

10 Ways to Get People Talking

Getting learner to talk and have dialogue with each other (and themselves!) is critical for ensuring learning. Here are 10 ways to get people talking:

1. **Partner/pair work.** Dividing people in pairs means that everyone is talking and engaged. This also minimizes the problem of the same people “stealing the floor”.
2. **Small group work.** Dividing people in small groups also gets most people talking. People feel more comfortable and free to talk when they are in a small group than in the whole group.
3. **Open questions.** Open questions have no set answer and invite dialogue. Since these questions cannot be answered with a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’, learners are encouraged to talk.
4. **Gallery walk.** A gallery walk is an invitation for a group to walk around the room and review a variety of things on display. These items to be examined could be on the wall, on tables, or on the floor. Often there is a request to discuss something at each station.
5. **Table work.** When a group is divided into multiple table groups, more talk happens. There should be a task for each table group and a time frame given.
6. **Choice.** When learners are given a choice about how to do something or what to do, they will usually choose what they are most interested in and what energizes them.
7. **Silence, reflection and journaling.** Often learners need time to think. Silence, reflection and journaling provide an opportunity for learners to talk *with themselves*.
8. **Relevance.** When something is relevant to the learners’ lives they will want to talk about it. Engagement is high when people are learning something they want to learn about.
9. **Walk and talk.** Many people like to walk and talk. When the energy is low or you need to change spaces, giving clear instructions about something to talk about for a specific amount of time, can be very engaging.
10. **Engagement.** Engagement and talking feed each other: when I am engaged I want to talk about it, and when I am talking I am engaged.