

Building Interaction: Engaging Secondary ELs
in Classroom Conversations

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Strategy: Team Building

With your table, roll the dice and share the
corresponding information.



Teacher: Last year you learned about plants and
photosynthesis. Can anyone tell me what they
recall about photosynthesis?

Student: I remember. It's when plants use the sun to make
food. They use these green things in their cells to make this
sugary stuff.



Today's Goals:

- *Identify ways conversations can build language development for English learners*
- *Examine scaffolds and strategies to assist English learners in oral academic activities*





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Classrooms should be filled with talk



because talking represents thinking.

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As we read the following discourse example taken from the book, Content-Area Conversations, think about how much academic language is being used.

Fisher, Douglas, et al. *Content-Area Conversations: How to Plan Discussion-Based Lessons for Diverse Language Learners*. ASCD, 2008. pg. 6

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Teacher: I was thinking about the life cycle of an insect. Do you remember the life cycle we studied? Malik?
Malik: Yes.
Teacher: What was the first stage in the life cycle? Jesse?
Jesse: They was born.
Teacher: Yes, things are born, but think about the life cycle of insects. Let's try to be more specific in our thinking. What was the first stage in the insect life cycle? Miriam?
Miriam: Eggs.
Teacher: Yes, insects start as eggs. Then they change and develop. They become larva after eggs, right? And then what? What happens to them after they are larva? Adrian?
Adrian: They are adults.
Teacher: They do eventually become adults, but there is a step missing. What is the step between larva and adults? What is that stage of the life cycle called? Joe?
Joe: Mature larva?
Teacher: Yes, there are two kinds of larva in the life cycle of some insects. But what I was thinking about was what happened to them after the larva before they become adults. Mariah?
Mariah: Nymph?
Teacher: Now we're talking about the three-stage cycle for some insects. Do the insects that change into nymphs come from larva? Let's look at our two posters again. Remember these? There is a three-stage process and a four-stage process. Let's study these again. "

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Strategy: Elbow Partners

Find a partner within your proximity.
Partner A will be the partner closest to the door.

Partner A

- Express to your partner
 - In your opinion, does this classroom exchange contain academic language?
 - Are the students having a difficult time with the

Partner B

- Express to your partner
 - Which students are proficient in English?
 - With this type of discourse, will the students ever become proficient?

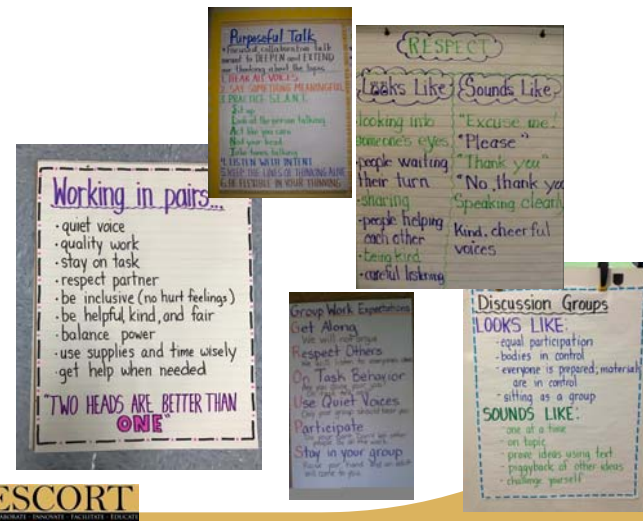


Planning Purposeful Academic Discourse



Set Expectations

- Define purposeful talk
- Discuss the roles within conversations
- Develop group norms
- Post norms as a reminder
- Reinforce the norms by assessing them
- Teach the procedures with practice activities



Build Community

- Dedicate time to building a climate of respect and collaboration.
- Encourage students to support one another.
- Use team building activities to lower affective filters.
- Teach and model respect for diversity of language, culture, and individuals.



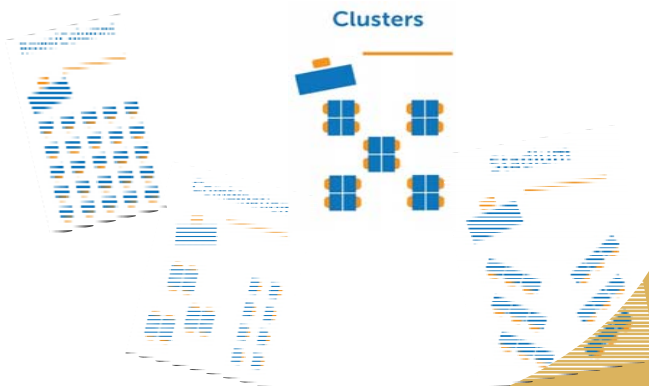
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Examine the Physical Space

- Arrange seating so that students face each other or can move easily.
- Use flexible seating arrangements.
- Strategically place ELs in the seating arrangements.

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Examine the Physical Space



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Use Creative Grouping Techniques



- Language Proficiency
- Primary Language
- Skills Development
- Work Habits
- Task or Activity
- Random
- Student Choice

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GROUPING CHART

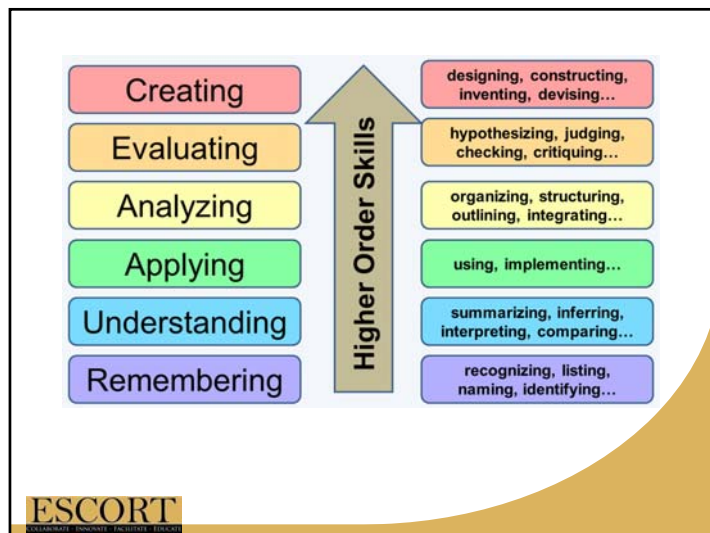
	1	2	3	4	5	6
A	Oliver	Raegan	Jaxton	Addi	Jace	Xavier
B	Danit	Bella	Brina	Austin	Lucas	Logan
C	Quinn	Hazen	Javier	Merhai	Ronald	Marcus

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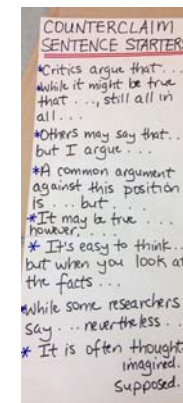
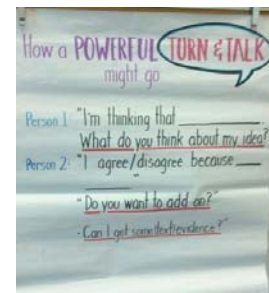
Ask Robust Questions

- Questions are not “tests”
- Questions are meant to gain access to our students’ thinking
- Open-ended questions should produce higher-order thinking
- “Can you put that in your own words?”

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Provide Response Starters



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Strategy: Number Heads/Scaffolded Questions

What is one example of an *academic discourse* that would *increase* the *likelihood of student participation*?

“One example of an *academic discourse* is...It *increases* the *likelihood of student participation* by...”

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Strategy: Number Heads/Scaffolded Questions

What picture comes to mind when you think about *academic discourse*?

“When I think about *academic discourse*, I picture...”

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Strategy: Number Heads/Scaffolded Questions

What *unique adaptation* can you make in your classroom so that ELs benefit from *academic discourse*?

“One *unique adaptation* EL students need is...which improves *academic discourse* by...”

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Questions?

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