

Universal Student Conversation Stems

Scaffolding Academic Talk & Equitable Dialogue Across All Domains

Academic talk is an essential habit that requires intentional scaffolding, direct modeling, and structured routines. These universal conversation stems provide students with accessible entry points to express ideas, negotiate perspectives, and build psychological safety across all learning domains.

Contributing & Sharing Ideas

- "An idea I have is... because..."
- "I would like to add to what [Name] said about..."
- "One way we could approach this problem is..."
- "From my perspective and experience,..."

Encouraging Others & Equalizing Airtime

- "We haven't heard from [Name] yet. What are your thoughts?"
- "That's an interesting point. Could you say more about that?"
- "How does everyone feel about this idea before we move forward?"
- "Who has a different perspective that might help us see another side?"

Active Listening & Clarifying Understanding

- "What I heard you say is... Is that correct?"
- "Could you give an example of what you mean by...?"
- "Where in our resource or data did you find evidence for that?"

Constructive Peer Feedback & Critique

- "I appreciate how you... because..."
- "One strength of your idea is... A tweak that might make it stronger is..."
- "I noticed that... Have you considered trying...?"

Navigating Conflict & Reaching Consensus

- "It sounds like we have two different ideas: [A] and [B]. How can we combine them?"
- "I see your point, but my concern is... How might we address that?"
- "What is one compromise we can all agree on to keep moving forward?"

Metacognitive Reflection & Goal Setting

- "Something our team did really well today was..."
- "An obstacle we faced was... and we handled it by..."
- "I felt supported by my team when..."
- "Next time we collaborate, one thing I personally want to improve is..."