



# ACT SKILLS SUMMIT: CRITICAL THINKING AND TALKING TO LEARN



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June 11, 2018

## Turn & Talk

*Too often classroom talk is “focused on assessing student understanding rather than encouraging and supporting it”.*

*-Linda Kucan 2007*

**How have you found this quote to be true or not?**

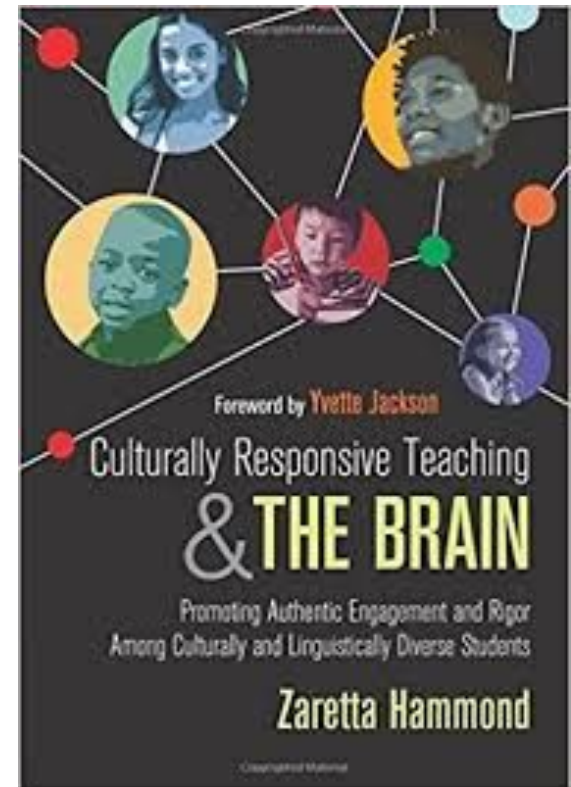
**What has been the role of classroom talk in your own education?**

## In this session you will...

- ❏ Explore the connections between culturally responsive teaching, discussion (dialogic talk) and critical thinking
- ❏ Explore how effective planning for discussion supports critical thinking

## Text Rendering Protocol: Groups of 3 or 4

1. Read the excerpts from *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Underline a **quote** (a sentence or few) that resonates with you.
2. Going around the table, each participant shares their quote and briefly why they selected that quote (1-2 min per person!)
3. Open discussion:  
How does this **affirm** or **challenge** your previous ideas about culturally responsive teaching?  
What are you wondering?



## Zaretta Hammond: The Learning Pit (4 min)



Take notes on the **big ideas** → **Turn & Talk**

## To build on Hammond...

“Teachers sometimes perceive student frustration or lack of immediate success as indicators that they have somehow failed their students. As a result, they jump in to ‘rescue’ students by breaking down the task and guiding students step by step through the difficulties. Although well-intentioned, such ‘rescuing’ undermines the efforts of students, lowers the cognitive demand of the task, and deprives students of opportunities to engage fully in making sense of mathematics.”

*NCTM, Principles to Actions*

## Back to Back/ Face to Face Protocol

*What is the role of discussion and dialogue in supporting students to move up and out of the learning pit?*

## The Role of Talk in Cognitive Routines

“Cognitive routines are the basic mental maneuvers the learner uses for information processing, especially when doing higher order thinking and creative problem solving.

Cognitive routines involve a set of steps students use collectively in the classroom during discussion, brainstorming, group problem solving, Socratic seminar, or other academic conversations.”

- Hammond 2015



**Discussion, or talking to learn, supports**

# Information Processing



## Powerful Planning Practices

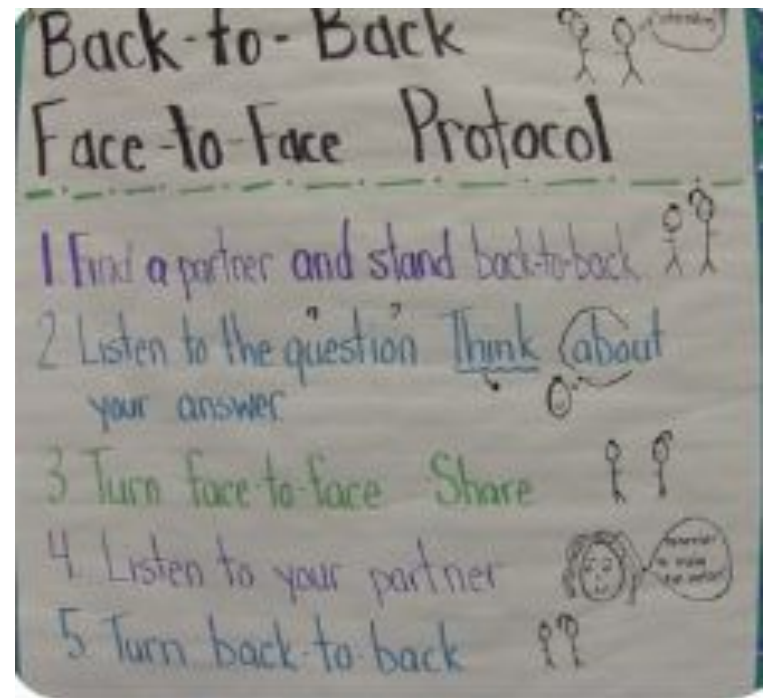
*Use a protocol for discussion*

*Plan open-ended, and higher order thinking questions*

*Anticipate struggles and misconceptions*

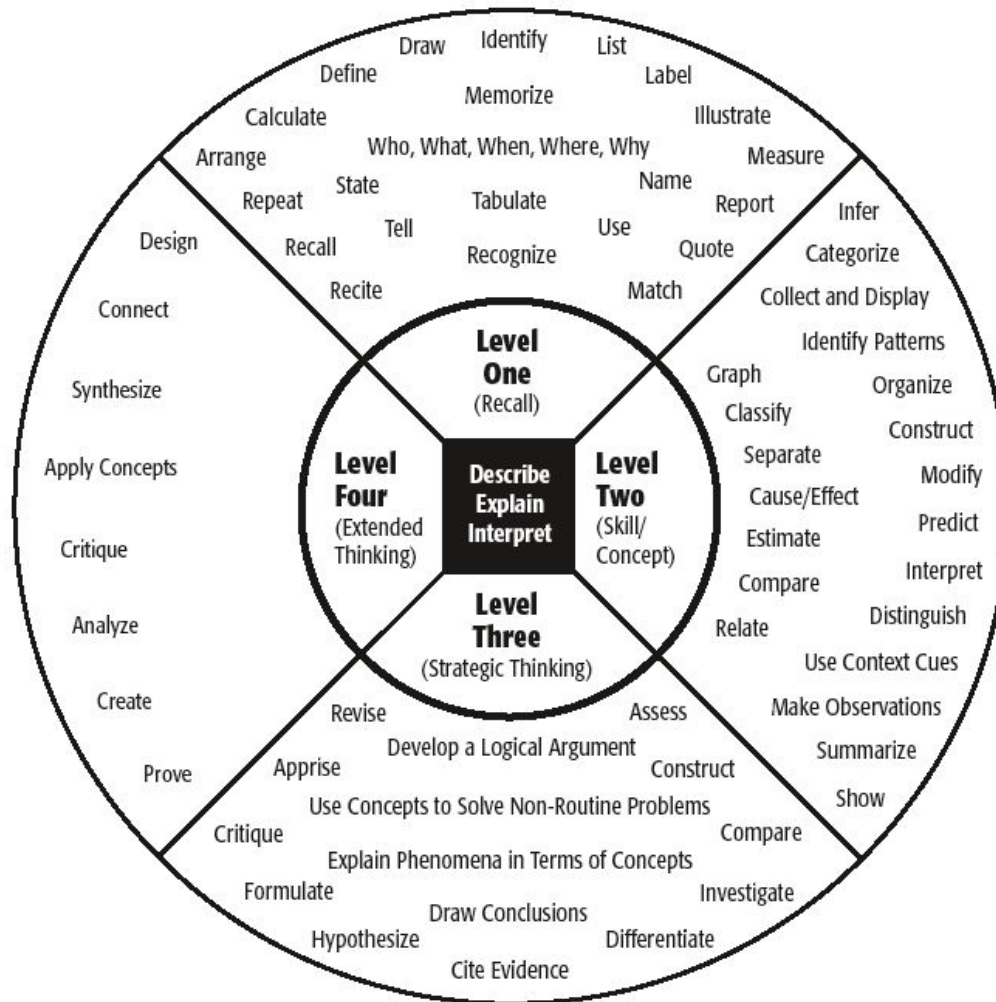
# Powerful Practice 1: Use a **protocol** for discussion to ensure equity in voice and to support the linking of ideas

- ❑ Back to Back/Face to Face
- ❑ Inner Circle/Outer Circle
- ❑ Give one/Get one
- ❑ Chalk Talk
- ❑ Numbered Heads Together
- ❑ Carousel Brainstorm
- ❑ Fishbowl



Which, if any, have you used?

# Powerful Practice 2: Ask open ended, and higher-order thinking **questions** to ensure critical thinking



## Powerful Practice 3: Anticipate **struggles** and **misconceptions** to ensure productive struggle

Plan ways to support students without removing the opportunities for students to engage in **productive struggle**.

- Where will they get stuck?
- What questions and prompts will have in your “back pocket”?
- What questions will you NOT ask? What prompts will you NOT give?
- How will you coach students to help one another?



No  
struggle



Productive  
struggle



Destructive  
struggle

See it in action, take notes on the form provided

## Inner Circle, Outer Circle Protocol

6th Grade, Springfield

*During the discussion, how does the educator loop back to the goal of the lesson?*

## Now you try it!

Use the [planning tool](#) to plan the powerful practices for talking to learn.

Be sure to:

- 1. Describe the task**
- 2. State the goal**
- 3. State the talk protocol**
- 4. Plan the discussion question(s)**
- 5. Anticipate struggle**



## Resources

- [BPS Essentials for Instructional Equity: Essential 3](#)
  - [Essential Practice: Facilitate Instructional Dialogue](#)
- [EL Education: Talk Protocols](#)
  - [EL Education protocols in action \(videos\)](#)

## Last remarks

*What did you learn or appreciate today?*