

Assessment for learning

Features of effective dialogue with example strategies used to trigger and sustain dialogue

Feature of effective dialogue	Examples of strategies used to trigger and sustain dialogue
Everyone is engaged with the dialogue.	<p>Use wait time to encourage more reflective responses and the less verbal children.</p> <p>Check answers on whiteboards for understanding and misconceptions and listen during group work to make decisions about who to support.</p> <p>Use no-hands-up questioning to encourage all children to listen and prepare a response.</p>
Teacher talk does not over-dominate the dialogue.	<p>Offer cues and prompts to encourage children to respond to each other and to extend their answers.</p> <p>Survey the class for signs of body language that indicate that a child has something to say.</p> <p>Use wait time after children's answers or questions to give yourself and other children a chance to reflect before responding. This tells children that their questions or responses are valued and are being carefully thought about.</p>
Pattern of dialogue is 'basketball' rather than 'ping pong' (teacher-child-child-child-teacher rather than teacher-child-teacher-child-teacher).	<p>Engage children in negotiating whether answers are right or wrong and in the justifications underlying them.</p> <p>Use cues and prompts that encourage children to respond to each other: 'Does everyone agree?', 'Does anyone want to add to that?'.</p>
Dialogue is reciprocal, that is, children respond to and build on what others have said.	<p>Use wait time: after responses the teacher waits a few seconds for others to think and respond.</p> <p>Don't fill time rephrasing questions or repeating children's answers.</p>
Children's contributions are well developed: for example, are at least a few sentences in length and include subject vocabulary.	<p>Use wait time in different ways: paired discussion as time to think; varied length of wait time, particularly for very high order questions that all of the class find very difficult.</p> <p>Encourage children to continue by using cues and prompts, including body language: 'Go on...', 'Can anyone say that with a key word in the sentence?'</p> <p>Provide sentence models and starters that support grammatically correct sentences and extended contributions.</p> <p>Encourage children to adopt some teachers' prompts in their group work.</p>

<p>Children are willing to take risks, for example being prepared to verbalise partially formed thinking.</p>	<p>Follow big questions with paired discussion. Acknowledge that the children are taking a risk – value this and encourage others to respond by building on their ideas. Expect the children to encourage one another: ‘I think what you mean is...’.</p>
<p>Children are willing to and see the value in challenging each other’s ideas in a constructive way.</p>	<p>Encourage constructive challenge: ‘Does anyone disagree?’, ‘Who can help us to think this idea through?’, ‘Talk in your pairs’. Expect children to ask for responses: ‘Does this make any sense?’, ‘It looks like...’, ‘Does anyone else think that...?’.</p>
<p>Children demonstrate higher levels of thinking, for example analysis, synthesis, prediction or evaluation.</p>	<p>Break down big questions: breaking up the central question into many sub-questions makes it easier to compose a response. Use wait time after the teacher’s questions and children’s responses. Don’t always accept right answers without discussion or justification.</p>