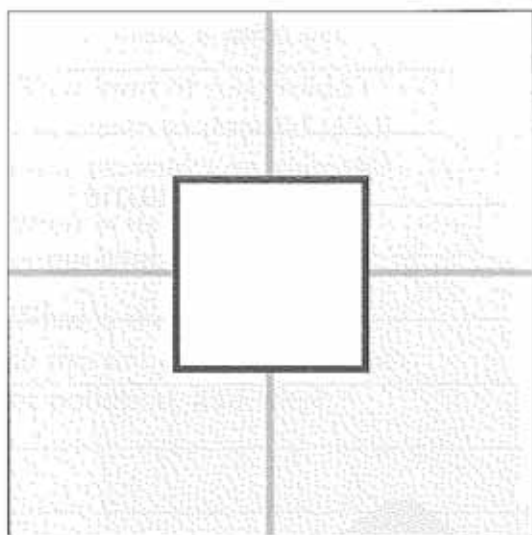




Place Mat...K to Adult

Place Mat involves groups of students working both alone and together around a single piece of paper to simultaneously involve all members. The paper is divided up into pieces based on the number of members in the group with a central square or circle. Ideally, groups of two to four work best. It can be used with groups of five, six, and seven, but if you do, the students should be skilled at group work.

Materials: piece of chart paper, pen or pencil for each person and a place to set the paper. Place Mat also works with regular 8-1/2 x 11 inch paper; however, the chart paper is more enjoyable as it provides the students with a bit more room and it's easier to read what others have written.



Application of this tactic:

Situation 1: You have read a story or a poem and you want the students to take the time to reflect, write, and share their ideas related to a key question or issue. Then do Place Mat.

Situation 2: You are starting a unit on energy or spring or government and you want to know what the students already know. You put them into groups of two or three and do Place Mat.

Situation 3: You have illustrated how to balance an equation or factor an equation or solve an addition story problem. You then put one question on the board and each student works out the solution in their space. They then share their thinking with others in the group. As an extension, you can put different questions on the board (one for each student in the group) and now students work on their own question. When finished, they share their solution with the rest of the group.

Situation 4: You are attempting to come to consensus around an issue. Each person writes (in their space) what he or she thinks are the most important issues. They then circle two or three ideas and star the most important idea to consider. They then take turns reading their list to the group and identifying the most important issue. The next person writes that key idea in the box in the middle. Repeat for each person. When finished, the group has the key ideas of the group, with each person knowing their voice was heard and respected.

Situation 5: You are watching a video and you want the students' minds engaged and accountable for key information (you can even assign them different questions to answer about the video). They jot down ideas during the video and share the ideas with their group.

Place Mat... Considerations

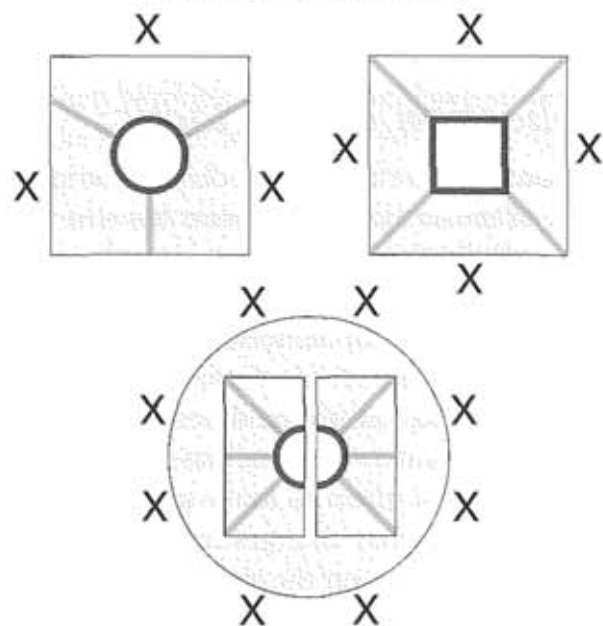
- Get a piece of chart paper and have the students divide it into the number of students in the group. You can decide whether to have the square in the middle or not. See Situation #4 on the previous page concerning how to use the centre square or circle.
- Students are provided with time to work alone. The social skill is respecting silence and privacy.
- Students then share their thinking with the group. Here you can decide whether you want the communication skill of *active listening* or *probing for clarification* etc., to be introduced to support the Place Mat process. We recommend you weave a social, communication, or critical thinking skill into the process.
- Students use the Round Robin tactic and rotate clockwise or counter-clockwise around the group, sharing their thinking. One option in the sharing, especially when it is their first time or they do not know each other well, is to allow them to have the right to pass—and either not share, or share later.

Place Mat... Adaptations

1. Weave in Walk About. Have one student take the sheet and go to another group to share the key ideas in the centre square.
2. If the students are in groups of three, you can have them do a Three-Step Interview focusing on what they constructed in the centre square.
3. With kindergarten students, they draw pictures—e.g., of what spring means to them.

4. Place mat works well when doing Concept Attainment. When the data set is being presented, the students can write their hypotheses in their space and later share their thinking using the ideas they wrote. Then, in the middle, they put their group's consensus.
5. When doing Mind Maps or Concept Maps, students can use this process to prepare for doing the Map by identifying the key ideas for the Map. They can put the most important ideas that should be placed on the Map first in the square.
6. In Brainstorming, some students will take over and others will try to do nothing. Place Mat encourages all the students in the group to brainstorm—it increases the chances of holding them accountable and getting them actively involved.
7. Once finished, you can have the students cut out their section, and then have them recombine with two or three others from another group. They then share.

Other Formats



large table – 2 groups