

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

# Send-a-Problem

## Critical Thinking Cooperative Learning

Get students involved in group discussion by directing student groups to write questions to send to other groups. Writing the question on one side of a notecard and answer on the other allows groups to evaluate how other approach the problem similarly and differently.

**Q** ← Label each side clearly: Q for question,  
A for answer (on the other side)

Once the instructor provides a topic or a critical thinking question, student groups write their own question on the front of the notecard.

Students discuss and determine their best →  
answer and write it on the back of the notecard.

The next group discusses the question. Once determining their answer, they review the answer on the back. The questions can be passed onto multiple groups.

**For detailed directions and alternatives, visit**  
**[oakland.edu/teachingtips](http://oakland.edu/teachingtips)**

*CETL adapted this material Adam Persky's 2012 Teaching Tip flashcards, who adapted this original content from Barkley's Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty.*

## Send a Problem

**Descriptions:** Methods used to get students involved in group discussion. Students generate questions and an appropriate answer written on a notecard. The question card is sent to multiple groups of students to discuss and answer the question allowing for revision.

**Purpose:** To facilitate group discussion, creative thinking and problem solving. Also, encourages revision of questions and outside-of-the-box thinking because alternate answers can be found. The process mirrors real-life scenarios that do not always have only one correct answer.

**Procedure:**

1. Divide students into small groups. Provide each group with a topic on which to base a review or critical thinking question.
2. Each group will write a question on the front of a note card. Indicate the question side with a Q.
3. The group will determine the best answer and write it on the back of the note card. Indicate with an A.
4. Questions are then passed to another group.
5. Without looking at the answer, the second group will discuss and formulate the best answer.
6. Once at a consensus, Group 2 will check their answer with the answer on the back. If the groups don't match, group 2 will discuss again. If appropriate, group 2 will write it in as an alternate or combine answers for a more comprehensive response
7. Questions can be passed to multiple groups.

Variation: Instructor can provide pre-written questions to each group. Students discuss in groups and send their answer along to other groups for assessment and addition of potential alternate answers.

For more information about this technique or questions about teaching and learning contact [apersky@unc.edu](mailto:apersky@unc.edu) copyright 2012

Barkely, E.F. et al., (2004). Collaborative Learning Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty. Jossey-Bass.