

Collaborative Comments

Collaborative Comments is a productive dialogue strategy that makes use of sentence stems to help guide student interaction and collaboration. Students are sometimes accustomed to speaking to each other in ways that may not be completely appropriate. Thus, they need good examples of how they should talk to each other when engaging in class discussions, as well as ways to listen to and respond to one another.

An anchor chart displayed prominently in the classroom will keep the stems and listening/responding points in the forefront of students' minds. Whenever small group or whole class discussion is about to start, referencing the chart will remind students of the "rules of engagement." It will take a great deal of modeling and practice that will pay huge dividends by positively impacting the culture of the classroom.

The stems and points listed below are generic and may be used to facilitate collaborative discussions about any number of topics.

Statements (stems)

- I agree because...
- I disagree because...
- I'm not sure about because
- What do you think about ...

- Tell me more about ...
- I'm thinking we should try ... what do you guys think?
- I really like your idea because...

Other Points to Remember about listening/responding

- Listen to each other.
- Think about your own ideas.
- ALL ideas are important.
- Think about what others have said before you respond.
- Respect others' ideas and responses.

How to implement the strategy (Summarizing):

1. Set the stage for the discussion by establishing whether it will be small group, whole group, or some combination of the two.
2. Present the topic.
3. Revisit the stems and listening/responding points.
4. Model, model, model.
5. Give students specific feedback regarding their use of the collaborative comments as they work together.

Adapted from:

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