Academic Conversations as a Gateway to Academic Literacy

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New York Teacher Webinar 1
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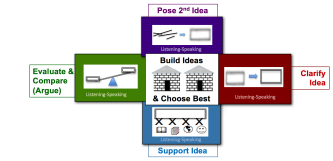
Goals for this Session

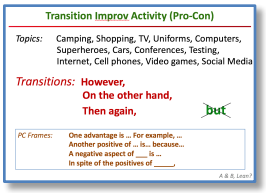
Overarching Goal: Learn ways to develop and assess academic conversation skills in order to promote sustained and effective academic conversations among students.

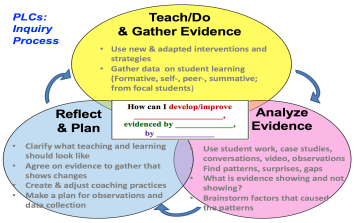
1. **Check in on what we have done since January 10th.**
2. **Review some key ideas related to classroom conversation development.**
3. **Deepen understandings of several strategies**
4. **Refine your plan for working on and with conversations this year.**

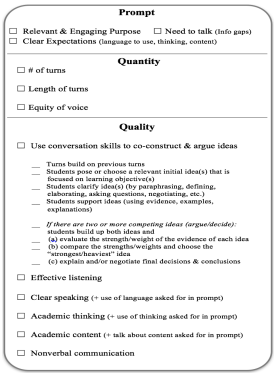
How are we doing with these?



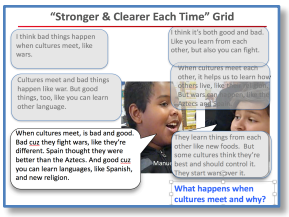
Ask for an (another) example to support the idea	Paraphrase what your partner said	Ask your partner to clarify (Why…How…)
Show that you are listening with your eyes, nods, posture	Pose a competing idea and start to build it up	Stay focused on the conversation prompt
Encourage your partner to talk more	Summarize the conversation up until now	Ask for criteria used to evaluate evidence

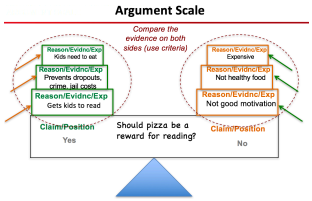




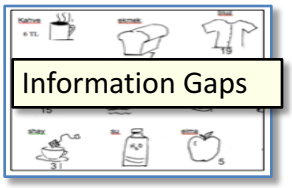


Write Model Conversations

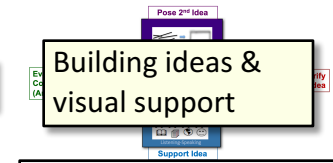




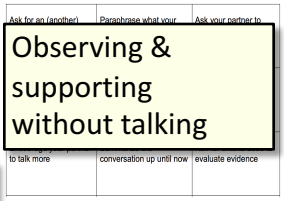
Effective Language Development Features to Apply to Other Activities



Information Gaps



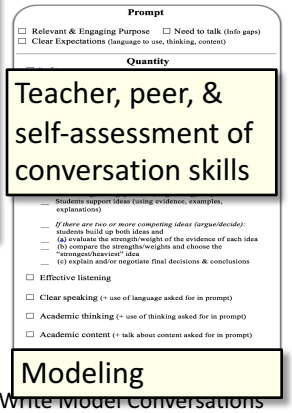
Building ideas & visual support



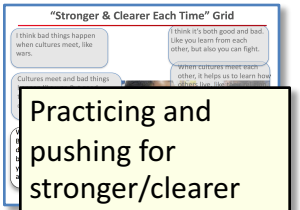
Observing & supporting without talking

Structured talking & listening with academic language

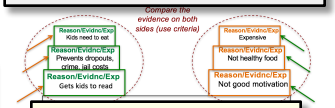
Jigsaws
Gallery Walks
Four Corners
Discussion Groups
Socratic Seminars
Teacher "Lecture"
(_____)



Teacher, peer, & self-assessment of conversation skills



Practicing and pushing for stronger/clearer



Visual scaffolding of thinking

Modeling

Write Model Conversations

What have we done to support the things on the right?

What more can we do? How can we use our current lessons to develop these things?

Prompt

☐ Relevant & Engaging Purpose ☐ Need to talk (Info gaps)
☐ Clear Expectations (language to use, thinking, content)

Quantity

☐ # of turns

☐ Length of turns

☐ Equity of voice

Quality

☐ Use conversation skills to co-construct & argue ideas

__ Turns build on previous turns
__ Students pose or choose a relevant initial idea(s) that is focused on learning objective(s)
__ Students clarify idea(s) (by paraphrasing, defining, elaborating, asking questions, negotiating, etc.)
__ Students support ideas (using evidence, examples, explanations)

__ *If there are two or more competing ideas (argue/decide):* students build up both ideas and
__ (a) evaluate the strength/weight of the evidence of each idea
__ (b) compare the strengths/weights and choose the "strongest/heaviest" idea
__ (c) explain and/or negotiate final decisions & conclusions

☐ Effective listening

☐ Clear speaking (+ use of language asked for in prompt)

☐ Academic thinking (+ use of thinking asked for in prompt)

☐ Academic content (+ talk about content asked for in prompt)

☐ Nonverbal communication

SAMPLE Conversation from Sarah Seliger

8th grade ELA/ENL Integrated

Teacher prompt: What are some negative character traits shown by the misfits in this text and what evidence do you have to support these traits?

Student A: I don't think the students had negative character traits. I think the teachers had negative character traits. Like manipulation.

Student B: No! How?

Student A: Because here where it says... (gives page and citation).

Student B: But this is about the students. Not the teachers.

Student A: Yes, but the teachers (goes on with example from text)

Teacher: That is a valid point. But what other negative traits can we write about?

Prompt

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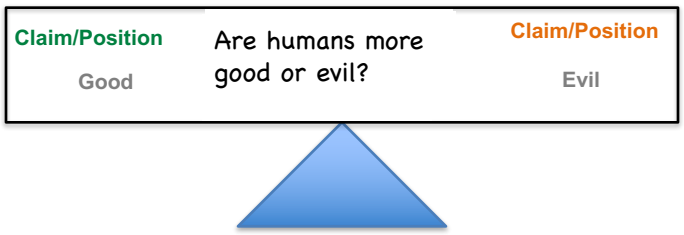
REVIEW:
Argument Balance Scale

Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations:
Argument Scale

Claim **vs.** **Opposite or Different Claim**

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



Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: *Argument Scale*

Mother Teresa

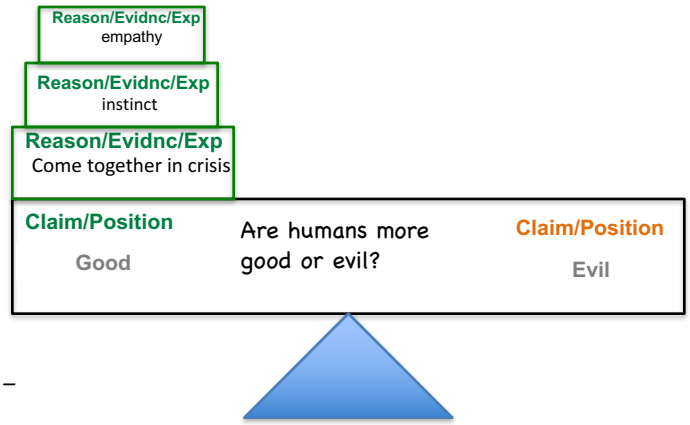
Instinct to protect—baby

Good intentions

Empathy - lost loved one

Society encourage – schools teach

Check on neighbot



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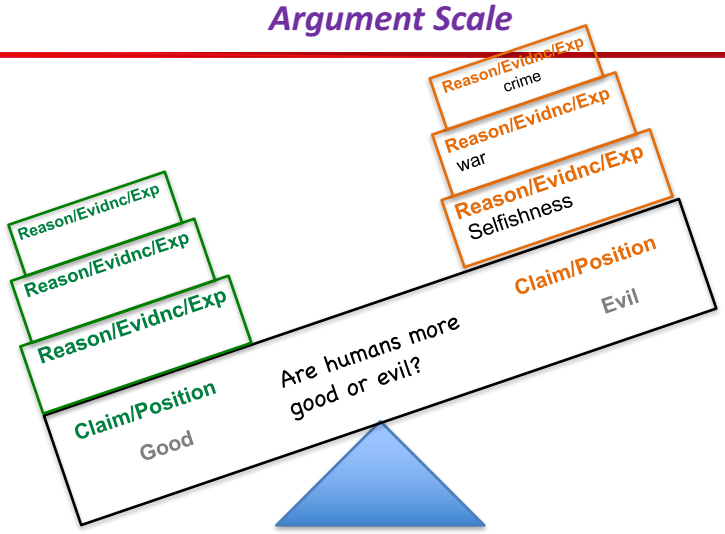
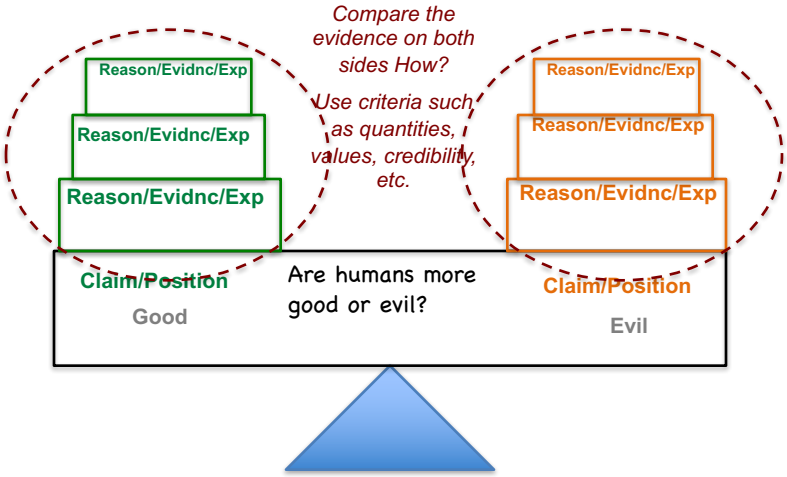


war

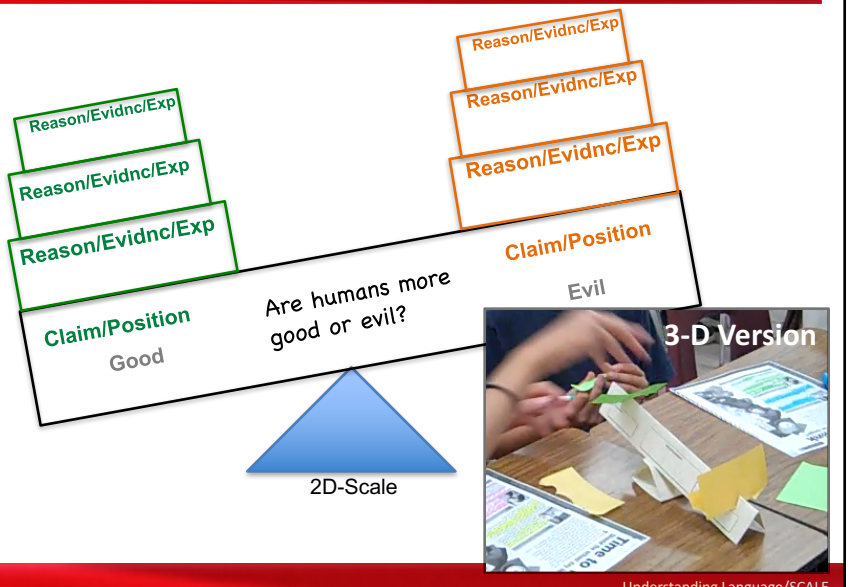
Crime

selfishness

Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: *Argument Scale*



Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: *Argument Scale*



Conversation Support Cards (Triads)

Ask for an (another) example to support the idea	Paraphrase what your partner said	Ask your partner to clarify (Why…How…)
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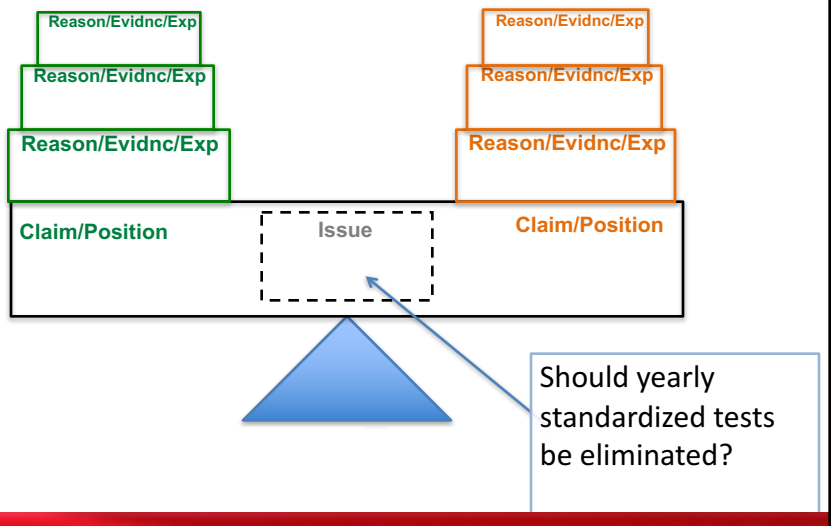
Your Turn with the Argument Balance Scale



Next Steps

- Design a lesson with 2 or more language development activities, teach it, and take notes.
- Fortify 2 activities that you often do with language development features like the ones we covered today. Teach with them and take notes on how they go.
- With the help of your students, develop student-friendly versions of the tool for peer and self-assessment.
- Update your Inquiry Cycle focus, evidence, and progress

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References

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