

Chalk Talk

Time: Varies according to need, 15 - 60 minutes.

Materials: Chalk board and chalk or paper roll on the wall and markers.

Specifics: A Chalk Talk can be an uncomplicated silent reflection or a spirited, but silent, exchange of ideas. It has been known to solve vexing problems, surprise everyone with how much is collectively known about something, get an entire project planned, or give a committee everything it needs to know with no verbal sparring.

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. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by a drawing a connecting line to the comment. *It can also be very effective to say nothing at all except to put finger to lips in a gesture of silence and simply begin with #2.*
2. The facilitator writes a relevant question in a circle on the board. Sample Questions: - What do you think about social responsibility and schooling? How can we keep the noise level down in your room? - What do you know about Croatia? - How can we improve the learning community here at school? - etc.
3. The facilitator either hands a piece a chalk to everyone, or places many pieces of chalk at the board and hands several pieces to people at random.
4. People write as they feel moved. There is likely to be long silences -- that is natural, so allow plenty of wait time before deciding it is over.
5. 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 to broaden
- *writing questions about a participant comment
- *adding his/her own reflections or ideas
- *connecting two comments together with a line and adding a question mark.

6. When it is done, it is done.