

Two minutes each way

How?

Get students into pairs. They then take it in turns to think through a topic out loud, without interruption. **It is crucial that the listener not take pity on a struggling or silent speaker and bail them out.** The listener in the pair is only allowed to listen or to repeat the question/topic verbatim (especially if the speaker appears to get off-topic), but cannot comment in any other way.

After two minutes, the parties switch roles, such that the listener now becomes the speaker and vice versa.

Example topics include:

Problems I'm having with this kind of calculation.

My understanding of the social construction of race.

Aspects of the law of tort that I need to clarify.

Constructivism in relation to my own experience of learning.

How I could go about this paper assignment.

You can increase the challenge by making the time longer: five minutes each way is very challenging work.

Be sure to keep time and let students know when to switch and when to end.

When?

At the start of a session, this kind of activity can gear students up for discussion.

During sessions, it allows for reflection and engages all class members.

At the end of a session, it can be used to summarize learning and to develop action plans.

Why?

- This activity pushes pairs to follow an argument further because there is no escape.
- It avoids the social collusion that enables us to escape difficult or complex issues, and it favors intellectual rigor.
- Students confront the limits of their understanding.

Two/Five minutes each way is based on a model from co-counselling.

Source: Gibbs, G. (1995). *Discussion with more students*. Oxford Centre for Staff Development.