INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Sweet Talk

Sweet Talk is a student grouping strategy in which students create their own groups by selecting preferred items from a box and then respond to prompts that relate to their choices. This grouping strategy can be used in any subject area.

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SWEET TALK

Summary

Sweet Talk is a flexible grouping strategy that works especially well as an icebreaker activity. Students choose one of several different kinds of items (candy, manipulatives, etc.) from a box or tray that indicate a personal preference and then form groups based on the kind of item they selected. Sweet Talk places the locus of control on students, not the teacher.

Procedure

This activity works with any items, not just candy.

1. Put 4 to 6 of each item type in a box. Have at least as many items as students.

2. Each student picks one item. Then they find others with the same item to form groups.

3. Assign each group a discussion prompt based on their item.

4. Give groups time to discuss their prompt.

5. Students switch to new groups with different items and discuss the same prompt again.

Repeat steps 2-5 as needed.

Alternate strategy application: Make and laminate cards with several category images on each card. Have each student choose a card. To group students, ask one to name one of the categories; students pair up with others who have the same item in that category.

Lukas Kiessling, Jonas Radbruch, Sebastian Schaube (2022) Self-Selection of Peers and Performance. Management Science 68(11): 8184-8201.