

Written Conversation / Silent Discussion

Summary

Silent Discussion takes the strengths of a well-managed verbal classroom discussion and moves into a written discussion. Some of the benefits of this move include:

- all students participate
- students practice writing in a low-stakes, social format
- students engage with content skills and knowledge

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Writing Standard 2 a.](#)

Additional Core Ties

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Reading: Literature Standard 1](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Reading: Informational Text Standard 2](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 a.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 b.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 c.](#)

English Language Arts Grade 9-10

[Speaking and Listening Standard 1 d.](#)

Time Frame

1 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Character

Materials

Paper

Writing utensil

Background for Teachers

Silent Discussion takes the strengths of a well-managed verbal classroom discussion and moves into a written discussion. Some of the benefits of this move include:

- all students participate
- students practice writing in a low-stakes, social format

students engage with content skills and knowledge

Student Prior Knowledge

The ability to read and write

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will gain a better understanding of the text by identifying key details and main ideas.

Students will be able to recognize and respond to diverse perspectives.

Instructional Procedures

Generate four discussion questions.

Group students into fours. Each student in the group receives a different question.

Give students 3-5 minutes to respond to the prompt on a piece of paper.

Students pass their responses clockwise.

Students again have 3-5 minutes to respond to either the question or their partner's response.

Continue to pass and respond until the first student receives the original question. have students summarize (either in writing or verbally) the discussion.

Silent Discussion Question Examples General:

List some questions you have after reading.

What are the most important ideas to remember from the reading? Why?

What was the hardest part for you to understand? What did you do to help yourself?

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Have students generate discussion questions (advanced)

Allow students to generate discussion without prompts--i.e. begin with a blank sheet of paper (even more advanced)

Extensions

Silent Discussion can be used in any content area, and is imminently flexible. It can be used to discuss/process/reflect on:

Reading

Video/Film

Lab experiences

Concert performances

Field trips

Athletic performances/Games

Silent discussion can be used to prepare students for a traditional verbal discussion or to wrap up a verbal discussion.

Bibliography

Wilhelm, Jeffrey. 2001. Improving Comprehension with Think-Aloud Strategies. New York: Scholastic.

Authors

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