Discourse Strategy Cheat Sheet

Strategy & Description
4 Corners ❖ Used to differentiate students based on their position on a specific statement/problem (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Draws out students' opinions and encourages academic arguments.
Brain-Hand ❖ Students are given roles. The "brain" is in charge of explaining steps, procedures, and reasoning. The "hand" is in charge of recording the thoughts of the "brain."
Coffee House ❖ A method to incorporate roles and increase accountability during group work. Students are assigned a part of the task they are responsible for recording for the group. The group works together on each prompt, but the assigned recorder changes for each step of the task.
Equity Sticks ❖ Used to randomly call on students to respond to a prompt.
Fish Bowl ❖ Used when the teacher wants to model (either participating with students or students alone) what a "good discussion" looks like during a particular activity.
Gallery Walk ❖ Students explore multiple prompts placed around the room. Often used when teachers want students to share their work with peers. Because this strategy requires movement, it can be especially engaging.
Give One/Get One ❖ Teachers use this strategy as a way to have students share their work or ideas with their peers. Students practice being active listeners as they take turns sharing ideas and recording the thoughts of others.
Instructional Conversations ❖ Used to promote academic language in conversation. Students tally how many times their peers use specified vocabulary words in discussions.

Jigsaw
- ❖ Used to emphasize cooperative learning by providing students opportunity to actively help each other build comprehension. Students are assigned an area they are to become the "expert" in teaching the other members.

Lines of Communication

- ❖ Used to get students sharing and receiving information from a number of students in an organized fashion. The class is divided into two rows of students facing each other. After sharing has taken place, one row moves over one position to repeat the process.

Numbered Heads

- ❖ Used to increase individual accountability in a group setting. Students are given a number. After the group has worked together, the teacher calls a specific number to be the spokesperson for the group.

Philosophical Chairs

- ❖ A method of organizing a debate. There is an "agree," "disagree," and "neutral" area for students to sit. Students take turns in the "hot seat" to share their reasoning and persuade neutral students to their opinion.

Quality Questioning

- ❖ Forming and framing questions aligned to instructional purpose that get students thinking
- ❖ Planning student responses and scaffolds to strengthen their thinking (i.e. Wait times (1 and 2 – see below), sequencing of questions to support students' thinking and answering, developing students' self-regulatory skills)
- ❖ Use for formative assessment

Creating a classroom culture where there is a student-teacher partnership and thinking is expected and valued.

Quick Draw for Points (Step/Justify)

- ❖ Used to explicitly honor and award the multiple ways to approach a task. Students are given points for each varied process used to complete a task. Or if your focus is efficiency, students can be given more points for using fewer steps.

Quick Write

- ❖ Used to allow for quick ideas and thoughts to be written down for a given task to either spur discussion, provide formative assessment, or reflection time for the student.

Sentence Frames

❖ A scaffold provided for students to help use academic language structures in written or oral formats. Can be posted around the room to encourage student use. *Example: "_____ have _____, but _____ have _____."*

Sentence Starters/Language Scripts

❖ Similar to sentence frames, but only provide a partial frame (a start) to begin their idea. *Example: "The first step is…"*

Language scripts may also include general questions to encourage student peer to peer discussion.

Snow Ball

❖ This strategy allows students to anonymously generate thoughts and ideas and respond to others' thoughts and ideas. After responding to a prompt on a piece of paper. Students toss the "snowball" and find a classmates' "snowball" to respond to. Teacher can elicit trends in thoughts or highlight strings of thoughts by students.

Socratic Seminar

❖ Used to get a deeper understanding of what an author is trying to express in a piece of text. Students, beginning with a leader asking an open-ended question, help each other understand the context.

Speed Buddies

❖ A variation of lines of communication (see above) where students have a given amount of times to share information at desks then one of the pairs moves to another seat to share again.

Stand and Share - Whole Group

❖ Used to elicit different answers from students in a relatively short amount of time. After given a prompt, the entire class stands. After one student shares their answer, anybody with the same response sits. This continues until all unique responses have been heard.

Stand and Share – Small Group

❖ Used as a way to visually see student accountability during group discussion. A variation of a "talking chip" (see below). Students stand in their groups. After they have contributed to their group discussion, they are allowed to sit.

Talking Chips

- ❖ Used to increase accountability during group talk. Students are given "chips" to use when contribution to the discussion, with statements or questions, has been made. Or students can be given a set amount of chips and can give them away every time they contribute. The idea is to end up with zero chips.

Think, Pair, Share

- ❖ This is a collaborative learning strategy where students work together to solve a problem or answer a question. Think: students have time to individually reflect on a prompt. Pair: students pair with their partner to compare thoughts. Share: partners share their thoughts with the class.

Think, Write, Pair, Share

- ❖ Similar to Think, Pair, Share (see above) with the added step of Write. For longer problems or questions, students may need time to write down their thoughts before comparing and revising with their partner.

Think/Wait Time

- ❖ Used to allow students who have different processing speeds to arrive at an answer to a prompt before the teacher elicits responses. After asking a question, the teacher allows 3 or more seconds of silence (Wait time 1). After a student responds, the teacher allows 3 or seconds of silence (Wait time 2).

Whip Around

- ❖ This is a quick way to get a lot of student input and is usually used when a prompt has many answers. The teacher quickly whips around the room to elicit different responses from students.

World Café
- ❖ There are three to four rounds where students respond to prompts in groups and can build on ideas from other groups. This strategy allows for flexible grouping. Some students are assigned as table hosts who summarize what the previous groups discussed.