




Classroom Conversations: The Power of Authentic Communication in Every Lesson

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AGENDA

1. Culture of Communication
2. Authentic Communication
3. Structured Interactions
4. Conversations




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Challenges

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


- 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?



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Let the Communicating Do a Lot of the Work

"Language is learned, not because we want to talk or read or write about language, but because we want to talk and read and write about the world. Especially for children, language is the medium of our interpersonal relationships, the medium of our mental life, the medium of learning about the world."
--Cazden (1977)




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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, winning, 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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Authentic Communication Features

For developing content, thinking, language, and social skills

Purposeful building of idea(s)

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



Information gap(s)

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

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

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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 divide the numbers when it's
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	It shows some up with two
Procedure	Approach	Geography influences the beliefs
Relationship	Explanation	I think we should all be more like in
		The European explorers were
		I can use a baseball bat, baseball,
		and Multiplying fractions makes them
		even smaller.

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Building Ideas Mindset (RWLSC)

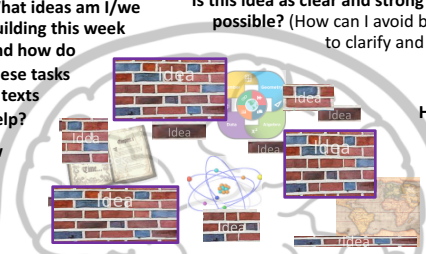
Fostering Voice, Agency, Autonomy, Engagement,...

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

What new ideas can I start building today?

Is this idea as clear and strong as possible? (How can I avoid being asked to clarify and support it?)

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



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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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CONVERSATION SKILLS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

for Fostering Conversation Skills & Authentic Communication

Transition Improv Activities



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Transition Improv Activity: Pro-Con

Topics: Social media's influence on language development

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

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

~~But~~

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

Listeners can & should:

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

A & B, motion, lean?

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Transition Improv

Elementary

Pros and cons of ice cream

Features:

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

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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?

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Transition Improv: Similar-Different

Animal cells

Lysosomes (digest food and break down waste)

Centrioles (pull chromosomes from nucleus during mitosis)

No cell wall

Plant Cells

Cell wall (gives plant its shape)

Large vacuole (store nutrients and waste)

Chloroplasts (produce carbohydrates using photosynthesis)

However,
On the other hand,
Then again,

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 _____

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Transition Improv: Similar-Different

Topic: old Brian & new Brian

New Brian

* Starting to learn how to hunt

* Has more food

* Had experience

* In tune to surrounding sounds

* Didn't let things get him down anymore

* Always in the head

* He knew how to hunt

Old Brian

* Did not know how to think

* Did not know how to respond to surrounding

* Only boy

* Was not prepared

* Constantly thought about the crash & being rescued

* Had less experience- got most experiences from TV, books, teachers

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 ...

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Do Transition Improv Activities have the Features of Authentic Communication?

Support	Clarify	Clarify	Support	Clarify
Clarify	Support	Clarify	Support	Clarify
Clarify	Clarify	Support	Clarify	Support
Clarify	Support	Support	Clarify	Support
Support	Clarify	Clarify	Support	Clarify

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CONVERSATION SKILLS SUPPORT ACTIVITIES for Fostering Conversation Skills & Authentic Communication

Stronger-Clearer Each Time Activities

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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

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

What's an example of fighting?

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

A begins and B listens and asks clarify & support questions. Go.

Take two-word notes. New partners! Don't forget to use examples. Stronger + Clearer!

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

The Aztecs and Spain. They didn't like each other.

Manuel

1st Partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

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

Take two-word notes. Switch partners! Don't forget to use examples & ask for clarify & support. Stronger + clearer!

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

When cultures meet each other, it helps to learn how others live. Like religion. But wars can happen, like you said.

Cultures meet and bad things happen like fighting, like the Aztecs and Spain. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.

What do you mean they learn religion?

Maybe not learned, but like mixing religions together.

Manuel

2nd Partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

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

I th
Like
oth

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

When c
other, it
-ba

(POST)
When cultures meet, is both bad and good. Bad cuz they fight, like the Aztecs and Spain. Spain thought they were better so they took over. Good cuz of new food and languages and religion.

Cultures meet and bad things happen like fighting, like the Aztecs and Spain. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.

When cultures meet, is bad and good. Bad cuz they fight wars, like they're different. Spain thought they were better than the Aztecs. And good cuz you can learn languages, like Spanish, and new religion.

They lea
other lik
some cu
best and
They sta

Manuel

What happens when cultures meet and why?

Stronger & Clearer Activity

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

Prep work for reading *Animal Farm*

Opinion Continuum: Communism vs. Capitalism

Stronger-Clearer Pre- & Post-Writing Sample(7th History)

Prompt: Was Martin Luther right or wrong in nailing his theses to the church door?

1. Pre-Write

Martin what do right on nailing the 95 theses on the Catholic Church

2. Conversation

3. Post-Write

most of nailing the 95 theses because he cracked a lot of rules of the church. one is he changed the idea of going your way out of hell you had to pay a bit of money to get in heaven. He wants other to change the bible to the language that every one understand.

WRITING ASSESSMENT

Pose one or more **relevant & buildable idea(s)**

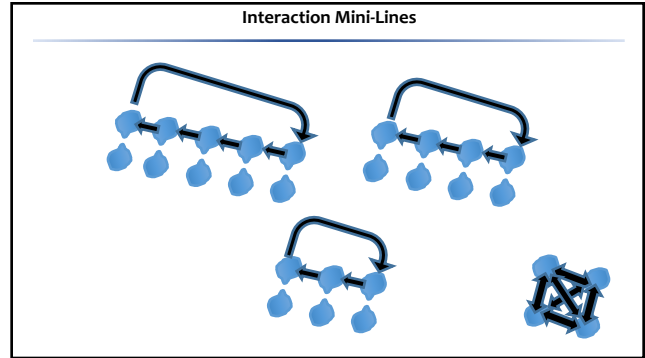
Support idea(s) with evidence, examples, explanations (accurate content)

Clarify idea(s) & terms

Disciplinary thinking (cause-effect, interpret, perspective, bias, analyze...)

Language use (Vocabulary, Grammar, Organization)

If it's an **argument: evaluate and compare ideas** to choose strongest/heaviest*



"Stronger & Clearer Each Time" Grid

Name	How can developing students' oral language (speaking, listening, conversing) influence reading and writing--(and content learning)?	You will present to colleagues on this topic.
Me	(Just two or three key words, if any)	
1.		
2.		
3.		
Me		

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.

Listeners can & should:

- Prompt for clarification
- Prompt for support
- Help with "What about...?"

15 sec "take w/ me"
 Highlight the writing
 Jigsaw variation
 Follow w/ conversation

Do Stronger & Clearer Each Time Activities have the Features of Authentic Communication?

The grid consists of a 4x4 array of colored boxes (red, blue, green) containing the words 'Support', 'Clarify', and 'Clarify'. Below the grid is a large, faint grid structure.

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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*)

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The Power of 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**

Constructive Conversation Skills: Building an Idea

Build up an Idea (at least to here)

Support

Clarify

Ask ?'s

- Define
- Elaborate
- Paraphrase
- Negotiate
- Analogy
- Synthesize

Hand motions

Constructive Conversation Skills: Building an Idea

Build up an Idea (at least to here)

Support

Clarify

Support

Support

Clarify

Support

Support

Clarify

Hand motions

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

IDEA

CLARIFY

SUPPORT

PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

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

IDEA

CLARIFY

SUPPORT

PROMPT: Why do animals adapt?

Adaptation helps animals to get food.

A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.

What does adaptation mean?

Eagles have good eyes to see little animals

What are examples of those adaptations?

For example? Tuna & swordfish

And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish to eat them.

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

IDEA

CLARIFY

SUPPORT

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And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish to eat them.

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.

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 makes itself look like the 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?
Like army clothes?	When they look like stuff to hide	And they do camouflage, too.
A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example?
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

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

The fish makes itself look like the 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?
Like army clothes?	When they look like stuff to hide	And they do camouflage, too.
A type of animal changes its body over millions of years to get food.	Eagles have good eyes to see little animals	For example?
What does adaptation mean?	What are examples of those adaptations?	And some fish swim really fast to catch little fish.

How do we get students to do this?

Constructive Conversations in 9th ELA

Context

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


This Clip

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

Constructive Conversation Skills: Collaborative Argument

The diagram illustrates a process of collaborative argument. It starts with 'Build up an Idea (at least to here)', which involves 'Support' and 'Clarify' steps. This leads to an 'Evaluate & Compare' stage, which includes 'Evaluate' and 'Compare' steps. Finally, it leads to 'Build up 2nd Idea (at least to here)', which also involves 'Support' and 'Clarify' steps. The diagram is labeled 'Hand motions' at the bottom right.

Conversation - 5th Gr. ELA/ELD



Context

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

This Clip

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

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.

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.



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

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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..."

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Possible Next Steps

Have students **engage in conversations** about learned topics, then self-assess. (10K hrs)

Model conversations & analyze them for skills (clarify & support) for building ideas

Weave building ideas, clarifying, and supporting into all interaction activities and discussions (whenever students read, write, listen, speak)

Have 2nd and 3rd pair-shares (e.g., Stronger-Clearer) in which students practice, push and are pushed to **support** ideas and **clarify**, to improve ideas

Improve pair-shares:

- A) More prompting for purposeful **building of ideas**
- B) Listener prompts talker to **clarify** and **support** in order to help build up idea
- C) Structure time for A and B students

CONTACT INFO



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Cultivate a Culture of Authentic Communication



We know our students' preferences, styles, backgrounds


We give up our need for "controlling & counting" all learning; we foster agency

Learning is driven by meaning--not by points and grades

Students push selves and others to build ideas by clarifying & supporting

Students collaborate, value others' ideas, and take risks sharing

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.

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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

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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

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