

APPENDIX | Talk Assessment Tool for Teachers

Directions

This assessment tool is designed to help you make judgments about the quality of students' talk during discussions about text in your classroom. Using a video of a whole-class or a small-group discussion, complete the five steps below. The purpose of working through each step is to help you gain both a global understanding of the discussion and a deeper understanding of the specific features of the discourse (e.g., incidence of authentic questions, uptake, elaborated explanations) that indicate high-level thinking and comprehension. It is through understanding the talk at this level that we can begin to understand the quality of students' thinking, learning, and understanding.

1. Before proceeding with the assessment, ask yourself this question: "What was your goal for this discussion?" Write your answer here or discuss your answer with your literacy coach or critical colleague.

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2. Select a ten-minute segment from the video that you would like to analyze, and view it. As you view the video segment, record who initiates each turn, and note anything about the turn that strikes you on the worksheet (pages 215–217). For example, you might note the occurrences of elaborated explanations, authentic questions, or affective responses. The Code-as-You-Go notation is provided to help you. Use the worksheet to make notations for approximately fifty turns, or about ten minutes of discussion.
3. View the ten-minute segment again and continue to add notes to your worksheet.
4. Based on your notes from the worksheet, make an assessment of the quality of the talk in the ten-minute sample using the rubrics provided.
5. Based on your viewing of the segment, your notes from the worksheet, and your assessment of the quality of the talk, reflect on the overall value of the discussion by writing responses to the reflection questions provided.