



Social Awareness

ABOUT CENTER FOR THE COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

The Caring School Community (CSC) program is a nationally recognized, research-based program for grades K–6 that builds classroom and schoolwide community while developing students' social and emotional (SEL) skills and competencies.

Teambuilder, Favorite Things

By: The Caring School Community

Favorite Things

Lesson Purpose

Students:

- Learn and practice “Turn to Your Partner”

The Lesson

1 ASSIGN PARTNERS AND GATHER IN A CIRCLE

Randomly assign partners and make sure they know each other’s names. (For suggestions on assigning partners, see the *CSC Overview*, p. 25.) Explain that the students will get into a circle again today. Remind them how to get into a circle, as well as your expectations for how they will move. Have them move to the circle with partners sitting together. If necessary, have them return to their desks and practice the procedure again.

2 TEACH “TURN TO YOUR PARTNER”

Tell the students that today, and throughout the year, you will stop and ask them to turn to a partner and talk. Explain that talking to a partner gives everyone a chance to share their ideas with someone before sharing with the class. (For more information about the role of cooperative structures in social development, see the *CSC Overview*, p. 19.)

Materials

- Space for the class to sit in a circle



Cooperative structures such as “Turn to Your Partner” increase students’ participation, make students accountable, and create a cooperative environment in the classroom. Use cooperative structures to increase student interaction during lessons across the school day.

BEGINNING-OF-YEAR LESSON



Establish a specific signal for calling the students back from “Turn to Your Partner.” A raised hand allows the students to finish what they are saying before turning back to face you.

Explain the “Turn to Your Partner” procedure. (For example, “When I say ‘Turn to your partner,’ you will turn to face your partner and start talking about a question that I ask. When I raise my hand, you will finish what you’re saying, raise your own hand, and turn back to face me.”) Explain that you expect the students to listen carefully when their partner is talking and to take turns talking and listening.

3 MODEL “TURN TO YOUR PARTNER”

With a student acting as your partner, model turning to face each other. Ask the students to turn and face their partner. Give the signal, and have partners turn back and face you. If necessary, have the students practice the procedure again.

Again, model “Turn to Your Partner” with your student partner, and this time, add sharing. Turn to your partner and say your first and last names. Have your partner say her first and last names. Give the signal, and both turn back to the class.



Having the students actually turn to face each other during “Turn to Your Partner” increases the students’ engagement with one another and helps them actively listen to one another.

4 USE “TURN TO YOUR PARTNER” TO TALK ABOUT FAVORITE THINGS

Have the class practice “Turn to Your Partner.” Ask:

Q What is your favorite color?

Say “Turn to your partner” and have the students turn and tell each other their favorite color. After a moment, give the signal to bring the students’ attention back to you. Have a few students share their favorite color with the class.

Practice “Turn to Your Partner” again by asking:

Q What is your favorite animal?



Turn to Your Partner

Class Meeting Lessons

Say “Turn to your partner” and follow the same procedure as before. This time, after partners share, have a few volunteers share their partner’s favorite animal with the class.

Continue to use “Turn to Your Partner” to have the students discuss other favorite things with their partner and the group. You might ask:

Q What is your favorite fruit?

Q What is your favorite toy?

5 REFLECT ON THE ACTIVITY

Ask and briefly discuss questions such as:

Q What did your partner do that helped you work well together?

Q What did you do that helped you and your partner work well together?

Q What could you do differently the next time you work with a partner?

Let the students know they will have many chances to practice “Turn to Your Partner” with other classmates this year.

Explain how you would like the students to move from the circle. Adjourn the activity and have them return to their seats. If necessary, have them practice the procedure until they are able to move in an orderly way.