

Chalk Talk Protocol

Purpose: Chalk Talk is a silent way to reflect, generate ideas, check on learning, develop projects, or solve problems. It can be used productively with any group — students, faculty, workshop participants, or committees. Because it is done completely in silence, it gives groups a change of pace and encourages thoughtful contemplation.

Overview: During this protocol, team members will have the opportunity to share personal thoughts/ideas, make suggestions, and plan relevant next steps

Time: Approximately 40 minutes (can be shortened as needed)

Roles:

- **Facilitator:** Facilitates the protocol by reminding members of the norms, moving the team through the steps, and ensuring that the discussion remains focused. The facilitator is a full participant in this protocol.
- **Timekeeper:** Keeps track of the time to ensure that the meeting stays on track

Protocol:

Step 1: Instructions (2 min) 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 with words or graphics as they please. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by drawing a connecting line to the comment.

Step 2: Introduce Stimulus (3 min) Share the stimulus for the discussion that is written and circled up on the white board (question, problem, research, data, strategy, theory, etc.)

Step 3: Prepare (15 min) Provide participants with a marker and instruct all to respond to the prompt by recording their thoughts on the board, drawing a connecting line from the prompt to their thoughts. Participants may write comments, ask questions, draw images/graphics, show connections between various comments, etc.

Step 4: Facilitation (5 min) 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 her/his own reflections or ideas
- Connecting interesting ideas/comments together with a line and adding a question mark

Actively interacting invites participants to do the same. 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 without any verbal sparring.

Step 5: Draw Conclusions (10 min) Based on the thoughts and ideas written on the board, have participants suggest implications/applications/next steps.

Step 6: Assignments (5 min) Establish owners and deadlines for next steps.