12 Tying into the discussion contributions of others

Goal > *This exercise serves to practice two important communicative competences: 1. attentive listening and 2. the ability to observe the inner connection or coherence of a discussion.*

3rd–9th grade   **30 minutes**

Materials:
Large paper strips or a poster for the building blocks of the sentence

Hint:

This exercise relates to an important rule of conversation, as suggested in #9 ("In reference to what the previous speaker said"). It supports the students with the sentence building blocks as a tool which they must use to apply the rule. For working with sentence building blocks, see also chapter 2c "Expanded means of speech" in the introduction.

Procedure:

- The instructor explains that a good, coherent discussion can only be achieved if the participants relate to one another so that they make connections with the previous speakers' contributions to the conversation. The instructor and students then discuss possible means of speech or sentence building blocks and write them down on paper strips or a poster.

- To test it, the instructor then makes an assertion and requests that the students make a connection to it with the listed sentence beginnings (e. g. "I find it useful that cell phones are not allowed in class"). This exercise will be repeated with other assertions until the students understand the principle.

- In the next 2–3 group or class discussions, students will deliberately pay attention to the importance of making connections to the previous speakers, either with the prescribed or the students' own sentences. Following the discussion, the students will engage in reflections about their experiences with the sentence building blocks: which sentence blocks were particularly useful? Are there other sentence blocks that we could utilize?

Examples of sentence building blocks for reference and linking:

- I would like to ask XY a further question:...

- In this regard, I would like to say the following:...

- XY has alleged/said that..., but...

- I agree with XY. I too, find...

- I do not agree with what XY has said, because...

- To what XY has suggested, I would add:...

- If I understood you right...

- I conclude that...

- It has been my experience that...

- It is good/bad that... / I like it (don't like it), when...