

# LET'S TALK!

BUILDING LINGUISTICS AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS  
IN AN ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM



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- ▶ Woodland Academy has 546 students
- ▶ Nearly all of our students (96.5%) qualify for free or reduced lunch
- ▶ 65% of our students in grades 1-6 are English Language Learners



# DEMOGRAPHICS

- ▶ First Grade Classroom
  - ▶ Then
  - ▶ And now...
- ▶ The Kids
  - ▶ Great listeners, but...
  - ▶ Not saying much

# A LITTLE PERSPECTIVE

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**WHO "THEY" ARE...**

# CHALLENGE #1

RECEPTIVE WAS GREAT, BUT...  
EXPRESSIVE WAS VIRTUALLY  
NON-EXISTENT ACROSS-THE-BOARD

**LANGUAGE  
DEVELOPMENT**

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# CHALLENGE #2

WITHOUT LANGUAGE, THERE WAS  
NO AUTHENTIC WAY OF ASSESSING  
AND BUILDING BACKGROUND  
KNOWLEDGE...ASSUMPTIONS  
WERE MADE

**LANGUAGE  
DEVELOPMENT**





# CHALLENGE #3

WITHOUT LANGUAGE, HOW  
COULD I BE SURE THAT I WAS  
BUILDING CRITICAL THINKING  
SKILLS

**CRITICAL  
THINKING**

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How could I get them engaged in meaningful conversations?

▶ GOALS:

- ▶ Utilize wait time
- ▶ Language Development
- ▶ Creating a culture of accountable talk and accountable learning, to help build critical thinking skills


**CRITICAL  
QUESTION**

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How could I do this while reinforcing components of the CCSS?

- ▶ Using Evidence
- ▶ Speaking and Listening
- ▶ Academic Vocabulary
- ▶ Conventions of Language

**ANOTHER  
CRITICAL QUESTION**

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## Teacher Research Seminar

- ▶ Working with colleagues
- ▶ Recording and transcribing
- ▶ Reflecting
- ▶ Now what?

**TIMING IS  
EVERYTHING**

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**Discussions**

**4**

**Learning**

An Oral Vocabulary and Language Program

Based on Fine Art and Real-World Photos

**THE STARTING POINT**

- ▶ Low risk – not about right vs. wrong
- ▶ Exposes kids to artwork and places they wouldn't typically have access to
- ▶ No decoding needed – level playing field = more confidence
- ▶ Reinforces all four components of the CCSS (speaking & listening, evidence, vocabulary, conventions of language)

**WHY IT MADE SENSE...**

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- ▶ Fine Art and Literature
  - ▶ Mood, Setting, Author's/Artist's Purpose, Inferring
- ▶ Real-World Photos and Informational Text
  - ▶ What can we learn?
  - ▶ What misconceptions did we have?
  - ▶ What does the image communicate about .....?
  - ▶ Who, what, where, when, how?

**BUILDING LITERACY SKILLS**



framework    adjusting    comical    material





concentrate

weight

posture

balance



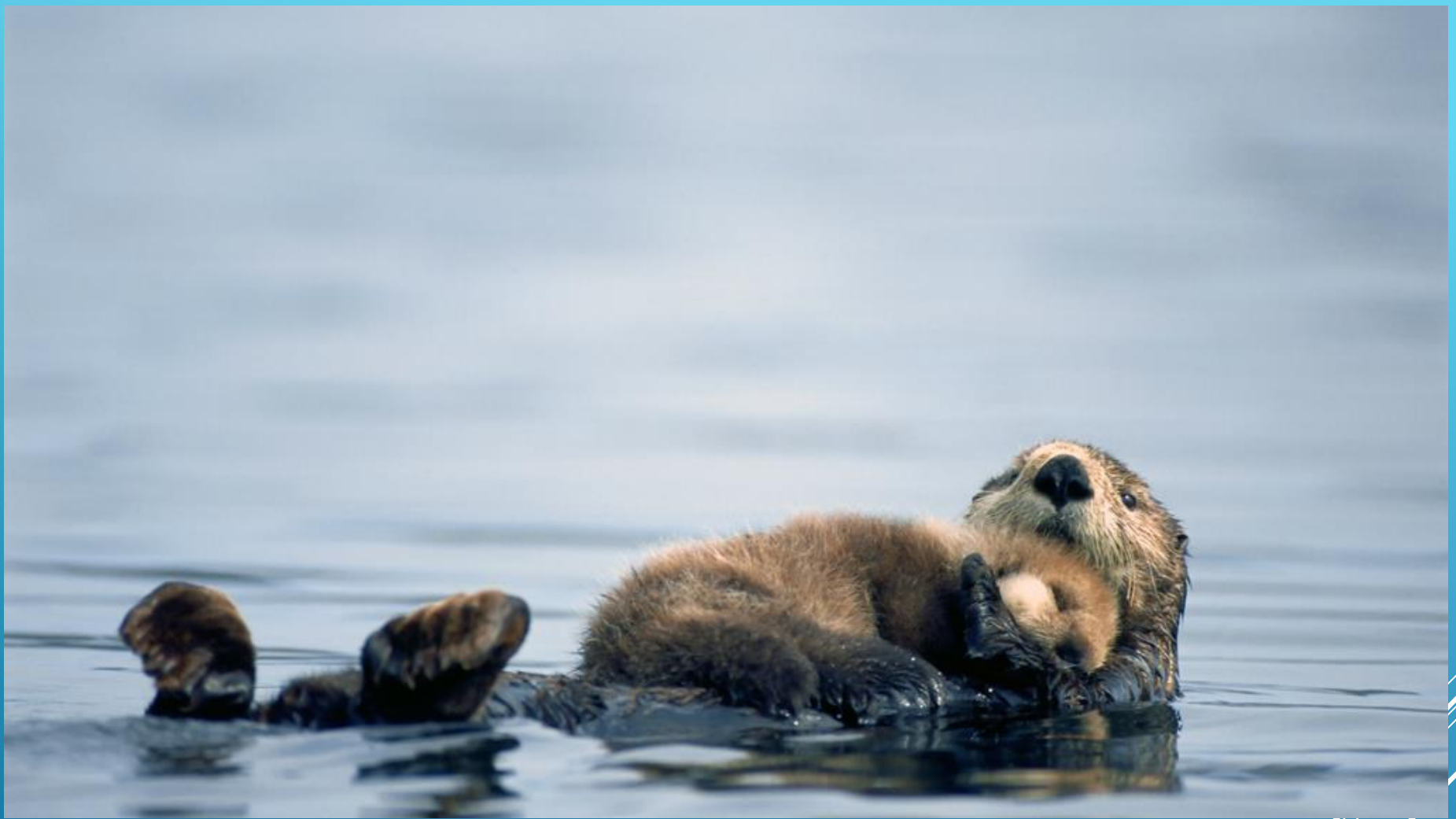


**ART IN ACTION!**



concentrate    figure    outline    sprawl





adaptation  
adapt

survival  
habitat

nurture  
vigilant

- ▶ Citing Evidence
- ▶ Speaking and Listening
- ▶ Academic Vocabulary
- ▶ Conventions of Language

**A QUICK EXAMPLE OF...**



realistic

abstract

material

voluminous

outline

posture

harness

emphasize

framework

oval

similar

dissimilar

describe

privacy

cargo

concentrate

spiral

metallic

haul

sprawl

balance

sparkle

figure

adjust

**WORDS, WORDS, AND  
MORE WORDS!**

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- ▶ Having conversations
- ▶ Sharing what was noticed in artwork
- ▶ Acting out photographs and making connections

**NOW WE'RE  
TALKING!**

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# Wait Time

- ▶ Giving each other time to organize their thoughts
- ▶ No hands up
- ▶ Need time to think, or need help?
- ▶ The ACT of respect

**BUILDING A CULTURE**





T: Okay, nice job...let me hear from one person...everybody put your feathers on the ground, because remember our jobs right now are to be listening because what everybody has to say

All: is important!

T: Okay, I would like to hear from one friend, and then we really have to stop...I know you have a lot to say, but don't forget, we're gonna talk about this more next week...one friend who thinks that the eggs are not strong

Leslly: umm...because they can break really easy

T: okay...so if something can break easily, do you remember the word we use for that? umm

Charlie: hmmm...(3 second wait time)...can you come back to me Ms. Bourgelas?

T: Sure...what's the word we use when something breaks easily

Bae: Umm...(4 second wait)...I forgot

T: Do you want more time to think?

Bae: I need help.

T: You want help...okay.

Washington: I think...(28 second wait)...it will go quickly

T: Good thinking...Kenneth, help him out

Kenneth: Fragile!

# Accountable Talk

- ▶ Truly listening to their peers
- ▶ Putting it in their own words
- ▶ Checking back for understanding

**BUILDING A CULTURE**

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**Geordie**

**Yaritza**

**FAMOUS FIRST-GRADERS!**

**T:** Okay.. So now that you're sure that you've added on, or you've understood what Griseida was trying to say, now you can add on your own thoughts, what you were going to say. Go ahead.

**Yaritza:** I was going to say that...that ummm...the...the guy's finishing like the face and the trunk and the body is like like finished already, so he's about...he's about to put the...the... paper... and stuff and he's and he's putting on something right now.

**T:** Okay. Geordie, can you tell me what you heard Yaritza saying?

**Geordie:** Yaritza said that the face isn't finished and the trunk is not finished so the man is finishing it right now.

**T:** Okay...can you check in with her to see if you understood her, if that's what she meant?

**Geordie:** Is that what you meant?

**Yaritza:** A little bit.

**T:** Nice job Geordie...can you tell us what else you were trying to say Yaritza?

**Yaritza:** I was trying to say that the paper is on the body and the man is putting something on the the face.

**T:** So Geordie, can you add on to what you just heard Yaritza say?

**Geordie:** Yeah...she said the paper on the body and can you say it again?

**Yaritza:** That the paper's on the body and the man is putting something on the face.

**Geordie:** Yaritza said the paper's on the body and the man is putting something in the face.

**T:** Check back with her.

**Geordie:** [No response...looking at teacher for help]

**T:** "Is that what you meant?"

**Geordie:** Is that what you meant?

**Yaritza:** Yes Geordie.

# Accountable Learning

- ▶ What's important, and why?
- ▶ Taking responsibility
- ▶ Believing that what they have to contribute is important

**BUILDING A CULTURE**



T: Put your hands down for one second...Yaritza, how does it feel when you're sharing what you're thinking about this sculpture, and one of your friends is able to put that in their own words, how does that make you feel?

Yaritza: It made me feel kind of happy.

T: Why?

Yaritza: Because they're trying to say what people are what what their friends are saying and umm..so...so umm... they check in with them and they see if they're right...like if that's what you meant...or is not, like a little bit...it makes some people happy or like like umm some... like... like...I....like...I was happy, and like...it makes me feel happy because like Geordie like said said umm..said the things I was saying.

T: Yeah...so you know that he was...listening to you...and that's really important for us as we share with each other to feel like what we have to say is important...that our friends hear us...and they listen.

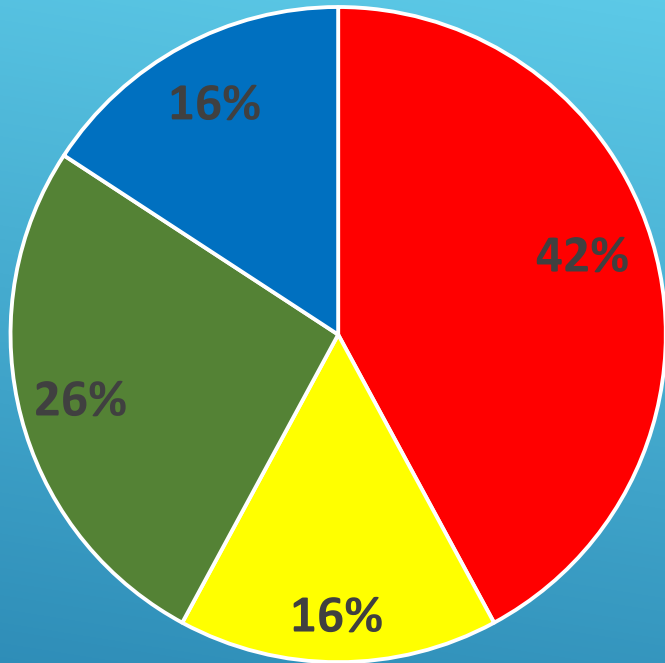
# Transcends across curriculum

- ▶ Apply vocabulary words in other contexts
- ▶ Use talk moves when discussing books and solving Math problems
- ▶ Increase in writing output
- ▶ Value each other, both socially and academically

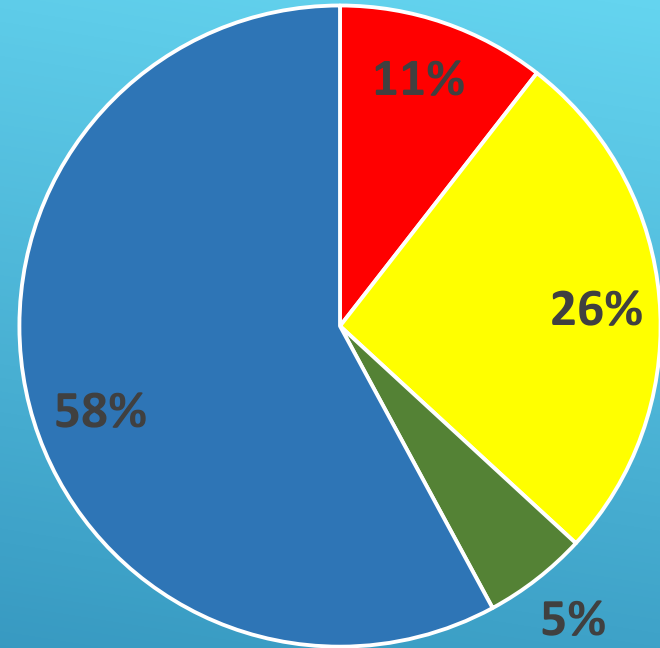
**A WIDE IMPACT**

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# September



# April



Below grade-level



At grade-level



Approaching grade-level



Above grade-level



- ▶ We need to give our students opportunities to TALK where there's low risk
- ▶ We need to build a culture of LISTENING
- ▶ We need to put ourselves in the position of being LEARNERS

# LESSONS LEARNED



- ▶ Be patient
- ▶ Let them talk about things with low risk
- ▶ Record, listen, REPEAT
- ▶ WAIT TIME...if you try nothing else, try this
- ▶ Other strategies and examples for you to take with you

**SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?**

Goal	Suggested Strategy	Examples
Intelligibility	Revoicing	<p>"So let me see if I've got your thinking right. You're saying..."</p> <p>*Always check back with student to follow up and make sure you've understood them.</p>
Explanation of Ideas and Opinions	Asking students to explicate their reasoning	<p>"Why do you think that?"</p> <p>"How did you arrive at that answer?"</p> <p>"Say more about that."</p>

# BUILDING LANGUAGE & CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Goal	Suggested Strategy	Examples
Coherence or Rigor	Asking students to restate someone else's reasoning	<p>"Can you repeat what he just said in your own words?"</p> <p>*After a student has restated someone's reasoning, have him or her ask "Is that what you meant?" to make sure they understood.</p> <p>**If the student didn't hear the original speaker, have him or her ask: "Can you say that again?", or "Can you please speak louder?"</p>
Coherence or Rigor	Challenging or providing a different example	<p>"Does it always work that way?"</p> <p>"What about....?"</p>

# BUILDING LANGUAGE & CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS



Goal	Suggested Strategy	Examples
Equitable Participation	Asking students to apply their own reasoning to someone else's reasoning	<p>"Do you agree or disagree?"</p> <p>"Why or why not?"</p>
Equitable Participation	Prompt students for further participation	<p>"Would someone else like to add on?"</p> <p>"What thinking can someone else share with us?"</p>
Equitable Participation	Using Wait Time	<p>"Take your time, we'll wait."</p> <p>"Do you want more time, or do you need some help?"</p> <p>*Encourage the rest of the class to have their hands down and to be formulating their own thoughts while they wait. This makes them accountable, AND it gives the student you've called on time to truly concentrate and think about what he or she wants to say.</p>

# BUILDING LANGUAGE & CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS



## Checklist

### Goals for Productive Discussions and Nine Talk Moves

Goal One Help Individual Students Share, Expand and Clarify Their Own Thinking	Notes/Frequency of Use
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. <b>Time to Think</b> - Partner Talk - Writing as Think Time - Wait Time	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. <b>Say More:</b> "Can you say more about that?" "What do you mean by that?" "Can you give an example?"	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. <b>So, Are You Saying...?:</b> "So, let me see if I've got what you're saying. Are you saying...?" (always leaving space for the original student to agree or disagree and say more)	
Goal Two Help Students Listen Carefully to One Another	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. <b>Who Can Rephrase or Repeat?</b> "Who can repeat what Javon just said or put it into their own words?" (After a partner talk) "What did your partner say?"	
Goal Three Help Students Deepen Their Reasoning	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. <b>Asking for Evidence or Reasoning</b> "Why do you think that?" "What's your evidence?" "How did you arrive at that conclusion?"	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. <b>Challenge or Counterexample</b> "Does it always work that way?" "How does that idea square with Sonia's example?" "What if it had been a copper cube instead?"	
Goal Four Help Students Think With Others	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. <b>Agree/Disagree and Why?</b> "Do you agree/disagree? (And why?)" "What do people think about what Ian said?" "Does anyone want to respond to that idea?"	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. <b>Add On:</b> "Who can add onto the idea that Jamal is building?" "Can anyone take that suggestion and push it a little further?"	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. <b>Explaining What Someone Else Means</b> "Who can explain what Aisha means when she says that?" "Who thinks they could explain why Simon came up with that answer?" "Why do you think he said that?"	

# TALK MOVES CHECKLIST

**Inquiry**

**perplexity**

**query**

**wondering**



**uncertainty**

**ANY QUESTIONS?**