

Think-Pair-Share

Students pair up to share thoughts on a problem or question initiated by the instructor. This can be modified to involve pairs of students exchanging ideas to enrich the discussion. The technique is good for generating class discussion and sharing of opinions and ideas.

Student Level: Any Level

Class Size: 3 – 100+

Ease of Use Rating: Easy

Activity Description:

Think-Pair-Share can be modified to fit any class size and any situation. Students do not have to move from their current seats and discussion can be guided.

The instructor presents an issue for discussion in the form of a problem or question, but instead of just throwing the question out for one student to answer, the students discuss possible solutions in pairs. Students should be given time (30-45 seconds) to think about the issue, then the students can form pairs to discuss the problem or question. Discussion time can vary depending on the question and how the discussion is going within the pairs.

In a final step, individuals share their thoughts with the entire class.

The Think-Pair-Share method may take some practice. When first using this technique, teachers may want to ask for volunteers to share their discussions and wait until the class is more comfortable with the procedure before calling on students to present before the group. The strategy is designed to foster short class discussions. Pairs share what they have discussed with the entire class. Other students can then respond to what is said or they can share what they discussed with their own partners. [1]

A modification on the Think-Pair-Share method is the Think-Pair-Square-Shared. In this technique, a step is added to the Think-Pair-Share method before students share with the class. Before presenting to the whole class, “student pairs turn to another pair and discuss what they have shared within their first pairs. [After this additional discussion,] the pairs share with the class.”[1]

“It is important for the teacher to make sure that pairs are matched up with other pairs, and that pairs have equal participation and that constructive sharing takes place. If you are concerned about a pair dominating the conversation, give each pair a specified amount of time to share their answer. Remind the pairs that they do not have to accept the other pair’s response, but they do have to show respect for the pair.” [1]

These activities can be modified to fit the objectives of the class; it may only be necessary for an instructor to use one or more of the methods only one time during a class period or only when complex concepts presented. The methods are designed to promote discussion and helps students help each other fill in the gaps or ask questions that they may not ask publicly in class.

Research and Applications:

[1] *Ten Techniques For Energizing Your Classroom Discussions*: From the Grand Rapids Community College Center for Teaching and Learning. [On-line]
http://web.grcc.cc.mi.us/ctl/ten_techniques_for_energizing.htm