

IT WORKED!

Classroom Discussions Seeing Math Discourse In Action

Joan Tellish

*Elementary Mathematics Support
Teacher*

*Howard County Public School
System, MD*

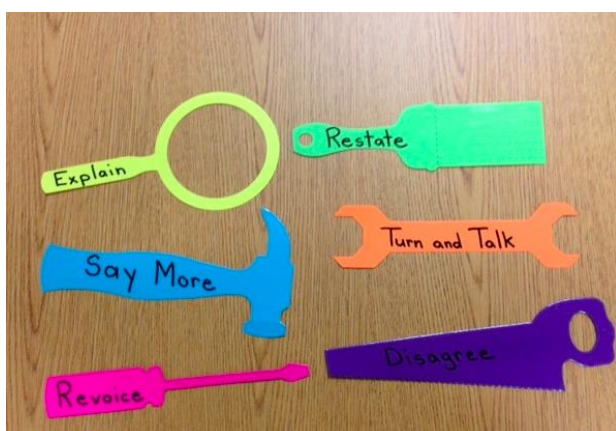
Classroom Discussions Seeing Math Discourse In Action

I used the book *Classroom Discussions: Seeing Math Discourse In Action* for professional learning with my grade-level teams. I used its facilitator's guide to develop my sessions. I met monthly with grade-level teams to discuss classroom discourse and how to incorporate "Math Talk" into daily instruction. Having just introduced the *Standards for Math Practices*, this professional learning connected well with these Standards, especially Practice #2: Reason abstractly and quantitatively, and Practice #3: Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others. In fact, this professional learning was instrumental in assisting the teachers to understand these two practices.

We began by defining "Respectful Discourse" and "Equitable Participation." The first step was to create a safe classroom environment. We discussed strategies for developing classroom norms. The teachers incorporated this into their classrooms and we debriefed the next time we met.

Next, we focused on one talk move at each meeting. We watched videos of teachers integrating the talk moves into instruction. Then the teachers would try this one move out and come back to discuss how it went. The talk moves we tried were: *Turn and Talk*, *Agree and Disagree*, *Explain*, *Restate*, *Repeat*, and *Say More*.

Kindergarten teachers only used *Turn and Talk* and *Explain*. Grade 1 teachers added *Agree or Disagree*. The teachers of other grades used all the talk moves. Each talk move was taught explicitly so the students were aware of it and had time to practice it. The teachers came up with the idea to name these talk moves our "Talk Tools". We created a "tool" for each move. Several teachers put them on wooden sticks and housed them in a tool box.



The following school year, the Literacy Coach and I partnered to plan and present six school-wide sessions at faculty meetings. We connected the "Talk Tools" to the *Speaking and Listening Standards*. Each classroom, including Music, Art, Physical Education, and Science, had the "Talk Tools" displayed and all the teachers in the school incorporated them in daily discussions. Having school-wide consistency allowed all the teachers and students to be aware of the language of these "Talk Tools."

I made a short video of the staff using the “Talk Tools” in various ways in their classrooms. This was shared with the staff so they could see how other teachers were utilizing them.

Students feel safe in a classroom when they solve a problem incorrectly and a classmate can respectfully disagree. An explanation from a peer can help to clarify. If they did not hear an explanation, they can ask him/her to repeat it, and by having a student repeat it, others will hear it a second time.

It is powerful to see respectful classroom discourse occurring school wide. The students know that when they answer a question it is innate that an explanation will follow!

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