



Supporting Learning with Authentic Communication: "It's Gonna Take Some Major Remodeling"

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OVERVIEW

A. Pseudo- vs. Authentic Communication

B. Authentic Academic Communication Framework

- I. Cultivating a Communication Culture
- II. Building & choosing Ideas
- III. Remodeling Instruction & Assessment for authentic communication

C. Next Steps



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Students of Concern

Do you have any students who want to learn, but who:

- aren't motivated enough by points and grades?
- have learned to "play" school?
- do the bare minimum too often?
- have adeptly figured out how to talk as little as possible in activities that require talk?
- feel like they don't belong?
- struggle academically because of language?
- lack social skills?



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SHIFT from

LESS to **MORE**

Individual piling up right answers, paying for points, & playing school

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



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Pseudo-Communication vs. **Authentic Communication**

Using words and other meaning-carriers to share information and do things for reasons other than using the information in meaningful ways (e.g., for getting points & praise, showing learning, showing off, etc.)

Using words and other meaning-carriers to share information for doing meaningful things (building, creating, changing, deciding, clarifying, negotiating, arguing, etc.) that just one person can't do. (R-W-L-S-C)

So what?



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Using these three terms, write an initial idea that you would like to start or continue building up today

authentic communication
building ideas
learning

Read your idea to your partner, who prompts, at least once, for clarification or support

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What are Ideas

that students would-could-should build?

Claim	Interpretation	Animals use energy to grow, heal,
Conclusion	Concept	The energy that animals have
Argument	Opinion	We should divide the 25 by 5 and
Solution	Theory	Brian became more independent
Pattern	Perspective	I can use the story of when I
Plan	Theme	You need to think about bias
Inference	Story	All life needs water.
Prediction	Hypothesis	I should come up with two
Procedure	Approach	Geography influences the beliefs
Relationship	Explanation	I think we should all be more like
		The European explorers were
		I can use a baseball bat, baseball,
		and
		Multiplying fractions makes them
		even smaller.

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II. Focus Learning on Building Ideas

Do your students habitually think, “OK, what important idea can I/we build and how do these texts and tasks help?” (Do they think of their brains as banks or workshops?)



II. Focus Learning on Building Ideas (from the start)

Context

- 1st grade science
- English learners
- First day of the unit on animals

This Clip

After looking at pictures in the beginning of the unit, students are asked “What helps the slow pufferfish stay alive?”



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What does building an idea look like?

(And how do we decide if it's built up enough?)

PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

IDEA
CLARIFY
SUPPORT

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

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PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

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SUPPORT

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example? Tuna & swordfish
What does adaptation mean?	What are examples of those adaptations?	And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish to eat them.

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Adaptation helps animals to get food.

Oh yeah, like rabbits run fast to get away from bobcats.	And they do camouflage, too.	What about adapting to get away from things that want to eat them?
A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example? Tuna & swordfish
What does adaptation mean?	What are examples of those adaptations?	And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish.

What does building an idea look like?
(And how do we decide if it's built up enough?)
PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

IDEA
CLARIFY
SUPPORT

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

How are those good examples?	Yeah, but remember that flat fish & the stick bug?	What's that?	Oh yeah, like rabbits run fast to get away from bobcats.
Like army clothes?	When they look like stuff to hide	And they do camouflage, too.	What about adapting to get away from things that want to eat them?
A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example?	Tuna & swordfish
What does adaptation mean?	What are examples of those adaptations?	And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish.	

What does building an idea look like?
(And how do we decide if it's built up enough?)
PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

IDEA
CLARIFY
SUPPORT

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

The fish matches its color & patterns to the sea bottom to hide	And the stick bug look just like tree branches to hide from birds	OK, so do we fix our idea?	
How are those good examples?	Yeah, but remember that flat fish & the stick bug?	What's that?	Oh yeah, like rabbits run fast to get away from bobcats.
Like army clothes?	When they look like stuff to hide	And they do camouflage, too.	What about adapting to get away from things that want to eat them?
A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example?	Tuna & swordfish
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What does building an idea look like?
(And how do we decide if it's built up enough?)
PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

IDEA
CLARIFY
SUPPORT

Yeah. Adaptation helps animals to get food & not be food.

The fish matches its color & patterns to the sea bottom to hide	And the stick bug look just like tree branches to hide from birds	OK, so do we fix our idea?	
How are those good examples?	Yeah, but remember that flat fish & the stick bug?	What's that?	Oh yeah, like rabbits run fast to get away from bobcats.
Like army clothes?	When they look like stuff to hide	And they do camouflage, too.	What about adapting to get away from things that want to eat them?
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What does adaptation mean?	What are examples of those adaptations?	And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish.	

II. Focus Learning on Building Ideas

How is the "building ideas focus" different from other views of learning?
Should we try to develop it more? How?



PROCEDURE: Stronger & Clearer Each Time Activity

1. Think of a response. You may use the optional frame: "Unlike ____, the "building ideas" approach ____ because ____"
2. In A and B pairs, A tell B your idea. B listens and asks one clarify (What does that mean?) or support question (What would be an example of ---?) B, remember to listen for ideas that will add to your idea. Wait to switch.
3. Switch: B tell A and A asks a clarify or support question
4. Tell each other which idea(s) you will use in your next partnership
5. Find a new partner and repeat 1 through 4

III. Remodel for Authentic Communication
(tasks that have effective language development)

Support	Clarify
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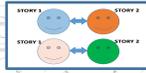
☐ Purposeful building of idea(s). Use language to build/do something beyond just answering questions for praise or points. Clarity & Support matter. Agency.

Support	Clarify
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☐ Information gap(s). Students get or give information that they want, need, or don't have. Gaps are natural or designed.

+

Co-design an experiment that helps you measure gravity.



If needed, there is attention to language in service of communication
Language modeling & scaffolding, sentence frames, practice, feedback, etc.)

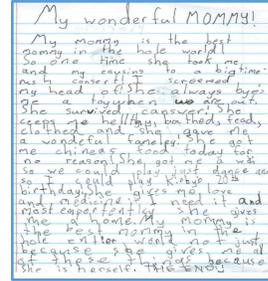
III. Remodel for Authentic Communication: READING

How can **reading** help students to build meaningful ideas and bridge information gaps?



III. Remodel for Authentic Communication: WRITING

How can **writing** help students to build meaningful ideas and bridge information gaps?



III. Remodel for Authentic Communication: SPEAKING

How can **speaking** help students to build meaningful ideas and bridge information gaps?



III. Remodel for Authentic Communication: LISTENING

How can **listening** help students to build meaningful ideas and bridge information gaps?



III. Remodel for Authentic Communication: CONVERSING

How can **conversing** help students to build meaningful ideas and bridge information gaps?



III. Remodel for Communication: Assessing Communication

(WCW Assessment)

PRE-ASSESSMENT (Writing)	#	CONVERSATION ASSESSMENT	#	POST-ASSESSMENT (Writing)	#
Pose one or more relevant idea(s)		Pose one or more relevant idea(s)		Pose one or more relevant idea(s)	
Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of clarifying (question, define, paraphrase, etc.)		Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of clarifying (question, define, paraphrase, etc.)		Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of clarifying (question, define, paraphrase, etc.)	
Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of supporting (quality & quantity of evidence, examples, explanations, & warrants)		Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of supporting (quality & quantity of evidence, examples, explanations, & warrants)		Sufficiently build idea(s) using the skill of supporting (quality & quantity of evidence, examples, explanations, & warrants)	
If it's an argument: after building ideas, evaluate and compare to choose "theaviest," and justify choice		If it's an argument: after building ideas, evaluate and compare to choose "theaviest," and justify choice		If it's an argument: after building ideas, evaluate and compare to choose "theaviest," and justify choice	
Use disciplinary thinking (Cause-Effect, Interpret, Perspective, Bias, Analyze...)		Use disciplinary thinking (Cause-Effect, Interpret, Perspective, Bias, Analyze...)		Use disciplinary thinking (Cause-Effect, Interpret, Perspective, Bias, Analyze...)	
Use effective language (Vocabulary, Grammar, Organization)		Use effective language (Vocabulary, Grammar, Organization)		Use effective language (Vocabulary, Grammar, Organization)	
		Take appropriate turns that connect to each other and build			
		Value each other's ideas			
		Use effective nonverbal communication			

Interview with a Student



Int: So, what do you like to do in class?
 Stu: Build ideas.
 Int: How do you do that?
 Stu: You clarify and you support with evidence & examples. And you keep doing those skills until it's as clear and strong as you can get it.
 Int: How do those skills help you build ideas?
 Stu: If you don't clarify, then you might be like way not on the same page about what things mean. For example, if you say "freedom," you and I might have really different ideas of what freedom means. And your definition might add to mine, right?
 Int: Right. What about supporting with evidence & examples?
 Stu: I just did that with the freedom example, right? If you don't use evidence and examples, it's weaker; it's just what you think, and that's not enough, even if you're the president.
 Int: Can you give an example?
 Stu: Ha. OK. If you say you think we should wear school uniforms, you need to have evidence that they help, like they cost less, or prevent stealing, or reduce gangs.

Interview with a Student



Int: I see. How is this class different from last year?
 Stu: Last year we just memorized stuff and took tests. Boooooring. Even when we did fun things like games and experiments, I didn't learn much. I was trying to win or memorize stuff. This year, we focus on building ideas. It can be in writing, reading, or talking. You probably want examples. OK, so in writing, instead of just trying to make my essay fit what it says on the rubric, now we write to others—and we build up an idea to communicate it better. And in reading, instead of reading to answer a bunch of questions, I read to form a big idea in my mind, and then I do something with it. Last year I did the bare minimum most of the time. Now I try cuz it makes a difference in me, or in others.
 Int: What about conversation?
 Stu: That's the most fun cuz you got another person to help you build up an idea. Everyone in the class knows that building ideas is what we do here. So my partner and I push each other to clarify and support each idea that we are working on. The teacher says, "Build it up 'til you can't build it up anymore."

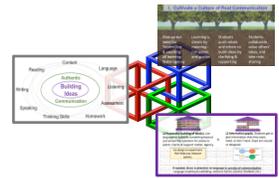
Interview with a Student



Int: Are ideas different in different subjects?
 Stu: Let me think... Like in ELA we read stories and figure out themes. We read what characters say and do and then start to figure out what the theme idea is as we go. And in science the teacher sometimes gives us a statement, like "Everything is attracted to everything else." and tells us to clarify and find examples to build it up in order to teach it to others.
 Int: What about history and math?
 Stu: In math we solve problems, so the idea is usually the way to solve the problem. I might say we need to come up with equations and set them equal to each other and my partner asks my "Why?" I need to come up with math reasons to build it up. And in history, let's see. We just learned about Black Plague. We built up ideas on how it either weakened or strengthened Europe for the future.
 Int: Great examples! One last question. How do you feel about learning this year?
 Stu: I have more friends this year in class, and more people listen to what I have to say. They even read my writing and say that I have good ideas. It feels good.

NEXT STEPS

1. Know pseudo- vs. authentic
2. Strengthen the Authentic Communication Framework
3. Start small & share (PLCs)
4. Make a long-term plan
5. Be creative



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