**A-Z University Teaching & Learning**

**Buzz-Groups**

**Short description**
Buzz groups is a didactic method that can be used as a type of brainstorming to activate students in a lecture. In pairs or groups of four, students briefly and quietly discuss a question, picture, problem, etc. Because they do this simultaneously, it creates a “buzz” in the room, though this is generally not disruptive. Exchanging in a small group lowers inhibitions to answer a question and creates a space to actively tackle a problem (by thinking and formulating).

**Procedure**
- Prepare the question/task
- Announce how much time students will have
- Plan how to collect the discussion results in plenum

**Didactic functions**
- Introduce a new problem or topic
- Activate previous knowledge
- Animate discussion
- Lower inhibitions for answering questions in a group
- Delve deeper into the topic (see ‘Lernstopp’)
- Loosen up frontal instruction phases

**Learning objectives**
- Absorb new information and compare it with one’s own previous knowledge/ideas
- Articulate and communicate one’s own work results/ideas
- Formulate knowledge gaps

**Application**
Questions to ask when planning:
- What do I want to know?
- Why do I want to know it?
- How do I collect the discussion results, or how do I give the students feedback? For instance, hand out colored strips of paper randomly at the beginning of class; students know that they will be asked to give an answer in front of the class; do not collect the answers, but instead give your own answer for comparison; take votes, etc. It is not advisable to call on individuals directly without advance warning!

**General framework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of course:</th>
<th>any</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants:</td>
<td>at least 6 people (works for 500 as well)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Room:</td>
<td>anywhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>3 min. plus feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Material:</td>
<td>present a possible visual starting point for question/discussion (picture, short quote, etc.)</td>
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**Remarks**
This method involves the least amount of effort for the instructors and yields the greatest activating effect for students! A variation of this is “Think-Pair-Share”: Students work on a question for one minute individually (Think), discuss their answers with a partner (Pair), and then present them to the group (Share).

**Literature**