

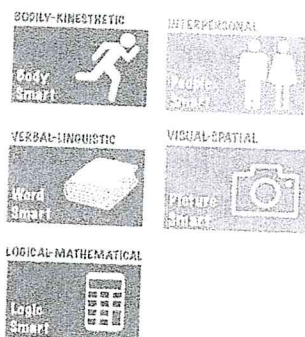
The Carousel

"I wish every student would participate in discussions!"

The Why

As quick as: 20 minutes

Multiple learning styles:



The Carousel promotes equity, because more students are likely to speak productively when groups are small and critiques or disagreements are indirect.

Gist: an extended, active version of Think-Pair-Share. The carousel gets everyone moving around the room to write and discuss various topics.

When to use: As a pre-assessment or a review game of a broad, multifaceted topic. When you need to involve everyone instead of hearing from the same few students each time.

How It Works

Step 1: Post 4-5 large sheets of paper around the room, with plenty of space between them. On each paper, write a different question or statement that can elicit a broad range of responses.

Step 2: Divide your students into 4-5 teams, and give each team a different colored marker. Each group begins at a different one of the posted questions.

Step 3: Set a timer for two minutes (or other amount of time). Instruct students as follows: "When I say go, you will have two minutes as a group to write as many intelligent points as you can on your board. When I call time, every group will take their marker and rotate to the left, just like a carousel."

Step 4: When groups rotate, instruct students as follows: "Before you write anything on your new question, read through what the other group(s) wrote. If you disagree with something they have written, put one line through that statement and write a response to it. Then begin to post your own additional thoughts."

Step 5: Continue rotating until all groups have responded to every question. Then facilitate a class discussion. All it takes to get great conversation going is a couple of lines drawn through comments of another color.

Twist: To cover a topic on which your students have background knowledge, try carousel to condense classroom study time. Pull out headings from the text to create your open-ended questions, ensuring that all necessary aspects of the topic will be covered during discussion.

Student perspective: "I'm more comfortable sharing my ideas in short, written statements first with my small group before the whole-class discussion. And it's fun!"

Common Core Connection

- Cite textual evidence
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.1
- Summarize complex concepts by paraphrasing
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.2
- Determine meanings of domain-specific words in context
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.4
- Synthesize information from various sources into a coherent understanding
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.9
- Work toward proficient independent understanding of text
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.11-12.10
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.2D

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

To generate thoughtful discussion during the Carousel, or any other time, ask open-ended questions that encourage students to think about context, not questions that have simple correct answers. For example, in an agriculture class, instead of asking which tools are used by horticulturists, ask how a horticulturist might handle a specific plant species in a specific environment.

Here are a few ways to generate thought-provoking, open-ended questions:

- 1. Use question stems from page 108.** You may even combine a few related questions in one prompt.
- 2. Ask "essential questions."** Essential questions are those "big idea" questions that make your field relevant and drive professionals. For our agriculture example, an essential question might be, "How is horticulture beneficial or damaging to the environment?"
- 3. Give context to "essential questions."** Use current events, local situations, or your students' personal experiences to make essential questions more specific. For example, the essential question above could become, "How might genetic engineering of affect our local economy?"
- 4. Pose problems to be solved.** Present a hypothetical situation as your Carousel prompt. "You've discovered an overabundance of nitrogen in a stream near your property. Is this a good or bad thing? What are some possible causes, and what should you do next?"