

## **“Novel Ideas Only” Activity Protocol**

### **What is a “Novel Ideas Only” Activity?**

This activity is a quick way to elicit background knowledge or new ideas from a group regarding a given topic/theme.

### **How do you implement the “Novel Ideas Only” Activity in the classroom?**

Students are assigned to groups of four (4). The teacher poses the prompt/question and then asks the students (in each group) to do the following:

1. To number a loose leaf page from 1-8
2. To work collaboratively to brainstorm possible responses/answers to the prompt/question – students are given 5 minutes to do so
3. As a new idea is asserted or stated aloud, another student from the group reiterates the contribution and then all students write it down on their individual sheet of paper
4. After 5 minutes, the teacher directs the students to draw a line under the last item offered by the group
5. All groups are then asked to share their group’s list:
  - a. Each group stands and one “reporter” shares the group’s ideas
  - b. The “reporter” starts the process by restating the prompt/question
  - c. The teacher reminds all other groups that they must listen to the first group very carefully because each ensuing group will only share a group’s idea if it was not shared by any other group before them – this step of the protocol is key for the strategy to work and hold true to its name (“Novel Ideas Only”)
  - d. As the groups share their “Novel Ideas Only”, the rest of the groups are writing the new contributions from each group to each of their individual lists. To facilitate this process, the teacher can also generate a separate running list on chart paper, so that students that have difficulty writing and listening (simultaneously) can copy the list after they have listened attentively to the contributions of all the groups
  - e. The end product of this activity allows for a class to generate a compilation of “Novel Ideas Only” as responses to the given prompt/question.

### **When would I use “Novel Ideas Only” in the classroom?**

The object of this strategy is to create a purposeful and engaging opportunity for students to work in teams of four (4) to brainstorm responses to a particular prompt/question that a teacher poses during class time, either as an introductory, review or share activity.

### **How can I use the activity with Beginner ELL students?**

Beginner students can benefit greatly from a question/prompt that requires them to reflect on a personal experience or requests that are related to an immediate context where a sequence of pictures, photographs and other forms of realia help contextualize the particular task.

In a predictable context, students at a low-to-mid beginning level of ESL should only be expected to identify everyday personal topics, as well as common individual words and learned phrases – they may even respond in their native language. Whenever possible, try to generate work/collaborative groups that are heterogeneous (i.e., 1 Beginner student, 2 Intermediate students and 1 Advanced student). This type of grouping allows for those students that are more proficient in English to model the proper use of it, as well as the academic language within context when appropriate.

Finally, when planning for group/collaborative work, use the “Description of Proficiency Levels” found in the Introduction section of the ESL Resource Guide noted in the footer below, to identify achievable goals for group/collaborative work for all your ELL students.