Phrases for Classroom Interactions

There are a number of phrases to manage classroom activities.  Here are several.

Encouraging feedback

* Are there any questions?
* Any questions so far?
* Would anyone like me to repeat that?
* Should I say that again?
* Is that clear to everyone?
* Is anything not clear?

Responding to correct student answers to questions

* Right!
* You’ve got it.
* Good thinking.
* Yan has raised an interesting point.

Responding to incorrect student answers to questions

*In US educational settings, instructors tend to indirectly point out that a statement is wrong*.  *The tendency is to focus on what a person said rather than on the person him- or herself.*

* Good guess, but not exactly right.
* That’s an interesting idea, but it is not quite right.
* Nice try, but not quite right.
* You’re close, but…

Giving hints (encouraging the student to revise or complete the answer)

* You’re on the right track, George, but you haven’t considered…
* If you do this, what do you think will happen?
* If we follow your suggestion, here’s what might happen.
* But what about…?
* What if you looked at this problem in another way, for example by…

Clarifying student comments

* I’m not sure I understand what you are trying to say, Stefan.  Could you restate your comment?
* In other words, Janice, you’re saying …
* If I understand correctly, you are asking…  Is that right?
* Could you give me an example of what you mean?
* Would you please repeat your question (a bit more loudly/slowly)?
* Could you explain that a bit more?

Repeating or paraphrasing a question or comment for the rest of the class

* Did everyone hear what Luis said?  He wanted to know…
* According to Luis, …
* Lee is asking whether…
* Sally thinks that…

Making sure everyone in class understands

* Do you all get this point? (Please raise your hand if you do not).
* Does everyone see how we solved the problem?
* Are you ready to work through a problem on your own (or in pairs)?
* Is this definition clear now?
* Which parts are still unclear to you?
* Would you like me to go over another problem?
* What questions do you have?

Inviting participation and discussion

* Do you have any thoughts on this (subject)?
* What are some other considerations regarding this?
* Do you agree that…?
* How do you feel about …?
* How does this compare with the Professor Joseph’s theory that …
* What is the point of this experiment?
* Would someone like to add to what Lindsay said?
* Can someone else help to correct this answer?
* Part of what you said is correct, but not all of it.  Who can help Sam complete the answer?

**Asking students to work alone, in pairs, or in groups:**

Individuals

* I would like each of you individually to spend a few minutes doing the following task:…
* Take a (few) minute(s) and think individually about …
* Think about \_\_\_\_ for a minute or two and write down your thoughts (or questions) on a scrap piece of paper.

Pairs

* Turn to your neighbor and discuss ……  Write down your thoughts on scrap paper
* Find a partner, preferably someone you have not already worked with, and talk about ……
* Go ahead and stand up and find one other person to talk to.  Both of you should introduce yourselves to each other and then together, answer the following two questions: …….

Small Groups

* I am going to ask you to get into groups of 3 (4, 5, etc.).  Feel free to get up and move around the room.
* *Then check*: Is everyone in a group with at least 3 people?
* In your groups of 3 (4, 5, etc). spend about \_\_ minutes analyzing/discussing/solving/answering …etc.

Bringing pairs/groups back together to discuss what they have learned:

* Please finish what you are doing in the next minute and then we’ll re-group as a class.
* Ok, lets pause our discussions and bring our attention back to the front (center) of the room.  You can stay with your group (partner) for now.
* Okay everyone, lets come back together, you can stay with your group (partner) for the time being.

Asking about student progress (*for example, when students are working in groups or individually during class*)

* How is it going here?
* Is everything going well?
* Are you all on the right track?
* Do you need any help with this?
* Are you having any trouble with this procedure?

Interrupting or redirecting conversation

* Let me interrupt for a minute…
* Let’s get back to your main point…
* Your comments relate to our next topic…
* May I add something here?

Expressing an opinion

* I think that…
* I believe that…
* In my opinion…

Expressing agreement

* I agree with your idea that…
* I think you’re right about that…
* That’s a good point.

Expressing disagreement

* I disagree with your viewpoint. (*direct*)
* I’m afraid I can’t agree with what you’ve just said because…
* On the other hand, have you considered…
* But don’t you think…

Finishing a discussion or a section of the lecture

* Finally…
* I’ll summarize buy saying…
* Let’s summarize and think about what we just learned.
* Are there any final questions?
* What final questions do you have?
* We have time for one or two more questions before moving on.