

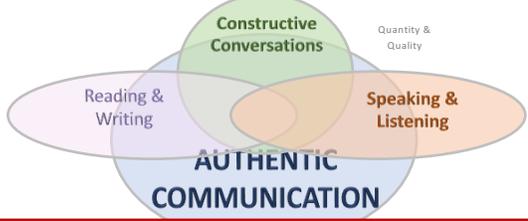


Improving Oral Language and Conversation Skills Across Disciplines

Jeff Zwiers
Portland, Maine
Jeffzwiers.org/Maine2017
jzwiers@stanford.edu

Understanding Language | Presented by Jeff Zwiers | Jeff Zwiers

Overview



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
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If you don't truly use language, you won't truly learn it.

"Ladies and gentlemen, from the cockpit, this is your airplane mechanic. I was asked to fly the plane today. I have never flown a plane before, nor in this type of weather, but I do know all the names of all the engine parts and how they fit together... So sit back, relax, & enjoy your flight."



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SHIFT from...

LESS to MORE

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

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

How does language use differ between these two?



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Types of Classroom Communication



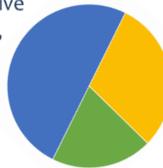
One-way (Productive Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing, Multimedia)
Tell your partner what you think motivates students to learn. Write an article for the school paper. Read a chapter to prepare you for the expert panel we will have...

Conversational (Collaborative Building, Exploring, Arguing)
With your partner, decide whether or not to move west. Co-create an experiment... Jointly come up with several ways to solve this problem...

Pseudo-Communication (Shiny, Fake, Indirect, Display, Drills, Games)
Turn and tell your partner the shift described in the previous slide (without looking). Turn to tell your partner the meaning of irony. Can someone tell me when WWII started? Solve this math problem. Write a response to literature essay (55). Read and answer the questions. Make a poster about photosynthesis)

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More Authentic Communication



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

Conversational (Collaborative Building, Exploring, Arguing)

Pseudo-Communication (Shiny, Fake, Indirect, Display, Drills, Games, IRE)



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Building Communication-Rich Classroom Culture: Reduce these Obstacles

- ❑ Our desire for "control" (e.g., "I don't know what they're saying back there.") (Low agency)
- ❑ Students don't push selves or others for clarity (mini-teachers)
- ❑ Teaching to assessments that don't value or inspire communication
- ❑ Focusing on points and grades → ("Pull to do the bare minimum")
- ❑ Lack of academic conversation assessments, models, supports, and practice time (Scrimmages)
- ❑ Over-structured "discourse" activities and over-use of sentence frames



How can we reduce these?

Authentic Communication Features for Accelerating Language Development

Useful & engaging purpose. Students use language to do/build/change something beyond just answering questions for praise or points. Clarity matters. Agency.

Information gap(s). Students get or give information that they want, need, or don't have. (natural or created) (students need one another)

Attention to language in service of communication? There is extra work on language used.

- Language modeling & scaffolding (e.g., sentence frames)
- Practice
- Formative feedback



Building speaking and listening with:

TRANSITION IMPROV Activities



Transition Improv Activity: Pro-Con

Topics: Social media's influence on language development

(You will make recommendations to teachers and students about the uses of 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 _____

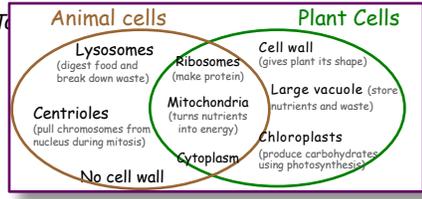
Transition Improv: For-Against

Topics: Genetic engineering, adding lime to soil to lower pH, 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 ...

Transition Improv: Similar-Different



SD Frames: 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 _____

Transition Improv: Two Views w/ Evidence

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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Transition Improv: Math Situations

Topics: Addition-Subtraction, Area-Perimeter, Multiplication-Division, Sine-Cosine, Volume-Surface Area, Linear-Quadratic, Fractions-Decimals, Integral-Derivative, Constant-Variable

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

Frames: You need to add when ... because...
When you ... you need to subtract because...
You need to calculate volume when... because...
When you ... you need to use decimals because...

Director can prompt for clarification and/or spark ideas, if needed.

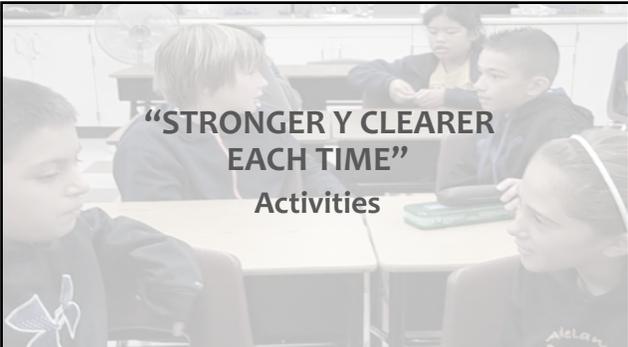
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APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might plan using **Transition Improv activities (with the three features of language development)** in your upcoming units or lessons.

**“STRONGER & CLEARER EACH TIME”
Activities**



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.

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“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

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

Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples; Stronger + clearer!

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.



Silvia



Partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

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"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.

1. Mario	both, learn
2. Juan	religion, Aztecs,
3. Spain	
Me	

Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples; Stronger + clearer!

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 others live, like their religion. But wars can happen, like the Aztecs and Spain.



Silvia
2nd partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

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"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

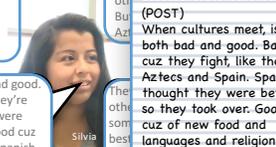
I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

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. 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.

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

(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.



Silvia
2nd partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

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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 rasy periwinkle provides a medicine that treats certain cancers including leukemia

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Stronger & Clearer Activity

Context

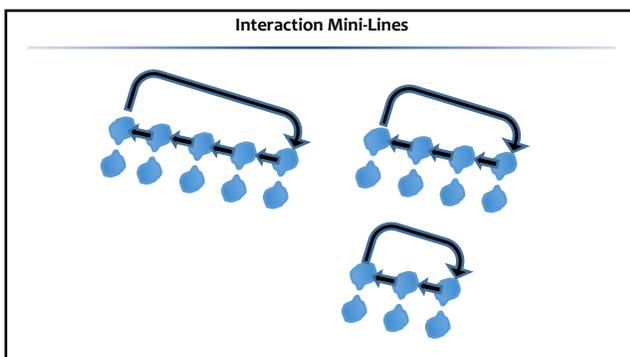
- 4th grade Science class
- Early Advanced speakers.
- Have read and discussed energy conversion
- Focus on stronger and clearer messages using examples.



This Clip

- 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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"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

Name	Why is it important to learn about history through primary source documents?	You are a historian trying to convince a history textbook author to include primary sources. He has not read in and need to know look for it.
Me	(Just two or three key words, if any)	
1.		
2.		
3.		
Me		

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APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might plan using **Stronger & Clearer Activities** (with the three features of language development) in your upcoming units or lessons.

COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS



Constructive Conversations



A conversation has a spirit of its own, and the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it... That is, it allows something to 'emerge' which hence forth exists.

--Hans Georg Gadamer

The Power of Conversation

In the Bantu language, the word *ubuntu* means that a person becomes a person only through other people.

Neuroscientists agree, arguing that our brains and minds are shaped in continuous interaction with other people.

During conversation, participants orient towards the other person's mind, inferring meanings and relevancies, rather than just decoding the verbal messages.



(Hari & Kujala, 2007. *Brain Basis of Human Social Interaction: From Concepts to Brain Imaging*)

Speaking & Conversations: Overlap & Differences



Speaking is one-way, one-time, clear & strong communication of ideas & thinking.

Think-pair-shares, Answering teacher questions, Jigsaws, Gallery walks, Oral presentations



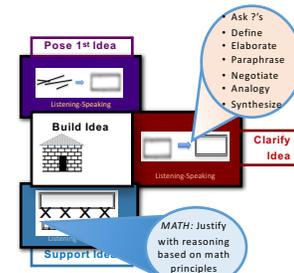
Conversations are back-and-forth interactions in which participants *build on* one another's ideas to *build up* ideas that weren't in their minds before talking.

Idea UNDER construction

WHAT: Constructive Conversation Skills (Build one Idea)

Students (w/o teacher) collaboratively build an idea (e.g., claim, answer, solution, interpretation)—not just answer questions, using the skills on the right:

(Note that these are not "natural" and eventually need to be "automatic"):



WHAT to Look For in a Conversation: Conversation Observation & Analysis Tool (COAT)

PROMPT:

Useful & Engaging Purpose Need to talk + Unique ideas Clear and Helpful Directions

QUANTITY

of Turns Length of turns Equity

QUALITY

Use conversation skills:
 Pose Clarify Support Evaluate
 to authentically build and argue useful ideas

OTHER KEY SKILLS

Listening Speaking Thinking Content Nonverbal Valuing Ideas

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Constructive Conversations in 9th ELA

Context

- Sheltered 9th grade English class
- 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.
- Some prompts are on the board



This Clip

- Prompt: "What do you think an important theme in this book is?"
- How do they clarify and support ideas? ("What does courage mean?" "Can you elaborate on that?" "Can you give an example from another book? "How does this apply to our life?")

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Constructive Conversations in 8th History

Context

- 8th grade History
- Civil War



The Civil War changed people's ideas because some people

This Clip

- Prompt: "How did the Civil War change people's ideas?"
- How do they clarify and support ideas?
- What might they work on?

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Analyze a Conversation

Alicia: Rosa Parks. Marcos said all she did was sit down, but I think she was a hero.

Paty: I agree. She has a book about her.

Alicia: Why do you think a whole book?

Paty: She was so brave to go to jail, and it was like just cuz she sat down on a bus.

Alicia: Jail is scary, I think. They put you in the bars with ...ladrone and//

Paty: //Yeah, and I think she knew it would happen. That's a hero cuz she knew they would put her in jail.

Alicia: And she started the...what's that word?

Paty: Boycott. They stopped using the buses.

Alicia: Boycott, so it, it changed those racism rules. All cuz of Rosa! ... Where's Marcos?

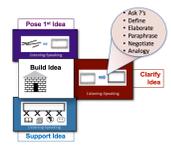


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Your Turn (Triads)

"[...] If you don't want a house built, hide the nails and wood. If you don't want a man unhappy politically, don't give him two sides to a question to worry him; give him one. Better yet, give him none. Let him forget there is such a thing as war. If the government is inefficient, topheavy, and tax-mad, better it be all those than that people worry over it. Peace, Montag. Give the people contests they win by remembering the words to more popular songs or the names of state capitals or how much corn Iowa grew last year. Cram them full of noncombustible data, chock them so damned full of 'facts' they feel stuffed, but absolutely 'brilliant' with information. Then they'll think they're thinking, they'll get a sense of motion without moving. And they'll be happy, because facts of that sort don't change. Don't give them any slippery stuff like philosophy or sociology to tie things up with. That way lies melancholy. (Bradbury, 1953)

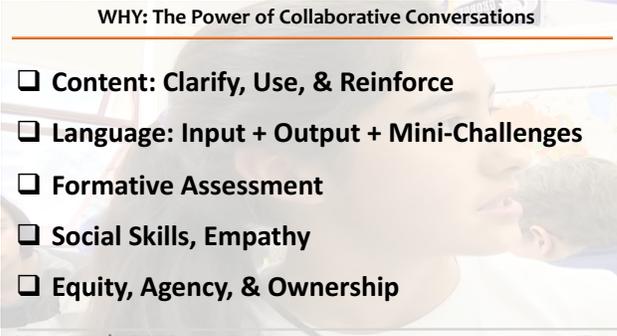
Work with a partner to co-construct what you think is an important theme from this text and how it might connect to today. Don't forget to clarify and support your idea.



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WHY: The Power of Collaborative Conversations

- Content: Clarify, Use, & Reinforce**
- Language: Input + Output + Mini-Challenges**
- Formative Assessment**
- Social Skills, Empathy**
- Equity, Agency, & Ownership**



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Collaborative Argument

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Constructive Conversation Skills: Collaborative Argument

Hand motions

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Improving Conversations

Laura: I think air has weight. Remember the balloon?
 Eli: I respectfully disagree with you.
 Laura: Why?
 Eli: Cuz I can't feel it. Put your hand out. Do 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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Improving 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.



Manny: So, what was the article about?
 Sara: Volcanoes and earthquakes. You read it, too.
 Manny: The volcanoes, they have lava. It's hot.
 Sara: And earthquakes shake the land, right? Buildings fall.
 Manny: Yeah.
 Sara: OK. That's all I got.



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Improving Conversations (Math)

Armando: It works for 1, 2, 3, and 4, so I say it's the equation.
 Gil: But what about 0, or negative numbers?
 Armando: What about them?
 Gil: It needs to work for all numbers.
 Armando: I don't think so. And besides. We don't have time.

Leah: I think we should use a table, like yesterday.
 Karla: I hate those things. They're so boring.
 Leah: So, what should we do?
 Karla: Maybe just times it.
 Leah: Why?
 Karla: Cuz that's what we did yesterday.

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Silent Support Cards (from the COAT)

- Ask for an (another) example to support the idea
- Paraphrase what your partner said
- Ask your partner to clarify (Why...How...)
- Build up the first idea first
- Show that you are listening with your eyes, nods, posture
- Pose an alternative idea and start to build it up
- Stay focused on the conversation prompt/purpose
- Encourage your partner to talk more
- Summarize the conversation up until now

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Using the Cards – 9th Gr. ELA

A: So, what do you think the poem is about?
B: I think maybe something like, You gotta be yourself. What do you think?
A: I think it's about being out in nature, that it's good to see plants...
 Oh, OK, So, why do you think it's about 'be yourself'?
B: Cuz it says he doesn't want to be growing in clusters in the valley, and stand alone, and like not stuck in a pot of dirt.
A: I like that. And the title is "Identity"
B: Yeah...
 How does that help our idea?

Identity (excerpt, by Julio Noboa Polanco)
 Let them be as flowers, always watered, fed, guarded, admired, but harnessed to a pot of dirt. I'd rather be a tall, ugly weed, clinging on cliffs, like an eagle wind-wavering above high, jagged rocks. I'd rather be unseen, and if then shunned by everyone, than to be a pleasant-smelling flower, growing in clusters in the fertile valley, where they're praised, handled, and plucked by greedy, human hands. I'd rather stand alone, strong and free, than be a tall, ugly weed.

Build up the first idea first
How does the title support our idea?

Using the Cards – 7th Gr. Science

1 Karla: So, why do squids have ink?
 2 Maya: For writing.
 3 Karla: What do you mean?
 4 Maya: Ink is for writing.
 5 Karla: Squids can't write...
 OK, so what do you mean that they write?
 6 Maya: Not with pens like us, but like maybe on a rock. Like to mark their place.
 7 Karla: I don't understand that, but I think they escape. Like the picture.
 8 Maya: OK...
 How do they escape with ink?
 9 Karla: They let it out and it makes a cloud so they, you know, can swim away.
 10 Maya: And maybe it poisons the fish?
 11 Karla: I don't know; I think jellyfish have poison.
 12 Maya: I hate jellyfish: the poison ones.
 13 Karla: People die from their stings, I think.

Ask your partner to clarify (Why...How...What do you mean by)
Ask your partner to clarify (Why...How...What do you mean by)
Stay focused on the conversation prompt/purpose



Using the Silent Support Cards

PROMPT: Come to a consensus with your partner on why the painter painted the painting in this way: why he included certain figures, their composition, postures, movements, gazes. Include what the painter wanted the viewer to feel or think, empathize, and learn from the painting. Try to agree on how accurate a depiction you think this is and why.



First landing of Columbus on the shores of the New World, at San Salvador, W.I., Oct. 12th 1492. (1862) Dióscoro Puebla, Spanish painter

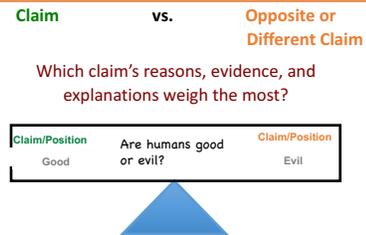
Conversation Prompts

- There is an engaging purpose for conversing that (a) connects to lesson objectives, and (b) requires thinking & doing something with ideas (e.g., create, clarify, argue (=>consensus), decide, rank, solve, evaluate, combine, compare, choose, fortify, build, & transform) (+ Agency)
- There is a need to talk (info gaps; bring unique ideas)
- There are clear directions for how to converse (language use, thinking, content)

ELA Literature: Collaboratively decide
ELA Expository: Decide whether or not to
Math: Work with your partner to create a
Science: In your conversation, compare
History: You will co-author a letter to a history journal. Converse with your partner to decide if Lincoln was more interested in abolishing slavery or more interested in preserving the Union. Use evidence to support the claims on each side and evaluate the value of the evidence, along with any bias that might exist in the sources. Use historian language such as "This is strong evidence because..."

Building collaborative argumentation skills with the
ARGUMENT BALANCE SCALE

Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations:
Argument Scale



Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

Left Pan (Pro-Illegal):

- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Litter in parks
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Smoker dies every 2 seconds
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Cost of healthcare

Right Pan (Pro-Legal):

- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Makes you cough
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Secondhand smoke kills

Central Question: Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Options: Yes (Left), No (Right)

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Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

Left Pan (Pro-Illegal):

- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Litter in parks
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Smoker dies every 2 seconds
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Cost of healthcare

Right Pan (Pro-Legal):

- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Makes you cough
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Secondhand smoke kills
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Tax revenues
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: What about unhealthy food?

Central Question: Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Options: Yes (Left), No (Right)

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Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

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- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Secondhand smoke kills

Central Question: Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Options: Yes (Left), No (Right)

Annotation: Compare the evidence on both sides How? Use criteria such as quantities, values, credibility, etc.

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Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

Left Pan (Pro-Illegal):

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- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Makes you cough
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Secondhand smoke kills
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: Tax revenues
- Reason/Evidnc/Exp: What about unhealthy food?

Central Question: Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Options: Yes (Left), No (Right)

Annotation: 3-D Version

Label: 2D-Scale

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Constructive Conversations in 8th ELA

Context

- 8th grade English class
- Early Intermediate to Early Advanced speakers.
- Have read articles on smoking
- Focal conversation skill: supporting your ideas with examples and evaluating them.

This Clip

- Each student chose a side to argue on whether or not to ban smoking.
- They use balance scale visual and paper clips to show "weight" of evidence
- They prompt each other to support and evaluate with "Why?" questions

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8th History – Using the Argument Scale

Mayra: One side is industrialization was bad.

Ben: What do you mean 'bad'?

Mayra: There was crime and it was dangerous. You saw the pictures, right?

Ben: Yeah, they had sick people, too. And people got hurt and died, in factories.

Mayra: I think a lot of people got sick and some did crime cuz machines took their jobs.

Ben: And there was lots of pollution.

Mayra: Say more about that. Like how did industrialization make pollution more bad?

Ben: The factories just dumped it into rivers.

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8th History – Using the Argument Scale

Mayra: And lots of smoke in the air, too.
 Ben: Yeah, so what about the good side of it?
 Mayra: On this card it says it helped people buy cheaper things.
 Ben: How?
 Mayra: The factories made lots of things in a day, so they could cost less. For example, cars.
 Ben: And people got jobs in factories so they got work and got paid.
 Mayra: And they maybe had better lives at home with inventions they made in factories.
 Ben: OK, so which side is stronger or heavier?
 Mayra: I dunno. Like the job thing is on both sides/

8th History – Using the Argument Scale

Mayra: /Some people lost jobs and some people got jobs. I don't know what was better. And they are the same size card.
 Ben: Yeah, so maybe they are even. But the pollution got way worse, and it's a big card.
 Mayra: Yeah. But does pollution weigh more than some of the inventions that made life better? We got cars and airplanes and they pollute.
 Ben: I think pollution is way more bad. Pollution kills animals and makes people sick. And it lasts forever.
 Mayra: I agree, but factories also make medicines.
 Ben: They make bombs, too.
 Mayra: OK, so let's say it is more on the bad side.
 Ben: OK.

Text: Schoolgirl loses veil legal case

A 12-year-old schoolgirl has failed in a legal challenge to her school's ban on a full-face veil. Justice Silber had been told that the girl's three older sisters had attended the same school and had worn the niqab with no problems. But the school told the girl it was not acceptable because teachers believed it would make communication and learning difficult. About 120 of the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. About half of them wear the hijab headscarf, which is permitted.

In his judgement, Justice Silber stressed that he was dealing with one particular case - not the wider issue of whether the niqab should be worn, in schools or anywhere else. He said the ban was "proportionate" in the light of certain factors:

- the veil prevented teachers from seeing facial expressions - a key element in effective classroom interaction
- the necessity to enforce a school uniform policy under which girls of different faiths would have a sense of equality and identity
- security - the head teacher had said an unwelcome visitor could move around the school incognito
- the need to avoid peer pressure on girls to take up wearing the veil

The girl's lawyer, Shah Qureshi, said: "It's surprising that he decided that the school had not infringed my client's freedom to manifest her religion given the fact that she entered the school on the understanding that the wearing of the veil was allowed when being taught by male teachers." Costs in the case were awarded against the family.



Text: Schoolgirl loses veil legal case

A 12-year-old schoolgirl has failed in a legal challenge to her school's ban on a full-face veil. Justice Silber had been told that the girl's three older sisters had attended the same school and had worn the niqab with no problems. But the school told the girl it was not acceptable because teachers believed it would make communication and learning difficult. About 120 of the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. About half of them wear the hijab headscarf, which is permitted.

In his judgement, Justice Silber stressed that he was dealing with one particular case - not the wider issue of whether the niqab should be worn, in schools or anywhere else. He said the ban was "proportionate" in the light of certain factors:

- the veil prevented teachers from seeing facial expressions - a key element in effective classroom interaction
- the necessity to enforce a school uniform policy under which girls of different faiths would have a sense of equality and identity
- security - the head teacher had said an unwelcome visitor could move around the school incognito
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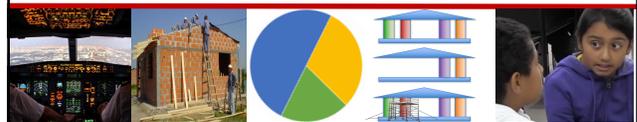
APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might use **Conversation Skills Posters, Model/Anti-model Conversations, Argument Balance Scale** in your upcoming lessons.

+
 Come up with **a sample conversation prompts** that you might use.

Wrap-Up



- Learners must use language in order to learn it!
- Shift from solo piling up pieces to co-constructing whole ideas!
- Increase authentic speaking, listening, reading, writing, & conversing
- Language features include purpose, info gaps, and attention to language
- Provide enough motivation so that students want to push selves and others to be clear.

jzwiers@stanford.edu | jeffzwiers.org/Maine2017 | ell.stanford.edu