

Group Constructions

Grade Level: 6th- 12th ESL Classroom **Time:** 50 min, 30 min

Lesson Goal: To make attributions of success or failure apparent to the student.

TSW: Explore their personal beliefs about academic success or failure in relation to their group.

TSW: Learn how making correct attributions can affect the effectiveness of their learning.

TSW: Discuss the importance they place on effort in relation to academic failure.

TSW: Evaluate their 'innate ability' attributions when experiencing academic success.

TSW: Practice oral language skills and problem-solving.

Define: Attribution, Innate-Ability, Effort, Academic Success, Academic Failure, Learning

Materials: Newspaper and masking tape, Hand-outs of evaluation prompt questions and group discussion questions.

Directions:

DAY ONE

(5 min) Student Activity

-Have students group themselves in 3's or 4's and send one person to collect a stack of newspaper and a roll of masking tape.

(5 min) Direct Instruction

-Tell students that they have 20 minutes to work together to build a table out of their materials.

-Ask students to work together to make it look like a table and make it strong enough to hold up one or more books.

(30 min) Group Activity

-Circulate around to the groups as they work, listening to their discussions.

-Extend their time by 10 min

(5 min) Class Activity

-Have each group bring their project to the front.

-Have the class vote on which looks most like a table. Test the tables for strength using a book.

(5 min) Review

-Tell the students to think about the success of their group and be ready to discuss tomorrow.

DAY TWO

(10 min) Group Discussion

- Pass out notecards to each student while explaining that they are to write down responses to the questions on the board 1) Was your group successful? And 2) Why or why not? (Be specific.)
- Once everyone in the class has completed their response, ask them to discuss quietly while you collect the cards. Discussion topic: how could their group have been more successful?

(20 min) Class Discussion

- Teacher-guided definition of the vocabulary related to the discussion. Terms such as “innate ability” should be teacher-defined, then ask the students to give examples of things they feel they are innately good at.
- Guide discussion toward the concept of effort: “Had anyone in the class made a table out of newspaper before? If no one had experience, how did they succeed?” “If they had another opportunity to perform the task, could they do it better?” “If they put in more *effort*, how would it affect their project?”
- Ask the students if they feel they are personally responsible for the success or failure of the project- why or why not?
- How does the table relate to their school success? When they approach a task in school with no experience, do they think that putting in a lot of effort will guarantee their success? Can they identify when success comes from an ‘innate-ability’ versus pure effort or ‘trying’?

Follow-up & Review:

- After the next content-area group activity (ideally in the same week), conduct a class discussion lead a brief discussion relating it back to the table-building activity. Ask the students if they were more willing to put effort into their project after thinking about their beliefs. Do they see their success or failure as a group as being effort-related?
- Reinforce this concept throughout the year. Conduct the Computer-Lab activity on Attributions.