Instructional Strategies That Promote Collaboration in the Classroom

Graffiti Placemat

This structure facilitates brainstorming. Students work individually to record their ideas, responses, or insights and then reach a consensus with the group on common ideas. The graffiti placemat is especially effective for activating prior learning at the beginning of a unit or lesson or for reviewing content or concepts at the end of a lesson or unit.

Directions:

1. Give students a question, statement, or issue to which they will respond.
2. Each student takes a different-colored marker and writes for a short time (90 seconds).
3. The graffiti may be used in a number of ways.

---The teacher may call time and ask students to categorize or review the responses, looking for common ideas or themes.

---Students can share their thoughts and write a summary statement in the center box

1. Each group reads, discusses, summarizes, and presents its ideas. Here are some examples:

---A math problem could be put on the overhead or smart board at the start of class, and each student would solve the problem in his/her space. Then students would share solutions with the group.

---Students might brainstorm everything they know about a particular topic (worms, Canada, ecosystems). Then the group could come up with a “big” question related to the topic in the center box. These questions could become part of the essential questions in the unit.