



Developing Dialogue Toolkit



When we talk about ‘developing dialogue’ we mean getting students to talk about their learning and so develop their speaking and listening skills. This means:

- Asking questions
- Answering questions
- Discussing ideas
- Talking about their thinking
- Talking about what they know

Why is it important?

“Children, we now know, need to talk, and to experience a rich diet of spoken language, in order to think and to learn. Reading, writing and number may be acknowledged curriculum ‘basics’, but talk is arguably the true foundation of learning”

(Robin Alexander, Emeritus Professor of Education at the University of Warwick, 2004)

“A common feature of the most successful schools in the survey was the attention they gave to developing speaking and listening.”

(Ofsted, Removing Barriers to Literacy, 2010)

“...recent research shows that the average length of a pupil’s contribution to a class discussion is just four words”

(National Literacy Trust, 2011)

Reasons why developing speaking and listening is important:

1. Provides teachers with information about student thinking.
2. Provides teachers with feedback to help them decide on the next steps
3. Provides opportunity for teachers to give feedback
4. Provides feedback to students. They are resources for one another.
5. Supports the growth of students as independent learners.
6. Develops student confidence and self-esteem
7. Effective communication is an important life skill

(Paul Black, Emeritus Professor of Education, King’s College London)

There follows a range of strategies that can be used to develop speaking and listening in lessons. These are divided into 3 main sections – starters, activities for the main part of the lesson and plenaries.

Starters

Word wall

- Ask students to suggest words for a topic 'word wall'
- Teacher types words onto 'wall' grid / picture
- Teacher can add words
- Can be extended / varied – nouns, adjectives, verbs, minerals, characters in books / plays, carbohydrates etc.
- Teacher should give a short explanation of each word, linking to current knowledge to aid understanding
- It doesn't matter if a student repeats a word already on the wall – respond positively – 'Yes – that's there - good we're all focused on the topic / thinking about the same thing.'
- Have students add graphics / pictures for each word.

I spy

- Put a topic diagram or picture on the whiteboard containing items illustrating target words



- Teacher models 'I spy'
- Students take turns to be 'I spy'
- Can be used to practise subject specific vocabulary
- Teacher varies clue to differentiate – not just initial letter. Clues can be about function / properties e.g. something made of glass, something used to heat things, something that shows how high the land is.

Ready, steady, teach.

Provide groups with a shopping bag of ingredients (for example, modelling clay, string, lollypop sticks, etc.). Tell them they have five minutes to plan an activity in which they use the ingredients to 'teach' the topic e.g. how the coastal features, arches, stacks and stumps are formed, cell structure etc.

One thing I know about.....

- Teacher asks students to tell one thing they know about selected topic
- Type onto whiteboard as list or spidergram and save
- Add to in subsequent lessons
- Choose topic you have been covering recently
- Accept repetitions – ‘Good you know that too’ to encourage less confident students
- Have students search for and add appropriate graphics/visuals to the spidergram
- See what students can remember in subsequent lessons before showing the saved list / spidergram

Who said it?

- Teacher reads out quotes / statements and asks 'Who said it?'
- Or students pick a card, read it out and others answer.
- Can be used for characters in books / plays, historical figures.
- MFL can be used for occupations or locations

Taboo

Describe a word/concept/character/event to a partner without saying the taboo words on the card (cards will need to be produced in advance).

Gimme 5

- Teacher provides category
- Students have to name 5 things
- Students can come up with 5 individually or in pairs / small groups depending on vocabulary knowledge / ability
- Teacher can give initial letter prompt
- Teacher can give thinking time by telling pupils in advance – ‘Your category is... I'm going to ask you after Jake's turn’

Objects

Pupils are given a group of objects and asked to sort/imagine/describe/predict/explain/plan an activity e.g. Given 2 tennis balls must invent a warm-up exercise in PE

What's the link?

- Provide 4 images that are related
- Students to identify what the images are and explain how they are related / linked.

Interesting images

- Provide images on powerpoint that are related to the topic
- Can spark of discussion / conversation / thinking
- Can be extended to have say four images that are linked. Pupils then have to describe and explain the links.

Video clip

Class watches very short extract, then consider in pairs: What do I already know? What did I learn from the clip? What do I want to find out?

Card Loops

Cards have unrelated question and answer on either side. Pupil reads question and person with answer responds and then reads theirs e.g. Acids and alkalis in Chemistry, WW1 in History

Sort it!

- Provide images or written words of items that belong to 2 (or more) different categories
- Students have to sort them into the respective categories
- Include a couple of blank cards for students to generate other items in the categories

No Yes or No!

Answer teacher's questions without saying yes or no.

Odd one out

- Provide 4 images or words where 3 are related and 1 is the odd one out
- Students to identify what the images are, which one is the odd one out and explain why

Pairs

- Work in pairs or small group
- Each group gets a set of cards, with key words and definitions.
- Place all cards facing down. Take it in turns to turn over 2 cards
- Match key word to definition of keyword
- Winner is the one with the most pairs

Verbal Ping Pong

With partner – take it in turns to say words on a given topic, or in a given category, e.g. – World War 1, water, verbs, animals – or to build a story. If you miss a turn or say a word not in the category, you must start again with a new “serve”. You can play this as a competition between groups or pairs of pupils.

Prove it

Make a bizarre statement and ask students to prove it is wrong e.g. Light bulbs suck in dark as opposed to give off light

Thunks

A question that has no right or wrong answer, but will generate discussion e.g. If you take all the books out of a library, is it still a library?

<http://www.thunks.co.uk/>

Main part of the lesson

Think, pair, share

Students have 2 or 3 minutes individual thinking time and then discuss their ideas in pairs before completing the task set or feeding back to the class.

5Bs

When students get stuck, encourage them to use the 5Bs:

Brain

Board

Book

Buddy (sitting next to)

Boss (Teacher)

Not only does this encourage discussion with their peers, but it is also great for developing them as independent learners.

The Thinker's Keys – by Tony Ryan

20 keys – strategies – that encourage thinking skills.

For example.....

The WHAT IF

What if there were no drugs?

The REVERSE

List 10 words that could not be used to describe Lennie in 'Of mice and men'?

The DISADVANTAGES

List 3 disadvantages of the umbrella and suggest improvements

The RIDICULOUS

At least one person from every household should go to church every Sunday. Discuss.

The QUESTION

The answer is Adolf Hitler, so what was the question?

The rest of the thinker's keys can be downloaded at <http://www.thinkerskeys.com/>

Helpdesk

Give students some post its

When they get stuck, write the question on the post it and stick it on the help desk – and their name
If a student knows the answer, they go to that person and help them.

Make it better

Start off with a simple statement e.g. Ice melts. Go round the room and ask pupils to add to the statement to improve it.

On air

Pass round a large, cut out microphone – whoever has it has to answer the question, ask a question and pass it to somebody else.....

Open questions

- Is 0.33 bigger than $\frac{1}{3}$ or smaller than $\frac{1}{3}$ or equal to $\frac{1}{3}$
- What's similar and what's different about fractions and ratios?
- Which is the odd one out:
Bird, cat, fish, elephant? Why
Piece of white paper, mirror, picture, television? Why?
- Why is _____ and example of _____?
- Why might people believe that _____?

Reporters

Students work in pairs as interviewer and interviewee and then swap roles.

Interviewer has to find out set number of things as directed by teacher and report back to class in the role of a news reporter –

"This morning I spoke to ... (literary character / historical figure / scientist / person living in country being studied) about... and he/she told me that..."

Provide mock microphones for reporters to use

Opinions

Students discuss topic as directed by teacher in small groups and each member of the group feeds back to class about another member of the group's opinion / view / suggestion.

"Leon thinks.....because....."

"Emma likes.....because....."

Exam questions – Paired work

Look at a completed exam paper in pairs.

Use the mark scheme to mark it in pairs.

Discuss common errors in pairs, then as a class

Plan, do and review

This can take place over more than one lesson depending on the task

Students work in groups. Teacher sets a task and students have to agree a plan of action including who will do what, carry it out and review how it went#

Either the teacher or group itself assign roles for group work – so leader / chair, timekeeper, scribe e.g.

- investigations/surveys
- planning a presentation
- designing a poster
- drama improvisation
- planning an assembly
- making a model
- science experiment

- charity project

For and against

In pairs or in small groups, students discuss a statement as given. Within each group, half of the students agree with the statement and half of the students disagree. Each has to explain reasons for agreeing / disagreeing. Also, to challenge the other side's explanations

Another way of doing this is for students to form two circles - an inner and an outer - those who agree in one circle, those who disagree in another

Pupils walk round and round until the teacher gives a signal to stop – they then have to try to persuade the person they have ended up facing of the merits of their 'for' or 'against' position.

The panel presents

Students work in small groups. Create a PowerPoint presentation with just visual images. When presenting to the class, each student in the group gives a verbal commentary to accompany the slides.

Freeze Frame

This can be used with paired, small group or whole class work. At some time during the main activity, teacher calls out "freeze frame".

Students volunteer or teacher selects students to describe where they are with task or to read out what they have written so far. Teacher highlights good examples e.g. "you used very emotive words".

Include a range of different levels so that students have examples of what to aim for when they continue with task.

Round Robin

In a circle activity pupils give their opinions, thoughts and ideas verbally around the circle or group. All pupils contribute.

Less able pupils benefit from hearing opinions, thought and ideas modelled by their peers and from hearing vocabulary modelled.

Debate

Children take a particular point of view in a structured activity and try to persuade others to agree to their point of view. They are encouraged to develop their arguments and reasons and present their ideas either individually or as a group. Use Blooms taxonomy of questions to encourage deeper thinking.

Home and Expert Groups

Group pupils in 'expert' groups. Each pupil in the expert group is assigned a number

The expert groups work together on a research, study or planning task.

The pupils are then re-grouped according to number (all 1s, 2s, 3s, etc) and each 'expert' then shares with the group what has been learned.

Hot seating

One pupil takes on a role or character – in a play, a text, a time frame (historical figure) or scenario (social situation, an environmental protester, a refugee, a bullied child). Other pupils interview or ask questions of the character and the pupil in role has to try to answer the questions from the character's perspective.

Just a minute

Like the radio programme of the same name pupils are asked to attempt to talk on a given subject for a minute without, hesitation, repetition, deviation.

Podcast

Short audio broadcast about the outcome of an experiment, research, what we have learned, questions I might ask.

Barriers games

Pupils sit back to back or with screen between. One gives instructions to the other – e.g. To complete a picture or puzzle, how to perform a calculation, make a model, perform an action – the other listens and follows the instruction. If pupil A is working from a model then they can compare results
Battleships would be an example of a barrier game.

Envoys

An envoy is elected from each group; after initial discussion the envoy from each group moves on in turn to other groups to share/explain what his/her group found out.

Snowball

Pupils discuss a particular issue/topic or question in pairs. Pairs join into 4s to share their ideas. Groups join together gradually to form larger groups to share ideas.

Fill the gap

Pupils cooperate to complete a task by obtaining missing information. For example, 2 pupils may have similar pictures but with different items missing. By describing, discussing and listening closely they cooperate to both complete their pictures.

Thinking cards

Use the statements on 'thinking cards' to stimulate a conversation in pairs or small groups, for think/pair/share activities, response tasks, development of thinking skills and questioning skills, or as writing starters.

On the fence

Classroom is 'zoned' for agree, disagree, on the fence. Teacher reads statements and pupils decide where they will stand - agree, disagree, on the fence. Pupils can be asked to justify their choice.

Line up

Pupils are given cards with statements, facts, calculations. They need to line up in order of importance, timeline, number order, etc (depending on the focus of the statements).

Diamond 9

- Students are given a number of different issues / statements (9 is a good number)
- They are then put into groups or pairs where they discuss the relative importance of each issue; which is most important, which 2 share the next level of importance, etc so that statements form a diamond shape (1,2,3,2,1)
- Students can share their decisions with others and justify their decisions, however the group must agree on the final order.

Listening Triads

Students work in groups of three. Each student takes on the role of talker, questioner or recorder. The talker explains something, or comments on an issue, or expresses opinions. The questioner prompts and seeks clarification. The recorder makes notes and gives a report at the end of the conversation. Next time, roles are changed

Plenaries

A number of the starter activities can be adapted and used as a plenary.

True or false

- Prepare a set of statements based on the lesson and ask students to decide whether they are true or false
- Ask students to justify their answer
- If false - ask students to supply correct statement
- Use true or false cards in a class 'vote'

- Ask students to make up their own true or false statements.

What's the question?

- Teacher compiles list of topic related 'answers'
- Easy to differentiate
- Students have thinking time and talking time with a partner then take turns to provide questions to go with the answers in the style of the game 'Jeopardy'.

Another thing I know about.....

Follows on from starter activity "One thing I know about "

Students recall what they said during starter activity and add a new piece of information.

Show n tell

- Students work in pairs to discuss evidence for Level achieved / objectives achieved
- Peer identifies how the work can be improved
- Names are drawn to feedback to class re. paired discussion

Discussion cubes

The discussion cube has questions on each face to prompt discussion, self evaluation or critical thinking. E.g. 'Today I found out that...', 'I would like to tell you about', 'the most interesting bit was.....', 'I could improve my work by.....'

Discussion cube templates www.communication4all.co.uk

Concept maps

- Different templates can be used in different ways to support the learning of new concepts
- Spidergrams and mind maps can be used to describe words linked to a specific topic
- Category maps can include a category word in the centre, then provide features or examples of that category surrounding it
- An attribute map would describe the attributes of a particular object
- Word maps are good for information that has a hierarchical structure
- Venn diagrams can be used to organise thinking

Change role – student as teacher.

What questions would you ask the class about today's lesson and why?