

# Classbuilding Strategies

## 1. Corners

As students move to corners of the room, they discover there are a variety of points of view on an issue. They understand points of view different from their own and stretch their own way of thinking.

### Photography Corner

#### 1. Teacher Announces Corners

Announce the alternatives for each corner of the room. "If you were to be an artist, which of these four professions would you choose: Photographer, Painter, Sculptor, or Graphic Designer."

#### 2. Students Think & Write

Give students a bit of silent think time to make their choice. Have them write the name of their corner on a slip of paper. "Without discussing with other students, write the name of your corner on a slip of paper."

#### 3. Students Go to Corners

Tell students to go to their selected corners. "Walk to your corner of the room and find a partner to talk with, someone not on your team."

#### 4. Pairs Discuss

Have pairs in each corner discuss the reasons for their preferences. "In pairs, discuss why you chose the corner you did." Select a few students from each corner to share what his or her partner shared.

## 2. Find-Someone-Who

Students circulate through the classroom trying to "Find Someone Who" knows and can explain a worksheet problem.

### 1. Students Mix & Pair

With worksheets in hand, students circulate through the room until they find a partner. "When you find a partner, see if he or she can answer a question on your sheet. If so, write the answer in your own words on the Find-Someone-Who form, and then have your partner sign your form to show he or she agrees."

### 2. Student Questions Partner

One student asks his/her partner one question on the worksheet. The partner shares the answer if he or she knows it. Then the student writes the answer in his/her own words.

### 3. Partner Checks

The partner checks to see that the answer is written correctly. If the partner agrees with the written answer, he or she signs off on the answer.

### 4. Reverse Roles

Students switch roles. The student who asked the first question tries to answer his or her partner's question.

**Finish the form:** Students mix and pair again with a new partner each time until they finish the Find-Someone-Who form.

## 5. Inside/Outside Circle

Students stand in anticipation, waiting for the teacher to call a number. They begin to rotate, wondering which classmate will be their next partner for sharing or problem solving.

### 1. Students Form Circles

Students stand in two concentric circles around the classroom. Students in the inside circle face out, facing a partner standing in the outside circle.

### 2. Student Shares with Partner

Have students from the inside circle share something with their partners. "Inside circle students discuss what you did this Saturday afternoon with your partner. You have one minute."

### 3. Reverse Roles

Students switch roles. The outside circle students now share while their partners listen. "Outside circle students, it is your turn to share for one minute."

### 4. Students Rotate

Have students rotate to work with new partners. "Everyone in the class face your partner. Now, make a right face and count out loud as you all rotate four people ahead to a new partner."

**Repeat:** Students discuss different topics each time they rotate to different partners.

## 6. Line-Ups

Students find they each occupy a unique position in the class, and the class can see at a glance where everyone stands.

### 1. Teacher Describes the Line

Announce a dimension upon which students vary. "Line up by height from shortest to tallest."

### 2. Students Line Up

Students position themselves in the line-up by finding where they stand relative to their classmates.

### 3. Pairs Discuss

Students pair up with the student next to them to discuss. "Would you like to be taller or shorter? What do you like best and least about your height?"



# 2S Create a Cooperative Caring Classroom!

## 3. Formations

Students signal each other into position as they coordinate efforts to sculpt a challenging class formation.

### 1. Teacher Announces Formation

The teacher directs the class to hold hands or stand to form a shape. The teacher may show the students a picture of the shape, or may give the instructions orally. "Form a capital letter 'A' by standing as a class in the shape of one large capital 'A.'"

### 2. Students Create Formation

As a class, students work together to become the formation. Students position themselves in the classroom to stand in one large capital letter "A."



## 4. Guess-the-Fib

The class becomes a game show as students sharpen their wits, have some healthy laughs, and learn little known facts about classmates or the curriculum.

### 1. Students Write Three Statements

Have each student write three statements. "We are going to play Guess-the-Fib, so everyone needs to come up with three statements about themselves. Two of the statements are unbelievable facts and one statement is a believable fib."

### 2. One Student Reads Statements

One student is randomly selected to read his/her statements to the class.

### 3. Teammates Discuss Statements

Teams put their heads together to reach consensus on which one of the three statements is the fib. "Put your heads together as a team and decide together which one is the fib. For your team to vote you must reach consensus."

### 4. Teammates Guess

The student presenting the statement asks how many teams guessed statements one, two, and three. Teams respond by holding up a slate or showing one, two, or three fingers. Teams which did not reach consensus do not respond.

**Play again:** The class repeats steps two through four so that a number of students present their statements.



## 7. Mix-Freeze-Group

The classroom is bursting with energy as students "Mix" around the room, "Freeze" in their tracks, and frantically "Group" to avoid falling into the dreaded "Lost and Found."

### 1. Students "Mix"

Students stand and push in their chairs. Then they "Mix." "We are going to play "Mix-Freeze-Group. Everyone get up and start to mix through the classroom. Make rapid right turns and left turns, and about faces. Spread out around the whole room. Keep moving until I call, "Freeze.""

### 2. Students "Freeze"

Call "Freeze," to have students stop mixing.

### 3. Students "Group"

Provide a clue so students know the size group to form. Students rush to hold hands forming groups. "How many syllables are there in 'Spring Vacation?' Group!" Students rush to form groups of four (corresponding to the four syllables in "Spring Vacation.") Students who don't form a group of four for the round become the "Lost and Found."

**Play again:** Play again with another question.



## 8. Mix-N-Match

Students excitedly "Mix" about the classroom trading cards, then search for a partner with a "Match."

### 1. Students "Mix"

After every student gets a card, they get out of their seats and mix through the classroom. As students pass one another "mixing," they trade cards.

### 2. Students "Freeze"

After students mix for a bit, call "Freeze." Students freeze.

### 3. Students "Match"

When the teacher calls "Match," it is time to find a partner with a matching card. Students mill about the room actively seeking another student with the matching card. When they find each other, they move to the outside of the classroom.

**Play again:** After all students have found their perfect match, call "mix" and they start again.



1 (800) WEE CO-OP

© 1999 Kagan

## 9. Similarity Groups

Students move about the room forming groups based on similarities. They discover hidden qualities of their classmates, similar to their own.

### 1. Teacher Announces Topic

Announce any topic on which students might group. Guide students' thinking by providing imagery about the topic. "Think about your favorite dessert. (Long pause.) Think about the last time you had the dessert. (Pause again.) Where were you? How did it taste as you took your first bite? Write down your favorite dessert."

### 2. Students Form Groups

Students get up and move about the class, grouping with those with a similar response. "When I say 'Go,' I want you to get up and form groups. Group with students who like the same or a similar dessert."

### 3. Pairs Discuss

Have students break into pair discussion within their similarity groups. "Pair up with your closest neighbor, not someone on your team, and discuss what you most like about the dessert."



## 11. Who-Am-I

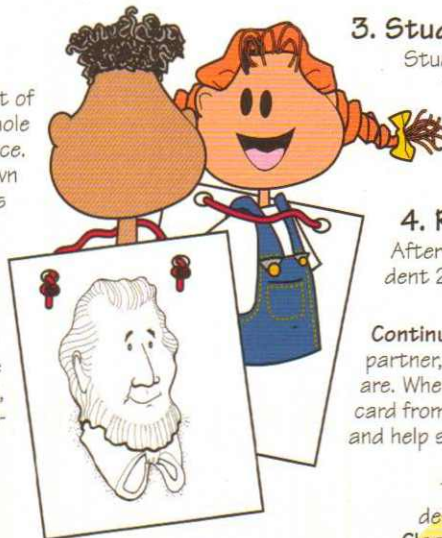
Students wonder who they are. They mingle about the classroom questioning classmates, attempting to uncover their hidden identity.

### 1. Cards Placed on Backs

Pictures or names are placed on students' backs. A bit of tape will do. If large laminated pictures are used, a hole punch and yarn may be used to create a picture necklace. Care is taken to make sure students don't see their own picture. Cards can be given to students and students can place them on a partner's back so no one knows their own identity.

### 2. Students Mix & Pair

Students walk around the room until they find a partner. Partners check each other's back. "Walk around the room until you find a partner. After you shake hands, look at each others' pictures. Then, take turns, each asking three yes/no questions."



### 3. Student Questions Partner

Student 1 asks his/her partner three yes/no questions trying to find out who is on his/her back. Tony, who has Abe Lincoln on his back, asks his partner: "1) Am I a person? 2) Am I a man? 3) Am I still alive today?"

### 4. Reverse Roles

After Student 1 has asked three yes/no questions, Student 2 asks three yes/no questions.

**Continue playing:** Students mix and pair up with a new partner, continuing the process until they guess who they are. When students guess who they are, they move their card from their backs to their fronts. They become helpers and help students who haven't uncovered their identity.

These classbuilding strategies are described in detail in the Kagan's book, **Classbuilding**. The book includes hints and variations for each strategy, how to use each strategy for classbuilding and across the curriculum, and ready-to-use reproducible activities.

To order, call  
1 (800) WEE CO-OP.

## 10. Stir-the-Class

The classroom is transformed into a supportive think tank as students move from one huddle to another, sharing ideas, congratulating each other, and building new ideas.

### 1. Students Stand in Groups

Students stand in groups of four. The groups stand in a circle around the classroom. In each group the students stand side-by-side in a line, facing the teacher in the middle of the circle. "We are going to do Stir-the-Class. Each team needs to stand together around the room. Let's form one large circle of teams."



### 2. Students Huddle

Ask a question or present a problem. Have students turn to face each other with hands on each others' shoulders, as in a football huddle. "What are some possible themes for our class party, and why? Huddle in your groups to discuss. When everyone has something to share, unhuddle and form a line so I know you are ready to share."

### 3. Students Rotate

When the groups all unhuddle, call a number and ask the students with that number to take a step forward. Then have those students rotate to a new group. "All 'threes,' take a step forward, make a right face, and rotate three ahead to join a new group."

### 4. Huddle Again & Praise

Have students huddle again with their new group and share their ideas. Have students show appreciation for their new member. "Huddle again with your new group. Find out from your newest member what ideas were shared in the last huddle. If you like the ideas you can each give him or her a pat on the back to show appreciation. After that, unhuddle and wait for a new question to discuss."

