

Silent Conversation

This is a method allowing the students to think and share their thinking on a shared board (digital or offline) and to have a conversation with a text and their classmates in silence. This method invites even the shyest students to share their thinking with their learning community. During this activity students will quietly write down their thoughts and questions, and remark and respond to their classmate's thoughts and questions. They will engage and be in "dialogue" with a shared text as they develop their understanding of it. In addition to this principle, this activity supports Learning Through Thinking, Learning Through Dialogue and Interaction, Learning Through Reflection and Evaluation.

Expected Outcome(s) – students will:

- ✓ Be able to share their thinking in writing.
- ✓ Be able to interpret a text.
- ✓ Be able to better understand a text by incorporating classmate's thoughts into their understanding.
- ✓ Be able to demonstrate active listening to other students' writing.
- ✓ Be able to explain how their thinking was affected by new ideas.
- ✓ Be able to express how they think about the long-term impacts of their actions and decisions.

Timing

The minimum amount of time you should plan for this method is **40** minutes.

Material

You can work offline or use blended learning tools.

Offline	Blended
A large paper or blackboard and many markers	Create an account to Padlet for step 2. Share the digital space with the students in groups to add their answers.

Prepare yourself

Offline:

Put the text below on a white board in your classroom.





Blended:

- Create a Padlet with the text for step 2.
- Provide each student with a tablet/laptop.

We suggest using this:

“The decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future.”

This is a principle called The Seventh Generation Principle and is based on an ancient Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)* philosophy.

Step-by-step or course

1. Input

Explain to the students that they will be participating in a silent conversation. That means that no one is allowed to speak, that everyone has something to write with, and everyone has access to the board. Students may comment, ask questions, make a connection, agree/disagree, explain, etc. the text and anything another student has written on the board. All responses are respectful and presume good intentions.

Show and give them to the text:

“The decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future.”

2. Open the Board



Once everyone understands what to do, they are free to write on the board or Padlet. Allow this time to develop, sometimes there will be a quiet period after a lot of activity, allowing the students to think. You may decide to prompt them to read everything that is written, to ask questions where they don't understand or add a comment to someone else's remarks. When they are finished, have them read to themselves everything written on the board.

3. Reflection

When everyone seems to have finished reading, stay standing around the board. Begin with some simple questions for the students:

- ❑ What did you notice?
- ❑ Did anything in your thinking change as you read other people's thoughts and questions?
- ❑ Is there anything on the board you still want to know more about?
- ❑ How was it different to have a silent conversation and not a talking conversation?



- ❑ How has your thinking about this quote/principle changed throughout this class?

Offer the students a few minutes to write down their thoughts about the principle and whether they find it an important idea on a new piece of paper with the quote written at the top? The students get a few minutes to write down their thoughts after the discussion. They need to reflect on it whether they agree with the quote in the end.

4. Bring it home

Back at school, have the students share what they brought from home. Consider beginning with a partner share and then a whole class share.