

THINKING ROUTINES & DISCURSIVE STRATEGIES

SILENT CONVERSATIONS

(adapted from "Chalk Talk" in Making Thinking Visible , Ritchhart, 2011)

We can make our diverse knowledge(s) visible and discover connections and tensions among our ideas and worldviews.

MATERIALS

Several whiteboard surfaces or chart paper.

To prepare, generate reflection questions and record one on each whiteboard or chart paper. These should be higher order questions, open to a diversity of responses. (Consider using the **Question Formulation Technique** to generate questions)

Share the questions with students. Ask if there are additional / other questions they think it would be meaningful to include. Add or replace questions until all are satisfied that the list is compelling!

Divide students into groups of equal number, one for each question.

Explain the following to students: This is a silent activity! No talking.

PROCESS

1. Students will first have time to answer the question at their home station. They will record their ideas on the whiteboard or chart paper.
(You can also use sticky notes if you want students to be able to rearrange the ideas during or after).
2. After 5-7 minutes, groups will rotate clockwise to the next station, where they will read and consider peers' responses, and add to what they find by making a connection (self, text, world) or posing a question.
3. After students have visited each station, they return to their own and see the knowledge their peers have built!
4. Students prepare a summary of what they find, and generate a question that peers' ideas have raised for them.
5. Small groups share summaries and questions, which the larger group considers together.

A video of students in Silent Conversation:

<https://youtu.be/ZqYIFoizPIM>