Integrating Speaking and Listening CCSS Across the Curriculum

Learning is a social task. Lev Vygotsky argued that "Language is the main tool that promotes thinking, develops reasoning, and supports cultural activities like reading and writing." As a result, instructional strategies that promote literacy across the curriculum play a significant role in knowledge construction.

Why not take the children's love for social interaction and talking to each other and put it to use to increase academics?

Younger children are beginning to develop an inner voice but still need to think out loud while completing assignments or tasks. If you listen closely to your students most of the time, they are not talking about random subjects but about the assignment or task at hand. They often are making connections with their own lives as they are working.

I have seen many benefits in my first- and second-grade classrooms, including:

- ALL students are engaged
- We have better class participation and discussions
- Students are more focused on the concept being taught
- Increasing problem solving among students

In addition to these benefits, I have seen how integrating speaking and listening builds a positive classroom community with less bullying, increased self-confidence, and greater independence for many students, along with the ability to work with all students.

You may be thinking, "But less work is being done if students are working in groups or partners." I can remember in my grade-school years how I dreaded working with groups. It meant I would do all the work! Not anymore! Teachers set up their classrooms from the beginning of the year with expectations that all students will be participating in discussions, projects, and tasks. My assessment of students is not just focused on the academic goals; I also use rubrics to evaluate the social goals. Additionally, I support students to use rubrics to evaluate the academic and social goals for themselves and their peers. At the beginning of the year, I teach my students how to critically think about their partner or group work and how to reflect on it.

Idea for projects or tasks to get students working together:

Book Clubs

Have students read the same book or about the same topic. I give my students guided questions before they begin reading and set aside time weekly for students to get into groups to discuss what they have read. Questions range from "What is your favorite part of the book?" to "How does the character change throughout the story?".

Peer Editing

I have students choose a piece of their writing from a unit and pair students up randomly to read their partners writing. The first time
they read it, they read for content (making sense and staying on topics). Then they reread for grammar (does it sound right and make sense). They reread it a third time to tell their partner what they liked about it and one way their partner can make the story better. I give my students colored pens to help make their partner’s work colorful.

**Number Talks**

This is how I get students talking about math. I give the students a problem to solve mentally. My students think how many ways they can solve the problem. Then, turning to a partner, they share what strategies they used. I ask my students to tell why they have the same answer or a different answer. Then as a whole class students share about what they learned from each other about solving the problem.

**Problem-based Learning (PBL) Projects**

Click on this link for ideas and how to get started on PBL.

**Brainstorming**

I use the Think, Pair, Share cooperative learning strategy for prewriting or before I begin a read-aloud. I randomly assign partners to work throughout the whole unit together. Their discussions are on what they will write about or how they will begin their writing if given a specific topic to write. Before, during, and after a read-aloud, students come up with “I wonder…” statements to share with their partner. Think, Pair Share and Turn to Your Partner are strategies you can use in any content area.

Vygotsky suggested that language helps children be strategic, rather than purely impulsive, in their approach to complex problems, and it helps them to gain control over their own thinking and behavior.

What is one idea you might try to incorporate listening and speaking into the classroom? How might you support students to use their language to be strategic in their learning?

**Resources:**

- Teacher’s Notebook: Rubric for Effective Teamwork
- Teacher’s Notebook: “Reading Reflections” Conversation-starters for Partner Talks about Books
- What are the benefits of cooperative and collaborative learning?

**Common Core Standards (grade 2)**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1 Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1a Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1b Build on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1c Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

Standards from corestandards.org.

Have you read our weekly Common Core tips? Read them here. If you would like additional support correlating your instruction to the goals of the Common Core State Standards, check out our correlation tool. It allows you to search by either DSC program or Common Core State Standard to identify all standards addressed in a selected DSC program within a unit, week, or lesson, or find which lessons in any DSC program address a selected standard.