Harnessing the Power of Conversations to Foster Language, Content, & Critical Thinking Across Disciplines

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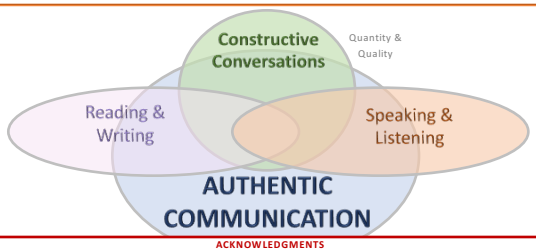
Overview



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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."

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?

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

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*)

Let's Converse

"We need to get back to basics. I learned that way, and look at me? I'm an administrator in a respected school district. Student-centered learning? If students can teach themselves, then why go to school? We need to get back to teachers teaching and students learning. This is how we will raise achievement. Just look at our test scores. They didn't go up at all this year. We even tried getting kids to talk to one another in conversations. When I did several walk-throughs, some pairs weren't even talking about the prompt. And it was loud. They should be using that time reading and writing and preparing for the tests so that we can show achievement and narrow the gaps between groups of kids. We have lots of language learners and they need repetition and practice and lots of academic vocabulary."

Are conversations in class worth the time and effort for all students?

WHY: The Power of Collaborative Conversations

CONTENT: Clarify, Use, & Reinforce (Structure & Relevance)

LANGUAGE: Input + Output + Mini-Challenges

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

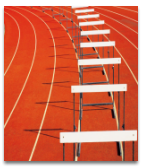
ACADEMIC THINKING: Critical & Creative

Social Skills, Empathy, Equity, Agency & Ownership

Much of this happens naturally—which is nice—but how do we maximize these?

1. Build Conversation-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 (i.e., because clarity isn't needed in the task)
- ❑ Teaching to assessments that don't value or inspire communication
- ❑ Focusing on points and grades → ("Black Hole 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?

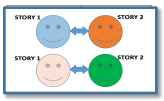
2. Build up Authentic Communication Features (for Accelerating Language Development)

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

Co-design an experiment that helps you measure gravity

+

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



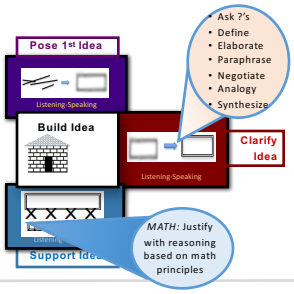
____ **Attention to language <u>in service of communication</u>?** There is extra work on language used.

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

3. Teach 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:**

(Notice that these are not "natural" in many students and eventually need to be "automatic"):



Conversation (Build 1 Idea)

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 …ladrones 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?

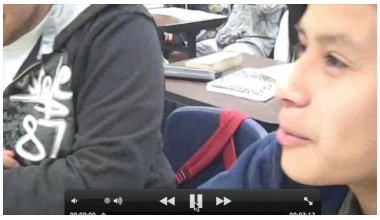
Paty: Boycott. They stopped using the buses.

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

Constructive Conversations in 9th ELA

Context

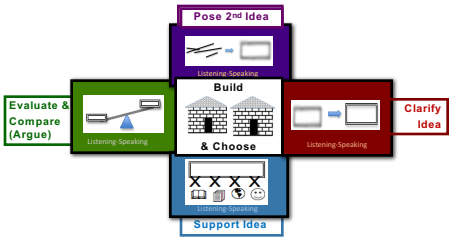
- Sheltered 9th grade English class
- Intermediate and early advanced speakers.
- Have read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*
- Focal conversation skill: supporting your ideas with examples from a text.
- Some prompts are on the board



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?"*)

3. Teach Constructive Conversation Skills: *Collaborative* Argument



Hand motions

Improving Conversations

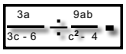
Laura: I think air has weight. Remember the balloon?
Eli: I respectfully disagree with you.
Laura: Why?
Eli: Cuz I can't feel it. Put your hand out. Do you?

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.

Improving Conversations

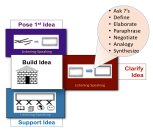
Alex: What caused the fall?
Carlos: The book said disease and war.
Alex: It also said crops and politics.
Carlos: All of them, I guess.

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



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 the most important theme from this text and how it might connect to today. Quickly decide on one theme and build it up.

4. Analyze (with students) Models and Non-models of Conversations

Highlight strengths & weaknesses in:

- **Conversation skills**
- **Content concepts**
- **Language use**
- **Thinking skills**
- **Valuing others' ideas**
- **Staying focused on the prompt**
- **Building up ideas**

4. Improve 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 & helpful directions** for how to converse (language use, thinking, content concepts…)

ELA Literature: Collaboratively decide whether or not Atticus should take a stand to defend Tom Robinson. Co-build both sides up with evidence from the text and explain how the evidence supports each side. Then decide which side weighs more and why. Use support language such as *support, evidence, because…* Also remember to use effective nonverbal communication.

4. Improve Conversation Prompts

Math: Work with your partner to create a word problem that requires the solver to solve it using two equations. Both of you contribute ideas and then decide which would make for the most interesting problem for your classmates to solve. Make sure the problem is clear; it can contain extra information and numbers, if you want to be tricky. Make sure to set up what is happening and use consistent units.

ELA Expository: Decide whether or not to raise the max number of hours per day that teenagers should use screens. Engage in a collaborative argument conversation in which you and your partner build up both sides of the issue and. Use evidence and discuss the credibility of sources. Discuss and negotiate types of screen time, if necessary, for your final decision. Use evaluation language such as *outweigh, weak/strong because, credible*, etc.

4. Improve Conversation Prompts

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…"

Science: In your conversation, compare the data that you got in the lab with that of your partner. If the data are different, jointly come to possible explanations for this; if similar, explain why. Make sure your explanations are clear and use scientific language such as: We believe that differences in the data are due to…" Come up with a final conclusion that describes what you learned—or were supposed to learn—from the lab.

5½. Know the Types of Conversations in Different Disciplines

- Deciding between two or more sides of a controversial issue
- Collaborating to agree on interpretations in literature
- Collaborating to agree on the best ways to communicate ideas to others

- Collaborating to interpret data and generate scientific explanations
- Solving problems & deciding between two sides of controversial science issues
- Role-based improv conversations

- Deciding between two sides of an issue or account
- Collaborating to solve social problems and challenges
- Collaborating to explain events, systems, and people

- Collaborating to solve a problem
- Collaborating to create new math problems
- Modeling math concepts and experimenting with numbers, symbols, & shapes

Craft a prompt

6. Use Formative Assessment Tools:
(e.g., 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

7. Use 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

Using the Cards – 5th 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 us?
A: Identity means how you're different…

Identity (excerpt, by Julio Noboa Polanco)

Let them be as flowers,
always watered, fed, guarded, admired,
but harnessed to a pot of dirt.
…gly weed,
…an eagle
…e high, jagged rocks.

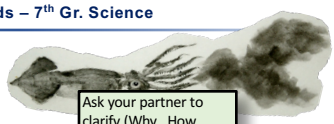
I'd rather be unseen, and if
then shunned by everyone,
than to be a pleasant-smelling flower,
growing in clusters in the fertile valley,
where they're praised, handled, and
plucked by greedy, human hands.

…uld stand alone, strong and free,
…ther be a tall, ugly weed.

Build up the first idea first

How does the title support the 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 th… …y 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 Cards – 2nd gr. SS

1A: What do firefighters need most? *(prompt)*
2B: Air.
3A: Can you give an example?
4B: Like a tank of air like the picture.
5A: Why do they need it most?
6B: So they won't die.
7A: Why?
8B: When they go in burned buildings. Smoke kills so they need air. Air is most important.
9A: I think they need water most.
10B: Why?
11A: They need it to put out the fire. That's what they do.
12B: But they can't use the water if they die from smoke.
13A: OK, yeah. Air is most important.

Conversation - 5th Gr. ELA/ELD

Context
- 5th grade Language Arts/ELD class
- Advanced and early intermediate

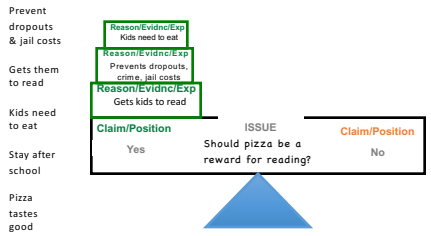
This Clip
- After reading an allegory for the Holocaust, students discuss what could have happened if the animals had stood together.
- They practice stating opinions, paraphrasing, and clarifying

Your Turn: Using the Silent Support Cards

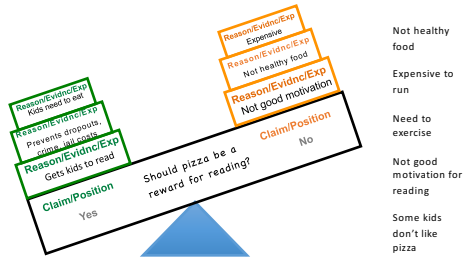
PROMPT: Come to a consensus with your partner on why the painter painted the painting in this way: why he included certain figures, their composition, postures, movements, gazes. Include what the painter wanted the viewer to feel or think, empathize, and learn from the painting. Try to agree on how accurate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

8. Use the Argument Balance Scale



Argument Balance Scale



Not healthy food

Expensive to run

Need to exercise

Not good motivation for reading

Some kids don't like pizza

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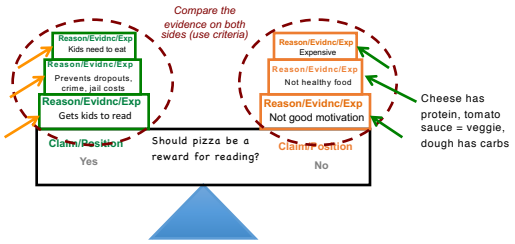
Argument Balance Scale



Cheese has protein, tomato sauce = veggie, dough has carbs

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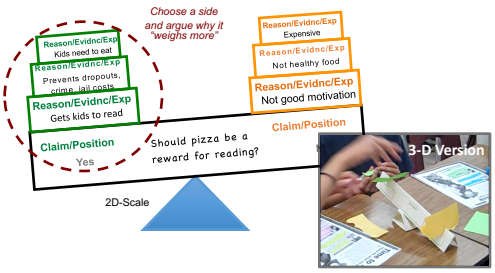
Argument Balance Scale



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Video Example

CONTEXT

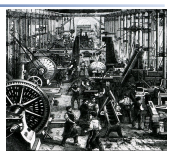
5th grade Language Arts/ELD class Advanced and early advanced partners.

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

8th History – Using the Argument Scale



Mayra: One side is industrialization is, 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.

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 like 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 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: Yeah, 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.

Argument Scale 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 Reason/Evidnc/Exp nication and learning difficu Reason/Evidnc/Exp the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. Abou Reason/Evidnc/Exp ear the hijab headscarf, wh Reason/Evidnc/Exp .

In his judgeme Reason/Evidnc/Exp stressed that he was dea Reason/Evidnc/Exp cular case - not the wider issue of whether t Reason/Evidnc/Exp e worn, in schools or an Reason/Evidnc/Exp aid the ban was "proportionate" in the li

- the veil p Reason/Evidnc/Exp n seeing facial expre Reason/Evidnc/Exp nt in effective classroo
- the neces rent faiths would have a sense o
- security - ound the school incognito
- the need to avoid peer pressure on girls take up wearing the veil

Claim/Position: Yes

Should the girl be allowed to wear the niqab in school?

Claim/Position: No

The girl's lawyer, Shah Qureshi, said: "It ing that he decided that the school had not infringed my client's freedom to manifest her re e fact that she entered the school on the understanding that the wearing of the veil w ing 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
- 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.

Argument Scale Text: The Tragedy of Dying Languages

Boa Sr was the last speaker of the 70, 000-year-old Bo language

I've listened to last speakers of many languages—dignified elders—who hold in their minds a significant portion of humanity's intellectual wealth. What can we learn from these languages before t Reason/Evidnc/Exp ? And why should we lift a finger to help res Reason/Evidnc/Exp s last speakers converse Reason/Evidnc/Exp they spin individu Reason/Evidnc/Exp st web of knowledge, a Reason/Evidnc/Exp ossibilities. They tell how their an Reason/Evidnc/Exp ccurately the passin Reason/Evidnc/Exp ut clocks or calendars and h Reason/Evidnc/Exp to hostile environ Reason/Evidnc/Exp tic to Amazonia.

We imagine assical civilizations. But ation arose and persisted solely eb of knowledge cont elebrate and interpret our existence. Language revitaliz will prove to be one of the most consequential social trends of coming d s push-back against globalization will profoundly influence human intellect the fate of ancient knowledge, wisdom, and culture. --K. David Harrison

Claim/Position: Yes

Should we use a certain amount of $ on language revitalization or STEM?

Claim/Position: No

The Tragedy of Dying Languages

Boa Sr was the last speaker of the 70, 000-year-old Bo language

I've listened to last speakers of many languages—dignified elders—who hold in their minds a significant portion of humanity's intellectual wealth. What can we learn from these languages before they go extinct? And why should we lift a finger to help rescue them? As the last speakers converse, they spin individual strands in a vast web of knowledge, a noosphere of possibilities. They tell how their ancestors calculated accurately the passing of seasons without clocks or calendars and how humans adapted to hostile environments, from the Arctic to Amazonia.

We imagine eureka moments taking place in modern laboratories or classical civilizations. But key insights of biology, pharmacology, genetics, and navigation arose and persisted solely by word of mouth, in small, unwritten tongues. And this web of knowledge contains feats of human ingenuity—epics, myths, rituals--that celebrate and interpret our existence. Language revitalization will prove to be one of the most consequential social trends of coming decades. This push-back against globalization will profoundly influence human intellectual life, deciding the fate of ancient knowledge, wisdom, and culture. --K. David Harrison

9. Use the Math Paired Conversation Protocol

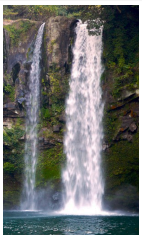
Suppose it takes the Almond River 4 years, by itself, to fill a reservoir, and Campbell Creek, on its own, 6 years to fill it. If both are flowing into the reservoir, how long will it take to fill it? Work with your partner to come up with two or more ways to solve this, justifying ideas along the way.

PROBLEM:

Paraphrase and clarify problem for one another (in pairs)
(Talk about what is asked; what is given; what happens; what the units are, etc.)
☐ TALK

Estimate the answer
(Each partner generate and justify your own estimate; then compare them)
☐ TALK

METHOD A *(name it)*	Justify method ☐TALK	METHOD B *(name it)*	Justify method ☐TALK
Visuals, Drawings, Charts, Symbols, Calculations, Solution	Justify what you do ☐TALK	Visuals, Drawings, Charts, Symbols, Calculations, Solution	Justify what you do ☐TALK



10. Build modeling, scaffolding, and conversation skills practice into other activities (e.g., Stronger & Clearer Each Time*, Gallery Walks, Jigsaws, Pair-shares, Peer Editing, Socratic Seminar, Group work, etc.)

(Conversation skills aren't just for conversations)

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.

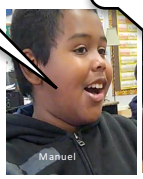
"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

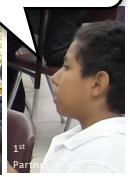
I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

Switch partners! Don't forget to use examples; 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.





What happens when cultures meet and why?

"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

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

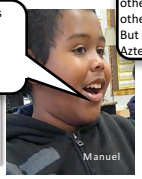
Switch partners! Don't forget to use examples; Stronger + clearer!

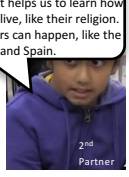
I think it's both good and bad. Like you learn from each other, but also you can fight.

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

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.

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





What happens when cultures meet and why?

"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

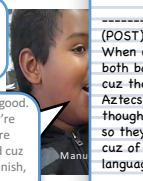
I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

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.



appens when cultures meet and why?

Stronger & Clearer Activity

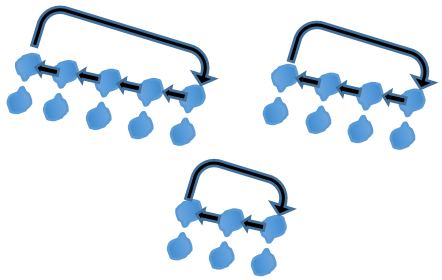
Context

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

Interaction Mini-Lines



"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" **Grid**

Name	**Why is it important to learn about history through primary source documents?**
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

You are a historian trying to convince a history textbook author to include primary sources.

"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" **Grid**

Name	**Is it worth the time and energy to adapt instruction and assessment to have more conversations in every lesson? Why or why not?**
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

You will present to your school on the value of having students engage in more and longer conversations during lessons.

One powerful way in which conversation can help students is…
I think educators need to know that a conversation entails…
We can adapt our lessons and activities in several ways, such as…
I disagree with you…

Listeners can & should:
- Prompt for clarification & support
- Help ideas along with "What about…?"

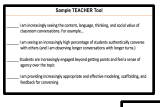
11. Develop a "Triangulated" System of Data Gathering and Analysis

Admin Data

Evidence of Conversation-Valued Learning at a School

Sample ADMIN Conversation Observation Tool

Teacher Data


Sample TEACHER Tool

Student Writing Connected to Conversations

	Beginning of Year									End of Year								
	C1			C2			C3			C1			C2			C3		
	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E
Juan	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	2	1
	.7			1			1			1.3			1.3			1		
	0.9									1.2								

Student Conversation Scores

Student Reflections & Surveys

Sample ADMIN Conversation Observation & Reflection Tool

_____ Lesson plans and instructional rounds show evidence of frequent efforts to use and improve conversations to learn

_____ Students push selves and peers to be clear as they seek to build one or more idea

_____ Students are engaged beyond doing "bare minimum" for getting points and feel a sense of agency over the topic (Teacher doesn't feel need to control every interaction)

_____ All students in the room are conversing

_____ Teacher provides appropriate modeling, scaffolding, time for practicing skills, and feedback for conversing

_____ Admin team is increasingly effective at supporting conversation work and assessment

Evidence of Conversation-Valued Learning at a School

_____ Students know what effective conversations consist of (skills and purpose)

_____ Students like to learn through conversations

_____ Conversations happen often in every lesson

_____ Conversations are assessed:

____ Students use of self- and peer-assessments focused on conversation quality
____ Formative assessment practices
____ Interim assessments
____ Summative assessments

Sample TEACHER Conversation Work Data Tool

_____ I am increasingly seeing the content, language, thinking, and social value of classroom conversations. For example…

_____ I am seeing an increasingly high percentage of students authentically converse with others (and I am observing longer conversations with longer turns.)

_____ Students are increasingly engaged in ideas well beyond for getting points and they feel a sense of agency over the topic

_____ I am providing increasingly appropriate and effective prompts, modeling, scaffolding, time for practicing, and feedback for conversing

_____ I am improving at developing and using interim & summative conversation assessments

STUDENT Conversation Reflection Tool

1. Is conversing with peers is a productive use of class time? Why or why not?

2. What is the purpose of a classroom conversation with a peer? Feel free to use examples

3. _____ I learn and remember more when I have conversations.
4. _____ I push myself and peers to be as clear as possible in conversations.
5. _____ The teacher provides modeling, scaffolding, and feedback for helping me get better at conversation.

6. Self-rate your skills based on your conversations this week:

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

STUDENT Conversation Performance Task Sample

Conversation Performance Assessment Task – DRAFT
5th Grade History

The purpose of this performance task is to have students engage in academically productive conversations that are based on argumentation and decision-making skills. Students will be rated on how well they clarify ideas, support ideas, evaluate and choose ideas, and collaborate to build up ideas with appropriate turn-taking.

Procedure

1. Tell students that they will read the text on Christopher Columbus. Tell them that after reading and a short discussion they will be paired with another student at random to have a conversation to decide on the issue of whether or not we should celebrate Columbus Day.
2. Have students read the article(s) on Columbus to decide on the issue. They can take notes on the article or on a separate sheet of paper.
3. Lead a short 5-minute class discussion that surfaces the pros and cons of the issue. Write these on a T-chart up front.
4. Tell them that they will have paired conversations and that you want them to use skills of clarifying ideas, supporting them with reasons and evidence, evaluating which idea is stronger, and collaborating to come up with a logical choice by taking turns and using appropriate language. Tell them that it is OK to disagree

STUDENT Conversation Performance Task Sample

CONVERSATION SKILLS		
Students clarify both ideas	Clarify by asking questions, defining, paraphrasing, elaborating, negotiating, analogies, etc. They work hard to make sure both understand both ideas.	
Students support & strengthen both ideas	Students build up & strengthen both ideas using evidence, examples, explanations, reasoning. Ideally, building up one idea, then the other.	
Evaluate the strength/weight of the evidence of each idea	Students look at the support for each side and decide which evidence/examples/reasons are strongest and why. They discuss the	

	Beginning of Year									End of Year								
	C1			C2			C3			C1			C2			C3		
	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E	C	S	E
Juan	1	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	2	1
	.7			1			1			1.3			1.3			1		
	0.9									1.2								

NEXT STEPS

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Free Online PD Courses (Conversations | Language in Math) --> ell.stanford.edu