**TOOL: Partner Clocks**

Partner clocks are a great strategy for helping students to pair up quickly and ensure that everyone has a partner. Mixing up the class in a fun way ensures that students build relationships across difference: students of different cultural, racial, or socioeconomic backgrounds, and student at different levels of mastery on a particular skill. In particular, this strategy can act as a support for English learners by ensuring that they have the opportunity to practice their English-speaking skills with multiple partners.

Sample Lesson Plan for teaching Clock Partners Strategy

Grades 2-6

Approximately 25 minutes

1. **Explain the purpose of the procedure.**

*“It is important to learn to work with all kinds of different people. Everyone in this class has unique perspectives and strengths, and I want you to benefit from that! Today I will teach you how to use ‘clock partners’ to help you pair up quickly so we harness our learning time.”*

**2. Describe the procedure.**

*“When I am finished speaking, each of you will receive a drawing of a clock. Write your name on it. You will see that there is a blank line near each hour. When I tell you to, you will begin looking for partners for each hour of the clock. You will have about two minutes to find a partner. For some of the hours I will give you prompts to help you find your partner. For others I will let you find partners on your own. Once you find a partner, please write one another’s names on your clock for the same time slot. Please make sure you walk and use indoor voices.”*

*“Every member of our classroom community is valuable. If someone who you do not usually work with asks to be your partner, I encourage you to give it a try. You might find that you can learn a lot from one another and help one another succeed. If is doesn’t work out, you can come speak with me privately about making a change.”*

Provide students with prompts that they can use, such as:

* "Can you meet at three?"
* "No, I'm sorry, I'm busy then, but I could meet at\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”
* “What times are you available to meet?”

**3. Practice the procedure.**

Ask for student volunteers to demonstrate asking a classmate to be their clock partner and filling out the clocks correctly.

**4. Pass out clocks.**

Potential Prompts for Student Partnering

Find a partner that:

* You don’t usually work with
* Who has the same favorite color as you
* Likes a similar food as you
* Likes a different subject than you
* Had the same teacher as you last year
* Came to the school the same year as you (e.g., kindergarten, first grade)

Teacher Assigned Partners

It can be beneficial to reserve a few slots for teacher-assigned partnerships. You can use these to be strategic about pairing students you think would benefit from working together.

Once all the slots are filled, have students place the clocks somewhere easily accessible (such as in a binder).

Click here for a [clock](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nR3-idzCh8uakkqjYIWN5DBVD43Y2pPU/view?usp=sharing) to use.

Lesson adapted from <http://www.tesol.org/>