

Human Graph

Thinking Interdependently relates to the fact that human beings are social by nature. Individuals who have developed this Habit of Mind understand that people can often accomplish a lot more intellectually and physically by working together than they can by working alone. With complex problems, many people bring many sources of experience and data. They also bring alternative points of view and ideas.

As students develop their ability to Think Interdependently, they learn to try out and justify ideas on others. They also develop a willingness to be open to feedback, and they become motivated to help others via constructive critiques. With this tool, students learn that listening, consensus-seeking, giving up one idea to work on someone else’s idea, developing empathy and compassion, leading, and supporting are all behaviors of cooperative human beings.

Preparation

- Familiarize yourself with the Thinking Interdependently video and lesson plan.
- Set your room up for the “Human Graph” activity so that students can move about the room freely and quickly.

Breaking it Down

- Introductory discussion
- Watch the “Thinking Interdependently” animated story
- “Human Graph” lesson
- Closing discussion

Introductory Discussion

- Write the old saying “A problem shared is a problem halved.” on the board.
- Ask students to explain what this quote means. Do they think this saying is true? Students may enter into a discussion about the pros and cons of sharing problems. Is there a time when you shouldn’t share your problems with others? Steer the conversation toward facing challenges together.
- Explain that when we face a challenge, make a decision, or solve a problem, we often benefit from asking others for their thoughts. One person working alone doesn’t have a chance to compare, elaborate, or look at their idea objectively. Outcomes are often better when “great minds think alike.”
- Explain that in our modern, technological world, we must find new technologies and media for communication that will allow us to share ideas and benefit from collaborative thinking and learning.
- Ask your students what it means to work together or be a part of a team? Does it mean thinking the same as everyone else? What is the difference between thinking the same as everyone else and thinking interdependently?



Active Learning

“Thinking Interdependently”

Grade: 4

• Interdependence is dependence upon each other. Thinking Interdependently is thinking together, as a group, in such a way that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It does not mean that every part or person is the same or thinks the same; in fact, differences are necessary to create a productive team environment.

Lesson

1. Watch the “Thinking Interdependently” animated story.
2. Explain that a human graph is much like a written graph except that the classroom floor is the page and each student is a point on an axis. Assign the left side of the classroom to represent “Strongly Agree” and the right side of the room to represent “Strongly Disagree.” You may want to label these with signs.
3. Tell students that as you make a series of statements they should respond by standing on one side of the room or the other according to their viewpoint. If their point of view is somewhere in the middle, they should stand in between the two end points.
4. Read the following statements, pausing for students to move each time. Periodically call on one or more students to share the rationale for their position.

I enjoy working on my own.

I think well when others do not disturb me.

I think doing a good job of Thinking Interdependently takes practice.

I get a lot out of listening to the ideas and suggestions of other people.

I have nothing to gain from listening to the ideas of others.

I don't like sharing my ideas because I worry that others will criticize me.

I like working with others, but I get upset if they take my ideas and make them their own.

I get more done when I work alone.

I get a lot out of sharing my thinking with others.

5. Have students pair up and talk about the experience. Give them the following questions to guide their discussion: How did my opinions about Thinking Interdependently compare with other people in the class? What aspects of Thinking Interdependently do I already do well? What aspects could I improve?

Closing Discussion

- Have students consider questions such as the following: What does it look like when people think together? What setting do you imagine them in? Do they need to see each other or could they think interdependently over the phone or via the Internet? What facial expressions and body language might you expect to notice? What does a group of people thinking together sound like? What might you hear people say? What might it feel like to be part of a group that is Thinking Interdependently? What feelings might the individuals experience?
- They may discuss these questions in small groups or as a whole class.



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