

Structures for Collaboration

Carousel Brainstorming

Used to elicit background knowledge, to build background knowledge, to review recently studied information, or to gather opinions. Allows students to build on one another's ideas in a very structured manner.

1. Prepare the same number of wall charts as groups. Each wall chart will have some kind of "stimulus" to which students will respond. These can be photographs, steps in a problem-solving sequence, targeted vocabulary, quotations, text excerpts, etc.—usually one item per chart.
2. Assign each group to begin at a specific chart. It may be helpful to assign a different color marker for each group.
3. On the first signal—groups move to assigned charts and generate and record as many ideas as possible for that item.
4. On the second signal—groups rotate clockwise to the next chart, review what the previous group wrote, and generate and add additional ideas or questions.
5. On the third signal—groups rotate clockwise to the next chart, review what the previous groups wrote, generate and add additional ideas or questions. Continue until all groups have written on all charts. Then, ask the students to take a "Gallery Walk" of all charts and be seated.

Fishbowl

Used as a structure for modeling a process and for giving groups of students the opportunity to have structured talk while others have structured listening.

1. Set up a small inner circle of students to demonstrate an activity for the class. Have all other students form a larger outer circle around the inner circle (fishbowl group) of students.
2. Give the outer circle a specific listening and recording task to accomplish while they observe the fishbowl group.
3. Give the inner circle (fishbowl) directions for the activity and how they are to proceed.
4. The inner circle (fishbowl) demonstrates the activity to the rest of the class. As necessary, clarify and correct the activity steps with the fishbowl group.
5. Debrief with the entire class.

Note: The fishbowl can also be used as a structure for Socratic Seminar, where the inner-circle students participate in a discussion and the outer-circle students listen and take notes. Later, the outer-circle students can comment on the discussion, using their notes and then, possibly, exchange places with the fishbowl students.

Four Corners

Used to check for comprehension and to build student accountability for articulating their understanding. Also helps build cohesion among classmates as they discover they can help each other.

1. Allow students to divide themselves into four groups based on their perceived level of understanding or mastery of a question or concept—physically, they can move to four different “corners” of the room. 1 = least level of understanding; 4 = highest level of understanding.
2. Ask the groups to brainstorm all that they know about the question or concept, and to generate questions that would help them gain more understanding.
3. Ask a representative from the Level-1 group to share all that was on their group’s brainstorm list, saving questions until all groups have shared.
4. Proceed in turn with each sequential group, allowing them to share new information not previously mentioned.
5. Finish with the group that perceived themselves as having mastered the material.
6. Revisit groups’ questions to see if any have been answered by the other groups’ sharing, and then invite students to answer the questions still pending.
7. Clarify misconceptions and misstatements.

Give One/Get One

Interactive method for reviewing content, eliciting background knowledge, or processing newly taught information.

1. Ask each student to make a list of ideas related to a teacher-generated topic or question on a sheet of paper.
2. Give students 2–3 minutes to create as long a list as possible.
3. Tell students to draw a line after their final idea.
4. Have students stand with their list in hand and talk, one on one, with as many other students as they can in a period of 3–5 minutes.
5. Students must give each other student they meet an idea from their list; they must also write down one new idea from each partner’s list.
6. At the end of the activity, create a class list of information completed from the individual lists of students.

Inside/Outside Circles or Parallel Lineups (“Conga Line”)

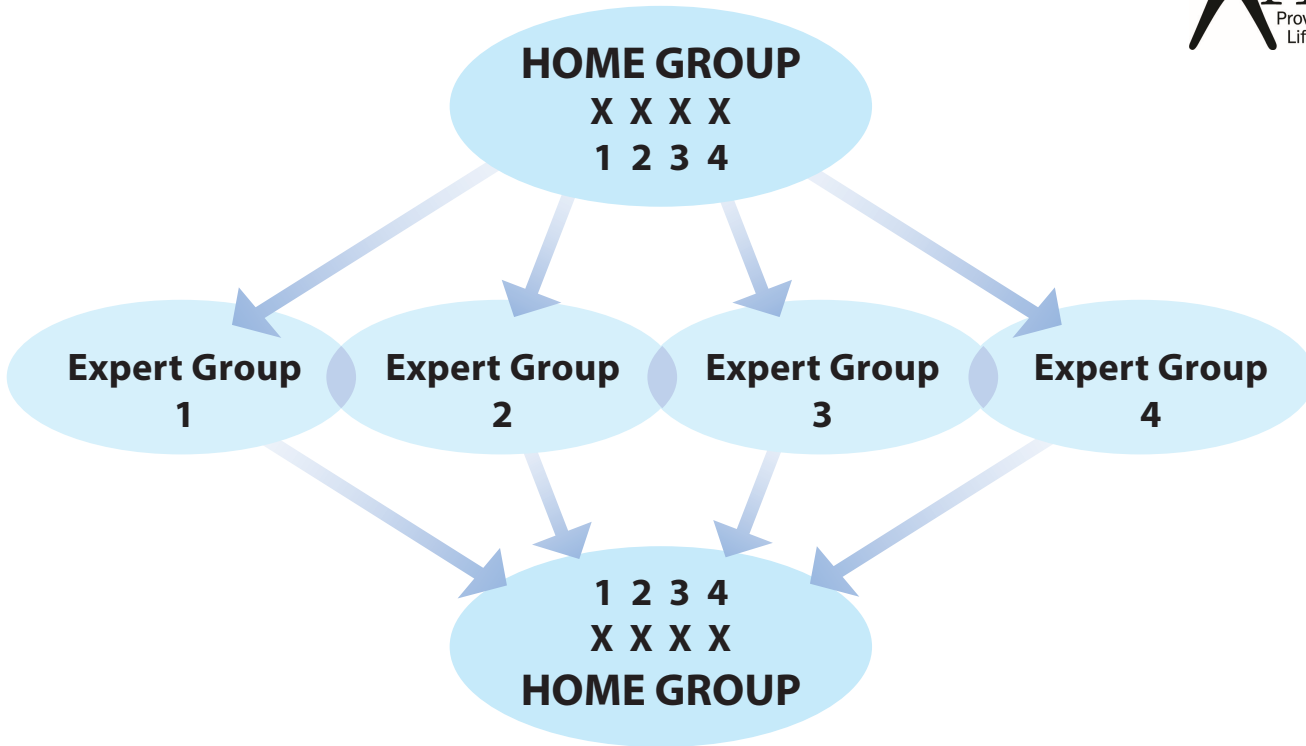
Used to review key concepts and to build academic talk.

1. Give each student a slip of paper or card with a question, vocabulary word, or some other topic they will need to explain.
2. Give them 2 minutes to think about their topic and to write notes on the paper/card.
3. Divide students into two equal groups (papers/cards can also be color-coded for easy division into two groups).
4. Place half the group in the inner circle directly facing a member of the second half of the group in an outer circle. (Alternatively, form parallel lines.)
5. Provide a limited amount of time for the partners to quiz each other on the topics from their papers/cards.
6. Coach the students to speak in complete sentences and to restate the question in their answer as they speak to their partners.
7. Coach students to ask their partner questions if the partner is not able to readily respond about the topic.
8. Have the outer circle move to the left (or right) two or three partners down. With parallel lineups, have one or two persons at one end of the line walk quickly to the other end of the line, and all other move one or two spaces to face a new partner. To form a “Conga Line,” use Conga music to cue students when to move; all the students dance while the outer circle or line moves.
9. Repeat Steps 5 through 8.

Jigsaw—Home Group/Expert Group

Used when discussion of new information is desired, but time is limited or the target text/content material is especially dense. Jigsaw provides scaffolded inquiry with accountability.

1. Divide students into small groups. The number of sections of the reading or the number of concepts being reviewed or introduced will determine the number and size of the groups.
2. Assign each member of the group a number that corresponds to the section of the text to be read or the concept to be mastered. Each member of the group is responsible for completing one part of the reading or mastering one of the assigned concepts. Encourage students to take notes.
3. Students then leave their “home” groups and form “expert” groups with other students with the same number. Each “expert” group works on its part of the assignment; members assist each other with questions, clarifications, and summaries. In preparation for going back to his or her “home” group as an “expert,” each student rehearses and teaches the lesson to the other members.
4. Students return to their “home” groups and share, discuss information, and teach their part of the assignment. Students synthesize their understanding of the whole text or set of concepts by summarizing the main ideas and identifying how all the jigsaw parts are related.
5. Students reassemble as a whole class and share their thoughts and responses.



Jigsaw Sequencing Groups

Used to structure a group for negotiation and problem-solving.

1. Cut/separate sections of a text into individual parts. Each part should have a complete meaning and show a type of transition at the beginning or the end of that section.
2. Form groups of students that correspond to the number of "jigsaw" pieces.
3. Each group member receives a different piece of the text, problem, or proof.
4. Each member of the group must then decide where their piece fits in the text, problem, or proof.
5. If a student thinks he/she has the first section of the text, problem, or proof, the student must give the reasons why without letting the group read the section. He/she tells the group, "I think I have the first piece because..."

6. If the group agrees that it is the first section, the student reads the text, problem, or proof aloud to the group and then places it on the table.
7. The group then proceeds to look for the next section following the same rules as above.
8. Once the group has identified what they think the correct sequence is, they summarize what the text or problem means or represents.

KWL

When done collaboratively, used to elicit collective background knowledge, to build purpose for a learning task, and to chronicle learning. Allows students to build on each other's learning.

1. Draw three columns on chart paper. Label the columns of the KWL chart; What we **K**now, What we **W**ant/Need to Know and What we **L**earned.

2. Identify a text selection or topic for pairs or small groups of students to consider during the activity.
3. Ask students to brainstorm and enter information in the first column to indicate what they already know about the topic—this is a way to discover students’ prior knowledge.
4. Ask students to brainstorm questions in the second column indicating what they want/need to know about the topic to better understand it—this can help establish purpose during the learning activity.
5. After engaging with the text/topic, have students revisit the KWL to identify what they’ve learned in the third column.

Note-Checking Pairs

Used to foster the 10-2 instructional model (10 minutes of “input”; 2 minutes of “processing”) and to check for comprehension.

1. At the end of a class segment (10 to 15 minutes), ask students to find a “Shoulder Partner” with whom to review their notes.
2. The note review activities could include:
 - Summarize the three most important points, using both students’ notes.
 - Choose the most important idea that will appear on the exam based on the notes.
 - Check the completeness and accuracy of each partner’s notes.
 - Use the notes together to solve an example problem.
 - Write questions together in the left column of their Cornell notes.
 - Use the notes together to work on a teacher-generated question.

Note: These notes and the “processing” that has been done can be collected as a formative assessment.

Novel Ideas Only

Structured method for eliciting collective background information, reviewing recently taught information, and for practicing academic talk, careful listening, and public speaking

1. Place students in groups and assign groups to list ideas about a given topic. Set a time limit for the task.
2. Have a spokesperson from each group stand and share one “novel” idea from the group’s list.
3. Students in each group must listen attentively to ensure that no group repeats information already provided by another group. As students hear an item shared by another group, they check it off their own group’s list.
4. Each spokesperson sits down after they have either read or checked off all the items on their list.
5. The activity continues until all “novel” ideas about the topic have been shared and all students are again sitting down.

Numbered Heads Together

Used for quick collaborative discussion with group and individual accountability.

1. Place students in groups of four.
2. Have students in each group number off from one to four.
3. Ask students a question for discussion or review or assign an academic task.
4. Have students discuss the question or complete the task in their groups, making sure that each member of the group can answer the question or recap the learning from the task if called upon.

5. Select a random number corresponding to a number of a group member.
 6. Select one or two students to respond to the question/recap the learning. Additional students with the same number can respond to the question by adding new information to the previous response(s).
 - a. Each student should share his or her writing one at a time.
 - b. Groups should look for common themes and record consensus ideas on paper or small whiteboard.
 - c. Each group should then discuss their list and identify their priorities by numbering 1, 2, 3, etc. Each small group shares their top agreements/priorities with the larger group.
4. The larger group records common themes/priorities.

Parking Lot

Used to build ownership and to encourage students to communicate their concerns and questions.

1. Provide students with sticky notes on which they can record questions and concerns.
2. Designate a location (the “parking lot”) in the room for students to “post” their questions and concerns.
3. Encourage students to add to the parking lot at any time.
4. Check the parking lot frequently and address any notes that have been posted.

Take Five

Used to gain consensus decision-making. It is an effective way to assess group needs and gather information for problem-solving.

1. Divide the larger group into smaller groups of 4–5 students each.
2. Provide quiet time for each student to complete a 5–10 minute quickwrite on a selected topic about which they are trying to make a decision.
3. Provide time for groups to collaborate and brainstorm.

Talking Chips

Used for accountable and equitable talk in small group discussions and promotes academic talk.

1. Have students each create three name cards (“Talking Chips”) with small sticky notes or slips of paper.
2. During discussion groups, have students take out their name cards (“Talking Chips”). Tell them that when they are ready to contribute to the discussion they must place one of their chips in the center of the table.
3. When they do this, all other students at the table must stop talking and listen attentively.
4. When students have used up all of their talking chips, they must wait for others to use theirs up, too, before they can contribute to the discussion again.
5. Once all chips are in the center of the table, they can be redistributed and all participants invited to join in the discussion again.

Think-Pair-Share

Used as a quick processing activity and/or check for understanding; the think/write steps are crucial for giving students time to process their understanding in preparation for sharing.

1. Instruct students to think carefully about a specific topic or a question. This may be facilitated by a quickwrite. Think-**Write**-Pair-Share is especially important for English Language Learners who need more “rehearsal” time before speaking.
2. Instruct students to find a partner near to them.
3. When you give a signal, one partner shares his/her answer to the question and the reasons that support it, while the other partner listens.
4. The partners exchange roles.
5. The partners prepare to share their answers/responses with the large group.

Think-Pair-Share—Squared

Used as a quick processing activity and/or check for understanding; the think/write steps are crucial for giving students time to process their understanding in preparation for sharing.

1. Participants listen to a question, concern, or scenario.
2. Individuals think and make notes about the questions, concern, or scenario.
3. Individuals pair and discuss their responses.
4. Pairs join into groups of four and discuss responses.
5. Foursomes prepare to share their answers/responses with the large group.

Whip Around

Used for quick processing and checks for comprehension.

1. Divide students into small groups of 4–5 students each.
2. Present a question or discussion prompt.
3. Give a time limit, usually 2–3 minutes.
4. Going around the group sequentially, each student comments on the question or discussion prompt.
5. A student may pass one time, but must comment the next time it is his or her turn.