and use as many of these phrases during their discussion.
3. At the end of the discussion ask students to reflect on which phrases they used.

Materials Needed

No materials needed 😊

Rationale

Students often slip into L1 when working in groups. This may be because they don't have enough target language to complete or take part in the discussion. By giving them key phrases or process language can help overcome this challenge.

openMind

openMind 2nd Edition is a popular 6-level American English course for adult students, that develops essential language and Life skills for 21st Century learners.

For more information please visit

<https://www.macmillanmind.com>