

LEARNING EXCHANGE PROTOCOL

Numbered Heads Together

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Numbered Heads Together Cooperative Learning Strategy

What Is It?

Numbered Heads Together is a cooperative learning strategy that holds each student accountable for learning the material. Students are placed in groups and each person is given a number (from one to the maximum number in each group). The teacher poses a question and students "put their heads together" to figure out the answer. The teacher calls a specific number to respond as spokesperson for the group. By having students work together in a group, this strategy ensures that each member knows the answer to problems or questions asked by the teacher. Because no one knows which number will be called, all team members must be prepared.

Why Is It Important?

This cooperative learning strategy promotes discussion and both individual and group accountability. This strategy is beneficial for reviewing and integrating subject matter. Students with special needs often benefit when this strategy is used. After direct instruction of the material, the group supports each member and provides opportunities for practice, rehearsal, and discussion of content material.

Group learning methods encourage students to take greater responsibility for their own learning and to learn from one another, as well as from the instructor (Terenzini & Pascarella, 1994).

Cooperative learning has been shown to increase student achievement, race relations, acceptance of special needs students, and self-esteem (Slavin, 1995).

How Can You Make It Happen?

1. Divide the students into groups of four and give each one a number from one to four.
2. Pose a question or a problem to the class.
3. Have students gather to think about the question and to make sure everyone in their group understands and can give an answer.
4. Ask the question and call out a number randomly.
5. The students with that number raise their hands, and when called on, the student answers for his or her team.

How Can You Stretch Students' Thinking?

This is a flexible strategy that can be used at a variety of levels. The teacher may start with factual information questions, and as students become more familiar with the strategy, ask questions that require analysis or synthesis of information. Student groups can be given statements such as, "School uniforms help to keep students focused on academics." Students' task is to come to consensus on whether they agree or disagree, giving an explanation of their reasoning.

After the students respond, have the other groups agree or disagree with the answer by showing a thumbs up or thumbs down, and then explain their reasoning. Or, if the answer needs clarifying, ask another student to expand on the answer.