

Great Classroom Idea



Grade level: High School

Subject (if applicable): All subjects

Please check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lesson plan | <input type="checkbox"/> project-based teaching/activity idea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> technology integration idea | <input type="checkbox"/> graphic organizer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> integration of faith and learning idea | <input type="checkbox"/> webquest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> classroom management technique | <input type="checkbox"/> virtual field trip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> devotional | <input type="checkbox"/> bulletin board idea |
| <input type="checkbox"/> science demo or experiment | <input type="checkbox"/> critical thinking strategy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> assessment tool | <input type="checkbox"/> original classroom game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> relationship-building idea | <input type="checkbox"/> other: _____ |

Description: (attach supplementary materials if needed)

A more Equitable Way to Evaluate Group Work

The following group assignment scenario was posted on ActionEd: Making Education Meaningful website.. Action-Ed is the brainchild of Regan and Amy Ross. It offers a solution to make grading fairer than the inadequate and universally disliked 'group grade'. I intend to use it this coming year.
S. Brüggemann

used with permission from Regan Ross, ActionEd: Making Education Meaningful website (<http://www.action-ed.com>).

1. Group Mark: This is the usual group mark; the mark earned on a project, paper, presentation, etc. For example, let's say a group of 4 members earned 16/20 on their presentation project. Their group mark is 16. Most often educators stop here, but I don't think it tells enough of the story. So ...

2. Total Group Points: Then they determined this by multiplying the group mark by the number of members in the group. Continuing with the example, the group mark of 16 is multiplied by the 4 group members giving us 64 Total Group Pts ($4 \times 16 = 64$).

3. Prepare Fractions: Then on a piece of paper, I have the students write a fraction beside every group member's name, leaving the numerator blank and using the same denominator as the group mark. For example:

- Stan = $\frac{\quad}{20}$
- Susan = $\frac{\quad}{20}$
- Joe = $\frac{\quad}{20}$
- Tanya = $\frac{\quad}{20}$
- Total Group Pts = 80

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Submitted by: Stefan Brüggemann

School: Crawford Adventist Academy

4. Group Negotiates Individual Marks: Then the group works out - *on their own* - who should get how many of the total group points. I ask them to review what went well and what didn't, and have them use that information - *on their own* - to decide how to allocate their total group points. They cannot use more or less than the total number of group points they earned, some members may earn up to 105%, and it's up to them to present their cases to their group mates as to why each member should get what they should get.

For example, lets say Stan was 'the man' and the group agrees their decent mark of 16/20 was largely due to him doing a great job on the most difficult tasks. They agree he should receive 105%, which would look like this:

- Stan = 21/20
- Susan = 1/20
- Joe = 1/20
- Tanya = 1/20
- Total Group Pts Left = 43 (64 - 21 = 43)

Then they move on to Joe, who - the groups agrees - did absolutely nothing in preparing for the presentation (Stan did Joe's work), but a good job in the actual presentation. The group decides to give Joe 8/20, and we're left with this:

- Stan = 21/20
- Susan = 1/20
- Joe = 8/20
- Tanya = 1/20
- Total Group Pts Left = 35 (43 - 8 = 35)

Finally, Susan says that she and Tanya contributed equally (which is mostly true), but Tanya adds that she was the one who spent a good 30 minutes proofreading everyone's final work and fixing mistakes. With this, the group decides on the following marks and submits them to their instructor who records them as the individual grades for the group assignment:

- Stan = 21/20
- Susan = 16.5/20
- Joe = 8/20
- Tanya = 18.5/20
- Totals = 64/80

5. Teacher Records the Marks: The teacher, then, does the following things before recording the marks:

- Verifies the numbers add up, ensuring students aren't trying to add a couple marks here and there (it happens more often than you think, and it always results in group members blaming bad math skills .. he he),
- Ensures that the group generally agrees with the collective decision/allotment, making sure no one was bullied, intimidated or guilted into taking a lower grade than they felt they rightfully deserved.
- Fields questions and assists with any negotiations that become heated, sometimes teaching (or coaching) a group how deliberate on the issue and how to present and listen to points-made calmly and rationally.

The following comment or suggestion was offered by 'Allison' who posted on [ActionEd: Making Education Meaningful](#) blog:

One thing I have done in the past is giving the students class time to work on their projects, at the end of each session I give them an accountability page where each person must write down exactly what they did during the work period. All group members must sign the paper at the end of the period stating that they agree that the written statements are indeed true. When I go to mark the final product I look to see if the workload was equally distributed. Works well with Middle School students.

(If you're interested, you can sign up for future teaching tips/ideas by following the appropriate links at <http://www.action-ed.com/blog/>)