**Active Learning Technique**

**Steps/Components**

1. Start with a list of discussion questions. List the questions (with numbers) on white paper. Make photocopies of the list, using a different color paper for each copy. Make enough copies so there will be a copy of one question for each student. (For example: If you have five discussion questions and thirty students, you'll need 6 copies including your original on white paper.)

2. Cut all the paper so that each question is on a separate slip of paper. Put the slips into a tub or jar. Each student picks one slip of paper and silently reads the question.

3. Give the class a few minutes to walk around and compare questions. Students may trade papers with anyone whose question they would prefer to answer. Trading can continue until you call time.

4. When you call time, have all students with question 1 meet in one corner of the room to discuss their questions; all students with question 2 meet in another corner, and so on. Give groups a few minutes to discuss.

5. Now have all students with white paper meet in one corner, all students with green paper meet in another corner, and so on.

6. In numeric order (or whatever order each group prefers), each student leads a short discussion by presenting her/his question to the group and then offering an initial response to the question. Other students can add to the response or engage in further discussion.

7. While the groups are working, the instructor can circulate to listen, encourage, and help if help is needed.

**Benefit to Student**

1. The trading session allows students opportunities to think carefully (either independently or cooperatively) about various questions. It also gives them some choice in which question they will answer and "own."  

2. The first group meeting (with each group focusing on a single question) allows students to speak and listen to classmates in a low-stakes, non-threatening situation. These meetings also give students a chance to compare their own thoughts about a question with other students' thoughts; to learn from each other; and gather ideas to share with other classmates.

3. The second group meeting (where each group member presents a different question) requires each student to lead a discussion and answer a substantive question in front of classmates, but in a low-stakes environment and having already had opportunities to think about the question and learn about other classmates' responses to it.

4. The second group meeting allows students to hear all the questions that you have assigned, and to participate in a discussion about all of them.