

Discussion Questions

Lesson Blueprints: Mapping Responses (“Chalk Talk”)

Grade Level: Middle and High School

Essential Question

How do we use others’ ideas to help us organize our own thoughts about a subject?

Materials

- Wall, whiteboard, or chart paper
- Post-it notes, multiples per participant
- Writing tools

Procedure

1. Distribute Post-it notes to the group, making sure there are extras readily available for those who need them.
2. Based on the material presented, a reading assignment, a common experience, or a problem, ask participants a broad question or challenge that will elicit a wide variety of responses. Participants are to silently think about their responses and write them down on one or more Post-it notes, one idea per note.
3. Have participants place their Post-it notes on the wall/whiteboard/chart paper in no specified arrangement on the designated space. If you are working with a large group, assign smaller groups sections of the room/wall/board or chart paper (e.g., everyone in this quadrant will post their notes on the pink paper; everyone in the back of the room will use the back wall; these three tables will post over here; etc.).
4. When everyone has contributed at least one Post-it to the space, ask the participants to silently review the posted responses.
5. Have participants organize the responses into groups or categories such as commonalities, themes, worst case scenarios, etc. Encourage civil discussion among the members as to how and why the ideas fit within the categories they have selected and if there are other possibilities.
6. If you work with multiple groups, have each select a representative who shares the group’s conclusions with the larger group.

Conclusion

Ask the participants to identify the most important thing they noticed or learned about the topic after participating in the exercise. How did the experience help shape their thoughts and ideas on the subject?