

Talk About It: Learning Skills Conversations

ACTIVE LEARNING
FOCUSFEEDBACK
FOCUS

SINGLE SESSION - Facilitation Guide

RESOURCES

- [Talk About It: Learning Skills](#) (Google Slides)
- [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#) (Google Doc)

SESSION PREP

SESSION GOALS

After you lead this session, participants will be able to:

- make connections between the Learning Skills and the academic vocabulary they already use
- make a list of twelve phrases they plan to use to make the Learning Skills common conversation in the classroom

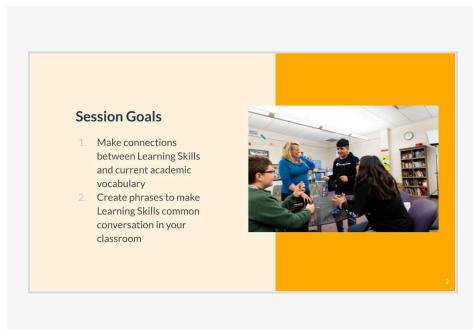
HOW TO PREPARE

1. Preview the resources listed above. Then, preview the session activities that follow. Take note of any additions or changes you would like to make.
2. Make a copy of the [Talk About It](#) slide deck and the [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#). Edit for your needs.
3. Preview the [Super Troopers clip](#).
4. Set up a physical space for collaboration like a [graffiti board](#). Prepare a set of group norms ahead of time (eg. add to the board without talking, make connections to other people's ideas, etc.)

SESSION FRAMEWORK

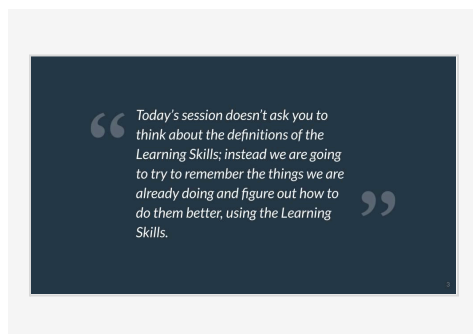
WHOLE GROUP

Slide 2



Introduce the session topic. Emphasize that this session focuses on practical application of the Learning Skills, not a review of their definitions.

Slides 3-4



Read the sentence on Slide 3, then the one on Slide 4 (they are both included below). Facilitate a discussion of the differences.

SAY: *I am going to say something twice. Keep an eye out for differences.*

Version 1: Today's session doesn't ask you to think about the definitions of the Learning Skills; instead we are going to try to remember the things we are already doing and figure out how to do them better, using the Learning Skills.

Version 2: Today's session doesn't ask you to establish the meaning of each Learning Skill; instead, we are going to reflect on the language we use in the classroom, and then use the patterns we identify in our speech to be creative and improve how we compose our conversations with students.


Slide 5

Spot the Differences

Collaborate with a partner on a list of differences.

Use the questions below to guide your discussion:

- When you talk to students, are you more likely to sound like Version 1 or Version 2?
- Is one version better than the other? When should you use each?





ACTIVE LEARNING

Ask pairs or small groups of participants to collaborate on a list of differences between the two sentences. Then ask them to answer these questions in a small group discussion.

- When you think about the language you use with students, are you more likely to talk like Version 1 or Version 2?
- Is one version better than the other? When should you use each?

Once small groups or pairs have discussed, ask them to share out to the larger group.

Slide 6

How can you improve your practice to include more Learning Skills in your everyday conversations with your students?

Super Troopers

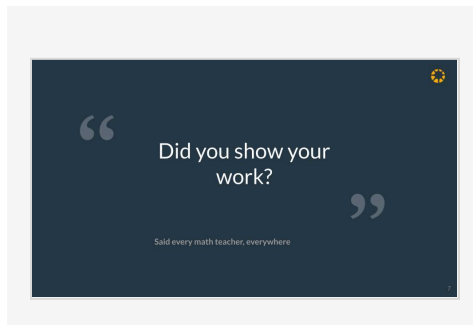
Explain to participants that they are working to include Learning Skills in their everyday conversations with students. Then, show the [Super Troopers clip](#) as “inspiration.” **[Warning:** this clip contains very mild foul language. Preview the clip and skip this portion if necessary.]

SAY: *A lot of our conversations with students about skills growth and development happen during check-ins or feedback sessions - those times you set aside to talk very deliberately with a student one-on-one about skills. But how often do you use them outside of those moments? And if you asked a student, while they are working, “what skill are you practicing right now?” could they answer you? How can we make these words a part of our classroom conversations, the same way we work to make academic vocabulary part of our classroom?*

Let’s get some inspiration... from the Super Troopers.

INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION AND PARTNER WORK

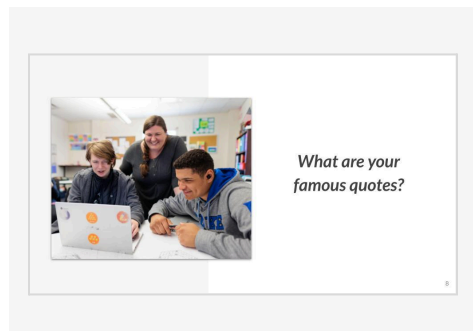
Slide 7



Read the quote on Slide 7, then ask participants to individually reflect about phrases or reminders they use often with their students. Participants should answer the questions in the [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#) Slides 7: Reflect section. You may want to facilitate a discussion after, allowing time for volunteers to share their quotes with the group.

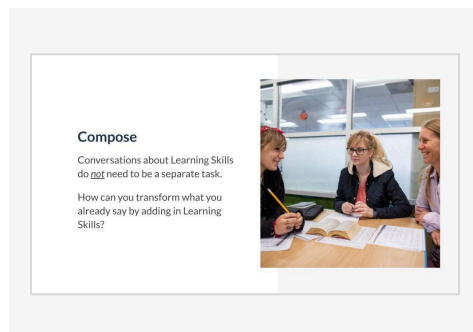
SAY: What are you always saying to your students? What academic vocabulary is part of your current classroom environment and routines? Answer the questions to reflect on what you are always saying.

Slide 8



Now, participants should start to identify patterns in their answers to the questions. What are they always saying? Invite them to make a list of their top five “famous quotes” (phrases they say often) in the [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#) Slide 8: Identify Patterns section. Be sure participants read the example before beginning.

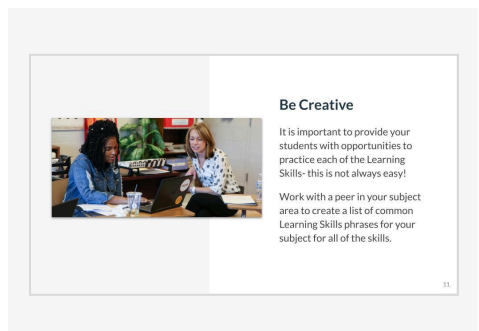
Slides 9-10



Invite teachers to be more intentional in *how* they talk with students. Using [Learning Skills](#) with students does not need to be a separate task or conversation. With intentional language, teachers can transform how they communicate these skills more frequently and routinely. Ask participants to use their top five “famous quotes” to compose Learning Skills phrases in the table in the [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#) Slides 9-10: Compose section. Be sure to read the example with participants and review how it includes skill language.

SMALL GROUP

Slide 11



Have participants discuss, with a subject partner or subject small group, how they can fit each of the twelve Learning Skills into their subject specific student conversations. They should record subject specific Learning Skills phrases/sentences in the [Talk About It: Thought Catcher](#) Slide 11: Be Creative section.

SAY: *It is important to provide your students with opportunities to practice each of the Learning Skills - this is not always easy. In fact, it may come more easily in some subjects versus others.*

Review the Learning Skills phrases you wrote in your Thought Catcher. Add them to the table in the next section of the Thought Catcher, where appropriate. Then, work with a peer in your subject area to fill in the gaps and create a list of common Learning Skills phrases for your subject for all of the skills.



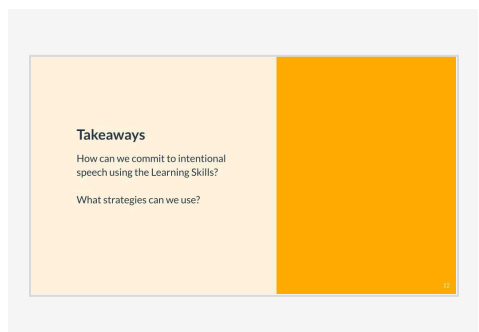
DIFFERENTIATE

Scaffolded support: If participants are struggling to complete the table with phrases or sentences for each Learning Skill, consider using the Learning Skill bookmarks to review the meaning of each skill, followed by a subject specific brainstorming session. Ask partners or small groups to think of examples of each Learning Skill as it would be used in that subject. (Examples: “What are students doing when they are **investigating** in your math classroom?” or “When do students most often **ask** thoughtful **questions** during English class?”)

Extension opportunity: Ask participants to make a list of academic vocabulary verbs, such as “factor” or “expand” in math and “transition” or “compare” in English. Consider asking them to build a shared document, like a Google doc, or write collaboratively on large poster paper, as they make the list. Once they have listed several verbs, have participants work together to make connections between academic vocabulary verbs and the Learning Skills.

TAKEAWAYS

Slide 12



Encourage teachers to use Learning Skills regularly in their student conversations. Collaborate on a list of strategies that teachers could use to remind themselves to use this intentional language (word walls or visuals, “skill of the day,” etc.).

Get more resources like this at www.opportunityeducation.org/resources