

Teaching Checklist – Academic Conversations

Step 1: Define the purpose of Academic Conversations:

- ☐ Explain to students that academic conversations are structured discussions designed to deepen their understanding of a topic, analyze ideas, and construct knowledge collaboratively.

Step 2: Establish clear expectations:

- ☐ Set expectations for active listening, respectful participation, and the use of evidence to support arguments. Make sure students understand the importance of respecting diverse viewpoints.

Step 3: Model Academic Conversations:

- ☐ Conduct a model academic conversation with the class or a small group, showcasing how to engage in active listening, ask probing questions, and provide evidence to support claims.

Step 4: Provide sentence starters and academic vocabulary:

- ☐ Offer sentence starters and academic vocabulary that students can use to express their ideas and respond to others. This scaffolding helps students articulate their thoughts more effectively.

Step 5: Teach effective questioning:

- ☐ Guide students on how to formulate open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking and promote discussion. Emphasize the difference between closed and open-ended questions.

Step 6: Select thought-provoking topics:

- ☐ Choose topics or texts that are rich in content and open to interpretation. Ensure they are relevant to the curriculum and encourage deep thinking.

Step 7: Practice active listening skills:

- ☐ Engage students in activities that develop active listening skills, such as paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking clarifying questions.