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 HARVARD
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



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Promoting Text-Based Discussion to Strengthen Literacy Outcomes

Word Generation Mexico

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Relevance of argumentative talk

Argumentation is a way of thinking that links reason and language (Schwartz, 2009) inseparably from socialization and intellectual development, since it seeks to influence the “representations, beliefs and values” of others (Guy Bassart, 1995: 43).

It is the opposite of giving instructions or orders... Argumentation is essentially democratic (Guy Bassart, 1995)

Teaching argumentative talk

- The explicit and systematic teaching of formal/academic discourse genres, such as argumentation, has a positive impact on school success (Snow, 2014).
- In the official Mexican curriculum, **argumentation is formally taught in eighth grade.**
 - In **4th** grade, students analyze **advertising texts**
 - In **5th** grade they write **personal opinion texts** (Rodríguez Hernández, 2020).
- Most incoming university students fail to write argumentative texts (González Robles, 2014)

Teaching argumentative talk

- Teaching of argumentation in school, three common strategies:
 - Answering a question that requires consensus: ***Who should the group representative be?***
 - Answering a question already analyzed by science with one or more answers – stances –which must be identified and investigated by the group: ***Do sign language speakers from different communities understand among themselves?***
 - Taking a stance on a controversial/relevant topic: ***What is the purpose of school?*** – Word Gen

Adaptación México

word

generation



Lunes

Introducir
tema y
palabras.
Clase de
lengua

Martes

Actividad de
matemá-
ticas con
palabras
meta

Miércoles

Ciencias
sociales con
palabras
meta

Jueves

Debate oral:
plenaria o
equipos

Viernes

Actividad de
escritura

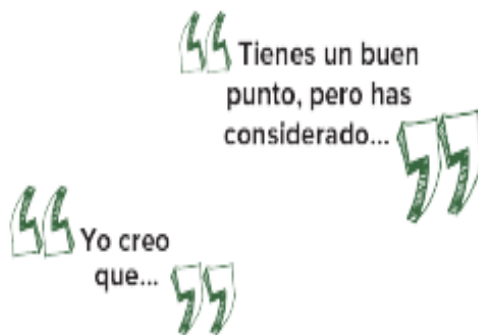
word

generation



Día 4:
Debate en clase

Los participantes efectivos emplean frases como éstas:



Some results with a very short version of
Word Gen interrupted by COVID-19

WG Mexico (2019-2020)

- Five schools: two elementary schools and three middle schools
 - Morning shift
 - Urban and urban-marginal area
 - San Luis Potosí (metropolitan area)
- Participants:
 - Elementary and middle school students
 - B. A. Psychopedagogy students (implementation team)
 - School teachers (just a few)

School	ELEM 1	ELEM 2	MS 1	MS 2	MS 3
# students	24	22	19	16	29

Can a six-week intervention program positively influence classroom discussion?

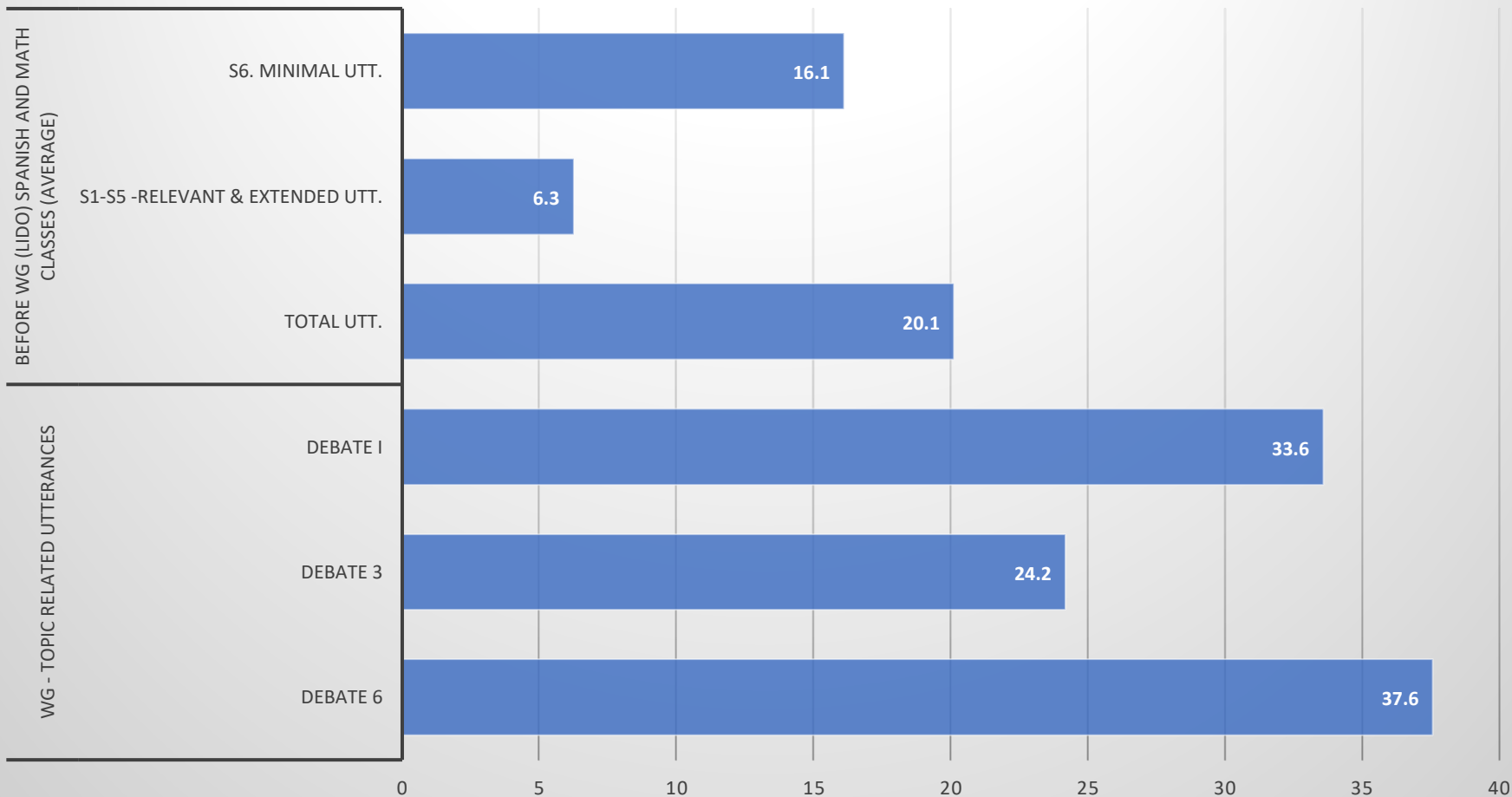
- Indicators

- amount of student talk – no intervention vs. intervention
- forms of interaction (roles)
- negotiation y argumentation quality
- academic discussion quality

- Three discussions were recorded and transcribed (initial deb1, intermediate-deb3 and final-deb6).
- Transcripts were reviewed to identify changes in the analysis criteria: student talk, roles, negotiation, argumentation and academic discussion.

Date	Topic
Nov 2019- Jan 2020	U1. What is the purpose of school? ¿Por qué vamos a la escuela?
Feb-2020	U3. Are kids responsible for stepping in to prevent bullying? ¿Los niños deben intervenir para prevenir el acoso escolar?
Feb- Mar 2020	U6. Junk food: Should schools sell it? ¿Debería venderse comida chatarra en las escuelas?

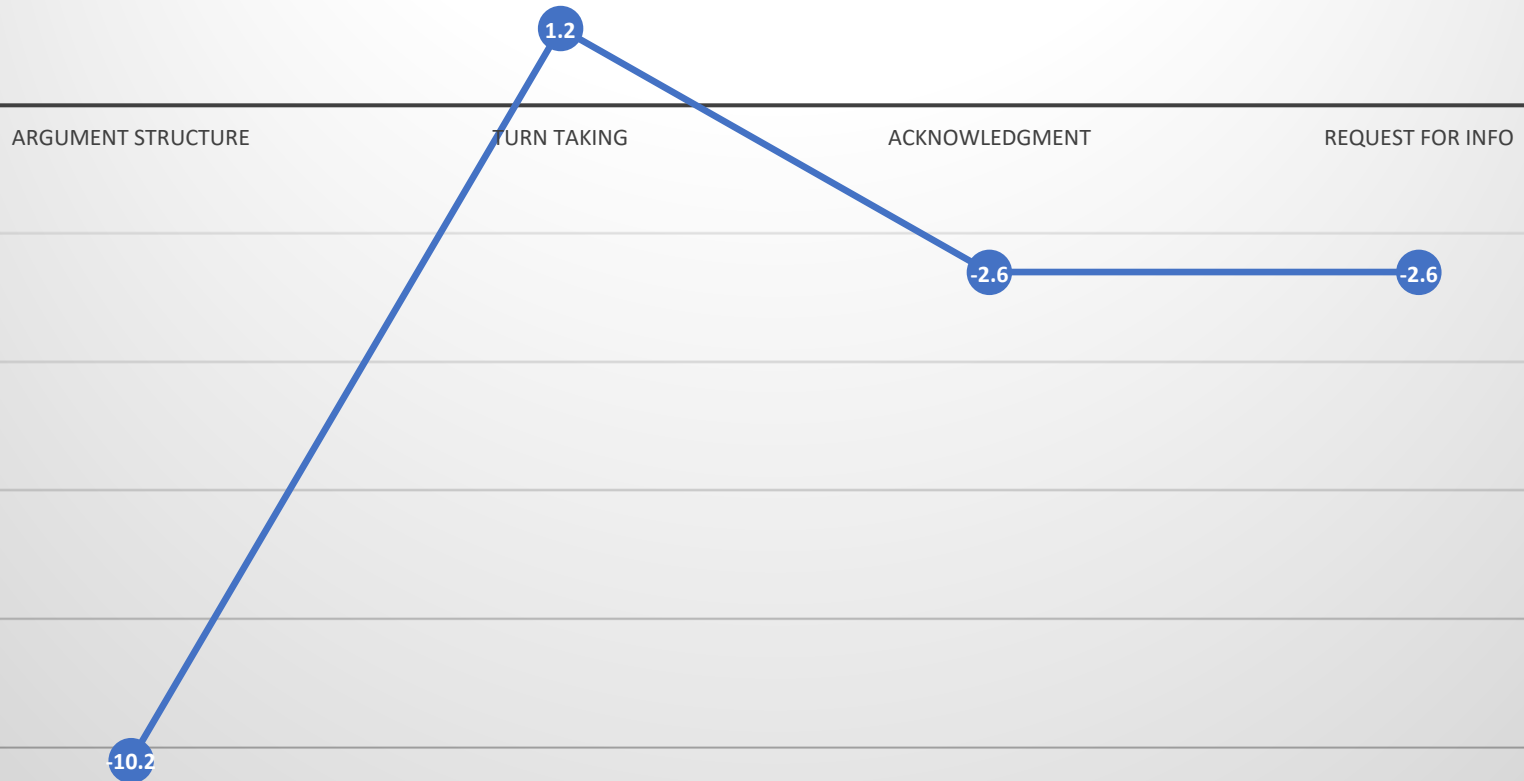
Student talk before and during WG. Utterances per session-mean (n=5)



CHANGE IN FORMS OF INTERACTION -STUDENTS. D6-D1 mean dif.



CHANGE IN FORMS OF INTERACTION -TEACHER. D6-D1 mean dif.



Academic discussion quality rubric

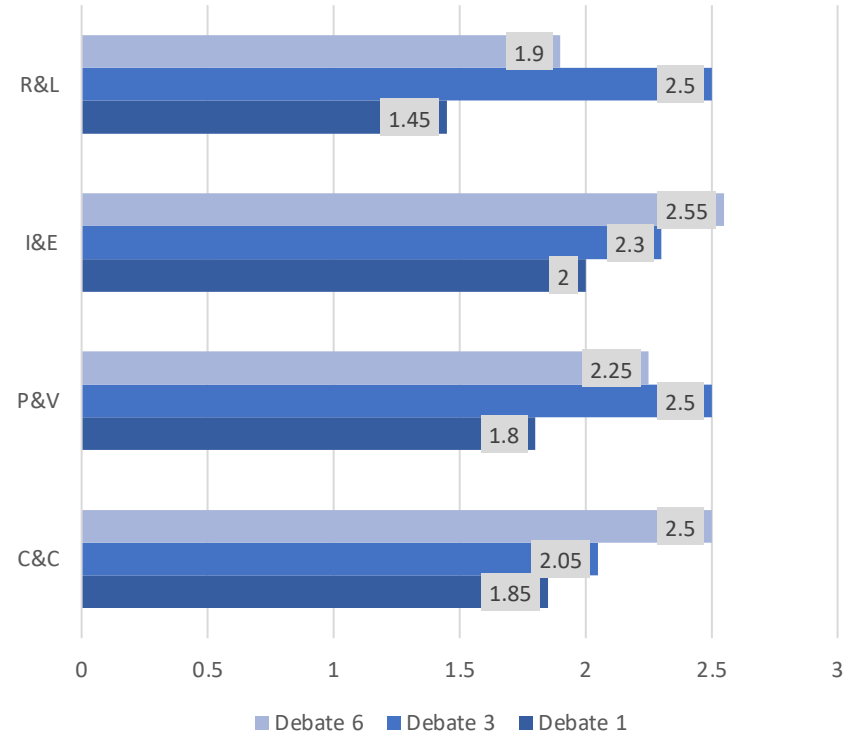
(Tracy, Ross Anderson, Snow & Selman, 2012)

REASON & LOGIC. Use logic, argumentation, or justification to support an argument.

INFORMATION & EVIDENCE. Refer to evidence from a text or previously acquired information to support an argument.

PERSPECTIVES & VOICE. Recognize, express or interpret a partner's point of view or demonstrate interest in modifying your own.

COOPERATION & COLLABORATION. Demonstrate a positive and respectful attitude towards the activity and towards other students.



Negotiation

Parallel

Participants present their arguments without interacting with others

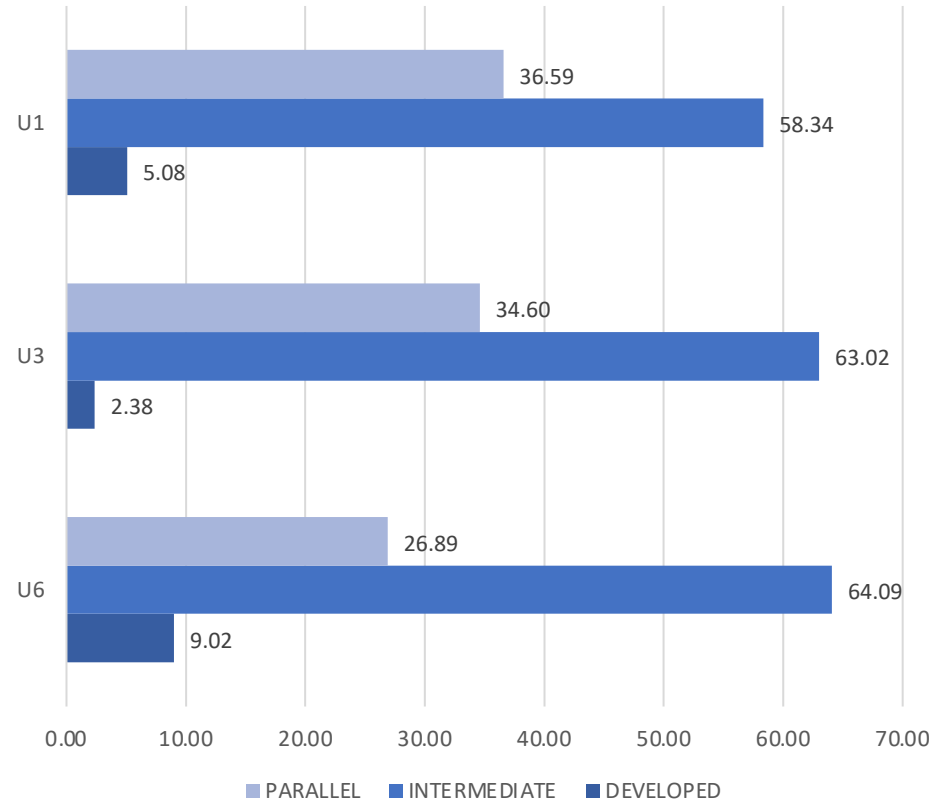
Intermediate

Interact with the arguments of others, complementing them

Developed

Elaborate arguments from others supporting or criticizing what was said

Type of negotiation (%)



Negotiation: examples

Paralela ESCUELA

*UNI: [...] *tanto analizar e interpretar nos ayudaría para una vida en un futuro y nuestras metas.*

*UNI: *debemos aprender de nuestros compañeros# nuestro amigo o de alguien más (U1P1L14, 19_NP)*

Media ACOSO

*E04: *si te hacen acoso este lo primero que se hace es ir a una autoridad no esperar que lo hagan por ti y ya.*

*E02: *pero si tu fueras el niño que ha sido acosado y no tienes la valentía para decirles que ese niño te está acosando xxx (U3P2L46, 48_NI)*

Desarrollada COMIDA CHATARRA

*ES6: [...] *porque pues si comida chatarra puede provocar una enfermedad...*

*E11: *respondiéndote ES6 # tú hablas de enfermedades y das un ejemplo este estas muy grave para decidir que en general cuanta chatarra comes [...] (U6S1L33, 41_ND)*

Parallel SCHOOL PURPOSE

- *UNI: [...] both analyzing and interpreting would help us for the life of the future and our goals.

- *UNI: we must learn from our classmates# our friend or from someone else (U1P1L14, 19_NP)

Intermediate BULLYING

- *E04: If they bully you, the first thing you do is go to an authority, not wait for them to do it to you and that's it.

- *E02: but if you were the child who has been bullied and you don't have the courage to tell them that that child is bullying you xxx (U3P2L46, 48_NI)

Developed JUNK FOOD

- *ES6: [...] because junk food can cause illness...

- *E11: responding to you ES6 # you talk about diseases and give an example, you are too serious to decide that in general how much garbage you eat [...] (U6S1L33, 41_ND)

Argumentation

Basic

Only the thesis of an argument is stated

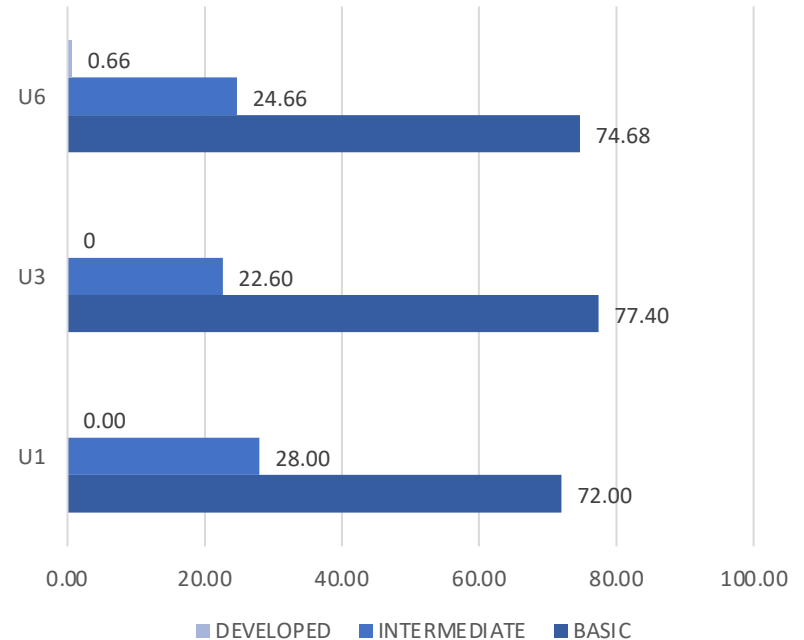
Intermediate

The thesis is stated with one or more arguments, without closing

Developed

The thesis is stated, there is at least one argument and a conclusion

Type of Argumentation (%)



Argumentation: examples

Baja ACOSO

**E05: pues así no te puedes quedar con los brazos cruzados tendrías que ayudar a resolver el problema (U3P2L42_CB)*

Media COMIDA CHATARRA

**E09: porque xxx nos acostumbran a comer y no ofrecer otro tipo de comida xxx sí tienen razón en que xxx si lo consumes en pocas cantidades [...]*

**E01: a nosotros nos da recursos económicos # así podemos ayudar al plantel de la escuela # a la escuela # pues si a la escuela a juntar [...] (U6S2L63, 70_CM)*

Avanzada COMIDA CHATARRA

- aparte hay que ver que por ejemplo ahorita que decimos que México es el país número uno con obesidad también hay que ver qué está pasando (...) por ejemplo hay muchas personas que están con sobrepeso o por ejemplo hay algunas personas que están en su peso normal [...] (U6S3L39_CA)*

Basic BULLYING

- *E05: Well then you can't stay with your arms crossed, you would have to help solve the problem (U3P2L42_CB)*

Intermediate JUNK FOOD

- *E09: because xxx they get us used to eating and not offering other types of food xxx yes they are right that xxx if you consume it in small quantities [...]*
- *E01: it gives us financial resources # so that we can help the school staff # the school # because if the school meets [...] (U6S2L63, 70_CM)*

Developed JUNK FOOD

- Furthermore, we have to see that, for example, now that we say that Mexico is the number one country with obesity, we also have to see what is happening (...) for example there are many people who are overweight or for example there are some people who are at their normal weight [...] (U6S3L39_CA)*

Conclusions

- Despite the short duration of the intervention, only six weeks, important changes are observed:
 - Before WG, students usually have few verbal utterances in the classroom related to the class topic; that changes since debate 1.
 - The teacher begins by managing the interaction (structure, turns and discipline) and little by little the students assume that role: they organize the dynamics and control the turns.
 - The students' participation diversifies towards the end of the intervention: they discuss, disagree, exemplify, explain.

Conclusions

- The quality of academic discussion improves in the areas of cooperation and collaboration; information and evidence.
- Their negotiation and argumentation skills show progress.
- At the beginning students tend to repeat the topic question and express their thoughts without considering what others say.
- In the end they become more involved in the topic, they listen to each other, complement, comment and even take up what another classmate said.
- The quality of the argument progresses from basic to intermediated. Students appear to need more practice to elaborate arguments with specific evidence.
- Other studies with this intervention suggest that there is also progress in the area of writing (Romero-Contreras et al., 2021, in press).

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Thank you

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