



Academic Conversations as a Gateway to Robust Learning



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Objectives

	 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

Language is essential for learning and showing learning.



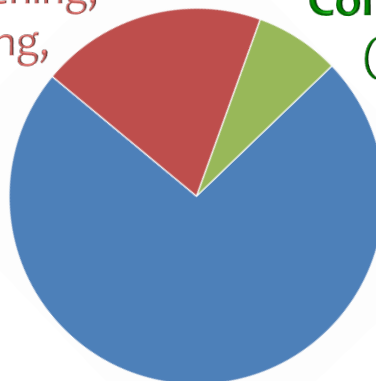
Every activity that students do in class should be leveraged to develop language.

The most effective way to develop language (& content & cognition) is authentic communication.

Types of Classroom Communication

One-way (Productive Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Multimedia)

Conversational (Collaborative Building, Exploring, Arguing)



Shallow/Fake
(Display, IRE)

Communicativeness "Test" (Essential Features for Language Development)

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

Discuss how authors
Decide how Columbus

Design an experiment that measures the speed of sound.

___ **Is there an information gap?** In the activity, do students get or give information that they want, need, or don't have?

___ **Is there attention to language in service of communication?** In the activity, is there extra teaching and assessment focused on improving how language is used?

- Sentence Frames
- Language modeling & scaffolding
- Practice
- Formative feedback

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Communicativeness "Test" (Essential Features for Language Development)

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___ **Is there attention to language in service of communication?** In the activity, is there extra teaching and assessment focused on improving how language is used?

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Understanding Language

Growing speaking and listening
with semi-structured discourse:

TRANSITION IMPROV

Activities



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?

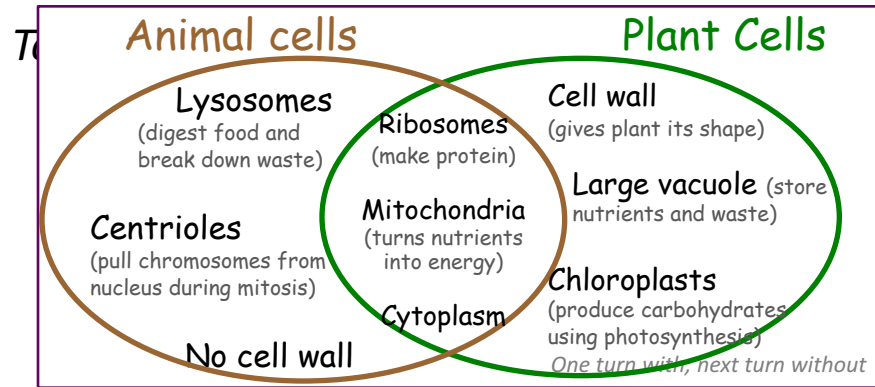
Transition Improv: **For-Against**

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 ...

OUTPUT: Transition Improv (Similar-Different)

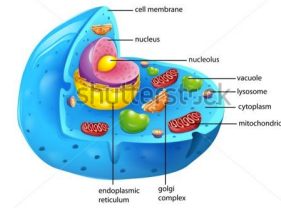


However,
On the other hand,
Then again,

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 ____

OUTPUT: Transition Improv (Similar-Different)

Topic: Plant cells & animal cells



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

~~but~~

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 ____

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Transition Improv: Two Views

Views: Patriots
Loyalists



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

~~but~~

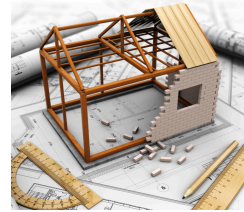
Frames: The ____ thought that ...
Many ____ believed that...
A different perspective held by ____ was that...
In the eyes of ____...

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APPLICATION TIME

1. Think about how you might use **Transition Improv activities** in your upcoming lessons.



2. How might you apply Transition Improv features **(one partner cues other to change ideas and use academic transitions in between; listener needs to decide which side the talker leans toward)** to activities you already use?

Developing Listening, Speaking,
Clarifying, & Supporting 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.




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.

1. *Mario* *both, learn*

2. *Juan* *religion, Aztecs,*

3. *Spain*

Me	
-----------	--

What happens when cultures meet and why?

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

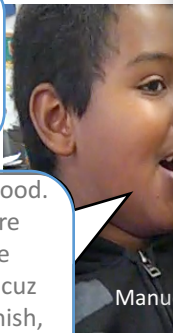
I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

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

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

(POST)
When cultures meet, is both bad and good. Bad cuz they fight, like the Aztecs and Spain. Spain thought they were better so they took over. Good cuz of new food and languages and religion.

When cultures meet, is bad and good. Bad cuz they fight wars, like they're different. Spain thought they were better than the Aztecs. And good cuz you can learn languages, like Spanish, and new religion.



What happens when cultures meet and why?

Stronger & Clearer Activity

Context

- 4th grade
Science class
- Early Advanced speakers.
- Have read and discussed energy conversion
- Focus on stronger and clearer messages using examples.



- Prompt is: What is energy conversion?
- Daniel talks to three different partners
- Look for if and how his response becomes stronger (idea-wise) and clearer (language-wise)
- *Reflect on ways to improve his response and/or the activity.*

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Looking at Student Work (Before & After Grid Partners)

PRE

INTERVIEW TIME!
(Listen in, Share out, Create together)

QUESTION: Why should I care about biodiversity?

MY ANSWER: Because the food chain

POST

I should care about biodiversity because without the variety of living things there wouldn't be anything to provide for us. For example(s) the rose periwinkle provides a medicine that treats certain cancers including leukemia.

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Stronger & Clearer Grid (Math)

Essential Question: How do you find a solution to a system of equations when both equations are in standard form?

(after Partner 1)

System is 2 equations
I know that at the
end of the steps
your answer needs to
be in co-ordinate pairs.

(after Partner 2)

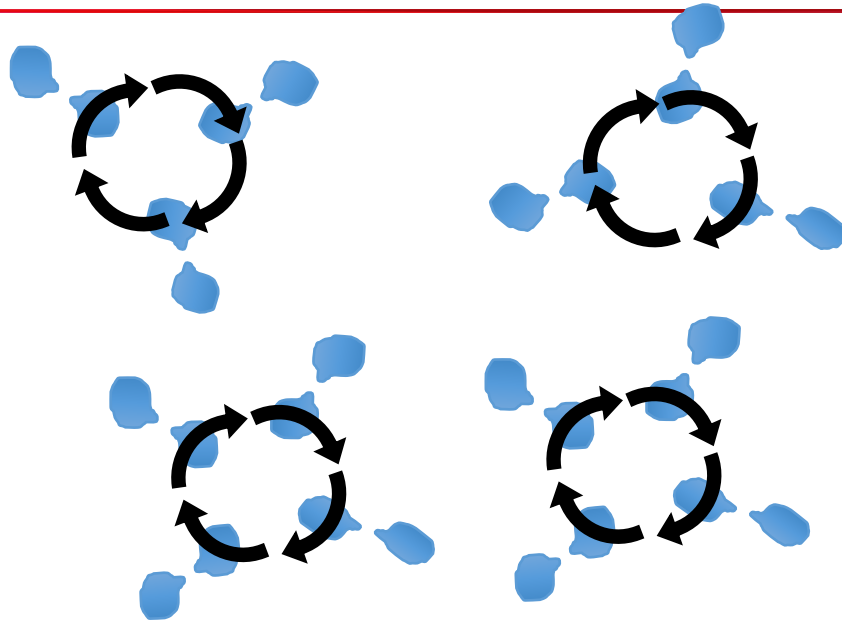
$$\begin{array}{r} x - 3y = 14 \rightarrow 2 - 3y = 14 \\ y - 2 = 0 \quad \quad -2 \quad -2 \\ \hline - 3y = 16 \\ - 3y = 16 \quad -12 \quad -12 \\ \hline (2, -4) \quad \quad -3 \quad -3 \\ = 9 \end{array}$$

At least one variable
needs to be isolated.
Replace (plug in) solve.
Answer becomes
co-ordinate pair.

(after Partner 2)

Make sure 1 variable is
isolated & it has to be
 $y = mx + b$. After that plug in using
parentheses. When you solve
it. To get out of the parentheses
use multiplication. When the
terms are combined, divide
the x and the number.
You now need to find y .
Choose any equation and
plug in. Then are you get
your answer you write it in
co-ordinate pair.

Practically Speaking: Interaction Mini-Circles



“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

Name	Explain how and why, when dividing two fractions, you multiply by the reciprocal of one of them
Me	How did the feudal system work?
1.	How did the Civil War change the nation?
2.	Why is it important to learn about history through primary source documents?
3.	
Me	
	What was the strongest theme or life lesson in this story? Why?

(Listeners can help and prompt for clarification and support)

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

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

One powerful way in which school can influence students...

School offers a wide range of...

Teachers often

~~I disagree with you....~~

(Listeners can help and prompt for clarification and support)

APPLICATION TIME



1. Think about how you might use **Stronger & Clearer Each Time activities** in your upcoming lessons.
2. How might you apply the S & C Features (**successive partners, borrowing, strengthening, clarifying, partner support, pre-post writing**) to activities you already use?

Key Practices

1. Push students to push themselves and each other to be as clear as possible every time they say something.
2. Encourage students to be “mini-teachers” who support and draw language out of peers.
3. Set up situations in which students want/need to be clear and want/need to listen to others (clarity matters)



What to Look For in Conversations: Conversation Observation & Analysis Tool

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

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Conversation Analysis

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

Eli: I disagree.

Laura: Can you give a reason?

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.



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Building Ideas in Conversations

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.

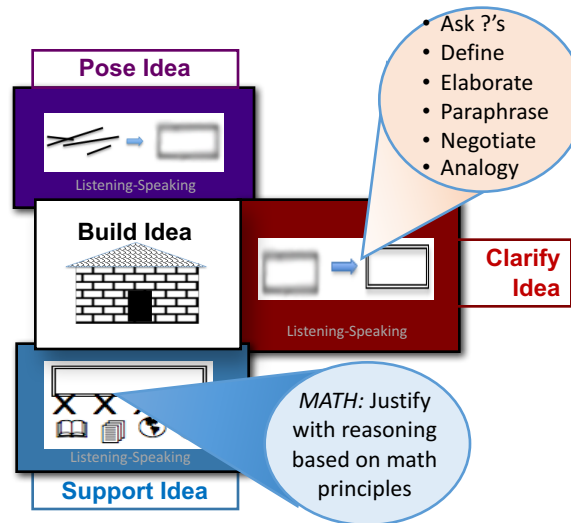


Mansur: I think there are different ways to solve it.
 Lynn: So? Just do what the teacher did.
 Mansur: But why did she turn the fraction over?
 Lynn: Who cares? Just turn it over.
 Mansur: OK.

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

Constructive Conversation Skills for "Build Up 1 Idea" Mode

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



Conversations at Beginning Levels of Proficiency

Learning objective: Use reasons to argue the importance of a historical figure.

Prompt: Talk about what makes Abraham Lincoln a hero.

A: How Lincoln a hero?

B: He stop slavery, the slaves.

A: How?

B: The war.

A: Yeah, Civil. He fighted it stop slavery.

B: Muchos die in the war.

A: Very bad.

B: But cuál es more bad? Slavery or die?

A: Slavery.

B: Why?

A: Cuz you not free, like, como en la cárcel, y te golpean. And Lincoln stop it. He's a hero.



Constructive Conversations

Context

- Sheltered 9th grade English class (taught by Patrick Hurley)
- Intermediate and early advanced speakers.
- Have read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*
- Focal conversation skill: supporting your ideas with examples from a text.
- Prompts on the board



This Clip

- Discuss the main theme: "what do you think an important theme in this book is?" *"An important theme of this book is real courage"*
- They prompt each other: "What does courage mean?" "Can you elaborate on that?" "Can you give an example from another book?" "How does this apply to our life?"

Assess a Conversation – (ELA)

Prompt	
Quantity	Quality
Supports & Structures	

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.



Argumentation

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 ARENT CONTESTS!

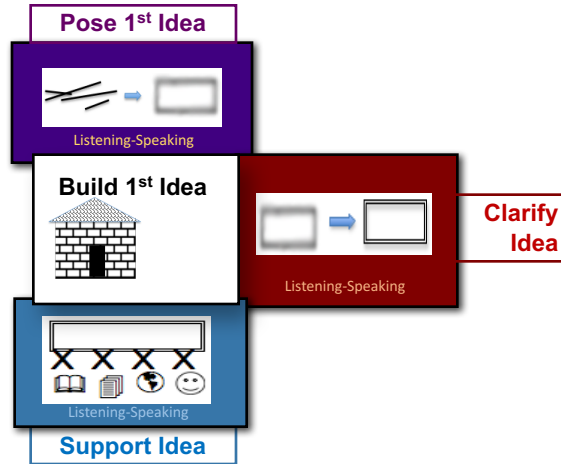
OK, A POINT FOR YOU, BUT I'M STILL AHEAD.

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WEEK 15

Constructive Conversation Skills for "Argue-Decide" Mode

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

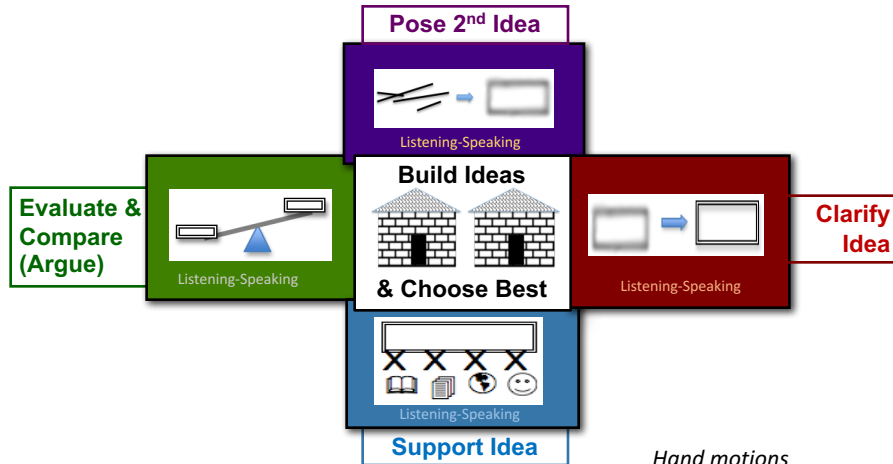


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Constructive Conversation Skills for "Argue-Decide" Mode

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



Hand motions

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Conversation – 2nd gr. SS (Use the CAT→)

Prompt	
Quantity	Quality
Supports & Structures	

A: What do firefighters need most? (*prompt*)

B: Air.

A: Can you give an example?

B: Like a tank of air like the picture.

A: Why do they need it most?

B: So they won't die.

A: Why?

B: When they go in burned buildings. Smoke kills so they need air. Air is most important.

A: I think they need water most.

B: Why?

A: They need it to put out the fire. That's what they do.

B: But they can't use the water if they die from smoke.

A: OK, yeah. Air is most important.



5th Gr. Language Arts/ELD (Use the COAT→)



Context

- 5th grade Language Arts/ELD class in San Francisco
- Advanced and early intermediate partners.

This Clip

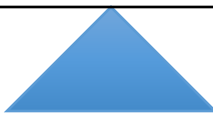
- After reading an allegory for the Holocaust, students discuss what could have happened if the animals had stood together.
- They practice stating opinions, paraphrasing, and clarifying

**Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations:
Argument 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
-------------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------



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Argument Scale

Prevent dropouts & jail costs

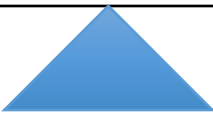
Gets them to read

Kids need to eat

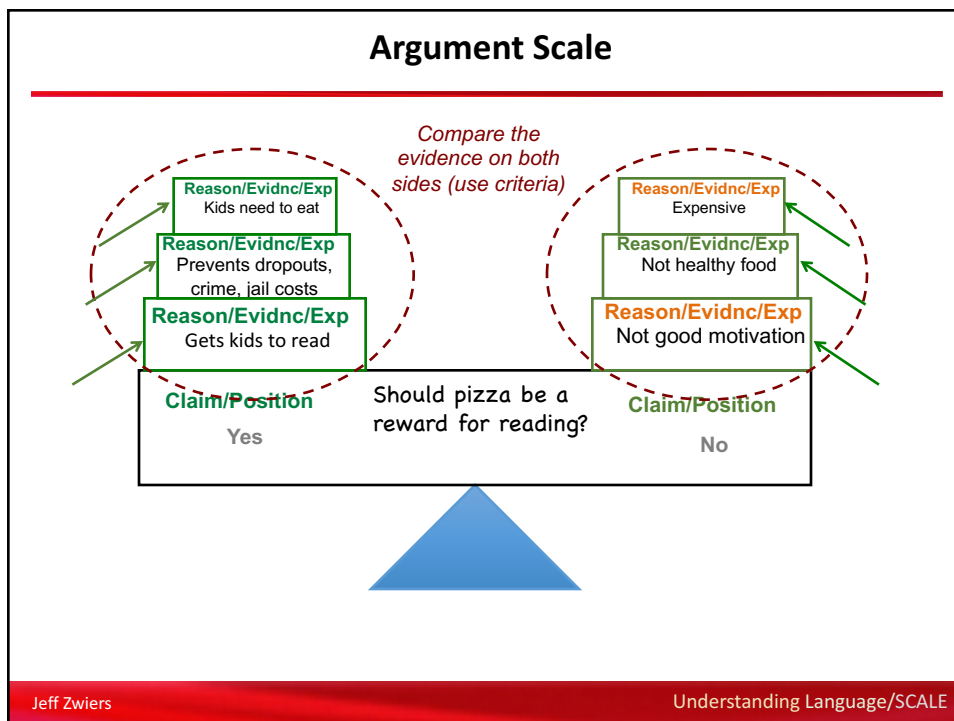
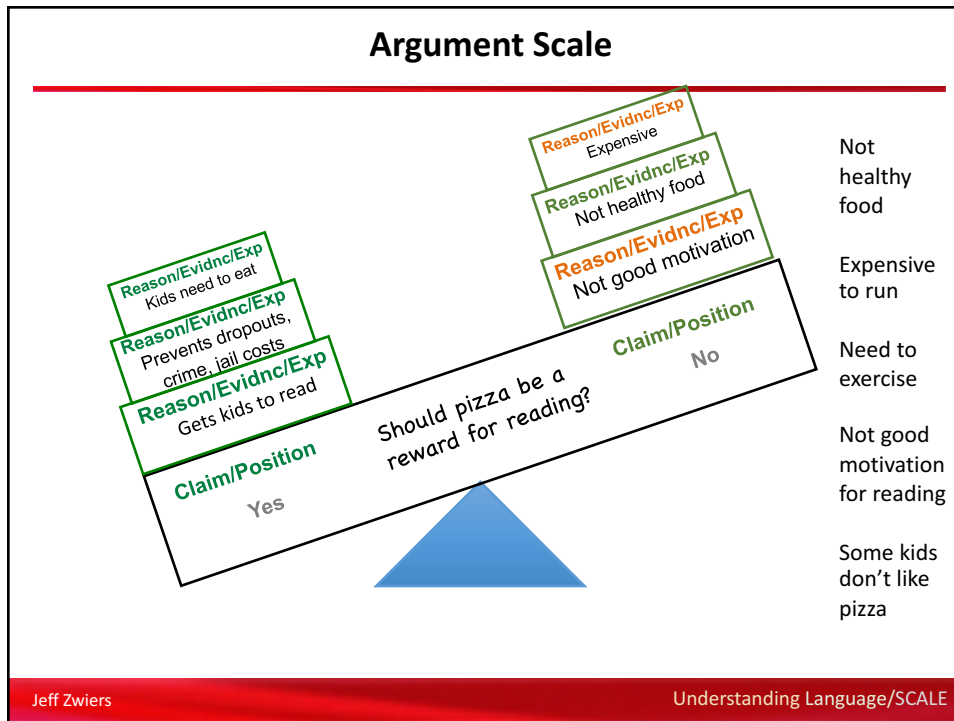
Stay after school

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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Argument Scale

*Choose a side
and argue why it
"weighs more"*


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

2D-Scale



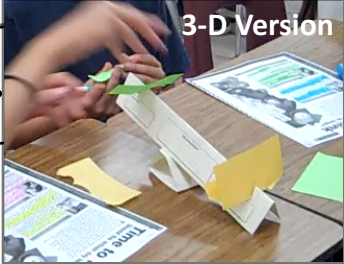
Should pizza be a
reward for reading?

Reason/Evidnc/Exp
Expensive

Reason/Evidnc/Exp
Not healthy food

Reason/Evidnc/Exp
Not good motivation

3-D Version




Video Example

CONTEXT

5th grade
Language
Arts/ELD class
Advanced and
early advanced
partners.

After reading an
article on a
program that
gives pizza as
reward for
reading,
students discuss
their opinions
on the issue.



THIS CLIP

- Watch for supporting opinions, building on ideas, and clarifying
- Notice if and how the balance scale helps students to extend talk
- Consider next steps based on this conversation

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Math Paired Conversation Protocol

Suppose it takes the Almond River 3 years to fill a reservoir, Belfair Creek 6 years to fill it, and Campbell Creek 10 years to fill it. If all are flowing into the reservoir, how long will it take to fill it?

PROBLEM:

Paraphrase and clarify problem for one another (in pairs) <i>(Talk about what is asked; what is given; what happens; what the units are, etc.)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> TALK			
Estimate the answer <i>(Each partner generate and justify your own estimate; then compare them)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> TALK			
METHOD A <i>(name it)</i>		METHOD B <i>(name it)</i>	
Justify method <input type="checkbox"/> TALK		Justify method <input type="checkbox"/> TALK	
Visuals, Drawings, Charts, Symbols, Calculations, Solution		Visuals, Drawings, Charts, Symbols, Calculations, Solution	
Justify what you do 		Justify what you do 	
<input type="checkbox"/> TALK		<input type="checkbox"/> TALK	

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Conversation Support Cards (Pair w/ Observer)

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

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APPLICATION TIME



1. Think about how you might use Conversation Skills Development activities (Skills Poster, COAT, Support Cards, Argument Scale) in your upcoming lessons.
2. How might you apply the features (visuals, gestures) to activities you already use?

Next Steps

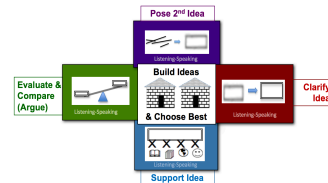
Transition Improv Activity (Pro-Con)

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*

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

A.R.S. Com?



Communicativeness "Test"
(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?

___ Is there an **information gap**? In the activity, do students get or give information that they want, need, or don't have?

___ Is there **attention to language in service of communication**? In the activity, is there extra teaching and assessment focused on improving how language is used? This includes modeling, practicing, giving feedback, and/or scaffolds.

"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

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

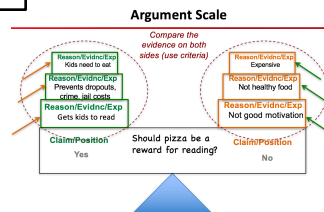
Cultures meet and bad things happen like war. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.

When cultures meet, is bad and good. But say they fight war, like they're different. Spain thought they were better than the Aztecs. And good out you can learn languages, like Spanish, and new religion.

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

When cultures meet each other, it helps us to learn how to live. Like the Aztecs and the Spaniards. They learn things from each other like new foods. But some cultures think they're best and should control it. They don't switch over it.

What happens when cultures meet and why?



Sample Lesson(s) Plan: Literature

- I. **Objectives:** Infer and support themes in short stories. Argue the most important theme for students your age.
- II. **Stronger-Clearer Each Time:** Read same story, share theme, support
- III. **Modified Jigsaw:** Think-Pair-Square: Read different stories, share theme and evidence with partner, then w/ other pair.
- IV. **Transition Improv:** Two Differing Themes (e.g., 'Two Brothers')
- V. **Academic Conversation Model:** Emphasize skills of supporting and evaluating evidence and importance, and arguing for one theme over another.
- VI. **Argument Balance Scale Conversations:** 2 Themes



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