Chapter One Resource: *Domino Discover* Step-by-Step Directions

Instructional Objective: Find patterns and surprises in student responses

Domino Discover is an essential classroom routine for differentiated instruction because the routine furthers student learning while providing a dashboard for teacher decision-making to adjust instruction. In *Domino Discover* each individual or a representative from each group shares responses equitably and efficiently, making this an effective way to gather student responses when questions are asked during lessons.

Picture the Routine

To begin, picture in your mind the game of dominoes, where dominoes are lined up in a row or a circle. When one domino is pushed the other dominoes fall one after another without any interruption. After all the dominoes have fallen a new picture is visible that couldn't be seen when the dominoes were standing individually. *Domino Discover* works exactly like this game. Every individual or a representative from a group provides a contribution. The teacher records the responses visibly for all to see. At the end of *Domino Discover*, the collection of responses provides a new view of the topic under discussion for consideration. Learners may need to be reminded that when one domino falls after the next one, the process of sharing ideas goes very quickly, so listening is very important. Listeners need a specific objective or purpose for listening, such as listening for what is missing from the new collection of responses or connections to what was said in their small group. Note that if someone does something different or goes off on a tangent, then the whole chain of dominoes falling won't work. This includes the teacher interrupting, so the teacher holds feedback until after *Domino Discover* is completed.

    Domino Discover can be practiced with the whole class sitting or standing in a circle where a "microphone" is passed (see scaffolding *Domino Discover* below). Any object can serve as a "microphone" (e.g., marker, yarn ball, or toy). It may be useful to practice passing the object or passing a "high-five" clap around the circle in silence before adding words. When words are added, there is only one speaker at a time who holds the object and everyone else is in the role of listeners. The object is passed around in a circle as each person takes turns sharing an idea (often starting with a single word, such as how you are feeling or a favorite activity). As students develop their skills in turn, taking, speaking, and listening, the responses can become longer and the groups smaller with the teacher standing in the middle of the room able to listen in on each group. Some teachers call this routine a "Wave," like in a football field; "Let it Rock," because all answers are given whether right or wrong or incomplete and no one interrupts; or "Family Feud," because the listeners can be challenged to add what is missing from the sharing. You can name the routine with students so that the purpose and action has meaning. However, variations of the routine need to have the essential elements of *Domino Discover* to ensure equity and the instructional purpose of serving as a dashboard for agile teacher decision-making.

Essential Elements

- ☐ Every individual or a representative from each group shares a response.
- ☐ Responses are recorded.
- ☐ A purpose for listening (an objective) is stated.
- ☐ Criteria (*Must Haves* and *Amazing*) guide the quality of responses.
- ☐ Responses are used to prompt student reflection and adjust instruction.

What might *Domino Discover* look like in the classroom?
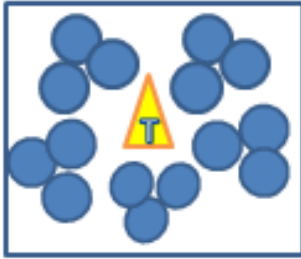
Use *Domino Discover* when gathering student answers to a question and brainstorming questions from the class to ensure that every student's ideas are heard. If students are seated at tables or standing in small groups, begin by asking students to generate a response or questions. Ask students to record their own ideas first and then *Domino Discover* to ensure that everyone's ideas are listened to, before starting a free discussion or open exchange to discuss the responses and add additional ideas. After the free discussion, each group prepares one or more reporters to share one response generated in the group. The reporters share from each group around in a domino fashion, one reporter after another without interruption. The teacher or a student records the responses from all groups for all to see. When reporters are sharing everyone else is in the "listener" role, noting patterns and surprises that emerge as each group shares. After *Domino Discover* the teacher invites anyone to add something that came up in the group and was not captured yet in the recorded responses. *Domino Discover* is much more inclusive, efficient, and effective than calling on students randomly and requires students to think and listen to each other.

Learn More—Watch Examples of Domino Discover in Action
http://www.alled.org/about-us/professional/video-library/
On our website, All Learners Learning Every Day, see four examples of *Domino Discover* in different classrooms. Notice how teachers give directions, identify who is going first, and collect and record responses.

How to Begin
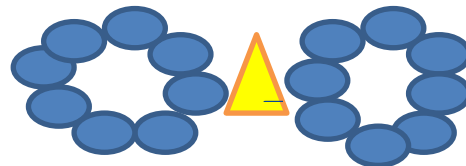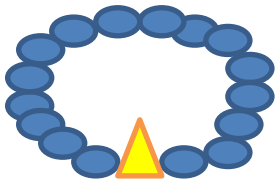
Consider teaching Domino Discover *as a **whole class** in a large circle, then dividing the class into **halves** with the teacher monitoring both circles from a central location, and then using Domino Discover in **small groups** of three or four. Students can share a word or phrase written on a scrap of paper or sticky note.*

Directions for Implementation

Objective

1. Identify Objective for collecting responses by stating the purpose or goal for listening.

Starting Position

2. Ask learners to jot down their initial thinking; this could be an answer to a question, the vocabulary words they remember, or the solution to a math problem. This should result in data that the teacher needs to tailor instruction and that will clarify, further, or review student learning.

Criteria

3. Post Quality Criteria for a high-quality response, e.g., "uses vocabulary words," "uses the word because," "represents ideas in more than one way or uses more than one strategy," or "uses evidence." Quality Criteria can be divided into *Must Haves* (required by all students) and *Amazing* (optional criteria to stretch students—these may be assigned to students who need an extra challenge).
4. Ask student to revise their response to meet the high-quality *Must Have* criteria and include one of the *Amazing* criteria.

Actions

5. Decide who will go first in the group (small or large).
6. Point to the person that will go second—establishing the direction for the circle.
7. State a Purpose for Listening, e.g., same and different responses, missing ideas, old and new ideas, connections, questions, vocabulary words, explanations, vivid descriptions, text evidence, or something specific related to the day's objective. The purpose for listening is the same as the teacher's purpose for asking students to share—think about how the answers will be used to tailor instruction, and share that purpose with students.
8. Take turns completing the task until everyone has gone, one after the other, like dominoes falling.

Reflection

9. Take a few minutes to notice patterns and surprises that learners noticed as well as to add missing responses and pose questions. Ask students to identify shared responses that met the required *Must Have* criteria and responses that were *Amazing*.
10. Adjust instruction based on perceived learning needs from the collected responses.