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Partner Puzzles



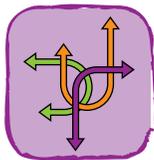
Materials

- Tagboard
- Photographs or magazine pictures
- Scissors
- Clear plastic baggie



Description

Activities in inclusive classrooms often require collaboration, teaming, and interaction (Dymond, Renzaglia, & Chun, 2008; Udvari-Solner, 2007; Udvari-Solner & Kluth, 2007). Students often are asked to work in pairs or small groups, but typical methods for grouping learners can lead to groans and complaints because students often want to work with their friends. To avoid protests, try making group formation into a game. By creating small jigsaw puzzles, students of any age can learn something new while finding their teammates in a fun, low-risk, and even humorous way.



Directions

For each group you want formed, create a puzzle with 3–6 pieces (depending on how many students you want in each group). Then, paste a picture on a piece of tagboard and laminate it. Finally, cut the pieces apart and store the group of puzzles in a clear baggie. When it is time for a group activity, give each student a puzzle piece and have him or her find partners by seeking others from the same puzzle pieces.

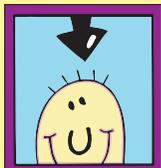
Teachers can turn the game into a learning tool by creating puzzles that match the content being taught. For example, if groups are forming to work on science projects, pictures of famous scientists can be used. If groups are forming for a collaborative writing exercise, puzzle pieces could reveal famous quotations. Students with disabilities and other students who are interested also may want to take these puzzles home if they prove helpful as a teaching tool.



Examples

During her social studies classes, Ms. Chaudoir grouped her students into pairs by having them assemble jigsaw puzzles of famous moments in U.S. history (e.g., signing of the U.S. Constitution, Battle of Gettysburg).

Students in a chemistry class find new lab partners by fitting together puzzles of diagrams from their textbook.



Keep in Mind

Another way to form groups is to make a set of index cards containing several famous pairs, trios, or groups (depending on what size you want the groups to be). Pass out one card to each student and have them find their partners by talking to one another, showing their card, and looking at the cards of others. Ideas for pairs include the following:

- Bart and Lisa Simpson
- Sherlock Holmes and Watson
- Jim and Huck Finn
- Lewis and Clark
- Barack Obama and Joe Biden
- Clifford the Big Red Dog and Emily
- Batman and Robin
- Romeo and Juliet
- Helen Keller and Anne Sullivan
- Peanut butter and jelly

Ideas for trios include the following:

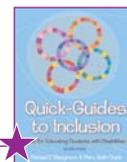
- The Three Musketeers
- Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, and Hermione
- Daddy Bear, Mamma Bear, and Baby Bear
- The butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker
- The Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria

Some teachers create pairs or trios connected to their content area, so an English teacher might have pairs such as Scout and Jem and Lennie and George, and an American History teacher might pair U.S. presidents with their vice presidents.



References/ Recommended Reading

- Dymond, S.K., Renzaglia, A., & Chun, E.J. (2008). Inclusive high school service learning programs: Methods for and barriers to including students with disabilities. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 43*, 20–36.
- Jolliffe, W. (2007). *Cooperative learning in the classroom: Putting it into practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Udvari-Solner, A. (2007). In M.F. Giangreco, *Quick-guides to inclusion: Ideas for educating students with disabilities* (2nd ed., pp. 151–164). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.



Udvari-Solner, A. & Kluth, P. (2007). *Joyful learning: Active and collaborative learning in the inclusive classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.



Vendors

Compoz-A-Puzzle Inc.

<http://www.compozapuzzle.com>

Several different blank puzzles that can be drawn by teachers or students themselves; use these to create pictures related to content or to write facts relevant to your subject area

Puzzle World

<http://www.puzzleworld.com>

Get theme or puzzle ideas from this “everything puzzles” web site. Puzzles are organized by brand, theme, and piece count.



Web Sites

The Cooperative Learning Center at the University of Minnesota

<http://www.co-operation.org>

The Cooperative Learning Center is the home base of Roger and David Johnson, two researchers known around the world for their work in cooperative learning. On this site you will find information on research related to cooperative learning as well as a Q&A on cooperative learning, in general.

Factacular

http://www.factacular.com/subjects/Famous_Pairs

A list of famous pairs

TEFL.net

<http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/teaching/putting-students-into-groups>

Fifteen ways to put students into groups