

Chalk Talk

Chalk talk is a (mostly) silent and visual way to engage in discussion without speaking. It can be completed within a 10 minute timeframes as a reflective 'prep' for the spoken conversation that follows afterward. Chalk talks offer a good way to unearth the varying opinions and perspectives of students regarding a particular topic.

Here's how it works:

1. The instructor writes a question in the centre of the board – for example “What does addiction look, sound, or feel like to you?” or “What kinds of learning outcomes is the discussion method most suitable for?” Several sticks of chalk are placed by the chalkboard (or markers by a whiteboard).
2. It is then explained by the facilitator that this will be a silent activity in which people are to prepare to write their questions/comments/concerns on the board.
3. People get up and write something in response to the question whenever they feel ready. Long silences and pauses are common between postings. Do not be afraid of silence!
4. The facilitator can also participate by drawing lines connecting comments that seem similar or contrasting, by writing questions about a comment, by adding her own thoughts and so on.
5. When a suitably long silence ensues, the facilitator can then ask if there are no more posts to be made by the group.
6. If the activity is said to be completed, conversation then ensues about the postings.
 - Students are encouraged to identify connections and themes among the posts and also to ask questions.

Adapted from Stephen Brookfield, *Discussion as a Way of Teaching*, retrieved from [http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr. Stephen D. Brookfield/Workshop Materials files/Discussion as a Way of Teaching Packet.pdf](http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/Discussion_as_a_Way_of_Teaching_Packet.pdf)