Academic Conversations as a Gateway to Academic Literacy

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Understanding Language | Language, Literacy, & Learning in the Content Areas

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AGENDA

I.   **How and what have we been doing?**

II. **The 4th Dimension: Strengthening Authentic Communication in Every Activity**

III. **Diving More Deeply into Speaking, Listening, and Conversation Work (Lesson Plans)**

IV. **The Role of Text in Conversations**

V.   **New Conversation Activities**

VI. **Develop a "Triangulated" System of Data Gathering and Analysis**

VII. **Next Steps**

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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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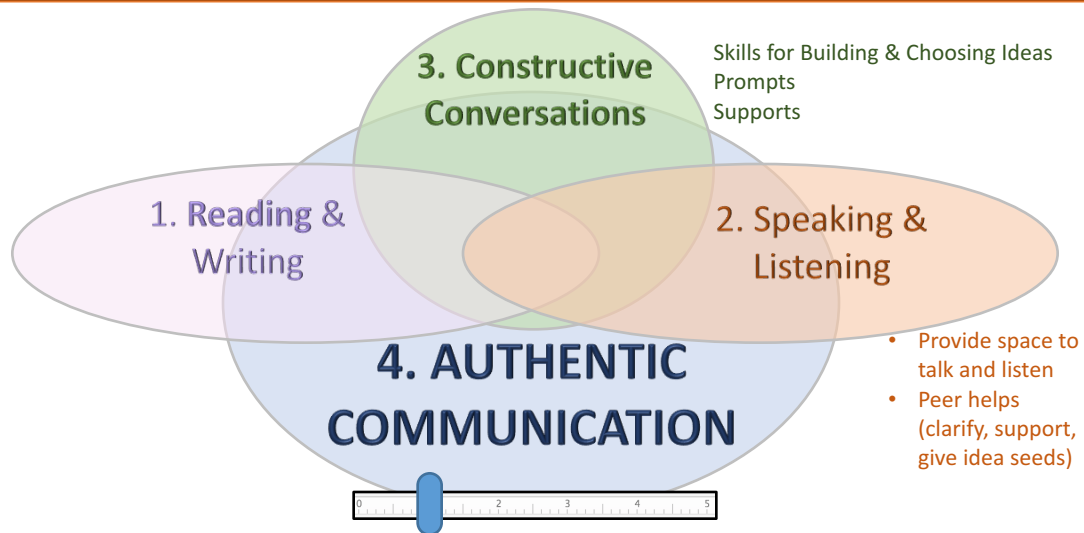
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How and What Have We Been Doing?

I.

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4 Dimensions

3. Constructive Conversations

Skills for Building & Choosing Ideas
Prompts
Supports

1. Reading & Writing

2. Speaking & Listening

4. AUTHENTIC COMMUNICATION

- Provide space to talk and listen
- Peer helps (clarify, support, give idea seeds)

0   1   2   3   4   5

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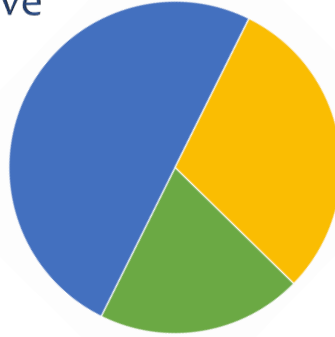
Pseudo-Communication
(Shiny, Fake, Indirect, Display, Drills, Games)

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 ($5). Read and answer the questions. Make a poster about photosynthesis)

More Authentic Communication

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

Conversational (Collaborative Building, Exploring, Arguing)

We need to notice it
It needs to bug us

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

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How Might These Differ With Respect to Learning?

I think the best route was over land. Even though it had dangers, they were smaller than going by ship. And it was less expensive, too.

I think the best route was over land. Even though it had dangers, they were smaller than going by ship. And it was less expensive, too.

*(**Prompt:** "After deciding what you think is the best route west, pair up with a person from another corner & try to convince him or her.")*

*(**Whole class prompt:** "What do you think was the best route to California? Use evidence from the text to support your idea.")*

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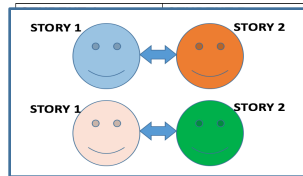**REVIEW: Authentic Communication Features for Accelerating Language Development**

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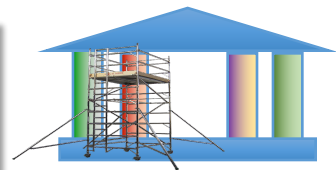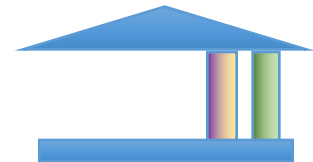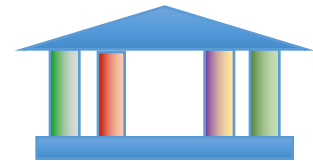
+

_____ **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.

Co-design an experiment that helps you measure gravity

STORY 1   STORY 2
STORY 1   STORY 2

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

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WHY: The Value of Collaborative Conversations
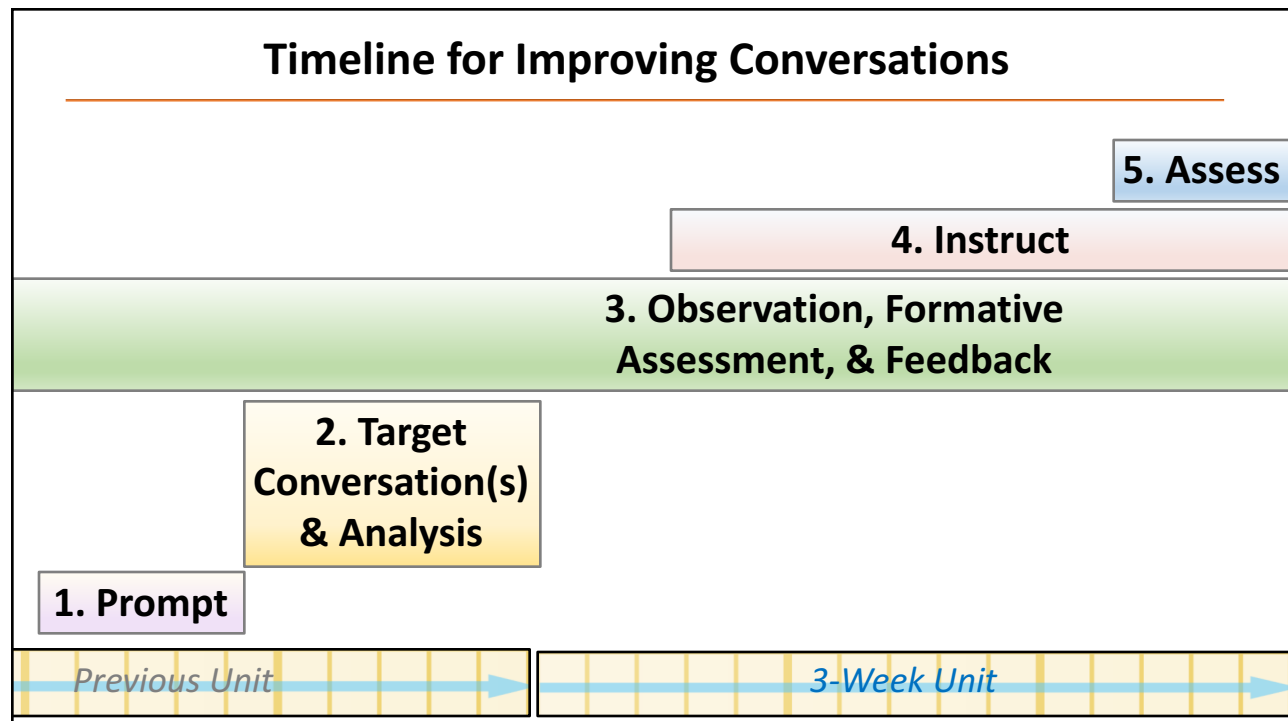
CONTENT: Clarify, Use, & Reinforce

LANGUAGE: Input + Output

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

ACADEMIC THINKING: Critical & Creative

Social Skills, Relationships Empathy, Equity, Agency, Identity, Belonging

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

Timeline for Improving Conversations

| | 5. Assess |
| | 4. Instruct |

3. Observation, Formative Assessment, & Feedback

2. Target Conversation(s) & Analysis

1. Prompt

Previous Unit → | *3-Week Unit* →

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1. Write a Conversation Prompt for a Target Conversation

❑ **There is an engaging purpose** for conversing that (a) **connects to lesson objectives,** and (b) r**equires 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

ELA Expository: Decide whether or not to

ELA Literature: Work with a partner to co-construct an idea for the strongest and most important theme that the author intended for readers to learn. Build up the idea by clarifying it and supporting it with examples and evidence from the text. Explain how the evidence supports the idea. Use effective body language and facial expressions, and make sure to value one another's ideas.

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## 1. Write a Conversation Prompt for a Target Conversation

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.

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.

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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
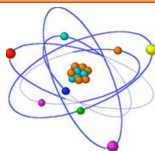
➤ Collaborating to interpret data and generate scientific explanations

➤ 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
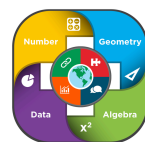
➤ Collaborating to solve a problem

➤ Collaborating to create new math problems

➤ Modeling math concepts and experimenting with numbers, symbols, & shapes

Craft a prompt

2. Write a Target Conversation for your Prompt

A: I think…

B: Why…

A:

B:

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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2. Analyze Target Conversation for "Most likely to Need Help"

- Lots of **clarifying**
- Content: clear understanding of **ratification** process
- Language: uses **transitions**
- **Values partner ideas**, even when disagree

QUANTITY		
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3. Observe & Formatively Assess Conversations

1. Start by observing for your "most likely to need help" things
2. Notice what stops conversations and what is needed to build up ideas.
3. Shape instruction based on these

QUANTITY		
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4. TEACH: Using Conversation Support Activities (Structured)
Building Conversation Skills Throughout the Lesson

4.1 Transition Improvs
- Two sides
- Support with examples
- Clarify (questions, definitions, paraphrase...)
- Academic transitions

4.2 Stronger & Clearer Each Time
- Stronger (Support w/ evidence)
- Clearer (clarify)
- Scaffolds

4.3 Information Gap Activities
- Need to talk & listen

4.4 Other Oral Activities
- Jigsaw, Gallery Walk, Pair-shares, Socratic Seminar...

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4.1 Transition Improv: For-Against (After Reading 2 texts)

Topics:

Attending and paying for a four-year college or university.

(You will make recommendations to students in an upcoming assembly)

Transitions: **However,**

On the other hand,

Then again,

~~but~~

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

A & B, Lean?

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4.2 "Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

Name	What is the most important theme in this story for teenagers today? Why?	
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)	
1.		
2.		
3.		
Me		

You are recommending to the school board that this book be read in 9th Gr. English

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4.2 "Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Jigsaw Grid (after reading)

Name	Is poetry necessary? Should we teach students to interpret—or even write—poetry during precious class time?
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

You are an author trying to convince a school to include more poetry in ELA curricula.

One reason for which poetry is vital/unnecessary is…
I think that poetry fills a key void in the human experience, in that it…
One challenge is selecting the poems. Another is to test learning…
I disagree with you…

Listeners can & should:
- Prompt for clarification
- Prompt for support
- Give "idea seeds" using "What about…?"

4.2 REVIEW: "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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4.2 Stronger & Clearer Each Time: Quotation Café

1. Choose key quotations from the text and put them on strips.
2. Tell students the title and have them read their own quotation.
   (They can memorize it, too)
3. Students meet with students who have different quotations, read quotes to each other, and both predict what the text will be about. (They can also ask questions.)
4. They can use frames such as:

   "I predict that the text will be about _____ because _____"
   "Given the clues I have heard so far, such as _____, I think the text will _____"

Towards Knowledge Societies

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4.3 Information Gap Argument Cards

A The main theme of *To Kill a Mockingbird* was "People are essentially good at heart":

– Ασδφκασ σδφδφ α σσ δδσαδφ ασδδ δ
– Ασδφ αδ δ δδδεεφριτφ δφδδκδ[
– Ειρυ φφφφφδ πνβχκδ σωοσκδδκα δδ

B The main theme of *To Kill a Mockingbird* was "People are essentially evil at heart":

– κδφδφ α γφ δδσαδφ ασδδ δ
– ψσδφ ασ δδδεεφριτφ δφδδκδ[
– ϑγφκφ σλ σδ σ σδφ σωοσκδδκα δδ

1. Teacher previews key vocabulary on cards & goes over sentence starters.
2. Students read and try to remember the points on the card.
3. A and B pairs build up one side, and then the other, and then come to a decision. They can look at the cards, if needed. (You can decide whether you want them to argue for the side on their card, or leave it up to them to decide at the end of the conversation.

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Information Gap Cards: Who I am

1. Model for students the goal of sharing biographical info (name, nationally, age when you died, likes & dislikes, etc.)
2. Act out needed vocab (like & dislike verbs) on the wall
3. Give a card to each student and let them practice what they will say to themselves
4. Have them find all three other artists and share their information

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Information Gap Cards: Who I am

Mi chiamo…
Io sono…
Mi piace… Non mi piace…
Scrivere
Scolpire
Dipingere
Inventare
89 = ottanta nove   67 = sesanta sette   82 = ottanta due
71 = settant'uno
Avevo ____ anni quando morí

Michelangelo Buonarroti
Italiano
1475-1564

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4.4 Applying the features & conversation skills to what you already do

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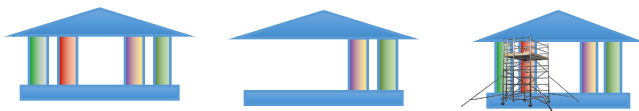
Think-Pair-Share

BEFORE - Tends to consist of:

- Turn and tell your partner your answer (similar);
- More talkative person starts;
- Do it to make teacher happy

AFTER- With features applied:

- Give a purpose for talking and listening to partner (You will use the information to help you draft a letter—and vice versa…)
- Have A and B students read different texts, do different problems, etc.
- Tell A or B partner to start; tell listener to ask at least one clarify or support question.

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4.4 Applying the features & conversation skills to what you already do

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Jigsaw

BEFORE - Tends to consist of:

- Copy from copies
- Purpose to fill in boxes
- Do it to make teacher happy

AFTER- With features applied:

- Give a purpose for talking and listening to partner (You will use the information to help you create a model of the water cycle…)
- Practice in expert groups, twice; stronger & clearer
- In home groups, other members ask clarify and support questions
- Model language and questions to use

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4.4 Applying the features & conversation skills to what you already do

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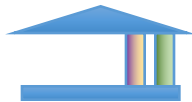☐ Listening ☐ Speaking ☐ Thinking ☐ Content ☐ Nonverbal ☐ Valuing Ideas

Gallery Walk

BEFORE - Tends to consist of:

- One person repeating description of poster
- Multiple others listening
- Do it to make teacher happy

AFTER- With features applied:

- Give a purpose for talking and listening to partner (e.g., You will use the information to help you decide which persons belong in our history book…)
- Presenter pushes self to present stronger and clearer message each time
- After presenter talks, "audience" asks clarify and support questions
- Teacher models language and questions to use

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PLANNING TIME

Think about how you might plan using and adapting Conversation Support Activities (Transition Improv, Stronger & Clearer Each Time, Information Gap, & Others such as Gallery Walks and Jigsaws in your upcoming units or lessons. Remember to have them support the target conversation features and skills.

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*)

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4.5 The Key Role of Texts in Conversations

I. **How do we pick texts?**

II. **How do we use texts that we already picked (or were picked for us)?**

III. **How do we have students read the texts to prepare them for conversations?**

IV. **How can students use texts during conversations?**

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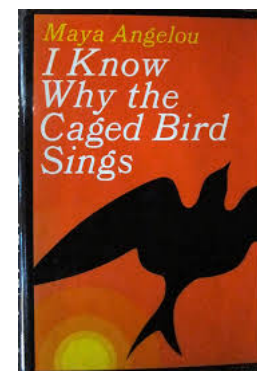
4.6 Constructive Conversation Skills (Review)

Pose 2nd Idea
Listening-Speaking

Evaluate & Compare (Argue)
Listening-Speaking

Build & Choose

Clarify Idea
Listening-Speaking

Support Idea
Listening-Speaking

ASL Signs

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Conversation Sample (8th History)
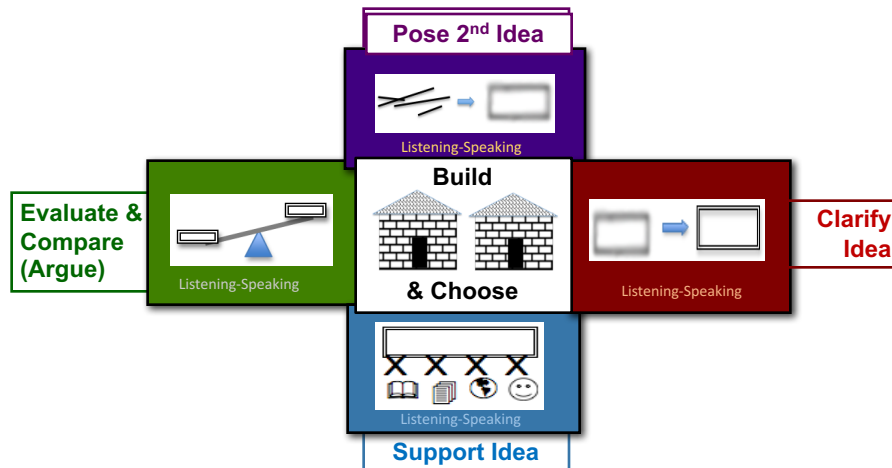
Alicia: Rosa Parks. Marcos said all she did was sit down, but I think she was a hero.

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?

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Conversation Sample (10th ELA)

PROMPT: 'Why does representation in media matter (so what)? What are some of the stereotypes that get played out; and how might that affect self-image?'

A: The media makes people think of themselves as their appearances; and the same ideas get repeated.

B: For example on this show the character, she was the boss and she was a woman; so she had to work extra hard. She was a representative and tried to make everybody happy, but then someone said 'I don't want to work for her; she's a woman and he went to go work for a man; they were just stereotyping her as not a leader.

A: That's on a lot of TV and in movies; if they are the boss they are mostly men. There are like 3-5 men for every woman. And if mostly writers and directors are men they will make shows for people like themselves; and they leave out the ladies.

B: Didn't history teach us that we could do anything? We got Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth!

A: I know; I was thinking; why is it still like this?

B: We should make a company that has women that write movies and we can show that ours are just as good. We just need money.

A: A lot of money.

4.7 - 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

Refer to the text

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Using the Cards – 6th 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.

I'd rather be ~~~~gly weed,
~~~~ an eagle
~~~~ 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. ELD

1 Karla: So, why do squids have ink?
2 Maya: For writing.
3 Karla: What do you mean?
4 Maya: Is for writing.
5 Karla: Squids can't write…
OK, so what do you mean that they write?
6 Maya: Not pens, but on rocks. Para marcar su territorio.
7 Karla: OK, but I think they got ink to…, they escape. Like the picture.
8 Maya: OK…
How do they escape with ink?
9 Karla: They let it out; it makes a cloud so they, you know, can swim away.
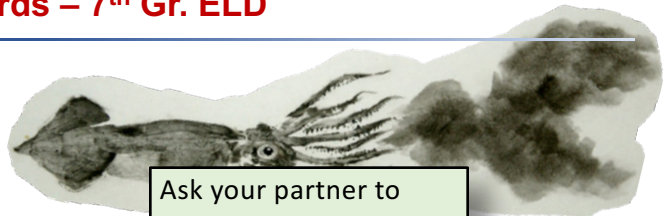10 Maya: And poisons the fish?
11 Karla: I don't know; I think jellyfish are poison.
12 Maya: Yo odio los jellyfish.
13 Karla: Me too.

> Ask your partner to clarify (Why…How… What do you mean by)

> Clarify: How do they escape with ink?

> Stay focused on the conversation prompt/purpose

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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

Using the Silent Support Cards

PROMPT: Come to a consensus and a clear explanation of where you think the mass of trees (think Redwoods) comes from. Discuss why many people often get this answer wrong.

So where does a tree's mass come from?

The 1648 potted willow experiment of Johannes Helmont is widely discussed in biology teaching because it is the first known quantitative experiment in biology. He wrote, "But I have learned by this handicraft-operation that all vegetables do immediately, and materially proceed out of the element of water only. For I took an earthen vessel, in which I put 200 pounds of earth that had been dried in a furnace, which I moystened with rainwater and I implanted therein the stem of a willow tree, weighing five pounds; and five years being finished, the tree did weigh 169 pounds. And least the dust that flew about should be co-mingled with the Earth, I covered the lip or mouth of the vessel with an iron-plate covered with tin, and easily passable with many holes. I computed not the weight of the leaves that fell off in the four Autumns. At length, I again dried the Earth of the vessel, and there were found the same two hundred pounds, wanting about two ounces. Therefore 164 pounds of Wood, Barks, and Roots, arose out of water only" (1622). And if the tree is using soil for its mass, then there must be less soil around it. And yet, it turns out that if you ask new Harvard graduates this question, the vast majority of them answer some variant of "It comes from the soil." The answer, it turns out, is blowing in the wind.
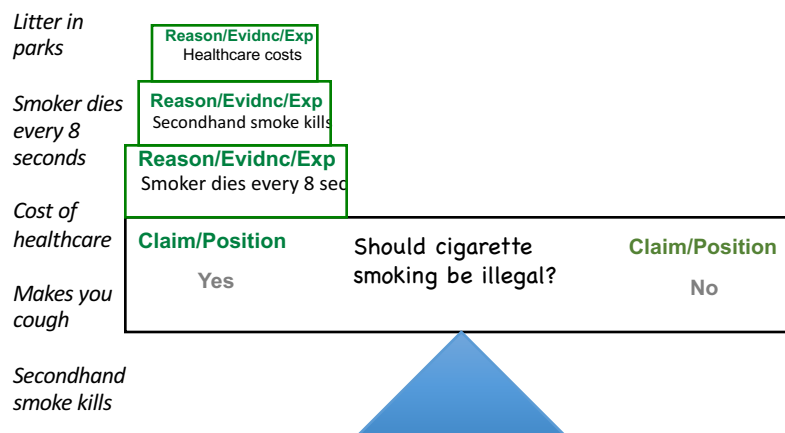
Using the Silent Support Cards

PROMPT: Read the excerpt from *Huckleberry Finn* (Twain, 1885) and come to an agreement on what the most important theme in the passage seems to be. Make sure to clarify and support idea(s) along the way as you build or choose your final main theme idea and prepare to present it to others.

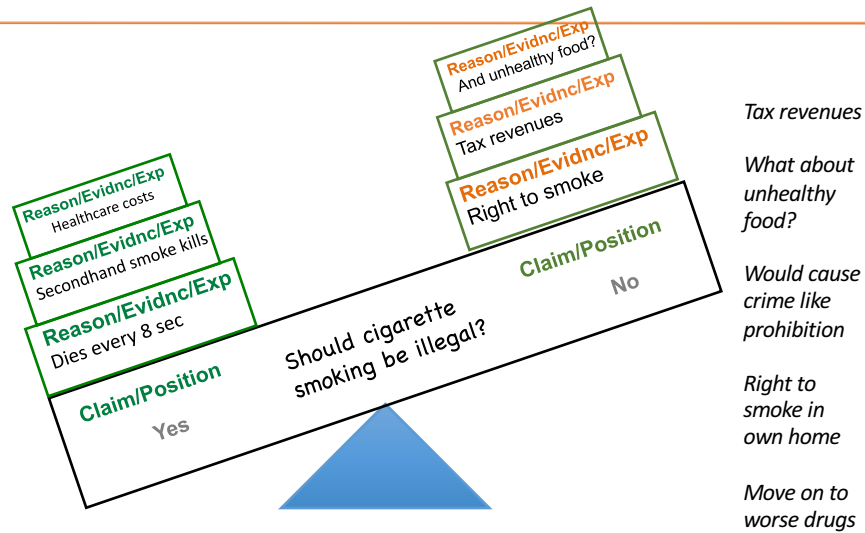### Excerpt from The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Twain, 1885)

It made me shiver. And I about made up my mind to pray, and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from ME, neither. I knowed very well why they wouldn't come. It was because my heart warn't right; it was because I warn't square; it was because I was playing double. I was letting ON to give up sin, but away inside of me I was holding on to the biggest one of all. I was trying to make my mouth SAY I would do the right thing and the clean thing, and go and write to Jim's owner and tell where he was; but deep down in me I knowed it was a lie, and He knowed it. You can't pray a lie—I found that out.

So I was full of trouble, full as I could be; and didn't know what to do. At last I had an idea; and I says, I'll go and write the letter—and then see if I can pray. Why, it was astonishing, the way I felt as light as a feather right straight off, and my troubles all gone. So I got a piece of paper and a pencil, all glad and excited, and set down and wrote: …….(text continues on handout)

4.8: Collaborative Argument Conversations - *Argument Scale*

Litter in parks

Smoker dies every 8 seconds

Cost of healthcare

Makes you cough

Secondhand smoke kills

Reason/Evidnc/Exp — Healthcare costs

Reason/Evidnc/Exp — Secondhand smoke kills

Reason/Evidnc/Exp — Smoker dies every 8 sec

Claim/Position — Yes

Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Claim/Position — No

4.8 Collaborative Argument Conversations: *Argument Scale*

Reason/Evidnc/Exp And unhealthy food?

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Tax revenues

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Right to smoke

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Healthcare costs

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Secondhand smoke kills

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Dies every 8 sec

Claim/Position No

Claim/Position Yes

Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

Tax revenues

What about unhealthy food?

Would cause crime like prohibition

Right to smoke in own home

Move on to worse drugs

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4.8 Collaborative Argument Conversations: *Argument Scale*

Compare the evidence on both sides How?

Use criteria such as quantities, values, credibility, etc.

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Healthcare costs

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Secondhand smoke kills

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Smoker dies every 8 sec

Reason/Evidnc/Exp And unhealthy food?

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Tax revenues

Reason/Evidnc/Exp Right to smoke

Unhealthy food doesn't affect others

Claim/Position Yes

Claim/Position No

Should cigarette smoking be illegal?

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8th ELA – Using the Argument Scale

FLOWERS FOR
ALGERNON

A: Why do you think the author wrote this story?
B: Maybe to teach us that we should be who we're born to be.
A: What do you mean?
B: You know, in the story Charlie wants to be smart and his operation makes him smarter. But it wasn't natural. And he wasn't happy, even after he's smart.
A: Yeah. And he was kind of like a science experiment. I don't think they should experiment on people like that. It's maybe like when they experiment on animals.
B: Yeah. That's messed up. What about the other side?
A: Maybe it's that we all can be smart. And maybe it's OK when science helps us? Science helps people be better in lots of ways.
B: Can you give an example?
A: Like drugs. When we are sick, they help cure us. I took pills last year when I had a infection and they made me better.

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8th ELA – Using the Argument Scale

B: I guess. And I think it's good to see that people like him could be smart. Like I see people like him, like at school, and I think they're just, I don't know, broken. But inside they are like us, maybe even smarter than us.
A: Maybe, OK, so are we done with both sides?
B: Yeah. Now we gotta decide which side is heaviest.
A: I can't decide. I don't think it's natural and it was like an experiment on a person//
B: //But it also, like I said, it helps us see inside people like Charlie.
A: I think the author wanted us to think that more. Maybe it wasn't natural, and that's bad, but the author, I don't know, is, more wants us to not think they're broken. What do you think?
A: I agree. At the end of the book I thought that a lot more than being mad about the experiment. If he died from that experiment, then it'd be different, but he didn't.
B: OK.

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4.9 Role-Based Improv Conversations
(Sample Text: 'The Two Brothers')

1. Pick a text that has characters with different things to share with one another (different perspectives, opinions, stories, motivations, etc.)
2. Tell students the prompt (e.g., You will converse with your partner about which one of you brothers was more right. You will come to an agreement.)
3. Assign roles for each pair (e.g., younger brother and older brother)
4. Have students read the text with the prompt in mind, taking notes on what they will say, based on their role.
5. Have them review their notes and put them onto one note card, with key words and not in complete sentences
6. Students converse with their roles in mind. (Using conversation skills, etc.)

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PLANNING TIME

Think about how you might plan to use and strengthen conversations in your upcoming units or lessons.

5. ASSESS: 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 strengths of types of evidence (e.g., numbers vs. personal/emotional cases…and other "apples v. oranges") to prepare them for comparing.	

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

Classroom Conversational Culture Tool

Are we reducing these obstacles? How?

❑ 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

Sample TEACHER Conversation 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

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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

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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

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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:
   - ❏ Clarify ideas
   - ❏ Support ideas with evidence
   - ❏ Evaluate evidence and compare ideas
   - ❏ Value partner ideas

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

Admin Data

Evidence of Conversation-Valued Learning at a School

Sample ADMIN Conversation Observation 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

Teacher Data

Sample TEACHER 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 beyond getting points and feel a sense of agency over the topic

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

Student Writing Connected to Conversations

Student Reflections & Surveys

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

	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

PLANNING TIME

Plan a lesson or unit informed by what we have done today.

Inquiry Process

Teach/Do & Gather Evidence
- Use new & adapted interventions and strategies
- Gather data on student learning (Formative, self-, peer-, summative; from focal students)

Reflect & Plan
- Clarify what teaching and learning should look like
- Agree on evidence to gather that shows changes
- Create & adjust coaching practices
- Make a plan for observations and data collection

How can I **develop/improve** _____, **evidenced by** _____, **by** _____

Analyze Evidence
- Use student work, case studies, conversations, video, observations
- Find patterns, surprises, gaps
- What is evidence showing and not showing?
- Brainstorm factors that caused the patterns

NEXT STEPS

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