

THINK LIKE SOCRATES

Using Questions to Invite
Wonder & Empathy
Into the Classroom

Grades 4-12

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Thank you

FOR YOUR
INTEREST IN
CORWIN

Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Think Like Socrates* by Shanna Peeples. In the following pages, discover a new way to foster group writing with your students. Featured is a step-by-step lesson plan with directions on how to use.

LEARN MORE about this title, including Features, Table of Contents and Reviews.

PROTOCOL 3.3 How to Create and Meet in Writing Groups

MATERIALS

- Cards with questions you have copied from student responses to Protocol 1.1: Generating Students' Authentic Questions in Chapter 1 (at least three per small writing group)
- A writer's notebook of some kind, composition or spiral (can store or make students responsible for)—to experiment with writing techniques, recorded thoughts, feelings, seed ideas, etc.
- A working portfolio stored in the classroom
- Your own writer's notebook that you commit to using, if only for ten minutes a day
- Groups of four or five students formed beforehand from student input. You can make the groups bigger, but smaller groups are able to process the writing easier within class time. Ask students to list three people they know could work well with them. If they know they absolutely can't work with someone, have them note the name of that student so you can be sure not to group them together.

TIME

About thirty minutes

INTRODUCTION

Writing groups are a good way to get better at writing, and they will help you by giving you a real audience for your work: each other. All writers need others to give them help in knowing what is working in their writing and also what needs work because it's confusing. This group is your chance to be both a writer and a good audience for other writers. Because it can be scary to share your writing, it's important that you feel comfortable with each other. That's why you will stay with this group for at least six weeks. With your group members, you will learn how to work together as readers and responders to make your writing better. I will give you some cards with questions on them that have been generated from other students. As a group, you will decide which question you most want to write about.

PURPOSE

We are meeting in writing groups for several reasons:

1. Reading our writing out loud helps us get better at fixing it and finding mistakes. It also lets us know if the funny parts are funny.
2. Working with a group helps us learn to trust each other enough to be honest about each other's writing. This helps us get better as writers and as friends.
3. Listening to others' writing helps us develop empathy for each other and realize that the old saying is true: Everyone you meet is dealing with problems you probably would never guess they're dealing with.
4. Bonding with a group of other writers helps you to develop confidence as a writer and as a communicator.

DIRECTIONS

You will move with your group to different spots in the room. Bring your notebooks and a pen or pencil with you. Choose who will lead the discussion (the easiest way is to pick whoever's birthday is closest to today). Choose a monitor to make sure everyone stays on time in the group and finishes the task. The leader will read the cards, and the group will vote on which one seems the most interesting to write about.

- **Ninety seconds**—Read the introduction and directions.
- **Three minutes**—Students gather in groups and choose a leader and monitor.
- **Three minutes**—The leader reads cards and makes sure everyone understands the questions. The monitor makes sure everyone stays on task and finishes within three minutes. The leader then counts the votes for each question and will cast the tie-breaking vote if necessary.
- **Five minutes**—The leader will get everyone's ideas on how to write about the topic (e.g., different ways to connect the question to what you are learning or thinking about, or something that happened to you).
- **Ten minutes**—After discussion, you will write silently. You may choose to stay with the group or move to another spot if that helps you concentrate.

Students are able to practice any of the writing skills, genres, or rhetorical modes you are teaching within this group. This frees you as a teacher to sit with struggling groups or to check in with everyone during the class period.

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EXTENSIONS

- These groups may stay together and work as inquiry circles or book clubs. Inquiry circles may choose to investigate a particular question and create a product from it. Book clubs similarly choose a book or work with another text that the group reads and processes collaboratively to create meaning. Students identified as needing special education thrive in these groups because everyone is focused on making meaning rather than getting a right answer.
- Students may use these groups as a support for goal-setting, reflection, recognition, and concerns. Those identified as gifted and talented (GT) often need this extra support to help them plan for new learning as well as begin to identify strategies that have worked to help them learn the material.
- Groups may meet as “study buddies” who use reciprocal teaching to help each other process material for a test, understand a particularly difficult concept within your content, or practice language skills with their peers. Speaking and listening in authentic contexts is critical for English language learners (ELLs), and these groups help them to both process content and practice language. ●