

Academic Talk

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A.M. Workshop Handouts

P.M. Workshop Handouts

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- Does anyone want to add to my summary?
- The author wants to highlight \_\_\_\_\_.
- The most important idea about the person/place/thing is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The most important person/place/thing is \_\_\_\_\_.



- Why \_\_\_\_\_? How \_\_\_\_\_?
- Explain \_\_\_\_\_.
- What is the problem with \_\_\_\_\_?
- What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?
- Would anyone else like to ask a question?



- I think \_\_\_\_\_ will happen next because \_\_\_\_\_.
- I predict the author will tell us \_\_\_\_\_.
- I predict the next part will be about \_\_\_\_\_.
- What do you predict?



- Are there any words we need help with?
- Is there anything else to clarify?
- Here is an idea I would like to clarify. (Text to self)
- \_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_.



## **Purposeful Partner Talk to Close the Academic Language Gap**

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Jane D. Hill and Kirsten B. Miller

Talking is an important precursor to effective reading and writing. For many language learners, if they can't say it, they can't write it. But in our urgency to get kids to read and write, talking has taken a backseat—which makes it all the more difficult for English language learners (ELLs) to keep up. As Williams, Stathis, and Gotsch explain,

"The idea that 'you learn to write by writing' is well and good for English-only students who need only to practice their writing skills to become better writers. However, this maxim is not helpful in describing the task for many English language learners who are struggling with a limited English vocabulary, a shaky grasp of syntax, and unfamiliar English grammatical forms and functions. In this case, more writing is not the solution."  
(2009, p. 22)

One way to close the academic language gap is to encourage teachers to schedule regular times throughout the school day for students to engage in academic conversations using targeted disciplinary vocabulary, including transition words that will ultimately lead to longer, more complex sentences with higher-level vocabulary. Here are some strategies for and examples of purposeful partner talk that helps ELLs attain academic language.

## Emphasize Speaking and Listening

Many times students are asked to talk with a partner during class to answer a question such as "How are renewable and nonrenewable energy sources the same or different?" Usually in scenarios like this, each partner will report on what they identify as a similarity or difference, and then the conversation ends. To encourage a richer conversation, however, teachers can model an academic conversation that includes both listening *and* speaking:

**Teacher:** I'm going to ask you to talk with your partner about similarities and differences between renewable and nonrenewable energy resources. Your partner might say, "Renewable and nonrenewable energy resources are different because one is easily replaced in a lifetime and the other is not." In academic conversations, we listen *and* speak. When we're good listeners, we ask our speaker a question about what they said—for example, "What do you mean by 'easily replaced in a lifetime'?" I want you to do the same thing. After your partner shares, use the question starter, "What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?"

Another strategy that promotes both listening and speaking is called the "Paraphrase Passport" (Kagan, 1992). With this strategy, students work in pairs to review notes and speakers are held accountable for listening carefully to their partner. Here's how it works:

1. Students partner up as A and B.
2. Partner A starts by saying, "I identified \_\_\_\_\_ as important because \_\_\_\_\_."
3. Partner B paraphrases what he or she heard: "What I think I heard you say is \_\_\_\_\_."
4. Partner B contributes something from his or her notes: "I also heard the teacher say \_\_\_\_\_ is important because \_\_\_\_\_."

5. Partner A paraphrases what he or she heard partner B say: "You think that \_\_\_\_\_."
6. The process continues until all notes have been reviewed.

### **Develop Richer Responses**

During partnered conversations about math, a teacher might say, "Talk with your partner about how you solve the problem." An ELL student may reply, "Add." In fact, many students will give the most limited response they can. Teachers can support all students in their academic language acquisition by providing sentence starters to help them sound like mathematicians: "Initially, I would \_\_\_\_\_. Next, I would \_\_\_\_\_. Finally, I would \_\_\_\_\_."

During a science experiment, a teacher might say, "Predict what will happen if we add more hydrochloric acid." Many students may provide a prediction with as few words as they can: "It will fizz over." The teacher can then promote academic language by modeling a sentence starter such as "I hypothesize that if we add more acid, then \_\_\_\_\_" and requiring students to incorporate a scientific term (e.g., volatile) into their answers.

### **Support ALL Students**

These strategies and examples illustrate that it's not only English language learners who can enrich their academic language through partner talk. Students who are native English speakers can face similar challenges with academic language. Think about your students of poverty. Do they come from homes where nonspecific language is used often (e.g., "Will you get that thing over there?")? Do they come from homes where parents often give directives to their children rather than engaging them in conversations and asking for their opinions?



Students come to school with varying degrees of exposure to academic language, but, as Wong-Fillmore points out, "There are no native speakers of academic language" (2013). To remind ourselves that all students need explicit instruction in academic English, we use the acronym ALL™, which reflects the idea that all students are **academic language learners**.

To support ALLs in using the language associated with schooling and help them to "sound like a book" (Hill & Flynn, 2006), we need to put specific structures in place that will allow multiple opportunities for students to talk with each other, hear good models of English, and learn the English that's been targeted to support the content.

## References

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- Kinsella, K. (2012). Cutting to the Common Core: Communicating on the same wavelength. *Language Magazine*, 12(4), 18–25.
- Williams, C., Strathis, R., & Gotsch, P. (2009). Speaking of writing. *Language Magazine*, 5, 20–22.
- Wong-Fillmore, L. (2013, January 8). *Common Core and English language learners* [Webinar]. Retrieved from <http://www.nclae.us/Webinars>

# Reciprocal Teaching

## Summarizer



The most important person/place/thing is \_\_\_\_\_.

The most important idea about the person/place/thing is \_\_\_\_\_.

This part also highlighted \_\_\_\_\_.

Does anyone want to add to me summary?

### Responders:

I agree that \_\_\_\_\_.

I also think \_\_\_\_\_ is important.

## Clarifier



\_\_\_\_\_ means \_\_\_\_\_.

Here is an idea I would like to clarify. (Text to self)

Is there anything else to clarify?

### Responders:

What do you mean by \_\_\_\_\_?

Here's a text to self connection I have: \_\_\_\_\_.

This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_.

## Predictor



I think \_\_\_\_\_ will happen next because \_\_\_\_\_.

I predict the author will tell us \_\_\_\_\_.

I predict the next part will be about \_\_\_\_\_.

What do you predict?

### Responders:

I think \_\_\_\_\_.

I agree that \_\_\_\_\_ will happen next and I also think \_\_\_\_\_.

Based on the title, I predict this will be about \_\_\_\_\_.

## Questioner



Why \_\_\_\_\_?

How \_\_\_\_\_?

Explain \_\_\_\_\_.

### Responders:

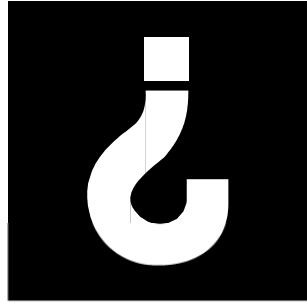
[Answer Question]

Can you give me an example from the text?



*STATE MAIN IDEA*

- State main idea and supporting details.
- Who or what is it about?
- What is most important about the who or what?



# QUESTIONER

Ask questions to help identify missing information:

- Who?
- What?
- When?
- Where?
- Why?



# CLARIFIER

- Ask author to explain anything that is confusing.
- What did you mean by ... ?
- Here is a word I would like you to clarify ...



PPFDICTP

- Help author with what to write next.
- Next, you could write about...



# CLARIFIER

(STUDENT START BY READING THE PROBLEM)

## PROMPT STARTERS:

- What is the problem asking?
- What type of problem is this?
- What happens in the problem?
- What do we need to know?
- What is your estimate for the answer?
- What important information is in the problem?
- What information is given that we don't need?
- Can we find any patterns?



# PLANNER

## PROMPT STARTERS:

- What is a possible plan to solve this?
- How do we begin or how can we break this down?
- How else can we show/do this?
- Which method is most useful & why?
- How can we draw/graph this?
- What other symbols can we use?
- How can we write what we are thinking and doing?





# QUESTIONER

## PROMPT STARTERS:

- Can you explain why you \_\_\_\_?
- What does that mean?
- Can you give an example of what you mean?
- What math rule are you using?
- What are examples of this problem in real life?
- How did you get that answer?



# SUMMARIZER

**(RECAP THE PROCEDURE USED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM)**

**PROMPT STARTERS:**

- Do you agree/did I explain it correctly?
- Can we find a shortcut or make the problem easier?
- What math language can we use to explain how we know our answer is accurate?
- How could we use this problem to help us solve other problems?



# THE SHOPPING SPREE



## CLARIFYING NOTES



It's Jade's birthday and she received money as gifts from her family and friends. Her mom agreed to take her to the mall to shop. Here is the money she received:

Grandpa and Grandma	\$50
Uncle Jimmy	\$35
Rebecca (her best friend)	\$22
Stefan (her other best friend)	\$20

A new store in the mall opened that has all the coolest things she needs. Here are the items that Jade really wants to buy but she only has her birthday money to spend.

Striped Skirt	\$27
Black top	\$20
Leather Jacket	\$40
Leather Boots	\$60
Jeans	\$50
Sneakers	\$32
Shoulder Bag	\$36

Your task is to decide (as a group) what Jade should buy with her birthday money and explain your reasoning:



## PLANNING NOTES



## QUESTIONING NOTES



## SUMMARIZING NOTES



## Structures for Academic Talk

### Numbered heads together\*

By having students work in a group, this structure ensures each member knows the answer.

#### Steps

1. Number the students in each group, up to four. If one group is smaller than the others, have number “three” answer for number “four” as well. The teacher can give numbers or students can give numbers themselves.
2. Teacher asks the students a question or sets a problem to solve. It must be stressed that everyone in the group must be able to participate and answer the question. Ensure enough wait time is given for the group to do the task.
3. Teacher calls out a number (two) and each “two” is asked to give the answer.

### Three step interview\*

This process activates prior knowledge and encourages peer tutoring. It can also be used to review and reinforce previously learned material.

#### Steps

1. Seat students in groups of four.
2. Students interview their partner by asking clarifying questions (What, How, When, Where, Why) about their understanding of a topic, skill or process.
3. During the second step, partners reverse the roles.
4. Students share their partner’s response with team.

### Think-pair-share

Accountability is built in because each student must report to a partner.

#### Steps

1. Teacher poses a problem or asks an open-ended question to which there may be a variety of answers.
2. Teacher gives the students ‘think time’ and directs them to think about the question.
3. Following the ‘think time,’ students turn to face their learning partner and work together, sharing ideas, discussing, clarifying and challenging.
4. The pair then shares their ideas with another pair, or with the whole class. It is important that students need to be able to share their partner’s ideas as well as their own.

### Three-minute review

Good to use for review during learning.

#### Steps

1. Teacher stops any time during a lecture or discussion and give teams three minutes to review what has been said, ask clarifying questions, or answer questions.

**Team-pair-solo\***

Designed to motivate students to tackle and succeed at problems which may initially seem beyond their ability.

Steps

1. Students do problems first as a team, then with a partner, and finally on their own.

**Circle the sage\***

Good way to address group questions.

Steps

1. Teacher asks class who has special knowledge to share; e.g., who was able to solve a difficult math homework question.
2. Those students become “the sages” and spread out in the room.
3. The rest of the class sits in teams.
4. Next, the team members divide themselves equally around different sages.
5. Sage shares knowledge and students return to teams.
6. Students share what they learned with team (each team member has visited a different sage).

**Mix-freeze-pair**

Gets students up and moving.

Steps

1. Teacher poses a question.
2. Teacher calls “mix” and students walk quietly around the room.
3. Teacher calls “freeze” and all students stop where they are.
4. Teacher calls “pair” and each student pairs with closest student and they share answers to the question.

**Inside-outside circle\***

This kinesthetic structure facilitates student interaction.

Steps

1. Students face each other in two concentric circles, either sitting or standing. Students in the inside circle face a partner in the outside circle.
2. Students in the inside circle are asked to share something with their partner.
3. Students reverse roles and the outside circle shares with their partner.
4. Inside circle rotates and a new set of partners is formed. Repeat steps 2 through 4.

### **Four corners\***

An approach that asks students to form an opinion.

#### Steps

1. Give students a prompt that requires them to form an opinion about the prompt. Use Likert scale options such as Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.
2. Post the response options in four corners of the room. Students walk to the area where their Likert scale choice is posted.
3. In their groups, students discuss their reasons for choosing the option they did. Each group then reports out to the class. As a follow-up, the teacher can ask students to go to another corner and argue the prompt from that point of view.

### **Paraphrase passport**

Students earn a “passport” to speak by accurately paraphrasing their partner’s ideas.

#### Steps

1. Students are paired.
2. Teacher assigns a discussion topic.
3. One student in the pair shares an idea.
4. Before the partner can share, he or she must paraphrase what was last said.
5. The student whose statement was paraphrased indicates whether the speaker has correctly captured their meaning.
6. The discussion continues.

### **Talking chips**

Each student is expected to contribute.

#### Steps

1. Each student gets 3-4 chips (poker chips work well).
2. The students are divided into groups of 4-5 people.
3. The groups are given discussion points to talk about. Every time a student speaks, they must put a chip in the center of the group. When a student runs out of chips, they are no longer allowed to speak until all other group members have all of their chips in the middle.
4. If there is more to discuss, they go in reverse...every time they speak, they take a chip out of the center until they have all 3-4 chips back.

\* Adapted from Kagan, S. (1992). *Cooperative learning*. San Juan Capistrano, CA: Resources for Teachers, Inc