

Transcript for DRGC Training video #10

Hi! Welcome to our DRGC video on implementing 21st century skills into our classrooms.

Implementing these skills, in particular, collaboration, creates a supportive learning environment where students work together to achieve common goals. In this way, collaboration is both a process and an outcome. We should focus on collaborative learning because it motivates students and brings them together while promoting real communication and higher order thinking skills, such as critical thinking.

In this video we are going to give you some practical strategies and techniques for encouraging collaboration.

First of all, we need to **establish clear expectations** for collaborative behaviour and stress the importance of teamwork and respect. You can do this by creating a class contract. Create it, of course, collaboratively. Here's how:

As a group, brainstorm what makes a happy and productive classroom.

Then, learners, individually, think of 6-8 rules they think are important.

After that, students compare their rules in pairs and justify their choices.

In the same pairs, students need to decide on the 8 most important rules from their joint ideas.

Put two pairs together and repeat the previous two steps

Repeat these steps until the whole class is working together

Write the final set of rules on the board, then ask students to edit the rules, working together, so that they are phrased positively (e.g. Arrive on time vs Don't be late)

You can put the rules on the wall and in students' notebooks.

Next, we need to create **collaborative learning spaces**

Arrange classroom furniture to facilitate group work and collaboration. Consider using flexible seating arrangements that allow students to easily transition between whole-class discussions, small group activities, and independent work. You can learn more about this in our video on student centered classroom and in our handbook.

Another good idea is to hand over some control to the students. (**handing over control to students**)

This fosters responsibility, engagement, and respect, while reducing negative behaviours. Some strategies that we can use is to offer some choices, for example: working individually or in pairs, deciding activity durations, or answering as different personas. We can also allow students to choose and order discussion questions, create their own questions for language practice, write comprehension questions for peers, prepare their own tests, and develop study materials. These methods motivate students, enhance creativity and collaboration, and reinforce their learning.

Another important thing to do if we want to foster collaboration is to **assign structured collaborative tasks**

Design activities and assignments that require students to collaborate, problem-solve, and communicate effectively in English, in pairs or small groups. In order to boost the effectiveness of

these collaborative tasks, break them down into smaller, manageable steps, and provide clear instructions for each stage of the activity. Let's have a look at some ideas:

This is the **Listening triangle**

Students work together in groups of three, with each member taking on a role: speaker, questioner, and note-taker.

The speaker talks about the question or topic.

The questioner listens carefully and asks for clarification or further detail

The note-taker observes this process and provides feedback to both speaker and questioner

Think-pair-share aims to give learners confidence with their ideas and language by providing ample thinking time and closed-pair work before speaking to the whole class. Ask students to consider their response to a question or text individually. After the quiet thinking time, the students then explain their ideas to a partner and aim to reach a collective viewpoint or conclusion. Then in larger groups, or as a whole class, students share their findings together.

Pyramid discussion (also known as snowballing) ensures that all participants have an opportunity to contribute, and that classroom discussion evolves organically from individual reflections to collaborative exploration. Learners discuss something or investigate an issue in pairs. The pairs then join another pair to form a group and share their findings. The small groups then join together to make a larger group.

Information gap activities are communicative activities for two or more learners where the students work in pairs or small groups to share information that is missing from their partner's or group members' knowledge. The activity typically involves providing each participant with different pieces of information related to a topic or task, creating a gap in their understanding that can only be filled by interacting with others. Through communication, negotiation, and collaboration, learners exchange information to complete the missing pieces and achieve the activity's objectives

Barrier activities are the ones where the two students sit with a barrier between them and they are required to convey information to each other. A book or a file can be used as a simple barrier, or students could sit with their backs to one another. The idea of the barrier is to ensure that information has to be conveyed through speaking only, rather than relying on visual support. Activities that can be done like this are dictations, drawing dictations, completing charts or spot the differences.

A **jigsaw reading** activity is a cooperative learning technique where students work together to master content from a reading passage. The process involves dividing the reading material into sections, with each section assigned to different groups. Within their groups, students become "experts" on their assigned section, reading and discussing key points. They then form new groups where each member shares their expertise, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the entire text. This is followed by a collaborative discussion to deepen understanding and promote critical thinking. Finally, students synthesize the information into a summary, analysis, or presentation based on the learning objectives.

Another interesting activity is **Find someone who**. This task is often used as a classroom icebreaker, or an interactive mingle activity, where students move around the classroom to find classmates who match certain criteria or have specific qualities or experiences.

After including these structured collaborative activities it is also important to **foster peer feedback and reflection** Encourage students to provide constructive feedback to their peers and reflect on their

own collaborative experiences. Incorporate structured reflection activities where students evaluate their teamwork skills, communication strategies, and contributions to group projects.

There are also many digital tools that can facilitate collaboration and communication among students.

Online collaboration platforms such as [Google Workspace](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), and [Slack](#) enable students to work together on documents, presentations, and projects in real-time, providing feedback and tracking changes. **Discussion forums** like [Padlet](#), [Flipgrid](#), and [Edmodo](#) facilitate class discussions and idea sharing outside the classroom. **Virtual whiteboards** such as [Jamboard](#), [Miro](#), and [Whiteboard.fi](#) support collaborative brainstorming and problem-solving. **Collaborative document editing tools** like [Google Docs](#), [Microsoft Word Online](#), and [Overleaf](#) allow multiple users to edit simultaneously. **Project management tools** such as [Trello](#), [Asana](#), and [Basecamp](#) help manage tasks and deadlines effectively. **Video conferencing tools** like [Zoom](#), [Google Meet](#), and [Microsoft Teams](#) enable virtual meetings and real-time collaboration, while **social media platforms** such as [TikTok](#), [Facebook Groups](#), and [Instagram](#) foster peer interaction and community building. Finally, **online polls and survey tools** like [Aweform](#), [Poll Everywhere](#), [Mentimeter](#), and [Kahoot](#) engage students with interactive quizzes and feedback sessions.

These tools are excellent for fostering collaboration and motivating students but it is vital that all users are aware of the complexities surrounding online safety.

Finally, in order to include 21st century skills it is important that we **celebrate collaborative achievements** (ovo na ekranu) by recognizing student accomplishments, showcasing group projects, and providing positive reinforcement for teamwork. Share these successes publicly within the school or on social media. Also, **promote cross-cultural collaboration** (na ekran) by creating opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to work together, discuss cultural differences, and address global issues, fostering cultural awareness and empathy