

# Classmates as Language Learning Allies: Activities to Encourage Student-to-Student Interaction

To learn a language, you must use the language, and practicing with friends and classmates is a great way to do this.

In this webinar, we will:

- discuss how to structure pair and group work activities to increase student participation in language learning activities.
- explore fun icebreaker activities, the “think-pair-share” principle, and different strategies for grouping students.
- demonstrate how pair and group activities can be an enjoyable and interactive way for students to see classmates as people who can help them improve their English skills.



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# Classmates as **Language Learning Allies**: Activities to Encourage Student-to-Student Interaction

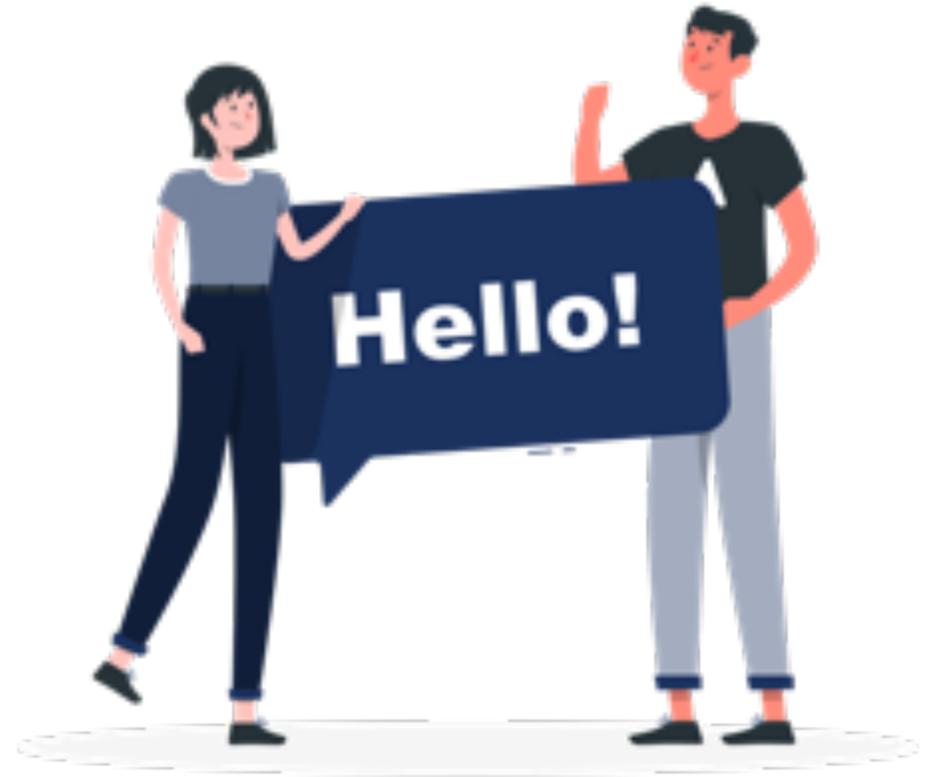


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# Checking In

How are *you*  
doing today?



# The Joy of Student Discussion

What a great sound!



# Webinar Outline

- Defining “interaction” and its importance
- Using “icebreakers” to get students talking
- Promoting pair and group work with “Think-Pair-Share”
- Sharing fun activity ideas
- Using different strategies for grouping students



# *Critical* Questions



What does the term  
“**interaction**” mean?

Can you give an  
example?

# “Interaction” Defined

When students are communicating naturally and focused on *sharing messages and information* and not on grammar and proper form (Krashen, 1981)



# More Than Grammar and Vocabulary

Repeat after  
me...



I am...

You are...

He/She/It is... + Adjective

We are...

They are...

# *Critical* Question



Why is “**interaction**”  
important in the  
English classroom?

# The Importance of Interaction

1. To learn a language, you must use it
2. More like “real life” use of language
3. Shows that mistakes are a good thing and how to recover from them
4. Makes the most of class time
5. A **FUN** way to build relationships in class



# Tips for Promoting Interaction

## Tip #1

Create a sense of community in your classroom.



# Instructor Introductions

*A Little More About Me*



# Student Introductions



# *Critical* Question



What are some other good questions you can ask to **get to know** someone?

# The Importance of Preparation

**Note:** Be sure to give students some time to think before asking them to share!



# Community Building

Those who want to  
go fast, go alone.

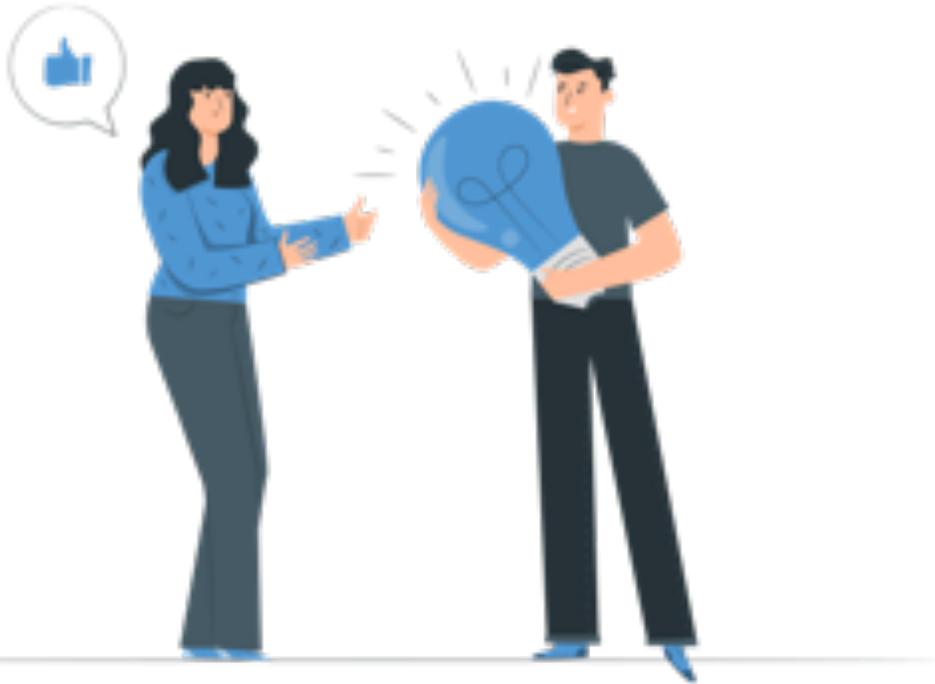
Those who want to  
go far, go together!



# Tips for Promoting Interaction

## Tip #2

Using “icebreakers”  
to encourage fun  
interaction.



# *Critical* Question



What is an  
“icebreaker”?  
Can you give an  
example?

# Icebreakers

- Short, fun activities designed to get students in the mood to talk and interact more
- They help “break” through student hesitation to speak (the ice)
- Encourages more participation later in class



# “Find Someone Who...”

1. Each student gets a question sheet.
2. The instructor gives them time to read the information they need to find.
3. Then, by asking questions, they try to find as many classmates as possible to answer the question.
4. The person who can get the most in 5 minutes wins!

# “Find Someone Who...”

Find someone who loves basketball...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who thinks computer games are a sport...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who loves running...  <b>Name:</b>
Find someone who is good at soccer...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who thinks fishing is a sport...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who hates to exercise...  <b>Name:</b>
Find someone who likes watching American Football...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who knows what sport LeBron James plays...  <b>Name:</b>	Find someone who has played or watched a game of baseball...  <b>Name:</b>

# “Find Someone Who...”

## Find Someone Who...

Loves basketball	Thinks computer games are a sport	Loves running
Is good at soccer	Thinks fishing is a sport	Hates to exercise
Likes watching American football	Knows what sport LeBron James plays	Has played or watched baseball



Student Note Sheet

# “Find Someone Who...”

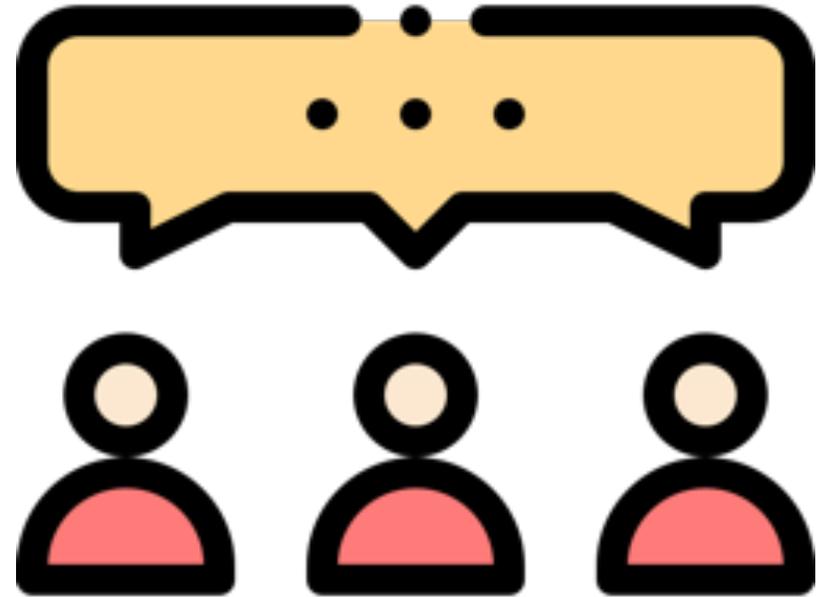


Find someone who loves running...

**Name:** Xiao

# “Guiding the Artist”

1. The teacher should select a picture, but don't show it to the class!
2. Put students into groups of three or four.
3. One person in each group should volunteer to be the “artist”; everyone else will be a “guide.”



# “Guiding the Artist”

4. Once each group has an **artist**, that person **must turn around** so they cannot see the teacher
5. The **teacher** will **show the picture** to the rest of the class so the guides can see it
6. The **guides** must **describe the picture** to the artist to help them draw. They can use gestures but must speak in English.



# “Guiding the Artist”



**How would  
you describe  
this picture?**

# “Guiding the Artist”



# Tips for Promoting Interaction

## Tip #3

Encouraging  
interaction with  
“Think-Pair-Share”

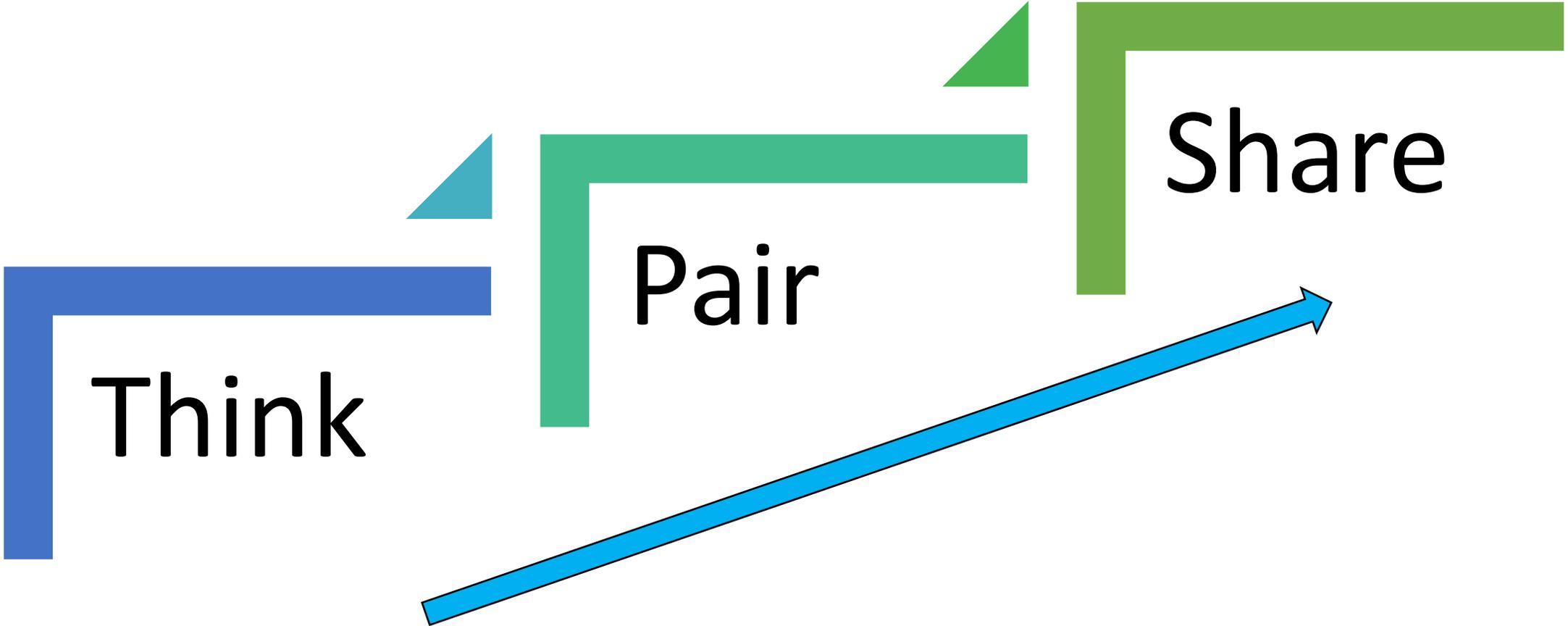


# *Critical* Questions



How do you like to  
**group students?**  
Let us know your ideas!

# A Helpful Grouping Strategy



# Step One: Open-ended Question



I think that a good athlete should be...

A good athlete must...

# Step Two: Think

THINK



# Step Three: Pair

PAIR



# Teacher Monitoring & Scribing

As students **discuss in pairs**, the **teacher** should monitor the conversations by **listening and taking notes** (known as “**scribing**”).



# *Critical* Questions



What should the teacher **listen for** during pair discussions?

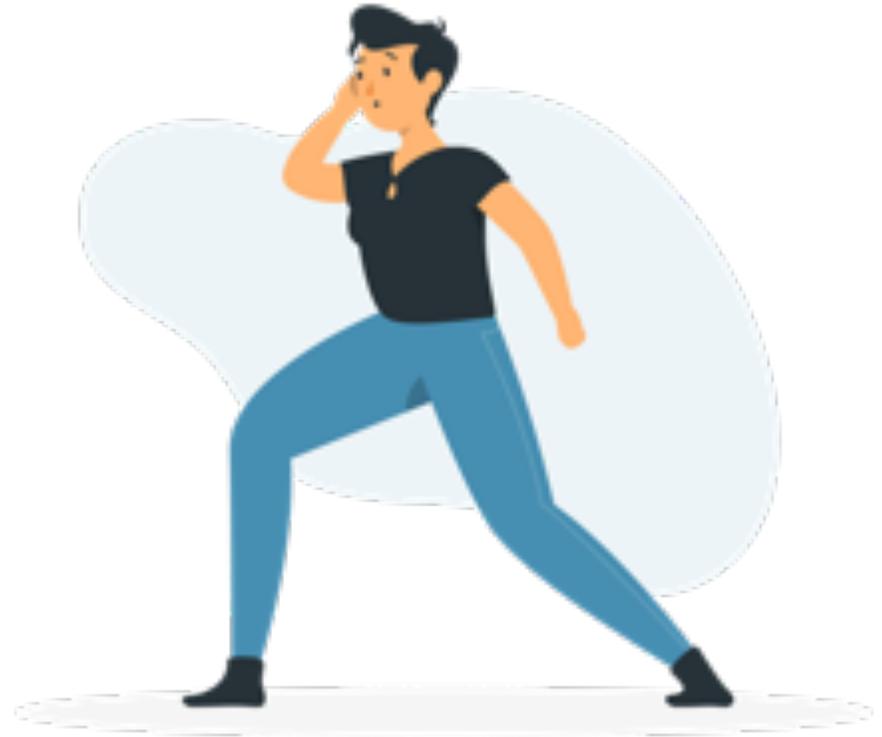
# *Critical* Questions



Why should the  
teacher **take notes**?

# Benefits of Monitoring & Scribing

**Note:** try to listen without interrupting the flow of the discussion!



# Step Four: Share

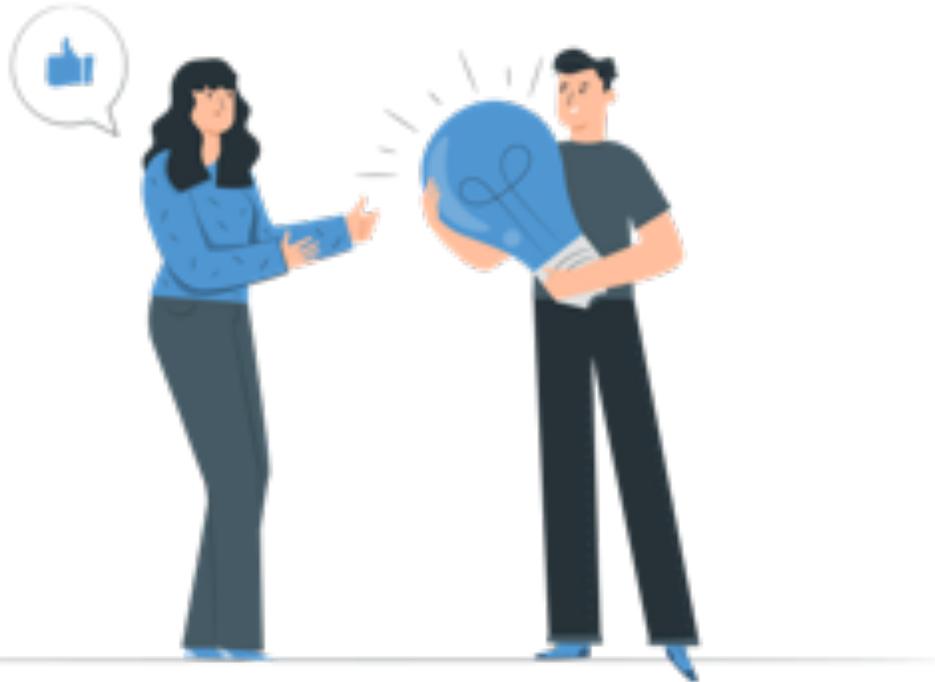
SHARE



# Tips for Promoting Interaction

## Tip #4

Building off of  
“Think-Pair-Share”



# Keeping the Interaction Going



## Types of Interactive Activities

1. Information gap
2. Role play

# Information Gap Activities



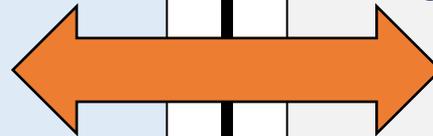
# A Simple Example Information Gap

## Student A

1. There are \_\_\_\_\_ teams in the NBA.
2. The most famous teams are the Los Angeles Lakers and the Chicago Bulls.

## Student B

1. There are thirty teams in the NBA.
2. The most famous teams are the Los Angeles \_\_\_\_\_ and the Chicago \_\_\_\_\_.



“Gap”

# Information Gap and Role Play



## Scenario

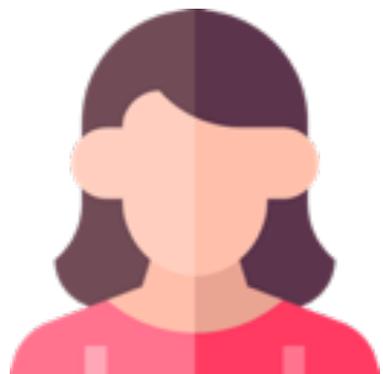
- ✓ You and your partner are the coach and owner of a professional basketball team.
- ✓ You want a new player, but are not sure who to pick between three options.
- ✓ Share information with your partner and then decide who you should pick to join your team!

### Student A (Coach Chart)

	Jamal Jafari	Diego Delgado	Bobby Buckets
Relevant Experience	Played every game in four years at Duke (the best U.S. college for basketball)		Was on a professional basketball team in Europe but only played in a few games in the last season.
Performance		Excellent natural athlete but still learning the game of basketball. Very fast, great jumping, could be stronger.	The smartest player. Understands strategy very well. Strong, never been injured.
Personality		Polite, friendly, his joking can be kind of distracting.	
Other Factors			Has a wife and two children.



**Student A**  
“Coach”



**Student B**  
“Team Owner”

**Student B (Team Owner Chart)**

	<b>Jamal Jafari</b>	<b>Diego Delgado</b>	<b>Bobby Buckets</b>
<b>Relevant Experience</b>		Played volleyball for 10 years but switched to basketball four years ago. Played at a small college.	
<b>Performance</b>	Very strong, but makes game strategy errors. Can play many positions. Has a history of injuries.		
<b>Personality</b>	Easy to work with, good leader		Doesn't really talk much, seems angry but follows orders well.
<b>Other Factors</b>	Broke his leg in the final year of college.	Does not pass the ball to teammates.	

# Information Gap and Role Play

Can you tell me about Diego Delgado's personality?



Sure! He's polite and friendly. But, he jokes too much.



# Information Gap and Role Play

Completed Chart

	Jamal Jafari	Diego Delgado	Bobby Buckets
Relevant Experience	Played every game in four years at Duke (the best U.S. college for basketball)	Played volleyball for 10 years but switched to basketball four years ago. Played at a small college.	Was on a professional basketball team in Europe but only played in a few games in the last season.
Performance	Very strong, but makes game strategy errors. Can play many positions. Has a history of injuries.	Excellent natural athlete but still learning the game of basketball. Very fast, great jumping, could be stronger.	The smartest player. Understands strategy very well. Strong, never been injured.
Personality	Easy to work with, good leader	Polite, friendly, his joking can be kind of distracting.	Doesn't really talk much, seems angry but follows orders well.
Other Factors	Broke his leg in the final year of college.	Does not pass the ball to teammates.	Has a wife and two children.



**Student B**

“Team Owner”

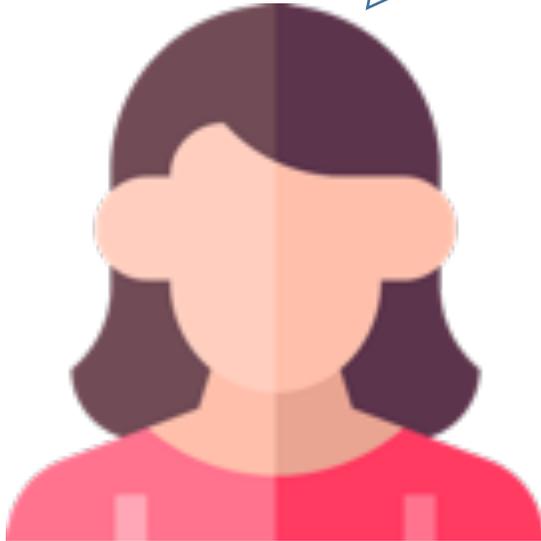


**Student A**

“Coach”

# Information Gap and Role Play

**I worry that Bobby has a bad attitude and won't work well on the team.**



**Yeah, I agree. But he's so talented!**



# Information Gap and Role Play

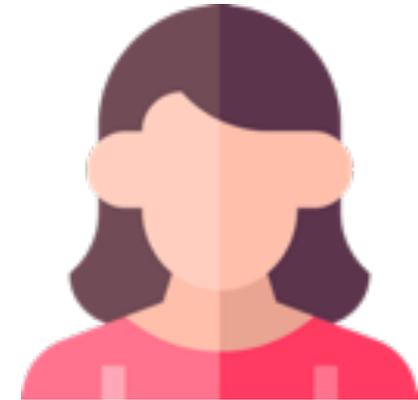
	Jamal	Diego	Bobby
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Smart</li><li>• Experienced</li><li>• Good leader</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good and natural athlete</li><li>• Friendly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong</li><li>• Smart</li><li>• Experienced</li></ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lots of injuries</li><li>• Might not be strong enough</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not experienced</li><li>• Does not pass the ball to teammates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maybe not be a “team player”</li></ul>

# Information Gap and Role Play



Completed Chart

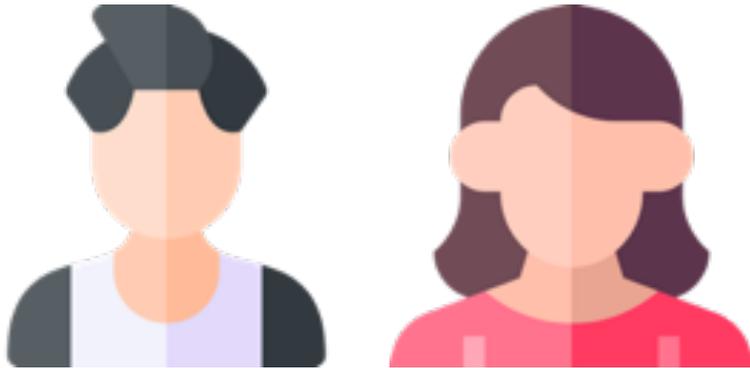
	Jamal Jafari	Diego Delgado	Bobby Buckets
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# Information Gap and Role Play

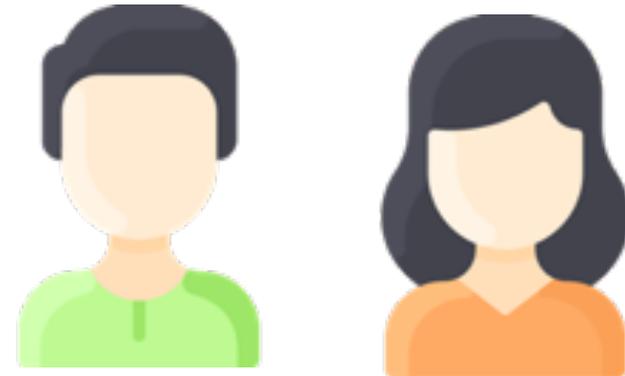
**Team A**

We want  
**Jamal!**



**Team B**

We want  
**Bobby!**



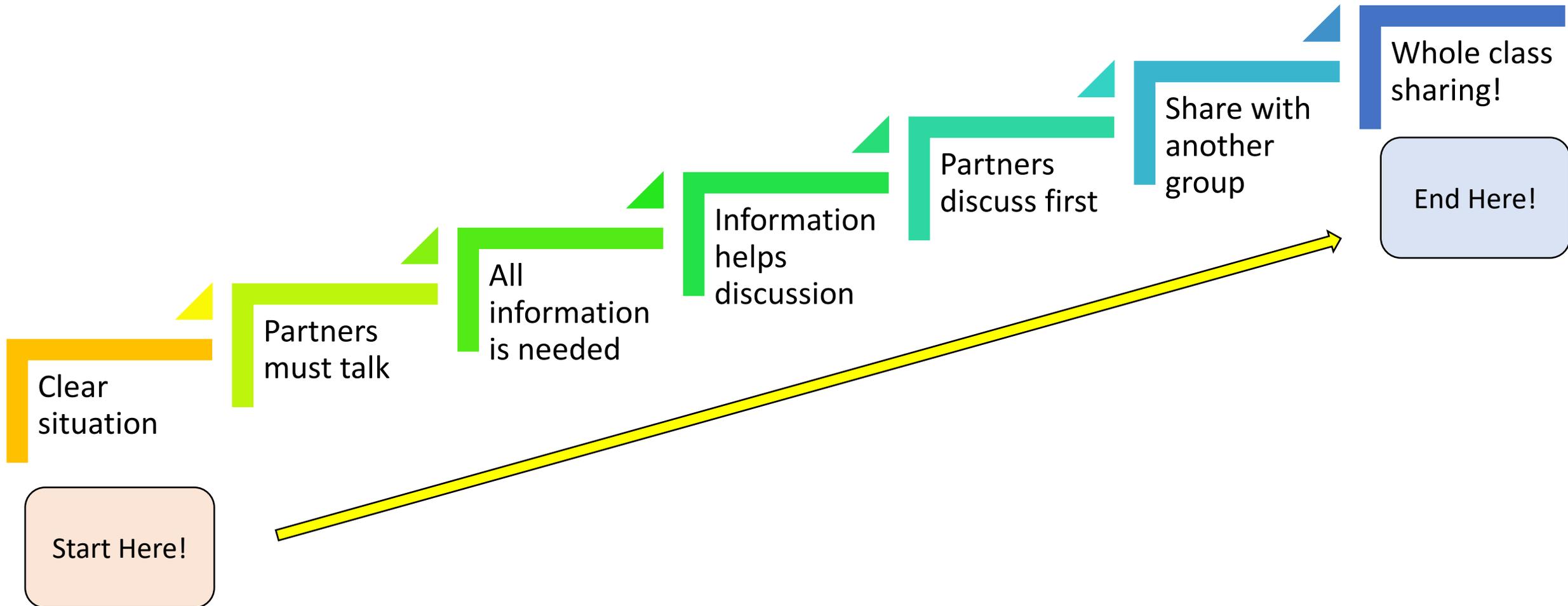
# Information Gap and Role Play

Jamal	IIII
Diego	I
Bobby	III

Winner!



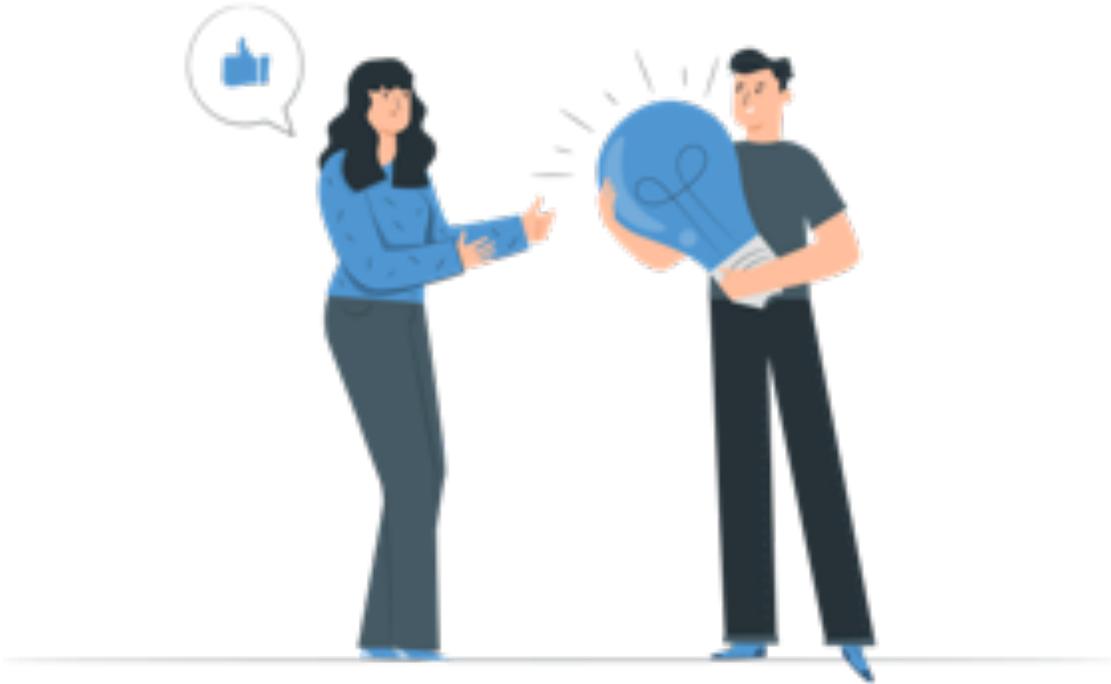
# Analyzing Information Gap and Role Play



# Tips for Promoting Interaction

## Tip #5

Using a **variety** of grouping strategies



# Grouping Strategies

- Let students pick
- Group by proficiency level (same and different)
- Use a “Randomizer” to put students into random groups
- Grouping by themes (favorite sport, favorite type of movies, etc.)



# Final Takeaway Points

To promote more interaction...

1. Create a sense of community in your classroom
2. Use “icebreakers” to get people talking
3. Use “Think-Pair-Share” to keep the interaction going
4. Build off “Think-Pair-Share” with information gap and role play activities
5. Use a variety of different grouping strategies

Thank  
you!



# References

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# Reflection Questions

1. Consider how you group students. What factors might you consider when planning how to best group students for a particular activity?
2. What do you do while your students are speaking to each other during group and pair work activities? How might you, as the teacher, make the most effective use of this communication time?
3. How might you adapt the activities shared today for your classroom?



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