



Methodsheets

Buzz group

DESCRIPTION

The *buzz group* is a didactic method for activating students. In pairs or threes, students briefly discuss a given question, picture, problem etc. As groups discuss simultaneously, a *buzz* (murmur) develops. The conversation in the small group allows students to formulate and exchange ideas in a 'safe' environment. This often encourages student participation in a subsequent plenary discussion.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Exchange knowledge.
- Relate new knowledge to one's own prior knowledge, insights, and experiences.
- Articulate ideas/questions/work results.
- Identify and formulate knowledge gaps

TIME

3-5 minutes plus collection/discussion in plenary

EXPERIENCES AND SPECIAL FEATURES

The method with the least time and organization effort for the instructor and the greatest effect on the activation of the students (see applications). It can be used in (almost) all teaching formats and at various points in any teaching unit.

VARIATIONS

Tips for use in digital settings Have students discuss in break-out groups in Zoom/MS Teams. In the plenary session, all groups can then contribute their results, ideally in visualized form (e.g. via a PowerPoint slide).

A continuation is *Think-Pair-Share*: Students work on a question individually for a minute (think), then exchange their answers in pairs (pair) and present them in the plenary (share).

APPLICATIONS

Introduction to a new topic, activation of prior knowledge, animation of discussions, encourage student participation in plenary, deepen topics, loosen up frontal input phases

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

Starting with 6 participants, no upper limit

MATERIAL/ PREPARATION

- Visualization of the content to be discussed.
- For larger groups, acoustic signal (gong/bell) to end the exchange and bring attention back to the plenary.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE

1. Announce *buzz group* and content to be discussed.
2. If necessary, moderate group formation (neighbour groups).
3. Announce time.
4. Take over discussion/results into plenary .

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Wahl, D. (2005). *Lernumgebungen erfolgreich gestalten. Vom trägen Wissen zum kompetenten Handeln*. Klinkhardt.