TIME SAVER:
Teamwork

TIME FOR CHANGE:

DREAM. ACT. CHANGE OUR WORLD.

Are you looking for creative ways to encourage collaboration and teamwork in your classroom or program? Sharing responsibility and encouraging each person to use their unique abilities towards a common purpose is the kind of sophisticated teamwork students need to practice in order to grow as changemakers. Our rapidly changing world demands this.

Follow these five steps to teach students the value of building an effective team. Effective teams develop and adhere to **teamwork guidelines**, allow for **multiple and flexible roles**, value **respectful communication**, and make decisions by **consensus**.

STEP 1

BUILD A SOLUTION WITHOUT A TEAM PLAN

Break the class into small groups (4-5 students). Have each group pick one of the challenges below that is relevant. Give the groups 10 minutes to discuss their challenge and design a solution:

- Students do not have enough time to eat during lunch.
- It is too loud in the cafeteria.
- Students have too much homework after school.
- A new substitute teacher is having a hard time.
- New students feel lonely and shy during their first week at school.
- *If you have time, let your students identify other challenges.*

STEP 2

REFLECT

After the groups have discussed a p challenge and designed a solution, ask students to reflect on their teamwork experiences (as a class or in their groups), using these questions as a starting point:

- Was it difficult to decide on a solution?
- How did everyone in your group feel about the decision?
- Did everyone feel heard?

BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK

Ensure that everyone has the chance to contribute at least one idea. Make sure those ideas are recognized positively.

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Work through consensus, making sure to vote on a final idea.

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Embrace evolving and/or multiple roles, sometimes leading and other times working in a supporting role.

STEP 3

CREATE TEAMWORK GUIDELINES

Some students may have felt unheard or unseen during this activity because there were no guidelines or expectations about working together as a team. Other students may not have realized that they were not allowing everyone to contribute their ideas.

Successful teamwork starts with establishing guidelines for how to work together fairly and effectively. Have students work together as a class to create guidelines they can use during teamwork activities.

1. Ask students how they would like to feel when they work in groups and write their responses (such as *valued*, *happy*, and *respected*) on the board.
2. Brainstorm how to turn these feelings into guidelines and expectations. Provide tangible examples like don't interrupt, make eye contact, and acknowledge team members' individual efforts and contributions.

STEP 4

BUILD A SOLUTION WITH A TEAM PLAN

Divide the class into their original teams. Go back to the first activity and have each team pick a *new* challenge to solve. Have the students repeat the solution-building activity, paying special attention to the teamwork guidelines they created together.

Changemaker Tips:

When your students begin the second round of solution-building, suggest that those who were leaders and/or particularly vocal during the first round consider giving space for others to lead.

Encourage students who are passionate about the solutions they came up with to try them out. This allows them to apply their brainstorming to real life.

STEP 5

REFLECT

As a class, ask students to reflect on how these two experiences differed. Use these questions as a starting point:

- How did you feel at the beginning of the first activity? Second activity? (Examples: *nervous*, *confused*, *excited*, *confident*, *curious*…)
- How did you feel at the end of the first activity? Second activity? (Examples: *frustrated*, *disappointed*, *proud*, *satisfied*…)
- Which experience worked better for your team? Why?
- How did the teamwork guidelines affect the interaction and collaboration among team members?

FIND BOOKS ABOUT TEAMWORK ON THE FIRST BOOK CANADA MARKETPLACE

Visit our **Teamwork & Trusting Others** section to find stories of people working together to make great things happen.

For students to feel like they are making valuable contributions to a team, they need to develop an appreciation for their own unique talents, qualities, and gifts. Visit our **Self-Esteem & Individuality** section to find books that help kids develop.

Working together requires students to be respectful of one another and demonstrate empathy for others' working styles, abilities, and ways of thinking. Visit our **Respect & Empathy** section.

LEARN MORE!

Learn more about transforming schools, programs, and classrooms into collaborative environments here.

WATCH ▷

Sources
A Toolkit for Promoting Empathy in Schools | Ashoka
The Young Changemaker's Guide to Team Building | Ashoka | Medium.com