

**Knowing How, Knowing Who, Knowing What:
Three guiding principles for developing collaborative learning**

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Video Transcript:

Slide 1: Knowing How, Knowing Who, and Knowing What

Hello. My name is Alice Wigglesworth. I'm an Assistant Professor in the English Department on the Mason Korea campus and a doctoral candidate researching peer review in the writing classroom.

In this video, I will present three guiding principles for developing collaborative learning. My interest in collaborative learning comes from my experiences using peer review in my writing courses. Peer review is simply the practice of students critiquing each others' work. Although writing is often seen as a solitary endeavor, I've seen, over the years, how students improve their writing when engaging in peer review. And, more importantly, students seem to improve their thinking through this same process.

While peer review is most commonly seen in the writing classroom, it is an exemplar of collaborative learning which has relevance across disciplines.

As part of my dissertation research, I explored how successful students engaged in the peer review process. The three principles of collaborative learning I will describe in this video emerged out of what I learned from my students. Looked at from this perspective, this presentation is the product of an exercise in collaborative learning.

These three principles for developing collaborative learning are: Knowing How, Knowing Who, and Knowing What

Slide 2: What is collaborative learning?

Before we move on, it may be appropriate to give a brief definition of collaborative learning and why educators may want to incorporate it in their courses.

Collaborative learning is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together. Often what is learned will be beyond what any individual could accomplish working alone.

Slide 3: Benefits of Collaborative Learning

It would be impractical to delineate the list of proposed benefits of collaborative learning. However, those which are most often cited include:

- The development of higher-order thinking
- Exposure to and understanding of diverse perspectives
- Increased retention and self-esteem, and
- Preparation for the world beyond the university classroom

Although the benefits of collaborative learning are well established, designing collaborative learning tasks is not always intuitive.

Slide 4: Knowing How, Knowing Who, and Knowing What

As mentioned earlier, the findings of my research suggest three principles for developing collaborative learning: Knowing How, Knowing Who, and Knowing What

Slide 5: Knowing How

The first principle is *knowing how*. This principle involves preparing students sufficiently to ensure they will ‘*know how*’ to complete the task.

“Knowing how” helps students develop the confidence needed to successfully engage in the collaborative learning tasks. This first principle is the bedrock that the following two principles rest on.

Slide 6: Knowing How

To provide students with the foundations and confidence they need to know how to complete the activity:

Design tasks directly related to material covered in the course.

Provide clear instructions, including examples or models where possible or necessary.

Design activities to include all members of a group. That is, avoid creating tasks a single advanced student could complete and hold individual students accountable for their contribution to the completion of the task.

When students know what is expected of them, the following principle of “Knowing Who” is more likely to be achieved.

Slide 7: Knowing Who

The second guiding principle for fostering collaborative learning is Knowing Who: This principle involves providing students the opportunity to get to *know* who they are working with and facilitating the development of relationships of students from diverse backgrounds.

The development of peer to peer relationships is essential in the development of trust necessary in successful collaborative learning tasks.

Slide 8: Knowing Who

To help facilitate relationships, create static groups. Static groups foster the development of relationships, allowing students to become more confident in their ability to speak and be heard.

In addition, they increase confidence in the ability of group members to give meaningful input.

To create a more enriching group dynamic, make groups diverse. Differences in backgrounds and experiences can help students see the world from different perspectives. Diversity of ethnicity, socio-economic status, age, and so on enriches students' learning and social experiences, as students from different backgrounds bring different perspectives to the group. In addition to diversity of background, students of differing ability levels can create tutoring relationships, which have been shown to benefit both students

To further facilitate the development of peer relationships, maximize peer interactions for both quantity and quality. Increase the quantity of student interactions by keeping groups small and using group activities which require student-to-student communication. By keeping groups small, each student will have more time to voice their ideas and a greater portion of responsibility. Similarly, increase the quality of these interactions by designing activities which require higher order thinking.

The social interaction associated with the principle of knowing who is the engine which drives the final principle of *knowing what and associated higher-order thinking*.

Slide 9: Knowing What

Knowing what is the final guiding principle. **Knowing what** involves designing tasks that promote higher-order thinking by engaging students with the course content, peers' ideas, and students' own process of how they came to where they are.

The social engagement involved in *knowing who* is necessary for students to engage in *knowing what*.

Slide 10: Knowing What

To meet this principle, design tasks that require students engage with outside ideas. Engaging with peers' ideas encourages students to evaluate, defend and/or reject their own ideas as well as those of their peers. This kind of higher order thinking is a core advantage of collaborative learning.

To further develop critical thinking, incorporate reflective writing following collaborative learning activities. Reflective writing is an exercise in metacognition, an important aspect of 'knowing what,' as it allows students to identify what they know and consider why they believe what they believe. It also allows them to identify what they don't know and need to consider.

The critical thinking involved in "knowing what" is the key benefit and can be seen as the aim of collaborative learning.

Slide 11: Knowing How, Knowing Who, and Knowing What

When students "know how" to do a task which is within the group's ability level, they develop confidence in themselves and their peers.

When students "know who" their group members are, they develop the social relationships necessary to benefit from the distributed knowledge and skills of the group.

And when students "know what" ideas are possible within and outside their group, they are put in a position to use higher level thinking to evaluate the ideas of others as well as their own.

Slide 12: Contact Information

Thank you for taking the time to watch this short video outlining three principles for developing collaborative learning. If you'd like to follow up on anything covered here,

please reach out to me! You can find me on the Mason Korea campus or contact me by email. Have a good day.

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