

CAROUSEL BRAINSTORMING

While I was in Texas this summer, Madalyn Cooke, who teaches 5th and 6th grade language arts and social studies at Mitchell Intermediate in The Woodlands, shared with our class the cooperative learning strategy of “Carousel Brainstorming” (CB). She used CB as a follow-up activity to a unit on World War II.

1. First, she picked several major concepts from the unit, such as, Allies, Axis Powers, Battle of Britain, and Pearl Harbor. She wrote each concept at the top of a sheet of flip chart paper and taped the paper on the wall.

2. Then, she divided her class into groups of three or four and had each group go to one of the concept “stations”. She gave each group a different color of marker with which to write.

3. For one minute, the groups wrote down everything they knew or had learned about the topic, e.g., What it is? Why it is important? Who were the key players? What events were important?, etc. They were allowed to use notes.

4. After one minute, they moved to the next station, read what others had written, and added information or made corrections using the original colored marker.

5. She continued this process until each group was back to their first station. Then, they read what the other groups had added.

Madalyn said the students were amazed at all they had learned. As a continuation she could have the students organize the information in a power map and write a summary.

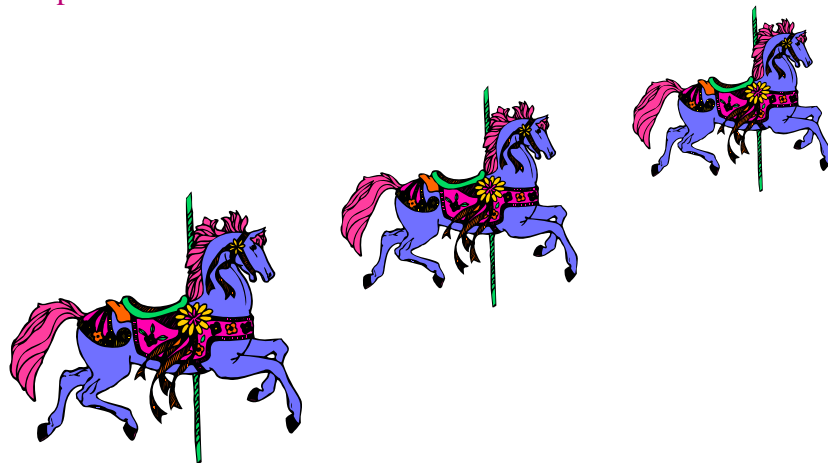
This strategy is not only a good activity for reviewing, but also for bringing out background knowledge. Have students in groups write everything they think they know about the key concepts of a unit. As you progress through the lesson, reading, looking at videos, doing labs, etc., periodically stop and let the groups make the rounds of the concept stations adding information and correcting misinformation.

Notice how this one strategy, plus the extensions mentioned, incorporates

- (1) background knowledge
- (2) active learning
- (3) metacognition
- (4) writing
- (5) discussion
- (6) organizing

These are the key elements of the CRISS learning philosophy.

We thank Madalyn for sharing a new “CRISS” strategy, and we encourage others “out there” to send us their ideas and adaptations for publication.



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