

Cooperative Learning: Think-Pair-Share Strategy

Overview

Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative learning strategy that can promote and support higher level thinking. The teacher asks students to think about a specific topic, pair with another student to discuss their own thinking, and then share their ideas with the group.

Steps

- Decide on how to organize students into pairs.
- Pose a discussion topic or pose a question.
- Give students at least 10 seconds to think on their own. (“think time”).
- Ask students to pair with a partner and share their thinking.
- Call on a few students to share their ideas with the rest of the class.

Hints and Management Ideas

- *Pre-assign partners.* Rather than waiting until the discussion time, indicate in advance who students’ partners will be. Otherwise, the focus may become one of finding a partner rather than of thinking about the topic at hand.
- *Change partners.* Students should be given an opportunity to think with a variety of partners.
- Give “*think time*”.
- *Monitor the discussions.* It is important to listen to some of the discussions so that common misconceptions can be addressed and unique ideas shared with the whole group.

Benefits of Think-Pair-Share

- When students have appropriate “think time”, the quality of their responses improves.
- Students are actively engaged in the thinking.
- Thinking becomes more focussed when it is discussed with a partner.
- More of the critical thinking is retained after a lesson if students have an opportunity to discuss and reflect on the topic.
- Many students find it safer or easier to enter into a discussion with another classmate, rather than with a large group.
- No specific materials are needed for the strategy, so it can easily be incorporated into lessons.
- Building on the ideas of others is an important skill for students to learn.