

## Assessing Projects: Encouraging Self-Direction and Collaboration Observation of Groups

### Assessing Collaboration Skills

Assigning students to work in groups not only enables them to practice a variety of process and thinking strategies but provides for the perfect opportunity to assess these skills.

All of the following strategies can be observed and assessed while students are working together to complete tasks:

- Content and communication skills are observed while students grapple with the content and help each other understand.
- Leadership strategies are used when students participate in any of the various roles, and help move a group to achieve its goals.
- Negotiating strategies are observed when students present different ideas for the group to consider.
- Problem-solving strategies are observed when students work to resolve differences or seek alternative solutions.
- Analyzing strategies are used when students summarize points of discussion, simplify complicated ideas, or put points in perspective.
- Negotiating skills are used when the group is asked to reach consensus, a process skill that honors the opinions of all involved to come to an agreed-upon outcome.
- Synthesizing strategies are used when students are asked to present work or to facilitate on-going work.
- Feedback strategies are used to inform peers or the teacher about the group's process, the task, and other aspects of the group work.

A variety of methods and instruments can be used to assess these strategies while students work in groups, including: questionnaires, checklists, rubrics, and prompts. To help students become self-directed learners, provide them with these same instruments and ask them to conduct self-assessments and provide peer feedback. Examples of these types of assessments are available in the *Assessing Projects* application.