



Let the Students Talk: The Power of Conversation in the Classroom

Course Syllabus

Course Description

Effective classroom conversations are essential for deep learning, critical thinking, and student engagement. In *Let the Students Talk: The Power of Conversation in the Classroom*, educators will explore strategies to create meaningful discussions across subjects, foster inclusive dialogue, and empower students to express their ideas with confidence. This course will provide practical techniques for establishing academic discussion norms, supporting multilingual learners, and integrating inquiry-driven and project-based learning conversations. Additionally, participants will examine how conversations can enhance social-emotional learning, promote equity and empathy, and encourage creative expression through drama and alternative communication styles. By the end of the course, educators will have a toolkit of strategies to sustain dynamic, student-centered discussions that transform the classroom into a space of active learning and collaboration.

This course enhances classroom teaching effectiveness and supports improved student outcomes by introducing new knowledge in fostering and sustaining meaningful, inclusive, and student-centered classroom discussions across subjects.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Describe the role of meaningful discussions in enhancing student engagement, critical thinking, and a positive classroom culture.
2. Apply strategies to establish discussion norms, support diverse communication styles, and foster inclusive dialogue for multilingual learners.
3. Design subject-specific strategies to integrate rich discussions into Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading, and Writing.
4. Facilitate deep, student-led discussions that enhance inquiry, collaboration, and problem-solving.
5. Implement strategies to guide discussions that support emotional well-being, peer conflict resolution, and health-related topics.
6. Create a classroom environment that fosters equity, empathy, and critical conversations on social justice.
7. Incorporate drama, improv, and alternative communication methods to encourage student voice and self-expression.
8. Apply techniques to sustain ongoing, meaningful, and student-centered discussions throughout the school year.



Modules

- Module 1: The Power of Classroom Conversations, Quiz 1
- Module 2: Building Academic Discussion Skills, Quiz 2
- Module 3: Facilitating Dynamic Discussions Across Subjects, Quiz 3
- Module 4: Project-Based Learning & Inquiry-Driven Conversations, Quiz 4
- Module 5: Social-Emotional Learning & Health Conversations, Quiz 5
- Module 6: Social Justice, Empathy & Inclusive Dialogue, Quiz 6
- Module 7: Creative Expression Through Conversation, Quiz 7
- Module 8: Sustaining Thoughtful & Engaging Classroom Conversations, Quiz 8

Grading

Each quiz must be passed at an 80% or higher (three attempts allowed).

Format

This is a self-paced, asynchronous (no required live meetings) course. Throughout the PD course, you will find it helpful to take notes along the way to assist with the quizzes. Within each module, you will find reflection assessments that are not graded but will help in your journey through the course. There is an interactive forum in the course to help you connect with peers and instructors, share ideas, and collaborate on best practices throughout your learning journey.