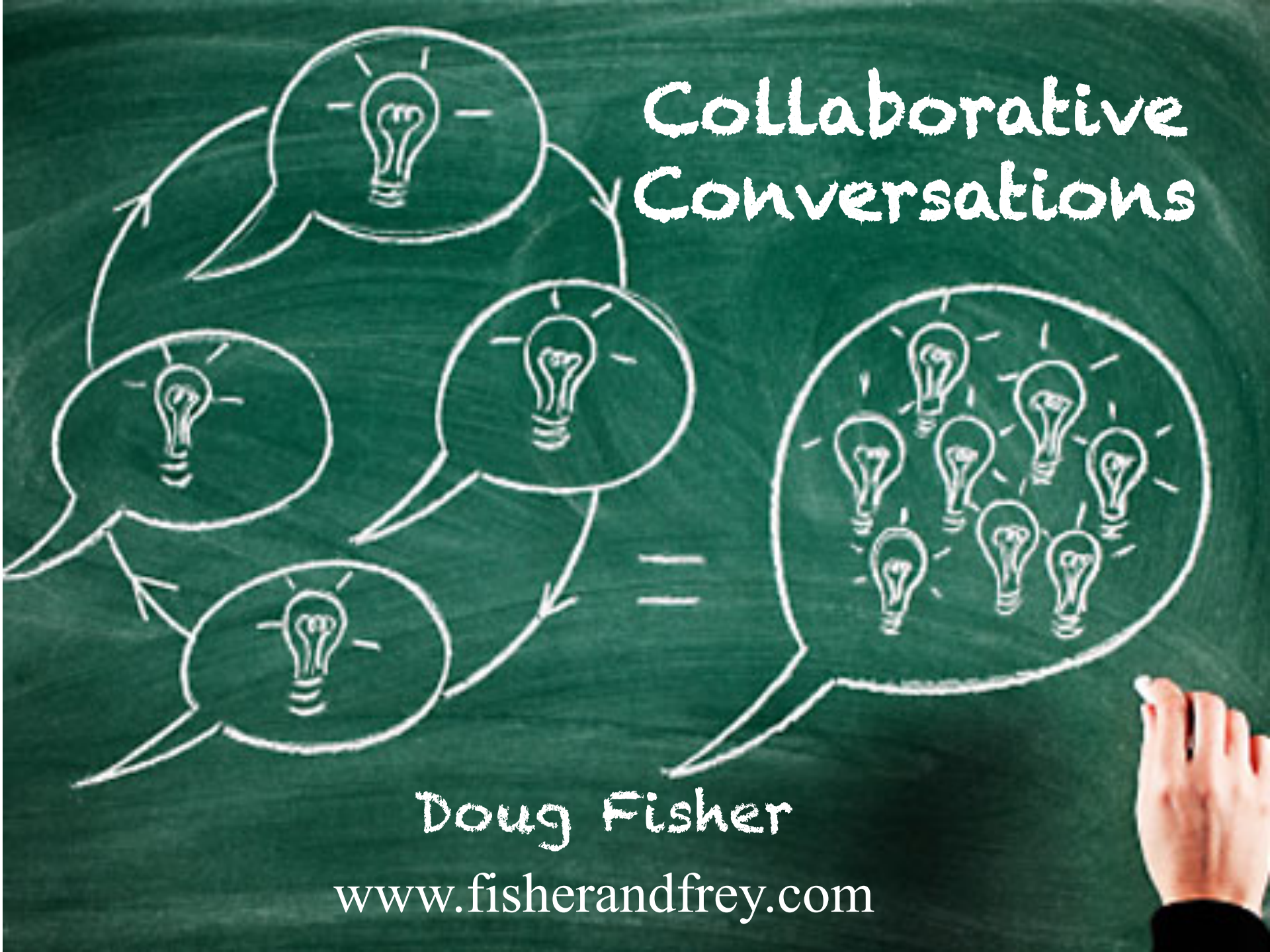

Collaborative
Conversations
Doug Fisher
www.fisherandfrey.com

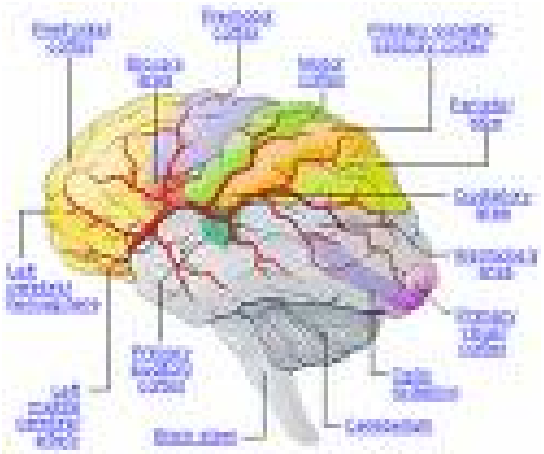
I'll go back to school and learn more about the brain!

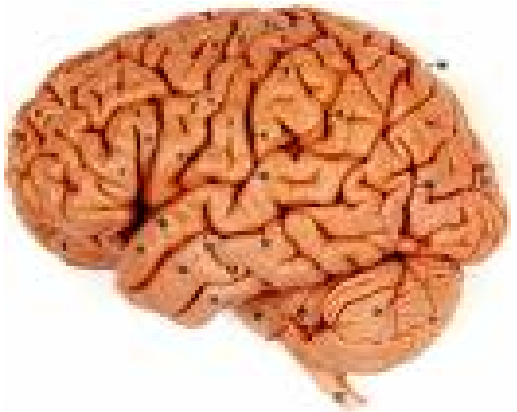
400+ page textbook

“Somites are blocks of dorsal mesodermal cells adjacent to the notochord during vertebrate organogenesis.”

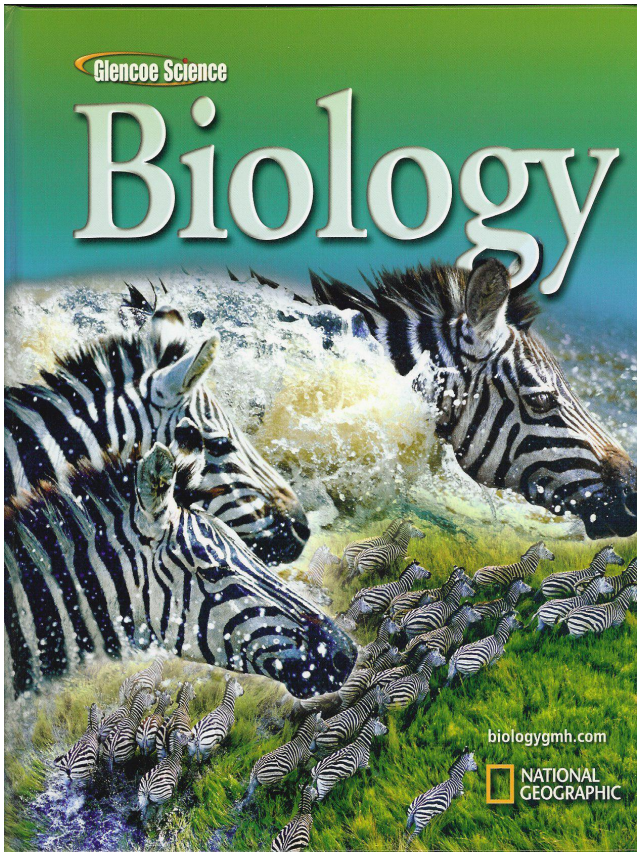
“Improved vascular definition in radiographs of the arterial phase or of the venous phase can be procured by a process of subtraction whereby positive and negative images of the overlying skull are superimposed on one another.”

I don’t know how you’re going to learn this, but it’ s on the test.

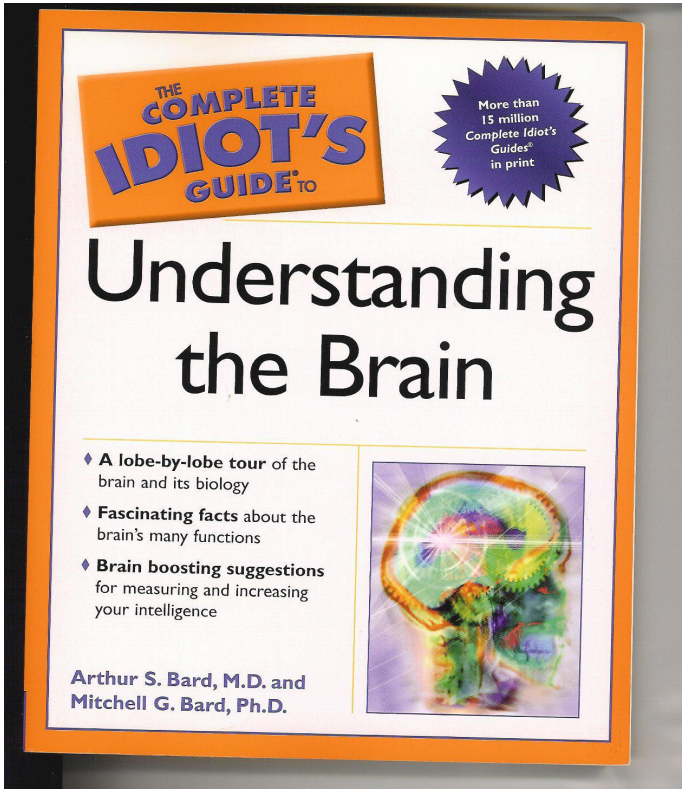




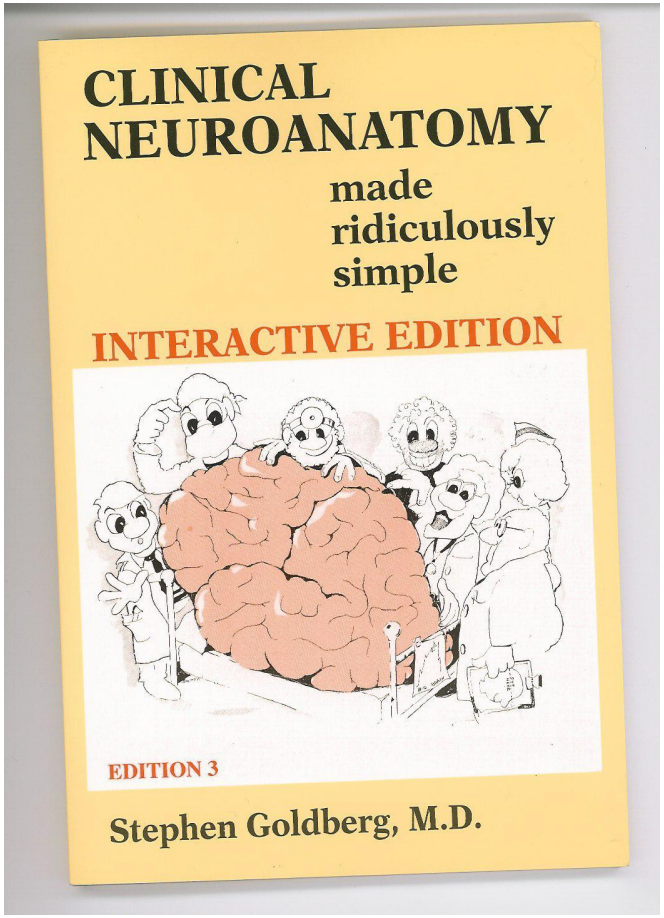
Quick, build background!



Expand understanding through reading



Reading increasingly difficult texts

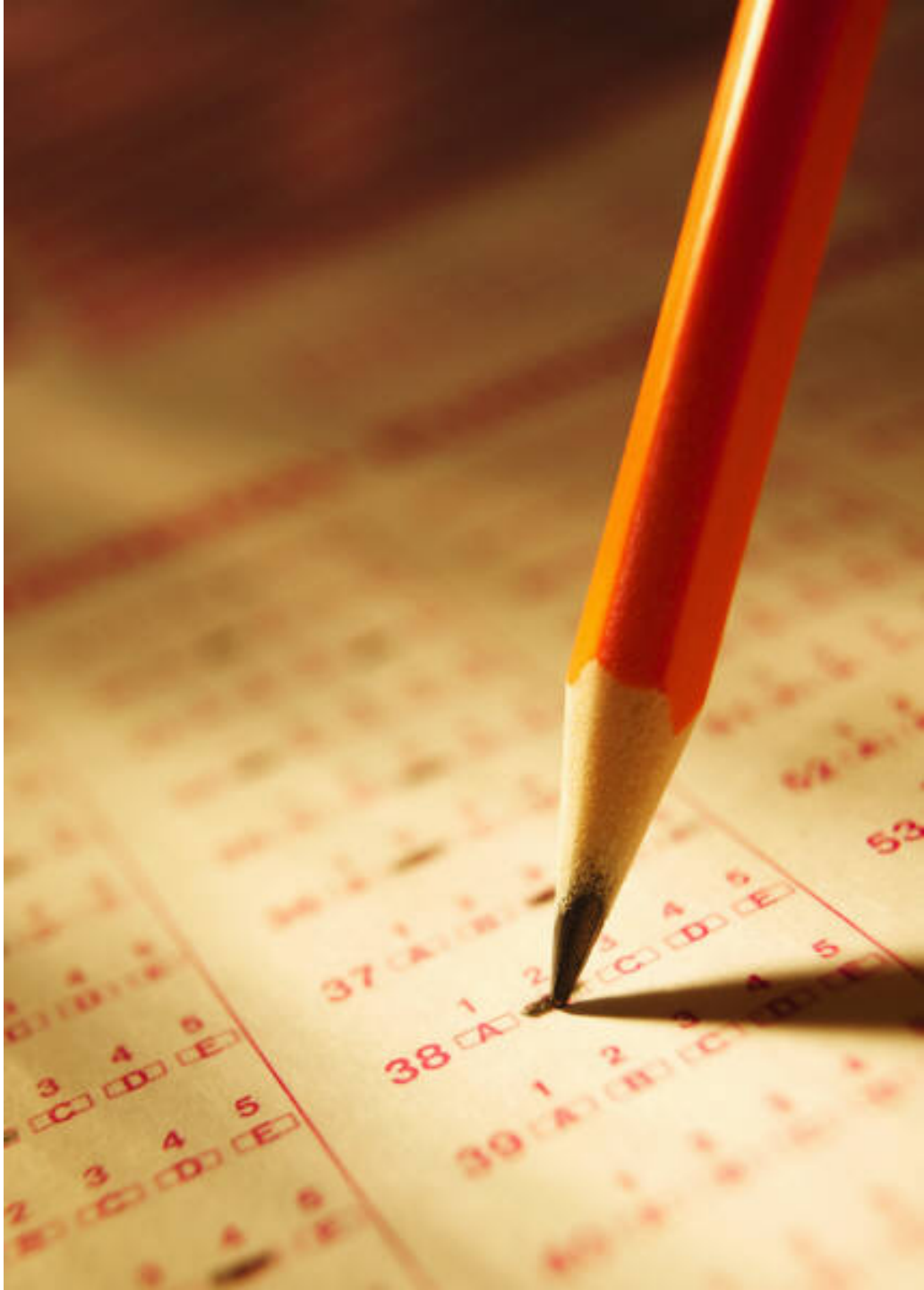


Read “non-traditional” texts

- To date, over 100 YouTube videos!
- PBS (*The Secret Life of the Brain*)
- Internet quiz sites about neuroanatomy
- Talking with peers and others interested in the brain

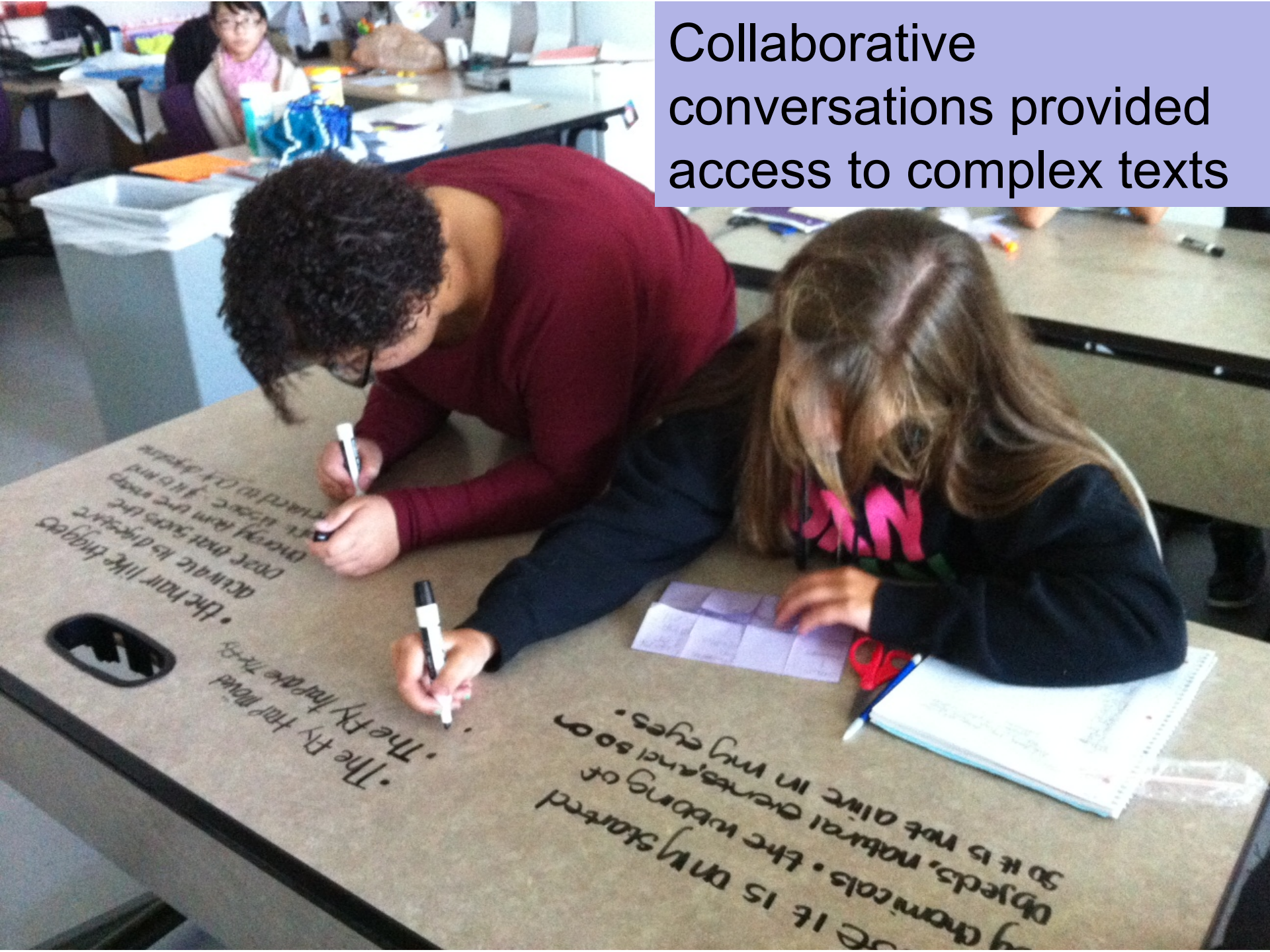
But, the midterm comes

17 pages, single spaced



Besides Some Neuroanatomy, What Have I Learned?

- You can't (independently) learn from books you can't read (but you can learn)
- Reading widely builds background and vocabulary
- Interacting with others keeps me motivated and clarifies information and extends understanding



Collaborative conversations provided access to complex texts

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Prepare for and participate in collaborations with diverse partners, building on each others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

K-2 Features

- *Following the rules of discussion*
- *Moving from participation to turn taking*
- *Sustaining discussion through questioning*
- *Adult support*

3-5 Features

- *Preparation for discussion*
- *Yielding and gaining the floor*
- *Posing and responding to questions*
- *From explaining own ideas to explaining the ideas of others*

6-8 Features

- *Using evidence to probe and reflect*
- *Collegial discussions include goals and deadlines*
- *Questions connect ideas from several speakers*
- *Acknowledge new information*

9-10 Features

- *Use prepared research in discussion*
- *Voting, consensus, and decision making*
- *Ensure hearing full range of opinions or options*
- *Summarize and synthesize points of disagreement*

11-12 Features

- *Civil, democratic discussions*
- *Questions probe reasoning and evidence*
- *Resolving contradictions*
- *Determine what additional info is needed*

Which Is It?

Group Work

- **Clarifying beliefs, values, or ideas**
- **Goal is sharing**
- **No accountability or group accountability**

Productive Group Work

- *Interaction*
- *Academic language practice and development*

- **Consolidating understanding using argumentation**
- **Goal is problem solving**
- **Individual accountability**

Group Work Examples

TTYPA

Carousel

Opinion Stations

Think-Pair-Square

Novel Ideas Only

Carousel

- Teams rotate around the classroom
- Composing answers
- Reflecting on other students' comments
- Questions posted on charts
- **Sentence FRAMES can be used**

1. Look closely. What do you notice?
2. How is this an example of weathering?

Sentence Frames

** The image shows _____ but not _____ .

** An example of weathering is shown _____ and _____ .

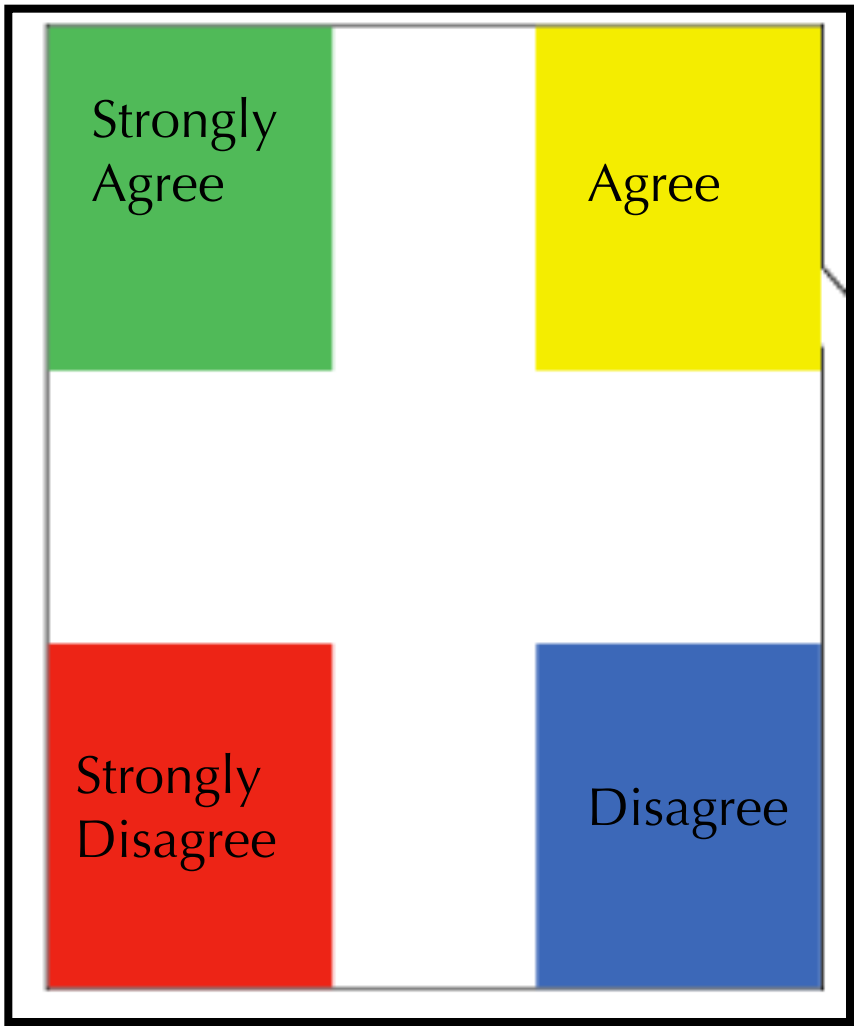
1. This is an example of a weathering rock. What makes this rock look like this?
2. What would cause the rock to look different?

Sentence Frames

** Weathering is caused by _____ which _____ .

** First, the rock might look differently if _____ . It might also look different if _____ .

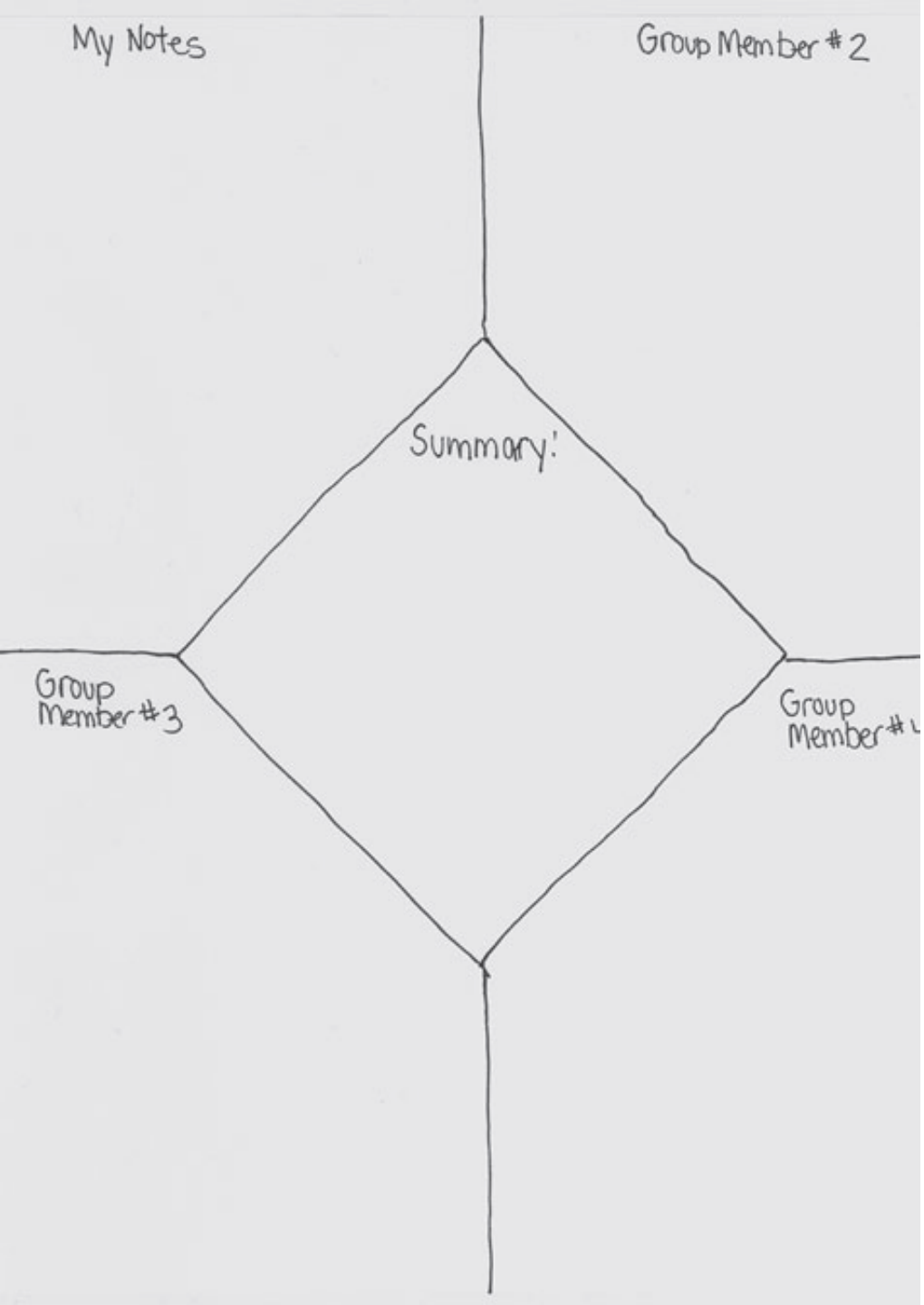
Opinion Stations



- Display a statement - - have students move to a spot in the room that corresponds to their beliefs
- Students discuss in their corner or spot in the room and then to the whole class
- Post sentence frames in each corner

Productive Group Work Examples

- Conversation Roundtable
- Numbered Heads Together
- Literature Circles
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Jigsaw
- Walking Review
- Collaborative Poster

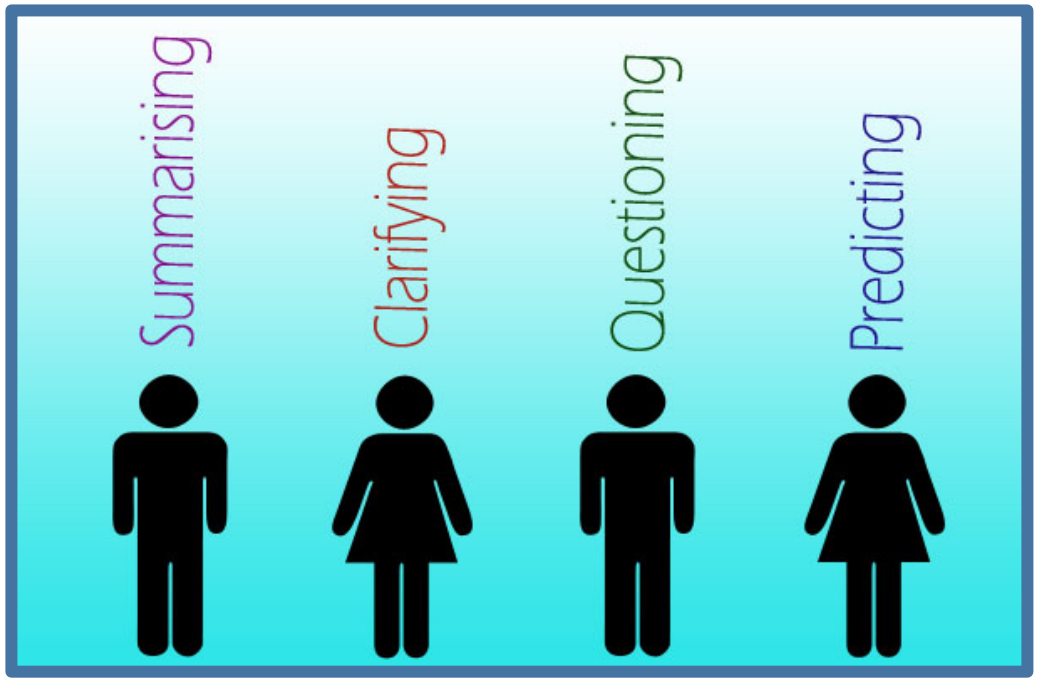


Conversation Roundtable

Numbered Heads Together

- Each person at table assigned a number
- Question is posed
- Die is rolled
- Everyone prepares that numbered person to answer
- Die is rolled again to call on a table number
- Person at that table answers

Reciprocal Teaching



- Student-directed groups
- Text is chunked in smaller parts
- Teacher or students can choose stopping points

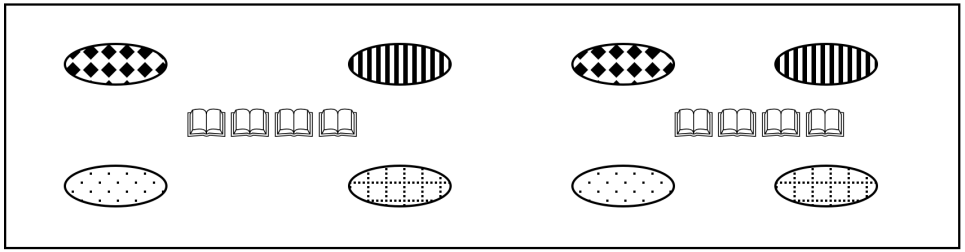
Jigsaw

Home Group

Expert Group

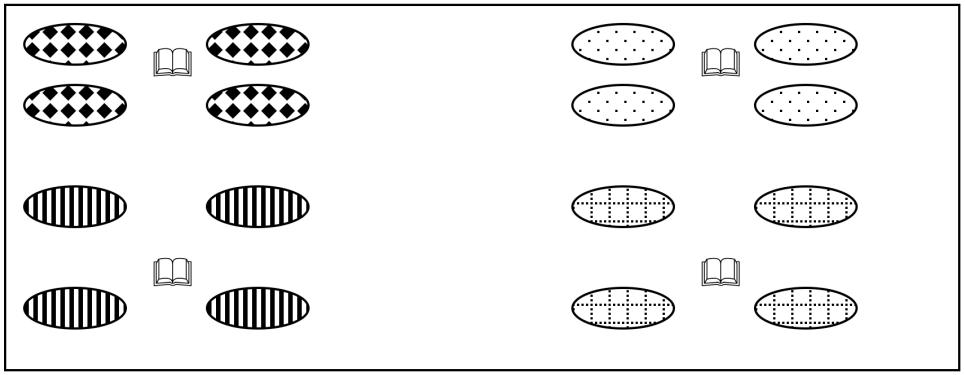
Home Group

Phase One: Home Groups



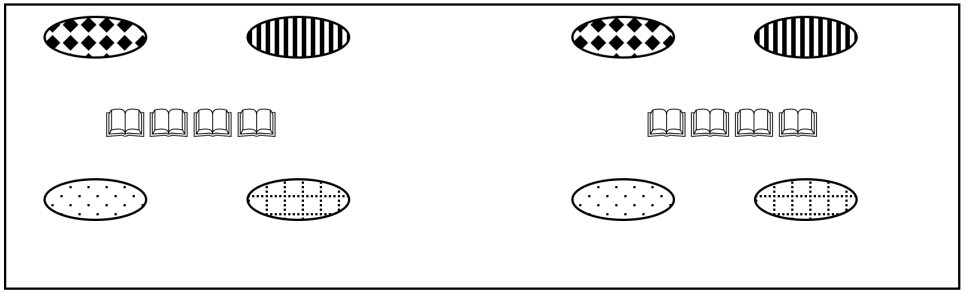
Students meet in home groups to divide the readings among themselves.

Phase Two: Expert Groups



Students meet in expert groups to discuss one of the readings.

Phase Three: Home Groups

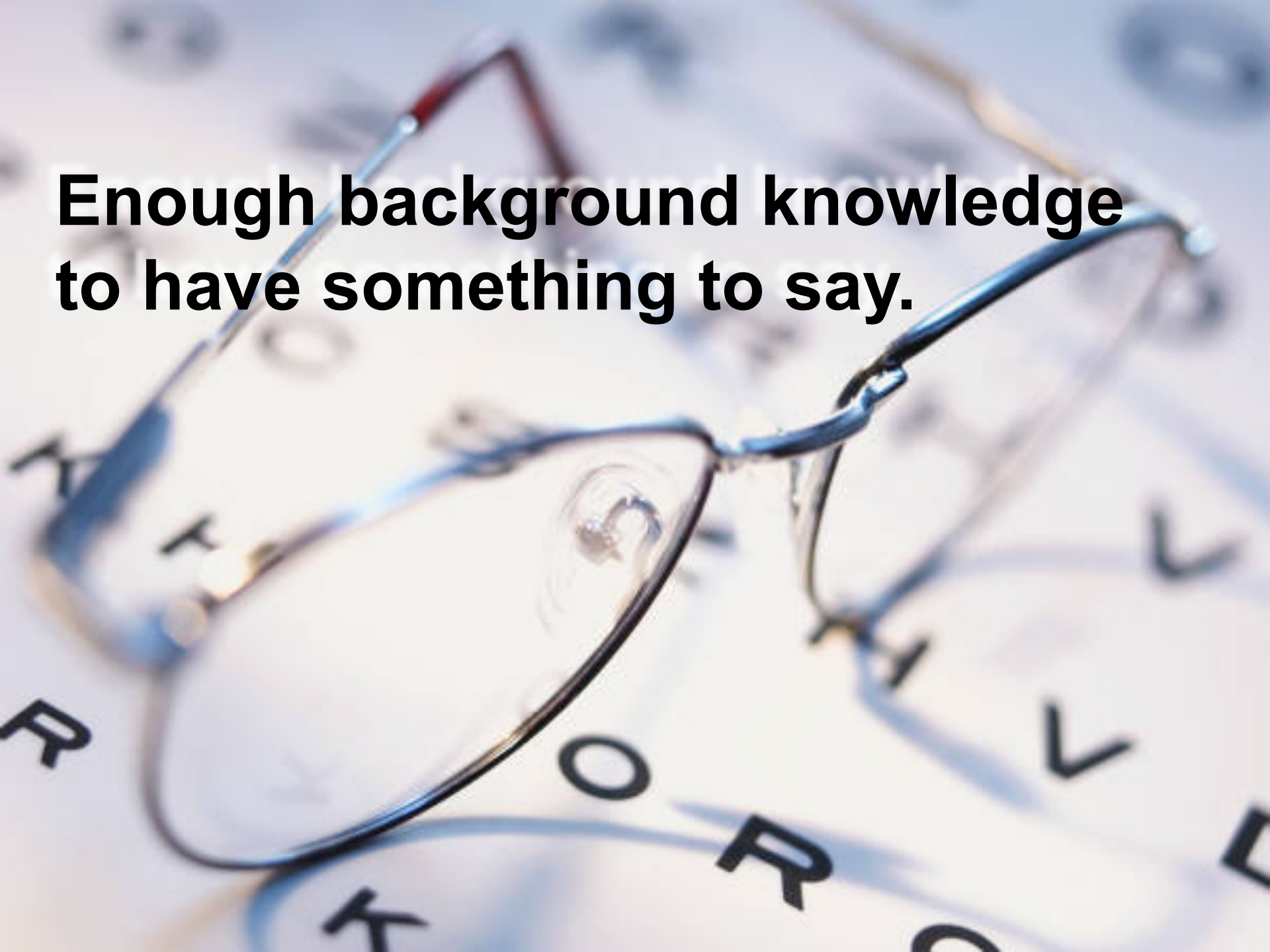


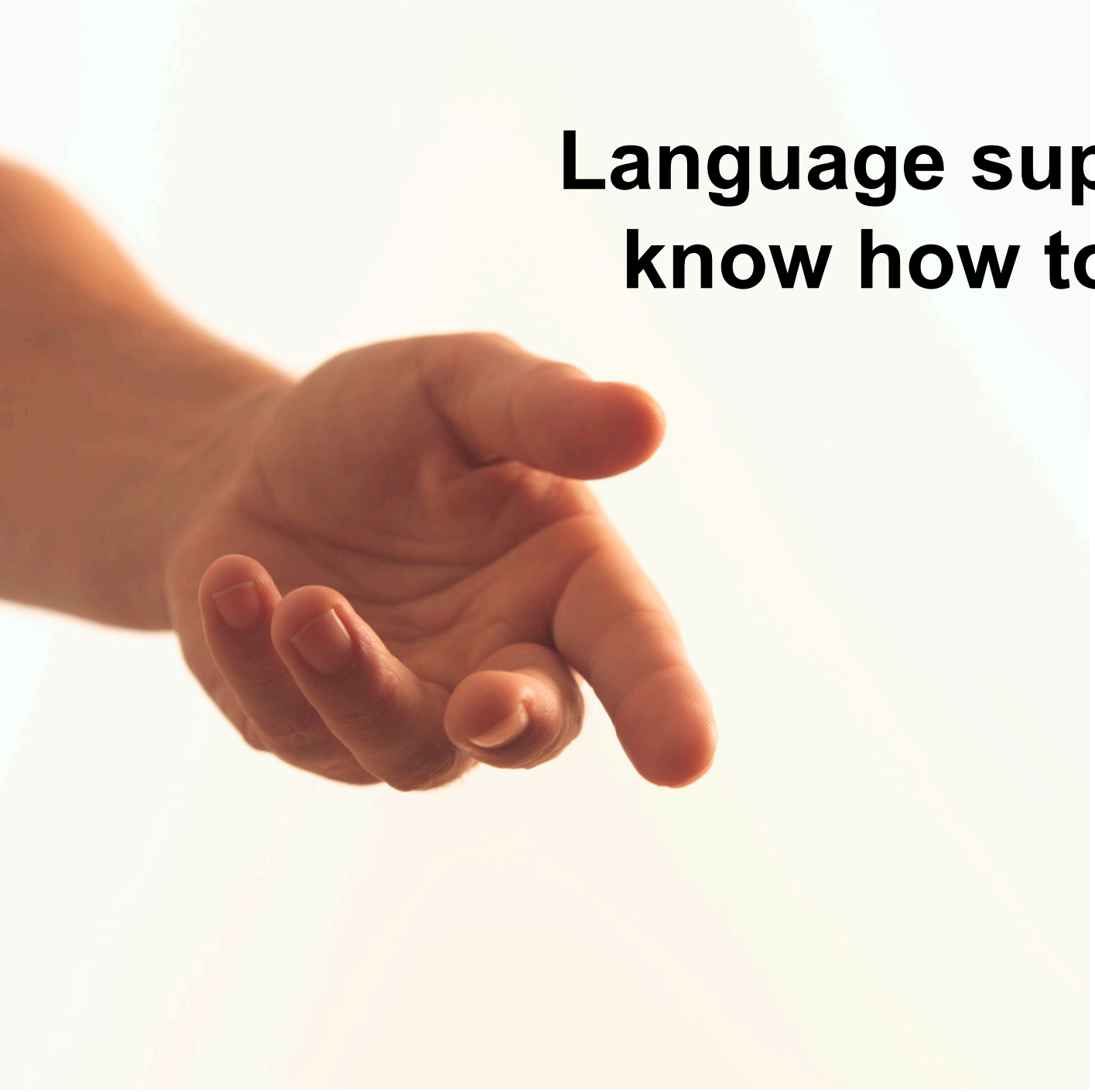
Students reconvene in expert groups to discuss all of the readings.

Collaborative Poster

- Students create a poster with specific visual information (drawings and text).
- All students participate in making the poster using their own colored marker.
- They sign the poster in their color.
- Students discuss **critically**, explain, and make decisions to complete this task.

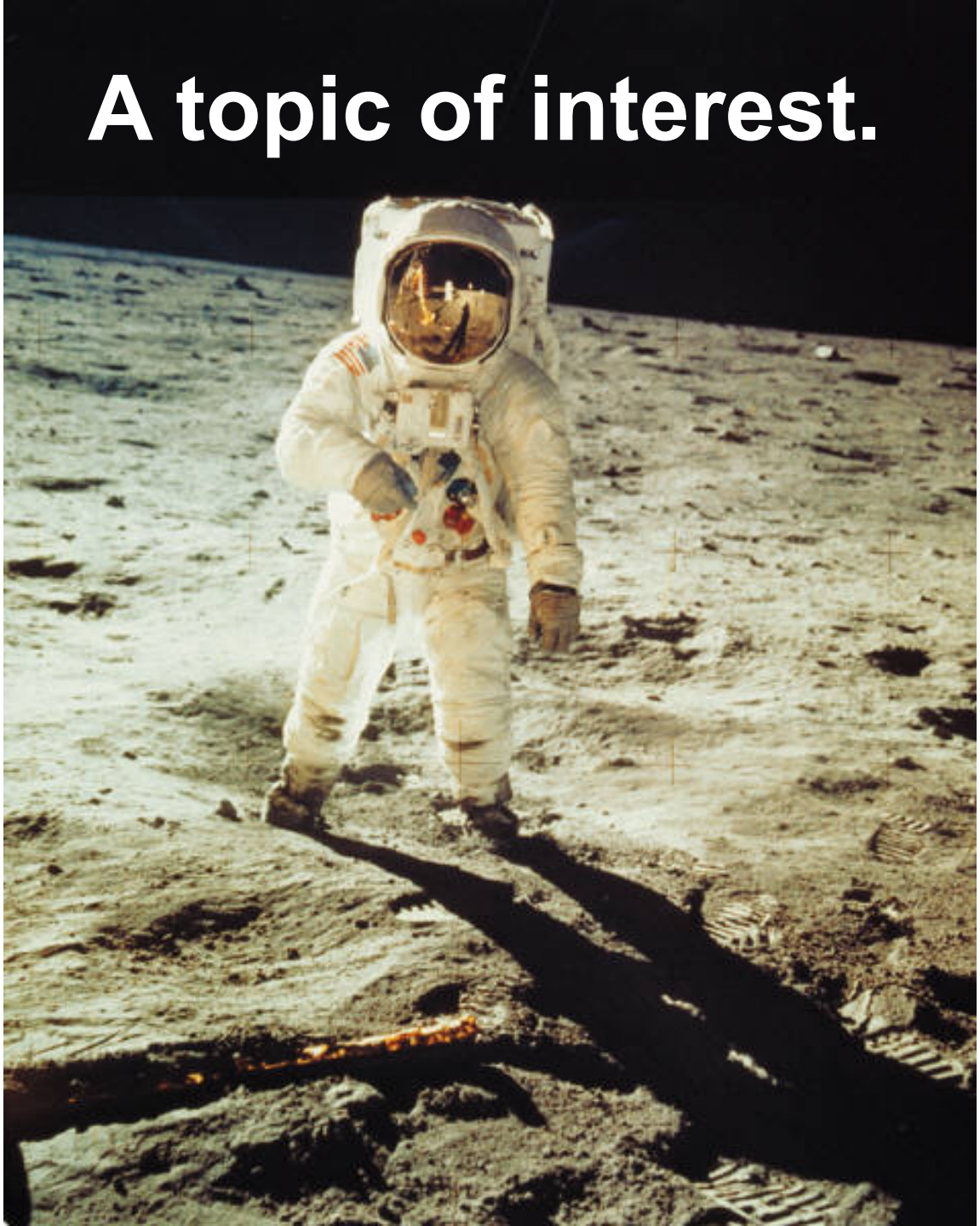
What does it take to make a task engaging ***and*** interactive?


Enough background knowledge
to have something to say.

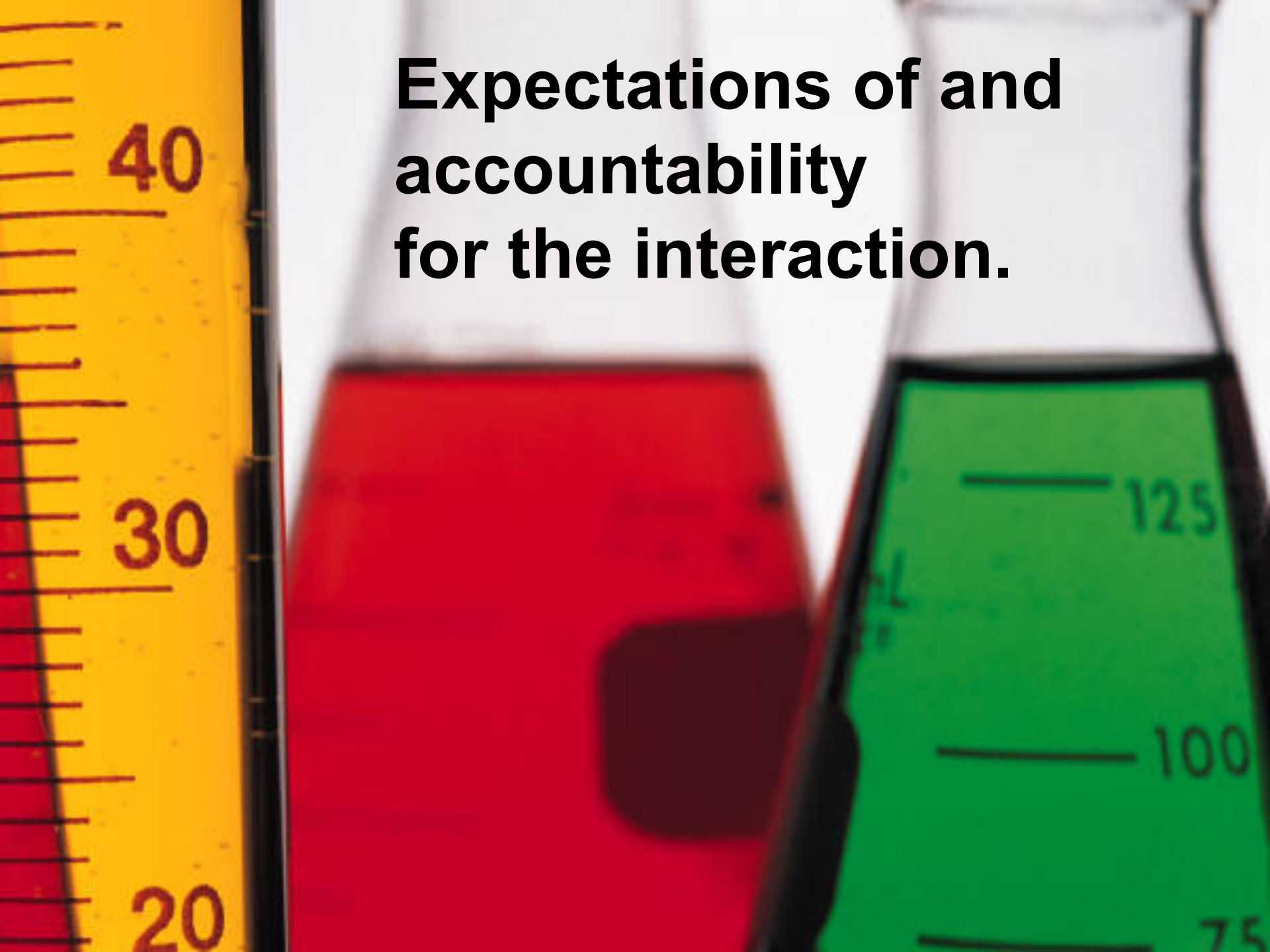


Language support to know how to say it.

A topic of interest.

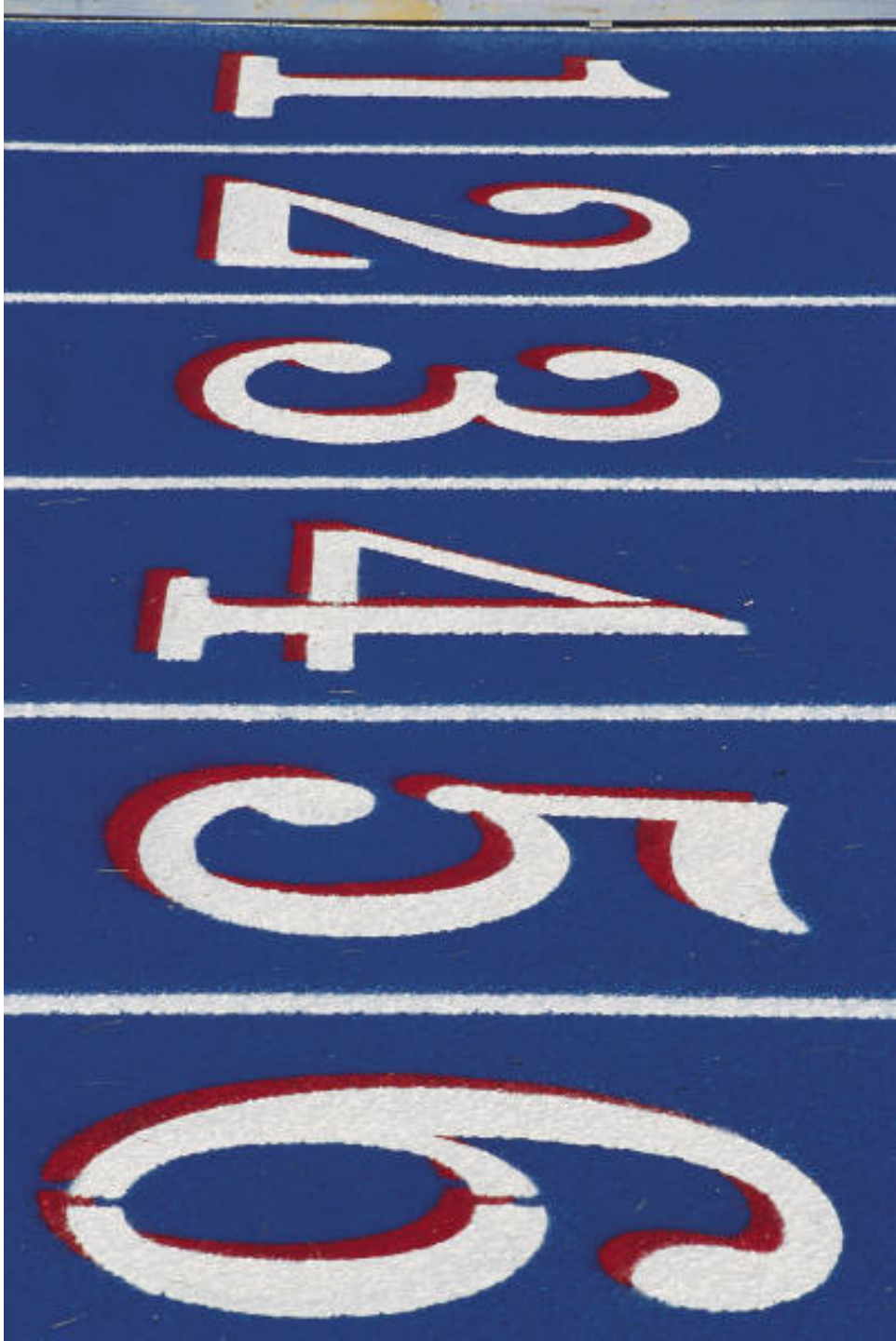


An authentic reason to interact.


Expectations of and
accountability
for the interaction.

An established community of learners that encourage and support each other.

Understanding of the task.



How do you construct a task that is engaging and interactive?

Indicators of Success - Productive Group Work DRAF T

INDICATORS	4-Exemplary	3-Applying	2-Approaching	1-Limited
Complexity of task: *The task is a novel application of a grade-level appropriate concept and is designed so that the outcome is not guaranteed (a chance for productive failure exists).*	Task reflects purpose and what was modeled. The task allows students an opportunity to use a variety of resources to creatively apply their knowledge of what was modeled. Students have an opportunity to experiment with concepts.	Tasks provide multiple, clear opportunities for students to apply and extend what was modeled. Students have an opportunity to use a variety of resources to creatively apply their knowledge of what was modeled.	The task is somewhat reflective of the purpose of the lesson, but there is little opportunity for student experimentation or innovation.	Task is an exact replication of what was modeled, with little or no opportunity for student experimentation with concepts.
Joint attention to tasks or materials: *Students are interacting with one another to build each other's knowledge. Outward indicators include body language and movement associated with meaningful conversations, and shared visual gaze on materials.*	Students ask critical questions of each other, developing and forming personal opinions and conclusions. They are able to evaluate and synthesize information, as well as independently use a variety of resources to acquire new or unknown information.	Body language, visual gaze, and language interactions provide evidence of joint attention to the task or materials by all members of the group. Students can explain their contributions and the contributions of other group members.	Body language, visual gaze, and language interactions provide some evidence of mutual attention to the task or materials by most members. Students are not holding each other accountable for purposeful contributions.	Students divide up the task so that they can work, then meet near end to assemble components. Body language, visual gaze, and lack of language interactions provide evidence of independent work occurring within the group.
Argumentation not arguing: *Student use accountable talk to persuade, provide evidence, ask questions of one another, and disagree without being disagreeable.*	Students reach a better understanding or consensus based on evidence and opinions provided by others. Students hold each member of the group accountable by usi[illegible]tioning strategies and [illegible]	Students ask for and offer evidence to support claims. However, members continue to maintain initial beliefs or positions about [illegible]	There is a process in place for accountable talk. However, student dialogue is limited and there are [illegible]nimal efforts to support [illegible]	No clear process is in place to facilitate accountable talk. Lack of st[illegible]evidence as [illegible]off-task, in [illegible]/or are unable [illegible]product.
Language support: *Written [illegible] teacher, and peer supports are available to boost academic language usage.*	[illegible] based on students' proficiency and need. A wide range of frames are available for students and students use the frames independently in academic language and writing. Teacher modeling includes the use of frames as well as academic vocabulary and high expectations for language production.	Students use one or two sentence frames from the variety that are available in a structured setting. A set of target vocabulary is available and used. Teachers model the use of frames. Students are encouraged to use the language support in guided instruction and productive group work.	Academic language related to the concept/standard is present. A frame may be provided. The teacher models at least once using target vocabulary or language frame. Students are encouraged to attempt using target vocabulary without opportunities for guided practice.	Vocabulary is posted but its use is not modeled. Students are simply told to use words. Language frames are not provided.
Teacher role: *What is the teacher doing while productive group work is occurring?*	Teacher is purposeful in scaffolding using prompts, cues and questions and checks for understanding regularly. Evidence collected during this time is used to plan further instruction.	Some scaffolding and checking for understanding occurs but there are delays in corrections or changes to the instruction. There is a link to further instruction.	Scaffolding or checking for understand occurs but is not used to plan further instruction.	Teacher manages, but does not interact with groups to scaffold conceptual knowledge.
Grouping: *Small groups of 2-5 students are purposefully constructed to maximize individual strengths without magnifying areas of needs (heterogeneous grouping).*	Groups are flexible and change based on students' proficiency, academic need, and/or content area. Productive group work occurs throughout the day.	Purposeful heterogeneous grouping occurs which are fluid in response to students' proficiency.	Some heterogeneous grouping occurs, but homogeneous grouping practices dominate. Decisions based on assessment are not apparent.	Grouping practices are solely homogeneous and are done primarily for scheduling convenience.

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Quality Indicator #1

Complexity of Task: *The task is a novel application of a grade-level appropriate concept and is designed so that the outcome is not guaranteed (a chance for productive failure exists).*

Quality Indicator #2

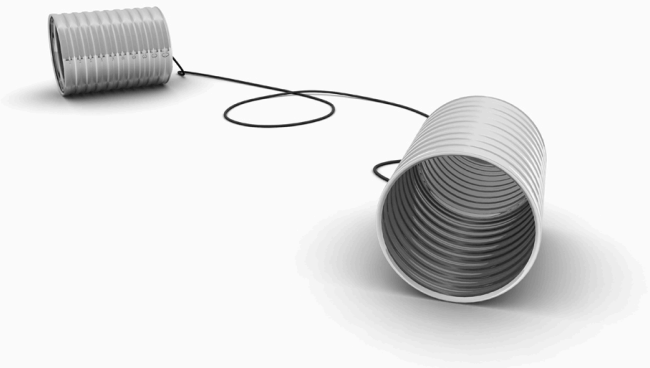
Joint attention to tasks or materials

Students are interacting with one another to build each other's knowledge. Outward indicators include body language and movement associated with meaningful conversations, and shared visual gaze on materials.

Quality Indicator #3

Argumentation not arguing:

Student use accountable talk to persuade, provide evidence, ask questions of one another, and disagree without being disagreeable.



Quality Indicator #4

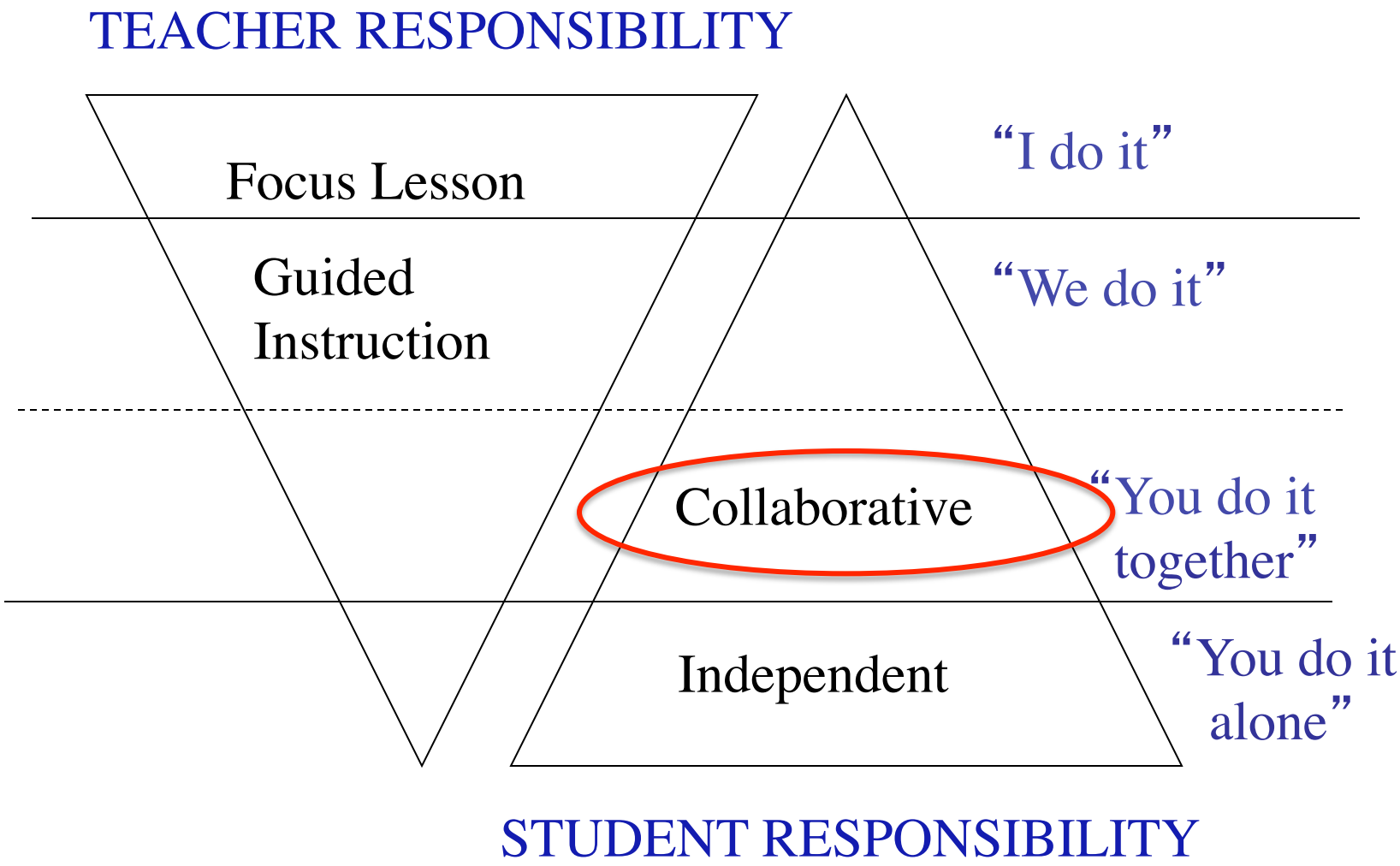
Language support: *Written, verbal, teacher, and peer supports are available to boost academic language usage.*

Quality Indicator #5

Grouping: *Small groups of 2-5 students are purposefully constructed to maximize individual strengths without magnifying areas of needs (heterogeneous grouping).*

Quality Indicator #6

Teacher role: *What is the teacher doing while productive group work is occurring?*



A Structure for Instruction that Works

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