

# Assessment for learning

## Teaching strategies for effective dialogue

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<p><b>Eavesdropping on group dialogue</b></p> <p>Teachers listen for evidence of learning either to transfer ideas from one group to another or to feed into later whole-class dialogue. Here they can plan the order in which groups give feedback to orchestrate rich whole-class discussion. They may prime children in preparation for this. Sometimes they may intervene to stimulate more effective group discussion.</p>	<p><b>Rich questions</b></p> <p>These are open-ended, higher-order questions which require learners to either link or apply ideas, give reasons, summarise or evaluate. Sometimes they encourage children to ask themselves further questions to qualify what the question is actually asking them to explain. Such questions generally require extended answers.</p>
<p><b>Questions linked to resources or tasks</b></p> <p>A resource is used to help open up an issue through a specific question. Resources can be powerful aids if they are chosen to set up and complement both challenging questioning and learning through responses to the challenges.</p>	<p><b>Modelling prompts and body language to encourage continuation</b></p> <p>Teachers use body language or oral prompts to encourage children to develop their answers, for example 'Go on...' or nodding when the child stalls. By making these prompts explicit the intention is that children adopt similar strategies in their group dialogue.</p>
<p><b>Wait time after a teacher question</b></p> <p>Children are given time to reflect independently on a question, to think and formulate ideas and construct a response before being asked to answer.</p>	<p><b>No-hands-up questioning</b></p> <p>Teachers select the child who will respond to a question. By watching children's body language it is often possible to identify those who have ideas to contribute.</p>
<p><b>Big questions</b></p> <p>These are significant questions that cannot be answered immediately. By its nature, a big question draws answers from many children and encourages them to come up with a list of smaller questions they need to answer before an</p>	<p><b>Peer discussion</b></p> <p>Teachers prompt dialogue, often via a question, to enable peer interaction to support learning. The opportunity to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups (which may be with peers who share the same first language) helps children</p>

<p>answer to the big question can be formulated. Sometimes the smaller questions are provided by the teacher.</p>	<p>articulate and check ideas before they reveal their group's answer to the whole class. Answers are better formed through group talk.</p>
<p><b>Acknowledge when children demonstrate effective dialogue</b> Teachers explicitly comment on the features of effective dialogue where they occur.</p>	
<p><b>Pausing to scan or survey</b> Teachers stand back to take stock of the learning across the class. This enables them to assess quickly what the children can do, can partially do or cannot do, to hear the language children are using as they work with others, and to adjust the teaching in response.</p>	<p><b>Modelling interest and enthusiasm</b> Teachers model respect for others' points of view by reflecting on them and exploring them, or model a positive response to sincere 'off the wall' comments, or are excited about a good response.</p>
<p><b>Wait time after a child's response</b> Children are given time to reflect on a peer's response to a question. This enables them to check whether they understand it and to formulate a further response that builds on what has been said.</p>	<p><b>Varying length of wait time</b> The length of wait time is adjusted according to the importance of and the level of challenge in the question, for example from a few seconds for thought to longer pauses of a few minutes for reflection or discussion.</p>
<p><b>Using incorrect or partially correct answers to prompt responses</b> Teachers model not being sure about what the right answer is: teachers are seen to take risks and be vulnerable, or they help children unpick thinking leading up to partially correct response and get others to challenge or support each step.</p>	<p><b>Negotiating whether answers are right or incorrect and why</b> Teachers invite a vote on a reasoned response or crystallise the views of two camps to help focus further discussion, or constructively challenge points raised by providing an alternative argument or perspective.</p>