

## Think-Pair-Share

*Think-Pair-Share is an active learning strategy that has been used successfully in classes of various sizes across a wide range of subjects.*

---

*The purpose of this document is to familiarize you with the Think-Pair-Share learning strategy. Specifically, you should:*

1. Be able to describe the components of the think-pair-shared activity
2. Identify the potential benefits of think-pair-share for the learner and the instructor
3. Apply the think-pair-share activity in a teaching encounter

### Think-Pair-Share Consists of Three Phases: Think, Pair, and Share

#### Think:

---

In the first phase of think pair share, the instructor asks question, poses a problem or gives a task to the class. Learners are then given a set amount of time during which they are expected to quietly and independently think about or write their answer.

- Questions should require engagement with higher order learning skills of evaluation, analysis or synthesis.
- The amount of time learners should be given should be related to the difficulty of the question being asked.
- Students will require varying amounts of time- students who finish early can be asked to provide a justification for why they feel their answer is correct.
- If there are any concerns about students staying engaged during the think time, the course instructor can ask students to write their answers.

## Pair:

---

During the second phase of the activity, students pair up or split into small groups to discuss and compare their thoughts.

- During this phase students can be instructed to pick the best answer, generate as many possible responses as possible, or come to a consensus, depending on the question asked.
- Groups are ideally heterogenous, with a mix of learning abilities, communication styles, and ethnicities and genders.
- The composition of the groups should be changed periodically, approximately every six weeks.
- As in the think phase attention should be paid to the amount of time given for discussion: too much time and students will become bored and get off task, too little time and they will become frustrated.
- Observing the groups during the discussion phase can help the instructor get a sense of the appropriate amount of time required for most groups to produce an answer to the question.

## Share:

---

In the final phase of the think-pair-share activity students rejoin the large group and are asked to share their responses with the class.

- This allows students the opportunity to discuss their answers with a small group of peers, rehearse their answers, and get buy in from their group members prior to being asked to share with the larger class.
- Sharing can be done by cold calling, asking for volunteers, requesting diverse responses, going around the room, etc.
- The instructor can also ask the groups to write their responses and collect these at the end of class.

## **Think pair share has several benefits for the learner and teacher alike.**

- It promotes increased involvement of students.
- Students develop increased comfort and skill with oral presentation.
- Because all students have the opportunity to share their answer and thinking there is an increased opportunity for them to get feedback both from the course instructor and from their peers.
- The quality of student's responses are improved with the increased wait time and opportunity for discussion.
- Instructors can focus their class time on asking higher order questions, rather than simply covering the basics.

## Think-Pair-Share can be adapted to a variety of classroom environments and tasks.

*Variations of Think-Pair-Share can include:*

- Pair-Share
- Think-Pair

*And in larger classes with voting mechanisms:*

- Think-Vote-Pair-Share
- Think-Pair-Vote-Share
- Think-Vote-Pair-Vote-Share

Brainstorm ways in which you might incorporate think-pair-share into your next class!

### Sources:

---

- **Lom, B. Classroom Activities: Simple Strategies to Incorporate Student- Centered Activities within Undergraduate Science Lectures. *The Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education* (JUNE), 11(1):A64-A71, 2012.**
- **Nolinske, B and Millis, B. Cooperative Learning as an Approach to Pedagogy. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* 53, 31-40, 1999.**
- Rao, SP and DiCarlo SE. Peer Instruction Improves Performance on quizzes. *Advan in Physiol Edu* 24:51-55, 2000.
- Sherman, L. Cooperative Learning in Post Secondary Education: Implications for Social Psychology for Active Learning Experiences. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991).

\*Note: **BOLD** = Recommended Sources