

I Think, We Think

I Think, We Think provides an opportunity for students to think about and record their own ideas prior to engaging in small- or large-group dialogue. They must first explicitly formulate and record their own ideas. Then they compare those ideas (*I Think*) to the group's ideas (*We Think*), which helps them clarify their initial thinking. Students may also modify their own thinking to accommodate new ideas offered through group interaction or recognize how their ideas informed the group's thinking.

This strategy provides teachers with an opportunity to become aware of students' initial ideas and monitor how they contribute to the group's learning or change as they interact with other students during activities and small group and class discussions. It may be used at various points during instruction to track concept development over the course of a unit:

- As a pre assessment of individual and group ideas prior to engaging in instructional activities.
- During the concept development stage to examine whether students have changed their ideas as they worked through exploratory activities.
- Whole class discussion may lead to the creation of a *The Class Thinks* chart that can be revisited and revised over the course of the unit of study.

How to implement the strategy:

1. Provide students with a two-column sheet with the headings I THINK and WE THINK.
2. Begin by having students record their initial, individual ideas about the concept or topic being studied.
3. Organize students into small work groups. Provide time for the small groups to engage in discussion and argumentation based on their I THINK ideas. Each student should record the ideas that result from the group discussion. Ideas should include those on which the group agrees, as well as those on which the group is unable to reach consensus.
4. Listen nonjudgmentally as the groups work and encourage as many ideas as possible.
5. Bring the small groups together for whole class discussion, pointing out the similarities and differences in student thinking. Keep a record of ideas (*The Class Thinks*) to refer to throughout instruction, particularly as they change or are modified.

Adapted from:

- Keeley, P. (2008). *Science Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction, and Learning*, Thousand Oaks CA. Corwin Press.