

Conga Line Instructional Strategy

Taken from Eight Ways to Use Movement in Teaching & Learning

By [Larry Ferlazzo](#) — July 24, 2020

The Conga Line (Vogt & Echevarria, 2008) has always been a class favorite. It's a teacher-friendly technique that can be quick or more lengthy and gets kids out of their seats. This is how I implemented it:

1. Students number off 1, 2.
2. All 1s stand in a line, and 2s stand face the 1s.
3. Students use a sentence stem to discuss the question or topic posed. Explicitly assign who will share first (for example, all 1s talk first, then 2s).

Class examples:

- Which is more important, being right or being kind? Explain I think being___is more important because ...
 - What was a leading cause of the American Revolution? One of the leading causes of the American Revolution was ...
 - Explain two ways to solve this problem. One way to solve this problem is ...
 - How did the character change from the beginning of the book to now? In the beginning of the book, the character was ... but now ... for example ...
4. When the music begins, all 2s move to the right until the music stops. (I encourage dance here! It makes it fun!!) Everyone has a new partner.
 5. Repeat steps 1-4 as many times as you can.

The Conga Line has been successful as a warm-up activity to build background for students as well as a formative assessment toward the middle or end of a unit. It helps students express themselves in a safe, low-stress way while hearing their peers' ideas, too. Step 3 is probably the most important one of all. Providing students with the sentence stem allows them an entry point into the conversation. It helps some students if we read the stem as a class before we begin the Conga Line. I never require them to use the stem, but it's there as a scaffold. Sometimes, I give student 1 a different question from student 2. Or I give a mixture of stems, and after a few rounds, they trade with peers. Following a Conga Line, I typically have students do a quick write because they now have many ideas from speaking and listening to their classmates.