

Teacher Talk Moves: Keeping Dialogue Productive

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In face-to-face classes, the realities of discourse are a little different from online courses, and it is important to consider ways to keep the discussion going productively in a more “real time” manner. Like in online courses, the focus during face-to-face discussions centers on pushing students to expand on their thinking, offering new ideas or resources, and redirecting the conversation when needed. When I started teaching, I felt like I sounded like a broken record at times when trying to push students to think more deeply and avoiding the ever-frustrating to me “one word answer”. To help me think more broadly about guiding discussion, I started to bring a “teacher talk moves cheat sheet” with me to class to help frame how I was going to ask questions to make conversations go to deeper levels. I have found that using the frames to think about my questions helps students think about their answers with greater depth, and they become so accustomed to probing questions that by the middle of the semester I find I often no longer find them necessary.

Teacher Talk Moves

- 1) Clarifying and Verifying
 - a. So, are you saying...?
 - b. Who can repeat?
 - c. Can you say more about that?
 - d. What do you mean by...?
 - e. Sorry. Could you say that again?
- 2) Soliciting Additional Viewpoints
 - a. Would someone like to add on?
 - b. Does anyone else have an idea?
- 3) Pressing for Reasoning, Evidence, or Applying One’s Reasoning to Someone Else’s
 - a. Why do you think that?
 - b. Do you agree or disagree and why?
 - c. Can you explain why X thinks that?
- 4) Asking for Evidence from the Text and Linking Evidence to Claim
 - a. Where do you see evidence for that in the text?

- b. What's your bias for saying that?
 - c. Why do you say that?
 - d. How does that help you make your point?
- 5) Challenging Someone's Thinking
- a. But what about what X just said?
 - b. But in the text, it says...
 - c. How do you square that with X?