

DiALoG Dimension: Relevance

As you use the DiALoG Tool in your classroom, you will determine if the following statement is Not Descriptive, Somewhat Descriptive, or Very Descriptive of the discussion you observe.

Students' contributions are relevant to the scientific question that is the focus of the argumentation activity.

To help determine how well the statement describes the discussion you observe, you might also consider:

At the Very Descriptive level, students consistently focus their contributions on the scientific question or topic at hand. During the discussion, they provide claims, evidence, and reasoning that are focused on the topic of discussion and often refer to shared resources (e.g., texts, evidence cards, graphs) to support their thinking.

Possible student actions that indicate they are making relevant contributions:

- Students using, and making use of, classroom texts or other topical evidence sources during the discussion.

Useful teacher prompts to model or provide opportunities for students to demonstrate making relevant contributions:

- *How is that related to your question?*
- *Can you connect that idea to your question?*
- *Are we digressing here? Let's remember that the topic/issue is*
- *Are we getting off-topic? How does this relate to . . . ?*

Responsive Mini-Lesson Summaries

The Responsive Mini-Lesson (RML) summaries below are intended to help you understand how the lessons help students build facility with making relevant contributions to a scientific discussion and to determine which RML is an appropriate fit for your students.

Not Descriptive

At the Not Descriptive level, students' contributions are rarely relevant to the scientific question or topic under consideration. This may indicate that they have yet to be formally introduced to this concept and/or are still building a basic understanding of the distinction between relevant and irrelevant information.

To respond to a score of Not Descriptive, this lesson has students consider claims and possible supporting evidence and choose which ideas are relevant to the offered claim. Students practice identifying irrelevant evidence by using everyday arguments. This accessible content helps students develop an initial understanding of relevance. The goal of this lesson is to provide students with several opportunities to identify both relevant and irrelevant evidence or ideas.

Somewhat Descriptive

At the Somewhat Descriptive level, students' contributions are sometimes relevant to the scientific question or topic under consideration. However, students are not consistent about distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant contributions.

To respond to a score of Somewhat Descriptive, this lesson has students consider complex examples of arguments and work together, through discussion, to determine if those examples are relevant. Students focus on various arguments about what is causing the mysterious disappearance of a fish species. The lesson concludes with students sharing their reasoning about why some arguments are irrelevant. The goal of this lesson is to provide students with practice evaluating arguments in order to determine whether each argument is mostly relevant or mostly irrelevant to the question under consideration.