

Developing Academic Speaking and Conversation Skills in Every Lesson

Why develop these?



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Tulare County Office of Education Best Results for English Learners

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Major Challenges

CLASSROOM CULTURE

- Students, educators, and assessments have “memorization-regurgitation” mindsets of learning
- Students don't see long-term & learning value of oral language
- Students are adept at minimizing their academic talk
- Students do not push selves or peers to improve their speaking and conversation skills

CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN

Inauthentic communication pervades curricula and pedagogy of language, literacy, & content

INSTRUCTION & ASSESSMENT

Oral language & communication play minor & shallow roles



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CLASSROOM CULTURE: A Major Overhaul



Individual accumulating of right answers, "paying" for points, & playing school

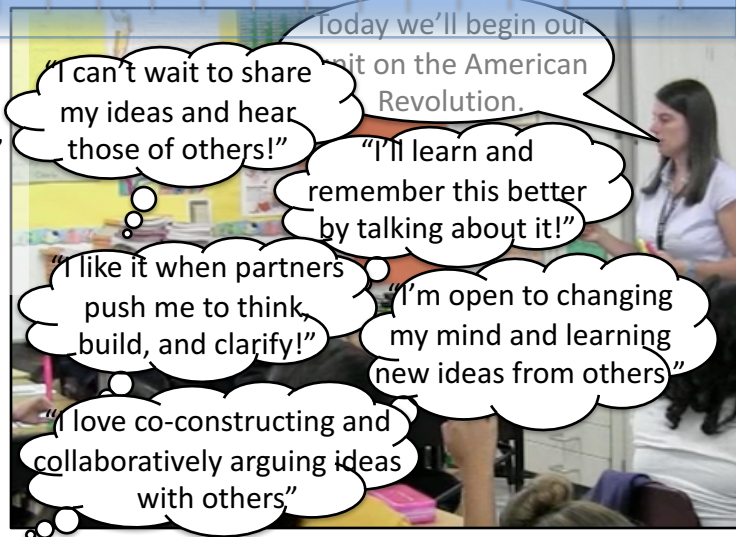


Collaborating, understanding, building, using, & communicating whole ideas




CLASSROOM CULTURE: Cultivating Conversation Mindsets

Each time a topic is introduced, every student thinks,




CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN: Essential Features for Language Development


___ **Is there a useful & engaging purpose?** In the activity, do students use language to do something meaningful and engaging (beyond just to answer questions or get points)? Does it prepare students to use language for academic purposes?




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CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN: Goals

	 SPEAKING	 CONVERSING
Increasing Quantity	# of students # of minutes	# of students in back-n-forth conversations
Increasing Quality	Strength Clarity	Co-Construction Collaborative Arguing Conversation Skills


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CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN:
TRANSITION IMPROV
Activities

Pro-Con
 For-Against
 Similar-Different

Transition Improv Activity: Pro-Con

Topics: Camping, Shopping, TV, Uniforms, Computers, Superheroes, Cars, Conferences, Testing, Internet, Cell phones, Video games, Social Media

Transitions: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again,

~~but~~

Frames: One advantage is ... For example, ...
 Another positive of ... is... because...
 A negative aspect of ___ is ...
 In spite of the positives of _____,

A & B, Lean?

Transition Improv: **For-Against**

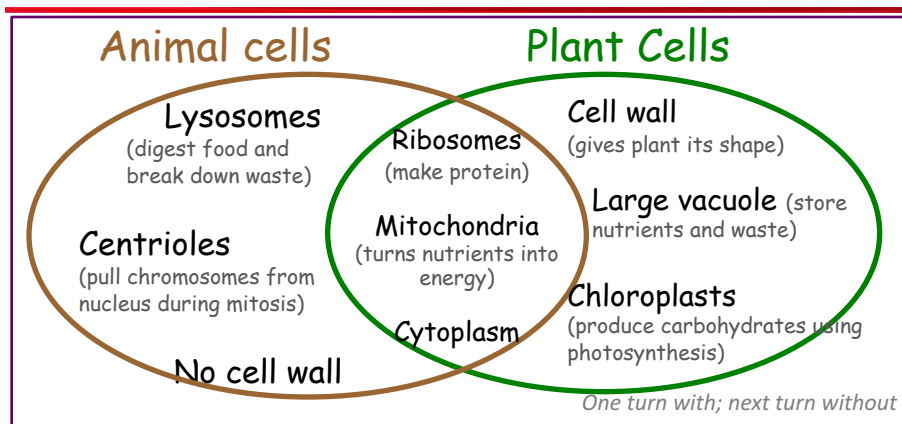
Topics: Fracking, adding lime to soil to lower pH, genetic engineering, nuclear energy, stem cell research, human-caused climate change, wolf reintroduction, de-extinction, zoos, preserving wetlands, corn as fuel, extraterrestrial life, desalination, ...

Transitions: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again, ~~but~~

Frames: **One reason for ... is ... For example, ...**
Evidence that supports ... is... because...
A reason against ... is ... For example, ...
Evidence that does not support ... is ... because ...

*A & B,
 Lean?*

Transition Improv: **Similar-Different**



Frames: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again,

Unlike animal cells, plant cells have ____, which ...
Plant & animal cells both have ____, which serve to...
... are similar to ____ in that they both ____
Animal cells differ from plant cells in that ____

CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN: The “Communicativeness Test” for an Activity’s Power for Developing Language

___ **Is there a useful & engaging purpose?** In the activity, do students use language to do something meaningful and engaging (beyond just to answer questions or get points)? Does it prepare students to use language for academic purposes?



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ASSESSMENT: Clear and Strong Oral Output (Self, Teacher, Peer)

- I included information needed and *expected by listeners (not too much and not too little), in order to be as clear as possible*
- I started with a clear main idea
- I clarified and/or supported the main idea (w/ evidence, details)
- I used two or more connected sentences
- I pushed myself to use academic words & long sentences
- I used nonverbal cues and stressed important words & ideas



CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN:

Working on Listening, Speaking, & Clarifying with

“STRONGER Y CLEARER EACH TIME”

Activities:

Stronger-Clearer Grid



Designing “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Activities



1. Prompt for an **original response**
2. Successive partners: **borrow and use the language, ideas, and evidence** each time-->
 - **Stronger** (often longer) with better supporting evidence and examples, and
 - **Clearer** with more precise terms and linked, organized, complete sentences.
3. Scaffolds **are reduced during** the activity.


“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid


I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples.

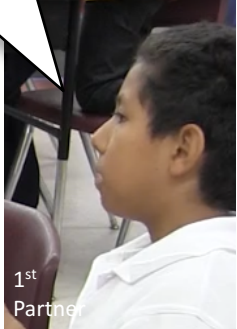
I think it's both good and bad. Like you learn from each other, but also you can fight.

(PRE)
Bad things happen when they meet.
Wars start.





Manuel



1st Partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?


“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples.

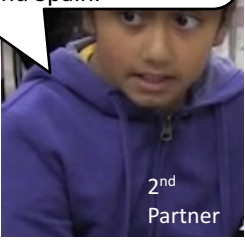
I think it's both good and bad. Like you learn from each other, but also you can fight.

Cultures meet and bad things happen like war. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.



Manuel

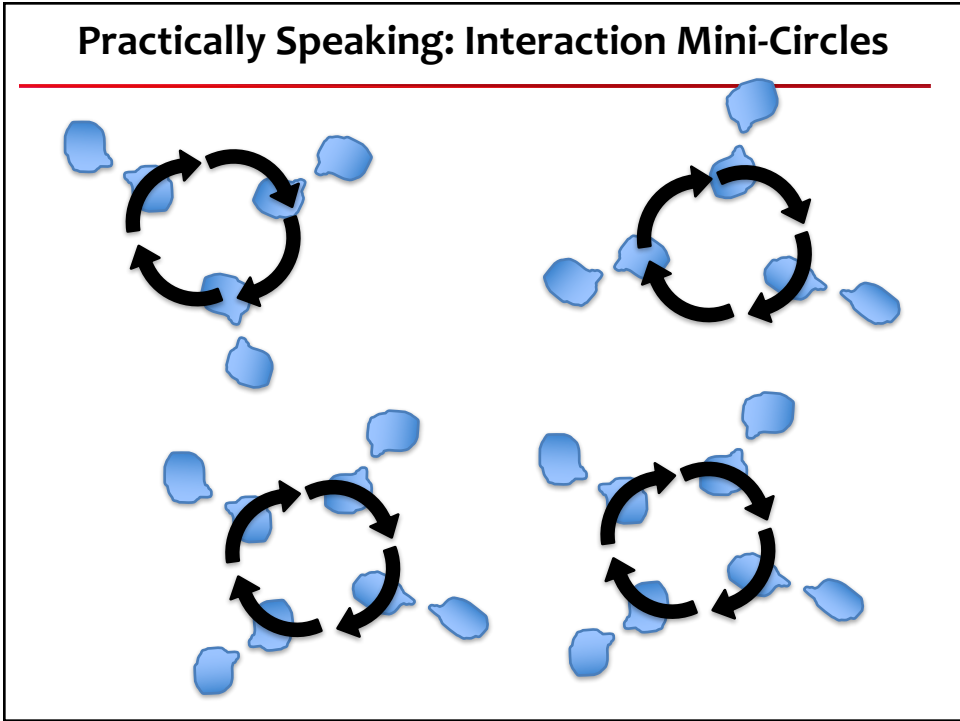
When cultures meet each other, it helps us to learn how others live, like their religion. But wars can happen, like the Aztecs and Spain.



2nd Partner

1. Mario	<i>both, learn</i>
2. Juan	<i>religion, Aztecs, Spain</i>
3.	
Me	

What happens when cultures meet and why?



“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

Name	How can school influence the current and future lives of students?
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

One powerful way in which school can influence students...
 School offers a wide range of...
 Teachers often

(Teacher can have listeners ask clarifying and supporting questions)

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INSTRUCTION Key Ideas


- I. Push students to push themselves and peers to be as clear as possible every time they say something—to value oral language and the time you give them to practice it.
- II. Encourage students to be “mini-teachers” who draw language out of peers.
- III. Set up situations in which students want to be clear and want to listen to others.





CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN:
Constructive Conversations

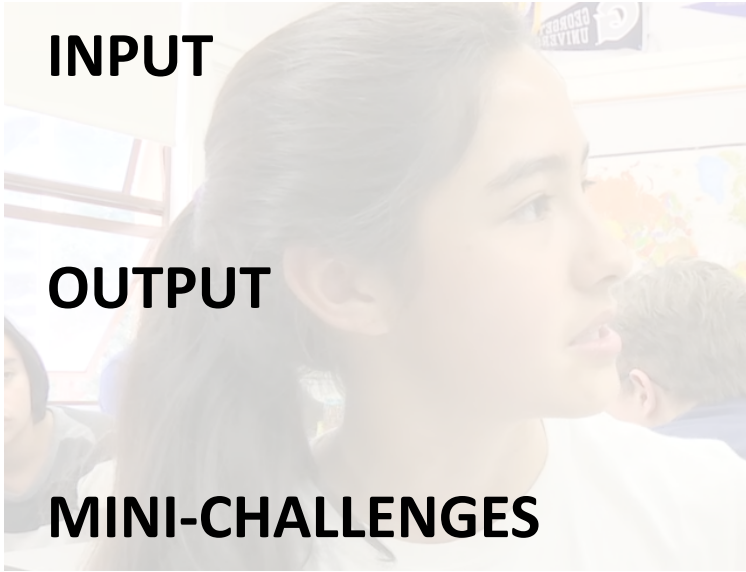



Conversations Develop LANGUAGE w/ Loads of...

INPUT 

OUTPUT 

MINI-CHALLENGES 



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Conversation Develops CONTENT w/ Loads of...

CLARIFYING



SUPPORTING



THINKING ←How?



Feedback

Laura: I think air has weight. Remember the balloon?

Eli: I disagree.

Laura: Why?

Eli: Cuz I can't feel it. Can you?



Lisa: I think the dog was his best friend in the story.

Edgar: I would like to add to your idea. My dog ran away last year and we found him in the park.

Lisa: Which park?

Edgar: The one by the train station.

Lisa: I took a train to San Jose last week.



Feedback

Alex: What caused the fall?
 Carlos: The book said disease and war.
 Alex: It also said crops and politics.
 Carlos: All of them, I guess.

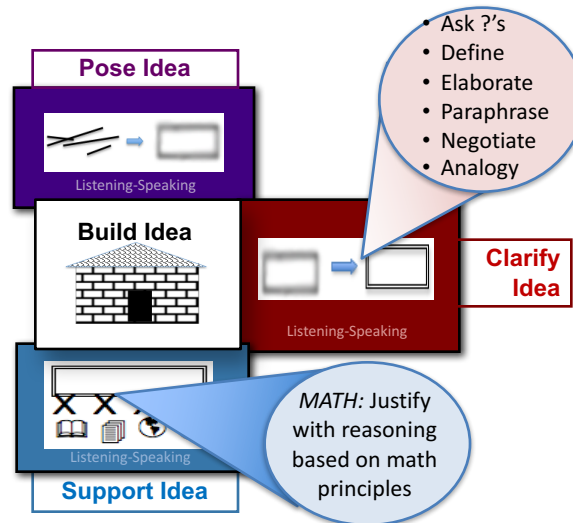


Mansur: I think there are different ways to solve it.
 Lynn: So? Just do what the teacher did.
 Mansur: But why did she turn the fraction over?
 Lynn: Who cares? Just turn it over.
 Mansur: OK.

$$\frac{3a}{3c-6} \div \frac{9ab}{c^2-4} =$$

Constructive Conversation Skills for “Build Up 1” Mode

Goal: Students collaboratively (but w/o teacher) build an idea (e.g., claim, answer, solution, interpretation), **using the following skills:**



Assess a Conversation – (ELA)

A: I think she not share it (bread)

B: Why?

A: Cuz the other animals not work; just lazy.

B: Yeah. I don't think to share, too.

A: Why?

B: Like my dad. He work for money. Not work, no money.

A: Yeah, no es justo.

B: Not fair. But teacher said is good to share.

A: I share when they help. Maybe I paint the school. It's my money, you know?

B: No. Maybe if ...no pueden...trabajar (work), like they're sick, maybe. But this story animals are lazy.

A: Is good to share, but not all the time, not with lazies.



Conversation Theory (Argue Mode)

WHEN A PERSON PAUSES IN MID-SENTENCE TO CHOOSE A WORD, THAT'S THE BEST TIME TO JUMP IN AND CHANGE THE SUBJECT!

IT'S LIKE AN INTERCEPTION IN FOOTBALL! YOU GRAB THE OTHER GUY'S IDEA AND RUN THE OPPOSITE WAY WITH IT!

THE MORE SENTENCES YOU COMPLETE, THE HIGHER YOUR SCORE! THE IDEA IS TO BLOCK THE OTHER GUY'S THOUGHTS AND EXPRESS YOUR OWN! THAT'S HOW YOU WIN!

CONVERSATIONS AREN'T CONTESTS!

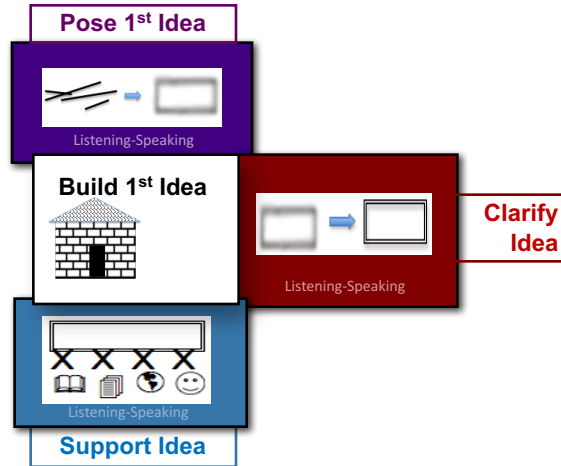
OK, A POINT FOR YOU, BUT I'M STILL AHEAD.

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WEEK 15

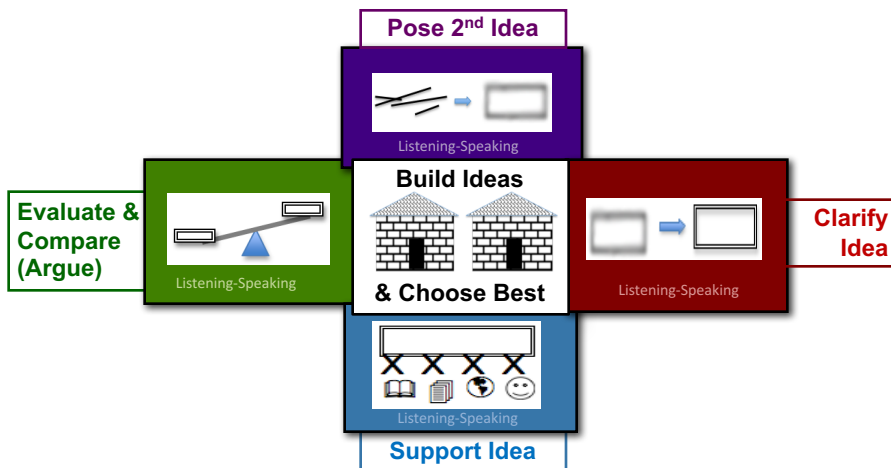
Constructive Conversation Skills for “Argue” Mode

Goal: Students collaboratively (but w/o teacher) build claims & ideas and then choose one of them, using the following skills:



Conversation Skills for “Build >1 & Choose (Argue)” Mode

Goal: Students collaboratively (but w/o teacher) build claims & ideas and then choose one of them, using the following skills:



ASSESSMENT: Conversation Analysis Tools

Turns build on previous turns to build up a relevant idea(s)

_____ Students create or choose a relevant initial idea(s) that is focused on learning objective(s)

_____ Students clarify idea(s) (by paraphrasing, defining, elaborating)

_____ Students support ideas (using evidence, examples, explanations)

If there are two or more competing ideas (i.e., an argument),

_____ Students evaluate the strength/weight of the evidence of each idea

_____ Students compare the strengths/weights and choose the “strongest/heaviest” idea

_____ Students explain (and/or negotiate) final decisions



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Conversation Sample - Math

A: What do we need to find?

B: How far the boat goes down the river.

A: So, how?

B: Maybe figure out the time to cross it, like straight, like this (a).

A: But I think we should just add the speeds together.

B: OK, that's 5 plus 3 equals 8. Then what?

A: We need to use the other number, 30. So divide?

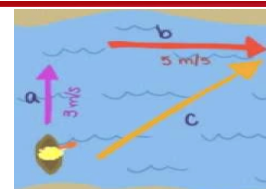
B: Why not. OK, so 30 divided by 8 is 3.75.

A: 3.75 what?

B: Meters, I think, but that doesn't look right.

A: No, so what do we do?

B: I don't know.



CURRICULUM & LESSON DESIGN:
Fostering Conversations & Their Skills
with the
Argument Balance Scale

**Scaffold for Collaborative Argument Conversations:
*Argument Balance Scale***

Claim

vs.

**Opposite or
Different Claim**

Which claim's reasons, evidence, and
explanations weigh the most?

Claim/Position

Good

Are humans good
or evil?

Claim/Position

Evil

“Constructive Conversations” Activity for All 4 Skills: Argument Balance Scale

Prevent dropouts & jail costs

Gets them to read

Kids need to eat

Stay after school

Pizza tastes good

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Kids need to eat

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Prevents dropouts, crime, jail costs

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Gets kids to read

Claim/Position

Yes

Should pizza be a reward for reading?

Claim/Position

No

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“Constructive Conversations” Activity for All 4 Skills: Argument Balance Scale

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Kids need to eat

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Prevents dropouts, crime, jail costs

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Gets kids to read

Claim/Position

Yes

Claim/Position

Yes

Should pizza be a reward for reading?

Claim/Position

No

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Expensive

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Not healthy food

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Not good motivation

Not healthy food

Expensive to run

Need to exercise

Not good motivation for reading

Some kids don't like pizza

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“Constructive Conversations” Activity for All 4 Skills: Argument Scale

Compare the evidence on both sides (use criteria)

Should pizza be a reward for reading?

Yes No

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“Constructive Conversations” Activity for All 4 Skills: Argument Scale

Choose a side and argue why it “weighs more”

Should pizza be a reward for reading?

Yes No

2D-Scale

3-D Version

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If-When Chart for Supporting Conversations

If... or When...	You can
The conversation doesn’t start well or at all,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say, “Let’s understand (clarify, define) this... What we need to do is ...” • Ask, “What does... mean in this case/context/situation?” • Say, “Let’s scan through the text again and look for...” • Say, “Let’s take two different sides; which one do you want?”
Your partner offers a short response,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for specific clarification or elaboration • Ask a question (I wonder why/how...) • Ask what a word or expression means • Ask for example that supports it • Give an example and ask if your partner agrees
Your partner offers a long and confusing response,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paraphrase it and relate it to the conversation purpose • Ask to clarify the most relevant part of the response • Ask for additional evidence or examples



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