

Small group activities

These activities help teachers to build student connections and to develop positive classroom relationships and climate. The activities can be used at the beginning of the year to help students get to know each other and then as required to build collaboration and cooperation. Most activities can be modified to suit the ages and needs of the group.

It is important to discuss with your students the skills they are developing, as well as any challenges they have completing the activities.

Examples of questions that could be used include:

- What was difficult about the task?
- What made the task easier?
- What did you need to do to be successful?
- What did you learn you have in common with another student?
- What is something new, different, surprising or special you learnt about another student?



Think-Pair-Share

- Students are divided into groups of 4 to 6. Present a question or topic for consideration. A question that is open-ended or has many possible correct responses is best for this approach. Examples of questions are:
 - What qualities make a good student?
 - How can I be a good friend?
- Each student thinks individually for a few minutes and generates some ideas. At a signal, each student pairs with someone else in their group to share their ideas and agree on the answer they think is strongest, most convincing or most interesting.
- After a few minutes of discussion time, the students then regroup and each pair shares their best idea with the rest of the class. The group then combines ideas to develop a collective class response.



Peer interviews

Have students paired – either assigned or randomly selected, depending on the dynamics of the group. Each person interviews his or her partner for a set time. When the larger group reconvenes, students introduce their partner to the rest of the group.

You may choose to provide students with questions to ask their partner. Open-ended questions will encourage interviewees to provide extended and reflective responses.

For example:

- Who is someone you admire? Why do you admire that person?
- What are your favourite things to do outside school?
- What do you wish people could better understand about you?
- What makes you happy?

This activity allows students to get to know each other better and promotes acceptance and understanding.



Jigsaw collaborative grouping

- Divide students into groups of 4 to 6. Give each member of the group a different piece of information about the topic to be explored. When combined, these pieces provide a complete and full understanding of the topic.
- An example could be ‘What is the lifecycle of a butterfly?’ with information segments on egg, caterpillar, pupa and adult.
- Expert groups are formed by students who share the same segment information. Students read and discuss to better understand their information.
- Students return to their original groups and work together to join all the pieces of information. The students can then complete either a group or individual task that draws on the combined knowledge.
- The jigsaw method promotes inclusion and cooperation among students.