INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES



Affinity Process

This strategy engages students in organizing ideas into themes to summarize content or find points of agreement. Students respond to a prompt and work in groups to organize the responses into themes.

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AFFINITY PROCESS

Summary

The Affinity Process strategy allows students to synthesize large amounts of information by organizing it into themes. This strategy ensures every student has a voice in the decision-making process as they create connections among similar ideas. First, the teacher provides students with a prompt that can result in multiple answers. After students respond, they work together to group similar answers until all ideas are arranged in themes. These themes can be ranked based on the number of similar ideas they contain. This is great for brainstorming ideas or creating classroom consensus.

Procedure

1. Provide students with a prompt (e.g., "What is an example of a living thing?" or "What makes someone a good writer?").
2. Ask students to answer this prompt on a sticky note. If students provide multiple answers, each answer should have its own sticky note.
3. Pair up students and have them pool their sticky notes. Invite pairs to find and group similar answers together, then name the categories into which the answers are sorted. For example, students may pair the answers "grizzly bear" and "corgi" into a category they name "mammals."
4. Combine groups and have students combine categories. This might involve pairing pairs, grouping tables together, or similar groupings. Repeat until the whole class forms one large group with an agreed-upon set of themes.

Adapted from Dam, R., & Siang, T. (2019). Affinity Diagrams – Learn how to cluster and bundle ideas and facts. www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/affinity-diagrams-learn-how-to-cluster-and-bundle-ideas-and-facts