

Response Cards: How to Make and Use

“Students learn best when they are actively engaged in learning relevant instructional material (Bost & Riccomini, 2006).” Response cards give teachers instant access to the level of understanding in their classroom be it individual, small group or the whole class. Christle and Schuster (2003) discussed that teachers provided more feedback, clarification and reteaching/modification to increase/improve a student’s understanding when students used response cards. Gardener et. al. (1994) found that when response cards were used, student responses were increased, quiz scores improved and students preferred response cards to hand raising. Also found was that the percentage of review and respond check points increased to almost 15 times more than hand raising and calling on one student at a time. Finally, Gardner et.al. also reported that students had more fun and were less frustrated about not being called upon. Reluctant students are less threatened and freer to participate.

The Cards

Access the templates for the Response Cards: student and teacher version on our website www.ABCD2SCo.com. There are several files: student sets, teacher sets and available in English and Spanish.

You will need the following supplies for a classroom set of 25 Response Card sets. 18 sheets of white card stock and 7 each of 11 different colors—plain colored copy paper works but cards are not as durable and construction paper doesn’t always cooperate in the copy machine—a laminator, scissors, paper cutter and 28 ea 1” loose-leaf rings.

Below is a list of the cards with suggested colors. The student sets templates have 6 cards per page. The teacher version is larger and has 1 card per page. The cards were designed to be an instant informal assessment. Use them individually, in pairs and small groups. Some teachers have made and used them with the A-D, True/False, and Yes/No cards the same colors for each respective group. Their reasoning is that this helps prevent cheating/copying etc. The reasoning behind each card being a different color is speed. If the answer is A (Solar Yellow) and the teacher sees purple and orange too, that item might need to be reviewed. However, if there is only one or two non yellows, the teacher knows who to check with and can move on. Make whichever style works for you.

Notes on the process. **Cut** the cards **BEFORE** laminating; they will last longer. Trim laminate closely for a better feel. Punch a hole in the top left corner of the cards (bottom left for the letters). *For the teacher’s set:* use three loose leaf rings to hold them together or have them spiral bound. Don’t forget the blank “help Please” card. You know, that obnoxious green one.

- Thumbs Up (color picture printed on white)
- Thumbs Down (color picture printed on white)
- True (Pulsar Pink)
- False (Orbit Orange)
- Yes (Gama Green)
- No (Re-entry Red)
- More Info (Blue)
- A (Solar Yellow)
- B (Purple)
- C (Fireball Fuchsia /Dark Pink)
- D (Cosmic Orange)
- I’m thinking! (color picture printed on white)
- I’ve got it! (Green)
- Blank (Terra or Neon Green)

Basic Guidelines.

The basics are easy, but here are a few guidelines I have found useful.

- Have a signal: Read/give the question and all the choices, wait, then give the signal for the students to respond.
- Give ample wait time: Wait longer than you think Choose an amount of time and set a timer. Students will need time to process the review item before being ready to answer.
- Shhhh! No talking! You too. Students should wait politely and patiently for the signal. You should not talk so that students concentrate on their response. No clarification, no explanations. Remember, this is an informal assessment but if you keep talking, you might skew the results.
- No changes allowed; mistakes are allowed and encouraged—begin with that expectation and it works.

A, B, C, & D

These are great for quick reviews and checks for understandings. Throw up a review item with A, B, C & D (or just two or three) choices and since they are all different colors, you have a quick snapshot. The **key** to this review is to have a **signal and some wait time**. Ask the question; give the choices. Then at the appointed signal have the students show their responses. If you use a timer, that signal is the sound of the timer.

The Blank Bright Green Card

Use this as a help signal. Use any color you want as long as it isn't a repeat of another color. Students can just flip it up on their desk or hold it up to let you know they need something extra.

Other Usages for Classroom Management and Groups

On the Back: Use the back for pairs, trios, and quartets. Then when you want pairs/trios or groups of four, tell the students to look at the back of the "A/B/C" card.

For Pairs: On the back of the "A" card, write pairs of items. Try opposites. Then when you want pairs, tell the students to look at the back of the "A" card and find their opposite. (Here are some opposites: Night/Day, Open/Closed, White/Black, Tall/Short, Wide/Narrow, Big/Little, Good/Bad, Young/Old, New/Used, High/Low, Right/Left, Wet/Dry, Long/Short, Inside/Outside, Smooth/Rough)

For Trios: On the back of the "B" card, write trios of fruits/food. (Bananas, Pineapples, Grapes, Strawberries, Watermelons, Blueberries, Kiwifruits, Guavas, Peaches, Apricots, Cherries) Then when you want trios, tell the students to look at the back of the "B" card and find the other two matching fruits.

For Quartets: On the back of the "C" card write/draw quartets of shapes. (Square, Triangle, Obtuse, Scalene, Acute, ...), Circle, Pentagon, Hecta/Octagon, Cones, Prisms, Cubes, Rhombus, Trapezoid) Then when you want groups of four, tell the students to look at the back of the "C" card and find the other matching shapes. *This works nicely for Numbered Heads or Jigsaw. All the circles do this, squares do that, triangles etc.*

Random Choice: On the back of the "D" card, number 1 through 25 (or however many you have). When you need an answer and want it to be random, then pick a number and whoever is holding that number must answer. Having them numbered also works well when the cards are collected and distributed each day; just line them up 1- through ????. Have a student responsible for this.

In the end, use them to have some fun and make things a little easier. If you can think of additions that might work or other ways to use them (that's how the Spanish additions were added), please feel free to share (shawn@abcd2sco.com).