USING COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS TO FACILITATE THINKING AND LANGUAGE, 6-12

Overview

• Collaborative Conversations: What Matters and Why
• The Core Language/Thinking Strategies
• How to Plan & Facilitate Conversations
• Collaboration Strategies
• Collecting and Interpreting Data

What Really Matters in School?

• Think Critically
• Share Thinking Using Language
• Talk And Write About Complex Ideas
• Use Academic Language To Talk About Thinking

SLP Focus

01
Select high impact goals
• Target thinking, talking and access to the curriculum

02
Use methods that develop thinking and speaking

03
Plan strategically
• Embed goals and methods throughout the day and across contexts
Cornerstone CC Anchor Standard

Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and text with peers and adults in large and small groups.

Collaborative Conversation Criteria
1. Outside Circle

- Exchange ideas and establish a common ground of understanding
- Build ideas together that lead to deeper understanding of academic material
- Discover new and more complex ideas
- Learn more about self, others and the learning process

Close to the Text

Basic Thinking & Language Strategies
2. Middle Circle

- Four Core Thinking/Language Strategies
  A. Ask and answer open questions
  B. Make inferential comments
  C. Identify and explore ideas that really matter
  D. Lift vocabulary and syntax

“Students learn and use these strategies deliberately and intentionally.”

CC Anchor Standard Progression

What changes across grade levels?
- Complexity of Text and Task
- Control and Sophistication of Thinking & Language
- Degree of Independence

Dependent Factors
- Guidance, Quality of the Learning Experience and Practice
A. Open Questions
Closed: Short, quick answer; check for comprehension; repeat a fact; answer yes/no
When, who, where, which, what and forms of do, have and be
Open: Think critically about the facts; deepen understanding; form new ideas
Why, how and what (decide, think, know, plan, and believe...)

How to Grow Your Intelligence
Many people think of the brain as a mystery. They don’t know much about intelligence and how it works. When they do think about what intelligence is, many people believe that a person is born either smart, average, or dumb—and stays that way for life.
But new research shows that the brain is more like a muscle—it changes and gets stronger when you use it. And scientists have been able to show just how the brain grows and gets stronger when you learn.
Everyone knows that when you lift weights, your muscles get bigger and you get stronger. A person who can’t lift 20 pounds when they start working out can get strong enough to lift 100 pounds after working out for a long time. That’s because the muscles become larger and stronger with exercise. And when you stop exercising, the muscles shrink and you get weaker. That’s why people say “Use it or lose it!”

The Very Best of Friends
• Jessie and James lived on a farm with fifty cattle, twenty chickens four horses, and three dogs. But there was only one cat. William. James liked cats, but Jessie didn’t. “Cats leave hair on the furniture.” Jessie said. “Cats are silly, skittish creatures. Cats aren’t nearly as useful as dogs.” Because James loved William so much, Jessie tried to love him too. But William knew, deep in his heart, that Jessie didn’t love him. Not really, not like James did.
• William was careful not to bother Jessie too much. He tried very hard to show her that even cats can be useful. Every morning William watched the postman put letters in the mailbox. William meowed loudly to let Jessie know there was mail...She just said crossly, “Stop that dreadful caterwauling! Off with you now. Off!”

B. Inferential Thinking
Literal Thinking - Restrictive
• Follows the words in the text exactly
• Repeats facts; Relies primarily on recall

Inferential Thinking - Expansive
• Derives a logical or probable conclusion
• Makes inferences based on evidence
• Early-developing; thinking and feeling
• Focuses on what the facts mean
• Essential mental habit
Very Best of Friends

James and Jessie are husband and wife. They live on a cattle farm and have a domesticated cat named William. William is James’s companion. Together they work the farm. At night, William curls up and sleeps on James’s feet. Jessie feeds William everyday but says cats are useless.

One day, James suddenly dies. William and Jessie are left on the farm alone. Once James is gone, Jessie puts William outside to live. He attempts to get back inside but Jessie locks him out. William lives outside and fights other animals to survive. He hunts and kills his food. After awhile, Jessie invites William inside and tries to feed him. He scratches her hand and hides under the tractor. Eventually, William stays inside with Jessie and sleeps on her feet at night.

Very Best of Friends

James and Jessie, a farm couple, share a life of happy companionship. William, a cat, lives with them. James dearly loves William. They are the very best of friends. Jessie doesn’t care for cats but tolerates him because she loves James.

When James dies unexpectedly, Jessie withdraws in grief, shutting out everything and everyone, including William. She doesn’t realize how her actions affect William. Unattended, William grows “mean and lean,” and one day angrily scratches Jessie. Startled back to reality, Jessie decides to win William’s trust and affection. She persists and they become the very best of friends.

Common Mental State Verbs

- Know
- Comprehend
- Evaluate
- Consider
- Wonder
- Think
- Decide
- Analyze
- Suppose
- Assume
- Understand
- Plan
- Imagine
- Examine
- Choose
- Believe
- Judge
- Reflect
- Observe
- Recognize
Insight: Look Deeply into an Idea

Easy, Simple Ideas

Difficult, Complex Ideas

C. Determine What Matters

- Key Ideas (Stepping Stones)
  - Carry significant meaning
  - Move the story forward
  - Have emotional subtexts
  - Result in a unified understanding

- Big Ideas
  - Lift the unified meaning beyond the text
  - Point toward a personal and/or universal application

The Very Best of Friends

- After awhile, William stopped trying to sneak into the house. He stopped meowing and he stopped watching the postman trying to cram more and more mail into a very full fridge. Instead he just lay on the bales of hay in the truck and glared at the house with its shut windows and its shut doors.

- And late at night William prowled the country roads and fought with cats and hunted anything that moved. He grew mean and lean and he hated everything and everyone.
Idea 1: Jessie, James and William have a complicated relationship.
Feelings: loved, unwanted, misunderstood, appreciated, tolerant

Idea 2: William and James have a close relationship.
Feelings: content, loved, accepted, grateful

Idea 3: James dies suddenly and Jessie and William are alone.
Feelings: depressed, abandoned, sorrowful, numb, shocked

Emotions: Bedrock of Ideas
“I’m sorry I’ve been so mean to you,” said Jessie, “but I think I’m better now.” “Will you come into the house with me? We could get to know each other. Perhaps one day we could be the very best of friends.”

But William stalked off, eyes flashing, tail in the air. He crouched under the tractor and there he stayed, until Jessie crawled after him and pulled him out and carried him into the house.

• Close, loving relationships bring joy and healing.
• Grief can close our eyes and hearts to what is good in life.
• Rejection and abandonment can cause hurt and negative reactions.
• People need each other’s love and attention to survive.
D. Lift Vocabulary and Syntax

- Every lesson but not first focus. Meaning is first.
- Intentional and deliberate
- Tier 2 Vocabulary and Complex Syntax
- "Affirm!
  - "Speak scholarly"
  - "Use grade level language"
  - "Say exactly what I want to say. Be precise."

Retire overused words: mad, sad and glad

Methods, All Conversations
3. Inner Circle

A. Approaches
① Thinking about Text
② SLP as Facilitator (Listen, Pause, Gaze)
③ Shared Reading

B. Instructional and Scaffolding Methods
④ Mental Sets
⑤ Think Alouds
⑥ Open-Specific Questions
⑦ Refer to Text
⑧ Additional High-Yield
⑨ Low-Yield

① Thinking About the Text

Integration

Text Study

Comprehension

Integration

Text Study

Comprehension
2. SLP as Facilitator

- Facilitator
  - Assist and guide
  - Encourage exploration and discovery
  - Methods: Listen, pauses, gaze, show emotion, think aloud, open questions

- Teacher
  - Impart knowledge
  - Stress retention and comprehension
  - Methods: Initiation-response-feedback model, questions

Shared Reading Basics

Adult
- Reads text (multiple times)
- Facilitates conversations about content
- Models and coaches how to think and talk about text

Student
- Reads with teacher
- Shares thinking with partners
- Deliberately uses thinking and language strategies

Text Selection Matters

- Accessible
- High interest
- Worth talking about
- Classroom text, when possible
- Excerpts work, check读 strategies, not outcomes

Instructional & Scaffolding Methods

- 4. Mental Set
- 5. Think Aloud
- 6. Open-Specific Questions
- 7. Refer to Text
- 8. Other High-Yield Strategies
- 9. Low-Yield Strategies
Method 4: Mental Sets

- For each lesson:
  - Seed and nurture explicit behaviors that become habits of mind
  - Pair with rubric and use its language
  - Concentrate on thinking and language expectations
  - 1. State expectations at beginning of a lesson.
  - 2. Remind students to use during the lesson.
  - 3. Summarize attempts at end of lesson.

Method 5: Think Alouds

Facilitator strategically speaks his/her thoughts audibly.
- Wonder aloud
- Suggest an interpretation
- React to key moment or emotion
- Strong emotion
- Confusing

Students learn what thinking about the text sounds like

Method 6: Open-Specific Questions

- Open-Wide
  - What do you think?
  - Why is this happening?
  - How do you feel about this?
- Open-Specific
  - What do you think about James's and Jessie's relationship?
  - Why were James and William so close?
  - Why do you think that William became feral?
  - How did Jessie feel when she realized James wasn’t coming back?

Method 7: Refer to Text

- Why students use it:
  - Provide evidence to support thinking
  - Return to a place that deserves more attention
  - Launch a new idea
- Why teachers use it:
  - All of the above
  - Refocus the conversation
  - Scaffold an individual student
Methods 8: Additional High-Yield Instructional Language

- Listen and Follow (Facilitator)
- Gaze, Pause and Emotion (Facilitator)
- Mental Set
- Open-Wide Questions
- Open-Specific Questions
- Think-Alouds
- Anchor
- Directives
- Refer to Text

Methods 9: Low-Yield Strategies

- Closed Questions
- Repeats/Expansions
- Conversational Recasts
- Predictions
- Talking More than the Students
- Being the Focal Point of the Conversation
- Ourselves
- Rescuing

Lesson Planning

- Select a worthwhile text.
- Read it several times.
- Note places with heightened emotion.
- Segment into a few key ideas.
- Identify the Stop and Talk Moments
- Write open specific questions for each key ideas.
- Develop a few big ideas for integration/application

Monkey’s Paw
W.W. Jacobs

- An elderly couple and adult son live in England at the turn of the century. The father comes into possession of a monkey’s paw that can supposedly grant wishes. His son thinks it’s a lark and encourages his father to wish for 200 pounds to pay off the mortgage. The father does. The next day a stranger from his son’s work visits to tell them his son was killed in machinery and the company will compensate 200 pounds. The father smiles slightly in recognition of what happens and faints.
- There’s more, of course, but you don’t need to know.
Elements of Discourse Analysis

- Key/Stepping Stone Ideas and Big Ideas
- Inferential Comments
- Exchanges per idea (Build Ideas)
- Tier 2 vocabulary; Complex syntax
- Initiation

Monkey’s Paw: Key Ideas (Stepping Stones)

- 1. Parents’ understanding of accident: 8 exchanges
- 2. Stranger conveying news: 6 exchanges
- 3. Coincidence/supernatural: 10 exchanges
- 4. Father’s understanding of talisman: 6 exchanges
- 5. Wife wants son back: 4 exchanges
- 6. Father’s smile: 5 exchanges
- 7. Son brings death on himself: 7 exchanges

Monkey’s Paw: Big Ideas

- Tact is necessary when delivering bad news.
- The mind takes time to process bad news.
- Events can be interpreted as coincidence or supernatural.
- There are consequences to what we say.
- Sacrifice is the cost.
- Plans can go awry.
- Take evil seriously.

Monkey’s Paw: Academic Language

- Predictable
- Sinister
- Foreshadow/Theme/Irony
- Symbolize
- Tainted
- Conveyed
- Impact
- Sympathy
- Wrath
- Coincidence/Supernatural
- Propose
- Awakened
- Skeptical
- Regret
- Supernatural
- Mockery
How To Plan and Facilitate

- Configure Small Group
- Select Strategies
- Select High Quality Text; Use Excerpt; Prepare lesson
- Facilitate
- Coach Explicitly
- Persevere!
- Build Stamina; Release to Independence

Fresh Start: Building Ideas (Stepping Stone) Together

1. Environment Limits Choices: 7 exchanges/1 facilitation
2. New Choices: 6/0
3. Spotting Potential: 4 /1
4. Chooses to Learn: 0 /1
5. Mapping Success: 4/2
6. Being Himself: 3 /1
7. Left Behind: 2 /2
8. Passing It On: 12/3

Fresh Start: Big Ideas

- Environment impacts behavior and learning.
- Everyone has choices.
- We have a responsibility to give back.
- Adults can make a difference.
- There are different kinds of leadership.
- It is important to be your own person.
- Values/behaviors are passed from generation to generation.

Academic Vocabulary

- Surroundings (I)
- Transfer (A)
- Distracted (I & M)
- Opportunity (B)
- Threat (I)
- Process (I)
- Environment (I)
- Successful (B)
- Responsible (I)
- Continue (A)
- Generation (A)
Farewell to Baseball
Key Ideas (Stepping Stone) Exchanges
1. Disease as a Gift 4/2
2. Reassure fans 4/5
3. Achieve goals 2/2
4. Grateful 3/5
5. Nature of Disease 3/0
6. Making most of Life 2/1
7. Legacy/Character 10/5

Qualitative Assessment

Interview
Observation
Rubric
Proficiency Scale
Discourse Analysis/Language Sample

Assessment/Evaluation

- Formative Measures -
  - Gather ongoing information about immediate learning
  - Inform teachers and students about how learning is progressing

- Summative Measures
  - Assess student learning compared to a set of goals or standards
  - State assessments, district benchmarks, end of unit or semester exams, report cards

Triangulation

- For evidence to be valid, different examiners must collect data from multiple tasks and in different contexts over a period of time.

- Tools: Interviews, Observations, Rating Scales, Rubrics, Checklists and Behavioral Sampling
- Contexts: Texts, Partners, Group Size
- Collectors/Informants: SLP, Teacher, Student
- Time Periods: At intervals of varying lengths
Interviews and Observations

- Interview
  - Ask questions to learn what informant knows
  - Interview teacher for most impact
  - Record initial and exit interviews

- Observation
  - Narrative
  - Anecdotal
  - Participant

Attribute Tools

- Capture predetermined but authentic attributes
  - Attributes = Indicators = Conversational behaviors
- Rate the student based on a set of valid attributes
  - Most subjective
- Easiest to create; and most versatile to use
- Only as good as the attributes
- Administer as often as instructionally relevant

Rubric: 4 - Outstanding! Advanced

**Idea/ Language**
- Spoke confidently about ideas that mattered
- Made insightful inferences about ideas, emotions, motivations and relationships.
- Stayed close to text; Built one important idea at a time
- Held onto several ideas throughout text and made important connections
- Deliberately used scholarly ideas and shared complex ideas and vocabulary
- Conversation flowed. Listened attentively
- Volunteered our thinking.

**Participation**

Behavioral Sampling

- Collect authentic data in natural contexts
  - Choose collection method
    - Real time scripting
    - Video or audio recording
- Focus on description during collection phase
- Analyze after data are collected
  - Qualitative Analysis
  - Quantitative Analysis
- Most time-consuming and fine-grained of the tools
  - Conversational language sampling (formative but with enough data points becomes summative)
- Collect as often as needed; Analyze segment or entire sample
Example 1 – Discourse Skills
Small Group Real-Time Scripting

Tally
☑️ on-topic comment
☑️ inferential comment
Write down mental state/emotion words

What Can We Say?

- Data collected at 3 time points, second read of Mr. Falk's, (10/4/16) and first (10/21/16) and second (10/29/16) read of The Very Best of Friends. SLP taped the 30 minute sample and used conversational discourse analysis to evaluate. J showed an increase in both quantity and quality of talk. The SLP's instructional behaviors appear effective. Data are expressed in ratio of total number of comments to number of inferential comments.

Example 1 – Discourse Skills
Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Oct 4</th>
<th>Oct 21</th>
<th>Oct 29</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>4/1</td>
<td>10/4</td>
<td>18/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>6/3</td>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>16/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>9/3</td>
<td>5/4</td>
<td>12/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>8/2</td>
<td>6/4</td>
<td>11/5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total # of On-topic Comments: # of Inferential Comments
(mental state verbs and emotion words used)

J’s Data

- J’s quantity increased 4.5 times; quality increased 11 times; the inferential/literal ratio increased by 2.4 times, from 25% to 61%.
- Use of academic vocabulary slowly increased. She is beginning to build ideas with her partner.
Describing Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Independent</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Partial</th>
<th>Very Limited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>With some assistance</td>
<td>Insufficient</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistently</td>
<td>Adequate</td>
<td>Improving</td>
<td>Complete assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Increasing</td>
<td>Very gradual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>Appropriate</td>
<td>Attempt</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Very inconsistent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Some accuracy</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pause</td>
<td>Capable</td>
<td>Slow but steady</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid gain</td>
<td>Substantial gain</td>
<td>Gradual gain</td>
<td>Very gradual gain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Anchor Standards: Exit Goal**

• What the exit goal might look like:
  • Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions by building on each others ideas, posing and responding with elaboration to specific questions, making thoughtful, insightful comments, reviewing key ideas and demonstrating understanding of multiple perspectives.
  • Begins in 1st grade and grows in complexity with practice and maturity

**Baseline**

• During a 30 minute facilitated conversational sample with 3 partners, J made 4 comments. Three were literal and one was inferential. J relied on rote memorization and retell to answer SLP’s open questions.

**Broad Goals for Students**

• Actively participate in classroom conversations (Initiate)
• Contribute comments and questions that show critical thinking (Inferential)
• Work collaboratively with partners to build ideas (# of exchanges per idea per conversation)
• Use language that matches the cognitive complexity of the text (Academic language: vocabulary and syntax)
• Say what they learned and how they learned it (Meta-cognitive)
Sources for Goals

- Anchor standards and specific grade behaviors
- Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration
- Conversational rubrics, proficiency scales and checklists
- SLP developed CC Exemplar Goals

Report Outline

- Purpose
- Tools, collectors and collection dates
- Strengths with evidence
- Limitations with evidence
- Recommended instructional strategies
- Recommended goal areas

Student Report

- The SLP and classroom teacher used classroom observations (Collaborative Conversation Focused Observation Form, the Collaborative Conversation Proficiency Scale) and behavioral sampling techniques including Discourse Analysis to collect data on multiple occasions between 9/06/18 and 10/23/18. The purposes were to describe the student's conversational strengths and limitations, set appropriate conversational goals and identify supportive instructional strategies.

The Benefits of Collaboration

- Aligns to general education goals and instruction
- Effectively supports students with IEP
- Optimizes transfer of small group work
- Impacts wider group of learners; leverages resources
- Offers opportunities to learn from each other
- Reduces professional isolation
Partnership Continuum

Light - Occasional Communication
- Exchanges primarily about IEP goals
- Some sharing of strategies and materials

Medium – Regular Communication
- Some co-planning/small group work
- Planned sharing of materials and data

Strong - Frequent Communication
- Ongoing planning and co-teaching
- Planned sharing of materials and data

Dynamic Process
- Entry place on continuum is flexible and adjustable
- SLPs and partners dip in and out of levels throughout the year
- Needs of students
- Opportunities for instruction
- Enthusiasm of teacher(s)
- Scheduling

Grade Level Realities
- Number of possible collaborators
- Personalities, levels of knowledge, commitment to collaboration
- Time and schedule constraints
- Wide number of grades/performances on SLP roster

Common Strategies to Offer
- Set a culture of communication trust
- Embed short conversations into every lesson
- Use high yield instructional language strategies
- Monitor student’s application of strategies