



## Communicating to Learn: Practices and Activities for Developing Academic Speaking, Listening, and Conversation Skills Across Disciplines (K-College)

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*What ideas are you looking to build?  
Are you open to building ideas you  
hadn't planned on building?*

## AGENDA

- I. Authentic Communication as a Foundation
- II. Conversation Skills
- III. Conversation Skills Support Activities
- IV. Conversation Modeling and Scaffolding
- V. Next Steps



## 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?
- 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?



## SHIFT from...

LESS

to

MORE

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



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



## 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, winning, 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)



## I. Authentic Communication Features

For developing content, thinking, language, and social skills

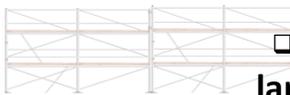
Whenever I have two of the three variables of distance, time, & speed, I can figure out the third.



Purposeful building of idea(s)

STUDENT A	STUDENT B
A shuttle enters an orbital path to catch up to an important satellite that isn't working properly. The shuttle is going faster than the satellite and mission control wants to know when the shuttle will reach it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shuttle is orbiting at 16,800 mph</li> <li>- Satellite orbits at 16,000 mph</li> <li>- Shuttle enters orbit 1200 miles behind the satellite</li> <li>- Orbit is 400 miles from the Earth's surface</li> </ul>

Information gap(s)



If needed, there is attention to **language in service of communication**

(Language modeling & scaffolding, sentence frames, practice, feedback, etc.)



## Building Ideas Mindset

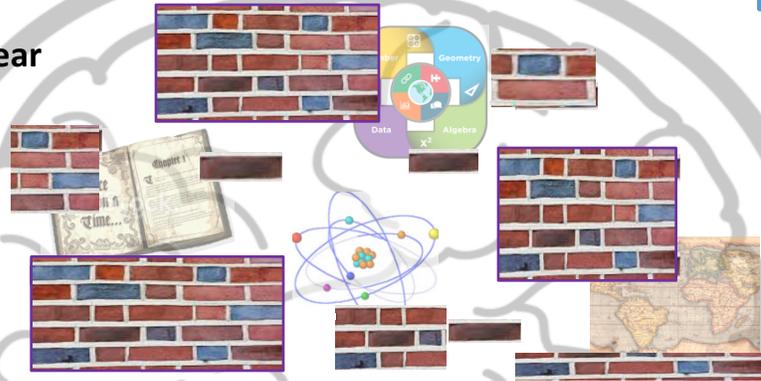
What ideas am I/we building this week and how do these tasks and texts help?

What new ideas will I start building today?



Is this idea as clear and strong as possible?

How can I help others build their ideas as much as possible?



## 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?”



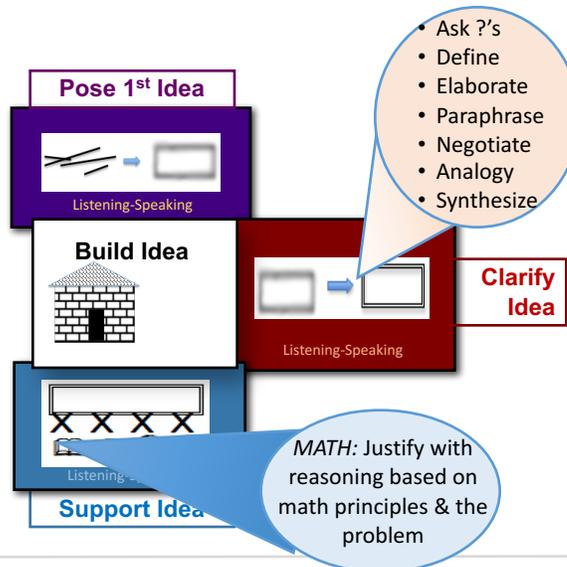
## Writing Sample After Conversation – 1st Gr.

How do you think the puffer fish defends itself from predators?

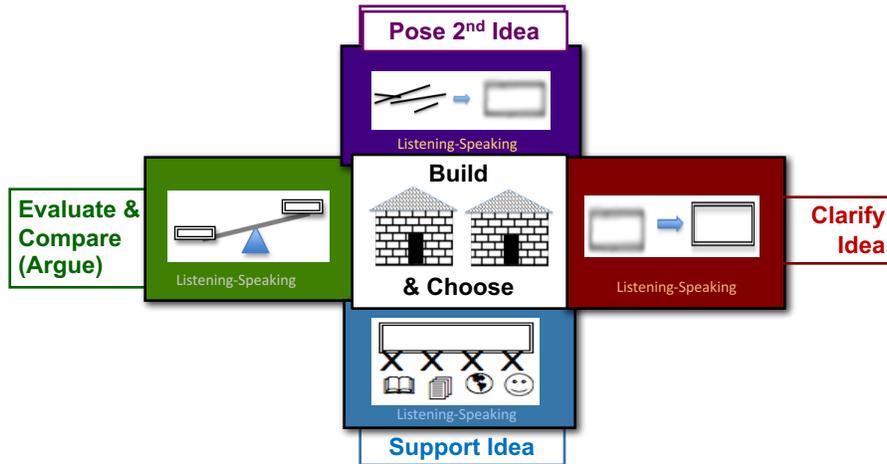
Our idea is that if the puffer fish spreads its spikes  
 out the predator will die and the fish  
 will bite it to because it wants its  
 prey.

## Constructive Conversation Skills

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



## Constructive Conversation Skills: Collaborative Argumentation



Hand motions

## Information Gap Activities for Fostering Conversation Skills:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Clarifying
- Supporting

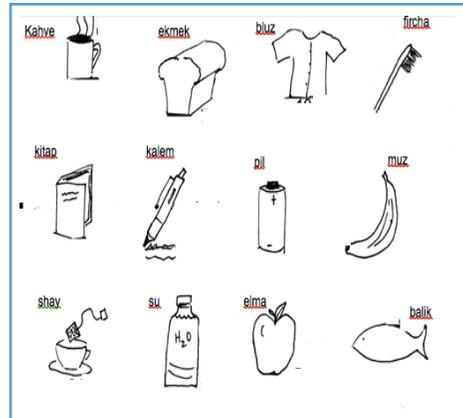
→ BUILDING ←

## & Authentic Communication Features:



## Information Gap: A & B Forms (At the Store)

1. Half of students get A & half get form B
2. Model & preview expressions & vocab
3. Students pair up and each play a role (e.g., B starts as customer; A is store owner)
4. A and B switch roles
5. Optionally, students create their own forms



## Info Gap Activities: A and B Forms

B: Merhaba. Nasilsin?

A: Chok Iyiyim. Sen nasilsin?

B: Iyiyim. Muz ne kadar?

A: Eekee lira

B: Shay ne kadar

A: Yooch lira.

B: Elma ne kadar?

A: Besh lira

B: Kitap ne kadar?

A: Ohn-besh lira

1 beer	2 eekee	3 yooch	4 dirt	5 besh	6 altuh	7 yehdee	<b>A</b>
8 sekeez	9 dohkooz	10 ohn	11 ohn-beer	20 yeer-mee	21 yeermee beer	30 oh-tooZ	
Kahve 6 lira		ekmek 7		bluz 19		fircha	
kitap 15		kalem		pil		muz 2	
shay 3		su		elma 5		balik	

## Information Gap Cards: If you want to live here,...

1. Model for students how you will respond to the prompt
  - o You are thinking of moving to the habitat where your partner lives. Ask him or her how you need to adapt in order to survive.
2. Act out words they will need
3. Students read own cards and try to remember the information.
4. Have them find all three other animals and learn how you would need to adapt to survive in each of their habitats.



- *What are you?*
  - *Where do you live?*
  - *How have you adapted to eat what you eat?*
    - *Because I eat \_\_\_\_, I have \_\_\_\_*
  - *How have you adapted to avoid dangers?*
    - *One trait that helps me avoid...*
  - *Can you clarify...give an example..*
    - *For example, one time I...*
- (remove these the third time)*

**What idea can students build with this new knowledge?**

### Info Gap Activities

#### Info Gap Cards Sample Conversation

- A: Do you know how fast the shuttle is orbiting?  
 B: Yes, but **why do you want to** know that?  
 A: Cuz I need to know it to figure out how long it takes to catch the satellite.  
 B: **How will** knowing the speed help you do that?  
 A: I'll use it and the satellite speed and the distance.  
 B: OK, it's going 16,800 miles per hour  
 A: Thanks. And how fast is the satellite going?  
 B: **Why do you need to know that?**  
 A: To know how long it'll take. If it's just a little slower, it'll take longer. I'll make an equation and put them equal to each other cuz that's where they meet.  
 B: That makes sense. The satellite is going 16,000 mph  
 A: Thanks. And how far are they apart when the shuttle starts its orbit?  
 B: **Why?**



**A: Model**

A shuttle enters an orbital path to catch up to an important satellite that isn't working properly. The shuttle is going faster than the satellite and mission control wants to know when the shuttle will reach it.

**B: Model**

- Shuttle is orbiting at 16,800 mph
- Satellite orbits at 16,000 mph
- Shuttle enters orbit 1200 miles behind the satellite
- Orbit is 400 miles from the Earth's surface

# How do Information Gap Activities

## Foster Conversation Skills:

- Speaking       Listening
  - Clarifying     Supporting
- ↪
**BUILDING**
↩

## & Authentic Communication Features:



## APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might support conversation skills using **Information Gap activities** in your upcoming units or lessons.

# Transition Improv Activities

## for Fostering Conversation Skills:

Speaking     Listening  
 Clarifying     Supporting  
↪ BUILDING ↩

## & Authentic Communication Features:

### Transition Improv Activity: **Pro-Con**

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**Topics:** Social media's influence on language development

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

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

*(You will make recommendations to teachers and students about the uses of social media)*

~~but~~

**Listeners can & should:**

- Prompt for clarification
- Prompt for support
- Offer idea seeds w/ "What about...?"

A & B, Lean?

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

## Transition Improv

Elementary

Pros and cons of ice cream

**Features:**

- Build ideas?
- Clarify & Support?
- Meaning, not points?
- Value ideas & take risks?
- ?



## Video of Pro-Con

Bryant High School

ELA

Teachers:  
Ghrawi and  
Fotopoulos

Prep work for  
reading *Animal  
Farm*

Pros and cons  
of communism



### Transition Improv: **For-Against**

*Topics:* Genetic engineering, electoral college, nuclear energy, social media, human-caused climate change, wolf reintroduction, de-extinction, zoos, year-round schools, corn as fuel, extraterrestrial life, desalination, going to college\* (2 texts)

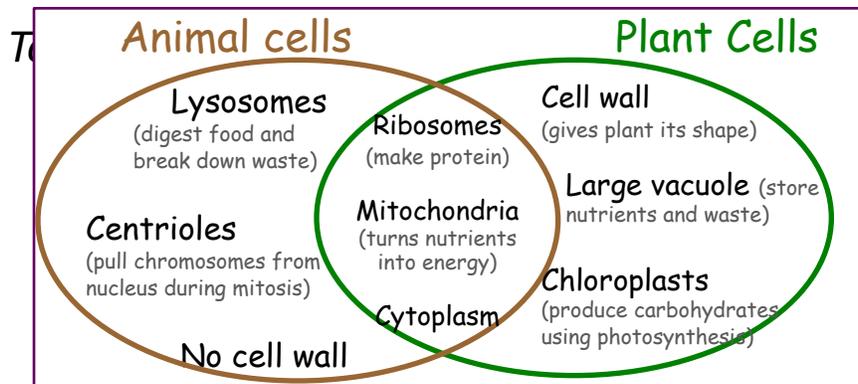
*Transitions:* **However,**  
**On the other hand,**  
**Then again,**

~~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?

### Transition Improv: **Similar-Different**



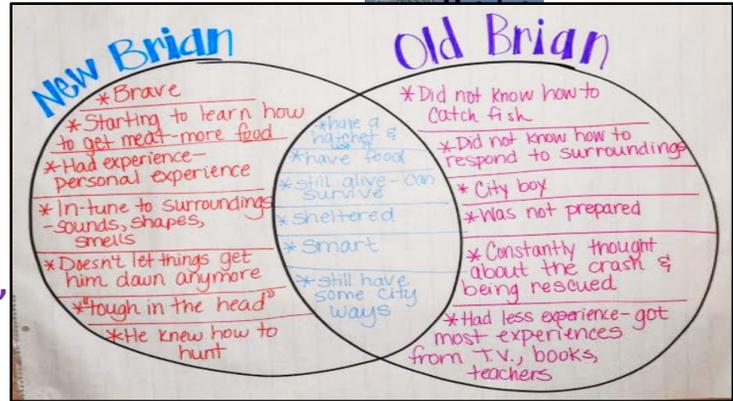
*SD Frames:* **Unlike animal cells, plant cells have \_\_\_\_, which ...**  
**Plant & animal cells both have \_\_\_\_, which serve to...**  
**... are similar to \_\_\_\_ in that they both \_\_\_\_**  
**Animal cells differ from plant cells in that \_\_\_\_**

**However,**  
**On the other hand,**  
**Then again,**

Transition Improv: **Similar-Different**

Topic: old Brian & new Brian

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



Frames:

Unlike the old Brian, new Brian \_\_\_\_, which came from  
Both new and old Brian \_\_\_\_, which ...  
New Brian differs from old Brian in that \_\_\_\_  
An important trait that didn't change in Brian was ...

Transition Improv: **Two Views w/ Evidence**

Views: Patriots  
Loyalists



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

~~but~~

Frames:

The \_\_\_\_ thought that ...  
Many \_\_\_\_ believed that...  
A different perspective held by \_\_\_\_ was that...  
In the eyes of \_\_\_\_...

## Transition Improv Activity: Positivo-Negativo

Tema: Viaggiare a altri paesi

### Positivi



Posso...

- mangiare cibo nuovo. Per esempio, in Peru ho mangiato ceviche...
- Imparare la storia del paese
- riposare, leggere, nuotare

### Negativi



Devo...

- spendere molti soldi. Per esempio, ...
- passare molto tempo in aereo.
- Cercare bagni puliti

D'altra parte,  
Tuttavia,  
Nonostante

~~Però~~

Nei viaggi, ...

Un vantaggio

Un'altro aspetto positivo e che ... per che...

Un svantaggio e che...

A & B, Lean?

## Transition Improv: Math Situations

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

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

~~but~~

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

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

# How do Transition Improv Activities

## Foster Conversation Skills:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Clarifying
- Supporting

→ BUILDING ←

## & Authentic Communication Features:



## APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might support conversation skills using **Transition Improv activities** in your upcoming units or lessons.

# Stronger & Clearer Each Time

for Fostering Conversation Skills:

- Speaking     Listening  
 Clarifying     Supporting

→ BUILDING ←

& Authentic Communication Features:



## 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. Listeners push for **clarification & support**, and offer ideas
4. Scaffolds are reduced during the activity.

## “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid Sample

I think the sun gets further away so it makes it winter.

**Switch partners!**

Seasons come from the world moving around the sun. It orbits. I think it's like when the teacher moved that ball around the light. It was tilted.

I think the sun moves out far away in winter and close in summer.



Manuel



1<sup>st</sup>  
Partner

What causes the seasons to change?

## “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

I think the sun gets further away so it makes it winter.

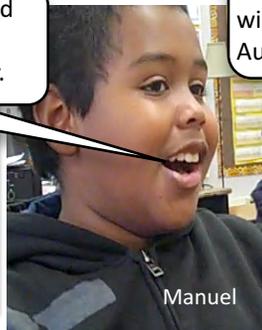
**Switch partners!**  
Don't forget to use examples; Stronger + clearer!

Seasons come from the world moving around the sun. It orbits. I think it's like when the teacher moved that ball around the light. It was tilted.

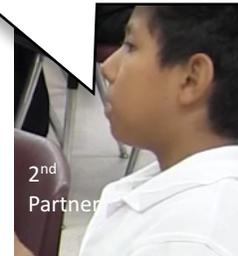
Maybe seasons come from the world it orbits around the sun. We move away in winter and close in summer.

I don't think the earth goes farther away. If we are up on the top, we get winter if we are tilted away. But in Australia its summer.

Me	Bad, wars
1. Mario	<i>both, learn</i>
2. Juan	<i>religion, Aztecs,</i>
3. Spain	
Me	



Manuel



2<sup>nd</sup>  
Partner

What causes the seasons to change?

## Student Model of “Stronger & Clearer Each Time”

I think the sun gets further away so it makes it winter.

Maybe seasons come from the world it orbits around the sun. We move away in winter and close in summer.

The earth is tilted and orbits ‘round the sun. We are on the top, so we are tilted toward the sun, so it’s summer. But in the south, like in Australia, its opposite. Its’ winter. I thought we got more far away, but we are just tilted.



Seasons come from the world moving around the sun. When the sun is high when the tea... around the light. I don't think th... If we are up or... we are tilted a... summer.

I think the sun moves out far away in winter and close in summer.

The earth orbits around the sun and it's tilted. We are north of the equator so in summer we tilt toward the sun. In winter we tilt away so it's cold.

What causes the seasons?

## Stronger & Clearer Activity

### Context

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



### This Clip

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

## Video of Stronger-Clearer

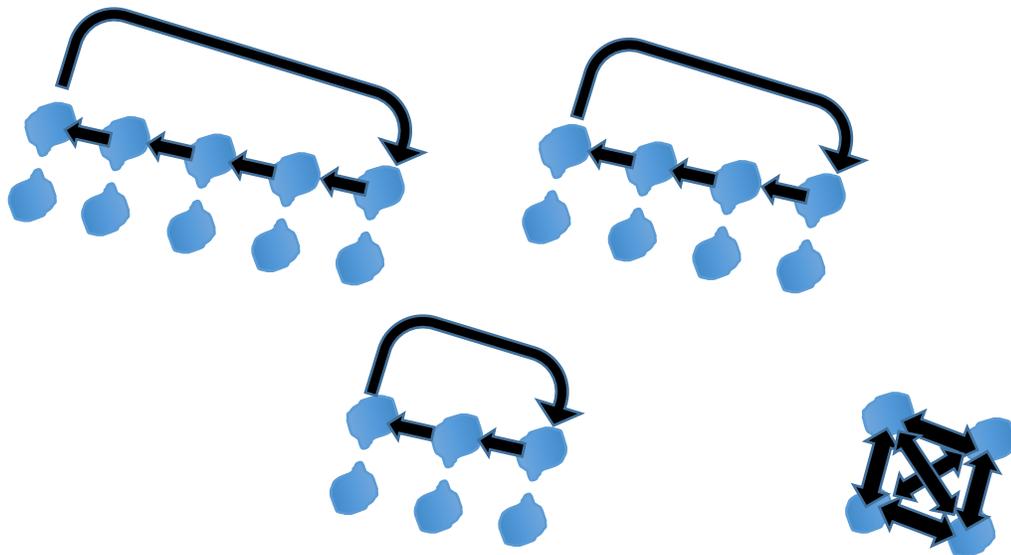
Bryant High School

ELA/ELD/History

Opinion  
Continuum:  
Communism vs.  
Capitalism



## Interaction Mini-Lines



### “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

Name	Do we need to spend more time reading and writing poetry?
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

*You are a teacher who will present on this topic to parents.*

### “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

Name	How can developing students’ oral language (speaking, listening, conversing) influence reading and writing—and content learning?
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

*You will present to colleagues on this topic.*

- Listeners can & should:*
- *Prompt for clarification*
  - *Prompt for support*
  - *Help with “What about...?”*

One way in which oral language influences reading is...because...  
 A student with a strong command of oral language can read...  
 Even though.....  
~~I disagree with you...~~

*15 sec “take w/ me”  
 Jigsaw variation  
 Follow w/ conversation*

### Stronger & Clearer Each Time: **Opinion Continuum**

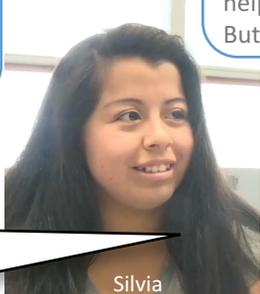
I think zoos are fun. I like seeing animals. I say yes.

I say no. It's like jail for them. And I don't like all people looking at me.

I was on yes but moved a little. I don't wanna be in cages like animals. It's like jail. But I still think it's fun to go and see them.

I think zoos are OK if the animals can't live wild. You know, I went to a zoo that helped hurt ones. Like a eagle. But other zoos are bad.

I don't know. Animals don't like in jail and people watching. But some get hurt and need people. Those zoos are good. Like they save eagles, maybe a broken wing. And we can learn from zoos, so yes.



Silvia



3rd Partner

**Should we have zoos or not?**

YES | Me | John | Cody | NO

### “Stronger and Clearer Each Time”: **Opinion Formation Cards**

1. Choose text quotations that support different sides of the issue and put them on small cards or strips.
2. Tell students the topic and have them start forming their *own* opinion.
3. Have students read out how it supports, contradicts, or even changes their own opinion.
4. Students then read quotations (They can also meet with a partner).

*You can use frames such as:*

- In my opinion, \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_.
- Despite the advantages of ...
- Given the points that I have heard so far, such as ...
- I think I lean more to the side of \_\_\_\_ because ...



**Listeners can & should:**

- Prompt for clarification
- Prompt for support
- Offer idea seeds w/ “What about...?”

**Should cell phone use be banned in school?**

# How do Stronger & Clearer Activities

## Foster Conversation Skills:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Clarifying
- Supporting

→ BUILDING ←

## & Authentic Communication Features:



## APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might plan using **Stronger & Clearer Each Time** activities—and/or adaptations to similar activities such as Gallery Walks and Jigsaws in your upcoming units or lessons.

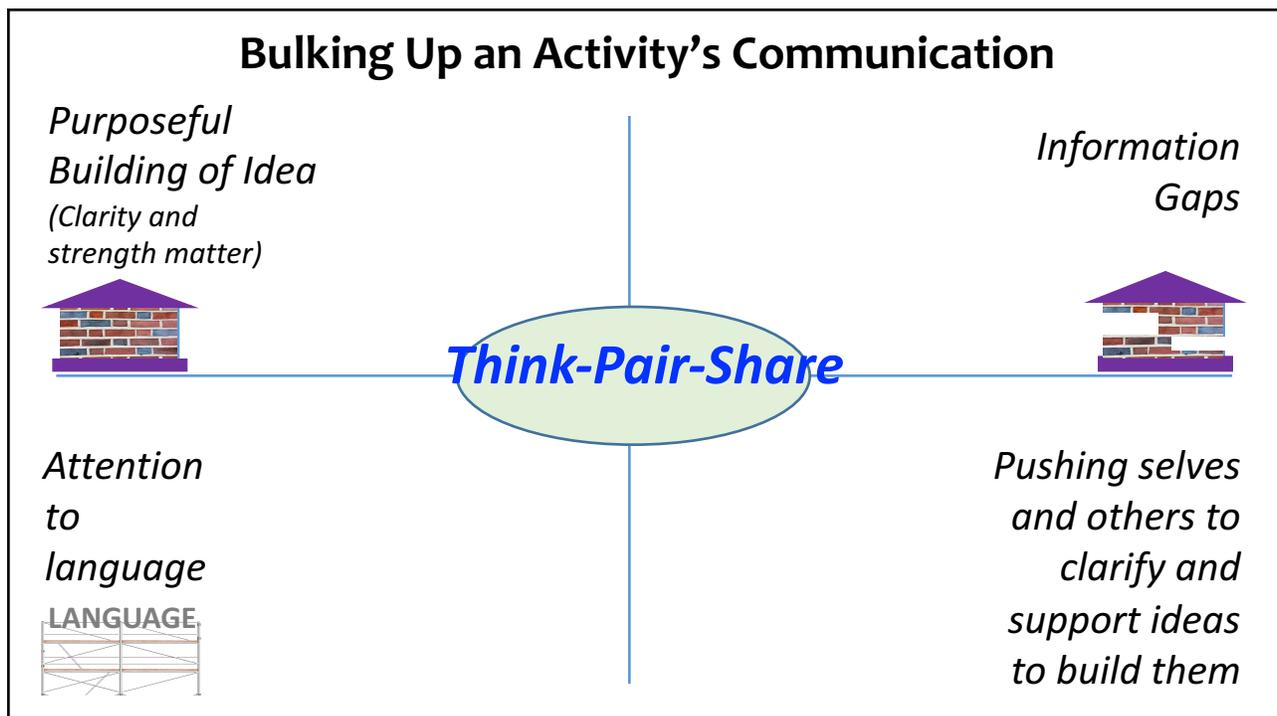
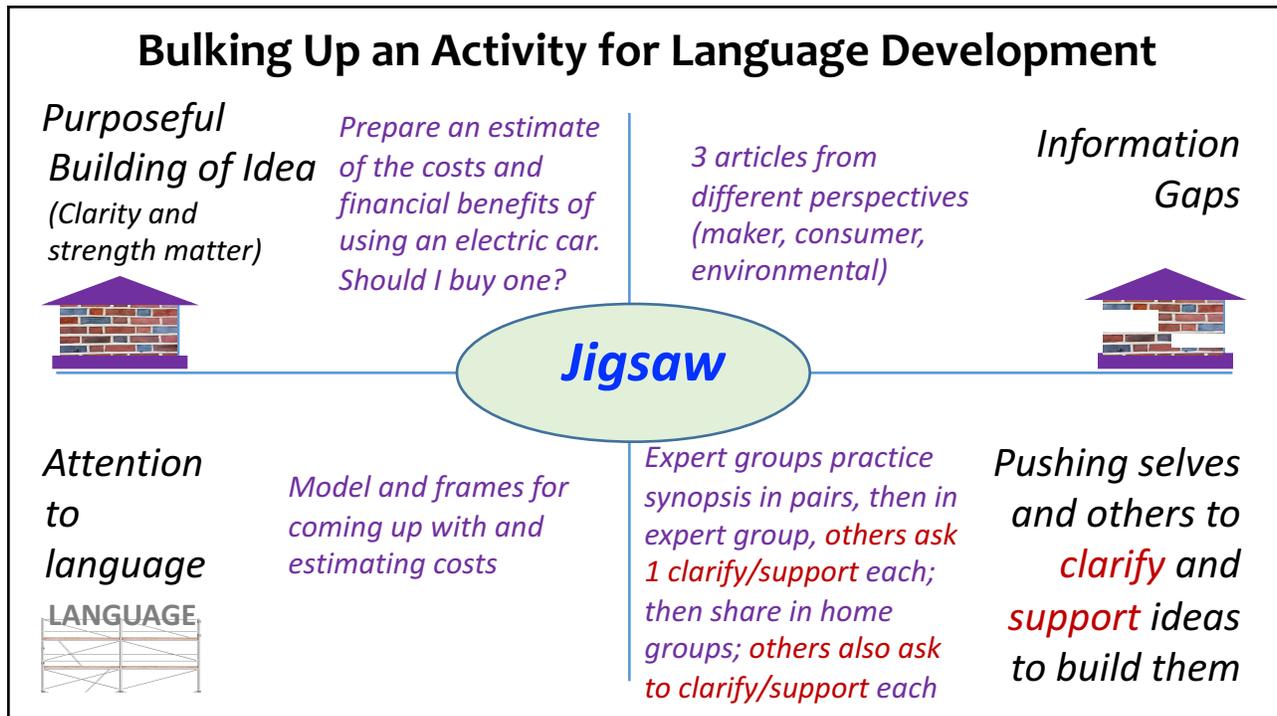
## Comments After “Oral Language Focused” Lessons

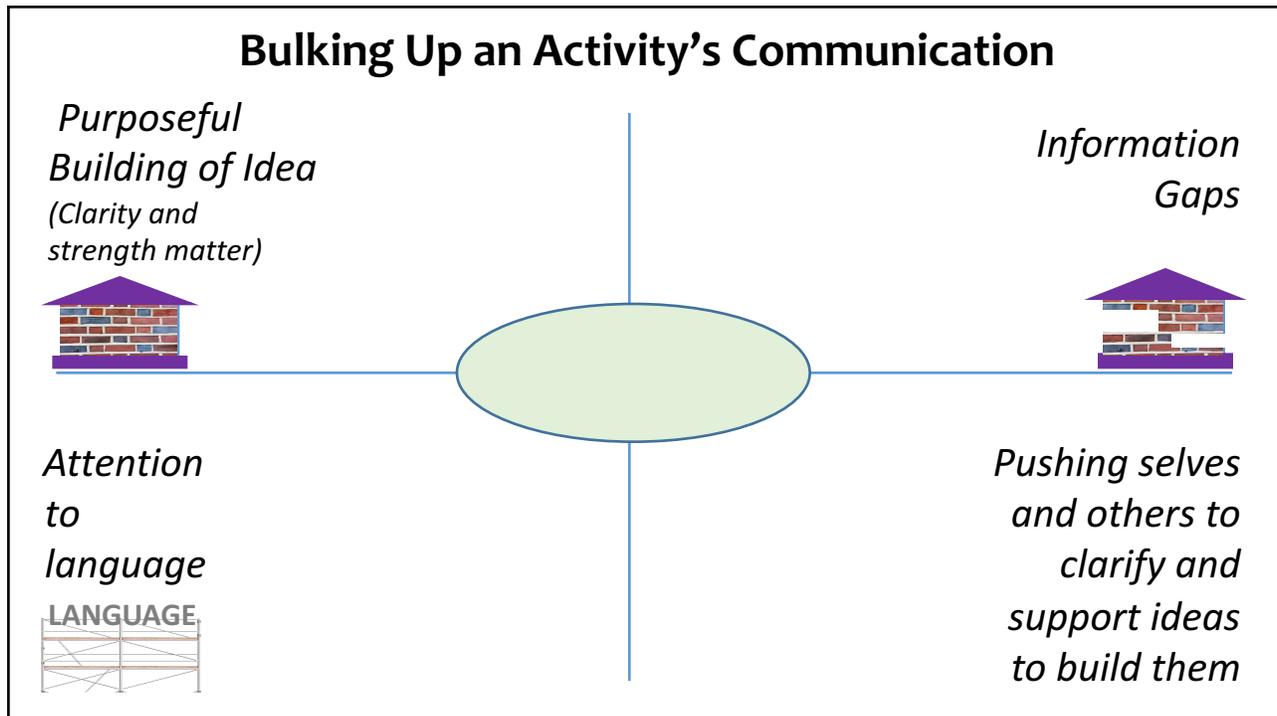
1. A Muslim girl, with tears in her eyes, said, “They laugh at me a lot. But today I had a voice. I could say what I thought. And they listened to me.”
2. The principal, after observing a student she knew well from his “trips to the office,” said, “It was wonderful to see him share his ideas with other students, to see him in a much different and better light.”
3. A shy boy, walking out to his next class, said, “Wow, I never used my brain so much.”



## Most Activities Can Cultivate Conversation Skills

<i>Read &amp; answer questions</i>		<i>Four Corners</i>
<i>Create a group poster</i>	<b>How can</b>	<i>Oral Presentation</i>
<i>Write a lab report</i>	<b>we get students</b>	<i>Gallery Walk</i>
<i>Take notes</i>	<b>to push themselves and</b>	<i>Think-Pair-Share</i>
<i>Create a story</i>	<b>peers to better</b>	<i>Literature Circles</i>
<i>Writers’ Workshop</i>	<b><u>clarify and support</u></b>	<i>Jigsaw</i>
<i>Whole class discussion</i>	<b>their ideas by adapting</b>	<i>Socratic Seminar</i>
<i>Simulation/dramatization</i>	<b>other activities?</b>	<i>Watch a video</i>
<i>Solve a word problem in pairs</i>		<i>Games (Bingo, Jeopardy, etc.)</i>





## 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 and encoding verbal messages (as robots might do).



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

## The Power of Collaborative Conversations (Why face-to-face communication is worth it)

**CONTENT: Clarify,  
Use, & Reinforce**

**LANGUAGE:  
Input + Output**

**FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

**ACADEMIC THINKING:  
Critical & Creative**

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

## 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

## Improving Conversations

Laura: I think the theme is we gotta forgive others.

Eli: I respectfully disagree with you.

Laura: Why?

Eli: Cuz it's not fair. People should be punished.



**Build up the  
first idea  
first!!!!!!!**

Leo: We should be able to vote.

Edgar: I agree. And drive cars around, you know, get licenses.

Leo: I drove my uncle's car in Mexico when I was 12.

Edgar: Where'd you go?

Leo: On the roads by his house, but then into a pond.

Edgar: Maybe you shouldn't get a license yet.

### Conversation (1<sup>st</sup>)

A: I think she not share it (bread)

B: Why?

A: Cuz the other animals not work; just lazy.

B: Yeah. I don't think to share, too.

A: Why?

B: Like my dad. He work for money. Not work, no money.

A: Yeah, no es justo.

B: Not fair. But teacher said is good to share.

A: I share when they help. Like maybe I paint the school. I don't want others...it's my money.

B: No. Maybe if ...no pueden trabajar, like they're sick, maybe. But the animals are lazy.

A: Is good to share, but not all the time, not with lazies.



### Conversation (5<sup>th</sup>)

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?



## Conversation (Math)

Ana: What do we need to find?

Ben: How far the boat goes down the river.

Ana: So, how?

Ben: Maybe figure out the time to cross it, like straight, like this (a).

Ana: I think we should just add the speeds together.

Ben: OK, I guess. So that's 5 plus 3 equals 8. Then what?

Ana: We need to use the other number, 30. So divide?

Ben: Why not? OK, so 30 divided by 8 is 3.75.

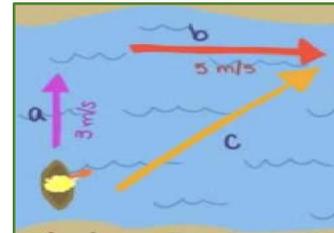
Ana: 3.75 what?

Ben: Meters, I think, but that doesn't look right.

Ana: No, so what do we do?

Ben: I don't know. Maybe go back to my idea?

A boat steers straight across a river at 3 meters per second. The river is flowing at 5 m/s. If the river is 30 meters wide, how far downstream will the boat end up on the other side?



## Constructive Conversations in 9<sup>th</sup> 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?")

## “Silent” Support Cards (from the COAT)

Paraphrase what your partner said

Ask your partner to clarify: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Why...How...)

Ask for an (another) example to support the idea

Build up the first idea first

Refer to the text

Define the word: \_\_\_\_\_

Explain how evidence supports the idea/claim

Stay focused on the conversation prompt/purpose

Encourage your partner to talk more

Show that you are listening with your eyes, nods, posture

Pose an alternative idea and start to build it up

## Using the Cards – 5<sup>th</sup> 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 a tall, ugly weed,  
than an eagle  
perched on high, jagged rocks.

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

I could stand alone, strong and free,  
rather be a tall, ugly weed.

Build up the first idea first

How does the title support the idea?

### Using the Cards – 4<sup>th</sup> Gr. Science

- 1 K: So, why do squids have ink?  
 2 M: To hide  
 3 K: What do you mean?  
 4 M: They hide in it.  
 5 K: Yeah...  
 OK, so why do they hide in their ink?  
 6 M: When they get scared, like maybe a shark come for them.  
 7 K: OK, I think they got ink to..., they escape. Like the picture.  
 8 M: OK...  
 How do they escape with ink?  
 9 K: They let it out; it makes a cloud so they, you know, can swim away.  
 10 M: And it poisons the fish?  
 11 K: I don't know; I think jellyfish are poison.  
 12 M: I hate jellyfish.  
 13 K: Me too.



Ask to clarify  
*(Why...How... What do you mean by)*

Clarify: How do they  
 escape with ink?

Stay focused on  
 prompt/purpose

### Silent Cards for a Conversation - 5<sup>th</sup> Gr. ELA/ELD



#### Context

- 5<sup>th</sup> 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

## 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 moistened 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)

## Using the Silent Support Cards

With your partner,  
**clarify** what is happening,  
 estimate the answer, and  
 come up with two ways of solving it,  
**justifying ideas and choices** along the way.

Suppose it takes the Almond River 6 months to fill a reservoir, by itself, and it takes Belfair River 10 months to fill it, on its own. If both are flowing into the reservoir, how long will it take to fill it?



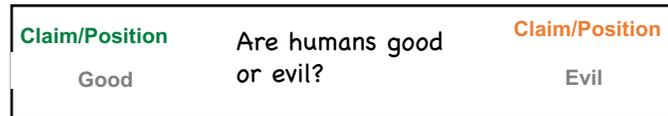
## Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

**Claim**

vs.

**Opposite or  
Different Claim**

Which claim's reasons, evidence, and explanations 'weigh' the most?



## Argument Balance Scale

Prevent dropouts & jail costs

Gets them to read

Kids need to eat

Stay after school

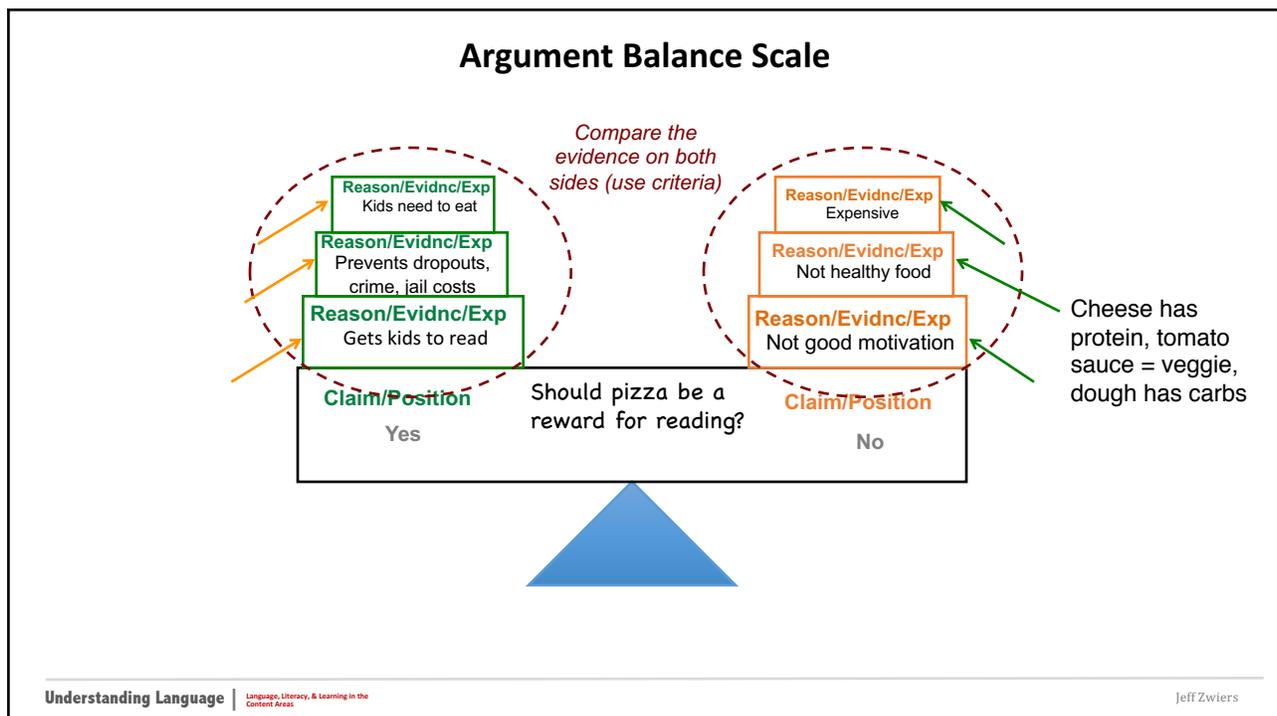
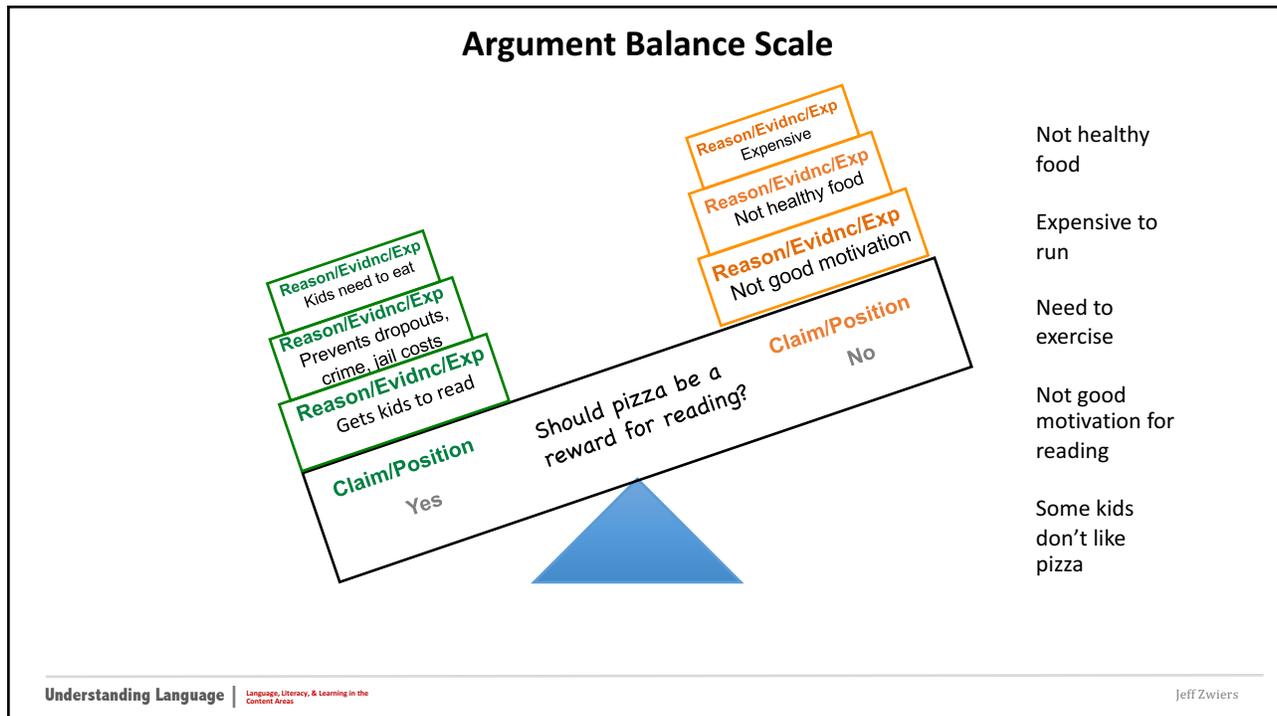
Pizza tastes good

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Kids need to eat

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Prevents dropouts, crime, jail costs

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Gets kids to read





### Argument Balance Scale

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

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Kids need to eat

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Prevents dropouts, crime, jail costs

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Gets kids to read

**Claim/Position**  
Yes

Should pizza be a reward for reading?

2D-Scale

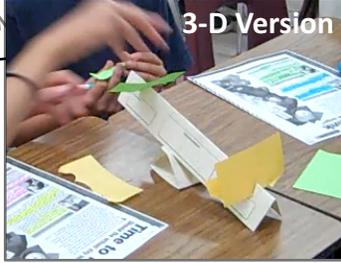


**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Expensive

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Not healthy food

**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Not good motivation

**Claim/Position**  
No



3-D Version

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### Video Example

**CONTEXT**

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

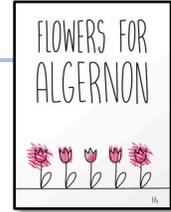
After reading an article on a program that gives pizza as reward for reading, students discuss their opinions on the issue.



**THIS CLIP**

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

## 8<sup>th</sup> ELA – Using the Argument Scale



A: Why do you think the author wrote this story?

B: Maybe teach us 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's not natural. And he wasn't happy, even after he's smart.

A: Yeah. And he was kinda like a science experiment. I don't think they should experiment on people. It's maybe like when they experiment on animals.

B: Yeah. It's messed up. What about the other side?

A: Maybe it's that we can be smart, all of us. And maybe it's OK when science helps? Science helps people be better in lots of ways.

B: What's 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.

## 8<sup>th</sup> ELA – Using the Argument Scale

B: I guess. And I think it's good to see, like, people like him could be smart.

A: What do you mean?

B: Like I see people like him, like at school, and I think they're just, I don't know, broken. But inside they're like us, maybe smarter than us.

A: Maybe, OK, so are we done with both sides?

B: Yeah. Now we gotta decide which 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 not to 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.

## Authentic Communication or Not?

	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p><b>Claim/Position</b> Yes</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Should we take the time &amp; effort to teach with more paired conversations?</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p><b>Claim/Position</b> No</p> </div> </div>	
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Even though... I/we chose...because...

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## 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 hinder communication and learning difficult for the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. About 10% of the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. About 10% of the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims. About 10% of the school's 1,300-plus pupils are Muslims.

In his judgement, Justice Silber stressed that he was dealing with a particular case - not the wider issue of whether the niqab should be worn, in schools or any other public places. He said the ban was "proportionate" in the light of the school's concerns:

- the veil prevents teachers from seeing facial expressions, which is important in effective classroom communication
- the necessity of wearing the niqab in schools would have a negative impact on the mental health of the girls
- security - the school is a public place and the niqab would make it difficult to identify the girls
- the need to avoid peer pressure on girls to take up wearing the veil

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

	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p><b>Claim/Position</b> Yes</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Should the girl be allowed to wear the niqab in school?</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p>Reason/Evidnc/Exp</p> <p><b>Claim/Position</b> No</p> </div> </div>	
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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.

## Conversation Prompts

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

**ELA Literature:** Collaboratively decide

**ELA Expository:** Decide whether or not to

**Math:** Work with your partner to create a

**Science:** In your conversation, compare

**History:** You will co-author a letter to a history journal. Converse with your partner to decide if Lincoln was more interested in abolishing slavery or more interested in preserving the Union. Use evidence to support the claims on each side and evaluate the value of the evidence, along with any bias that might exist in the sources. Use historian language such as "This is strong evidence because..."

## 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 Literature:** Collaboratively decide

**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.

## 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...”

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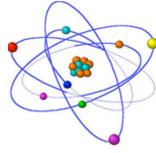
**Math:** Work with your partner to create a

**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.

## 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*

## APPLICATION TIME



Think about how you might plan using **Conversation Modeling & Scaffolding** activities—and/or adaptations in your upcoming units or lessons.

## Major Pillars for this Work



Design for real academic communication (Purpose, **clarity** & **support** matter, Info gaps)

Use all interaction activities to foster skills of **building**, **clarifying**, **supporting**, & evaluating

Push students to push themselves and others for **clarity and strength** (act like teachers)

In conversations, **build up** every idea as much as possible—and **build up** the first idea first.

## NEXT STEPS



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