



INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION, INC.
PRESENTS:

Brainstreaming™

Active Learning Strategies
That Enhance Understanding And Facilitate Learning

INTEGRATING
THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING
AND
THE ART OF TEACHING

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Up and About

Corners

While sometimes used as an icebreaker, Corners can also be used to activate prior knowledge, investigate the perspectives and opinions of groups and individuals, stimulate the thinking of students engaged in small group or individual projects, or review material prior to a test.

The classroom is separated into two to five clearly designated areas with desks pushed aside or huddled together in order to allow students room to move about. A cafeteria, gym or other large space also works well. Label each area with A, B, C or 1,2,3, large enough to be easily seen by all students.

The teacher provides the students with categories or choices corresponding to each designated area. Each individual student then moves to the area that they believe most closely corresponds to her/his response. Discussion of student positioning may begin immediately following individual questions or may be held for the completion of the entire exercise.

This activity provides a chance for the entire class to discover by visible means what others think and believe. The movement from one area to another aids in retention of information and gives students an idea of how their perspectives compare with those of their classmates. Discussions that follow the various stages of this activity provide students with opportunities to listen to differing points of view, defend their own positions, clarify information and may - on occasion - change their understanding of a particular situation or subject.

Up and About (continuation)

Stand Up/Sit Down

This variation on the *Corners* activity can be used in less time and with somewhat less preparation, or in more crowded settings, as no particular space for movement is required.

All students stand at their desks. The teacher reads a series of questions or statements to the class. Those students who disagree (or answer "no") sit down. The activity continues either by having all students stand up before each question or statement is read or by having students simply shift to the opposite position if their response is negative.

As with all other Affinity Grouping activities, adequate wait-time is essential. Many students require a moment of reflection before "voicing" their opinion, especially if it differs significantly from that of their peers.

Cross the Room

This activity is similar to *corners* in that it provides students with a tangible means of assessing both their own and their classmates' understanding of content and/or their positions and perspectives on a variety of issues. *Cross the Room* can also be used as a true/false introduction or review.

Students form two groups that line up facing each other on opposite sides of the room. The teacher reads a series of statements. Those students who disagree with each statement cross the room and join the opposite group.

Whereas in *Corners*, students will find themselves in groups of like-minded individuals following each realignment, in *Cross the Room* - because only those who disagree move to a new position - students are likely to end up in mixed-opinion groups. This provides different opportunities for discussion. Students will be challenged to defend their positions and to understand and learn from the varied perspectives of others.

Up and About (continuation)

Line-Ups

In this activity, students are given an opportunity to share their opinion on an issue or situation simply by choosing where they stand on a continuum. The teacher reads a statement to the class and designates two places at opposite ends of the classroom: one for "strongly agree" and another for "strongly disagree." Students then line up between the two endpoints according to the degree of their response to the statement.

Follow-up activities may include asking each student down the line to make a statement about why they have chosen their particular position and/or breaking the line in half and doubling students up to share their opinions with someone whose position differs from their own. Reflective activities, which provide students with opportunities to share what they've learned from others or simply to discuss perspectives they hadn't considered, are a particularly appropriate follow-up to this and other Affinity Grouping activities.

Slide Rule

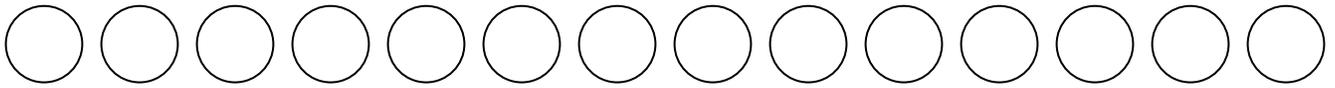
Students line up according to the degree to which they agree or disagree with a statement.

The line is then split in half. One half takes a step forward, turns around and "slides" down the line until they are positioned directly opposite the students from the other half of the line. Students who strongly agree will now be facing others who are somewhat neutral. Students who strongly disagree will also be facing relatively neutral peers. Students then share their points of view and supporting rationales with one another.

The line can also fold in half so that "strongly agree" now faces "strongly disagree". Students have one minute each to express their views. Before responding, the second student must restate or paraphrase what the first student said. This encourages all students to listen actively to the positions of their peers.

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Slide Rule



Strongly Agree _____ Strongly Disagree

Fig. 1

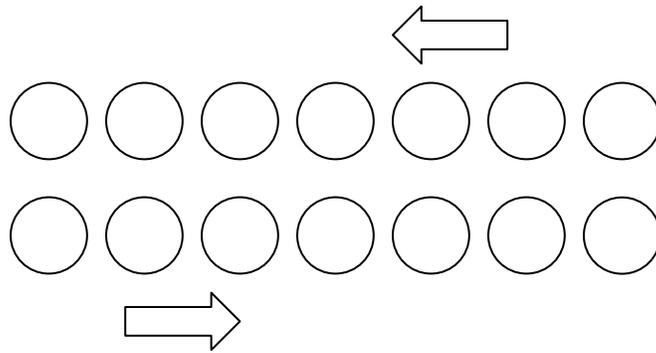
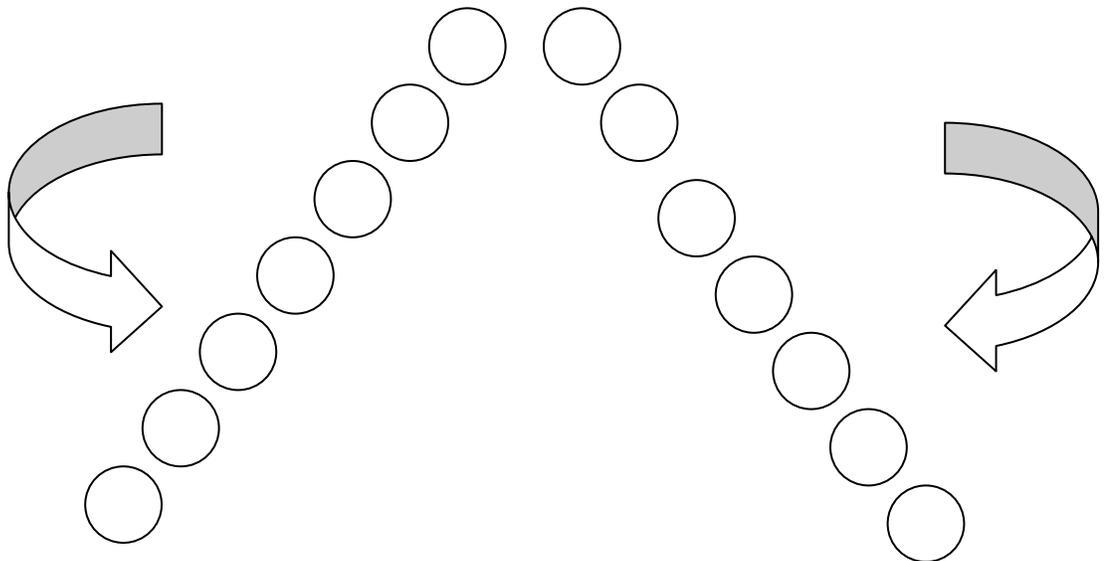


Fig. 2



Up and About (continuation)

Mirror Lines

Divide the class in half and have the two groups of students line up along opposite walls, facing one another.

From this point, students arrange themselves along a continuum according to the task or information provided by the teacher. The two groups may work simultaneously or in turn on similar or very different tasks.

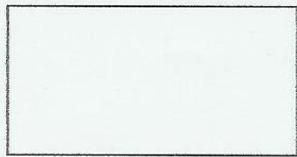
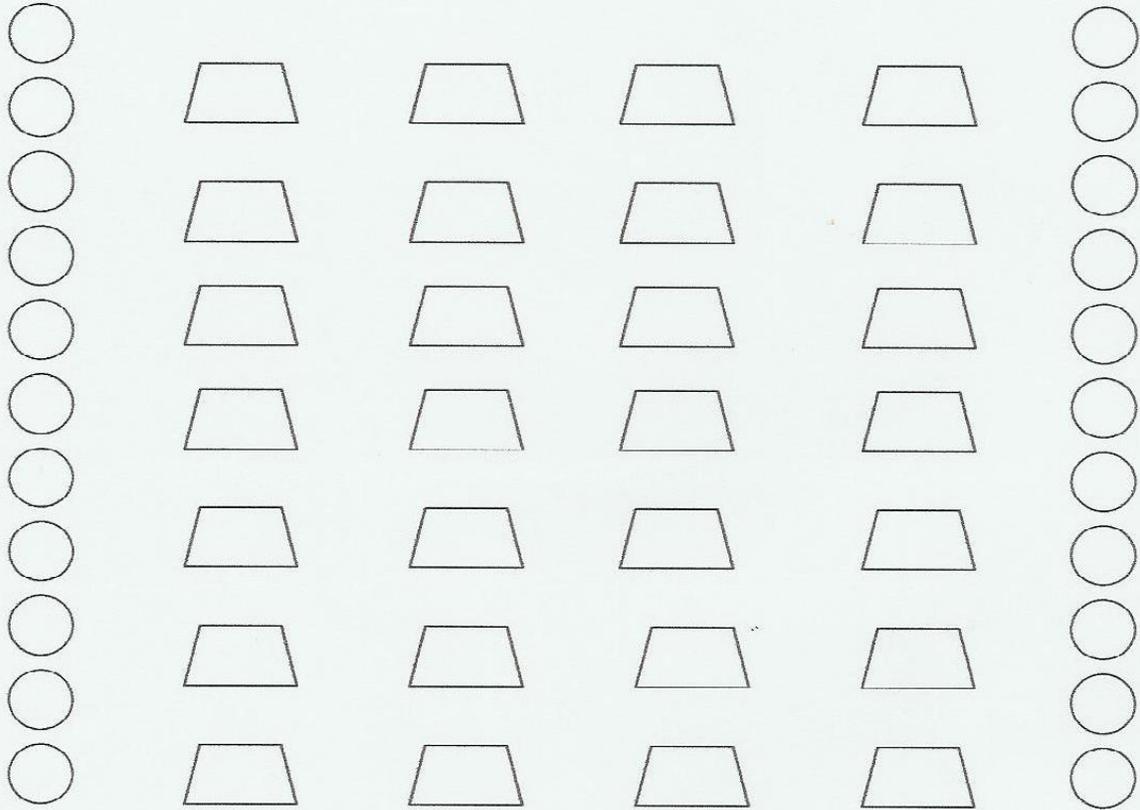
Throughout the process, the teacher is able to ask questions of one group in order to prompt observations and conclusions about what is happening in the group opposite them. Since one group of students can see the other clearly, they are better able to discuss the results of or differences in the line-ups, and can often provide valuable insight into the process by which the arrangements were achieved.

The task assigned might be to form a time line, order a set of events, or illustrate the degree to which students agree or disagree with a given statement. This arrangement also represents information in a way that helps to show approximate means or percentages.

Maypole

Half of the students form a circle facing outwards. The other half of the group forms a circle around the first group, facing the inner circle. Both circles make a quarter turn to the right. The teacher plays a selection of music and the two circles rotate in opposite directions. When the music stops, the students stop and turn to face those in the opposite circle. Students now interact with each other as per the teacher's instructions. The task can be an answer to a question or problem, an opinion, an explanation, a set of procedures, editing text, etc.

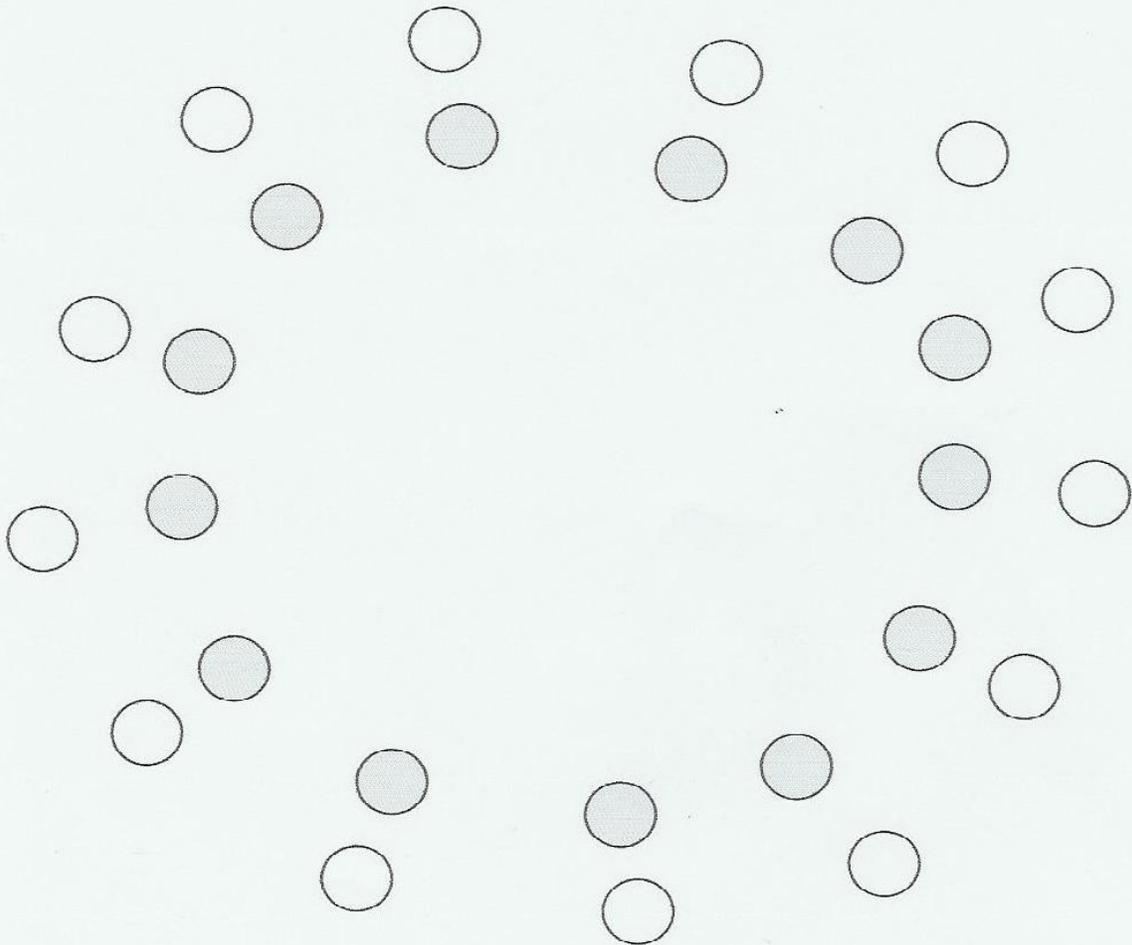
Mirror Lines



Front

Maypole:

Students: make half-turn to the right
walk to the music
stop when music ceases
turn to face student in opposite circle
share information



Move to the Center

All students form one large circle, facing toward the center.

The teacher then directs the students to, **"Move toward the center of this circle according to the degree to which you feel you are able to explain (define, categorize, solve, write about, sequence, demonstrate) ..."**

The teacher then names a certain term, concept, task or ability. The students respond by moving toward the center, charting the depth of their own understanding or recalling information to a certain degree of accuracy.

This activity is very useful for pre-assessment of student knowledge, understanding or misconceptions of upcoming content or the following unit of study.

It can also be used as a review for a test. As students walk toward the middle, they are self-assessing. The teacher can now see the confidence level with various concepts in the class as a whole, determine who will need help prior to the test and who can help them.

This activity also can be used to:

Choose different approaches to a problem

Reveal degrees of opinion

Discover individual talents and abilities

Make personal connections between students

Students that go directly to the center consider themselves peer experts. The teacher can then place a number of students from the perimeter around each peer expert. When all students in each group have gathered enough information from their peer expert, the students count off 1 to 4, 5, 6. All the ones will gather into a new group and teach each other what they learned from their own individual peer expert. The same procedure is followed by the twos, threes, fours, etc. This is called a "JIGSAW".

The teacher can now debrief the activity in the large group, successfully getting input from all students in the room.