Academic Discussion Continuum of Teacher Practice (At-A-Glance Version)

	Practice	Emerging	→	Thriving
Planning	**Planning cognitively challenging discussion opportunities (the what)**	o **Purpose** for discussion is not aligned to grade-level academic content. o The **prompt** only requires low-level thinking and short responses.		o **Purpose** for discussion is designed to deepen understanding of academic content and related big ideas or essential question. o The **prompt** requires higher order and disciplinary thinking. It requires different solutions, perspectives or controversy.
	Planning for how students interact (the how)	o Plans do not yet include clear **structures** for student talk or specific **strategies** to elicit talk. o Students are not **grouped** intentionally.		o Plans include carefully selected **strategies and structures** that foster authentic interaction for all students. o Students are **grouped** strategically.
Instruction	**Teacher & Student Facilitation**	o Interaction mostly between teacher and students. o Discussions **structures** unclear. o Absence of follow-up **questions** that elicit elaboration or justification. o **Questioning** practices are not yet equitable. o .		o **Discussion strategies** require students to engage in authentic interaction. o Pair, small and whole group **structures** are used strategically. o Students ask **questions** about other students' thinking. o Teacher questions may still guide the discussion. o **Questioning** practices are consistently equitable. o **Facilitation** moves encourage student interaction to deepen their understanding.
	Supporting All Students	o Absence of structures to ensure **equitable participation.** o No explicit support of **academic language**. o There is no **support** for diverse language learners.		o Teacher supports students to monitor the **equity of participation** in their discussions. o Teacher models and provides students opportunities to rehearse general and discipline-specific **academic language**. o Students are prepared to select their own **language scaffolds** to support articulation of their thinking.
Assessment	**Evidence of learning**	o No collection of **evidence of quality of discussion or resulting learning.** o No opportunities to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion.		o Consistent collection of **evidence of quality of discussion or resulting learning** and analysis of this evidence to inform next steps. o Students asked to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion and resulting learning/thinking to inform next steps that will improve performance.
Conditions for Learning	**Evidence of SEL and Classroom Management**	o **Classroom procedures, routines and/or norms** are inefficient and result in a loss of instructional time. o **Seating** is not yet conducive to discussion (e.g., students in rows). o **Environment** is primarily negative, with no safety for students to express themselves and no support from teacher. o **SEL instruction/ learning strategies** are absent.		o Teacher and students collaborate to reflect on and refine **classroom routines, procedures and norms** that maximize instructional time. o **Seating arrangement** maximizes discussion opportunities. o **Environment** ensures students across difference are comfortable challenging each other's ideas and taking intellectual risks. o **Explicit SEL instruction/learning strategies** are present and consistently integral to teaching and learning.

Academic Discussion Continuum of Teacher Practice (Text in Red indicate practices essential for ELLs)

Practice	Emerging			Thriving
Planning cognitively challenging discussion opportunities (the what) **Purpose:** the link between the discussion and learning outcomes. **Prompt:** The specific question(s) for discussion that engages students in deepening understanding. *Related OETF standard: IF: Planning Coherent Instruction*	○ My instructional plans do not include a **purpose** for discussion that is aligned to grade-level academic content. ○ The **prompt** only requires that students engage in low-level thinking (e.g., recall, basic facts). Students are not required to go beyond one-sentence responses.	○ My instructional plans include a **purpose** for discussion generally aligned to grade-level academic content but may not be linked to the big ideas or essential question of the unit of study. ○ The **prompt** invites some higher order thinking (e.g. analysis, synthesis, evaluation) but may not invite different solutions or perspectives.	○ My instructional plans include a **purpose** for discussion that aligns in some specific way to academic content and is linked to the big ideas or essential question. ○ The **prompt** invites students to spend a significant amount of time on higher order thinking or grappling with different solutions or perspectives. Students may be asked to explain, justify with examples or textual evidence, or productively struggle with a problem.	○ My instructional plans include a **purpose** for discussion designed to deepen understanding of academic content and the related big ideas or essential question. ○ The **prompt** invites students to spend most of their time on higher order and disciplinary thinking (e.g., sourcing in history or justifying a method for problem-solving in math) to productively struggle with academic content. The prompt requires different solutions, perspectives or controversy.

Planning: The What

Questions for reflection
Is my prompt discussion-worthy? Is it motivating, engaging, open to different solutions or perspectives, in service of deepening understanding?

How is the academic discussion intended to develop students' communication skills? Disciplinary thinking skills? Content understanding?

What are the demands of the task that students will need support with? Language demands? Literacy demands? Cognitive demands? Etc.

How does the discussion support the content objectives, big ideas and essential questions of my lesson/unit?

How does the academic discussion develop students' capacity to engage in sustained productive struggle?

How will I utilize SEL strategies to support student engagement in cognitively challenging discussions?

	Practice	Emerging	→		Thriving
Planning: The How	**Planning for how students interact (the how)** **Strategies**: Protocols for student talk. Some examples are: Think-Pair-Share, Participation quiz, Academic Discussion Placemat, Philosophical chairs, Discussion Roles, etc. **Structure:** Whole class, small group, or pair **Grouping:** How students are grouped together to balance skill, language proficiency and SEL competency levels *Related OETF standard: IF: Planning Coherent Instruction*	○ My plans do not yet include clear **structures** for student talk (e.g., group work, class discussion) or specific **strategies** to elicit talk (e.g., "talk in your groups") ○ For small group or paired interactions: Students are not **grouped** intentionally.	○ My plans include **strategies** or **structures,** but these are mostly focused on fortifying student output. ○ For small group or paired interactions: Students are **in groups** but it is not clear that grouping is intentional.	○ My plans include **strategies or structures** that are carefully selected to fortify student output and generate student interaction. ○ For small group or paired interactions: Students are **grouped** in an intentional way that supports most students' learning.	○ My plans include carefully selected **strategies and structures** that foster authentic interaction for all students. ○ For small group or paired interactions: Students are **grouped** strategically in a way that allows students to be resources for each other.
	Questions for reflection *What discussion structure or strategy best fits my purpose?* *How am I grouping students and for what purposes?* *What role does language or academic proficiency level play?* *Have I identified the SEL skills and competencies students need in order to be successful?*				

Instruction: Facilitation

Practice	Emerging	→		Thriving
Teacher & Student Facilitation **Strategies**: Protocols for student talk. Some examples are: Think-Pair-Share, Round Robin, Participation quiz, etc. **Structure:** Whole class, small group, or pair **Questioning:** follow up, clarification, and probing questions that a teacher or student asks during a discussion. Equity in questioning ensures that all students are asked high-level questions. **Facilitation:** Instructional and facilitation moves used by the teacher to guide the discussion. *Related OETF standards: 3B-Questioning and Discussion Techniques:*	○ Most interaction is characterized by back and forth exchanges between individual students and me. ○ Discussions **structures** (pair, small, whole group) may be absent or unclear. ○ I often accept answers without follow-up **questions** that elicit elaboration or justification. ○ **Questioning** practices are not yet equitable (low-level questions directed to ELLs, SPED, etc.) .	○ I use a few **strategies** to encourage student talk, although these mostly elicit output instead of interaction. ○ I may rely on one discussion **structure** (pair, small, and whole group). ○ I ask follow-up **questions** that require students to elaborate. ○ **Questioning** practices are not consistently equitable. ○ I use some **facilitation** moves (e.g. wait time, talk moves) to encourage student output.	○ I use a range of **discussion strategies** that elicit both student output and interaction. There is explicit instruction of discussion skills (e.g. create, clarify, fortify, and negotiate ideas). ○ Students have opportunities for pair, small, and whole group discussion **structures.** ○ I ask, and I invite students to ask, follow-up **questions** that require students to elaborate or justify their thinking. ○ **Questioning** practices are mostly equitable. ○ I use **facilitation** moves (e.g. wait time, talk moves) to encourage student interaction.	○ I use **discussion strategies** that require students to engage in authentic interaction in which they are applying discussion skills (create, clarify, fortify, negotiate ideas). Instruction that elicits output is intentionally designed to prepare students for authentic interaction. ○ Pair, small and whole group **structures** are used strategically to further learning. ○ Students ask **questions** about other students' thinking, including follow-up questions that require elaboration and justification. My questions may still guide the discussion. ○ **Questioning** practices are consistently equitable. ○ I consistently use **facilitation** moves (e.g. wait time, talk moves) to encourage student interaction to deepen their understanding.
Questions for reflection *Where are my students now and what are my next steps in building discussion skills?* *Have I identified the social practices essential for high quality academic discussion for all learners?* *How will I scaffold the social practices for all of my students?* *How do I move from fostering output to interaction?* *How do I model moving from highly scripted interactions to more authentic academic discussions for all learners*				

	Practice	Emerging	⟶		Thriving
Instruction: Supporting All Learners	**Supporting All Learners** **Equitable participation:** the strategies and structures in place to ensure all students have the opportunity and support to participate **Academic Language instruction:** explicit instruction and support that aid all students in effectively using **academic language** in discussion **Language support and scaffolds:** modeling, rehearsal, and use of sentence frames, word banks, discussion placemats *Related OETF standards: 3B- Questioning and Discussion Techniques*	o There are no structures to ensure **equitable participation**. o I do not yet explicitly support the use of discipline-specific **academic language**. o There is no **support** for diverse language learners.	o There are some structures that encourage **equitable participation**. o I provide discipline-specific **academic language** for students but inconsistently require its use. o There is some **language support** provided for diverse language learners (e.g., sentence frames) but these might not be differentiated.	o Structures require **equitable participation**. o I support students in using discipline-specific **academic language** by modeling, providing opportunities for practice and application of new language. o **Language supports** are differentiated and move students to using language independently (discussion placemats, sentence frames, word banks, etc.)	o I support students to monitor the **equity of participation** of their own discussions. o I model, provide students opportunities to rehearse general and discipline-specific **academic language**, and hold students accountable for applying academic language. o I prepare students to select their own **language scaffolds** to support articulation of their thinking (discussion placemats, posted sentence frames, etc.)

Questions for reflection

Who is participating? How do I know?

What additional support do my diverse learners need to fully participate and benefit?

How am I preparing all learners to use academic language appropriately?

How am I scaffolding the language use of my diverse language learners while moving them towards independence?

How do I use SEL skills and competencies to model and teach so that all students are heard and acknowledged respectfully?

Am I holding all students to high expectations while varying the level of support/scaffold needed?

	Practice	Emerging	→→→		Thriving
Assessment	**Evidence of learning** • Evidence of discussion skills • Evidence of resulting learning of content • Reflection *Related OETF standard: 3E- Using Assessment to Inform Instruction*	○ I don't yet collect **evidence of quality of discussion or learning** resulting from the discussion. ○ I don't yet provide students opportunities to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion.	○ I collect some **evidence of quality of discussion or learning** resulting from discussion (exit tickets, quick writes, etc.) but do not necessarily use this to inform next steps. ○ I provide students with limited opportunities to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion.	○ I collect **evidence of quality of discussion or learning** resulting from discussion and analyze this evidence to inform next steps ○ I provide students with opportunities to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion.	○ I consistently collect **evidence of quality of discussion or learning** resulting from discussion and analyze this evidence to inform next steps ○ I ask students to **reflect** on the quality of the discussion and resulting learning/thinking to inform next steps that will improve performance.
	Questions for reflection *How well did the discussion meet my learning objective?* *How does my evidence/data inform my next teaching moves?* *What questions emerge that I want to discuss with my colleagues?* *How have I created the conditions for my students to reflect honestly and frankly on their experience?* *How well did the discussion meet the needs of all students? Including:* ○ *English Language Learners* ○ *African-American Males* ○ *Special Ed* *How does my evidence / data inform my next teaching moves?* *What are my next steps? What tools do I need?*				

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LEADERSHIP, CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION

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Continuum is informed by Zwiers and Crawford (2011), LAUSD's Quality Teaching and Learning rubric, and OUSD's Effective Teaching

	Practice	Emerging		→	Thriving
Conditions for Learning	**Evidence of SEL Competency** **Managing Classroom Procedures** **Environment**: classroom culture, sense of safety **Seating arrangement:** rows, circle, groups, etc. **SEL instruction:** Teachers modeling and explicitly teaching strategies that build students' social and emotional learning skills and competencies *Related OETF standards; 2A: Creating an environment of respect and rapport &2C: Managing Classroom procedures*	○ **Classroom procedures, routines and/or norms** are inefficient and result in a loss of instructional time. ○ **Seating** is not yet conducive to discussion (e.g., students in rows). ○ **Environment** is primarily negative, with no safety for students to express themselves and no support from teacher. ○ **SEL instruction/ learning strategies** are absent.	○ **Classroom routines, procedures, and norms** are evident but only partially successful. ○ **Seating arrangement** allows for discussion (e.g., circle, small groups). ○ **Environment** is generally safe in that there is no hostile behavior (there may even be a respectful tone), but students are not encouraged to voice their thinking. ○ **SEL instruction/ learning strategies** are present but not yet integral to teaching and learning.	○ **Classroom routines, procedures, and norms** are clear, effective, and maximize learning time. ○ **Seating arrangement** allows for flexible grouping. ○ **Environment** encourages spontaneous and supportive sharing of ideas among most students. ○ **Explicit SEL instruction/learning strategies** present and somewhat consistently integral to teaching and learning.	○ I collaborate with my students to establish, reflect on and refine **classroom routines, procedures and norms** that maximize instructional time. ○ **Seating arrangement** maximizes discussion opportunities. ○ **Environment** ensures students are comfortable across difference (culture, language, gender) to challenge each other's ideas and take intellectual risks. ○ **Explicit SEL instruction/learning strategies** are present and consistently integral to teaching and learning.
	Questions for Reflection *Have I provided students an opportunity to identify their optimum conditions for learning? (This includes student actions, teacher actions, and environment)* *Have I identified my own optimum conditions for learning and shared them with my students?* *How will I model and explicitly teach:* • *self-awareness* • *self-management* • *social awareness* • *relationship skill* • *responsible decision making?*				

In the spirit of continual growth and improvement, the following Actionable Steps are designed to connect your reflection of individual practice and/or observation of trends at your site to concrete next steps. Based on your stage of practice (emerging to thriving), look for some possible actionable steps that will develop your capacity to foster quality academic discussion. These steps are best taken up in collaboration, either as a PLC, through peer support, or coaching. Be sure to reference the resources on the Quality Academic Discussions Google site to support your efforts.
https://sites.google.com/a/ousd.k12.ca.us/quality-academic-discussions/
Following this document is a sample of resources that can be found on the Google Site.

Actionable Steps

Emerging	→	Thriving
Prompts: ○ Use the 7 Features of Effective Discussion Tasks or Developing Discussion Prompts Checklist for collaborative planning **Pre-conditions (norms, routines, classroom setup)** ○ Strengthen classroom procedures and routines necessary for small and whole group discussion ○ Ensure seating arrangement is conducive to focal discussion structure (circle, students sit in pairs, etc.) ○ Teacher defined norm setting and expectations ○ Adults build awareness of the role of SEL practices in their professional conversations **Strategies and Tools:** ○ Focus on one or two of Cathy O'Conner's talk moves, e.g., "Say more, Who can paraphrase what ____ said? " ○ Use structured student talk strategies that focus on student output such as timed Think-Pair-Shared or Round Robin ○ Model discussion skills through teacher think-alouds, fishbowls, use of student discussion videos, etc. **Adult Learning:** ○ Formalized and intentional collaborative structures that support adult professional conversations (e.g., protocols and consultancies)		**Prompts:** ○ Use the 7 Features of Effective Discussion Tasks or Developing Discussion Prompts Checklist to collaboratively plan a task or for peer feedback in a PLC or Community of Practice **Pre-conditions (norms, routines, classroom setup)** ○ Ensure seating arrangement is conducive small and whole group discussion (students in groups or pairs) ○ Class co-construction of norms and expectations ○ Adults intentionally apply and begin to reflect on SEL practice in their professional conversations **Strategies and Tools:** ○ Try out more of Cathy O'Conner's talk moves. Videotape class discussion and bring to PLC to reflect and inform next steps. ○ Begin to ask students to use the Cathy O'Conner talk moves in small groups and pairs. ○ Use the Strengthening Common Practices chart** to build interactive discussion skills using existing strategies ○ Teacher and students model discussion skills through fishbowls, student discussion video etc. **Adult Learning:** ○ Provide opportunities for both formal and informal collaborative conversations. ○ Audiotape or videotape small group or pair discussions to analyze in a PLC.	**Prompts:** ○ Use the 7 Features of Effective Discussion Tasks or Developing Discussion Prompts Checklist to collaboratively plan a task for peer feedback in a PLC or Community of Practice **Pre-conditions (norms, routines, classroom setup)** ○ Ensure seating arrangement is conducive to flexible grouping (students in groups or pairs) ○ Students set individual and class goals on norms and reflect of these goals ○ Adults deepen, reflect and model SEL practice in all their conversations (professional, family, student, etc.) **Strategies and Tools:** ○ Build student capacity to use Cathy O'Conner talk moves in small groups and pairs. ○ Use the Strengthening Common Practices chart** to build interactive discussion skills using existing strategies ○ Try out discussion strategies that lead to more authentic interaction and responsibility for student facilitation (Socratic Seminar, Philosophical Chairs, Final word, etc.) ○ Audiotape or videotape small group or pair discussions for class reflection **Adult Learning:** ○ Provide opportunities for both formal and informal collaborative conversations, including peer observations. ○ Audiotape or videotape small group or pair discussions to analyze in a PLC.

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*_**The 7 Features of Effective Discussion Tasks**_ (_Academic Discussions_ by Zwiers and Crawford, 2011)

1. Require both partners to talk
2. Require critical and creative thinking.
3. Take advantage of controversies and conflict.
4. Recognize and reduce ambiguity.
5. Encourage thinking based on principles, laws, and approaches of the discipline.
6. Build in opportunities for transfer of knowledge and skills.
7. Provide choice and ownership.

Developing Discussion Prompts Checklist

	Does the prompt leave room for multiple perspectives or solutions?
	Is the prompt open-ended?
	Does the prompt connect to a big idea or essential question of the lesson/unit?
	Is the prompt engaging to students? Is it worthy of discussion?
	Does the prompt require students to think critically?
	Is the prompt posted?

** **Strengthening common practices and activities for more effective interaction** from Common Core Standards in diverse classrooms: Essential practices for developing academic language and disciplinary literacy by Zwiers, O'Hara, Pritchard, 2014.

Common Practice or Activity	Common Limitations	How to Build Interaction Skills Into and From It
Whole-class discussion	- Most responses are by the teacher and a handful of very verbal students - The teacher often controls the conversation	- Train students to respond to one another and use teacher-like moves and constructive skills. - Show and analyze model classroom discussions.
Socratic Seminars	- One person talks at a time - Intimidating to talk in front of others - Easy to pass or let others dominate.	- Have inner circle discuss topic and outer circle partners coach each inner circle participant. Take timeouts and have coach and coachee discuss next things to say; have circles turn and talk in pairs at times.
Sentence starters and frames	Looking at sentence frames during conversation can stall the conversation	- Focus on thinking skills and a few of its frames. - Have students memorize the frames. - Students find different partners and try to use the frames without looking (e.g., cover up the posters)
Visual and hands-on activities	Student can over-rely on commonly experiences visuals or the objects to communicate. Students might just point to them rather than using complex language.	- Create information gaps in which students use different visuals and need to describe them - Take away the visuals and objects and provide prompts that ask students to talk about the ideas face to face with a purpose.
Pair-shares and Turn-and-Talks	Pair-shares can offer quick quantity but lack quality in terms of complex language. Often partners share similar information one turn each.	- Structure the turn-taking ("Partner A starts first) and the responses: "After A shares an idea, clarify and build on that idea as much as you can. Then B can share, connecting somehow to the idea just built up. - Have different partners respond to different prompts.