

## Teammates Consult with a Twist

### Structured Cooperative Learning

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Teammates Consult with a Twist is a variation of the cooperative learning structure Teammates Consult (February 2006 tip). Teammates Consult with a Twist not only restructures group work by promoting thinking and reflection through discussion, it encourages students to produce their best work because they do not know which worksheet will be theirs at the end. The structure provides students with an opportunity to practice learned content and share ideas before writing answers to questions, which can range from simple recall to more complex interpretation. It requires that everyone participate in small group discussion, clarifying ideas until each individual is ready to write an answer. The group arrives at the best composite answers, thus affording the opportunity for better learning and better achievement. It can produce higher level thinking through stimulating discussion about the subject matter and can lead to new understanding. This structure promotes positive interdependence so that everyone walks away with the cumulative best thinking of the group. High expectations are evident since everyone discusses and then writes his/her own answers, which may be eventually be used by someone else.

#### PROCESS

The teacher selects or prepares a set of questions that the students are to answer collaboratively in their group. The complexity of the information and the level of understanding required by the question determine the level of difficulty of the task. At no time during this process are students both talking and writing.

#### STEPS

1. Students work in teams of three or four.
2. All students receive their own copy of the task.
3. A cup is placed in the center of each team's work space. Students begin by placing their pencils/pens in the cup.
4. A student reads the first question.
5. With the pencils still in the cup, students take turns sharing their ideas and answers to the question. Students may use their text and notes, if the teacher desires. Students discuss the answers and then come to consensus on the answer to the question.
6. The student to the left of the reader checks to see that all the group members understand and agree with the consensus answer.
7. WHEN THERE IS GROUP CONSENSUS, all students remove their pencils/pens from the cup and write the answer to the question in their own words on their own paper.
8. NOW COMES THE TWIST! When students are finished writing their answers, they pass their paper to the person on their left and steps 4-7 are repeated. Each time students finish writing their answers they pass their paper to the left again before moving to the next question. Passing the paper is a way to build positive interdependence among group members since teammates becomes responsible for the learning of each other as well as for themselves.

**Remember!** All pens/pencils are placed in the container while discussion is ongoing. This keeps students from jumping ahead of their teammates and helps ensure that all group members actively engage in the discussion of the correct answer.

Adapted from Kagan, Spencer. *Cooperative Learning*. Publisher: Resources for Teachers, Inc. San Clemente, CA 1999

<http://www.kaganonline.com/KaganClub/FreeArticles/IncreaseAchievement.html>