



Provide Opportunities for Success

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

In class discussions, outgoing and confident students who process language quickly often actively participate. Other students seldom participate due to shyness, uncertainty, or a slower language processing rate. To empower all students to engage successfully in discussions, try one of the following turn-taking strategies.

ROUND-ROBIN TURN-TAKING¹



Create a round-robin format so all students can participate successfully and equally in discussion. This predictable pattern enables students who process language slowly to predict when they will have to answer and better prepare their responses. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of particular students when assigning seats and determining where to begin the round robin.

For instance:

- When having students complete tasks where the possible responses diminish as turns are taken, start with the less capable students (e.g., “Name a noun in the following picture.”). This guarantees that their answer hasn’t already been presented.
- Conversely, when giving a more complicated task, having a stronger student respond first to model an appropriate answer can be helpful (e.g., “Recite the sentence pattern.”).

BALL PASSING²



Make possession of an object, such as a ball, the cue for answering a question or contributing to the discussion. While it may seem simple, it encourages students to focus on the discussion since they know they might be required to participate at any moment. This activity may be done with the teacher passing the object to selected students, or with the students passing it to one another.

Note: Prior to beginning ball-passing, ask students to write down their answers/ideas to ensure that those with expressive language weakness or slower language processing will be ready to participate successfully.

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