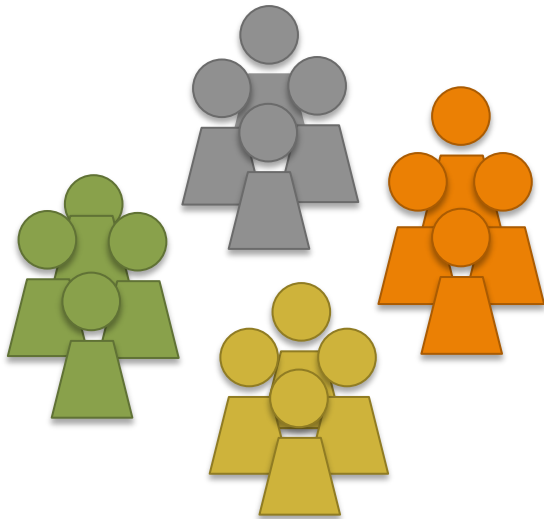


# THESIS SWAP AND SALE

A strong thesis not only directs a student's writing, but communicates relevance and intrigue to its readers. Start student writers on the right track toward achieving both of these goals in an interactive, low-pressure format with Thesis Swap and Sale in which students form small groups and "sell" their topics and theses to each other.

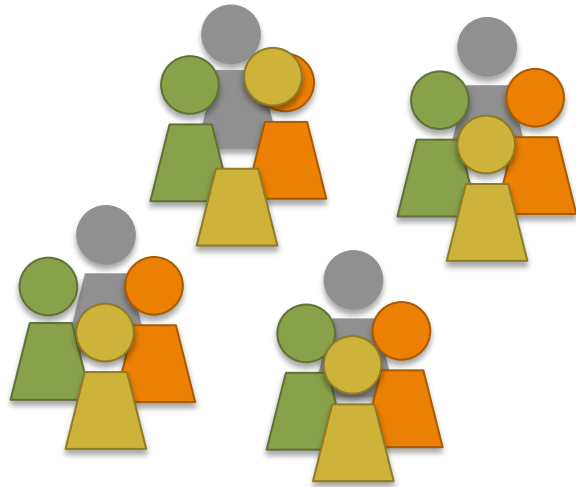
## DISCUSSION: ROUND 1

Each student "sells" their topic to the group, and they choose one topic accordingly.



## DISCUSSION: ROUND 2

Each student writes and presents a thesis for this topic. After switching topics, each student walks away with a bundle of potential theses.



Review one faculty's experience  
with this activity, along with  
step-by-step directions at  
**[oakland.edu/teachingtips](http://oakland.edu/teachingtips)**

## Thesis Swap and Sale

Students form small groups and have to “sell” their topics to each other. Once they “own” a new topic, they must write a potential thesis for that topic. It works like a preliminary peer editing. The goal of this strategy is to get students to engage in their writing from a reader-centered approach. It also places emphasis on the thesis statement, which is a problem area for many students.

### Step-by-Step Instructions of Strategy

1. Break class into small groups (4 works best, but it can be done with 3-5).
2. Have them choose a number one through four.
3. Number one begins by explaining his or her essay topic to the group
4. The other three group members then have to “own” the topic and treat it as if it were his or her own.
5. The three group members have to write a thesis statement for that topic. I usually give them about two minutes.
6. Then, number two presents his or her topic.
7. The remaining group members do the same. Repeat until every person in the small group has three potential thesis statements for his or her topic.
8. This usually takes about ten minutes. Fifteen tops.
9. Group the class back as a whole.
10. Have each person “sell” the topic to the class; however, those in the original group cannot “buy” it.
11. Every topic has to be “sold” and “purchased” and each potential buyer may ask questions about the topic.
12. Once purchased, that individual must write a potential thesis statement for the original “owner.”
13. Give to the original “owner” at the end of class.

This gives the students an experience with an informal/brief presentation, AND it gives the students one more potential thesis statement. An additional bonus is the interaction among peers in the class. The activity usually takes about a half hour to thirty-five minutes. It may take longer if you have a particularly chatty group that asks questions. Leave forty-five in your lesson plan. I usually combine this with a brainstorming activity or a short writing in class. I have also put a “for sale” sign on the board. It freaks out the students when they walk in the room. Again, side bonus.

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