

Interactive Learning Structures

Four Corners

1. Pose a question (academic or social) that has four possible responses. For example: "If you could choose one favorite weekend activity, what would it be?"
2. Designate one corner of the room for each response, for example:
 - Corner one—Listening to music
 - Corner two—Reading
 - Corner three—Spending time outdoors
 - Corner four—Sleeping
3. Give students a minute to reflect on their choice. When time is up, they move to the corresponding corner.
4. In their corners, students discuss in small groups (or pairs) why they made their choice.
5. Allow about 1–2 minutes for the discussion. Provide a 10-second warning before time is up.
6. Repeat, with a new question and responses, as time allows.

Snowball

1. Give each student a strip of blank white paper.
2. Students write a statement on the paper in response to a question or topic you pose (they do not put their names on the paper).
3. Students gather in a circle, crumple up their piece of paper, and toss their "snowball" into the center of the circle.
4. Everyone picks up a snowball and, going around the circle, takes turns reading it aloud.

World Café

(An adaptation of the World Café™, a structured conversational process, found at www.theworldcafe.com)

1. Have students form tables of four or five.
2. Assign each table a facilitator and give each table a different discussion topic.

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3. Provide a question to focus the table discussions. Allow 2–3 minutes for discussion
4. When time is up, give a signal to wrap up conversations. Invite two or three students per table to change tables. Pose a new focus question or use the same one for new table groups to discuss.
5. Do several more rounds of table changes as time allows. Then bring everyone back together and invite several volunteers to share out on idea from their table discussions.

Table Talk

1. Students sit in table groups of four or five.
2. Assign a topic or reading, and give a few minutes for students to individually jot down their own ideas and questions about the topic or to read the material. (For assigned readings, ask students to place a checkmark next to any ideas they agree with and a star next to ideas they want to learn more about.)
3. Give a 1-minute warning to let students know to wrap up their note-taking or reading.
4. Give the table groups time to discuss the topic or reading in an around-the-table format.
5. After this table sharing, pose a question for reflection on the topic or reading. Allow a few minutes for table groups to discuss.

Amazing Analogies

1. Have students form small groups, and assign a recorder and presenter for each group.
2. Identify a content-related topic and ask how it's related to something else, such as a common object or activity. For example: "How is Atticus Finch like a calendar?"
3. Set the timer. Groups take 1–2 minutes to come up with reasons and evidence to support the analogy. Give a sentence stem for them to follow: "Atticus Finch is like a calendar because _____."
4. When time is up, each group's presenter shares one of the group's ideas with the whole class.
5. Repeat for 3 to 5 more content topics and common objects or activities.