

Social Skills and Community Building

Cooperative Learning Structures	Explanation
Jigsaw	Groups with five students are set up. Each group member is assigned some unique material to learn and then to teach to his group members. To help in the learning students across the class working on the same sub-section get together to decide what is important and how to teach it. After practice in these "expert" groups the original groups reform and students teach each other. Tests or assessment follows.
Think-Pair-Share	Involves a three step cooperative structure. During the first step individuals think silently about a question posed by the instructor. Individuals pair up during the second step and exchange thoughts. In the third step, the pairs share their responses with other pairs, other teams, or the entire group.
Three-Step Interview -	Each member of a team chooses another member to be a partner. During the first step individuals interview their partners by asking clarifying questions. During the second step partners reverse the roles. For the final step, members share their partner's response with the team.
Round Robin Brainstorming -	Class is divided into small groups (4 to 6) with one person appointed as the recorder. A question is posed with many answers and students are given time to think about answers. After the "think time," members of the team share responses with one another round robin style. The recorder writes down the answers of the group members. The person next to the recorder starts and each person in the group in order gives an answer until time is called.
Three-minute review -	Teachers stop any time during a lecture or discussion and give teams three minutes to review what has been said, ask clarifying questions or answer questions.
Numbered Heads -	A team of four is established. Each member is given numbers of 1, 2, 3, 4. Questions are asked of the group. Groups work together to answer the question so that all can verbally answer the question. Teacher calls out a number (two) and each two is asked to give the answer.
Team Pair Solo -	Students do problems first as a team, then with a partner, and finally on their own. It is designed to motivate students to tackle and succeed at problems which initially are beyond their ability. It is based on a simple notion of mediated learning. Students can do more things with help (mediation) than they can do alone. By allowing them to work on problems they could not do alone, first as a team and then with a partner, they progress to a point they can do alone that which at first they could do only with help.
Circle the Sage -	First the teacher polls the class to see which students have a special knowledge to share. For example the teacher may ask who in the class was able to solve a difficult math homework question, who had visited Mexico, who knows the chemical reactions involved in how salting the streets help dissipate snow. Those students (the sages) stand and spread out in the room.

The teacher then has the rest of the classmates each surround a sage, with no two members of the same team going to the same sage. The sage explains what they know while the classmates listen, ask questions, and take notes. All students then return to their teams. Each in turn, explains what they learned. Because each one has gone to a different sage, they compare notes. If there is disagreement, they stand up as a team. Finally, the disagreements are aired and resolved.

Partners -

The class is divided into teams of four. Partners move to one side of the room. Half of each team is given an assignment to master to be able to teach the other half. Partners work to learn and can consult with other partners working on the same material. Teams go back together with each set of partners teaching the other set. Partners quiz and tutor teammates. Team reviews how well they learned and taught and how they might improve the process.

Like "Stand Up and Share," this structure requires the easy identification of a team member who will become the groups spokesperson. It too builds on another structure, such as Structured Problem Solving, but in this case the topics can be far more complex. After the problem solving discussions are complete and all team members indicate that they can give the team's report, you designate the student from each team who will "stray." That is, one student from each group (such as the "Number One" or the "Diamond") leaves it and rotates to an adjoining team to give the report. In large classes it is essential that the order of rotation is clear. Playing cards work particularly well because the "Aces" know to rotate to the "Twos," the "Jacks" to the Queens," and so forth.

Three-Stay One-Stray

The designated student, who is welcomed as a visitor, shares with this new team the results of his original group's discussion, giving proposed solutions to problems or summarizing discussions. A second rotation may be desirable if the topic prompted divergent thinking and solutions.

Three-Stay One-Stray offers a low-threat forum where students can exchange ideas and build social skills such as asking probing questions. It also offers students the opportunity to learn by teaching. Placing the report-out responsibility on the students reinforces the valuable conception that knowledge resides within the learning community, not just with the "authority-figure" instructor. Perhaps its greatest value lies in its efficiency. Instead of, for example, ten sequenced five-minute reports to the entire class (fifty minutes, plus transition time), individual students are simultaneously giving five-minute reports throughout the room. A Gallery Walk requires a report-out that can be visually depicted, preferably on butcher paper. It can be an outline, a concept or mind map, or any other written product. In this case a designated student stays by the desk or table or next to the butcher paper if it is taped to the wall and serves as the group spokesperson. The other students rotate around the room examining the products of other teams' thinking, asking questions of the designated spokesperson. (The spokesperson role should be rotated so that no one is left without the stimulation of exploring the different student creations.)

Gallery Walk

This structure is also efficient and engenders a sense of team cohesion as each group displays the product of their "group think." The variety of the end products emphasizes the value of critical/creative thinking.

You can use a variation of "Gallery Walk" when you have required individual or team long-term products. Rather than having time-consuming report-puts, each student circulates to classmates a summary of his or her project. Each product, such as a term paper or student portfolio, is assigned to specific work area, as in a conference poster session. Then a class period can be spent with students examining one another's work. To provide an opportunity for feedback, each student leaves a comment sheet next to the product, and browsers write a brief response.

Value Line	Students place themselves on a pretend line---1 meaning that they agree strongly or understand something completely and 10 meaning they don't agree or understand. Turn the line so that student are then match up along the line---#1 being with #10...for discussion and clarification.
Find the Fib:	Students write down two facts and one fib, the job of the team is to identify the fib.
ThinkPad Brainstorming:	Requires students to brainstorm and write down their answers on a sheet of paper. Once they are all done they are to share their information with the team.
Inside/Outside Circle:	Involves the entire class moving around the room sharing information.
Talking Chips:	Each student is given so many chips and each time they talk they must submit a chip. Once their chips are gone they may no longer talk. All students are required to use their chips.
Mix-Pair-Freeze	Each student is given a question, vocabulary word, or statement and must walk around the room until the signal is given to stop (could be music). Then student have their partner explain their question and vice versa. Student can then switch questions and the process is repeated.

Troubleshooting within Cooperative Learning Groups

Problem	Solution
Students are not all involved or on task:	Assign specific tasks to all students.
Groups are too noisy:	Have students move closer together.
Members act out:	Use motivation tactics to hold each person responsible for his actions -- for example, remind students that their participation in the group and their individual work are both being graded.

Work is slow or incomplete:

Work with students to set specific goals each day; have students create a timeline for their project and stick to it.

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