



Course Overview

This course is part of a series of short courses from the Understanding Language Initiative at Stanford University that facilitates the analysis and improvement of the communicative features of activities in English language development (ELD) lessons.

Communicativeness means that rather than focusing on memorizing grammar rules and word meanings to give the appearance of language learning and use, activities actually require and foster communication--they motivate and support students in using language to get interesting and meaningful things done.

Each course in the series highlights strategies to incorporate communication into a different skill, such as listening, speaking, reading, writing, and conversation. The first course focuses on designing activities that develop students' conversation skills across disciplines. We hope this series will benefit educators looking for engaging ways to enhance both content and language learning for students, especially English Language Learners.

This "coach" version of the course is geared toward instructional coaches and others who support teachers and build school-wide capacity. As such, the reflection questions and assignment are designed to help coaches to focus on communication as they work alongside teachers in examining students' conversation skills.

Goals & Purpose: This course is focused on understanding the key elements and skills for effective conversations, designing activities that develop students' conversation skills across disciplines, and formatively assess students' conversations and provide feedback

Session 1 – Welcome to Communication-Focused Conversation

This session serves as an introduction to the course.

Session 2 – Developing Constructive Conversation Skills

This session features a video describing two main modes of conversations and core skills for supporting them.

Session 3 – Classroom Videos

This session contains two video clips of real-life classroom examples.

Session 4 – Using the Communicativeness Design and Observation Tool

This session goes over the Communicativeness Design and Observation Tool and how to use it.

Session 5 – Readings and Resources

This session provides resources that provide background and complementary information to deepen your understanding of the course content.

Session 6 – Assignment

This section contains the assignment of the course. The assignment asks coaches to support teachers in selecting and adapting a communicative conversation task and then reflecting on how communicative it is when used with real students.

Session 7 – Course Wrap-Up and Certificate

This session is a conclusion to the course.

Throughout the course, opportunities are provided for you to connect your learning across sessions and to explicitly consider the implications of your learning for your classroom practice. You will also be able to revisit your work and reflections by viewing your individual Course Portfolios.