

Guide to Talk Moves

Critically Being With involves foregrounding the present reality of youth. This means pausing to actively listen to youth lived experience, and then moving to more fully center, make space for, and honor it. This shifts relationships and insights by humbly moving towards common ground with youth.

What are talk moves? Talk moves are the pedagogical moves that educators make to facilitate and scaffold engagement in ISL among youth without being the one doing all the talking or decision-making.

This guide highlights pedagogical moves to create and sustain an equitable learning community. It serves as one example of how to enact the Core Equitable Practice (CEP) of Critically Being With, as described in the Critically Being With Insights 2.6 document.

Questions for Group Discussions

- How have I/we sought to critically be with youth in my/our program -- calling caring attention to who they are and what they bring -- their feelings, ideas, histories, hopes and fears?
- Have I/we been more successful in critically being with some youth than others?
- What makes me/us uncomfortable with critically being with youth? Why?
- From my/our own experience, what talk moves have I/we used or experienced to support critically being with youth?
- What are some ways critically being with talk moves might be combined with other practices (e.g., embracing humanity)?
- What talk moves have I/we already used? Which do I/we want to add? Which ones will be the most impactful to critically be with youth? Which will be difficult?
- In the most recent lesson taught, how could I/we integrate these talk moves to transform who/what matters in STEM?

Things to Keep in Mind

This tool has been designed with partner educators. Themes include attending to youth narratives, valuing what youth value, and recognizing how youth work against injustice.

Some talk moves can work for multiple practices. For example, questions to critically be with youth may also work to embrace humanity.

This tool can be used alongside the Equity Compass tool to enhance discussions on talk move goals and outcomes.

Some of these talk moves may look like ones you are used to seeing, such as revoicing. However, **we call attention to when and how these moves are used to unsettle what/who matters in STEM and what expertise is and can look like.**

Examples of Talk Moves

Attending to narratives youth share about the conditions and contexts of their lives

Connecting to and making explicit systemic injustices

“What does [name]’s story about [important systemic issue] tell us about [lesson topic or investigation topic]? How could this change our original ideas about that issue/topic? What does that make us think more about?”

“I want us to think together about this more. Let’s talk about the reasons why [systemic issue related to topic] is so unfair. Maybe we should list the reasons you all share. [Looking at the list made together] How can we address these issues in our investigation/project/topic? Let’s make a new list of ideas!”

Revoicing Ideas Youth Share from their Lives

“That is powerful. So you mean that.....?”; “Oh, so your point is?” [Write youth ideas down somewhere public, such as the whiteboard.]

Making space for youth-valued meanings, practices, and social futures

Soliciting Youth Desires

“What are some things we do here that help you feel like you belong here or belong in STEM? What are some things you wish we would do or you wish you could do? If you could make today’s activity (or this program) different, what would you change?”

Eliciting and Valuing Youth Connections

“How do your projects connect to your life or someone else you know? What connections did you make between today’s activity/program and your life?”

Supporting Youths’ Meaning-Making and Problem-Solving

“What was your biggest challenge in your project/work today/this week? Why? What could you try out to address that challenge?”

Recognizing how youth are already working to make visible & to disrupt injustices within and beyond the learning space

Asking youth to share thoughts and related experiences from their lives

“Does this connect to something you’ve seen before or heard about in the world? How? What does this make us think of or remind us of?”

“What might be some important risks related to asking someone these [e.g., genetic, forensic, biometric] questions?”

Valuing and revoicing youth connections and expertise developed through lived experience

“That’s a good point. Is it OK for me to share that with the rest of the group? Name] just shared something really powerful. Did everyone hear that? What an important point. Thank you for sharing your expertise from your family’s experience. That makes me think about [followup reflection question]. Let’s take a minute to turn to our partners and think about how we could address that, and what that could mean for our investigation/design.”