Understanding different types of talk

Type of talk and definition	What it looks like	What it sounds like	Pedagogy: How?
Dialogic Talk Sustained stretches of talk which enables speakers and listeners to explore and build on their own and others' ideas to develop coherent thinking. The aim is to achieve a common understanding through structured cumulative questioning and discussion.	**Dialogic talk** is (Alexander, 2005): • *collective*: teachers and children address learning tasks together, whether as a group or as a class • *reciprocal*: teachers and children listen to each other, share ideas and consider alternative viewpoints • *supportive*: children articulate their ideas freely, without fear of embarrassment over 'wrong' answers; and they help each other to reach common understandings • *cumulative*: teachers and students build on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry • *purposeful*: teachers plan and steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view http://www.robinalexander.org.uk/docs/IACEP_paper_050612.pdf This type of talk is not IRF (Initiates-Responds-Feedback) where the teacher **I**nitiates a speech event (through question or statement), a pupil **R**esponds and the teacher gives **F**eedback[1]. IRF is transmissive rather than a dialogue. Can be seen in: • *whole class teaching* - teacher and student relate to each other in the class as a whole • *collective group work* – teacher leads small group work • *collaborative group work* - the teacher sets a task on which students must work together, and then withdraws • *one-to-one activity* - the teacher works with individual children • *one-to-one activity* – students work in pairs For a video example, visit the National Strategies archive: http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/dialogic-talk	• Speakers use more formal talk and signpost using numerals such as *firstly, secondly, another, in addition, one way* and so on. • Speakers explicitly signpost a change of topic for the listener or to conclude a stretch of talk, with words such as *now* and *so, we have covered the… anyway*, *right*, *OK* • Speakers give feedback to each other as they talk and listen with specific words like *exactly*, *definitely*, *right*, *absolutely*, *good*, *oh I see* and *that's interesting* or vocalisations *yeah*, *mmm*, *uh huh* and *oh*. They may also use non-verbal signals like a nod of the head. • Speakers switch between topics using phrases such as: *as I was saying earlier*, *like you were just saying* and *to go back to … again*. For more information about the grammar of talk, click here: http://c99.e2bn.net/e2bn/leas/c99/web/portal%20editor%20area/publishing/documents/Grammar_of_Talk.pdf	• Set up rules to create an ethos of talk (collective, reciprocal and supportive talk cannot happen without them) http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/exploratory-talk-0 • Be clear about the mode of enquiry[2] • Use questions starting with why and how, rather than what, who and how many • Balance recall with probing questions; facilitate more - direct and & control less. • Use the pose-probe-bounce questioning[3] to make student-teacher exchanges longer and answers 'built upon' rather than repetitive (work on listening to and building on answers and getting children to do the same) • Extend your feedback beyond 'good work' to deeper questions • Use 'no hands' so everyone will be ready to talk; using lollipop sticks makes this more fun! • Teach it like you would teach the writing sequence: e.g. set a clear context; deconstruct a model; make talk visible by using transcripts; unpick the grammatical features; scaffold first attempts with paired rehearsal and speaking frames/cards.

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Exploratory Talk Talk which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Relevant information is offered for joint consideration. Proposals may be challenged, but if so, reasons are given and alternatives offered. Agreement is sought as a basis for progress. Knowledge is made publicly accountable and reasoning is visible in talk.	Exploratory talk is where pupils listen critically but constructively to each other's ideas. The objective of this interaction is to reach an agreement. In the task, students must explore the different possible answers. They exchange ideas with a view to sharing information to solve problems. • everyone listens actively • people ask questions • people share relevant information • ideas may be challenged • reasons are given for challenges • contributions build on what has gone before • everyone is encouraged to contribute • ideas and opinions treated with respect • there is an atmosphere of trust • there is a sense of shared purpose • the group seeks agreement for joint decisions **Neil Mercer, 2008** <u>Can be seen in</u>: Collaborative group work (pupil led) This is opposed to disputational talk where there is disagreement and there are few attempts to pool resources, or to offer constructive criticism. With disputational talk students just make their own decisions and don't learn from each other. There are often a lot of interactions of the 'Yes it is! – No it's not!' kind. The atmosphere is competitive rather than co-operative. A video showing this type of talk - click here: http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/exploratory-talk-0	It is often involves unstructured, incomplete, and tentative sentences. So students' spoken utterances can be seemingly half-finished or incomplete (they are still meaningful, but are not meaningful outside this context). Students may finish each other's comments, interrupt, compete to take a turn, argue, disagree with or extend what is said. Some talk takes place with speakers speaking at the same time. Modal expressions i.e., *possibly*, *probably*, *maybe*, *I guess*, *I suppose* and *perhaps,* will help students negotiate what they mean in an essentially non-assertive way. It helps speakers adapt the forcefulness or certainty of what they are saying, depending on the responses of their listeners. This is one of the ways speakers adjust their points of view and develop meanings together. Modal verbs are used too i.e. *could* it be, it *might* show, if that is right then the other *should* be. For further information about bridging talk and text, visit: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/cpd5-bridging-talk-and-text.pdf	Unspoken rules of talk must be made explicit. Pupils need to develop shared rules for group talk and role-taking so they can collaborate. Teachers' questioning must stimulate pupils to higher-level thinking skills. It needs to create cognitive conflict! That is, a dilemma question. When setting up the stimulating question, it must be done using open-ended activities like the Odd One Out, What's the link, a Continuum line, etc. It needs to be formalised into written notes or feedback. This will provide an opportunity for metacognition. They need to reflect upon their thinking. Explicitly model this type of talk. e.g. -How to disagree without offending others (*That's an interesting idea but…*) -Competing to take turns without being aggressive (*Could I just make a point here…*) -Signposting a change of topic (*Have you considered….?)* -Using modal expressions and verbs to express tentativeness, probability, possibility, intention (Rather than say '*You are mistaken*' say '*Could you be mistaken*?' How to set up exploratory talk http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/

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Socratic talk (talking about talk) Socratic talk involves an outer circle of students observing an inner group of students discussing a topic, idea of text. The outer group who observes are given a wide range of questions related to the specific learning objectives of the lesson. The activity is designed to achieve a deeper understanding about a topic, idea or text.	• This talk involves a discussion group and observers. The pupils in the discussion group are seated at a table in the centre of the classroom, while the remainder of the class become observers and are seated around the room. • The inner group talk can involve any type of learning talk. [4] • In the outer group talk, each pupil observing is assigned a particular pupil or aspect of discussion for the focus of their observations; they take notes with the help of a guidance sheet or card. • At the end of the discussion, the teacher leads an evaluation where the observers are invited to comment. An example of how this would look is: 1.Give the inner group five minutes to read the associated resources they will be discussing while you are handing out the observation cards to the outer group and explaining what they have to carry out. 2.Then the inner group discusses the given topic for 10 minutes while the outer group takes notes and produces evidence for their feedback. 3.Provide 10 minutes for feedback, asking students to comment on their given question. Questions on the observers' cards can relate to: -Speaking behaviours (organising, encouraging, contributing, disagreeing politely, body language - Use of evidence and others' viewpoints - Use of specialist language For an example of Socratic talk about a poem, click here: http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/video-teaching-speaking-and-listening-using-socratic-approach-%E2%80%93-highlights	The inner circle will use the language and grammar of talk common to dialogic talk and exploratory talk depending on what question has been given to discuss. The outer circle will use language of exploratory talk too. They will have to report back what they heard or didn't hear, but in an inoffensive way. Modal verbs and expressions would be necessary to model.	Set up an inner group of four to six students talking about a chosen subject. The first time should involve confident speakers. Tell the rest of the class that they will be the observers in an outer circle, observing and evaluating the contributions of those holding the discussion in a central group. The outer group feeds back their observations at the end of the discussion, thus helping to improve their understanding of talk and discussion. They must be given cards or notes to do this.3 Observer cards for the outer circle can be found on page 19-31 of Talk as a Tool for thinking and page 19-23 of Bridging talk and text: http://www3.hants.gov.uk/cpd5-bridging-talk-and-text.pdf and http://www3.hants.gov.uk/cpd4-talk-as-a-tool-for-thinking.pdf For more cue cards, click: http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/ http://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/Thinking_Together_Talk_Tally.pdf The task in the centre circle should have: • Clear objectives • Distinct purpose • Defined time limits • An identifiable audience • Clear outcomes

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Notes

[1] ***IRF*** is learning by *rote (i.e.* drilling of facts and ideas through constant repetition); *recitation (*questions designed to test or stimulate recall of what has been previously encountered, or to cue students to work out the answer from clues provided in the question); or *instruction / exposition*: telling the student what to do, and/or imparting information, and/or explaining principles. This does not promote extended talk, interaction or collaboration as it is teacher led.

[2] ***Mode of enquiry:*** to narrate, explain, instruct, question, respond, build upon responses, analyse, speculate, explore, evaluate, discuss, argue, reason, justify and negotiate, and to judge when each form of talk is most appropriate.

[3] The pose-probe-bounce technique uses questions that move pupils thinking from being an observer to a critic. Pupils describe (posing) the incident/text and justify with evidence; then interrogate interpretations (probing) to exploring alternative interpretations (bouncing). For further information, visit http://712educators.about.com/od/teachingstrategies/tp/Educational-Probing-Techniques.htm and http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/socratic_questions.htm. Much of this technique is based on research from Tripp (1993) and Kolb (1984).

[4] This *learning talk* repertoire includes the ability to: *narrate, explain, instruct, ask different kinds of question, receive, act and build upon answers, analyse and solve problems, speculate and imagine, explore and evaluate ideas, discuss, argue, reason and justify, negotiate* together with four contingent abilities which are vital if children are to gain the full potential of talking with others: *listen, be receptive to alternative viewpoints, think about what they hear, give others time to think (Alexander 2005* http://www.robinalexander.org.uk/docs/IACEP_paper_050612.pdf)

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