

TEAM ROLES

A structure needs to be established when students are asked to work in teams. Many 'groupwork' lessons in the past have failed because the individuals were given no guidelines on ways in which they could contribute.

The purpose of working together should be clear for the team as a whole, but it also needs to be clear for each team member. They need to understand what 'role' they are going to play in the functioning of the team. If these 'roles' are expressly clarified, there is then less possibility of a team member not working with the team. It is also less likely that someone will dominate and try to assume all roles.

A considerable number of 'roles' can be undertaken in this strategy. Some of the more workable ones include:

- a. *Reader*: Who reads out any material that is handed to the group
- b. *Recorder*: Who writes down any notes that are needed by the group
- c. *Encourager*: Who constantly encourages team members to produce productive and positive work
- d. *Observer*: Who monitors the processes undertaken by the group, and records these observations on a monitor checklist
- e. *Materials handler*: Who collects and returns any material used by the group
- f. *Summariser*: Who clarifies and draws together the ideas expressed by the team.

Being given responsibility for one role leads to:

1. the student gaining a much better understanding of the role's purpose and potential;
2. the development of the skills required for the role; and
3. the necessity to concentrate on that role. It can be difficult to effectively function in more than one role at a time.

To establish 'Role Teams':

1. Train the students in the different roles. 'Adventures in Thinking', by Joan Dalton, has some excellent training strategies. Do not expect students to relate naturally to the roles. Allow for extensive practice before this strategy can be effectively implemented.
2. Divide the students into teams of four (which often seems to be the most effective number).
3. Explain the roles that are going to be undertaken and appoint members in each team to their particular role. Initially, this appointing could be undertaken by the teacher. At a later stage, the roles could be negotiated by the team.
4. Present the task to each team, and encourage each member to actively undertake their role.

Variations

1. Sporting teams already make use of roles during competition. Players are assigned various positions, and are expected to assume the role of that position for the entire game. However, other roles could also be added, such as a 'Team Encourager'. This person would not actually encourage players, but would continually remind others to do so. This is a subtle but very definite difference.
2. In activities such as brainstorming, there is often a set of rules for effectively implementing the activity. Assign each of the rules to a team member, who is then responsible for the implementation of that rule within the team. For example, in brainstorming, the roles would be:
 - a. to encourage as many ideas as possible;
 - b. to ensure that no judgement is allowed;
 - c. to encourage silly ideas; and
 - d. to encourage team members to 'piggyback' on each other's ideas.Each member must then concentrate on their role while the activity is being conducted.



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Who writes down any notes that are needed by the group



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Who constantly encourages team members to produce productive and positive work



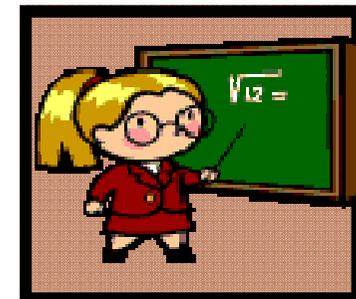
Observer:

Who monitors the processes undertaken by the group, and records these observations on a monitor checklist



Materials handler:

Who collects and returns any material used by the group



Summariser:

Who clarifies and draws together the ideas expressed by the team.



RECORDER

NAME:	DATE:
TOPIC:	PURPOSE:



write down any notes that are needed by the group	



