

P4C – the 10 step model explained

Preparation	This is about getting the group into P4C ‘mood / mode’. In the early days, activities might be geared to building a sense of community, but later they might focus more on the development of thinking and enquiry skills. Don’t forget occasionally to rehearse the aims or guidelines of P4C.
Presentation (of stimulus)	The stimulus should be engaging, relevant and meaningful to the group. It should contain some ‘big’ (i.e. Common, Central and Contestable) ideas / concepts that will inspire philosophical questions.
Personal Response (Thinking time)	Quite simply, time for private reflection on the stimulus. Silent thought can be challenging and may need to be modelled, and developed over time. Encourage use of paper to jot down ideas.
Question-making	Small group conversations. After sharing their personal responses to the stimulus, groups create open, discussible questions to put forward to the class. (Usually groups of 3 – 5, so as to end up with 6 – 10 questions).
Questions-airing	Questions, prominently displayed, perhaps on the floor, are celebrated, analysed and compared. Ambiguity or vagueness is cleared up, links often suggested, but also significant differences noted.
Question-choosing	One question is agreed upon for the focus of the enquiry / dialogue to follow. The question is either chosen by the community (usually by voting) or negotiated by the facilitator.
First Words	Getting the enquiry/dialogue started. One way is to invite the group whose question is voted for explain their thoughts on it. ‘Think-pair-share’ can be a good starter, too, or asking for a proposal/ response to the question. Over time, more critical responses can be encouraged, e.g. identifying assumptions in the question or ‘write to reply’ (first thoughts noted in writing).
Middle Words	Once the question / dialogue opens up, the metaphor of ‘building’ is key: building on each other’s ideas, and towards better understanding of the concepts / issue(s) arising. It is good practice to pause midway for reflection on how the ‘building’ is going. What progress has been made?
Last Words	A chance for pupils to offer their final words on what has been discussed. Often those who haven’t contributed during the session do so here and show they have been engaged. Different foci may be suggested.
Review	Basically, www.ebi (what went well; even better if) - best done after a short break (or at end of day). Most important is to use this step for the planning of the next session. Suggestions for lines of further enquiry and skills development can be invited and agreed. Invite stimuli suggestions.