

## Assessing & Supporting Academic Conversations

Jeff Zwiers

February 8, 2019

[jeffzwiers.org/february8](http://jeffzwiers.org/february8)

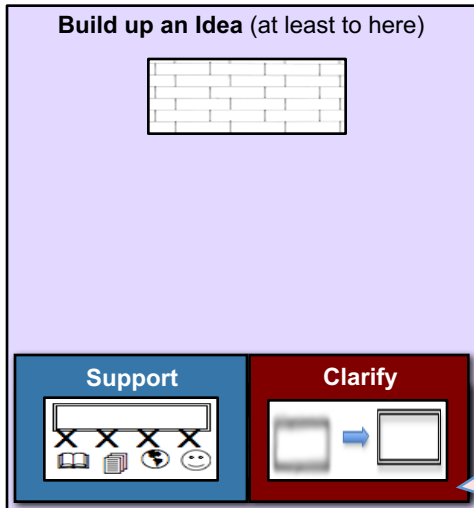
[jzwiers@stanford.edu](mailto:jzwiers@stanford.edu)

## OVERVIEW

1. Conversation Skills
2. Third Observer Notes and Coaching
3. Collaborative Argumentation
4. Argument Balance Scale
5. Next Steps



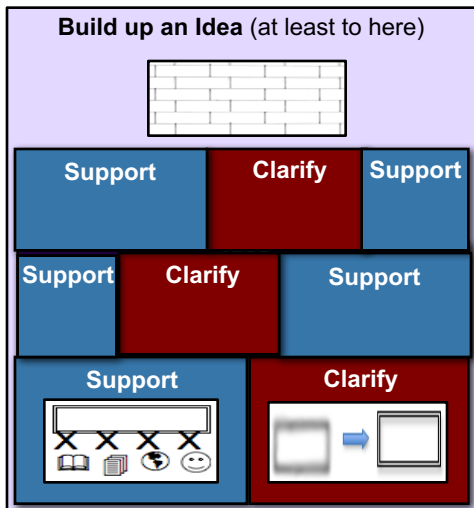
## Constructive Conversation Skills: Building an Idea



- Ask ?'s
- Define
- Elaborate
- Paraphrase
- Negotiate
- Analogy
- Synthesize

*Hand motions*

## Constructive Conversation Skills: Building an Idea



*Hand motions*

## Using Conversation Skills

**Prompt:** How can the Rainbow Fish teach us to be better people?



### Sample 1

A: He didn't share.  
 B: **And he had lots of scales.**  
 A: So?  
 B: **They're shiny. He got mad at the little fish, it wanted one.**  
 A: And then he talked to the octopus.  
 B: **He looked kinda scary.**  
 A: Yeah. But he was nice to the fish.  
 B: **Yeah. OK. Are we done?**

### Sample 2

C: He was selfish.  
 D: **So is that what we learn?**  
 C: No, like to not be selfish.  
 D: **Why not?**  
 C: Look at the fish. He didn't share and was sad//  
 D: **Yeah, cuz other fish stopped playing with him, and so he got lonely.**  
 C: Selfish isn't good.  
 D: **So to have friends, we gotta share.**

## Conversing to Build Ideas

### 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?”**



## Sample Conversation (2<sup>nd</sup> Gr.)

### Context

- 2<sup>nd</sup> grade ELA
- Had read story *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*

### This Clip

After reading the book, students are given questions about character changes for the conversation. Look for strengths, needs, & skills of posing, clarifying, supporting,



## Analyze Conversations

- Laura: What caused the fall?  
 Eli: The text said disease and war.  
 Laura: It also said crops and politics.  
 Eli: All of them, I guess.

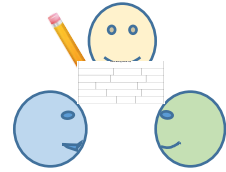


- Mansur: I think there are different ways to solve it.  
 Lynn: So? Just do what the teacher did.  
 Mansur: But why did she turn the fraction over?  
 Lynn: Who cares? Just turn it over.  
 Mansur: OK.

$$\frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$$



## Third Observer Notes & Coaching



1. As talkers converse, observer takes notes on the Idea Building Note-Taking Form, or something similar.
2. Make suggestions verbally or silently on sticky notes, when needed.

Idea Being Built Up

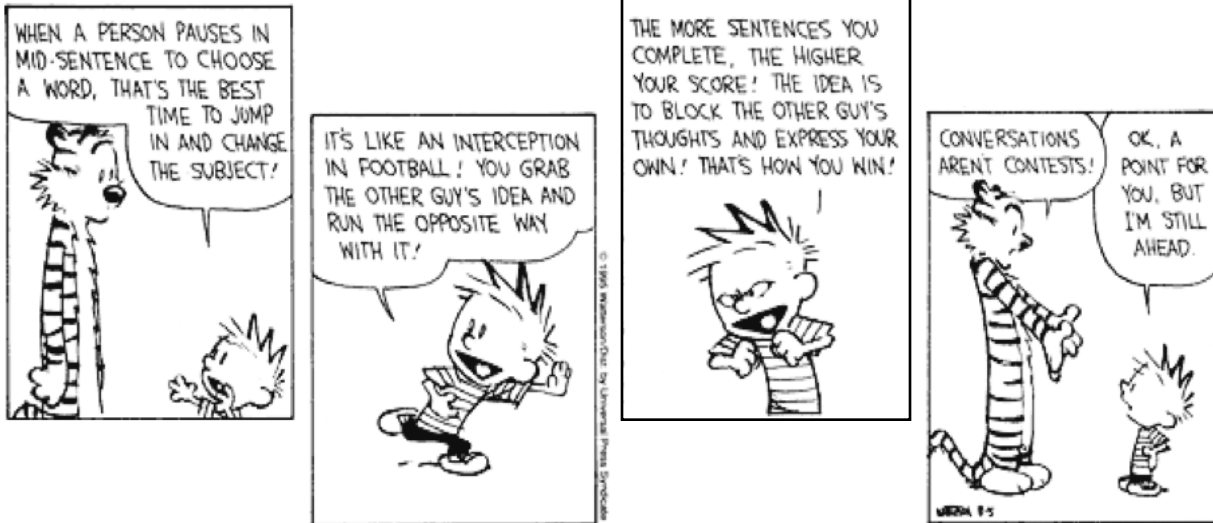

Refer to the text	Ask for an (another) example to support the idea
Define the term:	
Explain how evidence supports the idea/claim	Ask your partner to share more

### Interpret & Build an Idea

**PROMPT:** Come to a consensus with your partner on why you think the painters painted the paintings in these ways, why they included certain figures, their composition, postures, movements, gazes, etc. Include what the painter wanted the viewer to feel or think, empathize, and learn from the painting. How accurate were they? Were they meant to be accurate? Why is the one on the right side more famous?



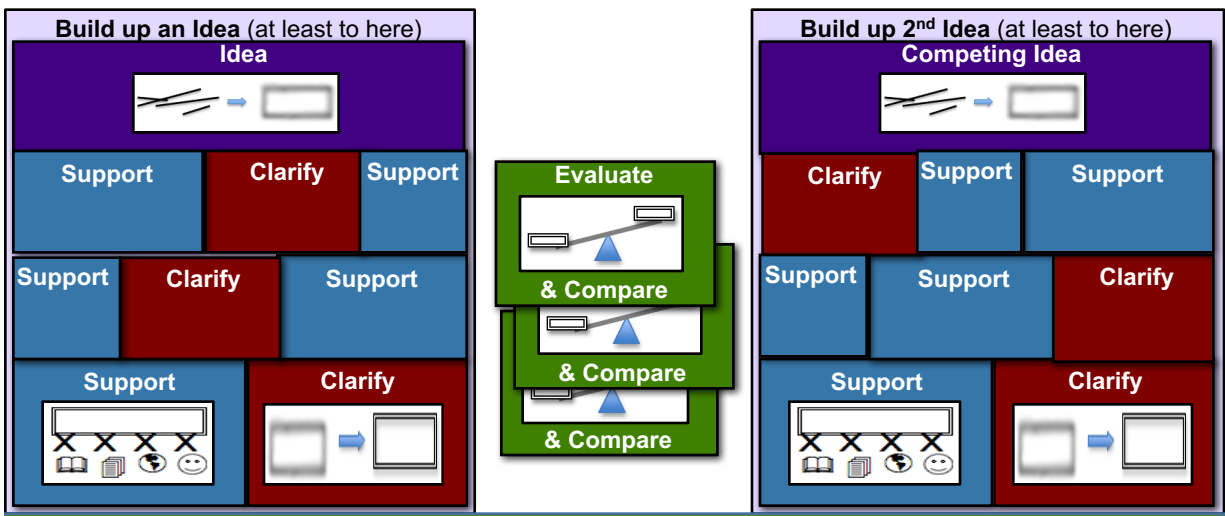
## Collaborative Argumentation



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

Jeff Zwierys

## Constructive Conversation Skills: Collaborative Argument\*



Hand motions

## Analyze Conversations

Laura: I think air has weight. Remember the balloon?

Eli: I respectfully disagree with you.

Laura: Why?

Eli: Because I can't feel it. Can you?



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 the mountains when I was 12.

Edgar: Where'd you go?

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

Edgar: Did you get all wet?....

## Collaborative Argumentation - 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

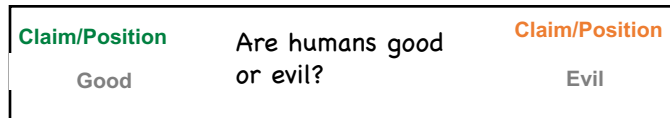
## Structuring Collaborative Argument Conversations: Argument Scale

**Claim**

vs.

**Opposite or  
Different Claim**

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



## Argument Balance Scale

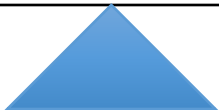
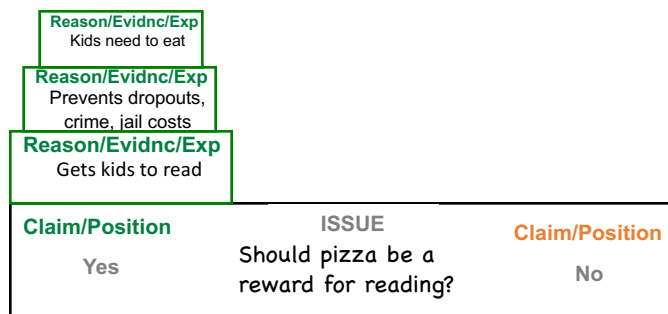
Prevent  
dropouts &  
jail costs

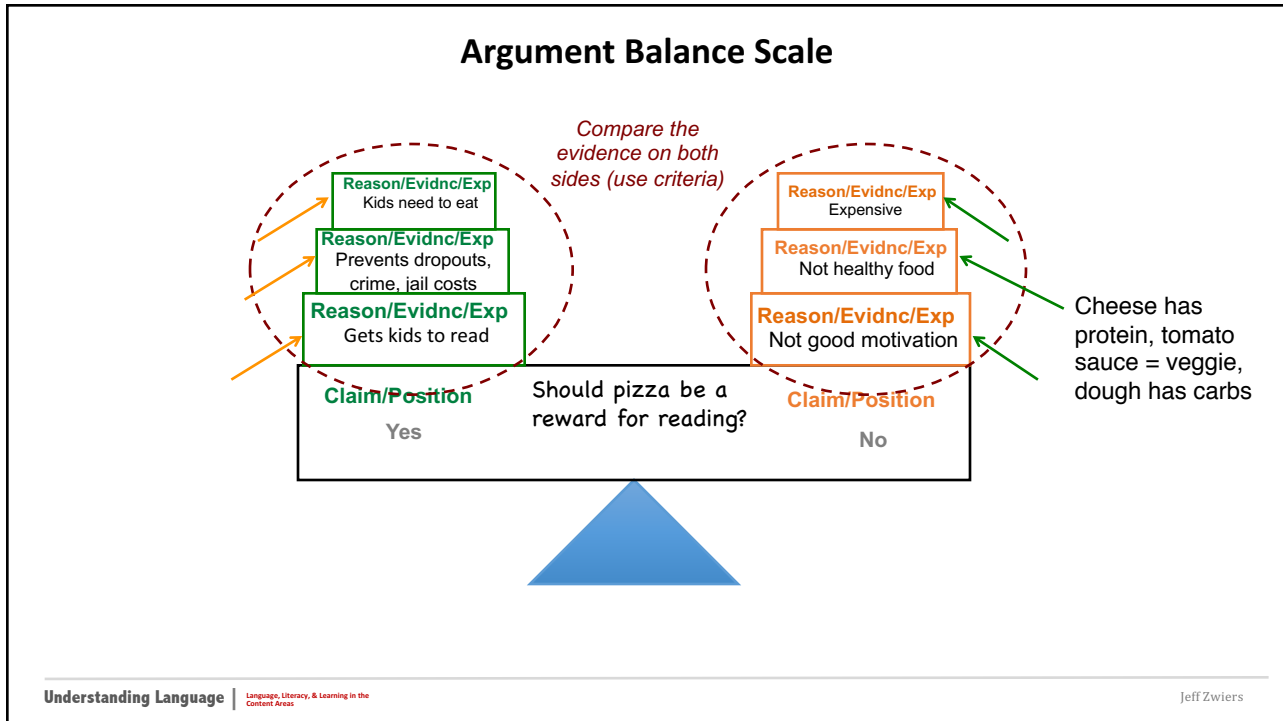
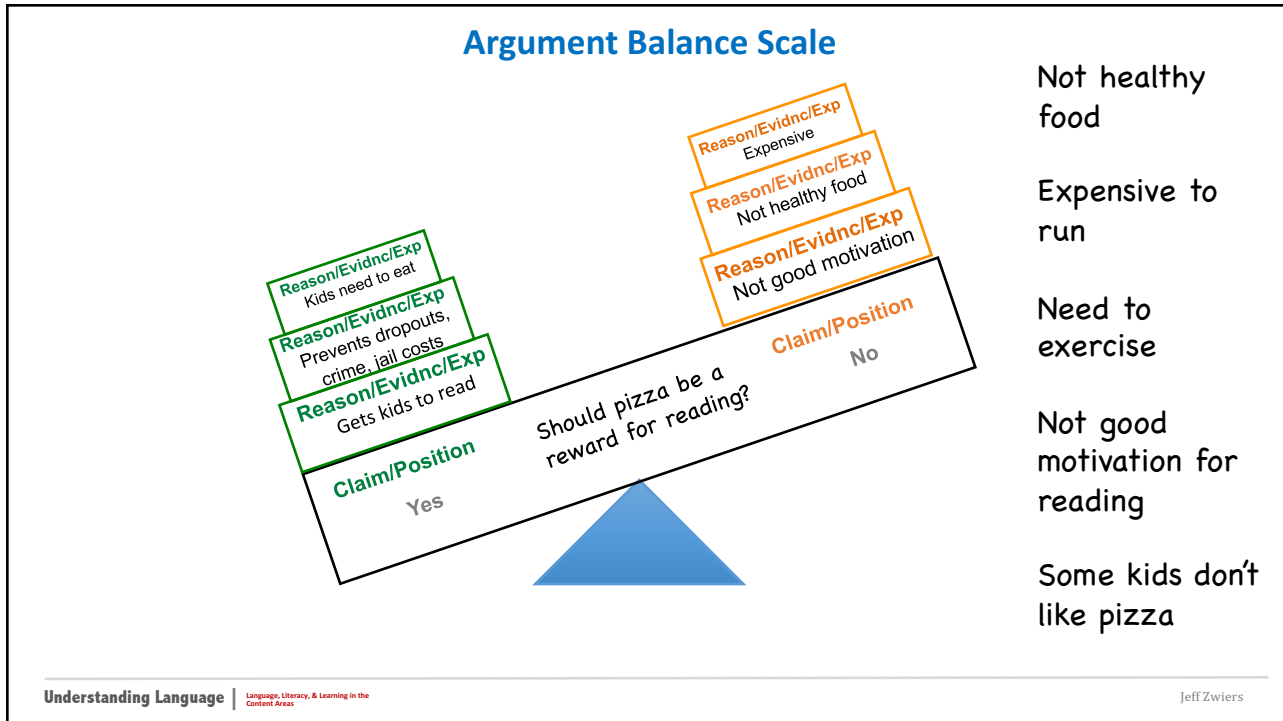
Gets them  
to read

Kids need  
to eat

Stay after  
school

Pizza tastes  
good







### 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

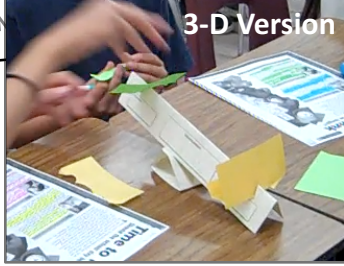


**Reason/Evidnc/Exp**  
Expensive

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

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

**Claim/Position**  
No



3-D Version

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

### Was the judge right or wrong?

---

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Reason/Evidnc/Exp


Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

Reason/Evidnc/Exp

**Claim/Position**  
Right

Topic?



**Claim/Position**  
Wrong

Even though... I/we chose...because...

Pair 1 – Prep  
Pair 2 – Use notes  
Pair 3 – No notes

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

## Stronger-Clearer Pre- & Post-Writing Sample (7<sup>th</sup> History)

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

Martin Luther did right on nailing the 95 theses on the Catholic Church

1. Pre-Write

2. Interactions

Martin Luther should of nailed the 95 theses because he checked a lot of rules of the church. one is he changed the idea of paying your way out of hell you had to pay a lot of money to get in heaven. He was able to change the bible to the langue that every one <sup>would</sup> understand.

3. Post-Write

## 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..."

## Possible Next Steps

Have students become and benefit from **third observers** who take notes and coach peers in their conversations.

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

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

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

**Have 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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** that depends on bridging info gaps
- B) Listener prompts talker to **clarify** and **support** in order to help **build up idea**
- C) Structure time for A and B students (e.g., Pro-Con)

## CONTACT INFO



Jeff Zwiers | [jzwiers@stanford.edu](mailto:jzwiers@stanford.edu) | [jeffzwiers.org/february8](http://jeffzwiers.org/february8)