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Academic Conversations with English Language Learners

Goals

- Participants will engage in discussions and activities that help English Learners understand complex text.
- Participants will learn how to support English language growth by expanding and amplifying the English that English Learners read and say.



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Academic Conversations

"Discussing a work of literature might be even more important than the solitary act of reading. As we share an interpretation with others, we learn how to communicate, how to agree and disagree. Perhaps more important, we share an experience."

Carol Jago, *Literature and Composition*



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Listening to Student Discourse: A Tale of Two Conversations

- You will analyze one of the following two discourse samples
- Students were responding to the prompt, *What causes seasons to change?*
- As you focus on either Sample A or Sample B, take notes on the following:
 - Do you see students building on their peers' ideas? How?
 - Do you see students staying on topic? Why or Why not?



What causes seasons to change?: Sample A

A: The summer there are long days and hot.
B: And, winter it's cold.
A: The sun goes down too early.
B: I don't like winter, because it rains a lot.
A: Yeah. Our street flooded last year.
B: But then, it's spring. It gets warmer.
A: We forgot fall, when the leaves change colors, and fall off Trees.
B: And we gotta go back to school. But, you get to see at friends.
A: I like summer the most

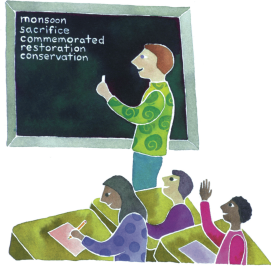


What causes seasons to change?: Sample B

A: I don't know.
B: I think we move like in winter further from the sun, cuz it's colder.
A: I don't think it moves away.
B: Something like... Tilt of the Earth. So, the whole thing, Earth, doesn't get closer.
A: Like the teacher showed with the ball.
B: Oh, like summer we lean close to sun. So, we get hot.
A: But winter we're tilted, further?
B: So, in South America is opposite?
A: Yeah, I think. But at this equator, I don't, I don't think it changes.
B: Probably not.



Why do teachers avoid small group discussions with English Learners?



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Why?

- Difficult to control
- Difficult to assess
- Too demanding for English Learners
- Unpredictable
- English learners are afraid to talk
- Students don't know what to say
- Teachers talk too much



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Videos, Visuals and Graphic Organizers

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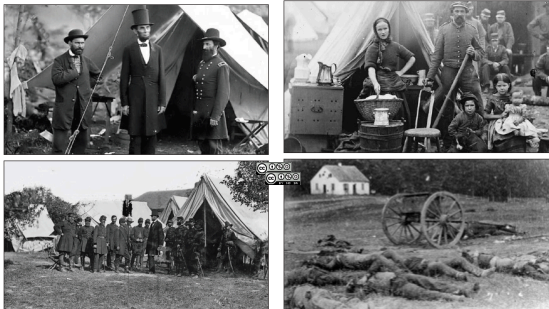
Café Talk

- Select four pictures about the topic of the lesson
- Tape the pictures, facing out, on to a large piece of chart paper.
- In groups of four, ask students to write about the picture in front of them for one minute.
- Turn the chart. Ask students to read what is there, respond and write more about the new picture.
- Continue until students have responded to and written about each picture.

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Handout #6: Civil War Photos



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Lesson 2 [21]

Lesson 2 [22]
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- S1: I choose, I choose, I choose these three words "we", "nation" and "people". Because like, "WE" mean like you, your race and my race we like compete and we come to school like together and we consider like together. The way I choose "nations" is like other nations is like all the people they come together to form a nations in the United States.
- S2: Oh yeah like me too in the "nations"
- S1: And the people who like the population of the United States start growing a little and start increasing.
- S2: Nations because the nations stop fighting and the nations have a union for ... and lib.. - What is this?
- S1: Liberty? You know Liberty?
- S2: Yeah. I know how, how win and we like liberty because the people fight for liberty and they want liberty.

- Partners work together to find instances of repetition and parallel structure in *The Gettysburg Address*.

Handout #11: Literary Device Matrix

Repetition: By repeating the same word or idea within the same sentence, or across sentences, the speaker ties a theme together and creates clarity for the listener. Often, repetitions are in groups of three.

Directions: Work with a partner to find examples of repetition in the *Gettysburg Address*. The first example has been done for you.

Example: New nation	any nation	this nation

Lesson 2 {27}

- Examples of Parallel Structure

- ✓ New nation, that nation, any nation
- ✓ So conceived, so dedicated
- ✓ We are engaged, we are met, we have come
- ✓ We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate,
we cannot hallow
- ✓ Of the people, by the people, for the people



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Provide opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs and small groups

Read, Retell and Summarize

- Select a passage for students to read.
- Read the passage aloud to the students.
- Select key words in the passage and ask students to underline these words.
- Ask students to copy the key words onto another piece of paper.
- Using the key words as guides, students retell the reading to a partner.
- Using the key words, students write a summary of the reading.



Read and Retell

- "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this."

• *Gettysburg Address*



Read and Retell

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- are engaged
- civil war
- testing
- So dedicated,
- can long endure
- Battlefield
- Dedicate
- a final resting place
- gave their lives
- We should do this.



Read and Retell

- are engaged
- civil war
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Key Points to Remember

- Scaffolding and discussions help ELs understand complex text.
- "Just right scaffolding" is better than one size fits all. Remove scaffolds as ELs' English improves.
- Scaffolding grade level text supports English language growth by expanding and amplifying the English that ELs read and say.





Scaffolding Bibliography

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