The language of P4C

Something important I've learned in P4C is to get into the habit of using the language of P4C. The more you use it, the more engaging, thoughtful and philosophical your conversations become. Try to support and encourage those around you to use the language of P4C everywhere – at home, in class, at lunch, on trips out. And use all available means to help develop it - through modelling, in displays, in reviews, using sentence starter cards and written work.

Language for building dialogue

You can lead this. Rather than telling or saying, 'I think', try asking 'Can anyone add to…?' or 'Who can build on that idea?' Try modelling with 'I can follow on from that…'.

Add	'I want to add to… '
Follow	'Following on from…'
Build	'Building on that idea…'
Agree	'I agree with … because…'
Disagree	'I disagree because…'

Language for reasoning

As dialogue develops, use the language of reasoning to push for depth. That means helping everyone to think about what things mean, why they matter and how they might change. Some words are particularly useful for phrasing challenging questions and making activities.

Words that are useful for questions about value

Important	'Which is more important?' Why is this important?'
Better / worse	'Which is better …?' 'Would you rather…?'
Good / bad	'Which of these is good?' 'What is bad about this?'
More / less	'Which of these is more … (brave, useful, kind etc.)

Words that are useful for questions about meaning

Is / is not / maybe	'Is reading a newspaper in a shop stealing?'
Same / different	'How are games and wars the same? How different?'
All, some, none	'Are all politicians selfish?'
Always, sometimes, never	'Is violence always unacceptable?'

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www.sapere.org.uk | enquiries@sapere.org.uk | 01865 408333
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