

Academic Conversation Samples

Roleplay:

Practice the script below with a partner to experience how an academic conversation flows to further learning. *After the roleplay, reflect on how the teacher guided the conversation and any implications this has for your own teaching.*

A: Teacher

B: Student

Science

A: What did you observe?

B: Well, the higher the ramp was, the further the car went.

A: Why do you think that happened?

B: I don't know. We just read about potential energy in the book. So, maybe the higher the ramp, the starting point, the more energy it had and it made it go further.

A: Yeah, I think the cars that went further had more energy because we had to lift the cars higher. We used more energy for them, even though we didn't feel it.

B: But what if we had to push real cars up a hill? Then we would feel it.

A: Yeah. I did that once and used up a lot of energy. I guess I gave it to the car. And every time I go up the stairs, I give myself potential energy, I think.

B: And what about the graph we made? Here we can connect the points and it makes a line, more or less.

A: So what?

B: Well, as the teacher showed last week, we can extra...polite, extrapolate the data. That means we can predict by using the line. So if the ramp is 500 inches tall, ..

A: We could predict how far the car would go?

B: But we would have to make up a formula or something, since we experiment with a ramp that high. So, if the height, h , is something, we want to know the distance, d ?

A: Well, each time the height is multiplied by around 4, so d could equal 4 times h , more or less.

B: OK, but so what? Why is it important? How is it useful to us?

A: We can learn how to predict when things are linear.

Math

A: What do we need to find?

B: We ultimately need to know if we have enough money. But first, we need to find the length of the fence.

A: How do you know that?

B: Because it asks if we have enough money. But we need to know how much fence to buy, which goes around the field. Then we need to calculate how much that fence costs and compare it to our \$290.

A: I think we are supposed to estimate a rough answer.

B: Maybe the length will be around 100 meters. What do you think?

A: I think it will be around 90 meters.

B: Why do you think that?

A: Because I think the circle part is 10 meters and I add up the rest.

B: What do we need to do? How can we use a drawing? Can we use a formula or algorithm?

A: We can add the sides that we see but then the circle piece? B: We can use the formula for a circle perimeter. It's pi times diameter. Then we find the perimeter and divide by four. How does that sound? Can we try any other ideas?

B: That sounds OK. What information do we need? And why?

A: We need the diameter to multiply it by pi. We can find the radius and ... We get 94.8 meters. Times 3 dollars per meter gets us 284.52; so we have enough money.

B: How does the perimeter compare to our estimations?

A: How is this like something that might happen in our lives?

Language Arts

A: What do you think the author's message is?

B: Well I don't think it was fair that the principal changed the rules about the jacket, you know, to pay for it.

A: Me too, but what was the lesson from the story?

B: Maybe it was to stand up for what is right.

A: Can you elaborate on that?

B: Well, she was sad at first and then talked to her grandpa who told her he could pay, but wouldn't. Maybe this helped her see that it would be, like, wrong to just give in and pay. What do you think?

A: Yes, I agree. I think Martha changed cuz maybe at first, if she had the money, she would've paid. But, however, her grandfather made her think and show the school people that they were wrong.

B: So how can we apply this to our life?

A: Maybe we can make sure bullies at school don't get away with bullying.

B: And maybe it has to do with racism, like we talked about in class, how people bully people based on their skin color, like we saw in history class.

A: How do we stop racism, though?

B: Maybe study really hard to be lawyers.

A: OK, how can we sum this up?

B: We can say that the author wanted to teach us to stick up for what is right, even when more powerful people change the rules; and we should study more.

Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard (in press) Teaching core standards in diverse classrooms: Research-based practices for developing complex language and disciplinary literacy Retrieved on June 19, 2019 at ALDNetwork.org