

# Modeling Language: Talk that Talk

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# Objectives

- Understand the importance of language modeling for young children
- Understand the components of frequent conversations
- Demonstrate an understanding of open-ended questions
- Define the role of repetition and extension in language modeling
- Understand self- and parallel talk
- Understand the role of advanced language in language modeling

# Specific functions of teacher communication

To provide direction or give instructions

To correct and redirect behavior

To develop concepts and skills

To discuss classroom or family life

**To assist all children in learning skills to prepare them for the lifelong pursuit of meaning in language – their own and those of others in their lives**



# Basic guidelines of communication

- Make sure you have the children's attention before you begin to speak
- Always get down on a child's level when talking
- Don't be wishy-washy – say what you mean and mean what you say
- Don't ask a question or offer a choice when there isn't one
- Don't ask questions to which you already know the answer
- If you must interrupt children, remember they deserve the same courtesy adults expect
- Use praise in moderation and only when it is sincere and truly called for

# CLASS Pre-K Indicators of Language Modeling

Frequent  
conversation

Open-ended  
questions

Repetition  
and extension

Self- and  
parallel talk

Advanced  
language

## Frequent conversation

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Back and forth exchanges – having true conversations with children

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Contingent responding – conversations are built around what children are interested in

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Peer conversations – conversations occur between children without teacher involvement

A large orange circle is positioned on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

# Breakout Rooms

- What makes it difficult for you to have frequent conversations with young children?
  - What could be done to overcome this barrier?
- What makes it difficult for children to have conversations with each other?
  - What could be done to overcome this barrier?



# Open-ended questions

Questions require more than a one-word response

Students respond



# Asking questions

The definition of question is “an expression of inquiry that invites or call for a reply; a subject open to controversy; an unsettled issue”



What questions do we typically ask children?

What shape is this?

What letter is this?

Do you like pancakes?

Did you hear me?

# Close-ended vs. Open-ended questions

## **Closed-ended**

- Can be answered yes or no
- Always has a correct answer
- Has an obvious answer
- If answered correctly will always have the same answer
- Requires remembering or knowing something, but not necessarily understanding it

## **Open-ended**

- Can never be answered yes or no
- Do not have a correct answer
- Does not have an obvious answer
- Will not necessarily have the same answer from different people
- Requires remembering or knowing something and understanding how to describe or explain it

# Value of open-ended and closed-ended questions

Open-ended questions (those that allow for multiple responses) are associated with nurturing divergent thinking (producing many options or possibilities, which may result in unusual solution)

Closed-ended questions (those requiring one correct answer) are associated with nurturing convergent thinking (putting all pieces together to generate one solution)

# What are high-level questions?

- Require thinking in a new way
- Will be answered in each child's own way
- Encourage children to expand their thinking and perspective on a subject
- Is developmentally appropriate for the age and stage of the individual child
- Inspires higher-level thinking

Big Questions for Young Minds, NAEYC, 2017

# A Comparison of the Two Versions of Taxonomies

## **Bloom's Taxonomy**

(original)

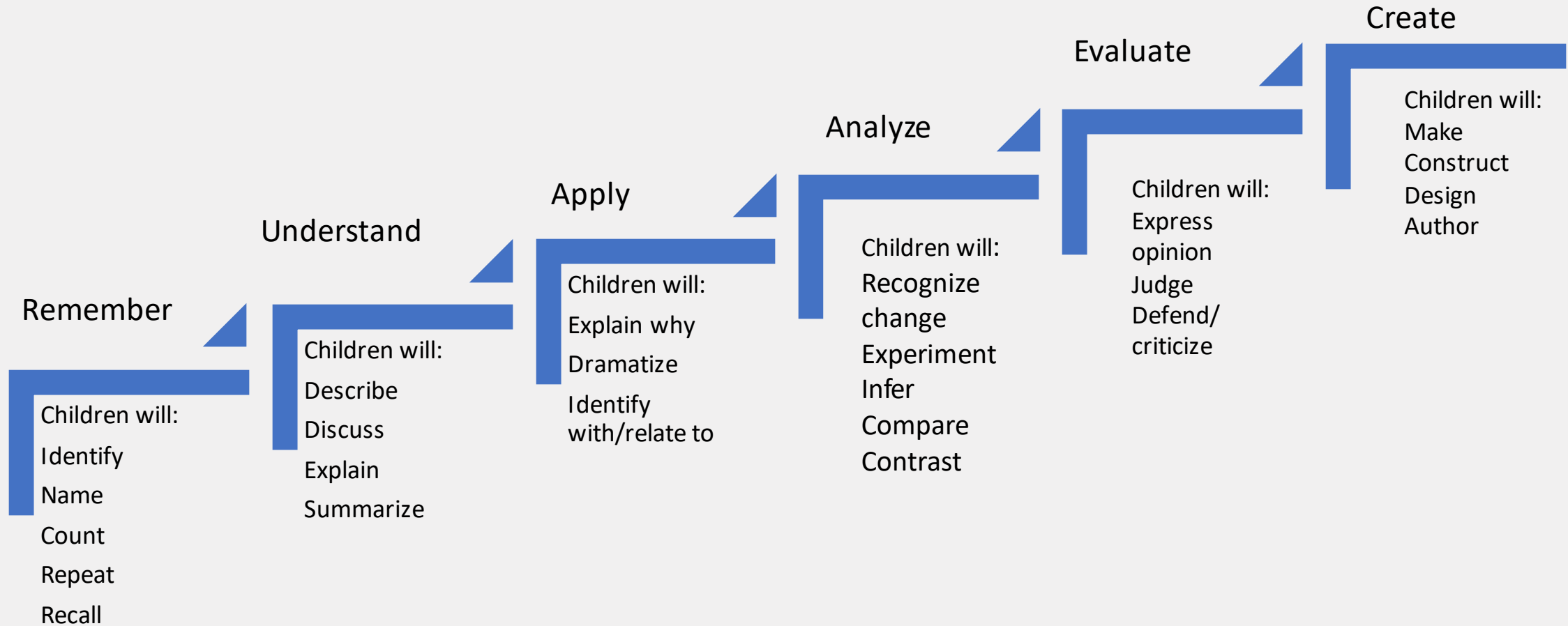
- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

## **Bloom's Taxonomy**

(with Anderson & Krathwohl modifications)

- Remember
- Understand
- Apply
- Analyze
- Evaluate
- Create

# Step up your questioning game



# Six Levels of Questions

- Remember
- Understand
- Apply
- Analysis
- Evaluate
- Create



# Considerations when asking questions

- Think about where your children are developmentally when planning questions
- Consider the children's prior knowledge.
- Start a question with "I wonder" or "What do you notice"
- Use big words that increase vocabulary
- Allow wait time for children to process what you are asking, think about it, and answer
- Ask another question or make a comment after the child answers
- Remember to listen to the children's answers





Let's look at questions in dramatic play while children are playing family

# Dramatic Play Area

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- Remember – “What color is your apron?”
- Understand – “How are you and Sydney a part of the same family? Are you related?”
- Apply – “I see that you are the mother in the family, how can you get the baby to stop crying?”
- Analyze – “How can you make sure that you get the same amount of food onto each plate?”
- Evaluate - “How do you think Thomas is feeling since you told him he can’t be a part of the family?”
- Create – “Let’s use some classroom materials to design something that help the baby doll sit higher up at the table so you can feed her more easily.”

# Questions all through the day

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- Learning centers
- Class meeting
- Arrival and departure
- Music time
- Large motor times
- Mealtimes



# Repetition and extension

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- Repeats
- Extends/elaborates



# Repetition and extension examples

## **The child says**

- Grandma came.
- Our car broke.

## **The teacher responses**

- Fun! Your grandma came to visit you. Tell me what you and grandma did during her visit.
- Oh no, your car is broken. Sometimes we have to take our cars to garages to have them fixed. Tell me what happened to your car.



# Self- and parallel talk

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- Maps own actions with words
- Maps student action with language



# Tips to increase self- and parallel talk

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- Select a part of the daily routine to begin to narrate
- Build relationships
- Use self- and parallel talk in conversations
- Do not expect children to respond or to imitate self- and parallel talk

# Breakout Rooms

- What makes it difficult to use self-talk?
  - What could be done to overcome this barrier?
- What makes it difficult to use parallel talk?
  - What could be done to overcome this barrier?



# Advanced language

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- Variety of words
- Connected to familiar words and/or ideas



# Repeat and expand new words

- Frequency
  - Say a word many times
  - The more a child hears a word, the more likely they are to learn it
- Expansion
  - Add information to what the child says
  - Repeat words across contexts

# Extending Children's Understanding of Environment

- <https://learn.teachstone.com/mod/page/view.php?id=15724>

# General guidelines to support children's language development



Be sincere and authentic



Try to ask questions that nurture divergent thinking



Limit questions requiring yes or no answers



Increase your comfort level with not knowing the answer; join the children in searching for it



If you already know the answer, don't ask the question



Practice conversations starters like "What do you know about mice?" rather than "Is this a mouse?"



Start a conversation with "What do you know about this?"

# Components of conversation-rich environments

- A large gathering area for group conversations



# Components of conversation-rich environments



- A comfortable area for more intimate conversations



# Components of conversation-rich environments



- A comfortable space for solitude



## Creative Arts Center

### **I am:**

Expanding creativity  
Increasing language development  
Learning cooperation and turn taking  
Enhancing eye-hand coordination  
Exercising fine motor skills  
Showing how I view things  
Bringing ideas to life  
Experiencing with new textures





## Talking Tips: Creative Arts Center

"Tell me about your picture."  
"Why/How did you pick that...?"  
"Where did you get that idea?"  
"How does it feel?"  
"What story does your picture tell?"  
"Tell me about the people in your picture?"  
"How did you create your artwork?"

# What makes a good listener?

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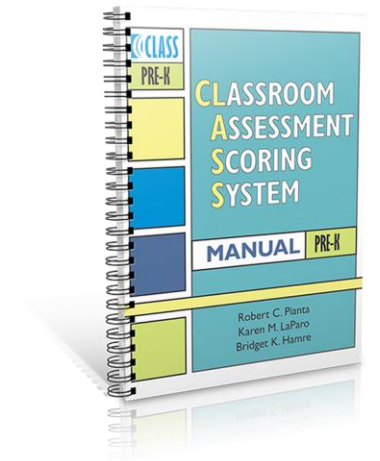
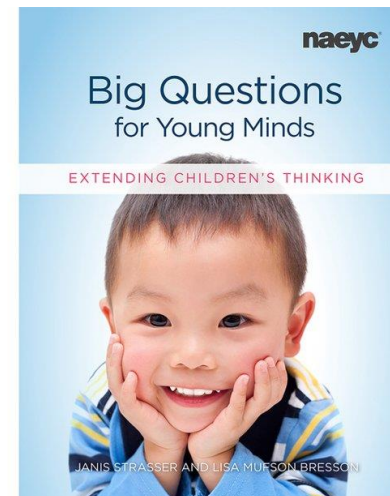
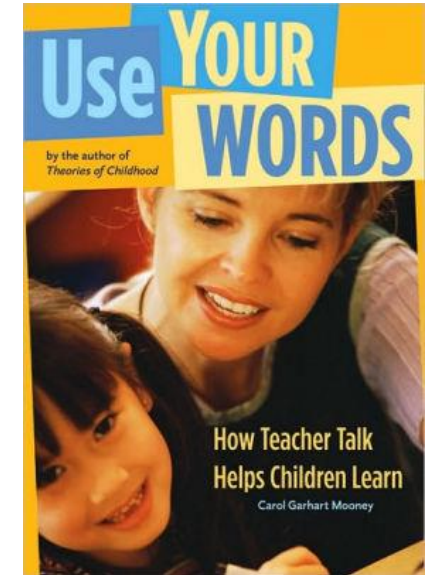
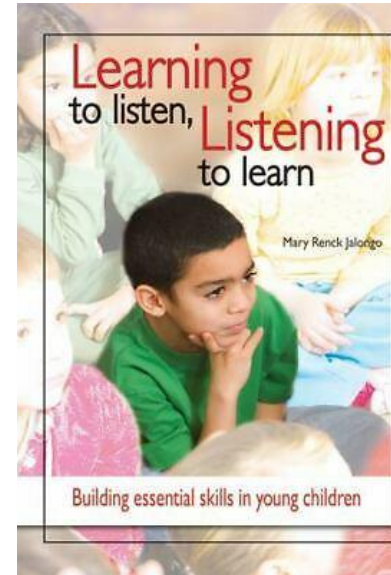


- A good listener
  - Makes eye contact appropriately
  - Is patient and does not interrupt
  - Asks questions in a pleasant tone
  - Is responsive both verbally and nonverbally
  - Prepares for listening by focusing attention

*Learning to Listen, Listening to Learn: Building Essential Skills in Young Children*, NAEYC, 2008.

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**Questions or  
comments?**

