



Increase Student Engagement With Interactive Learning Structures

Interactive Learning Structures are purposeful activities that give students opportunities to engage with content in active (hands-on) and interactive (social) ways.



Interactive learning structures are fun, but they're much more than that. They are also ignitors of learning. By piquing students' interest in the material, these structures encourage maximum effort and strengthen students' academic and social-emotional skills. By letting students interact in positive ways with classmates, these structures help build a positive classroom community. And by giving you quick and easy ways to organize students' learning, they help you make the most of your most valuable and limited resource—time. The result is improved motivation and learning outcomes for every student you teach. Utilize the five different interactive learning structures below to get your students motivated and engaged!



3rd Grade



ILS	Description
Around-the-Circle Sharing	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None <p>How to Do It</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have students gather in a circle.2. Ask a question. For example: <i>What's one thing that surprised you today?</i> <i>What's one thing you'd like to learn more about when we start [topic]?</i> <i>What is your favorite [vacation destination, book, food, etc.]?</i>3. Each student shares out a brief response to the question. (Decide and let students know ahead of time whether they may pass.)
Around the Clock	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clock partner placemats• Timer• Pens <p>How to Do It</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name the learning goal2. Put a clock partner placemat in the center of each group. Students use the placemat to determine whether they are the 12 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 6 o'clock, or 9 o'clock person.3. Give students a topic for discussion and have the 12 o'clock teammate ask the first question (generated by the teacher or by the students). A student might ask: <i>"According to this article, how many humans impacted the Great Lakes?"</i>4. Teammates answer clockwise.5. The 3 o'clock teammate asks another question about the topic. Teammates again answer clockwise.6. Repeat until every person has asked a question. Reinforce positive behavior.
Carousel	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chart paper with heading <p>How to Do It</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Post pieces of chart paper with labels or titles (such as the different types of teacher language) around the room or on tables or desks.2. Divide students into small groups. Designate a scribe for each group and give a different colored marker to each scribe.3. Each group will visit a chart and brainstorm ideas related to the topic; the scribe writes these ideas on the chart paper.4. At your signal, groups rotate to the next chart paper and add to the ideas listed. (Gauge the amount of time needed at each chart. To keep things moving, allow shorter times as the process continues.) Continue until all of the groups have contributed ideas to all of the charts.



ILS	Description
Colored Dots	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chart paper• Markers• Colored dots <p>How to Do It</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Post three to five charts around the room. Have colored dot stickers available at each chart.2. Label each chart with a subgoal of the main goal or subtopic of the main topic.3. Invite students to add their ideas to each chart.4. Students circulate and read the charts. At each chart, they use three stickers to “vote” for the ideas they think are most important. They can use their three stickers in any combination to show how strongly they view an idea (from one sticker per idea to all three stickers for just one idea).5. Bring the whole group back together. Tally up the votes, and use the results to guide a larger discussion.
Concentric Circles	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• None <p>How to Do It</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Name the learning goal.2. Have students count off by twos. Ones form an inner circle facing out, and twos form an outer circle facing in. (Or, students form two lines facing each other.) Each two should be facing a one, forming a pair.3. State a question or topic for discussion:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What are some ways to resolve conflicts with peers?</i>Give students some think time.4. Partners take turns speaking, briefly exchanging ideas. Allow no more than 1–2 minutes total for this back-and-forth.5. Students in the outside circle move one person to the left to form new pairs. (Or, students in one line move up one person with the first person in line moving to the end of the line.) Remind students about safe movement:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>How might you stay in your personal space when moving in your circle [or line]?</i>6. New partners discuss the same question or topic, or a new one that you pose. Repeat as time allows. Reinforce positive behavior:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I noticed your transitions were quick and efficient. You held productive discussions with each of your partners.</i>