

Want to try Speed Dating in *your* class?

What is Speed Dating?

An educational speed dating session consists of a series of brief one-on-one interactions between students. After talking with one partner for several minutes, students rotate to another.

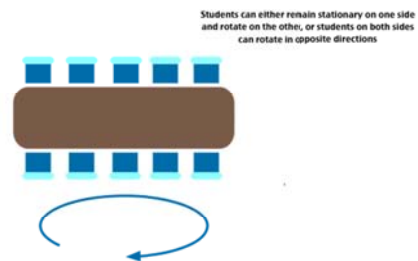
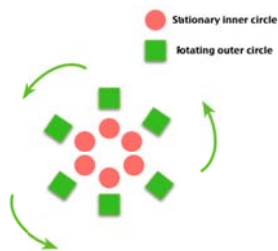
Speed Dating At-a-glance	
Prep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather materials • Check physical layout of the room—Does it allow for students to rotate? • Write questions for discussion • Set time constraints for session
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the activity • Keep time! • Announce when students should rotate partners (every 3-5 minutes)
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a Post-activity exercise

Prep

- Gather materials:

Materials Needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timer
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- Check the physical layout of the room—Does it allow for students to rotate?
 - *Some layout options:*



- Write questions for discussion:
 - Determine the number of questions you need:
 - Option 1: All partner-groups discuss the same question at the same time; you may change the group question after several rotations

- Option 2: Each stationary student has a question and rotating students answer a different question every time they move; you may switch who stays put and who rotates partway through the session
- Determine the type of question you want to use:
 - Depending on your pedagogical aims, questions may have one right answer that you want students to learn (generating and consolidating knowledge), or they may explore a gray area (promoting deep thinking and the exchange of ideas).

Sample Questions:

Factual sample question	Exploratory Discussion sample question
What is mitosis? (biology)	Why don't people's stated beliefs about equality always match up with their performance on implicit measures of racial bias? (psychology)

- If using factual questions, an optional preparatory activity is to have students prepare answer sheets ahead of time; this will give them another opportunity to review the material
- If using exploratory questions, an optional preparatory activity is to give students 10-15 minutes to free-write on the general topic of the speed dating session, which will allow them to organize their thoughts
- Set time constraints for session:
 - Students should spend 3-5 minutes discussing each question. The number of questions you generate will depend on the total length of time you want to spend on the speed-dating session and how many students you have in class.

During

- Introduce the activity:
 - Script: *Today we are going to learn about [insert topic] through academic speed dating! You're each going to spend several minutes discussing a course-related question with several different members of the class. I'll let you know when it's time to rotate. [Optional: When we come back together, I'm going to ask you to write about/discuss what you've learned.]*
- Keep time!
- Announce when students should rotate partners:
 - Many phones have built-in timers with alarms that you can set to go off at designated intervals. Be sure that students are aware of what sound they should be listening for to know when the "date" has concluded.

After

- Plan a Post-activity exercise:
 - Following the speed dating session, it's a good idea to ask students to write or talk about the information covered or the insights they gleaned from the session. A follow-up activity gives students the opportunity to consolidate information, ask questions about points of lingering confusion, and to reflect on new insights.

Post-Session Options

- Have students write a reflective essay for 10 minutes
- Hold a whole-class discussion to debrief the session
- Give students 10 minutes to jot down field notes about their interactions