

Write Pair Share

Plan

Write/Pair/Share is an oral language support strategy that allows students to formulate their thinking in writing before oral interaction with a peer. It increases student accountability for talk and supports the more hesitant speaker by providing written rehearsal. Peers quickly write down a response to a focus question provided by the teacher, then read the brief response to a partner and follow it with discussion of ideas.

This participation structure is reasonably easy to establish and use in the full range of settings in classroom instruction in all content areas. The Write/Pair/Share provides for a match between written/drawn language and social speech of peers to become part of the regular classroom procedures.

Implement

After the teacher asks a question, students take a couple of minutes to jot down a response. Student can draw a picture or write a phrase or a couple of sentences. Students then turn to a preselected partner, read their quick writing or share their picture, and then discuss their thinking about the question. Students can share with the rest of the group what they wrote or said, what their partner wrote or said, or the teacher can pass on the group share. The writing of thoughts lessens the need to share out from every interaction.

Observing during the times students are engaged in both the writing and the peer talk is an excellent opportunity to notice what was written, who is talking, how the pair is working, and quickly assess the learning about the content that is being discussed. The writing can be a form of accountability but be cautious not to push correct spelling and writing or writing might be discouraged.

Reflect

When classroom participation structures are used, they foster oral language development with peer talk. The Write/Pair/Share participation structure gives students time to form their thoughts and the writing helps students access their thinking in a written rehearsal. This writing is a scaffold for the social speech structure. It also provides a degree of classroom management but the key goal is oral language

development with peer-supported talk.

When this structure is used, almost all students have a opportunity to write and then a chance to share their thinking through writing in a low-risk setting. Verbalizing their written thinking scaffolds students understanding and provides talk at a peer level with the option to go back to the written support. By writing, students often use a more formal speech register that then moves into their social speech.