

which includes stress and intonation. As students are immersed in conversations with others, they pick up ways of communicating from others. Similarly, they experiment with, prune, and reinforce their own extralinguistic strategies. In the class of 30 students, Student A gets to see how 29 other people use gestures and prosody to communicate. Students, over the years, learn not only the important paralinguistic cues used in mainstream academic and professional communications but also cues used by students of diverse backgrounds. Students can't develop these skills from books, and they can't show it on bubble-in tests. And yet these strategies can—and often do—make a big difference in the future (e.g., job interviews and relationships).

REFLECT AND APPLY

First off, think about how you can model and scaffold the skills of overcoming mini-challenges, giving up and taking control, and using paralinguistic clues. Try putting a student-student conversation up on the wall and revealing it line by line, acting it out with a student. Then point out the skills to students line by line, as suggested by the statements in the right-hand column of the following table. You can also point out other conversation skills. This sample conversation happens in fifth grade, prompted by the question of why it was called the Boston Massacre.

Conversation Transcript	What to Point Out to Students
Student: Why do you think the author wrote this?	<i>"Notice how my partner took control of the conversation with a question."</i>
Teacher: I think it was to describe what happened the night of what they call the Boston Massacre. But I don't think it was a massacre. Not enough people died. Only seven, I think. See what I mean?	<i>"Notice how I tried to overcome the mini-challenge of describing this new idea, an idea that challenges common knowledge of the event."</i>
Student: Yeah, I think so. You think they used <i>massacre</i> to make it sound worse?	<i>"Notice how my partner paraphrased and added information to overcome the mini-challenge of understanding the new idea introduced."</i>

Conversation Transcript	What to Point Out to Students
Teacher: Why would they do that?	<i>“Notice how I took control of the conversation with a question. I also used the paralinguistic cue of lifting up both hands to show questioning.”</i>
Student: To make people mad, I think. For example. You would get mad if you hear about a massacre of your people, right? I would too. Probably madder than if just seven people died. Maybe it would get more people to fight.	<i>“Notice how my partner used you and herself as ways to overcome the mini-challenge of explaining her idea of getting people mad enough to fight. She used paralinguistic cues such as stressing certain words and physically pointing to me, and to herself, then to the text.”</i>
Teacher: You mean to fight against the British?	<i>“Notice how I clarified to overcome the mini-challenge of understanding the previous idea. Notice also that I gave up control, allowing my partner to continue to explain her idea.”</i>
Student: Yeah. They didn’t all want to fight. I read that a lot of more . . . how do I say, comfortable people, people with good jobs, wanted things to stay the same.	<i>“Notice how this person works hard to explain the type of people who didn’t want to fight.”</i>
Teacher: It would be interesting to find out what percentage of people wanted to revolt and why. I wonder what I would have done back then. Would I want to fight a war?	<i>“Notice how I take control at the end, posing a question that requires clearer data than just ‘not all of them.’ I then personalize it a little to prompt some perspective taking on both our parts.”</i>

CONVERSATION SKILLS

One of the ways in which we can help students make effective choices in their interactions with others is to develop several key conversation skills (Zwiers, O’Hara, & Pritchard, 2014). Unfortunately, many educators, students, and people walking down the street don’t have a clear enough idea of what is involved in effective conversational discourse. Many students, for example, think that all conversations are arguments to win or that they involve just one person sharing an answer with another, as what happens in most