

Sample Lesson Plan for Developing Academic Conversation Skills: Creating and Posing Ideas

This lesson plan can be modified according to the grade level and language proficiency levels of the students. The three values are schoolwide values from a specific school and can be changed according to the context. There are essential components of the lesson including the introduction and multiple reviews of the CREATE and POSE anchor chart, gestures, and questions with responses.

Grades: K–3

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1: Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade level topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Objectives

- Describe one of the three values (Be respectful. Be responsible. Be prepared.) using cause and effect academic terms (“When a student is respectful, then . . .”).
- Develop Conversation Skill: Create and Pose Ideas.
- Ask a partner to share an idea and explain (“What is your idea?” “Why?”).
- Connect an idea to a more important concept (“For example . . .”).

Performance Assessment

Paired conversation between two students analyzed with the Conversation Observation and Analysis Tool (COAT); (see Chapter 5).

Text

Teachers and students create text together by illustrating a series of visuals depicting students exhibiting core values.

Lesson Sequence

Introduce skill, build background, and create an idea

- Introduce language and content objectives.
- Build background—Remind students about three school values. What do they look like? Sound like? Feel like? (Make charts if needed.)

- Show a slideshow with visuals of examples and non-examples illustrating “respect.” At each visual, ask students, “Does this show respect? Turn and ask your partner, ‘Does this show respect?’”
- Teach the gesture and icon for “create an idea” using the CREATE and POSE anchor chart. This week we will be practicing “creating an idea that is conversation-worthy.”
- “I want you to think of our big questions: How do our school values help us learn more? Which value do you think is most important for helping us learn?”
- Explain that you will model the nonacademic conversation (wrong way) with a student (no eye contact, off topic).
- Ask for feedback: What did you notice when we modeled the nonacademic conversation?
- Model the *academic* conversation (correct way) with a student. Model the posing of a conversation-worthy idea (e.g., I think respect is the most important for learning because . . .)
- Ask for feedback: What did you notice when we modeled the academic conversation?
- Academic conversation practice in pairs. Which value do you think is most important for helping us learn? Why?

Review and Assessment

Use the COAT to assess the skill.

Informal teacher analysis of use of language at the word and sentence levels during conversations.

Extension or Home-School Connection

Students have an academic conversation at home with a family member: Which value is important in your life? Why?

Report back to class on answers.

ACTIVITIES FOR BUILDING THE SKILL OF CREATING/POSING

- **Think-Pair-Shares.** Pair-shares, turn-n-talks, and the like tend to be good activities for practicing the posing of ideas. Indeed, this type of practice is what these activities are best at. But with some extra structure.
- **Target Cards.** Pairs are given a green “topic card” with the topic or objective for a lesson or unit. They also receive blue “idea cards.” These are printed with a wide range of relevant and irrelevant ideas that might be posed by people. Students put the green topic card in the middle of the target and then take turns drawing a blue idea card and reading it. They both then place it on an image of a target and discuss how they determined if it belongs in the bulls-eye, on the next concentric ring, or out of range. The placement of the idea card on the image of the target depends on how relevant it is to the topic. This can later lead to brainstorm sessions in which students pose their own ideas on cards and then place them on a target.
- **Language Experience Approach (LEA).** The teacher transcribes students’ oral production into an expository or narrative written record on chart paper. The key to an effective language experience approach is a comprehensible, common experience shared by the class. The common experience could be an activity, text, field trip, experiment, or discovery in science. The sequence of events in history or steps to solve a math problem can also be recorded into an LEA. A read-aloud of a mentor text could be used as long as the text is comprehensible to all students. While recording students’ ideas, the teacher explicitly models academic vocabulary usage and language structure. Teachers can prerecord target language structures as paragraph frames to structure talk and writing. The creative text can then be a stepping-off point for the editing process.
- **Parking Lot.** Create a “parking lot” where students can write down ideas, at any time, that might be useful later. You or they can then look at the parking lot for conversation ideas, when appropriate. Even the act of writing ideas down and posting them can help students remember their ideas longer.
- **Assessing the Skill of Creating and Posing Ideas in Conversations**
You can formatively assess students’ abilities to pose relevant ideas by observing and using the COAT (see Chapter 5). You can also use a basic checklist for evaluating the skill:
 - Does the idea relate to the lesson objectives?
 - Does the idea allow for explanation and elaboration?
 - Does the idea involve opinion or have alternative perspectives?