

Collaboration

What it is: For the purposes of *ACCESS AfterSchool*, we will align with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo), which lists three broad interpersonal skills that delineate collaboration and teamwork¹: 1) the ability to relate well to others; 2) the ability to cooperate and work in teams; 3) the ability to manage and resolve conflicts. Each of these three elements has a number of sub-skills including empathy, oral communication, listening, leadership, self-regulation and negotiation skills.²

Why it's important: Employers point to collaboration and teamwork as one of the most important skills for entrants to the 21st Century workforce, second only to Oral Communication for those with a four-year college degree and to Professionalism for those with a two-year degree or less.³ Data show that students who work in small groups achieve more than students working individually⁴ and that cooperative learning methods can increase intrinsic motivation to learn.⁵

Strategies to implement Collaboration in *ACCESS AfterSchool*:

- Build into lesson plans activities which support small-group (3-4 students) interaction
- Create positive competition between small groups of students within the core subject matter of the class to build collaboration around a common goal
- Allow students to give and receive constructive feedback to each other (and to you!)
- Reinforce a collaborative culture by making sure all students have a voice in class discussions and engage in respectful listening
- Encourage shared leadership roles, giving responsibility for different tasks to individual team members who then manage that aspect of the team's overall project/assignment/goal.
- Guide students in negotiation and conflict resolution as part of the collaborative process

Applications/Examples:

- Art designs a mural or other large-group project, where small groups of students were responsible for one element of the project
- Cooking class could have a mock "Iron Chef" challenge in groups of 2-3 students. Class gives feedback to each team as their dish is being eaten.
- Relay races, team sports and other cooperative challenges fit naturally in fitness classes
- Movie making/photography students could work collaboratively on a film or a catalogue of class work

¹ Rychen, D.S. and Salganik, L.H. (2003), The Definition and Selection of Key Competencies (Executive Summary). Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>

² Jerald, C. (2009), Defining a 21st Century Education. Retrieved from <http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Policies/21st-Century/Defining-a-21st-Century-Education-Full-report-PDF.pdf> p. 58

³ Casner-Lotto, J., & Barrington, L. (2006). Are they really ready to work? Employers' perspectives on the basic knowledge and applied skills of new entrants to the 21st century U.S. workforce. Retrieved from http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/key_findings_joint.pdf

⁴ Lou, Y., Abrami, P. C., Spence, J. C., Poulsen, C., Chambers, B., d'Apollonia, S. (1996). Within-class grouping: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 66, 423–458.

⁵ Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. T. (2009). An educational psychology success story: Social interdependence theory and cooperative learning. *Educational Researcher*, 38, 365–379.