

Background: Rotational Graffiti

Introduction

Rotational Graffiti is an activity that can be used as a group brainstorming strategy to tap into students' prior knowledge at the beginning of a lesson.

Procedure

1. The teacher assigns students to pre-selected or random teams of 2 to 4.
2. The teacher distributes to each team a sheet of poster paper or large sheet of newsprint with a unique heading and enough same-coloured pens for each member. Pen colours are different for each team. The teacher has written an instruction on each piece of newsprint such as "Write everything you know about energy" or "What's in your kitchen and how does it work, Write or Draw". The headings are different for each team. The heading might be a key word, a statement, or a question. Repeated headings may be subtitled by "write" or "draw." For example, one poster might be headed "Heat – Write" and another "Heat – Draw."
3. Teams then either write or draw as many responses, ideas, or concepts about the topic as they can think of. This is done for a short, predetermined amount of time (1 or 2 minutes).
4. Teams then pass their sheet to the next group and receive a new sheet from another group in clockwise rotation. Students reflect on what is written on the sheet by the previous groups and adds to and/or modifies the work.
5. Sheets circulate until each team has placed its responses on each sheet. Time may be shortened (to 30 seconds). Eventually, each team gets its original sheet back with a number of ideas written down or drawn.
6. The sheets are posted on the walls around the classroom. The teacher may choose to discuss the ideas with the students by conducting a "Gallery Walk" around the classroom to view each poster and initiate a discussion about it in order to bring student ideas and prior knowledge to the surface to focus on the lesson that follows. Teachers may opt to use only student questions as described in item 7, below, instead of the Gallery Walk.
7. Students may be asked to write any questions that come to mind on paper. These questions may be grouped and summarized by the teacher in order to initiate a class discussion in the following class.

References

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2004). *Senior 3 Current Topics in the Sciences (30S): A Framework of General and Specific Learning Outcomes*. Activating Prior Knowledge 1.11.

Background: Rotational Graffiti was written by Don Metz and Stephen Klassen, University of Winnipeg. This publication reflects only the views of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

