Conversational Discourse
Presented by Ivanna Soto, Ph.D.

What is Conversational Discourse?
- Conversational discourse is the use of language for extended, back-and-forth, and purposeful communication among people.
- A key feature of conversational discourse is that it is used to create and clarify knowledge, not just transmit it.
- Language is not one solid tool but a dynamic and evolving mix of resources and flexible tools used to communicate, build, and choose ideas at any given moment.

What do you expect of your students during conversational discourse?

Conversational Discourse Terms
Terms used in the literature include:
- extended
- communication
- discussion
- argument
- orderly
- formal
- reasoning
- conversation
- social practice
- beyond the sentence level
- how language is used in a discipline
- language in use

Which of these terms resonate for you and why? Are there any terms that you might add to the list?

Norms: Making Conversations Cooperative
- Make your contribution not more or less informative than is required at the current stage of the conversation.
- Don’t say ideas that you think are false or ideas that lack evidence.
- Be clear.
- Be relevant to the current stage of the conversation.

(Grice, 1976)
### Building Ideas: Given and New

**Given**
- Paraphrase
- Recap
- Zoom in on information just shared in conversation

**New**
- Build new ideas
- Variations
- Build multiple perspectives

"Why talk if nothing new results?"

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### Conversational Discourse: Chapter 2

- Read your section of pages 11-17 and summarize the three most important ideas from your section.

**Discuss your summary and questions below with your group members:**

- How does this reading inform your definition of conversational discourse?
- How can you apply this to your teaching this year?

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### Chapter 2: Conversational Discourse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A: Pages 11-13</th>
<th>B: Pages 13-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Discourse and Clash of Paradigms</td>
<td>Conversational Purposes, Maxims, and Dispositions</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C: Pages 15-16</th>
<th>D: Pages 16-17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Ideas with the “Given” and the “New”</td>
<td>Choosing the Best Thing to Say Next</td>
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### CONVERSATIONAL SKILLS

Chapter 3: Classroom Applications for Conversational Discourse
- The Skill of Clarifying Ideas
- The Skill of Supporting Ideas
“The more genuine conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of either partner. . . . A conversation has a spirit of its own, and the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it—i.e., that it allows something to ‘emerge’ which hence forth exists.”

~Hans Georg Gadamer (1976)
Scaffolding Conversational Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question or Prompt</th>
<th>What I thought (speaking)</th>
<th>What my partner thought (listening)</th>
<th>What we will share (consensus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can you give an example of conversational skills?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Partner: How is that an example of conversational skills?</td>
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(Adapted by Soto-Hinman, 2009)

Additional Conversational Skills

- The Skill of Evaluating Evidence and Reasoning (pp. 30-35)
- Negotiating Ideas (pp. 35-36)
- Competitive Argumentation (pp. 36-37)

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