Do Now

*Building Oral Language: Using Conversation to Promote Vocabulary Development*

**Take a few minutes to respond to the following questions:**

* On average, how many minutes per day do you spend in genuine conversations with individual students in your class?
* What are some strategies that you are already using in your classrooms to teach vocabulary to your students?

Three Key Literacy Experiences: The Power of Conversation

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**Take 5 minutes to read the excerpt from the article, “Conversations in Child Care” (through page 18). As you read, reflect on the following questions:**

* What from this article stands out to you right away?
* What information in this article was familiar?
* What information in this article feels new?

Breaking Down the Oral Language Trajectory

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**Directions:**

1. Each table has been **assigned a standard**—it is written on top of your poster paper.
2. **Spend five minutes** breaking that standard into three components:
	* **Pre-Requisites** students need prior to learning this standard
	* What students **need to know** to master the entire spirit of the standard
	* What students **need to be able to do to** show complete mastery of the standard
3. Be prepared to **share the breakdown of your standard!**

**Steps for Breaking Down a Standard:**

1. Determine the variety of knowledge and skills students **will already need** to have when they begin working on this standard. **These are the pre-requisite skills**.
2. Identify the **nouns** within the standard. Those represent **what students will need to know** to successfully master this standard.
3. Identify the **verbs** within the standard. Those represent **what students will need to know how to do to** successfully master this standard.

**Sample Standard Breakdown:**

**Standard:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PRE-REQUISITE SKILLS**(what students need to come in knowing) | **KNOWLEDGE**(what students need to know to master this standard) | **SKILLS** (what students need to know how to do to master this standard) |
|  |  |  |

Reflecting on the Developmental Trajectories

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**Reflect independently on the questions below:**

We continue to revisit the standards (sometimes even the same ones) each time we dig into a topic. Why is it important to do this?

How might returning to the standards in each session change teacher practice? How might it affect student outcomes?

The TALK Strategy: An Introduction

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**As you watch the video of Joan and Nathan, reflect on the following question:**

What strategies does Joan use to support and engage Nathan in their conversation?

The TALK Framework

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**The TALK Framework** was developed by the Atlanta Speech School as a tool to help adults engage in meaningful conversations with children.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **T** |  |
| **A** |  |
| **L** |  |
| **K** |  |

**When can this strategy be used during the day?**

* Centers
* Small groups
* One-on-one
* Mealtimes
* Outdoors
* Changing table, hand-washing, etc.
* Before or after school

T: Tune In and A: Ask Questions

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**T: Tune In.** When you **“Tune In”, you enter the child’s world** and make the conversation meaningful to what they are interested in.

**To effectively “Tune In”:**

* Watch the child and **notice what is happening**
* Be patient and **wait for the right moment** to enter or begin the conversation
* When you do enter the child’s world, make sure to make an observation about **what the child is already doing** or what they are interested in
* Start by **making an observation**:
* “I notice…”
* “I see…”
* “I’m thinking…”
* “I wonder…”

**A: Ask Questions.** After commenting to enter the child’s world, **engage the child further by asking child-centric, open-ended questions.**

**To effectively “Ask Questions”:**

* You should use close-ended questions with **infants and young toddlers**
* **For older toddlers and preschoolers** use open-ended questions as much as possible:
	+ “Tell me about…”
	+ “Explain how…”
	+ “How do you know that…”
	+ “How did you figure that out?”
	+ “I wonder what would happen if…”
	+ “What if….”
	+ “What would you do if…”
* Try **either-or questions** or **comparison questions**:
	+ “Was it \_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_?”
	+ “How is \_\_\_\_\_\_ alike?”
	+ “How is \_\_\_\_\_\_ different from \_\_\_\_\_?”

**Video Analysis:**

Watch Ms. Johnethea “Tune In” and “Ask Questions”. Consider the following:

* How does the teacher get involved in the student’s world?
* What questions does the teacher use?

Tune In and Ask Questions: Practice

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**Watch the video of Andrew, an older toddler, and imagine that you are the teacher in his classroom. Then take two minutes to plan what you would say to Tune In and what initial question(s) you would ask. Refer to your notes on “Tuning In” and “Asking Questions” to make sure your ideas meet the criteria for being effective.**

To “Tune In”, I would say:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Then I would “Ask Questions” using the questions below:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Pause and Reflect

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Now that we have reviewed the first two elements of the TALK strategy, and seen a few videos of early childhood educators applying this strategy, **independently respond** to the reflection questions below:

* How will the beginnings of this strategy benefit your students?
* What parts will come easily to you? What will be more challenging?

L: Lift Language and K: Keep It Going

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**L: Lift Language.** When you **“Lift Language”, your goal is to push in new, complex vocabulary**, model correct grammar, and continue to engage the child(ren) in conversation.

**To effectively “Lift Language”:**

* Use think-alouds to **narrate your own thinking**
* Engage in both **self- and parallel-talk**
* **Restate** what a child says using a more complex sentence
* Model correct grammar and **rich vocabulary**
* Use synonyms
* Build on children’s statements by **adding more information** (add more information, describe, provide vocabulary words)
* Monitor children’s use of target vocabulary and **reinforce new words**

**K: “Keep It Going”** by committing to **multiple back-and-forth exchanges** with the child.

**To effectively “Keep It Going”:**

* **Keep watching** what the child is doing, and if they change directions, follow their lead
* Allow for the child to have **think time** and respond
* Continue to **reinforce complex vocabulary** through repetition
* **“Strive for Five”**…or more!
* Commit to (and plan for) **staying in one place to have extended conversations** with individual or small groups of children

**Video Analysis:**

**Watch the preschool teacher “Lift Language” and “Keep It Going”. Consider the following:**

* What strategies did the teacher use to “Lift Language”?
* How does the teacher keep the conversation going?

Practice the TALK Strategy: Directions

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**Practice Directions:**

**Prepare (2 minutes):**

* For this practice, you will work with your **“face partner”**, or the person who is sitting straight across from you.
* The **person with the nearest birthday will be the teacher first** when practice begins. The other person will be the student/coach.
* Take **one minute to read the practice scenario on the next page**. Jot down any notes, Tune In statements, questions, etc. that you may want to use.

**Practice (2 minutes):**

* Student 1 will **start acting as the student in the scenario**. Teacher 1 will **begin engaging the “student” in conversation** using the TALK strategy steps.
* **Student 1 will respond to Teacher 1**, answer all questions, and generally interact as though a student in a preschool classroom.
* The practice TALK conversation will continue for 2 minutes. **Remain in your roles for the entire two minutes.**

**Feedback (1 minute):**

* Student 1 will **provide feedback** to Teacher 1 using the **Feedback Cheat Sheet for the TALK strategy**, then the roles will switch.

Practice the TALK Strategy: Practice Scenario

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**You are a student or teacher interacting in a three-year-old classroom. The student is “playing” in the dramatic play center, and the teacher comes over to engage the student using the TALK strategy. Read the additional information below to see what the student is thinking and how the student should respond to the teacher’s questions.**

**Student:**

* **Basic actions:** You are in the dramatic play center, playing in a store. You are playing with some candy that’s in the “store,” and having a little conversation to yourself: “I want the candy…no, you can’t have it…but mom, I’ll be really good…no, you can’t have the candy…”
* **Why you are doing this/how you feel:** Yesterday you were at the store with your mom, and you asked her if she would buy you some candy. You really wanted this candy because you saw a commercial for it on TV and it looks yummy. She kept saying “no” to you, even when you said you’d be really good and save it until after dinner. You’re upset that she didn’t buy you the candy and you’re trying to work out (in your head) why you couldn’t have it, because you still don’t understand.
* **How to respond:** When the teacher asks you what you’re doing, share as much as seems appropriate based on what she’s asking you. Be sure to use preschool-level words for your emotions to give the teacher an opportunity to lift the language in the conversation. You may also choose to make errors in sentence structure to give the teacher an opportunity to model correct syntax.

**Teacher:** If you are acting as the teacher, remember that you would not yet know the background above until you start to uncover it during conversation. Use your open-ended questioning skills, your ability to lift language, and your determination to keep the conversation going to learn about what is happening in this child’s world.

Practice the TALK Strategy: Feedback Cheat Sheet

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **CRITERIA** |
| **TUNE IN** | * Watch the child and notice what is happening before jumping in
* Be patient and wait for the right moment to enter or begin the conversation
* Make an observation about what the child is already doing in order to enter the child’s world. Try saying:
* “I notice…”
* “I see…”
* “I’m thinking…”
* “I wonder…”
 |
| **ASK QUESTIONS** | * Use mostly close-ended questions with infants and young toddlers
* For older toddlers and preschoolers use open-ended questions as much as possible:
	+ “Tell me about…”
	+ “Explain how…”
	+ “How do you know that…”
	+ “How did you figure that out?”
	+ “I wonder what would happen if…”
	+ “What if….”
	+ “What would you do if…”
* Try either-or questions or comparison questions:
 |
| **LIFT LANGUAGE** | * Use think-alouds to narrate your own thinking
* Engage in both self- and parallel-talk
* Restate what a child says using a more complex sentence
* Model correct grammar and rich vocabulary
* Use synonyms
* Build on children’s statements by adding more information (add more information, describe, provide vocabulary words)
* Monitor children’s use of target vocabulary and reinforce new words
 |
| **KEEP IT GOING** | * Keep watching what the child is doing, and if they change directions, follow their lead
* Allow for the child to have think time and respond
* Continue to reinforce complex vocabulary through repetition
* Strive for five or more back-and-forth exchanges with the child
* Commit to (and plan for) staying in one place to have extended conversations with individual or small groups of children
 |
| **CONVERSATION DELIVERY** | * The child does most of the talking throughout the conversation
* The conversation remains focused on what the child was already engaged and interested in
* Teacher talk is primarily used to ask questions and lift language
 |

Practice the TALK Strategy: Reflection

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**Reflect on the questions below:**

How will the TALK strategy support student literacy outcomes in your classroom?

How will you hold yourself accountable to using this strategy regularly?

What support do you still need/want the most to continue to develop in this skill?

Exit Ticket

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**Take the next several minutes to complete your exit ticket, then turn it in to the facilitator.**

What are your next steps for ensuring that you are consistently using the TALK strategy with your students?

When and where will you increase your use of conversation with students? How will you hold yourself accountable for using these strategies?

What questions do you still have about what you learned today? What feedback to you have about the session for the facilitator?

**\*\*\*TEAR OFF THIS PAGE AND SUBMIT TO FACILITATOR\*\*\***