

## Strategy #4

### Card Sort

#### Purpose:

- To activate prior knowledge.
- To extend prior knowledge.
- To identify misconceptions.
- To categorize information.
- To help students focus on the material.
- To make connections between what students know and what they are about to learn.

#### Steps:

1. Students work in groups of 4-6. Each group is given 24-30 small note papers.
2. A topic is given. Working individually, students write or draw as many points as they can think of about the topic - one point, picture or diagram per card.
3. After about 3 minutes, students work together in their small groups putting the small cards into categories. Once the cards are in categories, the categories are labeled.
4. Students take a few blank cards, leave their tables and move from table to table to learn and gather ideas from the other displays of cards. This works best if the teacher asks the students to look for 2 or 3 ( a specific number) of new ideas.
5. After 5 minutes, the group members return to their tables and add to, or change their display.
6. Each group is given a large piece of poster paper and the cards are taped or pasted on it. More pictures or diagrams may be added as the poster is being created. The posters are put on display.

**Formative Assessment:**

As the students work, the teacher will note which students have prior knowledge and which may require more background knowledge.

Each group may be asked to briefly explain their terms or categories or to talk about the poster.

**Later**, the teacher has an opportunity to view the posters looking for incorrect information that might lead to confusion as the students learn the topic.

**Follow-up:**

At the end of the unit, students may do the card sort again and add to or change their poster.