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Differentiation

in Middle &
High School



Strategies
to Engage
All Learners





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Debate Team Carousel

What It Is:

A strategy for conducting structured debate or discussion through writing.

How It Works:

Sitting in groups of four, each student receives either a template or a blank piece of paper (which students fold to create four squares). The teacher poses a dilemma (e.g., “Did the main character really have a choice in this situation?”); an essential question (e.g., “Is a person’s health primarily determined by genetics?”); or a challenging issue (e.g., “Agree or disagree: voting should be mandatory.”), and the carousel begins:

1. In box 1, students respond to the question with a claim or belief and provide their reasoning or evidence. They then pass their paper to a group member.
2. In box 2 of the paper they receive from their fellow group member, students write something to strengthen the argument in box 1, regardless of whether they agree with what was said, using reasoning or evidence. They then pass the paper to another group member.
3. Students read what was written in boxes 1 and 2 of the paper they receive from the second group member and make a counterclaim in box 3 with supporting reasoning or evidence. They then pass the paper to the last group member.
4. Students read what was written in boxes 1–3 and add their two cents in box 4.
5. Students return the papers to their original owners and read their classmates’ responses to their own ideas.

What It's Good For:

- Introducing, exploring, synthesizing, or wrapping up an issue, concept, or topic.
- Pre-assessing students' thinking and argument-writing skills or understanding of a concept.
- Brainstorming or organizing ideas for argument-based writing.
- Analyzing a piece of writing (e.g., best argument made, place where voice most emerges).
- Warming up the class for Structured Academic Controversy.
- For math: working through homework problems that students got wrong, reviewing for a test, or strengthening mathematical reasoning skills.

Tips:

- Follow the carousel with whole-class, small-group, or partner discussion (e.g., offering opposing viewpoints, evaluating how one's thinking changed).
- Vary the prompts for each box to suit different needs or purposes (see Debate Team Carousel Examples, p. 134).
- Post guiding questions or clarifying prompts for each box while students are working.
- Have students initial each box they write in so that they (and you) know who wrote what.
- *For differentiation:* Assign different groups prompts of varying complexity. Although the topics up for debate may differ to stretch or support student thinking, the analytical skills exercised in the activity are the same for all students.

Debate Team Carousel Examples			
<p align="center">General Debate Team Carousel</p>		<p align="center">Math Debate Team Carousel</p>	
<p>1. Make a claim and explain your rationale. Say what you think, and why.</p>	<p>2. Add supporting evidence for the claim. Read your peer's claim. In this box, add something that would support that claim or make it stronger.</p>	<p>1. Solve the problem and show how you solved it.</p>	<p>2. Check the solution. Review the process and solution in box 1. Give two reasons you think it is correct or incorrect.</p>
<p>3. Make a counterclaim or provide evidence that challenges the claim. In this box, make a claim or provide evidence that argues against what is written in boxes 1 and 2.</p>	<p>4. Add your two cents. Read what is written in boxes 1, 2, and 3. Add your opinion and your reasoning in this box.</p>	<p>3. Provide another way of solving the problem. Solve this problem in a way that is different from the process used in box 1.</p>	<p>4. Detect errors and misconceptions. Note any errors or misconceptions you see in box 1, 2, or 3. If you don't see any, explain why you agree with what is written.</p>
<p align="center">Peer Review Debate Team Carousel</p>		<p align="center">Text Analysis Debate Team Carousel</p>	
<p>1. What do you believe is the strongest point in your essay? Why?</p>	<p>2. Add on! What would make this point even stronger?</p>	<p>1. What do you believe is the most powerful word, phrase, or line in this text, and why?</p>	<p>2. Give additional reasons why the word, phrase, or line in box 1 is the most powerful.</p>
<p>3. Counter! Identify and explain why this is not the strongest point.</p>	<p>4. Chime in! Read what is written in boxes 1, 2, and 3. Make suggestions for revision that take all of this feedback into account.</p>	<p>3. Push back against what is written in boxes 1 and 2. Explain why this is <i>not</i> the most powerful word, phrase, or line by pointing out weaknesses in the selection.</p>	<p>4. Suggest and explain another word, phrase, or line that is just as powerful as or more powerful than the one suggested in box 1.</p>

Source (Debate Team Carousel strategy and General Debate Team Carousel example): From *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner*, by P. Himmele & W. Himmele, 2011, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Copyright 2011 by ASCD.

Jigsaw

What It Is:

A cooperative learning strategy originally developed by Aronson (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997) in which each member of a small group becomes an expert on a different aspect of the content and shares his or her expertise with the other group members.

How It Works:

1. Students meet in home groups for task introduction and division of labor. Each home group member selects or is assigned one “piece” of the larger task “puzzle” (e.g., a chapter, a perspective, or a subtopic). These groups are usually heterogeneous.
2. Students reconfigure themselves into expert groups composed of students who share the same “puzzle piece.”
3. Expert groups work to compile information on their chapter, perspective, or subtopic. The teacher provides guiding questions, resources, graphic organizers, and any other necessary supports to facilitate the process.
4. Expert groups disband, and members return to their home groups. In the home groups, each member shares his or her respective piece of the puzzle, providing information, examples, and insights. The teacher supplies a graphic organizer to facilitate this sharing process.
5. When all home group members have finished sharing, the class engages in large-group discussion to address questions, seeming contradictions, and interesting observations.
6. The teacher collects evidence of home group understanding (e.g., via a synthesis question on the back of groups’ graphic organizers; one member from each group turns it in).
7. The teacher collects evidence of individual understanding (e.g., via an exit card).

What It’s Good For:

- Dealing with large amounts of information or varied perspectives.
- Increasing student investment through choice of puzzle piece and/or increased accountability in home groups.
- Designing and managing collaborative tasks.

Tips:

- Find and organize appropriate materials (e.g., readings, illustrations, websites) for each expert group; develop appropriate guiding questions and organizers for both home groups and expert groups.
- Model the process students should follow in each grouping configuration.
- Circulate vigilantly to catch misconceptions during both expert and home group work.
- Set and enforce time limits for each phase.
- Consider implementing Jigsaw in a block period (or two-period phase on a traditional schedule). This will give you a chance to conduct an understanding check (via Exit Slip or other method) of what students learned in their expert groups, so that they don't go to their home groups with misconceptions to pass on.
- Design the Jigsawed task at the outset of the planning process. This task should go beyond reporting to one another for the purpose of completing a graphic organizer. Any information-gathering tool should be a means to the end of completing a home group task that requires students to bring together and transfer what they've learned in their respective groups in a new way.
- *For differentiation:* It is possible to tailor expert group materials and tasks to meet the specific readiness of students (e.g., strategic choices of reading levels, number of facets addressed, complexity of material). If this is the goal, *assign* students to expert groups rather than letting them choose.

Classroom Example**Chaucer Jigsaw**

Task Introduction			
<p>We will be talking about narrators, characters, and authors in this Jigsaw. In your home groups, decide who wants to read each tale (see me for summaries/teasers). You will be responsible for individually reading your tale and answering questions while you read (I will supply resources to support your reading). In your expert groups, you will talk about what you learned from the text and then return to your home groups to share.</p>			
Expert Group 1 <i>The Knight's Tale</i>	Expert Group 2 <i>The Wife of Bath's Tale</i>	Expert Group 3 <i>The Miller's Tale</i>	Expert Group 4 <i>The Pardoner's Tale</i>
Expert Group Understanding Check			
<p>Before speaking with their home groups, students will reflect on their own reading and answer the questions within their section of the Jigsaw graphic organizer. Then they will move to their expert group and discuss their tale in detail, adding to the notes until they feel completely comfortable explaining the tale and its meaning to the home group.</p>			
Home Group Synthesis/Sharing Task			
<p>Students return to their home groups and explain how their tale, their narrator, and their characters depict society. They will summarize the tale and then answer the questions succinctly to their classmates. Then they will take notes on the appropriate tales that their classmates worked on. When students are finished sharing, they must reflect on what they've learned and answer the following prompts on poster paper: How are the narrators similar? How are they different? To what do you attribute these similarities and differences? What does examining multiple perspectives reveal about the nature of this society? What parallels can you find between this and our own society (school, local, national, or global)?</p>			
Whole-Class Discussion/Sharing			
<p>We will regroup after sharing and talk about how narrators can convey perspective on a society, as well as how an author (like Chaucer) can convey his opinions by using a narrator. We'll also talk about how specific characterization can affect how society is portrayed.</p>			
Home Group Accountability	Individual Understanding Check		
<p>Students will all turn in their graphic organizers to show what they've learned and processed from their classmates. Their notes and poster will tell me what we need to address further as a class.</p>	<p><i>Exit card:</i> Using an example from each tale, explain Chaucer's perspective on a societal issue of your choice.</p>		

Chaucer Jigsaw Graphic Organizer

	Teammate	Task Charge	Ideas/Answers
<i>The Knight's Tale</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the knight depict chivalry? • How does the narrator depict society? • What does this story reveal about the narrator? • How does the narrator's perspective compare with the author's perspective? • What tone have you heard within this story? Why? 	
<i>The Wife of Bath's Tale</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the narrator depict society? • What does this story reveal about the narrator? • How does the narrator's perspective compare with the author's perspective? • What tone have you heard within this story? Why? • What is the role of women in this story? 	
<i>The Miller's Tale</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the narrator depict society? • What does this story reveal about the narrator? • How does the narrator's perspective compare with the author's perspective? • Is this tale ironic? What's the tone? 	
<i>The Pardoner's Tale</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the narrator depict society? • What does this story reveal about the narrator? • What is the lesson you've learned from this story? Is it sincere? • What does this story reveal about Chaucer as the author? • Is this an honest story? 	

Source: Katherine Porzel, Deep Creek High School, Chesapeake, VA. Used with permission.