Assessing Students During Cooperative Learning

Resource Bundle

I. Assessing Students During Cooperative Learning Resource

II. References
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Resource  
(Back to Table of Contents)

Use this resource to help you formatively assess (and track) student knowledge and skill mastery during cooperative learning.

**Formative Assessment**
Assessment used to gather evidence of student learning and modify instruction. Using formative assessment will help you determine when and how to intervene and provide support.

**Ways to Monitor Student Progress**
(Johnson & Johnson, 1996)

- **Focus on positive actions**: Look for what is going right, not for what is going wrong. Track only a few actions per lesson.
- **Track the learning process**: Take note of who understands the content, how students are completing the task, and the quality of the work the group is able to complete in the allotted time.
- **Use a formal observation sheet**: An observation sheet, organized ahead of time, highlighting the specific behaviors and actions you will be tracking, can help you stay organized during the lesson.

**Observation Form**

1. **Create your own observation form**: Generate a separate form for each group of students. Below is a sample observation form that can be used.
2. **Decide on actions to observe**: Observe only a few actions per activity based on what works best for your students and the lesson. Suggested actions include:
   - Demonstrates content knowledge/objective mastery
   - Exhibits prosocial behaviors¹
   - Follows procedures
   - Displays creativity
   - Demonstrates higher order thinking skills
   - Uses a variety of strategies
3. **Track actions**: Check boxes when individuals demonstrate the desired actions. Write down specific evidence to support your claim.
4. **Give feedback**: Give feedback to students based on the evidence documented on the observation form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
<th>Student C</th>
<th>Student D</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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¹ Praising and encouraging the contributions of others, providing constructive criticism, checking for understanding, contributing ideas, or respecting other groups.
**Intervention Strategies**

If groups are struggling to demonstrate the actions being tracked, it may be necessary to intervene and modify instruction. Use these questions and conversation starters to determine if you should intervene and how you should do so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to Keep in Mind</th>
<th>Conversation Starters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Baloche,1998)</td>
<td>(Baloche,1998)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is it necessary for me to intervene?</td>
<td>• How did you come to that conclusion?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can I wait to intervene?</td>
<td>• Is there any other way you could approach this problem?</td>
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<td>• Will my intervention positively affect the group’s learning?</td>
<td>• Can you explain the expectations for this assignment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do the students and groups understand the expectations and content?</td>
<td>• You seem to be struggling with this problem. What are a few things we could do to overcome our difficulty?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can the group members solve their problem without my help?</td>
<td>• What is another way you could say that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are all students involved?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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References


