



# Dialogic Talk

Hannah Freeman  
Science Leader,  
St Mary's CE Primary School

*"How do you use 'talk' within science?"*

How can dialogic teaching support children's development of conceptual understanding in Science?

### Within curriculum Science:

Does dialogic teaching promote higher order thinking (specifically reasoning and justification)?

How do children appropriate linguistic devices to support dialogic talk within dialogic teaching?

What are the children's perceptions of the impact of dialogic teaching upon their learning?

The concept of the research was to explore how 'dialogic teaching' could support the children to develop deeper conceptual understanding with a focus on Science. However, the technique could be applied across the curriculum.

Reading around the work of Robin Alexander sparked my interest in exploring talk as an "essential learning tool" (Alexander, 2008a, p. 9) and how talk could be used more effectively to support learning.

Dialogic teaching is a pedagogical approach in which "talk is given the prominence which effective teaching and learning require" (Alexander, 2008a, p. 9). There are five guiding principles to dialogic teaching, which have been promoted by Alexander (2008a, p. 38); these he considers being "the most important component" of the framework for dialogic teaching. The image defines the key principles of dialogic teaching.

### Collective

- Teachers and children address learning tasks together as a group.

### Reciprocal

- Teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative points of view.
- Questions invite other children to participate.

### Supportive

- Children articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment.
- Reach common understandings.
- Teacher and children ask questions requesting ideas to be clarified or explained further.
- Affirmations to encourage children to continue speaking.

### Cumulative

- Teachers and children build on their own and each other's ideas.
- Chain ideas into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry.
- Challenging other points of view by offering an alternative idea, which is then explored by the group.

### Purposeful

- Teachers plan and steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view.
- Teachers point out particular comments that they want the children to notice or explore further.



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### What did I find out?

- Dialogic teaching promoted higher order thinking, with increased use of reasoning and justification.
- Children used the prompt sheet to enable them to be effective in dialogic talk.
- During dialogic teaching, children developed use of scientific language.
- Teacher intervention decreased when children were trained to use dialogic teaching.



## Sumdog Success at Stamshaw

Congratulations to Stamshaw, who won their first Portsmouth Sumdog Challenge Competition this summer. With 102 classes taking part, Stamshaw finished with classes in 1st, 3rd, 5th and 8th position overall. An impressive feat! Well done to all children and staff involved.

Research conducted by Sumdog in Glasgow (July 2016) shows that students who spent 1 hour per week on Sumdog progressed 3 times faster than those who spent less than 5 hours in total.

How can you use Sumdog to impact on basic number skills in your classroom?

# INNOVATE

Edition 1

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*"If we create a culture where every teacher believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve"*

Dylan Wiliam

### In this issue:

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## Welcome to Innovate!

### Better learning for every child, for every lesson

Being 'better' drives the culture and ethos of teaching and learning at PPAT and St Mary's schools.

Innovate seeks to celebrate and share the rich practice and creative research that is already being developed across our schools and to build on the reflective dialogue established through coaching relationships.

Ben Goldacre stated "by collecting better evidence about what works best, and establishing a culture where this evidence is used as a matter of routine, we can improve outcomes for children and increase professional independence." Our goal is to further develop a research-informed education system at PPAT to enrich our profession.

### NEW TRAINING FACILITY Opening September 2017

From autumn 2017, the new training facility at Portswood will host a series of teaching and learning events including:

- Teacher Talks** - A chance to hear what other teachers are doing in a friendly atmosphere
- Subject Knowledge twilights** - Open to all
- PTSA twilight groups** - including Coaching and Mentoring
- NQT training sessions**

## LAUNCH: TEACHER TALKS

You are invited to the first in a series of talks. This is an opportunity to share and discuss practice and research, network with other professionals from across the city and hear short summaries of recent research from local schools.

Date: Thursday 21 September 2017, 4pm  
Venue: Training Facility, Portswood Primary School

Guest speakers include: Mel Butt (TBPS) and Dr Miranda Dodd (University of Southampton)



# 'To what extent does a collaborative approach to maths investigation lead to enhanced outcomes for more able pupils?'

Mel Butt, Tanners Brook Primary School

## Rationale

I have been developing the effective teaching of maths for more able pupils in the upper juniors from September 2015 onwards - encouraging pupils to reason more deeply and providing a range of tasks designed to develop thinking. My aims for this project are to build upon successes and:

- Improve pupil strategies to solve problems
- Encourage pupils to think in a different way
- Engender a 'love' of learning for maths
- Deepen reasoning skills

## Intervention

We taught the Year 5 and Year 6 top set in the hall. Following a warm up they completed a task entitled 'Crossing the Bridge' (see below). Task design is vital and I always look for tasks that lead to debate - often where they have to test a theory or prove a statement. This task offered the opportunity to solve it in different ways.

Four friends need to cross a bridge. They start on the same side of the bridge. A maximum of two people can cross at any time. It is night and they have just one lamp. People that cross the bridge must carry the lamp to see the way. A pair must walk together at the rate of the slower person:

- Rachel: - takes 1 minute to cross
- Ben: - takes 2 minutes to cross
- George: - takes 7 minutes to cross
- Yvonne: - takes 10 minutes to cross

The second fastest solution gets the friends across in 21 minutes. The fastest takes 17 minutes. Can you work out how it is done?



'Crossing the Bridge' Task

## What next?

This was the first stage of the work on collaboration. The next stage was to see if outcomes improved further if the most able worked together or would the collaboration lessen. Also would other groups including LA also work well collaboratively? I have now delivered lessons to explore this and will be producing a further update.

# Maximising MFL Opportunities in a crowded curriculum

Alison Watson

Language Leader, Portswood Primary School



*'Learning a foreign language is a liberation from insularity and provides an opening to other cultures.'*

(DFE, Languages PoS: KS2, NC in England, 2013)

At Portswood Primary School this aspiration is realised every day with over 25 different languages spoken and an emphasis on language teaching being fun and active. Lessons involve the use of songs, ICT and props to engage pupils. The **emphasis is on talk** and the reinforcing of language features, whether English or French. Can you sequence these French words on cards to make a sentence? Where is the adjective in the sentence? Would it go there in English? For more able pupils the challenge is to think deeply about word order and other more complex language features such as the use of conjunctions and different sentence starters.



## Interested in your own teacher enquiry?

Speak to your school leaders and PPAT will be able to support you.

## In the next issue...

- Findings on Effective Questioning PPAT NQTs
- Reflections on Alistair Smith INSET

The celebration of languages means that the teaching of French also acts as a model for English teaching. All School Direct trainees and NQTs receive training on MFL, including observation of French lessons to emphasise key principles in any language teaching. These principles include the emphasis on active learning, high levels of talk (including song) and constant repetition. Given the wide range of languages spoken in the school, links are often made between the languages that the children know.

In a crowded curriculum, maximising time is vital, meaning all opportunities need to be seized, including counting in French while lining up, singing songs at the end of the day and answering the register in different languages. Can more able pupils say 'hello' in ten different languages? How about PE warm ups taught in French? Counting the skips, running to touch a different colour or following different instructions - "courez, sautez, marchez sur la pointe des pieds." A favourite Year 5 science lesson is when the children make mobiles to describe the planets in French. Key curriculum events are also crucial in raising language awareness. In Year 3 a French breakfast allows pupils to have simple conversations about croissants and hot chocolate. This is also the perfect time to share multi-cultural similarities and differences.

And what of new technologies? The use of iPads to record speaking has been used creatively in Year 6. Pupils make scenes, such as in a café, and are then able to watch them back, assess their speaking and improve their delivery. More able pupils, including bi-lingual French speakers, extend themselves by using dictionaries to widen vocabulary choices when designing their café menus. In this way, more able pupils show their independence and imagination, while using languages, all with a big helping of 'joie de vivre'!

*"How often do your pupils celebrate their own language?"*