

Some cooperative learning structures

Brainstorming

Stage 1

The group leader presents the topic/issues/problem. The group analyses the topic and each participant writes down ideas. Alternatively, the group leader may do this for the whole group. All ideas are valued and recorded. There is no discussion about the ideas and all participants are involved.

Stage 2

The group reviews the brainstormed ideas. Deletions are made if appropriate (that is, if the group member/s who offered a suggestion request its deletion).

Clarifications are made. There is group discussion and evaluation of the ideas. Suggestions are then rank ordered according to relevance or importance.

Three step interview

The opinions of everyone in the group are heard. This activity promotes active listening.

Stage 1

Groups of four are formed and the topic for discussion is presented.

Stage 2

In pairs, one becomes the interviewer and the other the interviewee. The interviewer listens to the interviewees' opinion or thoughts on the topic. (This is Step 1 of the *Three Step Interview*)

Stage 3

Still in pairs, the roles are reversed. (This is Step 2 of the *Three Step Interview*)

Stage 4

Within the group of four, one individual turns to a new partner in the group and tells the partner their own opinion or thoughts on the topic as well as those of the original partner. The new partner then reciprocates. (This is Step 3 of the *Three Step Interview*)

Slip writing

Stage 1

A problem or question is posed.

Stage 2

Each participant records answers on slips of paper – one idea per slip; no discussion; individual activity.

Stage 3

In small groups, all slips are viewed and sorted into piles. Double ups are put together and any that do not fit are put to one side.

Stage 4

As a whole group categories and responses are shared.

Stage 5

The group leader draws the threads together in a summary, concept web etc.

Hot potato

Stage 1

The large group is divided into small groups.

Stage 2

The group leader presents the questions, topics or problems to the groups. There is the same number of questions as there are groups. Each question/topic/problem is written on a large sheet of paper.

Stage 3

Each group is assigned one sheet. Participants brainstorm ideas/reactions/solutions to the topic, question or problem.

Stage 4

After a designated period of time the leader asks the group to move on to, or to rotate to, the next question sheet.

The process of rotation continues until all groups have answered all questions.

Stage 5

The group leader facilitates a discussion based on the brainstormed ideas.

Jigsaw

Jigsaw can be used for a variety of goals including mastery, concept development, discussion and group projects. Jigsaw creates interdependence and ensures positive relations.

Stage 1

Home Groups of four people are formed. This number can vary depending on the activity and the number of people in the whole group.

Stage 2

The assignment to be undertaken is divided into four tasks.

Stage 3

Each member of the Home Group nominates to undertake one of the tasks. They nominate to become “experts” in that task.

Stage 4

The Home Group splits to perform the nominated tasks with all members from the different Home Groups undertaking similar tasks together to form Expert Groups.

Stage 5

Once the experts have completed their nominated tasks, they reform with their original Home Groups and the experts share or “teach” the others in their Home Groups. By bringing all the tasks together, the Home Group is able to complete the original assignment.

Roundtable

Stage 1

Groups of four to six are formed.

Stage 2

A question that has many possible answers is posed.

Stage 3

Individuals list as many possible answers on their own sheet of paper within a given time frame, e.g., 30 seconds or 1 minute.

Stage 4

The individuals then pass their paper to the person on their left and continue listing their ideas on the new sheet. The previous person’s ideas can be read. Again this is completed within a given time frame.

Stage 5

This process of passing the papers round the table is continued until the papers return to their original owners. The whole group then reviews the total brainstormed results.

Listen, think, pair, share

This structure allows every individual to express opinions. It leads to elaborate answers and increased discussion.

Stage 1

The whole group listens to the question that is posed.

Stage 2

The individual thinks about his/her possible answers.

Stage 3

The individuals find partners and in pairs they talk about the questions and discuss their answers.

Stage 4

After this interaction, the individuals share their responses with the whole group.