Let's Talk

Structured Conversations

Facilitate a variety of structured academic conversations that enable students to monitor and build understanding.

ELPS *1C. 1D. 1E. 1G. 2D. 2E. 2G. 2I.*
All of Strand 3

IP Rubric *I-2, I-3, I-4, I-8*

- How do I get my reluctant students talking?
- How can I make sure students are talking on task?
- How do I get students to use academic language?

Why it works:

When students participate regularly in structured academic conversations, they can make better sense of new content while building academic language. Structured conversations are a way to **prepare the learner, interact with text** and **extend the learning.** These help students retrieve prior knowledge and connect it to new concepts and are scaffolds for writing and whole-group discussion. As we circulate, we gain insight into individual student understanding.

Suggested strategies:

Flexible Grouping

Structured Peer Conversations

Open-Ended Responses

Academic Language

Non-Verbal Signal

No Opt Out

Pacing Tools

100 Percent

Circulate

Student-Generated Questions

Tech tools:

Lead4Ward

Class Dojo

In the Let's Talk routine, we regularly:

- ☑ Remind students of Let's Talk procedures.
- ☑ Plan and post conversation questions and sentence stems.
- ☑ Guide students to use academic language.
- ☑ Implement structured peer conversations strategies
- ☑ Monitor student interactions.
- ☑ Coach students to clarify and paraphrase.

Classroom implementation:

☑ **Remind students of Let's Talk procedures.**

Students need a structure, purpose, and accountability for their **academic conversations**. Use **flexible grouping** to **Huddle** according to **language proficiency**. Post your procedures for a few go-to structures and practice them regularly. Establish and reinforce norms for protecting the talk time of reluctant speakers, such as **structured peer conversations** in the language of instruction.

☑ **Plan and post conversation questions and sentence stems.**

Decide when during your lesson students will need to process new content or retrieve prior knowledge. Create a question, task or problem with **open-ended responses** and matching **sentence stems** to guide students' conversations. As you plan, use **visuals**, **realia**, and **Total Physical Response** to enhance comprehension.

☑ **Guide students to use academic language.**

Model how to respond to questions incorporating the **sentence stem**. Set expectations for speaking in complete sentences and using **academic language** by providing a word bank, reminding students, and recasting in the language of instruction, or rephrasing subtly without requiring student repetition. Allow students to use **Pen/cil to Paper** as needed.

☑ **Implement structured peer conversations strategy.**

An example of an effective, flexible strategy of a **structured peer conversation** is John Seidlitz's **Q3SA** (Seidlitz & Perryman, 2008):

Question: Post and introduce a written **open-ended** question.

Signal: Prompt students to use a **non-verbal signal** when they are "ready to finish this sentence …"

Stem: Provide a **sentence stem** to match the question. Provide students **wait-time** or thinking time. Use **No Opt Out** and wait for **100 Percent** of students to signal before continuing.

Share: Use **pacing tools** to instruct students to discuss with their **partners** for a set amount of time using the **sentence stem**.

Assess: Call on students to share by **randomizing responses**, then check for agreement from others. Encourage second language learners to speak by allowing them to use their **native language** as needed. You should model the language of instruction by recasting responses.

☑ **Monitor student interactions.**

During structured peer conversations, **circulate** among pairs or groups, listening in and prompting if students are having difficulties. **Use Do I Really Get It?** and make note of student participation.

☑ **Coach students to clarify and paraphrase.**

Teach students prompts they can use to clarify and expand on their peers' comments. Model using **student-generated questions**, **paraphrasing** and **clarifying**, then have students practice using phrases such as, "So what I hear you saying is …," "Can you tell me more about …," and "I agree with your idea that…