**These are the quotations that will be used for the sort activity.**

High-quality discussion and exploration of ideas-not just the presentation of high-quality content by the teacher or text-are central to the developing understandings of readers and writers (Alvermann et al., 1996; Eeds &Wells, 1989; Gambrel1 & Almasi, 1996; Guthrie, Schafer, Wang, & Afflerbach, 1995).

Non- mainstream students-low achievers, children of the poor, and second- language learners-fare poorly in classrooms with traditional instructional approaches, which are structured in ways that fail to capitalize on these students' strengths and instead magnify their weaknesses (Gutierrez, 1994; Heath, 1983; Hynds, 1997; Marshall, Smagorinksy, & Smith, 1995). Such students typically do much better when instruction builds on previous knowledge and current ideas and experiences, permits students to voice their understandings and refine them through substantive discussion with others.

A wide range of studies has documented the fact that the typical pattern of classroom discourse is one-sided, following a pattern of teacher question, student response, and teacher evaluation of the response (Cazden, 1988; Mehan, 1979).

Teachers help students learn to examine multiple perspectives (from students, texts, and other voices) to enrich understanding rather than focusing on consensus interpretations.

Teachers assume that questions are a natural part of the process of coming to understand new material, rather than an indication of failure to learn, and that questions provide productive starting points for discussion.

Teachers use instructional activities such as discussion to develop understandings rather than to test what students already know.

In case studies that traced the evolution of 19 English classes (totaling 32 semesters of instruction) in Grades 7-12, Applebee found that the most effective curricula were organized around specific topics that unified the reading, writing, and discussion that took place over a semester or a year. Applebee called these long-term explorations "curricular conversations" to distinguish them from the short- term focus of day-to-day classroom interactions.

Applebee, Burroughs, and Stevens (2000) found that, when an entire course was integrated around one or more central topics of conversation, students' knowledge and understanding developed cumulatively throughout the course as they revisited important issues and concepts from new perspectives, with gradually broadening frames of reference.

One study characterized low-track classes as "caricatures" of regular classes, bearing the outward appearance of regular classes while paying superficial attention to academic work (Page, 1991). Gamoran et al. (1995) reported that honors English classes spent more time in discussion than did other classes.

When conditions are right, especially following student uptake of authentic questions and other "dialogic bids" (Nystrand, Wu, Gamoran, Zeiser, & Long, 2003), the result is an open discussion in which teachers and their students work out understandings face-to-face-the quintessential form of dialogic interaction. Discussion tends to be marked by the absence of questions, from both teacher and students, except for purposes of clarification.

Lower-track students are taught with significantly less emphasis on envisionment-building activities; extended curricular conversations; connections among reading, writing, and discussion activities; revising activities; and homework.

During open discussion, all participants are partners in the development of understanding. Sustaining such exchanges is difficult and may require considerable scaffolding by the teacher and considerable previous experience in discussion by the students. In the present study, open discussion averaged 1.7 minutes per 60 minutes of class time.

Typical teacher-student discourse resembles a quiz show, with teachers asking a question, the student replying, and the teacher evaluating the student's response. This is called initiation-response-evaluation, 'I-R-E,' or recitation.

Many instructors reference question taxonomies while planning. Starting a discussion with recall questions and stair-stepping through the rest until higher order prompts are dispatched -- has been sold as a pathway to cognitive vigor. Over-reliance on question hierarchies can result in conversations that are irrelevant to the content and context of the learning environment, and invite answers that nobody cares about.

It is never easy to talk about relationships between individual (silent) thinking processes and the dyadic or group (often noisy) interactions in the classroom. But because that relationship is at the heart of student learning and must therefore be at the heart of teachers’ planning, we have to try.

Thinking about the research inevitably will lead to greater self-consciousness, at least temporarily. I wish we as teachers could be as successful as so many parents on intuition alone. But as anthropologist Edward Sapir explains: “It is sometimes necessary to become conscious of the forms of social behavior in order to bring about a more serviceable adaptation to changing conditions.” Or, in his blunter words, analysis and conscious control are “the medicine of society, not its food.”

We saw fundamental differences in the nature of the classroom talk in the exemplary teacher classrooms. We observed these teachers fostering much more student talk – teacher-student, student-student. These exemplary teachers encouraged, modeled, and supported lots of talk across the school day. This talk was purposeful talk though, not simply chatter. This talk was problem-posing, problem-solving talk related to curricular topics (Allington & Johnston, 2002; Johnston, Woodisde-Jiron & Day, 2001).

Much previous work has well-documented the interrogational nature of most classroom talk. Teachers pose questions, children respond, teacher verifies or corrects. That is the dominant pattern observed in study after study, grade after grade (Cazden, 1988; Nystrand, 1997).

In exemplary classrooms, the talk we observed was more often of a conversational nature than an interrogational nature. Teachers and students discussed ideas, concepts, hypotheses, strategies, and responses with others. Teachers posed more "open" questions, where multiple responses would be appropriate.

Davis (2009, p. 107) –six faulty assumptions students often hold about discussions: one must argue for only one position; knowledge is really just opinion; personal experience is the real source of knowledge; issues should not be discussed unless there is agreement; individual rights are violated when ideas are challenged; and individuals in a discussion should never feel uncomfortable.

Remember that you can organize a discussion in many different ways: you can have students work in small groups, roleplay, choose sides for a debate, or write and share a paragraph in response to the theme or question.

Convergent questions require simple recall of “facts.” They don’t stimulate extensive discussion. Use them sparingly. Divergent questions are open-ended and have many possible answers. They often require that students critically examine an issue and the assumptions and logic underlying its supporting arguments. Divergent questions stimulate discussion.