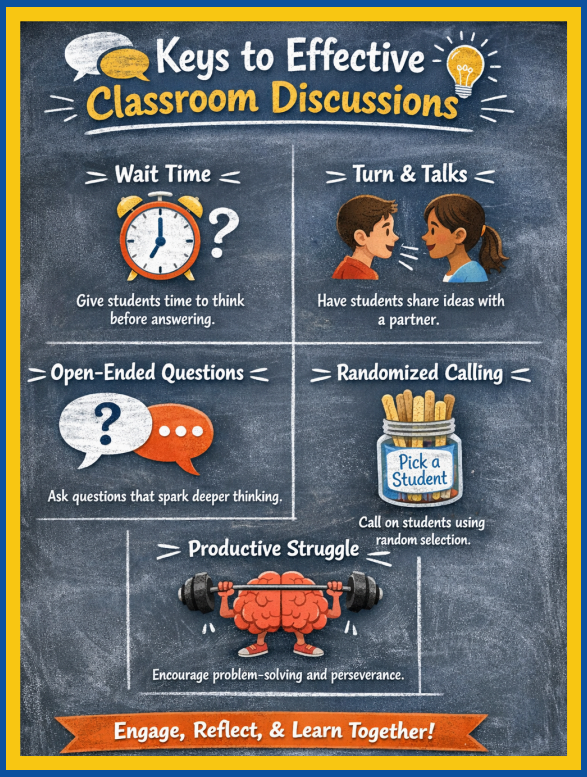
WSISD CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION | FEBRUARY 2026

IMPACTFUL INSTRUCTION



WANT TO ACCELERATE STUDENT LEARNING?

What if one simple shift in your instruction could move student learning faster? Purposeful classroom discussion can do exactly that. John Hattie's research shows that when discussions are done well, the impact is significant—more than twice the growth we'd expect in a year.

When discussions are planned with intention and guided effectively, students do more than just talk. They think more deeply, explain their reasoning, learn from one another, and make real academic gains. Strong discussions can even lead to more than two years of growth in a single school year, which makes them a powerful way to address learning gaps.

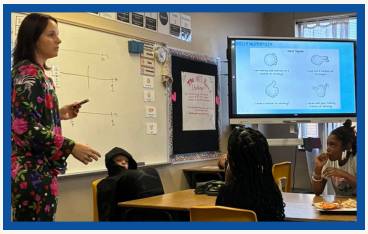
The key is that not every discussion gets these results—it depends on how the discussion is structured and supported. Are these five strategies part of how you're running discussions in your classroom?

FROM PD TO PRACTICE

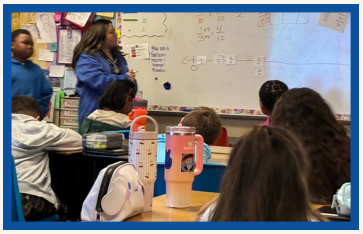
DAILY NUMERACY

Five to 10 minutes of Daily Numeracy every day may seem small, but those minutes add up. Each Daily Numeracy routine gives students another chance to make sense of numbers, explain their thinking, and work through challenges in a meaningful way. Over time, these small, consistent moments build learners who are more flexible, more confident, and better mathematical thinkers.

After a full year of consistent practice, students show stronger number sense, clearer reasoning, and greater confidence. When this experience continues year after year, the impact multiplies. What happens in those minutes matters. Your commitment to Daily Numeracy is an investment—one that lays the foundation not only for success next year but for sustained mathematical growth for years to come.



Alex Wiegman leads her class through a number talk using number lines.



Shane Cutshall uses the time in daily numeracy to review equivalent fractions.

THINKING MAPS

Just like Daily Numeracy, Thinking Maps really make a difference when students use them consistently—day after day, year after year. That repetition builds comfort, confidence, and deeper thinking over time.

Thinking Maps give students a clear way to show what's going on in their heads. They help students organize ideas, make connections, and explain their reasoning—skills that stick with them well beyond the classroom.

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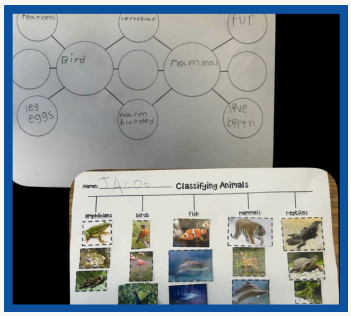
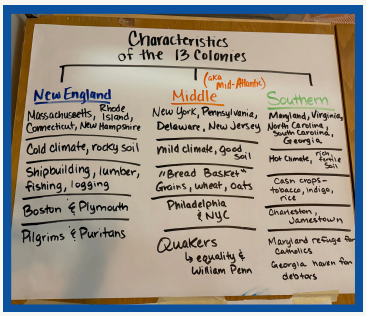
THINKING MAPS CONT'D

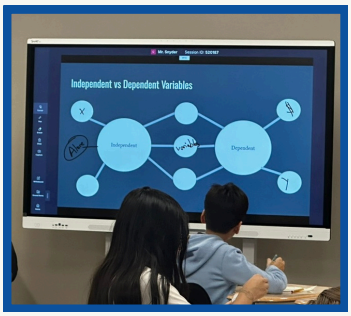
The ability to organize thinking is not just an academic strategy—it's a lifelong skill that supports learning in every content area and prepares students for success beyond school.



Jennifer Dexter's Life Skills class began with a double bubble map and progressed to a classifying map when learning about animals.



While teaching the 13 Colonies, students in Christina Delarosa's class created a classification map that she posted as an anchor chart.



Mr. Snyder used a double bubble map to assess his sixth grade students' knowledge of independent and dependent variables.

FUNDAMENTAL FIVE

Take a moment and think about the components of the Fundamental Five. These practices keep us focused on the instructional moves that make the biggest difference for student learning. When we consistently frame the lesson, work the power zone, build in purposeful student talk, reinforce positive behaviors, and ask students to write critically, classrooms feel clearer, more active, and more engaging for everyone.

These moves help us see student thinking, increase participation, and make sure all students—not just the ones who raise their hands—are involved in the learning. When the Fundamental Five is used consistently, it creates clarity for students and alignment across classrooms. It also gives us a shared language that supports coaching, collaboration, and growth.

At the end of the day, the Fundamental Five isn't about adding one more thing to our plates. It's about focusing on what matters most and doing it well. When we use these practices every day, we make better use of our instructional time and keep student learning moving forward.