




Instructions for this form:
Print this page for your pre-class planning. In the
“notes” box, customize your plans for your class content.

Pre-Class Planning Form

Learning Pairs Active Learning Strategy

See Silberman, p 18.

Time:  Varies to fit your goal for the assignment (may be as little as three minutes)

Description: Students work in pairs to discuss new concepts, make applications, or review. Learning pairs work well at the beginning, middle, or end of a class session. The setting may require use of handouts, multi-media, or pages in a text, depending on the goal of the assignment.

Value: This active learning strategy engages students in brief, pointed discussion with one other person. Since pairs form so quickly, students do not lose valuable class time as they might with group assignments requiring several class members to convene. The teacher closely monitors the time, allowing just enough time for specific discussion, but not enough time for departure from the topic.

Instructions

1. Either assign permanent learning pairs in your class and instruct the pairs to sit together throughout the semester, or instruct the students to pair with someone sitting next to them each time you use learning pairs. Observe whether each student has a partner and intervene as you see unpaired individuals (due to uneven class size or absences).
2. Clearly state the question, idea, or assignment you want students to discuss. If the assignment involves prereading during class, make the material available to every student via overhead projection, handout, or text pages.
3. Tell students the length of time you are giving them for their discussion in pairs.
4. Monitor the time closely and observe the class to see if your time allotment is too short, too long, or about right. If most pairs finish their discussions earlier than you anticipated, shorten the time allotment. If most pairs need additional time, announce the length of additional time you're allowing.
5. Solicit a specific number of responses from the audience.
6. Clarify or expound, if necessary, on responses that pairs present to the class.

Notes