

- This technique lends itself nicely to a **discussion of any art form** too. Post a picture on the board or have students listen to a piece of music. Then pose a provocative question about that and see what happens.
- Use TPS as a way to **review the steps of a process** (e.g. a chemistry lab) before starting it. Students talk about the steps they will take and then clarify with each other as needed. This technique helps the students avoid issues later on—before it is too late—as it allows them the chance to see where they are confused or still missing key pieces of data.

Further considerations to increase the benefit of a Controlled TPS:

- It’s fairly easy to hold students accountable for the discussion if you feel walking around the room isn’t quite doing the trick. Simply ask them to answer one or two written questions you’ve composed about the TPS topic. Those answers will let you know whether the partners talked about the content...or whether they were talking about something else entirely.
- When Persons B take their turn, you’ll likely notice that at the start of the allotted minute, the classroom volume is fairly loud because, using the prompts, Persons B are confident enough to start. Then, a short while later, the volume drops noticeably as the initial flood of responses have been offered. At this point, it might be tempting to shut down the conversation. *We would encourage you not to do this.* Often, some of the most

interesting and insightful comments are shared when Persons B, still trying to fill their time effectively, cull their minds for something new to offer.

Some final thoughts...

Keep in mind as you review the activities which follow, the concept of cost-benefit ratio. Ask yourself, always, how you can make the suggested strategy best work for your students. In each case, we will present a brief summary of how to carry out the tasks and then, as we did with TPS, we’ll offer curricular adaptations and some further general considerations for

Four Corners

Time Required: 15+ minutesGrade Levels: 3 - 12

Four corners is a classic, time-tested strategy that allows for a great degree of variability, both in terms of its application and student grouping. It is a whole class discussion technique that can be used at nearly any time during a class period. Four corners allows students the opportunity to make up their own minds about an issue while also sharing their thoughts with others in an informal manner. As always, there are many ways to adapt this technique, but the essential process of four corners works in this way:

As the teacher, your first step is to create a statement about which there could be several degrees of preference or agreement—from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”, for example. Next, organize the room so that there are four areas (corners), each with a label: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

Read the statement you wish the students to ponder aloud and give them time to consider their response/opinion. Instruct the students to move to the corner of the room that best matches their own feelings about the topic. once there, allow students the opportunity to discuss why they chose that corner.