

## **Accountable Talk**

Talking with others about ideas and work is fundamental to learning. But not all talk sustains learning. For classroom talk to promote learning it must be accountable--to the learning community, to accurate and appropriate knowledge, and to rigorous thinking. Accountable talk seriously responds to and further develops what others in the group have said. It puts forth and demands knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion. Accountable talk uses evidence appropriate to the discipline (e.g., proofs in mathematics, data from investigations in science, textual details in literature, documentary sources in history) and follows established norms of good reasoning. Teachers should intentionally create the norms and skills of accountable talk in their classrooms.

### **Engagement with Learning through Talk**

1. A substantial portion of instructional time involves students in talk related to the concepts delineated in the standards.
  - a. Throughout the school day, in all subject areas, there is a high amount of talk directly related to the content being studied.
  - b. A high percentage of classroom talk is by and among students.
  - c. Students participate in various forms of Accountable Talk, such as instructional discussions, whole class discussions, small group work, peer and student-teacher conferences, presentations, and interviews.
  
2. Accountable Talk sharpens students' thinking by reinforcing their ability to build and use knowledge. Teachers create the norms and skills of Accountable Talk in their classrooms by modeling appropriate forms of discussion and by questioning, probing, and leading conversations.

For example, teachers may

- press for clarification and explanation
- require justifications of proposals and challenges
- recognize and challenge misconceptions
- demand evidence for claims and arguments
- interpret and "revoice" students' statements

Over time, students can be expected to carry out each of these conversational "moves" themselves in peer discussions.

### **Accountability to the Learning Community**

1. Students actively participate in classroom talk.
  - a. Each student is able to participate in several different kinds of classroom talk activities.
  - b. Students' talk is appropriate in tone and content to the social group and setting and to the purpose of the conversation.

- c. Students allow others to speak without interruption.
  - d. Students speak directly to other students on appropriate occasions.
2. Students listen attentively to one another.
  - a. Students' body language/eye contact show attention.
  - b. When appropriate, students make references to previous speakers.
  - c. Speakers' comments are connected to previous ideas.
  - d. Participants avoid inappropriate overtalk.
  - e. Participants' interest is in the whole discussion, not only in their own turn taking.
3. Students elaborate and build upon ideas and each others' contributions.
  - a. Talk remains related to text/subject/issue.
  - b. Related issues or topics are introduced and elaborated.
  - c. Talk is about issues rather than participants.
4. Students work toward the goal of clarifying or expanding a proposition.
  - a. Students revoice, summarize, paraphrase each other's argument(s)
  - b. Students make an effort to ensure they understand one another.
  - c. Students clarify or define terms under discussion.

### **Accountability to Knowledge**

1. Students make use of specific and accurate knowledge.
  - a. Students make specific reference to a text to support arguments and assertions.
  - b. Students make clear reference to knowledge built in the course of discussion.
  - c. Examples or claims using outside knowledge are accurate, accessible, relevant.
2. Students provide evidence for claims and arguments.
  - a. Unsupported claims are questioned and investigated by discussion participants.
  - b. Requests are made for factual information, elaboration, rephrasing and examples.
  - c. Students call for the definition and clarification of terms under discussion.
  - d. Students challenge whether the information being used to address a topic is relevant to the discussion.
3. Students identify the knowledge that may not be available yet which is needed to address an issue.

### **Accountability to Rigorous Thinking**

1. Students synthesize several sources of information.

- a. Students refer to a variety of texts as sources of information.
  - b. Students connect ideas within and between texts.
  - c. Students use previous knowledge to support ideas and opinions.
2. Students construct explanations.
    - a. Students acknowledge that more information is needed.
    - b. Students use sequential ideas to build logical and coherent arguments.
    - c. Students employ a variety of types of evidence.
  3. Students formulate conjectures and hypotheses.
    - a. Students use "what if" scenarios as challenging questions or supporting explanations.
    - b. Students formulate hypotheses and suggest ways to investigate them.
    - c. Students indicate when ideas need further support or explanation.
  4. Students test their own understanding of concepts.
    - a. Students redefine or change explanations.
    - b. Students ask questions that test the definition of concepts.
    - c. Students draw comparisons and contrasts among ideas.
    - d. Students identify their own bias.
    - e. Students indicate to what degree they accept ideas and arguments.
  5. Classroom talk is accountable to generally accepted standards of reasoning.
    - a. Students use rational strategies to present arguments and draw conclusions.
    - b. Students provide reasons for their claims and conclusions.
    - c. Students fashion sound premise-conclusion arguments.
    - d. Students use examples, analogies, and hypothetical "what if" scenarios to make arguments and support claims.
    - e. Students partition argument issues and claims in order to address topics and further discussion.
  6. Students challenge the quality of each other's evidence and reasoning.
    - a. The soundness of evidence and the quality of premise-conclusion arguments are assessed and challenged by discussion participants.
    - b. Hidden premises and assumptions of students' lines of argument are exposed and challenged.
    - c. Students pose counter-examples and extreme case comparisons to challenge arguments and claims.
  7. Classroom talk is accountable to standards of evidence appropriate to the subject matter.

Website: <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/143110127103415203/lib/143110127103415203/video/ilp/at1.html>

Discussing The Skin I'm In (4:33) Grade 7

<http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/143110127103415203/lib/143110127103415203/video/ri/media/html/e159v1.html>

Discussing Existentialism (3:50) Grade 12

<http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/143110127103415203/lib/143110127103415203/video/ri/media/html/e105v2.html>