### The 5 Core Skills

The authors have identified five skills that make conversations more academic. We must teach these skills in school as students do not use them “naturally”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation Skills</th>
<th>Ways to Practice the Skill</th>
<th>Academic Vocabulary</th>
<th>Frames for Prompting the Skill</th>
<th>Frames for Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elaborate and Clarify</td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you elaborate on …?</td>
<td>I think it means …</td>
<td>I think it means …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What do you mean by …?</td>
<td>In other words …</td>
<td>In other words …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you tell me more about …?</td>
<td>An analogy for this might be …</td>
<td>An analogy for this might be …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you clarify the part about?</td>
<td>It is important because …</td>
<td>It is important because …</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you be more specific?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Ideas with Examples</td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you give me an example from the text?</td>
<td>For example …</td>
<td>For example …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What are examples from other texts?</td>
<td>In the text it said that …</td>
<td>In the text it said that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What is a real world example?</td>
<td>An example from my life is …</td>
<td>An example from my life is …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What is an example from your life?</td>
<td>According to …</td>
<td>According to …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What is the evidence for that?</td>
<td>An illustration of this could be …</td>
<td>An illustration of this could be …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What makes you say that?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Why is that a good example?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build On and/or Challenge a Partner’s Idea</td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What do you think about the idea that …</td>
<td>I would add that …</td>
<td>I would add that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>Can you add to this idea?</td>
<td>I want to expand on your point about …</td>
<td>I want to expand on your point about …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What might be another point of view?</td>
<td>(To challenge)</td>
<td>(To challenge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>How does that connect to the idea …</td>
<td>Another way to look at this could be …</td>
<td>Another way to look at this could be …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>I am not sure this is relevant, but …</td>
<td>Yet I wonder also if …</td>
<td>Yet I wonder also if …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>How can we bring this back to the question of …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrase</td>
<td>4 Purposes for Paraphrasing</td>
<td>I am not sure that was clear …</td>
<td>So, you are saying that …</td>
<td>So, you are saying that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>I can’t remember all that I said.</td>
<td>Let me see if I understand you …</td>
<td>Let me see if I understand you …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>How can we relate what I said to the topic/question?</td>
<td>Am I right in hearing you say that …?</td>
<td>Am I right in hearing you say that …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What do we know so far?</td>
<td>In other words …</td>
<td>In other words …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What are you hearing?</td>
<td>It sounds like you are saying …</td>
<td>It sounds like you are saying …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesize Conversation Points</td>
<td>Leave time at the end for students to:</td>
<td>What have we discussed so far?</td>
<td>We can say that …</td>
<td>We can say that …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>How can we bring this all together?</td>
<td>The main theme/point seems to be …</td>
<td>The main theme/point seems to be …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What can we agree upon?</td>
<td>As a result of this conversation, we think we should …</td>
<td>As a result of this conversation, we think we should …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What main points can we share?</td>
<td>How does this sound …?</td>
<td>How does this sound …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What was our original question?</td>
<td>What if we …?</td>
<td>What if we …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- ____________________________</td>
<td>What key idea can we take away?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Academic conversations are opportunities to take a verbal journey with others.” p. 30

“Conversation is the process of bringing your ideas to the table, sharing them, and shaping them as you listen to the ideas of another person. All partners should walk away with new ideas. … the goal is learning.” p. 30

**Benefits of Learning Academic Conversation Skills**

**Language and Literacy:**
When students are having conversations with each other they have the opportunity to build academic language by practicing talking, listening, and negotiating meaning. This allows students to practice the academic language they are absorbing from text, teacher, media, and peers. Teachers need to give students more opportunities to speak with each other about what they are learning. Oral language and communication skills must be practiced. They do not happen automatically. Through conversation students are being exposed to new words and are using them in authentic contexts. This is the most effective way for long-term vocabulary development. Furthermore, conversation builds other literacy skills as well such as syntax and background knowledge. Conversation builds oral language which is the foundation of reading and writing.

**Cognitive:**
Conversations build critical and creative thinking skills. Critical thinking involves zooming in on an argument, analyzing, dissecting, and evaluating it. Creative thinking is more divergent, opening up ideas to a range of possible solutions. Both thinking skills are used by experts in every discipline to build, shape, challenge existing ideas and identify new, promising ones. Conversation requires students to pay attention, maintain in memory the topic of conversation, consider one another’s perspective, infer each other’s beliefs, etc. Conversation forces students to think on their feet while exposing them to a variety of opinions.

**Content Learning:**
Conversations help students build a deeper and more lasting understanding of content concepts. Students learn and remember more by working with and manipulating ideas rather than simply digesting facts.

**Social and Cultural:**
Conversations provide an opportunity to build relationships with different people. Teaching academic conversations skills promotes equity. Students will have the experiences, knowledge, skills, and language to gain equal access to future educational and professional opportunities.

**Psychological:**
Conversations satisfy students’ need to be social. When teachers create the time, space, and focus for academic conversations, students have the opportunity to learn from each other, build an academic identity, and develop the ability to talk about what they are learning.


http://www.themainidea.net/tmi_pdfs2/Th%20Main%20Idea%20--%20Academic%20Conversations%20--%20August%202012.pdf

**5 Core Academic Conversation Skills** adapted from *Academic Conversations* by Jeff Zwiers and Marie Crawford
Skill 1: Elaborate and Clarify

Elaborating provides more information about a topic. The speaker should provide the amount of detail needed to communicate clearly. If not, the listener needs to determine when more information is needed and ask for it. The listener needs to be specific about what needs elaboration or clarification. A general prompt for more information might be “Would you elaborate on that?” A more specific request might be “Could you elaborate about the ways the states of clay are different?” This forces each person to think more specifically about a topic and give it a name.

Ways to Elaborate and Clarify

Elaborate with Analogies
Elaborate and clarify by using illustrations from a different area. The analogy must be related to the subject and familiar to the listener(s). An analogy is a more figurative and theoretical level of connection.

Example: Just as a caterpillar comes out of its cocoon so it can grow, we must come out of our comfort zone.

Questioning to Clarify and Probe
Students must learn to ask good questions to keep a conversation going. It is important to listen well in order to ask the right question at the right time. Good questions uncover issues not yet addressed, invites different perspectives, and possibly expands views to the big-picture or the long-term.

I wonder, how …?
I wonder, why …?
Why do you think that is?
What if …?

Elaborating and Clarifying with Examples
Examples are the way to explain or illustrate general, complex, or abstract concepts. Examples are concrete instances or members of a category. Examples are used to clarify concepts and examples which are commonly accepted and not up for debate.

Example: When a listener asks the speaker for an explanation of independent variables, the speaker can use examples from class experiments.
Skill 2: **Support Ideas with Examples**

Examples strengthen a debatable idea or argument. Examples are often *evidence*, the specific information that logically supports a hypothesis or perspective. There are four main types of examples. The most powerful types of examples are listed first:

1. Examples from the text
2. Examples from other texts
3. Examples from the world
4. Examples from life

Students should be encouraged to seek examples from texts. Students should also consider the strength or “weight” of an example’s support.

**Ways to Support Ideas with Examples**

**Examples from texts**
Texts serve as a model for academic language if we build “going back into the text” as a habit. This asks students to make decisions about which part of the text provides the best examples that support the idea.

**Examples from other texts**
Teach students to ask for and provide examples from other texts read in and out of school, as well as “texts” such as TV shows, movies, Web pages, and artwork. Students can evaluate quality from such a wide range of examples. Students often make connections between disciplines.

Example: Student uses a painting seen in art class as an illustration of Manifest Destiny in history class.

**Examples from the world:**
Education is about connecting ideas learned in school to their lives. Encouraging the use of examples from the world trains students to be keen observers. Students can connect real world events to the topics studied in school.

Example: Student links a recent attack by a mountain lion as an example of the conflict between humans and nature in science class.

**Examples from life:**
Personal examples can be helpful for understanding and remembering a topic, but life examples should stay connected to the topic or text. Train students to take a few seconds to think whether their example will deepen the conversation or take the topic in another direction.

*5 Core Academic Conversation Skills* adapted from *Academic Conversations* by Jeff Zwiers and Marie Crawford
Skill 3: **Build On and/or Challenge an Idea**

Academic conversations are intended for students to learn from one another and to build meanings they didn’t have before. This requires the skill to build on, connect to, or logically challenge what a partner just said. Students learn to consider multiple perspectives. Teachers can encourage students to respect, value, and genuinely seek the thinking and feelings of others.

*Ways to Build On and/or Challenge an Idea*

**Zoom In and Pick a Point**
Oftentimes a speaker will share several points or idea at once. A careful listener will identify a point that maintains the focus on and deepens the topic or provides a potential area of challenge.

**Connect Ideas**
Linking ideas to previous ideas thoughts texts, other conversations, interests, world issues, and examples is another way to build a quality conversation. This requires a good working memory in order to keep track of the important ideas in the class, the text, and previous statements make by others.

**Stay Relevant**
Students must determine whether their idea is relevant to the topic and serves to support or extend the topic. Filtering and tailoring an idea before sharing is an important practice. A speaker can begin a statement with, “I don’t know how this fits, but what about …, “ if they are unsure of the relevance. A listener might respectfully suggest, " Let’s table that for now.”

**Challenge an Idea**
Students must learn respectful and productive challenging skills. Learning often born out the energy of conflict and controversy.

**Adapt an Idea**
Conversations are alive and unpredictable. Since conversations often go in different directions, speakers and listeners must adapt, be flexible, be open to new ideas, and build on the thoughts of others.
Skill 4: Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is the skill of keeping track of what we are hearing, organizing key points, and describing what we understand in our own words. This requires a student to select important information. Students make inferences based on the speaker’s tone and emphasis. This helps students construct their paraphrased version of what the speaker said.

The Purposes Paraphrasing Serves

1. Helps negotiate meaning: When a speaker hears what they said through the mind of the conversation partner, the speaker has an opportunity to clarify the message if necessary.

2. Shapes or guides the speaker’s key points to focus on main idea: Key points can be illuminated that deepen the conversation.

3. Provides practice for listening and creating chunks of key points: This assists students in comprehending what is heard and read in the future.

4. Indicates the listener is interested: Paraphrasing goes beyond head nodding and shows true listening.
Skill 5: **Synthesize Conversation Points**

"Conversation is the process of bringing your ideas to the table, sharing them, and shaping them as you listen to the ideas of another person. All partners should walk away with new ideas. ... the goal is learning." p. 30

It takes skill and practice to keep track of ideas and combine useful ones during conversations. This requires remembering, highlighting, and fitting ideas together. It also demands taking paraphrased chunks of information, determining the most important ones, organizing, prioritizing, and shaping abstract ideas into a synthesized form. A synthesis solidifies the conversation’s purpose and increases retention.

*Leave time at the end of a conversation for students to:*

- Gather and combine useful ideas into a synthesis.
- Determine most important points and find ways to apply or generalize ideas to make them interesting and useful in life.
- Summarize in writing first individually, then talk with partners to negotiate their synthesis.
Skill 3: **Build On and/or Challenge an Idea**
ACADEMIC CONVERSATIONS WITH SOCRATES

Jennifer Pearson
@learn_teachJP
TABLE TALK

What are academic conversations?

What is the purpose of having academic conversations in the classroom?
LEARNING TARGET

I can extend my understanding of conversational skills so I can incorporate them into my instruction.
BENEFITS OF ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- Language and Literacy
- Cognitive
- Content Learning
- Social and Cultural
- Psychological
5 ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

Jigsaw

Read about one of the skills and complete that portion of the organizer.

- Elaborate and Clarify
- Support with Examples
- Build Ideas
- Paraphrase
- Synthesize
Jigsaw

Talk with your skill partner to prepare to teach the skill to your table.

5 ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- Elaborate and Clarify
- Support with Examples
- Build Ideas
- Paraphrase
- Synthesize
Jigsaw
As a table each pair share out and teach the other members about your skill.
As you listen to your table mates complete your organizer.

5 ACADEMIC CONVERSATION SKILLS

- Elaborate and Clarify
- Support with Examples
- Build Ideas
- Paraphrase
- Synthesize
ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

Word Sort:
2-4 people in a group.

Take an envelope and work together to sort the words.
REFLECTION

Word Sort

How did this activity ensure you practiced the academic conversation skills?

How aware were you that you used them?

What other ways could this activity be setup to use the five academic conversation skills?
ORCHESTRATING A PURPOSEFUL CONVERSATION

- Academic Conversation Questions
  - Frames for Prompting the Skill-Frames for Responding
  - Questioning Stems
    - Opening questions
    - Guiding questions
    - Closing questions
SOCRATIC SEMINAR

- Review Norms
- Opening Question: How can I build in/facilitate academic conversations in my classroom?
- Closing Statement- Take a moment and synthesize your thoughts and answer the opening question on your notecard.

**Keep the notecard, take it with you as reminder to incorporate academic conversations in your classroom.**
THANK YOU!!

Jennifer Pearson
@learn_teachJP
jpeteacher202@gmail.com