

Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face

Purpose

This protocol provides a method for sharing information and gaining multiple perspectives on a topic through partner interaction. It can be used for reviewing and sharing academic material, as a personal “ice breaker,” or as a means of engaging in critical thinking about a topic of debate.

Materials

- Questions to be asked between student partners, prepared in advance

Procedure

1. Have students find a partner and stand back-to-back with him or her, being respectful of space.
2. Give students a question or statement that they will share a response to with a partner.
3. Have students think about what they want to share and how they might best express themselves.
4. When you say, “Face-to-face,” have students turn, face their partners, and decide who will share first if you have not indicated that a certain person should go first.
5. Have students listen carefully when their partner is speaking and be sure to make eye contact with him or her.
6. When given the signal, students should find a new partner, stand back-to-back, and wait for the new question, statement, etc.
7. This may be repeated for as many rounds as needed/appropriate.

Variations

- Partners may be assigned.
- Partners may also stay together for the length of the protocol.
- The class may stand in two concentric circles with one circle rotating to a new back-to-back and face-to-face partner for each new question or prompt.
- The protocol may be repeated several times in a row with the same partners to give students multiple opportunities to check their understanding and receive information from their partners.