

Eliciting a Range of Responses

Grades 2–3

Use these practical strategies to engage more students in contributing during class discussions.

Routine Rationale

Why It's Important

Often only a few “professional participants” assume responsibility for responding in class on a regular basis. Relying on volunteers is not an equitable or efficient source of contributions, nor is overuse of a randomization technique (for example, name cards or an online student-selector tool).

Many language learners and basic readers approach class discussions with considerable trepidation. They struggle to interpret lesson discussion prompts that are often delivered orally without visual support. While attempting to process the question, their critical think time is frequently interrupted when the teacher allows verbally confident peers to blurt out or immediately raise their hands. They become even more distracted when the teacher looks furtively at the class and asks for a volunteer or resorts to name sticks.

Unaccountable requests trigger student passivity and rarely elicit a democratic array of responses. Avoid questions like the following: Does anyone want to share? Who'd like to report out? Lessen anxiety and curtail hastily crafted responses by not falling back upon global participation requests or primarily recruiting contributions with a student selector device.

Response frames, word banks, and partner rehearsal will bolster students' confidence, but reticent contributors must also perceive that the teacher is committed to hearing from diverse students. Use a consistent, familiar, and conscientiously introduced set of techniques to democratize lesson discussions. Strike a balance between preselected, randomly selected, and voluntary responses to increase the quality and quantity of verbal contributions.

When to Use It

- Use a consistent repertoire of strategies to elicit responses whenever individuals, partner, or teams are reporting out to the whole class.

Vary Strategies for Selecting Discussion Contributors

Use consistent and familiar strategies to productively elicit responses from a range of students during whole-class reporting. Follow a reliable sequence of strategies after familiarizing students with the protocols for each: 1) preselected; 2) student-selected; 3) partner-nominated; 4) voluntary. Refrain from using random-selection devices that can make apprehensive contributors feel anxious and preoccupied with being called upon rather than cognitively engaged and attentively listening.

Strategies for Eliciting Responses

Note: Pick up the icons for each strategy and teacher language in a speech bubble from the new English 3D Grade 2-3 Teaching Guide which are similarly utilized in the English 3D (Newcomer) Language Launch V1 Teaching Guide.

1. Preselected Initial Reporters

- If students are seated at desks during instruction, circulate to monitor independent tasks and peer interactions. If instruction is delivered in small group setting, or with students seated on the floor in front of board/lesson projection, monitor tasks from point of instruction. Preselect two students with common or representative responses to launch the discussion. This leaves like-minded peers feeling validated rather than discouraged by an initial contribution they perceive as more advanced. Beginning a lesson discussion with a preselected reporter eliminates the awkward silence and pressure students experience as the teacher awaits a voluntary response or resorts to randomly selected responses with a device. Similarly, in a primary classroom, it signals to potentially eager primary learners that they do not need to excitedly wave their hands to be called to contribute.
- **TIP 1:** Provide a rationale for preselecting initial discussion contributions.
I will select the first reporter. As you are sharing your idea with your partner or group, I will walk around to read what you are writing, or to listen to what you are saying. I will ask one or two of you to help me by sharing your idea first. This will help get our discussion off to a strong start. While I may not choose you today, everyone will have the chance to be our discussion starter.
- **TIP 2:** When preselecting students, speak softly to minimize disruption and use efficient, neutral phrasing:
 - *(Name), you will be our first reporter. Read your idea again to be ready to share with the class.*
 - *I'm going to ask you to share your strategy first during our discussion.*
 - *I'd like to call on you first to explain your drawing.*
- Alternatively, discretely place a small card with a microphone icon on the preselected student's desk as an unobtrusive verbal signal.
- As you start the class discussion with two preselected reporters, acknowledge you have done so with affirming phrasing: *I've asked (Name) and (Name) to begin our discussion/share their (strategies, steps, drawings). They have (strategies, steps, drawings) you will all appreciate.*

2. "Popcorn" Student-Selected Reporters

- Engage students in inviting responses from their classmates. Enlist a preselected reporter in "popcorn selection" of the next reporter from a different row, table, or part of the room. After the preselected reporter contributes, cue the student to "popcorn" and select the next reporter. *Thank you, (Name), for making sure our discussion is off to a strong start. Please help me call on another classmate.*
- Before the initial reporter selects the next contributor, cue students to take a moment to review their thinking or work in preparation for potentially being selected. This will ensure more reticent contributors are poised to report if selected. *Before (Name) calls on one of you, look at your answer/think of your idea again so that you will be ready to share it if you're called.*

- Specify that the selector must do so quickly using an assigned starter, such as *I select (Name)*. Display Language to Select Reporters and specify which starter to use. Echo-read the starter and model using a student's name. *(Name)*, I'd like for you to use this starter to call on a classmate (select one starter from Language to Select Reporters). *Everyone, let's practice, and we will use (preselected reporter's name)*.
- Begin with the initial starter: *I select (Name)*. Continue using it for a couple weeks until students are very comfortable before introducing the second. Introduce the first starter and continue to utilize it over several days. Once students are comfortable with the procedure and the set of starters, allow them to utilize the starter of their choice.
- With a small group, direct the selector to choose their right-hand elbow partner and continue until each student has contributed.
- With the whole class, direct the selector to choose a student from a different row, table, or part of the room (front, back, left, right).
- Continue until a few reporters have contributed, and close with partner nominations and volunteers.

3. Partner Nomination

- After the preselected initial reporter(s) and a couple student-selected reporters have contributed, ask students to recall whether their partner or a fellow group member shared a different idea during their interaction.
- If students need to "check in" with their partner or group for a quick reminder, allow them.
- Display Language to Select Reporters. Echo-read the sentence starter: *I nominate (Name)*. Model using a student's name. Explain that when we nominate someone for a job like captain of the soccer team, we know they can do the job well. Later, introduce the starter: *My partner, (Name), has a different (idea, answer, strategy, drawing)*.
- Direct students to raise their pencil or hand if their partner has a different idea and call on a couple volunteers. *Raise your hand if your partner had a different idea*.
- Commend the active listening skills of students who nominated their partner before opening the floor to volunteers.

4. Voluntary Final Reporters

- Open the discussion to students who have not yet contributed and wish to volunteer. *Raise your hand if you would like to share an idea that we have not heard yet*.
- Clarify options for voluntary reporting: 1) your own idea; 2) your partner's idea (if not already shared).
- Display Language to Select Reporters. Echo-read the starter: *I'd like to share my partner (Name's) idea*. Model using a student's name.
- To maximize time, specify the number of responses you expect from different parts of the room. *We have time for two more volunteers: I'm going to call on one student from the back and one from the front of the room*.
- While monitoring independent tasks and peer interactions prior to the discussion, invite one or two students with strong responses to volunteer using encouraging phrasing. *When I ask for volunteers today, I want you to raise your hand to share that (e.g., great strategy; creative model)*.

Language to Select Reporters (a classroom poster and displayable pdf)

- I choose (Name).
- I select (Name).
- I would like to hear from (Name).
- I nominate my partner (Name).
- I'd like to share my partner (Name's)
(idea, strategy, drawing).
- My partner has a different (idea, answer,
strategy, drawing).

Math Guide Card for Primary Grades (2–3)



Language for Problem Solving

Language to Ask for Help

Am I doing this right?

I don't understand.

Is this correct?

Can you help me?

I _____ to solve it?

How do I spell ___?

How do I _____?

Can you show me how to ___?



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Math Guide Card

Name _____



Math Guide Card

Name _____



Math Guide Card

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