Corners

Corners is a strategy developed by Dr. Spencer Kagan. It introduces into the teaching-learning dynamic the concept of “forced choice.” Students are presented with a question. They must select from a list of possible answers posted around the classroom. The student must select which answer they deem most accurate.

This breaks the typical class routine of one student answering at a time because all of the students in the class can be asked to stand by the corner of their choice simultaneously. The random nature of who will stand automatically deeply engages every student in finding a solution to the question in class demonstrated to be a powerful factor in improving student responses to questions.

STEPS

1. Teacher poses a problem or asks an open-ended question to which there may be a variety of answers.
2. Teacher gives the students ‘think time’ and directs them to think about the question and select an answer from one the “corners” posted around the room.
3. Following the ‘think time’ students move to the corner they have decided is the best answer to the question posed by the teacher.
4. At the “corner” the students may share their ideas with another partner or with the whole class.

APPLICATIONS

- Before a lesson or topic to orient the class (previous knowledge etc).
- Any time, to check understanding of material.
- At the end of a teacher explanation, demonstration etc, to enable students to cognitively process the material.
- To break up a long period of sustained activity.
- Whenever it is helpful to share ideas.

ADVANTAGES

Corners has many advantages over the traditional questioning structure. It forces all students to develop answers. Who responds to which question and in what order is left up to the teacher.

Recommendation: Have each student write their answer on a piece of paper before they get up and move to the corner they have chosen. This will hold each child individually accountable to their answer and not change their answer.