

Assessment for learning

Developing strategies that promote classroom dialogue – possible CPD activity

1. Use the tables 'Features of effective dialogue and associated strategies' (below) and 'Teaching strategies for effective dialogue' to provide prompts to help you think about the characteristics of effective dialogue that:
 - feature strongly in your teaching and the strategies used to achieve them
 - are absent or might be improved

2. Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of classroom dialogue in your class, year group or school, identify one feature of dialogue you wish to improve.

Use the table below. (The features are shown across the top of the matrix.) Work together to agree and tick the different strategies you could use to develop the aspect of dialogue you want to improve.

3. Identify one feature of dialogue you wish to improve across the school, for example 'Dialogue is reciprocal, that is, children respond to and build on what others have said'. Work together to identify strategies you could use to develop this aspect of dialogue. Use the table below to support this planning.

Choose two or three strategies that, as a school, you believe will help to develop dialogue, then plan, teach and review a sequence to trial them.

4. Ask your children to consider some of the features of effective dialogue and work with them to identify those that, if developed, might improve their learning.

Use the table below to identify and record those strategies that can help the children to develop the features of dialogue they have identified for improvement. Agree which ones are largely dependent on advanced planning for their success and which ones are more reliant on seizing of opportunities during the lesson. Use this information to collaboratively plan, teach and review a teaching sequence.

Features of effective dialogue and associated strategies

Features of Effective dialogue Teacher strategies	Everyone is engaged with the dialogue	Teacher talk does not over-dominate the dialogue	Pattern of dialogue is 'basketball' rather than 'ping pong'	Dialogue is reciprocal, that is, children respond to and build on what others have said	Children's contributions are well-developed sentences or phrases	Children are willing to take risks by sharing partial understanding	Children are willing to challenge each other's ideas in a constructive way	Children demonstrate higher levels of thinking	Children reprocess their thinking as a result of dialogue
Rich questions									
Big questions									
Higher-order thinking questions									
Questions linked to resources or tasks									
Peer discussion following a question									
Wait time after a teacher question									
Wait time after a child's response									
Varying length of wait time									
No-hands-up questioning									
Pausing to survey									
Eavesdropping on group dialogue									
Cue in children using gestures and prompts									
Model prompts and body language to encourage continuation									
Acknowledge where children demonstrate effective dialogue									
Group work strategies									