

## SFUSD Signature Strategy #3: Groupwork Feedback - Elementary

### What is this strategy?

Groupwork feedback is a strategy to publicly recognize the class norms and math focus of students as they work in groups. It is based on the Participation Quiz strategy, but modified to better fit the Elementary context. Group work is loosely defined to include partners, trios, or larger group sizes. The teacher takes public notes about the quality of the group work and the quality of the mathematical discussions. This feedback should focus on the specific nature of groupwork interactions as well as target mathematics of the lesson rather than general positive reinforcement.



### Why would I use this strategy?

While math class norms are important, it is not enough to simply post them and discuss them in the beginning of the year. Public groupwork feedback allows the teacher to communicate the behaviors and norms he or she values and wishes to encourage. With regular use, it reminds students of the classroom norms and allows them to deepen their practice and incorporate new approaches towards meeting them. It is also a way to recognize the efforts of students who may be shy or struggling in class. By highlighting the many strengths that students exhibit in class, the teacher fosters a classroom climate of growth mindset and multiple learning styles. This helps to mitigate the sense that some students are just “not good” at math.

### When do I use this strategy?

This strategy can be used whenever students are working in collaborative groups (partners, trios, or other). It is especially useful when establishing classroom and groupwork norms, and when doing tasks that do not require much teacher assistance.

### How do I use this strategy?

#### 1. Analyze the math task or activity.

Is the task or activity accessible, challenging, and important? Does it require students to read and talk together? Does it require a variety of math abilities? If a task is too hard, the teacher may spend more time answering group questions than observing. However, if a task is too routine, students will naturally work on it alone since little collaboration may be required.

#### 2. Decide on a focus.

The teacher decides which group norms and target math students should focus on. Early in the year, the teacher may focus on establishing norms, such as getting a quick start (reading problem promptly and making sure group understands), working together (heads leaning in and working in the middle of the group), and asking the group questions before asking the teacher. Later in the year, the teacher may focus on refining a norm that the class is struggling with, such as one student rephrasing what another student said. Additionally, the teacher may choose to highlight strengths of specific students who are not generally seen by their peers as being strong in math.

#### 3. Communicate the focus to students.

The teacher lets his or her class know that the lesson will be structured as a Groupwork Feedback class. This means that the teacher will focus mainly on how the groups are interacting together and working on the math instead of re-teaching or working with individuals or small groups. The teacher is clear about what he or she is looking for and uses language that students understand. The teacher explains that he or she will publically record how the students work in their groups, how they collaborate and approach the mathematics, and that there will be a discussion at the end of class based on these observations.

For example, the teacher can say that he or she is looking for:

- ❖ Quick Start
- ❖ “Because” statements (addresses the norm: “We make statements with reasons”).
- ❖ Students “leaning in” (addresses the norm: “We work together on the same problem”).
- ❖ Group questions only.

As students work, the teacher publically records statements about how groups are working together. This can be done on a document camera, whiteboard, chart paper, or overhead projector. The recording sheet is split into as many spaces as there are groups (see example Notetaking Form below). Making the recording public allows student groups to be reinforced for behavior that supports the norms and to notice where their behavior can change to meet the norms. Sometimes groups do not notice this public documentation, while other times they pay attention and feel reinforced or change their behaviors.

#### 4. Debrief the notes taken.

The teacher takes time before the end of class or in the middle of the task to debrief. Time is given for students to read comments or for the teacher to read comments aloud. The teacher highlights key evidence that supports the groupwork norms. The focus on groupwork norms to start and end the lesson can be a powerful way to reinforce the kinds of cooperative behaviors that teachers want to establish.

<b>Grade Span</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
All Grades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher may take digital photos of collaborative work and show them on projector during debrief.</li><li>• Teacher may have sheets of paper with the goals of the day’s Participation Quiz written on them and he or she may stamp the group’s sheet when evidence of the goals is observed.</li></ul>
Third - Fifth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teacher may write down his or her observations on sticky notes and leave them at a table group during an activity.</li><li>• Teacher may write down his or her observations on sticky notes and post notes under the document camera when convenient. This allows the feedback to be public and real-time.</li><li>• Teacher may record observations on a Groupwork Feedback Notetaking Form, projecting the feedback using a document camera as much as possible.</li></ul>