Constructive Chaos: Using Differentiation to Foster Collaboration

Grades: 5-12

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Collaborative Learning

An approach to teaching and learning that involves groups of students working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product.

"Collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is a naturally social act in which the participants talk among themselves (Gerlach, 1994). It is through the talk that learning occurs."
REASONS TO FOSTER COLLABORATION

• Give students time and opportunities within the activity to develop leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills.

• Establish expectations and norms for working together.

• Teach students active listening skills.

PRINCIPLES OF DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation is a philosophy of and model for effective teaching and learning that goes beyond strategies.

Differentiation is a potential response to regular and ongoing analysis of students’ characteristics and students’ learning.

Differentiation calls for instructional adjustments that responds to patterns in student needs.

Differentiation incorporates a range of instructional strategies, including whole-class instruction.

Differentiation relies on flexible grouping for a variety of community-building and instructional purposes.

Differentiation calls for respectful tasks that respond to students’ readiness, interest, and learning preferences.
Differentiation is for all grade levels and subjects. Each subject and grade level presents unique opportunities for and challenges to planning for differentiation.

Differentiation is the means by which all students make progress toward and beyond standards.

Differentiation is necessary for teaching all students in all kinds of settings, including the general education classroom.

**5 Fun Collaborative DI Strategies**

1. Speak Up
2. Fishbowl
3. Brainwriting
4. Zoom In
5. Conver-Stations
CONVER-STATIONS

• Students are placed into a few groups of 4-6 students each and are given a discussion question to talk about.

After sufficient time has passed for the discussion to develop, one or two students from each group rotate to a different group, while the other group members remain where they are.

• Once in their new group, they will discuss a different, but related question, and they may also share some of the key points from their last group’s conversation.

• For the next rotation, students who have not rotated before may be chosen to move, resulting in groups that are continually evolving.

Pyramid Discussion

• Students begin in pairs, responding to a discussion question only with a single partner.

• After each person has had a chance to share their ideas, the pair joins another pair, creating a group of four.

• Pairs share their ideas with the pair they just joined.

• Next, groups of four join together to form groups of eight, and so on, until the whole class is joined up in one large discussion.
LIST OF CITATIONS


