



Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together

**Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports
Student Learning** Module 11 Workbook



Nāku to rourou
nāu te rourou
ka ora ai te ākonga.

With my basket and
your basket the
learner will thrive.

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About this resource

Background

Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together is a set of modules that teachers and teacher aides complete together.

Each module in this series is a 'ready-to-use' pack with a presentation, workbook and activities so learning can be put into practice. This module includes self-paced e-learning. The module materials come in different formats to allow choice about how you learn.

Find out more at [Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together](#).

The modules follow an inquiry cycle. The workbook has a section for each step in the cycle.



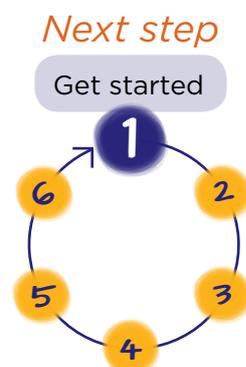
If you are leading the learning, refer to the [Facilitator Quick Guide](#) and gather any additional materials needed to complete the activities.

Download the learning materials from the [Module 11 page](#) of the Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together site.

Note that you have some choices about how you access the module materials. This is the PDF workbook format. It includes links to required resources and printable worksheets for the activities. If you are working with hard copy, you will need to access the online version to activate the links.

For an enhanced online reading experience, access the [e-workbook for Module 11](#). In the e-workbook, activity sheets are Google Docs that you can print, download as Word documents or copy to your own Google Drive for working online. If you are a teacher aide, you could work through the self-paced e-learning resource.

You also have the option to download a PowerPoint or view a narrated presentation.





1. Get started

Start by watching one or both of two short videos. Then read the cartoon, quotes and key principles. They introduce the main ideas covered in this module. Discuss these as a group. The learning outcomes describe what you'll achieve once you've completed the six steps.



Watch one or both of these the videos at the Ministry of Education's teacher aide Vimeo album:

- [Working in partnership to support students' learning.](#)
- [Planning and supporting effective ways of working.](#)

“ Oral language underpins all learning and all social interaction. Whenever we think, read, write, and whenever we communicate with others, we are drawing on oral language in some way. We use oral language to convey information, develop understandings, think critically, express ideas and identity, define our membership of social groups, build relationships, and manage social interactions. Our ability to use oral language effectively enables us to learn, to apply our learning, and to address the challenges of social and technological change. ”

Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 7

“ A learning conversation is first and foremost entirely open ended. ...to build on the natural learning dispositions of children, in particular their wonder of the world, sociability, creativity, their love of invention and play. ”

Teacher (New Zealand Curriculum Online: Learning conversations and key competencies)



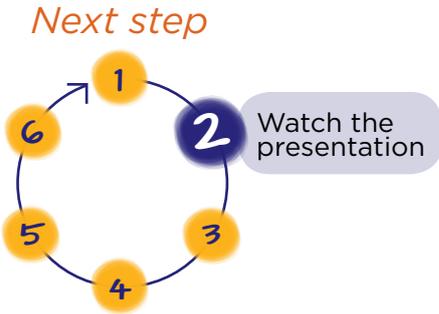
Key principles

- An inclusive classroom enables and values the contributions of all learners. It is an environment in which all students are actively engaged in the learning.
- As students deepen their engagement in learning, they feel increased ownership of their learning and become more active participants in the classroom.
- Purposeful interactions between teachers, teacher aides and students help students to learn. In purposeful interactions, teachers and teacher aides provide students with time and the support to think, learn and communicate.
- Teachers and teacher aides can support students to be active learners by using instructional strategies such as modelling effective classroom talk, purposeful questioning and revoicing.

Learning outcomes

This module is intended to support teachers and teacher aides to achieve four aims:

1. Develop a shared understanding of how questioning, wait time and other deliberate ‘talk moves’ can support student learning.
2. Examine their practice and identify how they can use classroom talk and questions to support students to think, learn and communicate.
3. Trial a new strategy for supporting learning for all students.
4. Reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they have tried together, using the questions in this module.



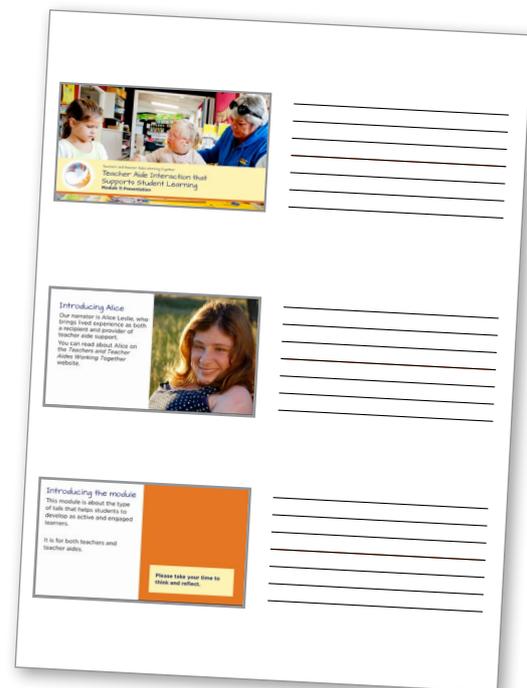
¹ The writers acknowledge that it is signed language rather than oral language that underpins the learning and social interactions of most profoundly deaf people.



2. Watch the presentation

Watch the presentation about how teacher aides can use interaction strategies to encourage students' thinking and learning. Read the discussion on the next pages for further information.

Visit the [Module 11 e-workbook](#) to download or watch the presentation.



Further information

Why this module?

Students learn through purposeful talk with others about new ideas and interesting problems. However, research has found that often, adults' interactions with students work to shut down contributions to class talk. The research also shows that in many interactions between students and their teachers or teacher aides, the adult does most of the talking. Often the intention of these interactions is to help students by reducing the mental effort it takes to complete the task. Unfortunately, making the task easier can reduce the opportunity for students to learn.

Module 10: *Supporting student learning in the whole class* explains that it is preferable that the teacher aide's presence is treated as an opportunity to free up teachers so they can spend more time with those students who need extra help. However, research has also found that generally teacher aides have more interactions with these students and spend more time talking with them. Therefore, it's important that teacher aides learn to talk with students in ways that open up the possibilities for learning.

This module presents some simple but effective strategies teacher aides can use to generate purposeful classroom talk that supports student learning.



Developing purposeful classroom talk

Purposeful classroom talk focuses on learning, not student behaviour. Too often, teacher aides fall into the habit of noticing and responding to student behaviour, managing this with comments such as, “Come on. You need to stay on task.” While these kinds of comments might help redirect students’ attention or behaviour, they do little to help them to learn and think. Learning-focused talk has the double benefit of redirecting students’ behaviour to the task and helping them to learn. For example, “What is your next step?” and “What other information do you need?”

Talk about new concepts is a natural part of learning. In most classrooms, the teacher will have planned for some structured talk to enhance the learning.

In a genuine learning conversation, the talk is focused on the learning goals and intended content and the students do most of the talking. Where appropriate, the teacher or teacher aide will interject with a question or comment that keeps the learning focus at the heart of the conversation and helps students think more deeply.

Good planning is essential for teacher aides to be effective in supporting classroom learning talk. Teacher aides need to understand the intended learning and have time to think about how to structure the talk so that it enhances the learning opportunities for students. For this to happen, they need the teacher to share the plan for the day.

The *Learning through Talk* series (Ministry of Education, 2009) explains how instructional strategies such as questioning and prompting help students focus on the learning, rather than just getting the right answer. It is intended primarily for teachers, but many teacher aides would also find it useful.

Using questions purposefully

One way that a teacher aide can support student thinking and learning is by asking the right questions at the right time. Carefully directed questions can help deepen students’ understandings.

Students will often ask for help from the teacher or teacher aide when they strike challenges in their learning. The research shows that teachers and teacher aides often respond with a question that contains the answer. This means that the students can guess at the answer without having to think through the challenge or problem. They may have the satisfaction of ‘getting it right’, but they haven’t had the satisfaction of finding the solution for themselves.

The 'right questions' are asked purposefully, with the intent of helping students achieve their learning goal. They encourage students to think about what they are learning and to use what they already know and understand to accomplish the new task or work through the problem.

“ Never say anything a kid can say! This one goal keeps me focused. ... Every time I am tempted to tell students something, I try to ask a question instead. ”

Reinhart, 2000, p. 480

Questions can be used in discussions with individuals and to promote group or classroom talk about the learning. Where appropriate, follow-up questions can be used to draw out and extend thinking.

It is important not to ask too many questions. This can make students feel they are being tested and need to get the 'right answer'. Active learners don't always know the answers, but they are good at asking questions for themselves.

There are different types of questions, each of which can be more appropriate at the beginning, middle or end of a lesson. Planning should include identifying some key questions and when it might be best to ask them. For example:

- at the start of a lesson, recall questions can help students connect to previous learning (for example, "What did we learn about this character yesterday?")
- during a lesson, questions that require students to explain their reasoning or that of another student can generate critical thinking ("Do you agree with, X? Why, or why not?")
- at the end of a lesson, reflective questions can help students evaluate what they have learned, and how well they have learned it and where their learning might take them next ("Do you know enough now to move on to the next step? What else do you need to learn before moving on?").

You can find out more about effective questioning in the *Learning through Talk* series (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Wait time

The term 'wait time' refers to the period that elapses from when students are asked a question to when they are expected to respond to it. It is a period of silence during which students can reflect on the question and work through their thinking.

“ Students learn most effectively when they develop the ability to stand back from the information or ideas that they have engaged with and think about these objectively. ”

Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 34

Typically, more students respond and students' responses are longer and more accurate when they are allowed at least three seconds of wait time. For some students this will be long enough, while other students will need longer. It's important to use the right amount of wait time for each student, depending on their needs.

Research shows that teachers and teacher aides usually allow less than 1.7 seconds for students to respond. They allow even less time for students who require extra support. Three seconds can feel like a long time and people are often surprised when a video recording reveals they do not wait this long. Instead, they tend to fill in the silence by asking another question or selecting another student to respond.

Increasing wait time is a simple strategy for supporting students to become more independent as learners. It tells students that they are expected to participate and gives them time to think about their learning.

Working together

Teachers and teacher aides need to work together to promote purposeful classroom talk. This means they can communicate shared expectations about how the students should engage with class talk and respond to questions. It also means they can be consistent in their use of the instructional strategies that support purposeful learning conversations.

Teachers can help teacher aides use these strategies by modelling their use of specific 'talk moves' with the whole class, in group situations and with individual students. Before the lesson, teachers can help teacher aides identify key questions that can be used at different times during the lesson to help keep the intended learning in focus.

References and further reading

Anthony, G., & Walshaw, M. (2009). *Effective pedagogy in mathematics (Educational practices series 19)*. International Academy of Education, International Bureau of Education & UNESCO.

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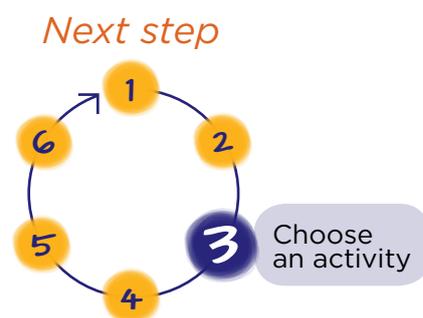
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3. Choose an activity

Choose one or two activities to do in pairs or small groups. Go to the back of the workbook for each activity's instructions, worksheets and resources.

Activity 1

Planning and supporting effective ways of working

In this activity, you will review the video *Planning and supporting effective ways of working* to reflect on the key principles discussed in the module.

Activity 2

Introducing 'talk moves'

In this activity, you will learn about five 'talk moves' you can use to support your students to become more active and engaged learners. You will think about how you currently talk with your students and how this impacts their learning.

Activity 3

Seeing the talk moves in action

In this activity, you will watch a video to learn more about the use of talk moves to promote learning talk. You will discuss the video and think more about how you could use the talk moves with your students.

Activity 4

Increasing student engagement through wait time

In this activity, you will take a closer look at the impact of wait time on student engagement. You will read and discuss an article about wait time and make a plan to look at your own use of wait time.

Activity 5

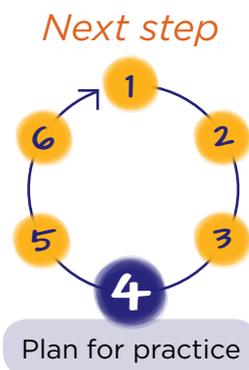
Question sort: Open and closed questions

In this activity, you will consider the difference between open and closed questions and how they might be used during a lesson.

Activity 6

Question sort: Planning for questioning

In this activity, you will think about some different types of questions and the best times to use them during a lesson.





4. Plan for practice

It's time to plan how you will put your learning into practice. Try one of these suggestions in your work together over the next few weeks.

If you did **Activity 1**, you saw a teacher aide working with some students and identified some strategies they tried. Select one of these strategies and make a plan for trying it with your students. Consider having an observer watch so you have another perspective on how well you are implementing the strategy and the impact on students. Observation works best when it's planned and carried out in partnership. Each person should clearly understand the strategy that is being tried and why.

If you did **Activity 2**, you have thought about your use of open and closed questions. Consider the questions you use with the students you work with. How thoughtfully do you use open and closed questions? What is the balance of your use of open and closed questions? What have you noticed about how this affects the quality of talk with the students? Do you need to increase your use of open questions? Plan how you could do this.

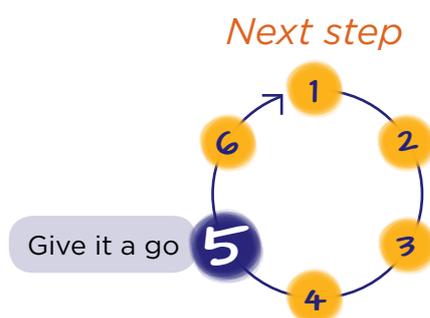
If you did **Activity 3**, you have sorted some questions for use at different phases of a learning experience. Together, consider when the students you work with tend to require the most support. Is it when unpacking the task, completing the task or reflecting on their learning? Plan how you could use some of these questions with your students.

If you did **activity 2 or 3**, continue to reflect on the impact of your questioning. Are your questions helping the students to take greater ownership of their thinking? How can you tell?

If you did **Activity 4**, you developed a plan for investigating your provision of wait time. With a partner or team, analyse the evidence you gathered, and consider the following questions:

- Do you provide less wait time for different types of interactions with the students? If so, why?
- Does your wait time vary when working with different students? If so, why?
- Do you need to increase wait time? How could you plan to do that?

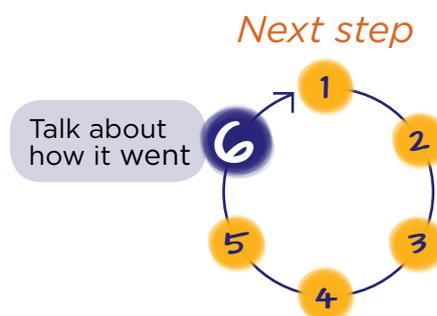
If you did **activities 5 and 6**, you have learned about some specific 'talk moves'. Together with the teacher, plan how you can use one of the talk moves with your students. Make sure you explain and model the talk move to the students so they understand what is required. After a few weeks, ask your students if it helped and meet with the teacher to reflect on the impact of the talk move.





5. Give it a go

Implement the strategy you decided on in Step 4. Use the space below to make notes about what you did and how it went.





6. Talk about how it went

Meet to talk about how the strategy from Step 4 went. Discuss and plan how you might adapt or modify your practice. Use the questions below to guide your reflection.

- What did we try?
- What happened when we did this? How did the students respond to the strategy? How did the adults experience and respond to the strategy?
- What changes did we notice in the students' behaviour?
- What went well? What did not go as well as we hoped?
- What did we find hard to implement? Why?
- What will we do differently next time?
- Did we let the students know what we were trying to change in our practice?
- Did we model the type of responses we were expecting?
- What did we learn about our practice?
- What are we going to do next to get better at helping students develop independent learning practices?

Possible next steps

When thinking about what you might do next, consider the other topics in this series:

- Teachers and Teacher Aides: Who Does What?
- Keeping Our Work Confidential, Professional and Safe
- Supporting Students with Complex Needs
- What Do We Think about Disability and Diversity?
- Identifying Students' Strengths
- Students Participating in their Individual Education Plans (IEP)
- Understanding the New Zealand Curriculum
- Fostering Peer Relationships
- Creating Inclusive Classrooms
- Supporting Student Learning in the Whole Class

Visit [Teachers and Teacher Aides Working Together](#) to access these modules.



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11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Planning and supporting effective ways of working

Activity 1

In this activity, you will review the video *Planning and supporting effective ways of working* to reflect on the key principles and strategies discussed in the module.



Reread the key principles on page 4 and talk briefly about what they mean to you



With the principles in mind, watch the video *Planning and supporting effective ways of working*.



On a second viewing of the video, record the specific strategies you noticed the teacher or teacher aide using.



Discuss the strategies you identified with your group. How might they help your students become more independent? How do you think your students would respond to these strategies? What might you try?



You may like to extend your discussion by viewing the video *Working in partnership to support students' learning*

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Question sort: Open and closed questions

Activity 2

In this activity, you will look at the difference between open and closed questions and think about when they are best used. Before doing this activity, you will need to cut out the labels from the template (see over).



Using Post-its, note five questions that students are often asked. Write each question on a separate Post-it. For example, 'Have you finished your work?' or 'What do you think will happen next?'



Read the definition of open and closed questions (see over).



Working with your partner or group, read the questions on the Post-its. Use the heading labels to organise them according to whether they are open or closed.

Discuss the questions, thinking about the kind of response each one might generate. Think about when you might use an open question, when you might use a closed question and why? What will be the effect on students if they are only ever asked close questions? What happens in a classroom when most questions are open?



Look at the closed questions in the list you generated and rewrite them so they are open.

Question sort: Open and closed questions (continued)

Activity 2

Definition: Closed and open questions

There are two main types of question: closed and open.

Closed questions can usually be answered in one or two words. They are useful when we need specific information quickly or for simple recall, for example, when we know the answer but want to check that the other person knows it, too. At the start of a lesson, closed questions can help students remember what they already bring to the learning. Too many closed questions can make people feel as if they are under interrogation!

Examples of closed questions:

- Have you finished your work?
- Who won the game?
- What day is Waitangi Day?
- Which spelling is correct?
- We read this yesterday. Who remembers the author's name?

Open questions require a longer response. They open up people's ideas, thinking and feelings. They challenge people to explain their reasoning and enter a conversation. The responses to open questions can be surprising and creative. Students are more likely to remember the intended learning when they have the opportunity to explore it through open questions.

Examples of open questions:

- What do you think will happen?
- What do you know that might help solve this?
- How did you work that out?
- Why do you think the girl did that?
- How could you use this information?

Question sort labels: Open and closed questions

Open questions	Closed questions
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11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Question sort: Planning for questioning

Activity 3

In this activity, you will think about the types of questions that are best used at different times during a lesson. Before doing this activity, cut out the labels and the question examples you would like to use from the template (on the next page).



Using Post-its, note five questions that students are often asked. Write each question on a separate Post-it.



Working with your partner or group, read the questions on the Post-its. Use the heading labels to organise them according to whether it's best to use them at the beginning of a lesson, during a lesson, at the end or when someone is stuck. Make sure you have a reason for each of your decisions.



Extend the sorting activity, by placing the question example cards under the appropriate label.



Select at least two questions from under each label and discuss the type of responses you would expect from each question.

Review the lists you have created and discuss the best type of questions to encourage students to think more about their own learning.

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Question sort: Planning for questioning (continued)

Activity 3

Question sort labels: When to use different questions

At the beginning	During the lesson
When someone is stuck	At the end

Examples of questions

What do you already know that can help you?	So you are saying ...? Is that right?
Where can you find out more about ...?	What kind of mistakes might people make when they see a problem like this?
How can you describe ...?	What helped you learn ...?
What was hard today?	How could you sort these ...?
Can you please repeat what ... just said?	Where did you start? Then what did you do?
Do you agree with [Name's] idea? Is that right?	Does anyone have more to add?
Is that maths talk?	What is it asking you to do?
I'm not following. Can someone help me understand what [Name] just said?	What ideas from the problem might help you solve it?
[Name], what can you add to this conversation?	How is the way [Name] did it the same/different to yours?
[Name], can you speak louder so all of us can hear?	What about if you ...? Will it still work?
Does anyone want to disagree? Be ready to explain why or why not.	Is there anything you could draw or write that might help?
What will the answer tell us?	What are some examples of ...?

How could you act this out?	Did you hear what [Name], said?
What do you know that might help you solve this?	What questions are you thinking about?
How would you make sense of this?	Can you think of a similar problem?
Does anyone want to take a risk here? What could we try?	What will help you to get started?
How can you prove you understand what we were learning today?	Can you explain what you mean? Tell us a little more.
What should you do first?	What do you need to practise?

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Increasing student engagement through wait time

Activity 4

In this activity, you will take a closer look at the impact of wait time on student engagement. You will read and discuss an article about wait time. You will make a plan to investigate how you use wait time. You may then wish to devise a way to improve this strategy in order to engage students' thinking.



Research suggests that when students are not given time to think, they quickly give up. It also shows that it is especially important to provide sufficient time for students who are struggling to explain their thinking or solutions.

Wait time should be part of everyday classroom norms. It communicates the expectation that the student is expected to respond. It gives them time to organise their thoughts about how they might help solve a problem or contribute to a discussion. Wait time is particularly important for students for whom participation can be more challenging, such as English language learners.

Usually, this involves simply waiting after a question or prompt has been stated in order to move thinking forward. However, you can make it more explicit: I am going to give you time to think about that.

Read the excerpt 'Your Secret Weapon: Wait Time' from *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Success as a Teacher* (2005) by Anthony D. Fredericks. It summarises the impact of wait time and likens it to percolating coffee.



In pairs or small groups, discuss any information in the excerpt that you found interesting or resonated with you.

How much wait time do you give? Plan how you could investigate a range of the interactions and wait time you have with your students. Explain what you are doing to your students. They may be able to help you create or carry out your plan. For example, you might ask students to take turns timing you and then help you graph the results.

If you find that you need to increase your wait time, discuss and implement a strategy for doing so. Again, your students may be able to help.

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Introducing 'talk moves'

Activity 5

In this activity, you will be introduced to five talk moves that help to promote classroom talk and focus students on the learning goal.



Read about the five talk moves (see over) that teachers and teacher aides can use to generate purposeful learning talk.



Discuss the talk moves and clarify your understanding of each move.



Look at the 'Moves that you use' chart. Use it as a guide for discussion about any of the talk moves or similar strategies you have used.

Consider moving on to Activity 6, which gives you an opportunity to see a teacher using some of the talk moves in her classroom.

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Introducing 'talk moves' (continued) Activity 5

The Five Talk Moves			
The term 'talk moves' was introduced by Suzanne Chapin and Catherine O'Connor (2007, 2009). They describe five simple actions that teachers and teacher aides can use to promote student understanding and independence.			
Move	Definition	When to use and why	Example
<i>Revoice</i>	Repeating what a student has said in different words, and then checking that the rewording reflects the student's meaning.	This move can be used to help students clarify their thinking when their meaning isn't clear. It maintains their engagement, because they are expected to listen to and confirm whether they have been correctly understood. Students can use this move to check their understanding of what another person has said.	So you're saying ...? Is that right?
<i>Restate</i>	Asking a student to restate another student's contribution and then checking with the first student that this is correct.	This move can be used to focus students' attention on an important idea. It also helps ensure everyone listens to each other, as they need to be ready in case they are asked to repeat someone else's ideas.	Can you repeat what [X] said, using your own words?
<i>Elicit student reasoning</i>	Asking a student to explain their reasoning with regard to another student's claim.	This move is used to generate respectful discussion. As students explain what they think about another student's response, they are challenged to make their own reasoning explicit. It also supports students to make connections and consider different answers to a problem. It can help them to get past barriers that are preventing them working through a problem	Do you agree or disagree with ...? Why? What do you think about ...?
<i>Add on</i>	Asking students if they have something to add to another student's thinking.	This move is another way of encouraging students to listen to each other and to focus on key learning. It requires students to think deeply about the problem or concept in order to contribute further. It can also help generate discussion when not many people are talking. The teacher or teacher aide can direct particular students to add on to the thinking.	Can anyone add on to that? [X], could you please add to [Y's] thinking?

Wait time	Waiting at least three seconds for a response to any of the talk moves above.	Wait time should be part of everyday classroom norms. It communicates the expectation that the student is expected to respond. It gives them time to organise their thoughts about how they might help solve a problem or contribute to a discussion. Wait time is particularly important for students for whom participation can be more challenging, such as English language learners.	Usually, this involves simply waiting after a question or prompt has been stated to move thinking forward. However, you can also make it more explicit: <i>I am going to give you time to think about that.</i>
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Chapin, S., & O'Connor, C. (2007). Academically productive talk: Supporting student learning in mathematics. In Martin, W. G., Strutchens, M., & Elliott, P. (Eds.), *The learning of mathematics, 69th NCTM yearbook* (pp. 113-128). Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Chapin, S., O'Connor, C., & Anderson, N. (2009). *Classroom discussions: Using math talk to help students learn, grades K-6* (2nd ed.). Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions Publications.

Moves that you use			
Move	What moves have you used?	What happened as a result?	Notes from discussion
Revoice			
Restate			
Elicit student reasoning			
Add on			
Wait time			

11 Teacher Aide Interaction that Supports Student Learning

Seeing the talk moves in action

Activity 6

In this activity, you will watch a video about a teacher's experience of using talk moves in her classroom. You will discuss the talk moves she uses and consider how you could use them with your students. This activity is best done as a follow up to Activity 5, which introduces you to five talk moves.



Watch the video *Improving participation with talk moves*.



As you watch, record the strategies teacher uses.



Discuss the following questions:

- How did the teacher encourage students to make connections?
- What talk moves were used in the video?
- What was the impact on the students?
- What strategy did the teacher develop to find out what the other students in the class were thinking?



Add the final strategy the teacher uses in the video to the Activity 5 chart, 'Your own talk moves'. Complete the chart to include a definition, a statement on when to use the talk move and an example.



Read the 'Your own talk moves' chart and discuss how you can use these moves with your students.

Do you use any other talk moves with your students? If so, share them with your group and add them to the chart.