Teaching Cooperative Learning Roles

A Simple, Effective, Low-Cost Activity to Use in Your Classroom

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The activity

As students work on a project throughout the duration of the course, this activity will ask them to assume/choose certain social/work roles each time in order to improve emotional intelligence, navigational skills, and ultimately enhance their learning experience.

This activity is great for classroom culture, classroom management, classroom rituals & routines, community-building, interdisciplinary teaching/learning, and student projects

Students will learn

- Ownership and sense of belonging
- Buy-in and commitment
- How to work in cooperative roles through which they can develop their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills
- How to enhance their ability to understand and express their emotions appropriately in activities involving the other intelligences

Here’s what you do

Resources needed:
- Poster paper
- Markers
- Goal setting sheet and roles handout

Approximate time:
The introduction of this activity (preferably during the first project of the year) will take approximately 20-30 minutes of active discussion and thinking, then this activity can be implemented in all project-based activities thereafter.

Visit https://youthbuild.org/my/education to access more classroom activity ideas
1. **Introduction:**

- At the beginning of the first major project of the class, explore and define “roles” that are a part of getting a group project completed.

  (e.g. time keeper, project manager, supplies, researcher, teacher, cheerleader, question captain, taskmaster, materials manager, accountant, etc...).

- Make sure that the students walk away with an understanding of the descriptions and functions of each role.

2. **Visual Representation:**

- At this point, the teacher can either let the students create their own visual representations of the roles they think are most important, or the teacher can use the ones already illustrated and attached to this LTA. The roles that are already illustrated are time manager, materials manager, project manager, communication manager and reflector. On the illustration there is a place to put the students’ name once they have chosen. These illustrations will be posted on the wall for the class to see and remind them of their responsibilities.

3. **Group work:**

- Students are then put into the groups they will be working in and asked to commit to play one of those roles for the duration of that project. They will have other opportunities throughout the course to play another role when other projects are done so they may be able play another role. This will give them exposure to many different roles played out in everyday life and more opportunities to improve on their emotional intelligence.
4. **Execution:**

- Students then execute the project objectives in their roles. The teacher can give the group individuals opportunities to self-assess themselves in the roles they are playing with the “Goal Setting” sheet. This will help them analyze their learning and how they are interacting with the group they are working with.

**Success Tips**

- Guide the assignment of roles, don’t dictate. You want them to choose the roles so they can learn how to be those social roles. “Purpose NOT Power!”

- Make yourself available but do not force your opinions or ideas on them. They need to “discover” the social role and your helpful suggestions for each student will help them to fully understand it as they “discover”.

- Really gear up to pitch it well and enthusiastically so that they buy it and have excitement about it each time.