

STRATEGIES THAT PROMOTE COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

STRATEGIES EMBEDDED IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Fundamentals of Communication Trust

- Seek out and value the ideas of others
- Listen intently to understand the point of view of others
- Expect and invite all group members to participate
- Encourage others to speak their mind and respond non-judgmentally to differing ideas
- Develop rituals that support independent conversations (protocols, rubrics, and role assignments)
- Acknowledge and respect the differing response rates of participants

Opportunities for Conversations

- Provide frequent, varied facilitated opportunities to talk during each lesson
- Configure partners and groups to maximize trust for each of the participants
- Link students with similar interests into conversation teams
- Revisit familiar text to deepen thinking during subsequent conversations
- Use excerpts to provide higher order thinking and language exercises

EXPLICIT LANGUAGE STRATEGIES FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

- Make explicit the cognitive processes necessary to understand and share ideas
- Listen intently to and follow students' conversational lead
- Stop briefly and identify instances of critical thinking as they occur to illustrate what critical thinking sounds like
- Ask open-wide and open-specific questions
- Use anchors to facilitate conversational flow and to help students stay with or return to an idea
- Use non-verbal behaviors (gaze, pause, gesture, facial expression) to invite students into the conversation and/or to direct thinking toward a possible key idea
- Use directives to bring students into the conversation or cause students to stay with an idea
- Refer to and read specific passages in the text to help students locate key ideas and stay with a conversation
- Plan for and provide multiple structured opportunities for conversations during each lesson
- Select interesting texts that challenges students to think and talk
- Reread and discuss excerpts selected because they contain key ideas
- Pair and group students for conversations based on interests and abilities
- Establish conversational routines/rituals
- Videotape conversations and ask students to deconstruct video

LANGUAGE STRATEGIES FOR THE STUDENT

- Use different kinds of rehearsals to prepare for a variety of classroom language activities
- Prepare for conversations by reading text in advance, planning open questions for discussion, and rehearsing conversational points about key ideas
- Make logical inferences about key ideas and contribute to ideas introduced by others
- Initiate comments and open questions to introduce and help shape key ideas and to stay in the conversation
- Determine key ideas and explain the thinking process used to derive them
- Cite evidence from the text to justify the importance of key ideas
- Deliberately use complex vocabulary and sentence structure to talk about key ideas
- Seek ways to build ideas with others by asking them what they think and how they came to their perspective
- Consult a rubric to prepare for a conversation and then self-evaluate the quality of the participation
- Advocate for self with teachers and partners