

Activity: How do you use whole-class talk?

Objective: To monitor and evaluate your own strategies for sustaining productive whole-class talk

Time: 2 hours

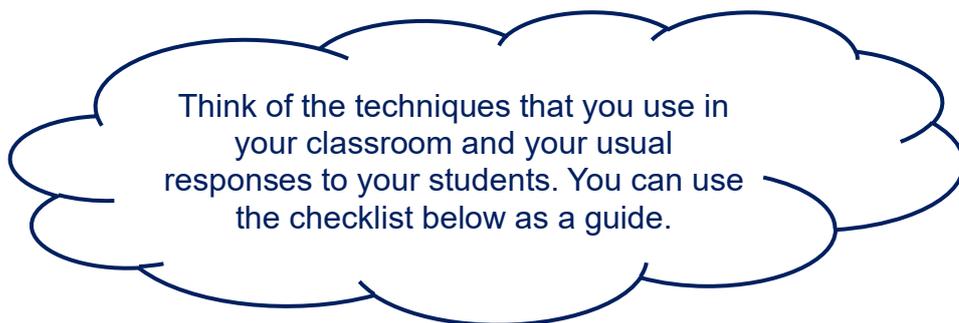
Resources: A voice recorder

Activity: Identify a lesson when you are beginning a new topic. Include in your lesson plan an introductory discussion in which you can explore what students already know and understand (or do not understand) about the topic. (This could last up to about 10 minutes). Record this session. Listen to the recording.

Key ideas: When you listen back to it, consider the following questions:

- How much time, proportionally, did you speak compared with the students?
- What kinds of questions did you ask? Did you ask open questions as well as closed ones? Were your questions designed to make them reason and reflect on their understanding, or just to provide factual responses?
- Did you use any techniques for sustaining productive whole-class dialogue?
- Did you give students opportunities to make extended responses (or did you tend to interrupt or cut them off)?
- Did you pick up ideas that students offered and weave them into the discussion?
- How did students behave in this session? Did they seem willing to share ideas?
- Did you find the discussion useful, regarding your teaching plans?
- Finally, how happy are you with how the discussion went? Do you think you are making the most of such sessions?

(epiSTEMe, 2011; Introductory Module Teaching Notes, p. 9)



Observation checklist: Talk techniques that teachers use...

1. to elicit knowledge from learners

1a. Direct elicitations

"What is the capital of Peru?"

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1b. Cued elicitations

[Teacher provides a hint]

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2. to respond to what learners say

2a. Confirmations

"Yes that's right"

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2b. Rejections

"Not really"

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2c. Repetitions

[Teacher repeats what child has said]

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2d. Reformulations

[Teacher rephrases what child has said]

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3. to describe significant aspects of shared experience

3a. 'We' statements

"We are going to read..."

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3b. Recaps

"Today we have looked at six characters.."

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