

CONCEPT ATTAINMENT STRATEGY

Jerome Bruner (1956) developed the Concept Attainment strategy. It can be thought of as a game of “finding the rule.” It is a teaching strategy characterized by “a pattern of decision in the acquisition, retention, and utilization of information that serves to meet certain objectives” (Bruner, Goodnow, & Austin, 1956). In this process, new ideas are introduced – and defined by students - inductively through the “acts of categorization” (Bruner, et al., 1956). Students see examples and non-examples, form theories, and then test those theories against the given data until they are able to name the idea.

1. Choose a concept to develop (e.g., Sustainability)
2. Designate one area of the pocket chart or t-chart as “My Idea” and “Not My Idea”
3. Make a list of both examples and non-examples of the idea
4. Present the first card by saying, “This is my idea” Place it under the appropriate column
5. Present the next card by saying, “This is not my idea” Place it under the appropriate column
6. Repeat this process 2 more times
7. Ask the group to look at the examples under each column and discuss how they are alike.
8. Ask the group to **think** about what the “idea” may be, but not to say it out loud.
9. For the next three examples under each column, ask the students to decide if the examples go under “My Idea” or “Not my Idea” (mix-up the examples, so that they do not follow a predictable pattern). Here students who had a prediction can confirm (or not) their idea.
10. Ask students, who think they know the idea, to volunteer some more examples and non-examples (depending on time)
11. Ask students to take a guess. Review the examples to see if the data supports their prediction
12. If no one has the correct prediction, prompt them to identify patterns in the My Idea column and contrast them to the non-example column. Last resort - tell them what the “idea” was. Go back and review how the idea examples connect and support the “Idea.”