

Tips for Group Learning

Sustainable Crew meetings are not structured like a typical classroom setting. The role of the Crew Leader is that of a group facilitator, not an “instructor” or “teacher”. For Crew Members and Crew Leaders who have not experienced this before, it may take a little while to become comfortable in this learning environment.

The following tips are intended to help you and your crew adapt quickly:

1. **Sit in a circle.** Arranging your crew seating so everyone can see each other assists with conversation flow and creates an atmosphere of inclusion. If the Crew Leader is standing or sitting in front of a room with seats that are all facing forward, it can make the crew meeting feel too much like a “formal” classroom.
2. **Learn and use first names.** Look for Crew Members as you take attendance to match names with faces. Introduce yourself and ask students to introduce themselves if you have Crew Members join you to make up meetings. Use names when asking students to participate. Don’t be afraid to ask Crew Members to remind you of their name if you don’t remember.
3. **Lay the ground rules and enforce them.** At your first meeting spend a little bit of time talking about respectful group interactions. Ask Crew Members to think about and share what they can do to help create an environment where different and *differing* views and opinions can be expressed. Raising hands to speak probably won’t be necessary, but reminding students not to interrupt each other or to speak one at a time, might.
4. **Use groups within groups.** Sometimes it is difficult for people to speak in front of a large group. Breaking your crew up into smaller groups (2-4) can help address this issue and gives Crew Members an opportunity to learn and share directly with each other. This method can be used for sharing recommendations or exploring Toolbox items. Allow groups to spend 10-15 minutes in discussion and then share what they’ve learned or which recommendations they’ll be implementing with the entire group.
5. **Address challenges and issues as soon as possible.** If you have situations or Crew Members that present special challenges to crew meetings, speak with them or the Student Program Coordinator as soon as possible. The longer you wait the more difficult it becomes to address the issue and there is a greater possibility that it will have an effect on crew dynamics.