



2. Think-Pair-Share

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What's the idea?

Giving students the opportunity to discuss questions with a partner before answering improves their engagement and learning.

What does it mean?

Think-Pair-Share is a simple, collaborative learning strategy with three steps:
Step 1 – Think. Students consider a question individually
Step 2 – Pair. Students discuss their ideas with a partner to refine their thinking and seek peer support
Step 3 – Share. Selected pairs present their answers to the class.

The act of discussing the question creates a safe space where students can ask further questions and practise ideas. This maximises participation because all students answer each question. Reporting back is also easier because students repeat an idea they have rehearsed. Finally, it is less scary for pairs to admit that we don't understand or ask for further support than it is for an individual.

What are the implications for teachers?

Use this strategy to replace 'hands-up' during whole-class questioning to secure maximum engagement.

Students may need to practise how to move from pair-talk to class listening; establish strong start-stop routines with your class to help transitions run smoothly.

Consider seating plans carefully too; students need to feel safe and supported in their pairings. During feedback, encourage active

listening and ask students to build on and challenge each other's responses. As students gain in confidence, encourage debate within pairs and raise the level of challenge.

You can combine this technique with 'Cold Calling' so that pairs expect to be asked to share their ideas and are prepared for this.

Finally, think ahead: well-planned, open questions promote deeper thought, understanding and challenge.

TOP TIP / Experiment with the amount of 'think' and 'share' time you allow; too little time and answers will be underdeveloped, too much and attention may start to waver.

Want to know more?

Sherrington, T, (2012). *The Washing Hands of Learning: Think Pair Share*. Available at: <https://teacherhead.com/2012/07/17/the-washing-hands-of-learning-think-pair-share/6>

