



Toolkit for Successful Dialogue in the Common Core Classroom

Judi Kusnick, Sacramento State

A Framework for Thinking about Dialogue

There are numerous student dialogue techniques for use in the classroom. In instruction we can be strategic about selecting dialogue protocols for specific purposes. One way to increase the strategic aspect of our approach to dialogue is to consider a framework to help guide our technique selection process. In other words, we benefit by having specific goals for student-to-student dialogue, considering those goals when selecting a technique to employ and thinking about all of this within a framework that recognizes the classroom context.

Here is a frame with four aspects to consider when incorporating student-to-student dialogue in the classroom.

- A. Set the task for talk (What engaging activity or event precedes dialogue?)
- B. Regulate the time for talk
- C. Structure the dialogue interaction
- D. Attend to the accountability – define the product or goal (oral, written, drawing, other representation, etc.)

Using Dialogue Protocols

Possible Goals for Student Dialogue:

- Eliciting prior knowledge
- Practicing vocabulary
- Putting ideas on the table
- Creating hypotheses or potential explanations
- Constructing arguments with evidence
- Processing text
- Giving students a chance to modify their thinking, express ideas or gain ideas

Choosing a Dialogue Protocol:

Be strategic in matching a dialogue protocol to an instructional goal. Different protocols are good for different goals. Here is a breakdown of some dialogue protocols in different categories of use:

Goal	Student in groups	Students in pairs
Eliciting prior knowledge Putting ideas on the table Brainstorming hypotheses or explanations	Say Something Talking Sticks Paraphrase Passport	Paired Verbal Fluency Give One, Get One
Constructing arguments with evidence	Talking Sticks Paraphrase Passport Four Corners	Structured Think-Pair-Share
Processing text	Final Word Say Something Paraphrase Passport Four Corners	Structured Think-Pair-Share Give One, Get One
Review Practice Vocabulary acquisition	Paraphrase Passport	Quiz, Quiz, Trade Paired Verbal Fluency 3-2-1
Getting students on their feet	Four Corners	Quiz, Quiz, Trade Paired Verbal Fluency 3-2-1 Give One, Get One

Dialogue Stems

In many dialogue situations it is often a benefit to provide students with stems for starting their responses. The stems serve as a starting point or focusing tool for the dialogue and assists in keeping student talk on topic. Stems are included with some of the dialogue protocols on the following pages. Here is a general list of dialogue stems organized into categories, with a few stems for general use. Stems need not be tied to a particular protocol and you can mix and match them as the need arises.

<p>Expressing an Opinion: I think/believe that... It seems to me that... In my opinion...</p>	<p>Disagreeing: I don't agree, because... I got a different answer... I see it another way...</p>	<p>Acknowledging Ideas: I agree with (a person) that... My idea is similar to/related to ___'s idea. My idea builds upon ___'s idea that ...</p>
<p>Asking for Clarification: What do you mean? Will you explain that again? I have a question about...</p>	<p>Affirming: That's an interesting idea I hadn't thought of that I see what you mean</p>	<p>Partner and Group Reporting: We decided/agreed that... We concluded that... Our group sees it differently We had a different approach</p>
<p>Soliciting a Response: What do you think? Do you agree? We haven't heard from ___ yet. How did you get that answer?</p>	<p>Predicting: I guess/predict/imagine that... Based on..... I infer that... I hypothesize that...</p>	<p>Offering a Suggestion: Maybe we could... What if we... Here's something we might try...</p>
<p>Individual Reporting: I discovered from ___ that... I found out from ___ that... _____ pointed out to me that... _____ shared with me that....</p>	<p>Paraphrasing: So, you are saying that... In other words, you think... Your thought is that...</p>	<p>Holding the Floor: As I was saying... Finishing my thought... I was trying to say...</p>

Stems for general use:

“As I read this I was thinking ...”

“After doing that I think ...”

“After reading that I ...”

“This makes sense to me because ...”

“This doesn't make sense to me because...”

“One question I have about this is ...”

Say Something

Say Something is a straightforward protocol and is effective in small groups and is useful in getting a lot of thinking on a topic out in a short period of time.

Following an experience (science activity, lab, reading, video clip, or lecture, etc.), students (in their groups) take turns saying something about their thoughts on the topic. One student starts off (teachers may designate that person – i.e. the student sitting closest to the door) and makes a comment about the experience, activity, reading, or information while the other group members listen. Then the next group member makes a comment reacting to or adding something to the original comment or adding a new idea. The process proceeds until each group member has had an opportunity to contribute something to the original comment. All comments relate in some way to the topic under consideration. Here are some useful stems that can be used in the **Say Something** protocol.

Observation/Comment	Clarify	Inference	Connect	Question
I noticed that ... I think that ... I saw (heard, smelled) ... This is good because ... This is hard because ... This is confusing because ... This makes sense because ...	Now I understand ... No, I think it means ... At first I thought ..., but now ... I agree with you, and ... What this means is ...	I predict that ... I bet that ... Based on these data I think ... One thing I think is ... I wonder if ...	This reminds me of ... This process is like ... This is similar to ... This ... makes me think of ... It also ... This ... is like ... because ...	How did ... In what ways is ... like ... What might happen if ... Do you think that ... What evidence supports ... In other words, are you saying ...

Structured Think-Pair-Share

Structured Think-Pair-Share adds some accountability and structure to the familiar Think-Pair-Share. The organizer helps cure a common problem with **Think-Pair-Share** – the tendency for the think part to be very abbreviated. The organizer slows the process a bit and supports thinking, as well as provides a scaffold for future writing.

Structured Think-Pair-Share

My name: _____ Partner's name: _____

Think – my thoughts or understanding at this time

Pair – what I understand my partner is telling me

Share – our common understanding after talking, what we can share with others or what was most important in our dialogue

Talking Sticks

The **Talking Sticks** protocol helps even out the contributions in a group, gets more students contributing and moderates the pace of dialogue. We've all seen situations where one person dominates a group dialogue. **Talking Sticks** reduces that type of behavior and allows a greater number of voices to be heard. Using this protocol can help improve listening skills.

Talking Sticks Directions

In **Talking Sticks**, each student in the group places his or her pencil/pen in the middle of the table (These are the "talking sticks." An alternative is to have other items be the talking sticks – one teacher we've observed uses colored craft sticks). To make a comment on the topic a student must pick up their talking stick. Students may comment while holding their talking stick, but once they are finished, they set their talking stick in front of them and they are not allowed to comment again until all the other group members have had a turn (picked up their talking stick from the center of the group and commented). If a group member does not want to comment, he or she may pick up the talking stick and say, "pass."

Quiz, Quiz, Trade

Quiz, Quiz, Trade is an active and engaging technique for review. It allows students to craft questions, check answers and cover recently addressed curriculum. Remind students to cover their answer when they read their question to the partner, otherwise they often are showing the answer as they ask the question.

Quiz, Quiz, Trade Directions

1. Students write one question about the material on a piece of paper and write the answer on the other side (teachers should remind them to use their own knowledge, the book or other resources to help them write a thoughtful question and check their answer).
2. Each student should find a partner.
3. Students ask a question, then wait for an answer. The partner doesn't give an answer right away.
4. Next, the student's partner will ask a question. Then each partner tries to answer the other partner's question.
5. The students share the correct answers with each other – the teacher emphasizes how important it is for each of them to understand the question and answer.
6. The two students exchange follow-up questions and then find a new partner.

3-2-1

3-2-1 is a great activity for review, for formative assessment, for getting students out of their seats and for sharing ideas. It is a highly student-centered technique and affords a short, concentrated opportunity to verbalize one's thinking and hear another person's thinking. It's also a great ticket-out-the-door.

Think about _____. Write down the following:

- 3 things that they learned
- 2 questions they have
- 1 new idea or connection

Students find a partner and take turns sharing their lists.

The 3-2-1 items (learning, questions and connections) don't have to be exactly that. Teachers can adapt the items to fit their curriculum. So a teacher may go with 3 things learned, 2 things the students already knew and 1 way to apply the new knowledge or some other permutation.

Summary Protocol

Summary Protocol helps students learn how to summarize text by working in small groups. Start with short passages of text as students are learning the protocol and becoming more efficient at producing summaries.

Here are the directions for Summary Protocol:

- Form groups of three. One person will keep the group on-task.
- Read one paragraph silently (leader makes sure all group members know where paragraph starts and ends). Each person reads silently to him or herself, and only when everybody has finished with the paragraph does the group progress to the next step.
- Group discusses the content of the paragraph. All group members should contribute (the leader facilitates this).
- Group comes to consensus about one or two main ideas.
- Talk about how to write the main idea(s).
- Each group member writes down the main idea(s) on his or her own paper.
- Repeat for each paragraph of the reading. .

When Summary Protocol operates efficiently, observers should see and hear groups alternating between silent reading, group dialogue and group writing (the latter may include some dialogue as well). This pattern should repeat itself for each paragraph in the reading.

Paraphrase Passport

Paraphrase Passport builds understanding in three ways. First, it requires attentive listening. Second, it requires restatement of another person's statement in the form of a paraphrase. Third, it allows ideas and understanding to be verbalized and added to. Other benefits of using **Paraphrase Passport** include lessening the occurrence of one person dominating the dialogue and increasing involvement by all students.

Paraphrase Passport can be supported by modeling the protocol for the class and by having one person in each group designated to facilitate the process – they listen for paraphrasing going on and get group members to paraphrase if they are not paraphrasing. Students will need practice at paraphrasing, as they generally are not used to listening carefully enough to be able to paraphrase or to effectively construct a paraphrase statement. However, these are two very powerful skills in communication. **Paraphrase Passport** used effectively and repeatedly builds the skill of listening to understand.

This protocol takes practice. It generally is not a norm of Western culture to paraphrase before adding comments or ideas. It helps to keep the groups to about four students each so there are not too many thoughts to react to. **Paraphrase Passport** can be supported by talking about what it should sound like – one voice from each group heard at any one time; what it should feel like – speakers feeling as if they were heard; and what it should look like – three people looking at one speaker in each group.

Paraphrase Passport Directions

1. Form groups of three or four students*.
2. One student begins by making a comment related to the topic.
3. The next person to speak must paraphrase the first comment before stating their comment.
4. Repeat the process (students paraphrase the student before them and then add their own comment) and continue for a predetermined time, or until the topic has been thoroughly discussed.

* It helps if there is one person in each group designated to facilitate this process – to listen for paraphrasing and remind group members to paraphrase.

Four Corners

The **Four Corners** protocol gets students up and moving around in a directed manner and promotes student-to-student dialogue. It also has two built-in components of accountability – the recording of group thinking on the chart and the extension of writing a paragraph about their reasoning in support of their position.

Four Corners Directions

1. Hang a sheet of chart paper in each of the room's four corners.
2. Label the first chart "Strongly Agree," the second "Agree," the third "Disagree" and the fourth "Strongly Disagree."
3. State the issue or controversy and have the students stand in the corner that best reflects their position on the issue.
4. Direct students in each corner to have a brief conversation about their positions. Then have the group list on the chart paper four or more reasons for their position.
5. Each group then presents their ideas to the class.
6. Organize a debate in which those who strongly agree – make a point by stating one of their arguments.
7. Then those who strongly disagree – can offer a counterpoint from their poster and state the reason for their argument.
8. Next those who agree – can respond by explaining why they agree, but do not strongly agree, with the argument.
9. Finally, those who disagree – can contribute by telling why they disagree, but do not strongly disagree, with the argument.
10. Continue steps six through nine for as many of the remaining statements as you wish.
11. As an extension, each student can use the statements to help them write a paragraph supporting their position.