

### What is it?

**Discourse** is a strategy students use to practice organizing their thinking in preparation for conversations and/or writing. The teacher provides appropriate scaffolds to support and maintain participation by all.

### When to do it?

**Discourse** is a strategy that can be used in any content area lesson, multiple times including:

- Setting Up the Day's Lesson - Creating opportunities for students to reconnect to previous learning.
- Launching a Unit of Study – Creating opportunities for students to access prior knowledge.
- During and After Lessons – Creating opportunities for thoughtful/reflection and constructing meaning.

### How to do it?

#### Ahead of time -

- The teacher organizes the classroom environment so it is conducive for conversations.
- The teacher models desired conversation behaviors.
- The teacher models and provides students guided practice stopping on-demand, thinking about a particular topic, organizing one's thinking about a given topic, having a conversation with a partner, 'coming back into one conversation', and recording one's thinking.
- The teacher identifies a signal to bring the whole group back into 'one conversation' and provides students guided practice in using the signal.

#### In the Lesson -

- At the appropriate time in the lesson, the teacher engages students in verbal and/or written discourse about a prompt/topic.
- The teacher provides appropriate scaffolds.
- The teacher uses the predetermined signal and brings the group together in 'one conversation.'  
(Optional: The teacher engages students in sharing their thoughts with the group.)
- The teacher decides when the Discourse strategy will be applied in the lesson.

## Why do it?

**Discourse** is a high leverage strategy to support classroom discourse. When implemented as outlined, this strategy supports and promotes:

- Student engagement.
- Access to the learning for all.
- Opportunities for students to construct meaning.
- Opportunities for students to extend and deepen critical thinking skills.
- A community of learners.
- High expectations and accountability.
- The ability to write on demand.
- Ongoing formative assessment.