

## Teaching Tactics

Describe a successful assignment, exercise, or teaching tactic that could be replicated by other instructors.

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### Think-Pair-Share

**The context:** Class discussion is difficult to get started. Often it is the same 3 or 4 students who do all the talking. Others zone out, or squirm when I call on them by name, making it an uncomfortable situation for everyone.

**The pedagogical purpose:** The goal here is to promote critical reflection by every member of the class and to give every student an opportunity to articulate the results of that reflection.

**Description of the strategy:** The title *is* the strategy, which consists of three steps: (1) Think: Pose a question to the class as a whole, and give them time to reflect on it individually (anywhere from 2 to 5 minutes). The more specific the prompt, the better. Encourage students to write down their thoughts. (2) Pair: Ask students to turn to their neighbor and, in pairs, tell each another what they are thinking, what they wrote down, how they would respond, what they would say to the larger group, etc., and why (5 to 10 minutes, depending on the topic). (3) Share: Call the larger group together and invite volunteers to share either their own response or what they heard from their neighbor. If it is still just the usual suspects volunteering, then call on individuals. Ask them to explain to the class what they heard their neighbor say. Follow up: “Do you agree with this interpretation/decision/approach? Why or why not?”

**Why it is effective:** Any question of depth (beyond simple factual “check-ins”) requires some thought. Extroverts and socially confident students are fine thinking out loud, which is why they are often the first to speak up. Other students need time to decide what they think. It also helps to try a dry run with one classmate, before “putting yourself out there” with the class as a whole. The process allows space to formulate a thought, consider alternative views (if only in an initial way), and refine one’s own position.

**Attachment (if appropriate):** See clip art below.



Source: <http://drsolistech.blogspot.com/2014/06/flipped-classroom-strategy-3-think-pair.html>