Cooperative Learning Handbook

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Success for All
A Nonprofit Education Reform Organization

The mission of the Success for All Foundation is to develop and disseminate research-proven educational programs to ensure that all students, from all backgrounds, achieve at the highest academic levels. These programs were originally developed at Johns Hopkins University.

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Using the Handbook

his handbook is an introduction to the basic cooperative-learning routines, classroom-management techniques, and conflict-resolution strategies that support SFAF programs. Don’t expect to master these routines in the first week of school, or even the first semester. It takes time and concerted attention to fully implement the strategies. The good news—that’s all it takes.

Developing a Focus

This guide is not meant to be read from cover to cover. Pick one or two routines on which to focus, read the associated text, and begin to plan how the techniques will play out in your classroom. Try them for a few weeks, referring to the *Cooperative Learning Handbook* for tips and troubleshooting. When you feel comfortable that you are implementing the routines well, select another area of focus.

Your needs in the classroom will determine the order in which you implement the cooperative-learning routines. At the start of the year, you might want to establish basic classroom practices such as the Zero Noise Signal, Ask Three Before Me, and 1-2-3 Move. Such routines set an immediate standard for behavior and are easy for students to master, providing an early framework for success. If you have concerns about your students’ ability to mediate daily conflicts, you might begin by focusing on cool-down strategies, “I” Messages, or other teamwork and problem-solving skills.

The Where to Start chart at the beginning of the routines section can help you select an appropriate focus given the needs of your classroom. The important thing is to work on only a few routines at a time; allow the students to achieve a high level of comfort with each before shifting your focus. By building a firm foundation early in the year, you will actually increase your teaching and learning time later on. In other words, go slow to go fast.

Tailoring the Strategies

As you begin implementing new routines in your classroom, it is normal to feel anxious or uncertain. Some teachers report feeling a loss of professional control. It is not our intent to replace teacher discretion. Indeed, you need to use your professional judgment to determine which strategies work with which students. As a teacher, you have the challenge of finding just the right combination of techniques for your class.

We ask that as you learn the routines, you implement them as faithfully as possible. Once you and your students have become more familiar with the strategies, you will have a better understanding of how to modify them and maintain their original purpose. We encourage you to discuss any proposed modifications with your facilitator, SFA coaches, and other teachers before trying them in the classroom.
**The Power of Teams**

Because it is often easier to maintain energy levels and enthusiasm when working as a team, the SFAF encourages teachers to talk with one another about all aspects of implementation. Besides lending a friendly ear, fellow teachers can provide valuable perspective on a situation and offer to help you brainstorm solutions. Never underestimate the power of your peers to give you a boost.

Informal conversations in hallways or the lunchroom are helpful, but we recommend that teachers discuss program implementation in a variety of more formal settings: within your teaching team or house, in content- or grade-level teams, and in other teams centered on common needs or interests. Short weekly or bi-weekly meetings focused around instructional goals and processes can make a big difference, if only to combat any isolation and discomfort you might feel when first implementing SFAF programs. Another reason to work in teams: there’s no better way to experience what you expect students to do in class.

If you are uncertain how to focus team discussions, the following forms might be of use. The following pages include a sheet you can use to assess your own understanding of the routines detailed in this booklet and three sample meeting forms with instructions. Choose whichever form works best for your team, and modify it as needed.

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**Think It Through**

**Program**

Think It Through is a process in which students spend some quiet time reflecting and self-talking their way through a problem before they attempt to jointly craft a solution that works for everyone involved.

**Breaking It Down**

When students are involved in a conflict, they individually complete a Think It Through sheet, a process which involves:

- Self-talking through the problem that needs solving
- Identifying their feelings about the problem
- Communicating those feelings through an “I” Message
- Proposing one or more solutions to the problem
- Once each child has completed a Think It Through sheet, the student representatives then choose a possible resolution using Talk It Out or Check It Out.

**Fine-Tuning the Technique**

- Keep Think It Through sheets in a specific place in your classroom where children can go to cool down and talk out their problems.
- Make alternatives available for the students who have difficulty with written problems. For example, a tape recorder which the students can use to record their answers will permit these students from having to write out the Think It Through sheet and starting the problem-solving process.
- Because students learn to handle a variety of different problem-solving models, some forms may be more appropriate for school-based versus after-school-based classrooms. Before these expectations are formalized and consistently communicated, you should expect students to need help solving classroom conflicts. Review these expectations periodically with students and other school personnel that have been trained in the procedures to remind them of the importance.

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**Teacher teams serve many of the same purposes as student teams: reducing the sense of isolation common among teachers, helping to solve potential problems, and increasing the repertoire of skills and knowledge at your disposal. Teams can also cut down on your work, as team members exchange time-saving tips and share preparation tasks.**

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*Throughout this handbook, additional resources are shown to help the user visualize the structure being described. These resources are available for download at www.sfapowerteaching.org.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studying the Routines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the main purpose of this routine? Why is the routine important?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is my plan for its implementation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will I know whether the routine is working? What should I expect to see from students?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Goal Development Chart

Goals from Previous Meeting
This section provides a way to focus your discussion. To start your first meeting of the year, write in any goals that have guided you since returning to school—preparing for your students’ arrival, beginning to implement PowerTeaching, etc. For subsequent meetings, transfer goals and next steps from the previous goal development chart before the meeting begins.

Accomplishments/Successes
This is a time for sharing your daily or weekly victories, no matter how minor they might seem. Do not stint on this, especially at first. It is critical to celebrate the progress that each teacher is making. Give yourselves frequent pats on the back for all your hard work.

Obstacles/Questions/Concerns
Use this section to record any problems or questions team members have related to schoolwide or classroom goals. It is important to acknowledge anything that is not going as smoothly as you would like. Spend enough time here to note people’s primary concerns, but try to keep the focus on constructive troubleshooting. If you veer off to topics over which you have little control or issues that you cannot solve at this time, simply note the concern, and then move the discussion along.

You may find that you can solve many of your questions by brainstorming as a team. If not, arrange to meet with your facilitator or a grade-level or content-area leader. SFAF coaches are also available during school visits or by phone to help craft solutions. Assign a team member to follow up on any remaining obstacles before the next meeting.

Reminders/Tips/Clarifications
This is a time to focus on instructional solutions—to review what you have learned in SFAF trainings, address any lingering questions, and talk about any classroom observations you might have. Focus primarily on the obstacles, questions, and concerns that team members raised regarding schoolwide or classroom goals. Where might you find additional information on these topics? (Manuals, training notes, other teachers, your facilitator, or your point coach are all good resources.) Start thinking about goals and next steps to work on in the days to come.

Goals/Next Steps
Use this section to record the next set of actions you wish to take to increase student learning. As a team or an entire school, develop up to three goals to work on until the next meeting. Talk about what these goals mean and how you might begin to meet them in your classroom or the wider school environment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component:</td>
<td>Trainer:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Goals from previous meeting

### Accomplishments/Successes

### Goals/Next Steps

### Goals from previous meeting

### Accomplishments/Successes
Team Meeting Agenda Form

**Topic**
Establish a topic for each meeting to provide a clear focus for your time together. This helps people know what to listen for and makes it easier to rein in discussions that wander off topic. It also allows people to set targeted goals and benchmarks. The facilitator or team leader should determine the first topic. Topics for subsequent meetings should be collaborative, depending on teachers’ needs and requests.

**Share Data from Classroom Application Activities**
General impressions of implementation are important, but so is using data to substantiate them. After the initial meeting, team members should begin to bring back data that is evidence of a goal-related activity implemented in the classroom. Examples of valid data include student work, anecdotal records, quantitative tallies, student interviews, videotapes, and so forth. Facilitators may also offer general data or examples from classroom observations.

**Videotape/Discussion/Other Presentation of Information**
You can choose to explore a topic in a variety of ways, depending on the particular goals you have for a session. For instance, to introduce a new topic you might want to watch a videotape, share an article, or listen to a presentation by a team member or other knowledgeable staff member. To follow up on previous sessions, you might share comments and questions or problem solve to address challenges related to earlier goals. Whatever the topic, focus on improving program implementation and increasing student achievement.

**Identify Next Step(s)**
Learning about a topic is one thing; connecting it to classroom practice is another. As a team, determine what your next steps will be as an outgrowth of your discussion. Keep the list short—between one and three items—so you can devote adequate attention to each item. Be specific and if necessary, prioritize the steps. Set the topic for the next session or two, and begin brainstorming suggestions for future meetings.

**Identify Classroom Application Data to Be Collected**
Part of effective professional development is assessing the impact it has on classroom teaching and student achievement. As you determine next steps, you need to identify concrete, measurable data to collect and bring back to the team as evidence of success. This will allow you to evaluate how well a strategy is working in your class, whether it is having the desired effect with the students, and what modifications you might make to increase its impact. It also provides direction for both next steps and future goals. Focused data may include specific numbers of students able to meet the identified goal, tallies of teacher interventions, examples of student work, anecdotes, classroom videotapes, and other observable measures. Be prepared to begin your next meeting by sharing and analyzing results.

The central questions at the heart of any meeting must always be: How will this help students? What impact should it have on their achievement? How will we know whether it is working?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Session Leader:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Data from Classroom Application Activities:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videotape/Discussion/Other Presentation of Information:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Next Step(s):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Classroom Application Data to Be Collected:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and Location of Next Meeting:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Meeting Record Form

Old Business and Housekeeping Issues
Begin by briefly touching on any issues left open at the end of the previous meeting and by noting any daily concerns that are getting in the way of instruction—items, such as a lack of materials, a permanent jam in the photocopier, and other logistical or housekeeping issues, that prevent you from focusing on the most important task, teaching. Do not spend significant time discussing these concerns! Gather them on a list to pass along to your facilitator or department head, who will help address them as quickly as possible.

New Business: Instructional Questions, Comments, and Concerns
Use this portion of the meeting to discuss classroom instruction and student achievement. You might choose to explore a new technique or routine, troubleshoot current strategies or delicate classroom issues, or review the previous week’s accomplishments (no matter how small), and the steps you have taken toward the previous week’s goals. As much as possible, keep the discussion positive and focused on finding effective solutions.

Topics should vary according to the needs of your classroom and the instructional focus of your team or school. For instance, you might want to work on pacing, on using Think Alouds with the students, or on ways to help the students transfer reading strategies to content areas. You might wish to demonstrate a routine or strategy, either for a friendly critique or simply to share it with your team. Together, you might find it useful to develop a common rubric for scoring a three-paragraph essay. You could also use meetings to read and review different classroom resources or professional articles.

But always at the center of your discussion should be the questions: How can I use this in my classroom to have the most powerful effect on student achievement? How will I assess whether it is working?

Action Items and Next Steps
Write down measurable, attainable next steps that teachers will take. You can have a common set of actions or each teacher may adopt a slightly different approach. The important thing is to write the steps down, so you can revisit them in coming weeks to see how you are progressing. If any old business or housekeeping items can be solved by team members, include these as action items, and record who will be responsible for following up.

This is a simple form that can be easily tailored to the task at hand. Use the boxes as a guide to how long each portion of the meeting should take.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Business and Housekeeping Issues</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Business: Instructional Questions, Comments, and Concerns</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Items and Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Cooperative Learning Overview

What brought you to teaching? For many people, it was the opportunity to make a difference to individual children, to watch them grow and learn and explore. But being responsible for the social and academic progress of every child turns out to be a daunting proposition, given all the variables in their lives that are outside your control. Class size alone makes it difficult to provide the individualized attention children need and deserve. The reality is that some students will always slip through the cracks. Or will they?

The Success for All Foundation was founded on the belief that every child can—and will—learn when provided with proper support both inside the classroom and out. No matter what the academic level of the student, each child is challenged to do his or her best, and the contributions of all team members are equally valued.

Cooperative learning is one of the most powerful tools you have in providing the level of engagement and academic and social support your students need to be successful. In the cooperative-learning classroom, all the students benefit from the constant coaching, encouragement, and feedback of their peers. And since more of the responsibility for learning rests on the students and teams, you are able to spend more time working with individuals and small groups of learners, doing the kind of teaching that originally drew you to the field.

Why cooperative learning?
As children move into early adolescence, they pay increasing attention to their peers—to what they think, say, and do, and to what they believe is cool. Cooperative learning takes advantage of this need for social interaction by offering young adolescents a structured opportunity to discuss topics, share ideas, organize their thoughts, and work with other students. Cooperative learning also employs positive peer pressure by giving teammates a common learning goal and rewarding them for reaching that goal.

Besides filling a developmental need, this social dimension is actually a critical aspect in the learning process for people of any age. People learn in communities. Together, we can accomplish more than as individuals, and we have more fun in the process. Students are no different. Research shows that opportunities for cognitive rehearsal, clarification, and reteaching have a positive effect on academic achievement.

“The most important assumption is that every child can learn. We mean this not as wishful thinking or just a slogan but as a practical, attainable reality. In particular, every child without organic retardation can learn to read. Some children need more help than others and may need different approaches than those needed by others, but one way or another, every child can become a successful reader.”

Slavin and Madden, 2001, p. 4

The benefits of cooperative learning are well researched and documented:
- Higher grades
- Increased retention of information
- Better relationships with peers
- Greater intrinsic motivation
- Better ability to stay on task
- Improved attitudes toward school
When students collaborate, they have an opportunity to discuss new concepts with someone close to their own level of understanding. They get to try out new ideas and ask questions in a small group before speaking to the whole class or finishing a written product. When students discuss and defend their ideas or solutions with teammates, they learn to think problems through, to support their own opinions, and to critically consider the opinions of others before coming to a conclusion. And they learn that in the end, the responsibility for learning still rests with them.

How It Works

The SFAF programs emphasize team goals that can only be achieved when all members of the team are learning and improving. The task is not only to do something as a team but also to learn something as a team. Because individual students compare their scores only with their own past performance, every team member is able to contribute equally to the success of the team.

But how should this kind of experience be structured? According to research, three elements are key to making cooperative learning effective: team recognition, individual accountability, and equal opportunities for success. Cooperative learning provides all three.

- **Team recognition:** Students work in heterogeneous teams of four or five members, and teams earn certificates or other recognition for achieving a designated goal together.

- **Individual accountability:** Teams work together to complete a project, solve a problem, or prepare for a test, but each student is responsible for completing an individual product and taking a test. There are no group grades.

- **Equal opportunities for success:** Students and teams are never in direct competition with one another. To earn individual recognition, the students compete against their own past performance rather than against their classmates, so every student has an equal opportunity to succeed. To earn group recognition, teams strive not against one another but toward a common goal, so every team has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Cooperative learning is often portrayed as involving team grades, or asking one child to do the work for four, or turning control of the classroom over to students. In SFAF curricula, it means none of these things. Instead, as Michael D. Rettig and Robert Lynn Canady point out, “The essence of cooperative learning is that we work together, we learn together, but we are held individually accountable for our own learning” (2000, p. 233). Here, too, the research is unequivocal: structuring opportunities for team members to help one another and rewarding teams whose members improve upon past performance, is the most effective cooperative-learning model.
What Does a Cooperative-Learning Lesson Look Like?

Although the language used in each curriculum varies slightly, each lesson is structured around the same basic framework, designed to support cooperative learning and make the best use of both teacher time and student learning time.

■ **Teach:** During the first portion of each lesson, you prepare the students for learning. Through questioning and modeling, you lead them through the new content they need to complete the rest of the day’s activities, whether reading a novel, problem solving, or working on a team product.

■ **Team:** During this part of the lesson, the students take control of their learning, working as partners or teams, while you circulate through the room checking with individuals or small groups of learners to monitor comprehension and clarify misunderstandings. This is your chance to meet with students one-on-one for targeted instruction.

■ **Test:** This takes place both formally and informally across the weekly cycle of instruction. Formal assessments take place at the end of each cycle or lesson. Informal assessments occur on a daily basis as you circulate around the classroom, as well as through the daily products that the students or teams complete, and during the wrap-up discussions at the end of a class period.

■ **Team Recognition:** Teams earn daily points throughout the cycle for working well together and meeting certain behavioral objectives, and they receive formal recognition and rewards at the end of the cycle/lesson based on both the academic improvement of individual team members and the team cooperation points students have earned.

We know that it can be uncomfortable, scary, or downright threatening to adopt new ways of teaching, particularly when they upset the usual balance of teacher- and student-directed activities. The cooperative-learning routines and other strategies presented in this manual should help ease the transition. Research-based and classroom-tested, they form the foundation of the basic daily lesson structure used by the SFAF. They also translate easily into non-SFAF classrooms, allowing for a schoolwide approach to cooperative learning, even in schools that have elected to adopt only a single curriculum component.

For more on cooperative learning, try the following resource:

Getting Started with Student Teams

Most of us have had the experience of being in a team where one or two people did all the work, while everyone got the benefit of the grade. This is not what teams in SFAF programs are all about. Many of us have also experienced the energy that comes from working with others on a project and felt the tremendous flow of ideas that comes from putting several minds to work on a problem. We have been part of teams where we knew collectively more than as individuals, where we accomplished things together that we could never have done alone, and where we rose to the occasion and benefited from the array of skills that people brought to the team. This is the team model to which the SFAF subscribes.

Forming Teams

In the SFAF classroom, teachers create teams; the students do not. A team generally consists of four students. Add a fifth member to selected teams only when the class is not equally divisible by four. It should represent a cross-section of the class in gender, race or ethnicity, and past performance. Ideally a team includes:

- Two boys and two girls
- Different ethnic backgrounds
- One relatively high, one low, and two average performers
  (High performer is a relative term meaning high in comparison to others in the class, not necessarily high compared to school or national norms.)

Within teams, designate partners—usually the two students sitting next to each other rather than across from each other. Five-member teams should have one set of partners and one triad.

The goal is to create partnerships and teams that function well. You can take into consideration behavioral concerns and deadly combinations when forming teams, but avoid deliberately putting students with friends or switching students from team to team. Over the course of the school year you want students to learn how to work well no matter who their teammates are. Never let students choose their own teams.

When forming teams at the beginning of the year, you might have little or no academic or performance information available. In such a case, assign teams using only gender and ethnicity. Keep these initial teams together for about three weeks or until you complete the introductory units of study. By then you will have enough grades to determine each student’s performance level more accurately. From then on, re-form teams every four to eight weeks, generally as you finish a major unit of instruction. Follow whatever schedule works best for you and your students, as long as you allow enough time for team members to learn how to work together effectively.

Teams that represent different learning styles, competencies, and leadership abilities usually turn out to be the strongest, stronger even than teams made up only of leaders, thanks to their diversity of skills. The same is true of teacher teams: a balance of skills and working styles is highly beneficial.

“Research has...shown that using cooperative learning in the classroom can have positive effects on interethnic relationships, acceptance of mainstreamed academically handicapped students, student self-esteem, liking of others, and attitudes toward school and teachers.”

One Million Children
Slavin and Madden 2001, p. 205–6
To assign students to teams, use the following method or any other available method that results in heterogeneous teams.

One simple way to place students in teams is by using index cards with the students’ names on them, as in the following example. The example is based on a class of thirty students.

1. Write each student’s name on an index card.
2. Divide the number of students by four to determine how many teams you will need. (For a class of thirty you will end up with seven teams: five teams of four members and two teams of five members.)
3. Put the index cards in order according to student achievement level: lowest to highest.
4. Place the top seven cards on the table.
5. Line the bottom seven cards up in a row underneath the first row.
6. Place the remaining cards in two rows, lined up underneath the others, keeping aside for a moment the two extra cards. The students are now arranged by their academic achievement. The four cards in each column represent a heterogeneous team.
7. Review the composition of each team, and make adjustments as needed to balance ethnicity, gender, social skills, absenteeism, and other factors. Move cards only along the same row—do not move them up or down a column.
8. When you are satisfied with the composition of teams, assign the two remaining cards so you now have five teams of four members and two teams of five members.

Facilitating Teamwork

As students get accustomed to working together, you may have questions about effectively managing a classroom of teams. The following are commonly raised questions and some possible solutions. If you have other questions, check with your team, your facilitator, or your SFAF point coach.

How can I control noise levels?

As you begin to implement teamwork, you might notice that your classroom sounds noisier than usual. The room should have a healthy buzz, because teammates often need to talk to one another, but noise levels should never exceed acceptable limits. Use team cooperation points and verbal praise to reward teams using appropriate voice levels. Work with the students on using a library voice, an indoor voice, or a six-inch voice (as if they were talking to someone six inches away). When the noise begins to rise, use the Zero Noise Signal to help the students bring the volume back down to an appropriate level. If noise continues to be a problem, step up the pace of your lessons to minimize time off task. When re-forming teams in later weeks, distribute talkers evenly among teams.
How can I encourage the students to rely on their team instead of on me?

When teams are functioning well, students recognize that part of their job in class is to challenge and support their partners and their team. They know that their work is not complete until every member of the team understands what has been taught and is prepared to show their knowledge either through questioning or through informal or formal assessment. They also understand that the success of their team depends on the contributions of each teammate. To facilitate teamwork, ask questions like the following as you visit teams:

- How are your teammates helping you with this task? How are you helping them? What can you do if you encounter a problem completing this task?
- Do you agree with your teammates' answers? Do you have anything to add? What if you disagree?
- Did you ask three before me? Can anyone else on your team answer that question? What about someone on a neighboring team?

What if teammates work independently or if one student does all the work?

To encourage team members to work together, use routines like Chip In and Round Table to promote 100% participation. Require team members to share resources to complete a task (for example, by providing only one or two reference books instead of four). For written, team-based activities, offer each team member a different color pen, and require that the final product show approximately equal amounts of each color. Monitor teams closely, and publicly praise teams who are working well together or whose final product clearly represents the efforts of the whole team.

What if team members do not get along?

Realize that students may need some time to get used to working in teams. Each student is an individual and may differ from teammates in a number of ways. The easiest solution is time. As soon as the students understand that teamwork is standard in your class and that they need to cooperate to be successful, they will come around. Never allow the students to change teams; the incentive to cooperate comes in part from the realization that they must work together for several weeks before being assigned to new teams.

Reinforce positive behaviors and cooperation with frequent team cooperation points and verbal praise. Sometimes giving extra rewards to successful teams will promote better cooperation among less successful teams. You might also consider an additional team-building activity to facilitate interaction among team members, and devote a small amount of class time each day to discussing and modeling the team cooperation goal and effective conflict-resolution skills. Work with team members to identify one another's unique strengths: what skills do they bring to the team? Although you cannot expect the students to change their classroom behavior overnight, you can shape their behavior in small increments.

Friendship is not a criterion for effective teamwork. In the real world, people must find ways to work together regardless of their personal differences.
In the rare instance that a student refuses to work in a team or cannot control his or her behavior, temporarily remove the student from the team and assign him or her to work independently; he or she must complete all class assignments without benefit of team assistance. After seeing how much harder it is to work alone, in most cases the student will ask to return to the team. Always alert the Solutions coordinator in cases of behavioral difficulty. The Intervention Team can help craft effective solutions based on each child’s strengths and resources.

If, in spite of your best efforts, there are a few teams in the class that just cannot work together, consider re-forming the teams earlier than you otherwise would, paying careful attention to avoid the problems from the initial set of teams. Ask members of the Solutions Network for suggestions on ways to encourage better teamwork in your classroom, and plan how you will begin to implement these strategies.

**What if families complain that working in teams seems unfair?**

Families often have valid questions about their children working in teams. If families express concern, explain that the students are graded based on their own individual performance, not on the work of team members. Talk with them about the academic benefits for all students: in helping others learn, the students themselves gain a stronger understanding of the concepts and have a greater recall of what they have learned. Discuss the social benefits of cooperative learning as well: for the students to be successful in the world outside of school, they need to know how to work with people from all backgrounds and perspectives, and teamwork allows the students to develop strong leadership and social skills. If community concern about cooperative learning is widespread, talk with your Solutions coordinator about arranging a family night or some other event to model cooperative learning and its benefits.
Team-Building Activities

Each time you form or re-form teams throughout the year, have the students participate in some sort of team-building activity. At a minimum, teams need to design new team names, logos, and/or slogans. To prevent overlap, coordinate team-building exercises with other teachers in your team or house.

1. VANITY LICENSE PLATES
   Give each team a piece of blank paper and several markers. Have them design a vanity license plate for their team, including a slogan (just as states often place mottoes on their plates, teams can too) and a message of no more than eight letters and numbers printed in block capitals. Teams may also draw a background design for their license plates if time remains.

2. TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE
   Within each new team, students take turns telling one another two truths and one lie about themselves. The team must guess which is the lie. The lies should be as believable as possible in order to fool the group. Each team then chooses one of its members to share two truths and a lie with the whole class, which then tries to guess the lie.

3. ALL TOGETHER NOW
   Give the class a topic such as “an invention I wish I could make,” “what I wish our school looked like,” etc. Then give each new team a sheet of poster paper and a set of markers or crayons. Without talking, the #1 person begins the drawing. After one minute tell the #1s to pass the paper to the #2s. Give the #2s one minute to add to the drawing before asking them to pass it to the #3s, and so on.

4. BOXING MATCH
   Give each new team a shoebox with lid, scissors, glue, and old magazines. Teams must completely cover the outside of the box and lid with cut-out pictures and words that relate to the members of that team. Use the box as storage space for team supplies.

5. CREATE A TEAM SLOGAN
   Create a team slogan, a team cheer, and a team handshake. These can be based on what students will be studying, on common likes and dislikes, or on any other criteria. To keep the activity fresh at other times during the year, change the specifications.

6. MAKE A POSTER
   Make a poster that demonstrates all the things the team members can discover that they have in common. To ensure that all team members participate in the project, give each a different color marker and tell them that each color must be equally represented in the final poster.
7. **COME FLY WITH ME**

Give an 11” x 17” sheet of paper to each new team. When you say “Begin,” each team must make a paper airplane—without talking, using only their nondominant hand and with every member of the team contributing—within two minutes. Afterwards, have a contest to see which team’s plane can fly the farthest.

8. **NEWSPAPER SCAVENGER HUNT**

Get duplicate sets of newspapers, one per each new team. Also, give each team scissors, glue, and a 12” x 18” piece of poster board. Create a list of items that teams must find in the newspaper. Items might include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a picture of the president</td>
<td>a score from a game</td>
<td>a computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an animal</td>
<td>name of a country</td>
<td>a horoscope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a children’s movie</td>
<td>somebody</td>
<td>a local restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a baby</td>
<td>somebody not smiling</td>
<td>a food item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on sale</td>
<td>something scary</td>
<td>a word with ten or more letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number the items in the list, and give a copy of the list to each team. Team members must hunt and find the items, cut them out of the newspaper, and glue them to the poster board in the order listed. Consider the time you have available and the level of the students to determine how long or how complex the list should be. Allow fifteen to thirty minutes for the hunt, and tell the students that when you call time, all newspapers must be folded into a neat stack with no scraps on the floor.

9. **GRAB BAG THEATRE**

Prepare a bag for each new team that includes miscellaneous, unrelated objects (e.g., a baseball, lipstick, rubber ducky, spatula, hat, can of beans). There should be one item for each member of the team. Give one bag to each team. Each member reaches in without looking and takes an item. Within ten minutes the team must develop a skit based on a topic you give the class. The topic can relate to classwork or can be generic (e.g., the worst field trip in the world, our cafeteria was taken over by aliens, etc.). During the skit, each member must use the item they drew from the bag. Teams perform their skits for the rest of the class.

10. **A TOWERING PLAN**

Give the following materials to each new team: ten straws, ten paper clips, four sheets of notebook paper (two for practice and two for the actual activity), and one pair of scissors. The goal is to build the highest tower. Each team gets five minutes to discuss its plan, then ten minutes to build the tower. The tower must be freestanding—it can’t lean against anything. Only the materials supplied can be used.
11. IN THE CIRCLE

Give each new team a piece of poster board or a large piece of paper. Have the team draw a large circle. Team members write things inside the circle that they have in common and write things outside of the circle that are unique to a team member. Use the following categories to elicit responses, or tailor the categories to tie in with the topic of study.

What is your favorite...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>food</th>
<th>animal</th>
<th>cartoon</th>
<th>vegetable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drink</td>
<td>movie</td>
<td>cereal</td>
<td>restaurant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV show</td>
<td>movie star</td>
<td>brand of gym shoe</td>
<td>computer game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>book</td>
<td>time to get up</td>
<td>number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singing group</td>
<td>basketball team</td>
<td>time to go to bed</td>
<td>school subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV star</td>
<td>dessert</td>
<td>color</td>
<td>season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>store</td>
<td>theme park</td>
<td>state</td>
<td>holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sport</td>
<td>theme park ride</td>
<td>song</td>
<td>month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sports star</td>
<td>place to hang out</td>
<td>hobby</td>
<td>car</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. SPELL IT OUT

To each new team give a word that relates to either the topic of study, cooperative learning (e.g., team, teamwork, group, together), or any other topic of your choice. Team members have five minutes to find personal items in their desks, backpacks, etc. that start with each letter of the word you gave them. For example, gum, ruler, orange, umbrella, and pencil could be used to spell G-R-O-U-P.

13. FOUR (OR FIVE) OF A KIND

Figure teams out on paper. Then think of a different book for each new team, and assign characters from that particular book to the members of the team. For example, members of a five-person team might be assigned Dorothy, Tinman, Scarecrow, Lion, and Wicked Witch. On an index card, write the student name as well as the character name assigned to each person. Before you switch teams, hand out the index cards. Students then move around the room to find the other characters who make up their team. Once they are in their correct teams, partners interview each other’s characters by asking their name, age, hobbies, favorite foods, favorite TV shows, etc. Students must remember to answer as their characters would. Besides books, you might also use movies, TV shows, plays, etc.
## Where to Start Chart

What do you want to work on in your classroom? Record the targeted technique on an index card, and keep it handy as a reminder throughout the lesson.

The obvious solution isn’t always the easiest. For example, one of the most effective ways to reduce classroom conflict is simply to keep all the students engaged. If conflict is a problem in your class, you might want to begin with strategies to keep everyone involved.

### KEEPING EVERYONE INVOLVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask Three Before Me</td>
<td>Round Table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip In</td>
<td>Team Cooperation Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss and Defend</td>
<td>Team Celebration Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
<td>Think-Pair-Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Reporter</td>
<td>Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TIME AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask Three Before Me</td>
<td>Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down</td>
<td>Zero Noise Signal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Reporter</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-2-3 Move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-One Conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MAKING INVISIBLE PROCESSES VISIBLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Thermometer</td>
<td>Stop and Stay Cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishbowl</td>
<td>Team Score Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like Chart</td>
<td>Think Alouds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss and Defend</td>
<td>One-to-One Conferences</td>
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<td>Think-Pair-Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random Reporter</td>
<td>Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check It Out</td>
<td>Problem Solving—My Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Council</td>
<td>Problem Solving—Our Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Stoppers</td>
<td>Stop and Stay Cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool-Down Strategies</td>
<td>Talk It Out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Thermometer</td>
<td>Team Cooperation Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I” Messages</td>
<td>Team Celebration Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like Chart</td>
<td>Think It Through</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ask Three Before Me

Purpose
Routine questions like “Where do we write our name?” and “What’s the date?” usually do not need a response directly from the teacher. The Ask Three Before Me strategy frees you to answer those questions that clearly require teacher input and to assist students in genuine need. It also helps students and teams take more responsibility for their own learning by reinforcing the idea that they can depend on someone other than the teacher for help.

Breaking It Down
- Before the students begin any activity, make it clear that if they have questions, they need to ask three other people (teammates or students nearby) before coming to you.
- Firmly enforce the rule. Whenever a student asks you a question, your response should be, “Did you ask three before me?” If they have not consulted others, defer the question first to teammates or nearby students.
- If the student still has not received a satisfactory answer after asking three people for help, you should then offer assistance.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- Consistency is key, especially early in the year. If you find that the strategy is not taking hold, make a conscious effort to respond to the student's questions by asking, “Have you asked three before me?” Over time, this repetition will set and reinforce the standard.
- Initially, you might want to post the rule on the board as a reminder for the students.
- Another way to establish Ask Three Before Me in your classroom is to make it a weekly team cooperation goal and to award team cooperation points whenever you notice teams using the strategy.
- The students should consult those closest to them, not their friends across the room. If volume is a problem, work with the students on appropriate voice levels by practicing indoor voices or six-inch voices instead of outdoor voices, for example.
- As the students gain experience working together, you can extend the strategy to higher-order thinking questions as well. The more you encourage the students to consult their classmates first, the more you reinforce effective teamwork and problem-solving skills.
Purpose
Research shows that when we give students explicit strategies for dealing with conflict—strategies that bring an otherwise invisible process to the surface—we help them internalize healthy models of conflict resolution. Students who have already mastered Talk It Out can practice Check It Out, a less formal alternative that allows two students with a conflict to discuss the situation and find a win-win solution.

Breaking It Down
Check It Out is for conflicts involving two students. It differs from Talk It Out in that it allows for more complex discussion about a problem. The steps students follow in the Check It Out process are:

1. Each student states an “I” Message, which the other student then paraphrases.
2. The first student asks a question that delves deeper into the reasons for the conflict by seeking to discover the other student’s point of view.
3. The two students continue talking and asking questions until they understand each other’s opinions of the conflict.
4. Together, the students work toward and agree to a win-win solution.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Since this is a less-scripted approach to conflict resolution, introduce Check It Out only after the students are comfortable with the more formal steps of Talk It Out. Keep a printed sheet with the Check It Out process for students to consult when conflicts arise.

- As with Talk It Out, you will need to spend time modeling and analyzing this process with the students. They will not master it on their own. Introduce it as the students gain comfort with their communication skills. Use scenes from a book or movie to set up a conflict scenario, and, as a class, work through the Check It Out process. You might also ask individual students to role-play a hypothetical conflict.

- The students must be careful to use cool-down strategies and conflict stoppers to prevent the conflict from getting worse. As the students learn the Check It Out process, monitor from a distance in case you need to intervene and remind them of the steps or help set them back on the path toward peace.

- If the students are unable to resolve a particular situation, steer them toward the more scripted Talk It Out process.

* Check It Out is a routine used primarily in the elementary grades.
The analogous process for the middle grades is Problem Solving—Our Part.
Purpose
This simple technique keeps all the students involved by giving every child the opportunity (and the responsibility) to contribute to team discussions. It is an effective way to nudge reluctant speakers to participate and to rein in students with the tendency to dominate.

Breaking It Down
- Prior to a team discussion, distribute a cup or some other type of container to each team, and give each student one or two counters—chips, centimeter cubes, game pieces, or other small objects.
- To begin the discussion, one student shares an idea or answer with the team and puts a counter into the team's container. Then it is another student's turn to speak and place a chip into the container.
- As each child speaks, other members of the team listen carefully. This continues until every team member has had a chance to participate in the discussion, or "chip in."
- The students may pass if they have nothing to say at first, but they need to be thinking of something to contribute the next time their turn comes around. Each student's counters must be used for this activity to end.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- If the students have difficulty paying attention to one another's contributions, make active listening the weekly team cooperation goal, and award team cooperation points whenever you catch teams listening well and responding to what each other has to say. All team members should be ready to ask a question or contribute to the discussion at any point.
- If teams are still having a hard time balancing the contributions of their shyest and most outgoing team members, work on 100% participation as the team cooperation goal. Give team cooperation points to teams where all members are actively involved in the discussion.
- The point is not for the students to feel trapped into talking, but to remind them of their responsibility as a team member. If you have an exceptionally shy or reluctant student, do not get into a battle of wills over the need to chip in. Instead, consider ways to compromise and yet still bring the child into the discussion. You could, for example, initially give the student one less marker than others on the team receive, or you could make a Free Pass certificate that the child can place in the container once a day in place of a marker. Over time, as the child gains confidence, remove these supports until the student is a fully contributing member of the team.

Chip In

ROUND TABLE
If you like the Chip In technique, try using Round Table. It's a way to have students brainstorm as a team.
Purpose

Long before children are able to vote, they are ready to participate as full-fledged members of a community. Class Council is a flexible forum that gives students the skills and the structure to do just that. Through regular meetings that range from five to thirty minutes, students have the opportunity to share praise and good news, raise questions and concerns about day-to-day affairs, and engage in planning and problem solving within the context of the classroom community. In short, they learn how to be effective citizens and leaders.

Breaking It Down

Use the following agenda to structure your Class Council meetings:

- **Share encouraging words:** The best way to cement strong social skills is to consistently reinforce desired behaviors through public praise and recognition. Begin every Class Council meeting by reading aloud any encouraging words that have collected in the Class Council box during the week.

- **Discuss class concerns:** Use this portion of the meeting to raise or resolve issues needing the input of the whole class. Talk about classroom rights and responsibilities, address ongoing behavioral concerns, plan for an upcoming event, or tend to other classroom business as necessary. The students should submit any concerns to the Class Council box before the meeting begins so you can plan the agenda accordingly.

- **Practice Problem Solving—Our Part:** Before you can expect the students to manage conflicts on their own, they need time to practice problem solving in situations where they don’t have the same level of emotional investment. Provide time in every Class Council meeting for the students to think through, discuss, and role-play solutions to interpersonal issues.

- **Teacher affirmations:** Bring the Class Council meeting to a close by identifying the positive behaviors you saw during the meeting. Note any progress that the class has made in their problem-solving skills, praise individuals or teams for their contributions to class, and thank the students for all their efforts today and during the past week.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Early in the year, plan on devoting between twenty and thirty minutes weekly to your Class Council meeting. Set a regular time, and tell the students about it so they know what to expect. Later, as students become more familiar with one another and with classroom routines, vary the length of meetings depending on their needs in any given week. For instance, a five-minute meeting might suffice one week, giving students just enough time to check in with one another and with you, while another week you might want to extend the session to allow for a more prolonged discussion.
Always start and end the Class Council meeting on a positive note. If you know you will be discussing something difficult, plan how you might wrap up the meeting so the students feel good about themselves and their contributions.

With the help of your students, establish ground rules to govern Class Council meetings. Use the language of conflict stoppers and roadblocks to guide discussion, and talk about why it is important for all the students to feel safe sharing their feelings in front of the class.

Initially, when having the students practice the Problem Solving—Our Part process, use neutral material that does not identify or point fingers at any students in particular. Take conflict scenarios from novels, stories, videotapes, newspapers, and plays, or ask the students to invent their own scenarios for use in Class Councils.

Make a Class Council box (similar to a suggestion box), and place it in a convenient classroom location. Remind students throughout the week to jot down encouraging words, class successes or concerns, and scenarios for practicing the problem-solving steps. Have them submit these to the box prior to the Class Council meeting. All contributions should be anonymous.

Whenever you hear a compliment, encourage the student who said it to write it down and add it to the Class Council box for you to share in front of the class. If you wish to give a copy to the child who received the compliment, type it up to preserve the anonymity of the author. You could also record encouraging words on a success card to send to the student’s family so they know about their child’s positive contributions to class.

Remind the students that encouraging words should not be about what a student wears or looks like, but what he or she can do or what strengths the student has. They also aren’t reserved solely for Class Council meetings. The students can offer encouraging words (aloud or written) at other times during the week. Remind them that everyone likes to hear positive feedback now and then.

Be sure to hold Class Council meetings not only when you have concerns about how the class is running, but also when you want to celebrate and share class successes. Work from your students’ strengths, and build up their resilience by emphasizing their many positive efforts and contributions.

Remember that emotions can run high in school. Take the students’ emotional temperature at the start and end of class, both to alert you to potential problems and to give students an outlet to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe setting. (See Emotional Thermometer for additional details.)

Screen submissions before class, and remove any inappropriate ones. Add your own encouraging words and class concerns to the box. The more models you provide for the students, the better.
Conflict Stoppers

Purpose
Conflict stoppers are actions that students can take to prevent common classroom conflicts or to keep an existing conflict from getting out of hand. They are a critical part of the formal Problem Solving—My Part process, in which students take time to cool down and think about the problem and possible solutions. Conflict stoppers can also be used as informal classroom reminders whenever a squabble arises.

Breaking It Down
- There are many ways to head off the kinds of daily conflicts your students might experience in the classroom, hallway, lunchroom, or play area. A list of possible conflict stoppers includes:

1. Share
2. Take turns
3. Apologize
4. Ignore
5. Make amends
6. Compromise
7. Laugh it off
8. Flip a coin
9. Wait until later
10. Get help
11. Talk it out

- Display a poster or printed list of these conflict stoppers for the students to consult when they have a disagreement.

- When small conflicts arise, the students should first try one or more of the options on the list. This may avert the need for a more formal intervention process like Problem Solving—My Part.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- The more the students practice these options, the more they will internalize them. Consistently use the language of conflict stoppers in your classroom and school. Keep the list posted in your classroom, or make sheets available to the students or teams, and refer the students to this resource as needed. (See the Roadblocks section also.)

- Instead of getting drawn into simple conflicts, ask the students involved whether they have tried any conflict stoppers. If not, have them consult the list to see if any of the options is a viable solution. Initially, you may need to help walk them through each of the possibilities.

- Publicly praise the students for using these strategies on their own and for averting any need to go through the Problem Solving—My Part and Our Part process.

- This is only a starter list of conflict stoppers. Periodically help the students brainstorm some conflict stoppers of their own, and encourage the students to talk to one another about their favorite strategies. By listening to others, children might discover new options that they would never have thought of on their own.

“Many of the behaviors that students bring to school are necessary to help them survive outside of school. Just as students learn to use various rules, depending on the Nintendo game they’re playing, they also need to learn to use certain rules to be successful in school settings and circumstances. If students from poverty don’t know how to fight physically, they are going to be in danger on the streets. But if that is their only method for resolving a problem, then they cannot be successful in school.”

A Framework for Understanding Poverty
Payne, 1998, p. 100
Cool-Down Strategies

Purpose
When people become angry, emotions can get in the way of peaceful conflict resolution. Cool-down strategies are ways for students to bring their emotions under control before getting into trouble or causing harm to anyone or anything. With their anger in check, students can then take steps to resolve the conflict peacefully.

Breaking It Down

■ The students must first recognize that they are getting angry and that they need to take steps to bring their anger under control. (See the Emotional Thermometer section.)

■ Next, they need to employ an appropriate strategy for talking themselves into a less volatile state of mind. To do this, they can use the Stop and Stay Cool steps, self-talk, or any other technique that works.

STOP AND STAY COOL
In this strategy, the students identify that they are in danger of losing control and then practice regulating their breathing as a way of defusing their anger. (For more on this, see the Stop and Stay Cool section.)

SELF-TALK
In this strategy, each person thinks of a phrase or statement to repeat silently when he or she is getting angry. Statements might include: “I can stay in control,” “This will pass,” “There is no need to get upset,” “I can get through this,” “People make mistakes, and I can excuse them,” or any other phrase that interrupts the cycle of angry thoughts.

■ Once the students have their emotions back under control, they can begin taking steps to resolve the conflict. (See the Conflict Stoppers, Problem Solving—My Part, and Problem Solving—Our Part sections also.)

Fine-Tuning Technique

■ Emotions are invisible, and the students will need help recognizing the signs in themselves and others. Use the Emotional Thermometer technique to talk about the incremental—or immediate—escalation of emotions. Use role-play or a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart to introduce and talk about signs that might indicate when someone is getting angry: clenched fists, raised voice, tensed upper body, etc.

■ Help the students develop a more complex range of vocabulary to describe their feelings. This will attune the students to the nuances of their emotions and allow them to recognize the difference between frustration and fury, for instance.
■ Model, model, model. Use a Think Aloud to show the students how to analyze a problem. Practice working through cool-down strategies in hypothetical conflicts, or talk about conflicts in books that the students are reading as a way to discuss alternatives.

■ Discuss why cool-down strategies work: they interrupt the cycle of angry thoughts that could otherwise escalate and lead to violence.

■ Acknowledge that anger and frustration are emotions that can be hard to handle. Reassure the students that feeling angry or frustrated is not bad, but that they need to learn how to control their reaction to these emotions. It is their reactions that can get them into trouble.

■ Not every cool-down technique will work for everyone or in every situation. Work with individual students to find a strategy that fits. Suggestions include taking a break, counting to ten, taking a deep breath, or finding another task like exercising, playing music, doing a puzzle, reading a book, or writing to a friend.

■ Provide experimental stations where the students can try different strategies, such as listening to a cassette tape or sculpting clay, to cool down, and encourage the students to share their own ideas with others.
Purpose
This is a structured opportunity for students to discuss an issue with their teammates, make an argument, and support their position with evidence. Having students discuss and defend their ideas allows them to review and revise their thinking, and it gives them practice with skills that they will be expected to use in their writing and assessments. It also offers you a window into their thinking, so you can check for understanding and tailor instruction as needed.

Breaking It Down
■ The students take turns sharing their thoughts about a topic or their answers to a question, being sure to give concrete reasons for their position.
■ As each student shares, team members listen carefully to the argument.
■ Once the student has finished, teammates challenge the student with questions like: How do you know that? Why do you think that? What evidence do you have?

Fine-Tuning the Technique
■ The students may need time and repetition to internalize this process, but you can make it easier for them by consistently challenging all the students to support their answers. Don't accept responses at face value. Always ask the students: How do you know that? Why do you think that? What evidence do you have?
■ If you notice that some team members are less involved in team discussions, try the Chip In technique to encourage equal participation of all members.
■ To improve the quality of discussion, have the students paraphrase or restate what their teammates just said, before offering their own responses. You could also ask teams to focus on active listening, and award team cooperation points to teams that show good listening skills.
■ Be judicious in your use of this routine. Reserve it for the most essential concepts in a lesson; not every question deserves the same level of extended discussion.
■ Explicitly show the students how to apply the same strategy to their writing, not just their speaking. Help them learn to develop their answers on assessments, student pieces, and written reports using the same three questions: How do you know that? Why do you think that? What evidence do you have?
■ Each class period, spend five minutes or so listening to one team’s discussion. What does this tell you about the students on the team? Have they grasped the most important concepts? Do you need to clarify any misunderstandings? Can you tell anything about their learning styles? How might this change the way you present new material to these students?
Purpose

Students often lack the ability to recognize when they are about to be overpowered by their emotions. They also tend to have an insufficient emotional vocabulary to understand the many nuances in their feelings—for instance, misinterpreting loneliness as anger. Teaching students to take their emotional temperature is the first step toward helping them learn to keep their reactions under control.

Breaking It Down

■ Emotions run on a continuum from low-key to intense. Before students can control their response to anger and other emotions, they first must be able to identify the feeling and gauge its intensity.

■ Just as a thermometer measures rising temperatures, an emotional thermometer measures rising levels of emotion.

■ Create an emotional vocabulary word bank with the students to introduce or review a variety of ways to describe different levels of a particular emotion. (For example, annoyed, bothered, frustrated, irate, livid, resentful, furious, and outraged are different levels of anger.)

■ Have the students label their thermometers with words from the word bank and then write down—or simply discuss with their teammates—situations that might make them feel each of these emotions.

■ Thereafter, a student can refer to the emotional thermometer and use it to gauge his or her level of emotion. Recognizing when emotions are heating up and acknowledging the intensity of those emotions are important steps toward peaceful conflict resolution.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

■ The students need regular practice and encouragement in taking their emotional temperature. It is not an easy skill to master. When you see tempers flare in the classroom, have the students involved check their emotional thermometers. If tempers are too hot, the students must cool down before attempting to resolve the problem. If you have sufficient wall space, post a thermometer for easy reference; the students can then point to their anger level.
■ Work on building the students’ emotional vocabulary over time. Vocabulary alone is not a remedy, but without it the students cannot come to a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of contributing factors in an emotional situation. Begin with words that the students intuitively understand (slang and colloquial expressions are fine), but as the year progresses add words appropriate to school or a more formal work setting.

■ People who study emotions generally recognize seven basic families of emotion: happiness, sadness, love, disgust, anger, fear, and surprise. Beginning with anger, create different emotional word banks for each of these families, and have the students develop emotional thermometers to measure their range of emotion in each.

■ Help the students connect emotions to something they can see, hear, or feel. Use a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart to explore the manifestations of a particular emotion and to help the students sense the subtle differences between their many moods.

■ Reveal your own emotions to the class. If you are frustrated by something they are doing (or not doing!) refer to your emotional thermometer, and talk with the students about what cool-down strategies you might try. Use a Think Aloud to show your mental processes. The more examples you can provide for your class, the better they will understand how to use these techniques on their own.

■ Remember that emotions can run high in middle school. Begin and end class each day by taking the students’ emotional temperatures. Not only does this alert you to potential problems, but it also gives the students a safe venue to share their thoughts and feelings. On days when they are particularly worked up, you might need to attend to their emotional well-being before picking up your lesson plan.
**Purpose**
To have a group of students correctly model what a specific team cooperation goal looks like and sounds like.

**Breaking It Down**
- Usually happens the second day of a PowerTeaching lesson cycle.
- The teacher selects a team to model the specific team cooperation goal. The teacher will want to pick a team that was doing really well with the specific team cooperation goal in the previous week. The teacher can make this a big deal for the team that is chosen and prep them for the fishbowl by giving them a specific scenario to act out.
- Follow the fishbowl structure as illustrated below.
- The teacher will initiate a class discussion about the students’ observation and the discoveries that were made.
- After the team has modeled for the class, the teacher will also award team cooperation points to the team that was chosen.

**Overall Structure**

In the inner circle sits the team you selected. They will be actively modeling the team cooperation goal for the PowerTeaching lesson cycle.

In the outer circle the other members of the class sit. They will watch what the team in the inner circle is doing. They serve as an active listener and cannot participate in the discussion.
"I" Messages

Purpose
In any conflict, it is important that the people involved understand one another’s thoughts and feelings. “I” Messages are a way for a person to communicate clearly, but without insults, blames, or threats, how he or she feels about a problem. They are a key part of the Problem Solving—My Part process, in which students take some time to cool down and think about a problem before they attempt a solution.

Breaking It Down
An “I” Message has three parts:

1. I feel…. In the first part of an “I” Message, a student states how he or she feels as a result of the current situation.
2. …when you…. In the second part, the student states what behavior has caused this feeling.
3. …and I would like…. In the final part, the student names something that he or she would like to see happen as part of the resolution to the problem.

An example would be: “I felt embarrassed when you called me ugly and stupid today at recess. I would like you to apologize and not call me names anymore.”

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- It is important to differentiate between feelings and actions when developing an “I” Message. The first part of an “I” Message must state what the students feel inside. The second and third parts must each contain a clear description of an observable behavior: something specific they can see or hear. The students may use sentence stems other than “I feel...when you...and I would like...,” but they should always include these three distinct sections in their “I” Messages.

- Remind the students to use their emotional vocabulary to identify and describe feelings when building an “I” Message. If the students lack sufficient words to describe their range of feelings, first work with them on building a stronger emotional vocabulary. (See the Emotional Thermometer section.)

- If there is more than one problem between two students, each student should prepare an “I” Message and decide together which problem to work on first.

- Sometimes the students focus on surface problems while the underlying source of conflict remains hidden. For instance, hitting or name-calling might be symptoms of a deeper conflict like not knowing how to share. For lasting solutions, help the students identify, explore, and resolve the root issues, not just those on the surface.

- An effective “I” Message is the first step, but not a solution in itself. Once the students develop their “I” Messages, they must still use Problem Solving—My Part and Our Part to come up with a solution that works for everyone involved.
Purpose

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique developed by Elliot Aronson (1978) in which students leave their teams to work in expert groups to gather specific information or complete a portion of a task. It allows teams to divide a larger task or topic into smaller pieces so they can get more done in the same amount of time. It also lets students delve more deeply into one topic, and then reap the benefits of teaching their teammates about it.

Breaking It Down

■ In Jigsaw, team members are divided among several expert groups, each assigned to a different topic.

■ All #1s work on the same project, all #2s on another, #3s on yet another, etc. Instead of creating an additional expert group, distribute any fifth members of teams among existing groups.

■ After completing work in their expert groups, the students return to their team and teach their teammates what they have learned.

■ By the end of class, each team member will have learned about all the topics.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

■ Be sure to review expectations with the whole class before teams split into expert groups. It is critical that the students understand what they are to do in their groups and what they will be expected to teach their teammates when they return to their teams. Write a key question or task on the board, a piece of chart paper, a transparency, or an expert page as a visual reminder to keep the students on task.

■ Don’t leave the sharing of information to chance after the students return to their teams. Provide a form where the students can record information from the different expert groups, or require them to answer questions that call for input from each team member. Ideally, these questions should not simply restate one or more questions from each expert group, but ask new questions that require the students to synthesize the information through team discussion.

■ In One-to-One conferences, ask team members to describe two things they learned from their partners. This helps remind students that they must listen carefully to their partners, and that their partners are also depending on them to provide good information. Award team cooperation points for active listening.

■ Pacing is key when you are using Jigsaw. Allow adequate time for both expert groups and teams to complete their parts of this technique. If time is short, you might need to modify the task—for instance, by limiting the number of questions you ask the students to research.

During what part of a lesson are you most likely to use Jigsaw?
- Vary the task to match your instructional goals and the abilities or interests of your students. One possibility is to have all students read the same text, with each expert group looking at it from a different perspective. This facilitates team discussion, as everyone is working from the same information and can challenge or support each other's opinions based on what they have read. Another option is to have expert groups review different texts—for example, texts written at different reading levels, addressing different aspects of a common topic, or introducing different (but related) topics. This option allows you to individualize instruction, but it also requires more planning and coordination.

- In general, assign students to expert groups at random using Numbered Heads. Assign partners within the expert groups, so each student has someone with whom to share knowledge and resources.

- If you choose to have each expert group working with different materials (for example, texts at different reading levels), decide ahead of time how you will determine expert groups. Will you assign students based on your own assessment of their abilities or interests? Will you allow the students to select what they want to work on? How much instructional time will this take? Is it important that each team sends a representative to one of the groups? If so, how will you make sure this happens? Plan the logistics before class begins, to minimize any disruption.

- Test the students only on what they have directly studied! Never assess the students on a text they have not read or a task they have not had the opportunity to do. This is primarily a concern when expert groups are working with different readings or activities, as students’ only access to some of the material would come through the reports of their teammates. One easy solution is to use the same set of guiding questions for each expert group and to structure assessments along similar lines. This allows the students to draw chiefly on their own direct knowledge, while still incorporating relevant information gathered from other expert groups.

- Set up a station with the materials from each of the expert groups, so students who wish to learn more about any of the topics can investigate on their own or with their partners.
Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like Chart

Purpose

A Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart is a simple tool that helps students identify the specific kinds of behaviors that accompany each team cooperation goal or conflict-resolution strategy. It is a way of making otherwise invisible processes visible—and thus accessible—to your students.

Breaking It Down

Here’s how it works. Say your class is focused on helping and encouraging one another:

- Make three columns on chart paper or an overhead transparency. Label one “Looks Like,” the next “Sounds Like,” and the last “Feels Like.”
- Ask your students what helping and encouraging their teammates looks like. List answers on the chart. (Examples include: listening attentively, explaining a solution without giving the answer, nodding, smiling at a teammate, giving a thumbs up or high five, and so on.)
- Next, ask what helping and encouraging sounds like. List answers on the chart. (Examples include: “Way to go! That’s a great explanation,” “Thanks for helping me; I understand how to do it now,” “Super solution! I wouldn’t have thought of doing it that way,” “You can do it,” and so on.)
- Finally, ask what helping and encouraging feels like. List answers on the chart. (Don’t worry if the students can’t think of any examples right now. You may return to this column later in the week, once the students have gained more experience.)
- Remind the students each day of the kinds of behaviors that you are looking for, and refer to the chart whenever you award team cooperation points, so the students have a concrete understanding of what they are aiming for.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Use chart paper or transparencies instead of a chalkboard to create your chart, so you can add to it over time. Post the list, and review it as a class the next time you want to work on that behavior.
- As you see evidence of the students trying out the kinds of behaviors you identified, reinforce them by awarding team cooperation points. For the strongest reinforcement, be sure to tell the students exactly why they are receiving the points.
- Even though the students may initially be unable to fill it in, the “Feels Like” column is one way to help the students become aware of their emotions and how certain behaviors make them feel. Return to this column after the students have experienced the particular behavior, cooperative-learning strategy, or conflict-resolution process on which you chose to focus.

Use this same kind of chart to explore conflict-resolution strategies with your class: What does a good solution look like? What does it feel like? Do both people have to be happy for it to be an effective solution?
To assist visual learners, add hand signals to call attention to the different steps in this routine. For example, ask the question, and then point to your temple and say “Think.” Then, after a suitable amount of time, give the signal for team discussion. Providing simultaneous visual and verbal cues helps the students stay focused on their current task.

If you find that you need help randomly selecting students, label wooden sticks or slips of paper with the numbers from one to four (or five) and put them into a bag. Another option is to take the aces, twos, threes, and fours (or fives) out of a card deck. After allowing the students time to think and discuss as a team, call a team name, and then pull a number from the bag.

If you are working on active listening with the students, ask them whether they agree or disagree with the previous student’s answer and whether they have anything else to add. This is a subtle but firm reminder that they need to listen carefully to one another’s responses.

During the few seconds when teams are discussing the question and answer, encourage all team members to take part. Award team cooperation points to teams with 100% participation—for example, “Great job, Team Judo! I can see that everyone is involved in the discussion! Give yourselves five points.”

Use the team discussion time to take a quick, informal assessment of the students’ learning, to note any points of confusion, or to offer feedback, encouragement, and clarification.

**Time-Saving Tips**

- After the students have had a chance to think and pair during Think-Pair-Share, use Random Reporter to randomly call on a student from one or two teams to share with the class.

- When having the students Jigsaw, assign them to expert groups using their numbers.

- Use Random Reporter as a way to randomly select students for a task. For example, put team materials in a basket, bucket, box, or bin where teams can easily collect and return them. Then call all #2s to pick up their team’s supplies. At the end of class, ask all #3s to record team cooperation points on the team score sheet. This limits the amount of disruption caused by such routine chores.
Purpose
The business of learning takes place in our heads and doesn’t always show up on formal assessments. To know where each child in your class is both academically and socially, you need regular one-on-one contact. One-to-one conferences are a time for you to check student progress, expand student thinking, and coach students to do better by helping them set individual learning goals. The conferences allow you to give timely feedback and to tailor instruction to the needs and learning styles of each child.

Breaking It Down
■ Whenever the students are working in teams, circulate to conduct one-to-one conferences with individuals, partners, or teams.
■ Ask open-ended, higher-order thinking questions that require the students to delve into their understanding of the most important concepts and content.
■ Clarify and correct misunderstandings as needed, or assist the students in breaking tasks down into manageable chunks.
■ To save time, ask to see the students’ Learning Guides during your conference so you can check off completed products and add your initials without making a special trip.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
■ Ask questions that assess understanding of basic concepts by having the students tell you what they are working on or what they have learned. For the students who are struggling, set small, intermediate goals that direct the students toward the final product; revisit these students often to check progress. Pose higher-order questions to the students who are ready to extend their thinking beyond the immediate task. Teach them how to generate these kinds of questions on their own.
■ It is more important to have meaningful discussions with those students you do see than to see every student every day. Make a plan: Which students or teams do you want to target for one-to-one conferences today? This week? Are you particularly concerned about the academic or social progress of a student? Is there someone who needs the boost of a little extra attention? How are you going to make sure to touch base with every student at some point during the week?
■ Model and encourage strong discussion skills by conferencing with an entire team and asking the students whether they agree or disagree with their teammates’ answers and whether they have anything else to add.
■ Use what you learn from one-to-one conferences to tailor your instruction. Do you need to revisit a concept with the whole class? Do you need to try presenting information in new ways to address the different learning styles represented in your classroom? Are you pushing the students hard enough or could you encourage them to do more? How can your conferences with the students spur your own thinking about teaching and learning?
Purpose
Conflict resolution is a complex process, particularly if students have one way of coping with problems at home and another at school. Problem Solving—My Part is the first step in a structured process that helps students resolve conflicts in a peaceful and productive way. Students complete this step individually before working on Problem Solving—Our Part with the other people involved in the conflict.

Breaking It Down
- This process is a way for the students to reflect on a problem before it escalates. Whenever a student has a problem, he or she should complete a Problem Solving—My Part sheet to identify how he or she feels about the situation, express those feelings through an “I” Message, and begin to think about possible solutions.
- The basic questions on the Problem Solving—My Part sheet are:
  1. **Problem**: What is the problem?
  2. **Feelings**: How do I feel about the problem? How do others feel about it?
  3. **Solutions**: What are some possible solutions?
  4. **Pros and cons**: What are the pros and cons of the solutions I have suggested? Which solution do I think is the best choice?
- Once the students have answered each of these questions, they are ready for Problem Solving—Our Part, in which two or more people work together to resolve the conflict.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- The students need opportunities to calm down and think through their reactions before attempting to resolve a conflict. While Problem Solving—My Part gives them this kind of quiet time, you might also need to offer explicit practice with cool-down strategies before the students can successfully complete this stage of the conflict-resolution process.
- Problem solving is a skill that improves with practice, so it pays to allow the students regular opportunities to test their abilities. Look for two characters having a problem in a movie, television program, newspaper, cartoon, or story. Use a Think Aloud to model how one character responds to the conflict, or have the students pretend to be one of the characters and write answers to the questions from that point of view. The more practice the students have following the steps to Problem Solving—My Part, the more automatic their skills will become.
- Remember that each student involved in a conflict must complete his or her own Problem Solving—My Part page before attempting to negotiate a solution with others.

- Designate an area of the classroom where the students may cool down and gather their thoughts when they are upset. Post charts of conflict stoppers and cool-down strategies for easy reference, and provide an ample supply of Problem Solving—My Part student pages in a folder or envelope for the students to complete as needed. Place the Class Council box at or near this problem-solving station.

- Encourage the students to see other applications for the same problem-solving steps. For instance, the students can use the steps to address personal issues such as always waking up late for school. First, they identify the problem and their feelings about it; then, they evaluate their alternatives; and, finally, they decide on a course of action to help them get to school on time.

*Caution the students that they need to be savvy about trying to apply these strategies outside of school. While peaceful negotiation is the ideal, it is not always possible—or even recommended. Sometimes it is better just to walk away from a conflict, and if the students are in physical danger, they may also need to take a different approach. But emphasize that on school grounds, you expect them to implement the problem-solving process.*
Purpose
Problem Solving—Our Part gives students a way to peacefully resolve conflicts by helping them negotiate and implement win-win solutions. Before the students can participate in the Problem Solving—Our Part process, they must complete the steps to Problem Solving—My Part.

Breaking It Down
- First, each student must complete a Problem Solving—My Part sheet on his or her own. This gives the students a chance to calm down, analyze the problem, identify their feelings, and begin thinking about possible solutions.
- Next, the students take turns sharing their “I” Messages and summarizing what the other person has said. This validates their feelings and lets the students know that they have been heard.
- Then the students share their recommended solutions, again summarizing to ensure that they have correctly heard and interpreted what the other person has proposed.
- The students review the possible solutions, discuss their pros and cons, and agree on a plan they both are willing to try. The important thing is that each is committed to implementing the proposed solution.
- Next, the students try their plan. They implement the proposed solution the next time they encounter the problem situation. Depending on how much time has elapsed in the interim, you may need to remind them of their plan.
- Finally, once they have had a chance to see their plan in action, the students reconvene to evaluate how it has worked. If everyone is satisfied, they have successfully completed the problem-solving process. If anyone is dissatisfied, however, they need to continue looking for a win-win solution together.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
Initially, when having the students practice the Problem Solving—Our Part process, use neutral material that does not identify or point fingers at any students in particular. Take conflict scenarios from novels, stories, videos, newspapers, and plays, or ask the students to invent their own scenarios for use in Class Councils.

- Infuse story discussions with the language of conflict stoppers and roadblocks. Talk about win-win, win-lose, and lose-lose solutions in the context of books or articles the class is reading. The more familiar the students are applying these words to other situations, the more likely they are to think of their own conflict in the same terms.
Choose active listening as the weekly team cooperation goal when your class is working on mastering the Problem Solving—Our Part process. If the students are to come to a peaceful resolution, they must listen carefully and be sure they both hear and understand what others are saying.

Explore the idea that eye contact, personal space, and tone of voice can have different interpretations in different cultures or settings. Discuss any implications for conflict resolution and the problem-solving process in your classroom.

Often, the students will identify more than one problem in their “I” Messages. Though it is important that the students have the opportunity to state all their concerns, make sure that they work on only one issue at a time. Later, as they become more adept, they may be able to tackle multiple problems simultaneously.

If a problem is complicated, and you feel unsure how to help, remind the students that they don’t have to solve it on the spot. They can think about it overnight, and then sit down together the next day to develop a plan.

Remember that your role in the problem-solving process is to provide models and assistance. As much as possible, allow the students to do the hard work of thinking a problem through to resolution.

Consistently praise the students who attempt peaceful solutions to conflicts. Reward the students with public recognition when they apologize, make amends, compromise, talk it out, or use another conflict stopper to end a disagreement.

Achieving win-win solutions to conflicts can be difficult. Help the students see that sometimes agreeing to disagree is the best they can achieve.

Remember to stick with the process. Check on the progress of plans that the students have developed and implemented. Teach the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of a plan and of redesigning solutions, when necessary, to achieve better results.

Explain that conflict is not always negative. For example, athletes train harder when the competition is fierce. Sometimes conflict can also cause you to generate new ideas or solutions that you would never have thought of otherwise. It is how you react and what you do with a conflict that determine whether it is a negative or positive experience.

For additional thoughts and tips, on implementing this routine, see the Fine-Tuning sections of both Talk It Out and Check It Out.
Random Reporter

**Purpose**
Typically, some students desperately want to be called on to answer a question, while others desperately want to avoid it. Random Reporter is a flexible strategy that introduces the expectation that all students will be prepared to answer every question with the support and assistance of their team. At the same time, because you select students at random to respond to a question, it eliminates the need for raised hands and keeps you from inadvertently calling on the same students over and over again.

**Breaking It Down**
When you place the students into teams, assign each student a number from one to four (or one to five for teams with five members). Write the number on a piece of masking tape, and stick the tape to each student’s desk. Change the numbers only when you form new teams.

To use Random Reporter, follow these steps:

1. Ask a question.
2. Have the students **think** about an answer for a few seconds.
3. Have the students **discuss** their answers with the team for a few seconds.
4. Call on either the #1s, #2s, #3s, or #4s (or #5s) to **share** the team’s answer with the class.

**Fine-Tuning the Technique**
- Don’t expect perfection from yourself or your students right off the bat! This technique will become automatic as the year progresses.
- Pacing is critical with Random Reporter. Are you allowing silent time for individual students to think before asking them to discuss with their team? Are you allowing teams time to talk before asking them to share with the class? If not, make a conscious effort to count to five before moving to the next step.
- Do not call a number until it is time to share. The students are more likely to stay engaged in team discussion—and to help one another prepare an answer—if they do not know who will be asked to share the team’s response. After all, it could be them!
To assist visual learners, add hand signals to call attention to the different steps in this routine. For example, ask the question, and then point to your temple and say “Think.” Then, after a suitable amount of time, give the signal for team discussion. Providing simultaneous visual and verbal cues helps the students stay focused on their current task.

If you find that you need help randomly selecting students, label wooden sticks or slips of paper with the numbers from one to four (or five) and put them into a bag. Another option is to take the aces, twos, threes, and fours (or fives) out of a card deck. After allowing the students time to think and discuss as a team, call a team name, and then pull a number from the bag.

If you are working on active listening with the students, ask them whether they agree or disagree with the previous student’s answer and whether they have anything else to add. This is a subtle but firm reminder that they need to listen carefully to one another’s responses.

During the few seconds when teams are discussing the question and answer, encourage all team members to take part. Award team cooperation points to teams with 100% participation—for example, “Great job, Team Judo! I can see that everyone is involved in the discussion! Give yourselves five points.”

Use the team discussion time to take a quick, informal assessment of the students’ learning, to note any points of confusion, or to offer feedback, encouragement, and clarification.

**Time-Saving Tips**

- After the students have had a chance to think and pair during Think-Pair-Share, use Random Reporter to randomly call on a student from one or two teams to share with the class.

- When having the students Jigsaw, assign them to expert groups using their numbers.

- Use Random Reporter as a way to randomly select students for a task. For example, put team materials in a basket, bucket, box, or bin where teams can easily collect and return them. Then call all #2s to pick up their team’s supplies. At the end of class, ask all #3s to record team cooperation points on the team score sheet. This limits the amount of disruption caused by such routine chores.
Round Table

Purpose
Round Table is a technique that allows teams to quickly brainstorm answers to a question or to make lists of questions, facts, ideas, or conclusions. It is a timesaving way to generate responses from all team members that helps maintain a high level of student participation.

Breaking It Down
- During Round Table, team members all work from a single piece of paper.
- One student writes a response on the paper and then passes it to the next student.
- That student writes a response and passes the sheet along to the third team member, and so on.
- Teammates continue adding responses until you call time (usually after two or three minutes).

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- Round Table works best when responses are limited to lists or short sentences. Do not use this technique for questions that require a lengthy response or extended thought.
- If you find that the students are keeping the paper for too long, say “Pass” every 10 seconds or so to let them know it is time to give the paper to the next team member.
- Vary the amount of time that you have the students spend brainstorming depending on how many responses they seem to be generating, as well as on the pacing of the lesson. You don’t want to cut off the flow of ideas or overstretch your time. Allow a bit of extra time if teams have difficulty getting started on their lists.
- Use Random Reporter to have several teams share responses after you bring the brainstorming to a close.

During which part(s) of the lesson are you most likely to use Round Table? Why?

CHIP IN
If you like the Round Table technique, try using Chip In. It’s a way to ensure that all students participate in team discussions.
Purpose
Students do not always come to school with sufficient conflict-management skills to negotiate a classroom setting. To develop a healthy control of their emotions, they may need to practice specific strategies for cooling down when they feel themselves getting angry. Stop and Stay Cool is one way to do that.

Breaking It Down
In this strategy, the students:
1. Identify that they are in danger of losing control
2. Tell themselves to stop and stay calm
3. Practice regulating their breathing as a way of defusing their anger

Once students are back in control, they can then begin to identify possible solutions and take steps to resolve the conflict. (See the Conflict Stoppers, Problem Solving—My Part, and Problem Solving—Our Part sections.)

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- Although the students must work their way through the steps of Stop and Stay Cool themselves, you can help them regain control of their emotions. When you notice a child getting upset, gently remind the student of the steps, and ask if he or she needs help working through them.
- Initially, the students may not have enough self-discipline to talk themselves back into control. Together, you might want to establish a safe space within the classroom where a student can go for a few minutes until he or she has cooled down. Check in with the student to see how things are going.
- Use Problem Solving—My Part and Our Part to keep the resolution process on track.
- Not every technique works for every person or every situation. See the Cool Down Strategies sections for additional suggestions to try with the students for whom Stop and Stay Cool is not working and for other ways to fine-tune students’ conflict-prevention and -resolution skills.
Purpose

In any conflict, the goal is to find a win-win solution, but this can only happen when both parties are clear about their feelings, calm enough to actively listen to one another, and have the skills to negotiate effectively. It is important to give the students an initial structure for this kind of complex negotiation. The step-by-step Talk It Out model is a way of making the problem-solving process concrete enough for the students to practice on their own.

Breaking It Down

The steps in the Talk It Out process are:

**STEP 1:** Each person gives an “I” Message, with the other person summarizing that message. This ensures that each knows how the other is feeling.

**STEP 2:** Each person suggests a solution to the problem, with the other person summarizing to be sure he or she has understood.

**STEP 3:** Both people discuss the possible solutions and agree on one to try. They should be striving for a win-win result, something with which both parties can live.

**STEP 4:** They implement the plan.

**STEP 5:** They get back together to discuss whether the plan has worked or whether they need to try something else.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Spend some class time early in the year modeling the Talk It Out process and allowing the students to practice the steps. Although it means an initial investment of instructional time, it should dramatically diminish the amount of time you spend mediating conflicts later in the year.

- The problem-solving process is an exercise in active listening. As you begin to implement Talk It Out, make active listening your weekly team cooperation goal.

* Talk It Out is a routine used primarily in the elementary grades. The analogous process for the middle grades is Problem Solving—Our Part, which incorporates the same basic steps but is tailored to a middle schooler’s increasing abilities and complexity of thought.
Create scenarios or ask the students to come up with their own, then have them role-play walking the steps of the peace path with a partner. By asking the students to solve imaginary differences, you give them valuable experience and skills on which to draw when they attempt to resolve their own points of conflict.

In addition to modeling the Talk It Out process for students, keep the Talk It Out game board in a folder on the Round Table to guide students as they work through the process on their own. (For more details, see the elementary grades’ Getting Along Together curriculum.)

The students must be careful to use cool-down strategies and conflict stoppers to prevent the conflict from getting worse. As the students learn the Talk It Out process, monitor from a distance in case you need to intervene and remind them of the steps or help set them back on the path toward peace.

Establish ground rules. For instance, the students may not use the Talk It Out process as an excuse to get out of classwork: if a conflict arises in the middle of an activity, let the students know that they may need to wait until a more appropriate moment in the lesson or day before attempting to resolve their differences. Likewise, if the students experience inappropriate outbursts of emotion as they attempt to walk the peace path, institute a three-strikes rule: after three outbursts, the student must either call in a pinch hitter to help with negotiations or sit on the sidelines for a time before resuming the problem-solving process. Be clear and consistent with your expectations.
Team Cooperation Goal

**Purpose**
The team cooperation goal is a way to improve students’ in-class behavior over time and help children learn to function effectively in teams. By focusing on a single behavior at a time and having team celebration points tied to this targeted behavior, students soon internalize appropriate classroom behavior. As the students become more skilled in interacting with their classmates, conflicts decrease and time increases for both learning and individualized or small-group teaching.

**Breaking It Down**
Pick one behavior to focus on at a time. Spend time discussing what that behavior actually looks like, what it sounds like, and even what it feels like, so the students have a strong mental image to compare with their own behavior.

**Practice active listening** involves listening with a goal or question in mind and analyzing what you hear or see in light of this question. It means paying close attention to what a speaker says, thinking carefully about his or her words, and formulating a response. An important part of active listening is also respecting the contributions of others, even when you do not agree. Behaviors you might expect to see when students are actively listening to one another are: heads close together, eyes on the speaker, and bottoms up as students lean over their table. All team members should be ready to ask a question, restate a teammate’s answer, or otherwise contribute to the discussion at any point.

**Help and encourage others** involves the ability to gauge where teammates are in their understanding and help them extend their knowledge or skill. It means that students share their own thinking, ask questions, and give hints or suggestions, but they do not tell each other answers or do each other’s work. It also means offering thanks, praise, or compliments for specific things a teammate has done well. In a team where students are helping and encouraging each other, you might hear comments and questions like the following: “That explanation was very clear,” “I like how you…,” and “Have you tried…?”

**Everyone participates,** or 100% participation, means involving all team members in a team discussion or project, including those who are reluctant to join in. It also means making sure that each member of the team understands the key concepts and is adequately prepared before sharing in front of the class or being individually assessed. When every member of a team is participating, all students are on task, teammates are taking turns and talking to one another about their work, and students are actively listening to one another and offering assistance to a struggling teammate.

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For additional ideas of how to use the team cooperation goal effectively, see the LOOKS LIKE/FEELS LIKE CHART, TEAM COOPERATION POINTS, and TEAM SCORE SHEET sections.

If teams need help keeping every member involved, try the CHIP IN strategy.
Explain your ideas/tell why is an important part of any child’s education and a consistent theme throughout SFAF. All students need practice sharing their thinking or explaining how they came to a particular answer—both because children sometimes get correct answers through faulty reasoning and because the best way to learn is to teach. Students who can explain their thinking clearly to others have more than a surface understanding of the material and are more likely to retain it.

Complete tasks seems like a given. Of course students have to complete tasks! But it is not always clear what constitutes a completed task, what expectations the students must meet, and what form their product should take. This team cooperation goal is a pact between you and your students. Your responsibility as a teacher is to explain the requirements of a task clearly. Each team’s responsibility is then to fulfill those expectations.

**Fine-Tuning the Technique**

- While your students are learning what kind of behavior you expect in the classroom, pick a weekly goal instead of a daily one. This helps focus discussion on what the targeted behavior looks like, and it gives the students extended practice in demonstrating that behavior. Coordinate with other teachers, so they, too, are focusing on the same team cooperation goals.

- Be aware of cultural differences in how people communicate. For example, the amount of eye contact or the physical distance between people can have a profound impact on interpersonal communication. Help the students explore the possible effects of cultural differences on their perceptions of a given situation.

- Be sure to praise the students when you see them demonstrating the desired behaviors. Be as specific as possible—for instance, “Great job helping and encouraging one another! I like how you thought of a hint instead of just giving away the answer.”

- Begin the week with a five- or ten-minute discussion about what the targeted behavior looks like. Use role-play, a Looks Like/Sounds Like/Feels Like chart, or some other means of bringing the behavior to life so the students can actually experience it before they are held accountable for it. At the start of class each day for the rest of the week, review the behavior, and remind the students of how to tell whether they are meeting the goal.

- As you look for evidence of these behaviors, listen in on team conversations to hear how the students are thinking, where they are struggling, and whether you can sense common misunderstandings that you need to address as a whole class.

- As your class becomes familiar with these five goals, add others or refine the students’ understanding of the existing goals. For instance, talk about why the goals are important and how they help the students of all abilities achieve, or discuss how they are related to effective problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills.
Team Celebration Points

Purpose
Tied to homework, team cooperation, Random Reporter, and Team Check activities, these points improve student behavior and help team members hold one another accountable for learning lesson content.

Breaking It Down
- For every day of the lesson cycle, award team celebration points for the following (These points are recorded on the Team Celebration Points poster.):
  - Homework – Award one point for each team member who brought back completed homework. If all team members brought back their homework, the team earns an additional point.
  - Team cooperation – As teams display positive cooperative behaviors as defined by the team cooperation goals, provide specific feedback, and award team celebration points. (The number of points awarded is up to the discretion of the teacher.)
  - Random Reporter – Award team celebration points according to how prepared each team representative is to answer questions thoroughly and accurately.
  - Team Check – Award team celebration points for how well teams prepared their representative to answer the Team Check accurately and explain the team’s solution.
- Each team can keep a running record of their points earned using the section of the team score sheet labeled “Tally Boxes for Team Celebration Points,” or the teacher can record the points on the poster.

For related topics, see the LOOKS LIKE/SOUNDS LIKE/FEELS LIKE CHART, POINT STRIPS, TEAM COOPERATION GOAL, and TEAM SCORE SHEET sections.
At the end of the cycle:

For grades 1 and 2

- Go to the Team Celebration Points poster, and convert each team's team celebration points into Super, Great, or Good Team status. To do this:

  1. Find the team with the highest total team celebration points. This team sets the bar for the Team Celebration Points poster scores.

  2. Place the overlay on the poster, with the top of the blue band aligned with the highest-scoring team's bar on the Team Celebration Points poster.

  3. All teams with scores that fall within this first blue band are Super teams. Identify these teams on the Team Celebration Points poster.

  4. All teams with scores that fall within the yellow band (below the blue band) are Great teams. Identify these on the Team Celebration Points poster.
5. All teams with scores that fall within the red band (below the yellow band) are Good teams. Identify these teams on the Team Celebration Points poster.

6. All other teams that fall below these three bands are also Good teams. Identify these teams on the Team Celebration Points poster.

**Teacher's Note:** Using your own discretion, you may decide that you want only the teams with scores that fall within the last red band on the overlay to qualify as Good teams. You may want to start out with everyone qualifying as a Good Team, and then increase the expectation that a team’s score must fall within the red band to qualify as a Good Team.

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**For grades 3–8**

The team with the most team celebration points on the Team Celebration Points poster at the end of each cycle sets the bar for team celebration scores. Use the overlay provided to help students visualize the following:

- Place the overlay so the blue bar aligns with the top of the highest-scoring team’s bar on the Team Celebration Points poster.
- Team(s) within the blue band will earn a team celebration score of 100.
- Team(s) within the yellow band will earn a team celebration score of 90.
- Team(s) within the red band will earn a team celebration score of 80.
- All other teams will earn a team celebration score of 70.

These points should be recorded in the box titled “Team Celebration Poster Score.”
**Think Alouds**

**Purpose**
Learning is all about thinking, and thinking takes place in the head—which means that without explicit instruction in the internal strategies and processes that thinkers use, students might never understand how to take control of their own learning. To become strategic readers and effective thinkers, students need to see how other people think and read. They need to hear you think aloud.

**Breaking It Down**
Think Alouds give voice to your mental processes. They are a play-by-play description of what is going on in your head, and they help the students become more metacognitive—to think about their own thinking. To use a Think Aloud:

- Be clear about what you are modeling—for example, “Remember, we’re working on using context clues. I’m going to show you what I do when I read. You will hear me stop and think aloud when I come across a word I don’t know.”

- During the Think Aloud, do not interact with the students. Pretend that you are alone in the room and have the unusual habit of verbalizing your every thought. For instance, if you are modeling context clues, begin reading a short passage aloud. Stumble over the meaning of a word, stop yourself, and ponder out loud: “Hmm. That’s a word I don’t recognize. I wonder if there are any other words that might give it away, or if I can tell what it means by looking at the sentence before or after.” Search through the text aloud, giving voice to your thoughts, until you have figured out the word.

- When you have finished thinking aloud, discuss the strategy that you modeled (in this case, using context clues): How did the strategy work? When should the students use it? How will it help them?

**Fine-Tuning the Technique**
- Use visual and verbal cues to show when you are reading versus when you are thinking to yourself. Exaggerate if you have to: Point to your temple, stroke your chin, or look to the distance to show that you are thinking. Track the text with your finger to show that you are reading.

- Ask questions of yourself as part of your Think Aloud. When you read a word that you do not know, for instance, your mind asks a series of questions: “I wonder what that word means? Are there any little words that I recognize within the larger word? Can I tell anything from the context of the sentence?” Your mind sifts through these options so quickly that you might not even be aware of them, but these are exactly the kinds of questions you want to bring to light. By modeling your own thinking process, you the teach students how to think.

“In essence, students need to be conscious of how they go about their thinking before they can fine-tune or fix it. They need to develop an ability to monitor and fix. **THINK ALOUDS** require a reader to stop and think periodically, reflect on how a text is being processed, and understand and relate it orally.”

“Think Alouds and Metacognition”
Success for All Foundation, 2001
Think Alouds are particularly useful for modeling good reading strategies (clarifying, summarizing, predicting, and questioning). They are also effective for modeling in the content areas. For example, you can model how to complete a science lab, reason out a math problem, or interpret a play. How else might you use Think Alouds in reading and the content areas?

Don't leave learning to chance! Set the stage for the Think Aloud so the students know exactly what to look and listen for, and debrief the Think Aloud afterward to draw the students' attention explicitly to the most important details.

The most effective Think Alouds sound spontaneous but are actually carefully planned—or even scripted—ahead of time. Identify the skill or process you want to model, and decide which elements to highlight. How can you break the skill or process down into manageable bits? What are the students most likely to struggle with? What opportunities will they have to practice on their own or with teammates? By planning ahead and anticipating student needs, you can create a more effective learning experience.
Think It Through*

Purpose
Think It Through is a process in which students spend some quiet time reflecting and self-talking their way through a problem before they attempt to jointly craft a solution that works for everyone involved.

Breaking It Down
When students are involved in a conflict, they individually complete a Think It Through sheet, a process which involves:

- Reflecting on the problem that needs solving
- Identifying their feelings about the problem
- Communicating those feelings through an “I” Message
- Proposing one or more solutions to the problem

Once each child has completed a Think It Through sheet, the students involved can then move toward a peaceful resolution using Talk It Out or Check It Out.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

- Keep Think It Through sheets in a specific place in your classroom where children can go to cool down and talk out their problems.
- Make alternatives available for the students who have difficulty with written activities. For example, a tape recorder which the students can use to record their answers will prevent these students from becoming frustrated with the Think It Through sheet and rejecting the problem-solving process.
- Because students come to class with a variety of different problem-solving models, some of them more appropriate for school than others, you will need to model, discuss, and consistently reinforce your expectations for resolving classroom conflicts. Review these expectations periodically throughout the year—particularly after a vacation or after an unusually disruptive incident.

"Schools often keep [Think It Through sheets] in the guidance office or in the main office for students experiencing difficulty throughout the day. In addition, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and other school personnel may keep these sheets to dispense to students if necessary. The more opportunities a student has to practice talking themselves through problems in a positive way, the more automatic and accomplished the skill becomes.”

Slavin and Madden, 2001, p. 257

* Think It Through is a routine used primarily in the elementary grades.

The analogous process for the middle grades is Problem Solving—My Part, which incorporates the same basic steps but is tailored to a middle schooler’s increasing problem-solving abilities and complexity of thought.
The students must identify and agree on a single problem on which to work. Not every conflict, however, is that cut-and-dried. For some students, trying to decide which complaint to address first may itself become a point of conflict. To facilitate the process, consider working with the students to list their various issues and come to some agreement about how to proceed. Then turn the process back over to the students.

For more details on this stage of conflict resolution, review the Check It Out, Conflict Stoppers, “I” Messages, and Emotional Vocabulary sections.
Purpose
As with Random Reporter, this simple questioning technique keeps all the students involved in class discussions and provides an opportunity for every student to share an answer to every question. It takes the fear out of class discussion by allowing the students to think carefully about their answers and talk about them with a partner before they are called on to respond. For shy or tentative students, this can help put the emphasis back on learning instead of on simply surviving class. The technique was developed by Frank Lyman of the University of Maryland (1981).

Breaking It Down
To use Think-Pair-Share, follow these steps:
- Ask the question.
- Have the students individually think about an answer for a few seconds.
- Allow the students to discuss their answer with partners for a few seconds.
- Finally, have the students share in teams, or call on a few students to share their answers with the class.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
- There is no magic amount of think time and pair time. In general, depending on the complexity of the question, allow the students to think for five or six seconds, and to pair for perhaps ten seconds. You want to give them just enough time to think and to spark some ideas in their partner, but not enough time to get off-task.
- Give a specific task when asking the students to pair. For example, say “Take ten seconds to talk with your partner and come up with one answer to the question,” or “Talk with your partner for a few seconds and see if you can come up with two solutions to the problem.”
- When it comes time for the students to share their responses (in partners, in teams, or as a class), anything doesn’t go. The students need to provide correct, well-reasoned, clearly explained answers. Use questioning to help students or teams flesh out their answers. Model the elements that make an answer stronger—phrasing the answer as a complete sentence, using words instead of gestures, supporting answers with evidence, and so forth.
If the students are not prepared to answer questions, ask yourself whether you are allowing silent time for individual students to think before having them pair with their partners. Are you allowing partners time to talk before asking them to share with the team or the class?

- Listen to partner and team discussions to see what kind of responses the students are giving. This can provide valuable clues about how well students work together, how well they grasp the concepts, and what images they use to make those concepts stick in their minds. Not only does this information make a good informal assessment, but it might also prove useful the next time you teach the material.

- Make sure partners are of different academic levels. This allows the students who are at a lower level (or who are very shy) to hear and practice a response from a higher-level or more secure student, become inspired to think of another response, and gain the confidence to share their own answers.

- To help visual learners, add hand signals to call attention to the different steps in this routine. For example, ask the question and then point to your temple and say “Think.” After a suitable amount of time, extend your right index finger and middle finger together and say “Pair.” When partners are ready to talk with their teammates, touch the tips of both of your index fingers and middle fingers together and say “Share.”

- To vary responses during share time, vary your questions. Encourage your students to react to what others have said—to compare answers, add information, agree, disagree, or otherwise respond to the answers proposed by their classmates. Teachers call this Think-Pair-Share-Compare. Award team cooperation points for active listening.

- If you want the students to share with the class, do not feel as though you must call on a representative from every team. After calling on one or two teams, ask other teams to give a thumbs up if they had similar answers.

- Do not allow the students to shout out answers or raise their hands. If you want to make sharing more random, use numbered slips of paper, wooden sticks labeled with the numbers one to four (or five), or the aces, twos, threes, and fours from a deck of cards to call on students. (See the Random Reporter section.)

- Think-Pair-Share is a highly effective routine for questions that require students to exert their mental muscles, but not all questions merit such extended contemplation. For simpler queries, you might do better with Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down or by eliciting a quick response from one or two students and moving right on.
**Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down**

**Purpose**
This quick method of polling keeps everyone involved in a lesson and lets you quickly assess student understanding or opinions.

**Breaking It Down**
- Ask a yes-or-no, agree-or-disagree type question.
- Have the students give thumbs up to respond in the affirmative, thumbs down for a negative, and sideways if they aren’t sure.

**Fine-Tuning the Technique**
For simple questions, or to assess class comfort level, you do not necessarily need to provide think time between the question and the students’ response. For other questions, however, you might want to allow the students several moments to think about their answer before giving thumbs up or thumbs down. To guide the class, use hand signals: Ask the question, and then point to your temple and say “Think.” After a suitable amount of time, flash a thumbs up signal to elicit the class response.

How can Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down help you determine and address the needs of individual students?
Purpose
While a cooperative-learning classroom should have a healthy buzz, you certainly don’t want noise to become a problem. The Zero Noise Signal is an easy way to quiet the class and focus the students’ attention on you. Use it whenever you have something the whole class ought to hear, when the students need to bring the volume back down to acceptable levels, at the start or end of an activity, or when you want to refocus students who are off-task.

Breaking It Down
To give the Zero Noise Signal:

■ Stop talking, raise your hand in the air, and remain quiet as you wait for your students to respond.

■ When the students see you give the signal, they should complete their sentences, then respond to the signal by raising their hands, turning their attention to you, and becoming silent.

■ Keep your hand raised until all the students have returned the signal and the room is quiet. Wait until the students are alert and attentive before beginning to speak.

Fine-Tuning the Technique

■ Do not speak when your own hand is in the air, no matter how tempting it may be. The only way for the students to understand this technique is if you are a good model when you use it. If you absolutely must speak, lower your hand until you have finished talking.

■ Do not move along in the lesson until all the students are silent and attentive. This might take some work, especially early in the year, but with consistent practice students will soon respond. Make it a game to see how quickly they can react. Challenge them to do better, for example by pitting their times against those of another class. Award team cooperation points for a quick response.

■ If the signal doesn’t seem to be working, ask yourself: Do I talk when my hand is in the air, or am I silent as a model for the students? Do the students know they can finish their sentence before raising their hand? Do I wait for all the students’ attention before going on?

■ Add a nonverbal signal to help capture your students’ attention. For example, flick the lights or clap twice before you raise your hand. This helps the students who are auditory learners or who have their backs to you.

Space the teams as far apart as is convenient for your classroom. Having teams separated from one another should help reduce noise and facilitate movement around the room. It also makes evacuation easier in case of emergency.
■ If noise continues to be a problem, work with the students on developing a six-inch voice, a library voice, or an indoor voice. Include voice level as part of the criteria for team cooperation points. Praise teams for maintaining an appropriate volume, and give them one or two additional points when they do.

■ Have fun with the Zero Noise Signal. Periodically develop a new signal (for instance, touching your left earlobe), and share it with the class. Keep a running score of which team responds first to the signal, and let the winning team at the end of the week choose a class privilege like being first in line for lunch as their reward.
1-2-3 Move

Purpose
This simple technique helps maintain order when students have to move in the classroom or other areas of the school. By smoothing the transition between activities, it can save precious class time for instruction.

Breaking It Down
■ Explain what you expect the students to do—line up by the door, move into expert groups, pick up materials, etc.
■ Say “one” (and hold up one finger) for the students to gather their belongings.
■ Say “two” (and hold up two fingers) for the students to stand and push in their chairs.
■ Say “three” (and hold up three fingers) for the students to move.

Fine-Tuning the Technique
■ Use the Zero Noise Signal to get your students’ undivided attention before giving the first sign, and make sure the students remain quiet as they complete each step.
■ Don’t say “1-2-3” without pausing in between each number. Allow several seconds for the students to react.
■ Use clear hand signals, and once your class has the idea, try giving silent cues only.
■ Practice this technique consistently from the first day of school. Although initially it may seem a trifle cumbersome, with steady practice it will soon become automatic—and a great energy saver.
Appendix

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Team Score Sheet

Using PREP Points

Team Name: ____________________________________ Start Date: _______________________________

Team Cooperation Goal: ____________________________________ Unit: _____________________________

Homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
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★ = 1 Homework Bonus Point

Team Members

PREP Points + Team Celebration Points = Total ÷ 2 = Final Team Score

You are a _________________________ team!

Team Celebration Points Reminder

- Team Cooperation
- Random Reporter
- Team Check
- Homework

Good Team 70–79 points
Great Team 80–89 points
Super Team 90–100 points
GETTING STARTED

- Have students record their team names, the team cooperation goal, the start date, and the unit title before beginning each lesson.

TEAM CELEBRATION POINTS POSTER

Teams can earn celebration points through the following ways:

- Homework
- Team cooperation
- Random reporter
- Team check

TEAM CELEBRATION POINTS

During each cycle:

For every day of the lesson cycle, award team points for the following, and record these points on the Team Celebration Points poster.

HOMEWORK

During Check-In each day:

- The Recorder marks ✓ for complete homework, ✗ for no homework, or ab for absent.
- The Recorder shades in the ✓ if all team members present have brought their homework that day.

Each day or at the end of the cycle:

- The teacher or the Recorder colors in the appropriate number of boxes on the Team Celebration Points poster to correspond with the number of team members who brought in their homework.
- If all team members completed their homework, the team can earn a bonus point which should be recorded on the Team Celebration Points poster.

TEAM COOPERATION—As teams display positive cooperative behaviors as defined by the team cooperation goals, provide specific feedback, and award team points. (The number of points awarded is up to the discretion of the teacher)

RANDOM REPORTER—Award team points for how well each team representative is to answer questions thoroughly and accurately.

TEAM CHECK—Award team points for how well the team prepared its representative to answer the team check problem accurately and explain his or her solution.

During each cycle:

- To keep track of points, the Recorder can make tally marks in the box that corresponds with the day, or you can color in the appropriate bars on the Team Celebration Points poster.
- If the Recorder makes tally marks, at the end of the lesson, record the number of tallies that each team earned on the Team Celebration Points poster.

At the end of the cycle:

The team at the end of each cycle with the most team points on the Team Celebration Points poster sets the bar for team celebration scores. Use the overlay provided to help students visualize the following:

- Place the overlay so the blue bar begins at the top of the team with the highest bar on the Team Celebration Points poster.
- Teams within the blue band will earn a team celebration score of 100.
- Teams within the yellow band will earn a team celebration score of 90.
- Teams within the red band will earn a team celebration score of 80.
- All other teams will earn a team celebration score of 70.

These points should be recorded in the Team Celebration Points box.

PREP POINTS

- Prior to awarding points, determine how many points each question is worth. The total points available must always equal 100.
- If the answer is correct, the team receives points based on the number of points available for that question. If the answer is incorrect, they do not receive any points.
- Move those top papers to the bottom of each team’s pile. You now have a different student’s paper.

At the end of the cycle:

- The Recorder adds the PREP points to the Team Celebration Points to obtain the total.
- To obtain the final team score, divide the total by 2.
- Mark Good, Great, or Super Team on each team’s score sheet according to the points criteria.

Good Team: 70–79 points
Great Team: 80–89 points
Super Team: 90–100 points

Roles for team members:

GO-GETTER—Gets the necessary materials at the start of class and returns them at the end

RECORDER—Tallies the daily team celebration points that the team earned (if the teacher cannot record them on the poster immediately) and is responsible for figuring the final team score at the end of each PowerTeaching lesson cycle

DISCUSSION STARTER—Reads or restates the first question to start the team discussion

Pick new students to fill these roles at the beginning of each new PowerTeaching cycle.
# Team Score Sheet

## PowerTeaching: Mathematics

### Using Improvement Points

**Team Name:** _________________________________________________________________________________________  
**Start Date:** _________________________________

**Team Cooperation Goal:** ______________________________________________________________________________  
**Unit:** ___________________________________

#### Homework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
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**Total Improvement Points:**

**Average Improvement Points:**

**= 1 Homework Bonus Point**

**÷ by the number of team members:**

**Average Improvement Points:**

### Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Members</th>
<th>Improvement Points</th>
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### Team Celebration Points

#### Tally Boxes for Team Celebration Points

- Day 1:
- Day 2:
- Day 3:
- Day 4:
- Day 5:
- Day 6:
- Day 7:

### Team Celebration Points Reminder

- Team Cooperation
- Random Reporter
- Team Check
- Homework

---

**Final Team Score**

**=**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Improvement Points</th>
<th>Team Celebration Points</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Final Team Score</th>
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**Good Team** 70–79 points  
**Great Team** 80–89 points  
**Super Team** 90–100 points

You are a ____________________________ team!
Using Improvement Points

How to Use the Team Score Sheet

GETTING STARTED

• Have students record their team names, the team cooperation goal, the start date, and the unit title before beginning each lesson.

TEAM CELEBRATION POINTS POSTER

Teams can earn celebration points through the following ways:

• Homework
• Team cooperation
• Random reporter
• Team check

TEAM CELEBRATION POINTS

During the cycle:

For every day of the lesson cycle, award team points for the following, and record these points on the Team Celebration Points poster.

HOMEWORK

During Check-In each day:

• The Recorder marks ✓ for complete homework, ✗ for no homework, or ab for absent.
• The Recorder shades in the ✓ if all team members present have brought their homework that day.

Each day or at the end of the cycle:

• The teacher or the Recorder colors in the appropriate number of boxes on the Team Celebration Points poster to correspond with the number of team members who brought in their homework.
• If all team members completed their homework, the team can earn a bonus point which should be recorded on the Team Celebration Points poster.

TEAM COOPERATION—As teams display positive cooperative behaviors as defined by the team cooperation goals, provide specific feedback, and award team points. (The number of points awarded is up to the discretion of the teacher.)

RANDOM REPORTER—Award team points for how well prepared each team representative is to answer questions thoroughly and accurately.

TEAM CHECK—Award team points for how well the team prepared its representative to answer the team check problem accurately and explain his or her solution.

During each cycle:

• To keep track of points, the Recorder can make tally marks in the box that corresponds with the day, or you can color in the appropriate bars on the Team Celebration Points poster.
• If the Recorder makes tally marks, at the end of the lesson, record the number of tallies that each team earned on the Team Celebration Points poster.

At the end of the cycle:

The team at the end of each cycle with the most team points on the Team Celebration Points poster sets the bar for team celebration scores. Use the overlay provided to help students visualize the following:

• Place the overlay so the blue bar begins at the top of the team with the highest bar on the Team Celebration Points poster.
• Teams within the blue band will earn a team celebration score of 100.
• Teams within the yellow band will earn a team celebration score of 90.
• Teams within the red band will earn a team celebration score of 80.
• All other teams will earn a team celebration score of 70.

These points should be recorded in the Team Celebration Points box.

FINAL TEAM SCORE

• The Recorder adds the average improvement points and the Team Celebration Points score to obtain the total.
• To obtain the final team score, divide the total by 2.
• Mark Good, Great, or Super Team on each team’s score sheet according to the points criteria.

Improvement Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your quiz score is...</th>
<th>Number of points earned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perfect paper (regardless of base score)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 points above base score</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base score to 10 points above base score</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 points below to 1 point below base score</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 points below base score</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IMPROVEMENT POINTS

At the end of the week:

• Score the concept quiz, and then compare that score to the base score to determine improvement points.

• See the improvement point criteria in the box below.
• Record each team member’s improvement points.

At the end of the cycle:

• Add the improvement points earned.
• Divide by the number of team members.
• Record the average in the Average Improvement Points box.

Roles for team members:

GO-GETTER—Gives the necessary materials at the start of class and returns them at the end

RECORDER—Tallies the daily team celebration points that the team earned (if the teacher cannot record them on the poster immediately) and is responsible for figuring the final team score at the end of each PowerTeaching lesson cycle

DISCUSSION STARTER—Reads or restates the first question to start the team discussion

Pick new students to fill these roles at the beginning of each new PowerTeaching cycle.
Bibliography


