

Talk Science

Professional Development

Transcript for Talk Strategies: Goal 2 – Listen Carefully



1. Overview

Helping students to share and expand their reasoning is the foundation for productive talk. But students also have to get better at **listening to their peers**, in new and much more focused ways. They can't build on each other's thinking if they are not listening to each other!

For talk to promote learning, it's critical to build a classroom culture where students take one another seriously. Students have to learn to go public with their ideas, speaking loudly and clearly enough so that everyone can hear and understand them. And if students can't hear, or don't understand what a classmate says, they have to be willing to speak up and ask for clarification.

There is one talk move that helps to build a *culture* of listening. This move, "**Who can repeat or rephrase?**" – is about asking students to repeat or put into their own words what a classmate has said.

Classroom Video Example 1:

Aisha: Well um, I was going to say about the pattern, ... um that... I think that with the water and salt combined, it's the same thing as the salt dissolved in water. Because like, um it seems like, that when um the salt and the water combine it's the exact same thing as the salt dissolved in water. So, 'cause, then the salt water, the salt goes in--, the salt's weight goes also into the water's weight, and then it equals...

Teacher: (pause) I wonder if somebody can repeat what you just said.

Student: That was a lot.

Teacher: I'm not even sure if I can and I was listening. Can you repeat what she just said?

Jaylia: I think so.

Teacher: "I think so." You should listen to Jaylia.

Jaylia: So I think Aisha was trying to say that the combined weight of the salt, water, of the salt and water, it would—it would be close to the amount of the salt and water—the salt dissolved in the water.

Teacher: OK. Is that what you said?

Aisha: Yes.

Teacher: Can you confirm that?

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Notes**Classroom Video Example 2:**

Teacher: OK. Who thinks they can repeat Alicia's idea? Kayla, you want to try rephrasing what she said in your own words?

Kayla: If you put the same-- if you put the same...

Most teachers almost *never* use this move. And yet it is one of the most powerful and transformative of all of the talk moves. We encourage you to try it. The "Who can repeat?" move lays the foundation for productive talk and learning. And it has big and immediate payoffs for students.

Classroom Video Example 3:

Mathais: Also your weight line can help you see the difference in weight between each, um, each material.

Teacher: Can you say a little more about that?

Mathais: Because like, um because some people might want to know like -- because people might not have seen that, and their weight line might help them organize like to see how--how many grams in weight the sand more than the organic material.

Teacher: Who can kind of repeat what Mathais said in their own way? That's a really important point to think about. That's a great way for us to use, or to think about the use of a weight line. Who can kind of put that in their own words so that everyone really understands Mathais' point? Aisha, do you think you can put that in your own words?

Aisha: I think what he means is that if you put it on a weight— on a weight line...

The "who can repeat?" move can be used at any point in a discussion, whenever someone has said something that everyone in the conversation needs to hear. If it's a new move in your toolkit, it's worth introducing it to the students explicitly. You can start by explaining that in discussions, you'll be doing something new. From now on, you'll be asking the students to repeat what someone else has said, so that everyone gets better at explaining their thinking and listening hard to one another. If you are working with colleagues in a study group, this is a good move to practice using early on, and compare notes with your colleagues as to what impact this move has on student discussion and the creation of a culture of listening.

Text on screen:

The "Who can rephrase or repeat?" move helps to build a culture of listening. Use it early and often!

2. Who can rephrase or repeat?

The “Who can repeat?” move puts everyone on notice that they are expected to be listening attentively. They must be able to hear and understand what was said well enough to repeat the idea or put it into their own words.

This move is also helpful in other ways. It gives students practice at putting complex ideas into words. And the stakes are relatively low. The student who repeats is getting practice at verbalizing a complex idea. It’s often helpful to return to the first student and say, “Is that what you were trying to say?” Often the first student will then say more.

Classroom Video Example 4:

Nikia: ...one number that’s closest to both numbers.

Teacher: OK so what’s another way of saying that? Zaria, nice and loud, share with us what do you think they are trying to tell us?

Zaria: They’re trying to say like what--what number’s closer to the middle.

Teacher: Ah. Is that what you were trying to say Nikia? And Mia, is that what you were trying to say?

This move also provides time to think. It gives everyone a chance to hear a complex idea a second time, perhaps in slightly different words.

Finally, it can have a long-term effect on students’ motivation to be clear. If the student who is asked to repeat can’t do it, then the original student can be asked to say it again. This can motivate the original student to speak up and to explain their ideas more clearly.

Classroom Video Example 5:

Lucas: Maybe where the ships are is a basin, so all the water got drained out into the river?

Teacher: Oh. [pause] Can anybody repeat what he just said? If you can’t repeat what he just said, are we practicing our norms?

Tyla: Can you please repeat what you just said, Lucas?

Tavon: Lucas, can you repeat what you said please?

Lucas: Maybe that the ships right now are in a basin, so all the water got drained out into another river.

Teacher: What do you ... maybe you should say a little more about a basin.

Lucas: Like a basin is like - once there was water in there, right? Maybe, and there could be rivers connected to that basin, and the rivers are flowing the opposite direction from the basin, so maybe the water is getting drained out.

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It's important to emphasize that the "Who can repeat?" move is **not** a classroom management tool. It's most successful when you ask someone to repeat who actually thinks they can. Don't start off by using this move as a disciplinary sanction, to catch students out who aren't listening.

At the beginning of your efforts to use this move, some students may *resist* repeating or putting something into their own words. It's important to get across that they are allowed to say "I didn't hear" or "I didn't understand." But they must then ask the person to repeat. After the first student repeats, you follow up by asking the second student to 'try it again'.

Classroom Video Example 6:

Nikia: ...then it would be the same weight.

Teacher: Whoa! Can someone maybe repeat what Nikia just said? She just brought up a really interesting point. Who caught it? Who caught it? Just Janise and Victoria? Nikia, I'm going to ask **you** to repeat it one more time, then I'm going to see who can catch it a second time. Really, really listen, because she just brought up a very interesting point.

Nikia: That if the volume is different, then it might ... the weight might be the same.

Teacher: I'm going to have someone else repeat it and I really want to be sure that you heard this point. Tiffany?

Tiffany: Nikia said that if the materials um have different volumes, they might weigh the same.

Teacher: Aha. I'm going to have one more person repeat that because, goodness, gracious, this is a really interesting idea and I'm hoping we're going to get a chance to explore this idea. Jordan, do you think you could repeat that idea because I want to make sure Jaydon, John, Dayson, Jazzie, I want to make sure everyone heard it.

Jordan: Um I heard that she said um that ... that the containers ... [long pause]

Teacher: Did you hear what she said?

Jordan: Yes, it was just ...that I got confused.

Teacher: OK, well if you're confused, what could you do?

Jordan: I need help.

Teacher: You need help. Maybe we could ask her to repeat it. Go ahead. Ask her to repeat what she said.

Jordan: Can you repeat what you said please?

Tiffany: Nikia said that um if ... Nikia said that if...

When students are expected to repeat another student's ideas, everyone benefits. The original student is honored by being taken seriously. The repeating student gets practice externalizing a complex idea. And the group gets time to think more deeply about the idea. English Language Learners benefit tremendously,

along with everyone else, when this move is used. The “Who can repeat?” move may slow the conversation down, but it helps to establish and sustain a productive culture for talk while deepening everyone’s learning.