

STUDENT TALK PROTOCOL DESCRIPTIONS (CONTINUED)

Purpose: To Generate Students' Initial or Final Explanations of a Model

Idea Coaching

Pre-teaching (just for the first time you use idea coaching)

1. Brainstorm, as a class, the characteristics of a good coach. "Patient, responds to what you need, stays on the sideline during the game, supports you to do your best, loyal, supportive, etc."
2. Tell students, "Now you are going to coach each other with science ideas. When you are the coach, your ideas have to stay on the sideline. Your job will be to listen carefully to your partner to help them move their ideas forward, to be the best scientist they can be."
3. If possible, model this, using a student as an explainer and the teacher as a coach. Ask something easy, like, "Could you explain how you got to school today?" The teacher/coach should press for detail, especially around unclear terms or parts that aren't fleshed out.
4. If possible, the teacher should add some commentary about how he or she is making decisions about what to ask. For example, call a quick time-out and explain, "Wow. It's really hard not to tell the explainer how I got to school today, but I'm trying really hard to get ideas out of my explainer." Also, "I'm not telling the explainer that their ideas are bad, or why I might think they're bad, if I did."
5. You can test this out as a whole class with an easy question to practice. For example, you could ask, "What would your dream job be like?"
6. You can also have students edit the conversation prompts so they sound more authentically teen-like.

For regular, everyday idea coaching:

7. Ask students to pair up. Pass out the conversation table tents to the coaches.
8. Coaches can self-select who goes first, with the most confident student explaining first to seed the other student with ideas, or you can say, "The person closest to the window goes first," etc.
9. Designate an open-ended, explanatory question that students should talk through. It is helpful if this is about something students have already thought about or examined. A good point to do this is after a lab, demo, or observation. One question could be, "What did this lab teach us about pressure/respiration/ convection/etc.?"
10. Present the question you want students to talk about in their pairs. Repeat it once so everyone can hear.
11. Give the room time to think about it. (A few seconds is fine, but you could expand this to a pre-write if you prefer.)
12. Ask the idea coaches to begin coaching. The rest of the students are explainers.
13. Move through the room and listen carefully. Try not to interrupt.
14. When the conversations slow, ask the explainers to tell something helpful their coach did.
15. Have the coaches give their explainers a "very coachy high five." or tell the explainers, "You're my MVP!" (or something similarly goofy but supportive).
16. Switch coaches and repeat.
17. Ask students to nominate a coach of the day or to reflect again on their coaching practice. Emphasize to students that really listening to each other is very, very hard – especially if you have a big idea of your own.

