
Think-Pair-Share

Professor Frank Lyman and his associates, University of Maryland Howard County Southern Teacher Education Center, have developed simple concept development structures, Think-Pair-Share and Think Trix. Their description follows:

WHY THINK-PAIR-SHARE?

Many teachers run their classrooms in the "share" mode. Basically this recitation model means that one student talks at a time. Though not fatal for the teacher who is proficient at this "uni-mode" strategy, it is not conducive to a high degree of pupil response, and for beginning teachers especially it can be a major source of control problems.

Think-Pair-Share is a "multi-mode" strategy developed to encourage student participation in the classroom. Students are taught to use a new response cycle in answering questions. The technique is simple to learn and is applicable across all grade levels, disciplines and group sizes. In some cases (K-12) students can facilitate the process themselves.

WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF THINK-PAIR-SHARE?

- Students listen while the teacher poses a question.
- Students are given time in which to think of a response.
- Students are then sometimes cued to pair with a neighbor and discuss their responses.
- Finally, students are invited to share their responses with the whole group.

A time limit is set for each step in the process. Many teachers use cueing devices such as bells, pointers, hand signals, or cubes to move students through the cycle. Students may be asked to write or web (diagram) their responses while in the think and/or pair mode(s).

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS?

Students have time to at least think through their own answers to questions before the questions are answered and the discussion moves on. They rehearse responses mentally, and sometimes verbally with another student, before being asked to share publicly. All students have an opportunity to share their thinking with at least one other student, thereby increasing their sense of involvement.

Think-Pair-Share is a Cooperative Learning strategy, and as such has advantages for students in the areas of acceptance, peer support, achievement, self-esteem, liking of other students, and liking of school. Cooperative Learning also has positive effects on mainstreaming and relationships between handicapped and nonhandicapped students.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO TEACHERS?

Students have been found to spend more time on task and to listen to each other more when engaged in Think-Pair-Share activities. Many more students raise their hands to respond after rehearsing in pairs. Students may have better recall due to increased "wait time," and the quality of responses may be better.

Like students, teachers also have more time to think when using Think-Pair-Share. They can concentrate on asking higher-order questions, observing student reactions, and listening to student responses. Class discussion can be a much more relaxing experience for teachers and students. Finally, Think-Pair-Share is easy to learn and easy to use!