



# 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 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-8**

- 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.

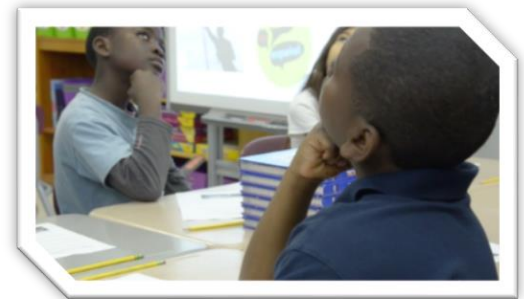
Students need a structure, purpose, and accountability for their **academic conversations**. Use **flexible grouping to Huddle** according to **language proficiency**. Post your procedures for a few go-to structures and practice them regularly. Establish and reinforce norms for protecting the talk time 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...”