

Cooperative Learning Strategies

Jigsaw – Students are placed into “home groups” and “expert groups” and each is assigned a different topic within a general topic. Helps students get engaged with one another and holds them accountable for their learning.

How to use: The home group student will work on researching their topic with the expert of the same topic. The student will then return to their home group to teach their topic to the group. Together, all the pieces come together to form the product.

When to use: Could be used across content areas with a variety of topics. Use in small reading groups with students being assigned to research different story elements. Use in science with students assigned a different animal to research. Use in social studies with students assigned a different person associated with the Battle of the Alamo. Use in art to research different classifications of art. Use in CTE class to discuss different aspects of digital citizenship. Variations: After gathering research, the home group presents their collected information to the class, making them the experts. The expert on that topic could gather all the information and present to the class. Each homegroup could make a visual representation of the information collected to display to the class.

Write Around – Students are placed in groups of 3-4 and the teacher assigns each group a topic or idea. The topic/idea should have multiple ideas or understandings. Allows students to demonstrate their contribution and knowledge of an idea or topic. Students need to pay attention to what is written and acknowledge that they are helping one another to learn.

How to use – One piece of paper is shared by the group and each student takes a turn writing response to question or idea. After a certain amount of time, the student passes the paper to next student who reads over the paper and adds to, further explains, or clarifies what was written.

When to use – Use in ELA to describe the conflict in a story or novel. Use in science to describe the habitat of an animal or group of animals. Use in history to describe the effects of industrialization. Use in art to list steps involved in creating an art project. Use in any classroom to list the classroom rules and expectations.

Variations: The teacher could write a response on the board and, working in groups, the students would collaborate then choose a member to add another response on the board.

If applicable, the students could draw visual representations of their responses, each adding their contribution to the drawing. Could be used as an interactive game where students add responses through online site.

Quiz-Quiz-Trade – The teacher creates a set of question cards for the class, or each student creates a question card. Helps students review information by answering and asking questions. Can build

student confidence, encourages participation and thoughtful discussions.

How to use: Students quiz a partner, then get quizzed by partner, then trade cards to repeat the process with another partner.

When to use: Could be used before new unit to access prior knowledge. Use at the end of a unit to review vocabulary. Use to review math problems. Use at the beginning of the year to review classroom rules. Use in history to review dates and events.

Variations: After the pair answers the question card, they could come up with a new question to try to stump the teacher. The teacher can answer the question or ask the class for help.

Students can form 2 lines facing each other, after each answers the question, the students take a step to their right forming a new partnership. Questions can be uploaded to an online quiz bank and students, working in pairs, answer questions online.

Showdown – Working in groups, teammates answer question cards supplied by teacher. Teammates celebrate or tutor, and then celebrate answers. Encourages student engagement and participation as it helps students review unit information.

How to use: Teacher selects one student on each team to be Showdown Captain for the first Round. Captain draws first card, reads the question, and provides think time. The students, working alone, write their answer and signal when ready. Showdown captain calls, “showdown” and teammates show and discuss their answers. Captain checks the answers and if correct, the team celebrates. If not, teammates tutor, then celebrate. The next round, the person on the left of the captain becomes the Showdown Captain.

When to use: Use to solve math problems. Use to review vocabulary definitions. Use to describe process used in science experiment. Use to review dates and events of history unit. Use to identify elements of a story or novel.

Variations: Teacher could call out oral questions and students, working in groups, could display answers. In online quiz game, students could collaborate, then choose the answer that matches theirs. Students could write the questions provided for the showdown.

Rally Table – Working in pairs, students take turns solving problems, writing a response, or making a contribution to a project.

How to use: Teacher provides a task that has multiple possible responses and provides think time. Students, working in pairs, take turns passing a paper or team project, each writing one answer or making one contribution to the project.

When to use: Could be used in ELA to list story elements. Could be used to show steps involved in solving a math problem. Could be used to review dates and events from history unit. Could be used to social studies to review differences in cultures. Could be used to review steps used in science experiment.

Variations: Students could write the questions provided. Students could work in pairs to answer questions in online quiz game. Students could compete against other groups to see who can display their answer first.

Forced Debate – Strategy that requires students to use their communication skills and work within a group.

How to use: The teacher writes a proposition on the board, such as “Should there be a vending machine in the cafeteria?” Students who agree move to one side of the room, those that disagree move to the other side of the room. The students will then debate those on the opposing side. The strategy forces students to think critically, considering the ideas of the group, as opposed to their personal opinion.

When to use: Could be used to discuss opposing sides in historical wars. Could be used to debate social or cultural issues. Could be used to predict what may happen in a science experiment. Could be used in ELA to propose 2 alternate endings of a book. Could be used to debate two different themes for Prom.

Variations: The teacher could provide a seed question, then the students brainstorm and select a representative to debate a representative on the opposing team. The students brainstorm, then present the benefits of their position to the class. Afterward, the teacher asks if any of the students have changed their position on the issue. After brainstorming, the students go to the front of the class to debate a member of the other team, one on one.

Discipline Strategies

Oral Reminder – Teacher reminds all students of rules/procedures to reinforce what is expected.

How to use: The teacher states to the class the rule/procedure that the student is not following as a reminder to the student.

When to use: When a student is not following the rules/procedure it can be used as a reminder without calling the student out.

Variations: The teacher could walk to the student and quietly ask if he/she is following the rules/procedures. The teacher could praise a student that is following the rules/procedures. The teacher could walk by the student and say, “Thank you for following the rules.” The teacher could reinforce to the class the importance of following rules/procedures for an effective learning environment. The teacher could offer the student the choice of following the rule or accepting a consequence.

Redirect – Teacher redirects activity when a student is off task or not following rules.

How to use: The teacher walks over to the student and redirects the student to the appropriate task.

When to use: When a student is off task or not following rules.

Variations: The teacher could walk to the student and ask the student what they should be doing and allow the student time to get on task. The teacher could take the opportunity to give the class a stretch break then resume task at hand. The teacher could offer the student a choice of two options to get the task accomplished. The teacher could give the student a quick job to offer a break before resuming task. The teacher offers student the choice of resuming task or accepting consequence.

Ignore bad behavior – Teacher ignores bad behavior if it is done to seek attention.

When to use: When a student is acting out as a way of seeking attention. It should only be used when doing so will cause no harm to students.

Variations: The teacher could praise students that are on task and following rules. The teacher could transfer to a fun activity and allow student an opportunity to change behavior and join the class in the activity. After ignoring the behavior for 5-10 minutes, the teacher could speak with student and ask if they would like the opportunity to try again. After ignoring the behavior for 5-10 minutes, the teacher could offer the student the choice of 2 different options to accomplish task. After allowing time for student to reflect, the teacher offers student the choice of returning to task or accepting consequence.

Time Out – Teacher sends student to area away from other students to reflect on behavior.

When to use: When a student is misbehaving and other strategies have not worked to correct the behavior.

Variations: The teacher can allow the student time to reflect on behavior, then ask them to rejoin the class. The teacher can offer the student a choice of another task if they cannot participate appropriately in the class activity. The teacher can remove the student from the other students and have student complete written reflection on his/her behavior. The teacher can send the student to another classroom to reflect or complete alternate assignment.

Positive Reinforcement – Teacher uses positive reinforcement to encourage positive behavior and limit negative behavior.

When to use: Start using positive reinforcement from the beginning of the year.

Variations: The teacher assigns points/reward system and awards points to tables or groups that are displaying positive behaviors. The teacher can offer a class reward when a fill in the blank phrase is completed with positive behavior. The teacher can award class points to earn a reward such as eating lunch outside. The teacher can offer individual reward tickets to students displaying positive behavior. The teacher can offer praise tickets to individual students that are displaying positive behavior.

Special Education Strategies

Thematic Instruction – One theme is carried through multiple subjects to help students make connections.

How to use: A single theme is tied to several subjects allowing students to make connections.

When to use: Could be used in ELA to write about the animal that was studied in Science. That animal could also be used in Math problems. In Social Studies, the animal could be compared to animals that live in the country being studied.

Variations: The students could nominate a theme that would be voted on. The theme could be an event that is happening in the school or community.

Preteach – Provide students with a preview of the lesson that contains objective, summaries, and key terms and vocabulary.

How to use: The teacher provides students with a preview of the lesson that contains the objective, summaries, key terms and vocabulary with pictures. Having the information allows the student to focus on the lesson instead of taking notes and allows them to add additional notes.

When to use: Use in ELA to summarize a story and add vocabulary words with pictures. Could be used in Social Studies when starting a new unit. Could be used in Science when starting a new lesson.

Variations: The students could work with a partner to go over the preview and make questions to ask the teacher before starting the lesson. The students could work in groups to make predictions about the new lesson.

Role Play – Students act out content that is learned.

How to use: The students work with partner to act out a concept learned to help with Comprehension and understanding.

When to use: Use in ELA to act out a scene from a story. Use in ELA to display character traits. Use to reteach class procedures. Use in History to portray an historical figure. Use in History to Give the viewpoint of a person from the opposing side.

ELL Strategies

The 3 W's (What I read, What's in my head, What my Partner Said) – The students can chunk information and make connections.

How to use: The students use a graphic organizer to write about what they read, what they think about what they read, and what their partner says about what they read. It allows them to think about the topic before they communicate with others, but allows them to confirm the meaning with peers.

When to use: Could be used in ELA as a tool for comprehension. Could be used in math word

problems to compare answers with example in book and answer of peer. Could be used in Science as a review for terms. Could be used in small reading groups to make predictions using clues in text. Could be used in Social Studies to list cultural differences from text.

Sentence Frames – The students use premade sentence frames with blanks to fill in missing words.

How to use: The teacher gives students sentence strips that are premade with words and punctuations allowing the student to fill in the blanks with key words. This allows the student to focus on the content, but not the grammar.

When to use: Could be used in ELA to identify story elements. Could be used in Science to identify key terms. Could be used in Social Studies to identify vocabulary words. Could be used to review rules or procedures. Could be used in ELA to find a clue for predictions.

Variations: The teacher could write the sentence frame on the board or overhead and students could verbally fill in blanks. The students could write sentence frames for one another to fill in. After completing several sentence frames, the students could put them in the order that follows the text.

Character Diaries – The students write a diary of what would happen in the everyday life of a character from a story.

How to use: The student makes diary entries of what might happen in the everyday life of a character from a story. This allows the student to use higher order thinking, connect with the character, and help with comprehension.

When to use: Use in ELA to help with comprehension and character traits. Could be used in Social studies to write about a student in another country or different culture. Could be used in science and have student pretend they are an animal from the text.

Variations: Have the students act out what their character might do. Allow the student to draw pictures for their journal entries.

Brainstorm – Have students brainstorm before starting a new lesson to add background knowledge.

How to use: Students can brainstorm while the teacher creates a web on the overhead projector to add background knowledge and allow for connections.

When to use: Use in ELA to make predictions about a story. Could be used in Social Studies to note clues in pictures from text. Could be used in ELA to list characteristics of a character from a story. Could be used to list words associated with an animal from a science text.

Variations: The students could have graphic organizers that they use to brainstorm, before sharing with class. Students could work with a partner to brainstorm, then share with the class.

Preview – Provide students with a preview of the lesson that contains objective, summaries, and key terms and vocabulary.

How to use: The teacher provides students with a preview of the lesson that contains the objective, summaries, key terms and vocabulary with pictures. Having the information allows the student to focus on the lesson instead of taking notes and allows them to add additional notes.

When to use: Use in ELA to summarize a story and add vocabulary words with pictures. Could be used in Social Studies when starting a new unit. Could be used in Science when starting a new lesson.

Variations: The students could work with a partner to go over the preview and make questions to ask the teacher before starting the lesson. The students could work in groups to make predictions about the new lesson.

Gifted and Talented Strategies

Independent Projects – When gifted and talented students have finished their work before the rest of the class, they may use their creativity to explore a special area of interest related to the topic.

How to use: The teacher provides the student with a concept to explore and research for higher order thinking and problem solving.

When to use: When the student has completed the class assignments.

Variations: The gifted students could work together on a team project. The students could choose their final product. The students could present their findings to the class to provide additional learning opportunities to the other students.

Leveling Assignments – Level class assignments and learning outcomes depending on students' abilities.

How to use: Include higher level questions on tasks, assignments and tests for gifted students.

When to use: In place of regular assignments and assessments in the classroom.

Variations: Allow the gifted students to choose the product of their choice on assignments.

To provide additional learning opportunities to the other students, the gifted students could work with other students to provide understanding and challenge them with higher order thinking. Another option is to differentiate the curriculum according to student abilities.

Students will be assigned different tasks according to their abilities and, when finished, all students can present their findings to the class.

Curriculum Acceleration – Allow gifted students to assume responsibility of their own learning through curriculum acceleration.

How to use: Allow students to work ahead to problems or skills that they do not know to encourage learning for its own sake.

When to use: In place of regular classroom assignments and assessments.

Variations: Have the student research a topic that they do not understand and allow them to choose their product. To develop communication skills, offer the student an opportunity

to present to the class if they choose to do so. Have the student use critical thinking skills to problem-solve an issue that relates to the topic being studied.

Technology Integration

Use Skype to connect with others – Connect with others in your area or around the world to collaborate and/or learn from others.

How to use: Allow students to learn and collaborate with others outside the classroom.

When to use: To provide an interactive resource to topics learned in the classroom.

Variations: Students can collaborate with other students in their area on a project or book study. Students can debate others on a topic. Students can learn about life in another country by connecting with students around the world. Students can interact with an author and ask questions about a book being read in class.

Use Google Classroom – The Google classroom can be used for posting and submitting class assignments and cut down on paper use.

How to use: When students have their own technology, they can access the Google classroom for assignments. Assignment instructions and resource links can be provided in the assignments for easy access in or out of class. The assignments can be completed online and submitted in the Google classroom.

Variations: Students can collaborate with other students for group work on a Google doc. Students are able to work at their own pace on their assignments. Teachers can differentiate by posting different assignments according to student needs. Students can easily communicate with teachers and other students through the Google classroom.

Student Blogs – Students use online blogging sites as a creative outlet to build writing skills.

How to use: As a daily journal activity for students to be creative while building writing skills. Variations: Students can write diary entries from the perspective of another character from a book or a historical figure. Students can write short essays or poems.

Quizzes and Games - Use online quizzes and games to review and check for understanding.

How to use: Create online games in Kahoot to provide a fun way for students to review information.

Quizzez can be used to create custom quizzes and provide assessment for reteaching.

Variations: Have students provide questions for games and quizzes. Flashcards can be utilized on some sites for students to study. Use online quiz at the beginning of a unit to assess what the students already know.

Certification Content Specific Strategies

The Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DRTA) – A discussion format that focuses on making predictions before reading content.

How to use: The teacher introduces the topic and asks students what they know about the topic. The students then preview the reading segment looking at headings and illustrations. The students then make predictions about what they will learn. Their predictions are recorded. After reading, the students evaluate their predictions with evidence that supports or contradicts their prediction. Students discuss their predictions and the content read. The teacher discusses how students can use this strategy on their own and how it facilitates understanding and critical thinking.

When to use: Use this strategy before reading new content. Use this strategy before introducing new vocabulary. Use this strategy before introducing new concepts.

Variations: Students can make individual predictions. Students could work in pairs or groups. The entire class could work together participating in oral discussion.

Comparison Matrix – A comprehension activity to recognize similarities and differences.

How to use: The teacher creates a matrix with subjects, categories, topics, etc. across the top to create columns. Attributes, characteristics, details, etc. are listed down the side of the matrix to create rows. After completing the matrix, discuss the similarities and differences.

When to use: Use this strategy to recognize similarities and differences in subjects, categories, or topics. CTE teachers could use this to compare different careers and the education or certification needed, salaries, growth in the industry, etc. Students could use this to compare different colleges.

Variations: Students could complete the matrix on their own. Students could work in pairs or groups to complete their matrix. The matrix could be completed together as a whole class.

Response Notebooks – Students use writing to clarify their ideas, identify confusing points, integrate new information with background knowledge, and deepen their memory and understanding of what they read.

How to use: The teacher models how students will use the response notebook to answer open-ended questions, make connections to background knowledge, share feelings or justify opinions.

Students make journal entries before or after reading and responses are shared through class discussion, used for student reflection, or student feedback.

When to use: Use this strategy before reading new content. Use after reading new content.

Use as a review to assess student knowledge.

Variations: Students could write specific passages in one column and response, including personal questions and reflections, in the other column. Another variation is to add a third column for dialogue where another student would read the text and response and add further insight or additional quote of the text.

List-Group-Label – An activity to activate prior knowledge to develop understanding about topic to be learned.

How to use: The teacher writes a cue vocabulary on the board and students brainstorm related words. After recording student responses, the teacher leads a discussion about which should be eliminated and why. The students work in groups clustering the words and give each cluster a descriptive term. When finished, the groups share their cluster and give reasons for their choices. Students then read the text and afterward, the teacher gives them a chance to change or modify their clusters. Students share clusters and discuss rationales.

When to use: Use this strategy before learning new content. Use before learning new vocabulary. Use to review and assess student knowledge.

Variations: Technology apps, such as Popplet, could be used to create word clusters. A Dialectical notebook could be used for a student to respond to and make sense of text.

Vocabulary by Analogy with Word Walls – A vocabulary by analogy strategy that helps students use morphemes to figure out unknown words and make connects with words they know.

How to use: The teacher explains the meaning of common roots, prefixes and suffixes and provides examples of each from the content vocabulary. The teacher and students create a word wall with examples. Using a think-aloud, the teacher models how to use these parts of words to figure out meaning of unfamiliar words.

When to use: Use when introducing new vocabulary words. Use when students encounter unfamiliar words to figure out the meaning. Use to review vocabulary.

Variations: Students can create personal word charts in a notebook. Students could use technology to create a digital word chart.

Knowledge Rating Scale – A vocabulary activity that introduces new content words to students to find out what they already know about the subject the words are related to.

How to use: The teacher creates a chart with columns that include: word, can define, have seen or heard, and no clue. The new vocabulary words are written down the first column. The teacher models how the students will consider each word in the chart and complete the row marking an "X" if appropriate. For example, if a student can define the word, they mark an "X".

If they have heard the word, they mark an "X", etc. The students then define the words they can define and the teacher discusses these definitions. The students add, or alter, their

definitions as the text is read.

When to use: Use before and after introducing new vocabulary. Use before and after reading text. Use to review and assess student knowledge.

Variations: Students can work in pairs, then jigsaw as a whole class until all words are defined. Students can work in groups, then jigsaw. The teacher could use a technology app and project for the students who would call out definitions.

Semantic Map – A visual representation of background knowledge and experiences with an identified concept. Creating the map activates background knowledge and making predictions.

How to use: The teacher chooses an idea or topic and writes it on the board with a circle around it. The students brainstorm subtopics related to the topic and the teacher draws lines connecting them to the main topic. The students then brainstorm specific vocabulary or ideas related to the subtopic with lines connecting them to the subtopic. After reading or discussing text, students add ideas or vocabulary to the map. The teacher discusses how students can use this strategy in their own reading and learning.

When to use: Use before and after reading text. Use before and after introducing new content. Use before and after introducing new vocabulary. Use as a review to check student knowledge.

Variations: Students can work in groups to develop their own maps, then discuss with the class adding ideas or words shared by others. The teacher could use a technology application to create and display the word map, adding ideas generated by the students. Students could use a technology application to create their own maps.