



WHO IS DOING THE TALKING?

More student talk. Deeper thinking. Stronger language.



THE IDEA

In many classrooms, a small number of students do most of the talking. EAL learners often say less, not because they have nothing to say, but because they need more time, support and structured opportunities.

By making talk more equitable and intentional, we give all students a chance to think, process and use language to build understanding.



IN THE CLASSROOM

Use structures like Think–Pair–Share.

Give everyone a role (e.g. speaker, listener, summariser).

Use sentence frames to support contributions.

Track who is speaking and set a goal for broader participation.

Value and build on all contributions.

Create a safe, respectful talk environment.

THE 3 STEPS

1



NOTICE

Notice the pattern.

Pause and observe who is talking.
Consider who is not talking and why.
Look for patterns over a lesson or a week.

*Who is doing most of the talking?
Who is not contributing?
What might be the barriers?*

2



SUPPORT

Provide structure and support.

Use pair or small group talk before whole-class discussion.
Give clear roles and sentence frames.
Allow thinking time.
Model and rehearse the kind of talk you want.

*I think ... because ...
I would like to add ...
Can you say more about ...?*

3



AMPLIFY

Build on and value all contributions.

Invite a range of voices.
Recast and extend student ideas.
Connect contributions to develop thinking.

*That's an interesting idea. Can you say more?
I like what you've said because ...
Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet.*



WHY IT WORKS

More opportunities to talk build confidence, vocabulary and thinking.
Structured talk supports deeper understanding.
It helps EAL learners participate without lowering academic challenge.



EAL UPGRADE

Provide sentence frames or key phrases for discussion.
Pre-teach topic vocabulary to enable fuller contributions.
Use visual supports (e.g. discussion mats or role cards).



TRY IT TOMORROW

Choose one upcoming lesson.
Plan a structured talk activity (e.g. Think–Pair–Share) with clear roles.
Set a target to hear from at least three different students who don't usually speak.
Reflect on what changes in the quality of talk and ideas.



TEACHER LANGUAGE

*"Take a moment to think before you speak."
"Use the sentence frame to help you."
"I'd like to hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet."*

**DUNCAN
ROSE**

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