

BTW... I keep highlighters, colored pencils, and fine-point markers. If you ever need to borrow them, just dig around in my office; you'll find them!

Discussion Techniques

Table Talk

Purposes: (1) activate prior knowledge, (2) build background knowledge,

(3) encourage active listening, and (4) set a purpose for reading/lesson

Procedure:

1. Write a thought provoking statement or question related to the subject of the upcoming lesson on the chalkboard.
2. Each student has two minutes to read the topic, reflect, and write a response.
3. Each student has three minutes to share his/her response with a partner, reflect, and write a response to his/her partner's statement.
4. Pairs combine to form small groups of 4-6 students. Responses are shared within the group and one response is chosen to share with the whole class.

Discussions work so much better when students have been asked to have their thoughts in print (written, drawn or highlighted) BEFORE they start talking!

**I didn't use index cards with this. I ran copies and asked them to highlight the information they wanted to share.*

Save the Last Word for Me

Purposes: (1) provide a structure to discuss the information and ideas in the text and (2) make connections to and evaluations of the information presented in the text

Procedure:

1. Students read a designated text.
2. After reading, students complete **index cards** with the following information:
 - Side 1: Each student selects an idea, phrase, quote, concept, fact, etc., from the text that evokes a response. It can be something new, something that confirms previous ideas, or something with which he/she disagrees. Each student writes his/her selection on side 1 and indicates the page number where it can be found in the text.
 - Side 2: Each student writes his/her reaction to what he/she wrote on side 1.
1. Students gather in small groups to discuss their information.
2. Students discuss using the following procedure: A student reads side 1 of his/her card; each student in the group responds to the information shared. The student who authored the card gets the last word by sharing side 2 of his/her card. The process is repeated until everyone in the group has shared.

**We followed this up with a whole-group discussion using the pop-up debate technique. Every student has to share one thing he or she discussed. First one to stand speaks. As soon as he/she sits, the next one to stand, or pop-up, speaks, and so forth. We checked their names as they stood, so the students were actually eager to stand before anyone else. They were afraid someone would "steal" their idea before they could use it!*

Chalk Talk (or “Ink Think):

Chalk Talk is a silent conversation in writing that allows students to have an equal opportunity to participate. It is a versatile protocol that can be used for many purposes.

Purposes: Assessing prior knowledge; assessing what was learned; solving problems; communicating to others

Process:

1. The facilitator explains VERY BRIEFLY that Chalk Talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the Chalk Talk as they please.
2. The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board or chart paper.

Sample questions:

- What did you learn today?
 - How can we keep the noise level down in this room?
 - What do you know about Croatia?
 - How are decimals used in the world?
1. The facilitator either hands a piece of chalk or marker to every student, or places many pieces of chalk or markers at the board. Students can comment on the initial question—and subsequent comments—by simply drawing a connecting line to the question or comment.
 2. People write as they feel moved. They can read and respond to the comments of others. There are likely to be moments where not much seems to be happening—that is natural, so allow plenty of wait time before deciding it is over.
 3. How the facilitator chooses to interact with the Chalk Talk influences its outcome. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:
 - circling other interesting ideas, thereby inviting comments
 - writing questions about a participant’s comment
 - adding his/her own reflections or ideas
 - connecting two interesting ideas/comments together with a line and adding a question mark

I haven't done this, but I can picture it working well. I would probably ask them to brainstorm answers on their own paper first.