



Professional Development for the CLLP

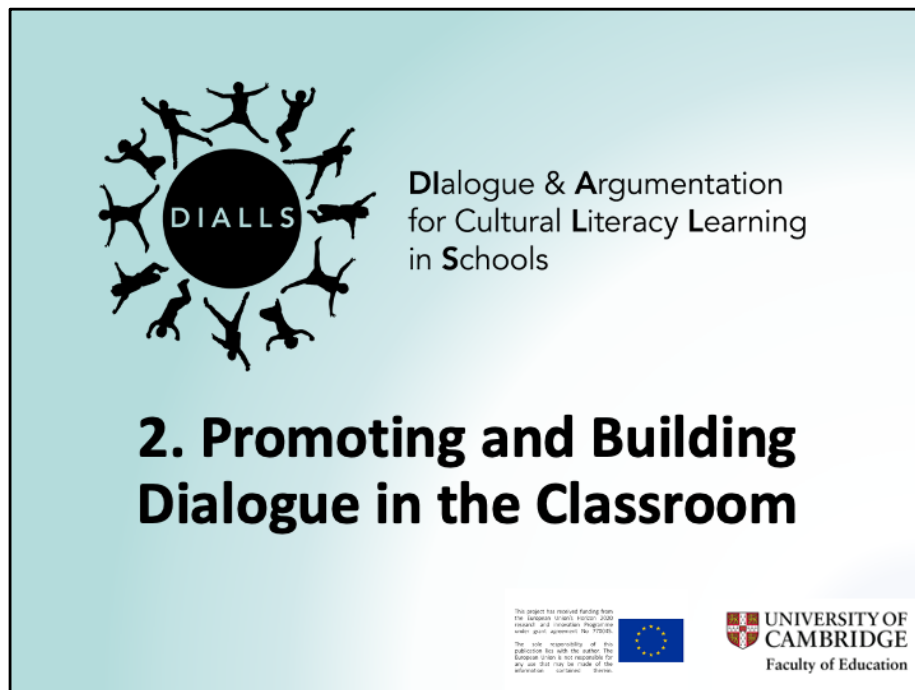
2. Promoting and Building Dialogue in the Classroom

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**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**
Faculty of Education



Welcome to session 2 in our Professional Development package. We are now going to turn our attention to promoting and building dialogue. We'll think about what makes a dialogic classroom, and how we can establish norms for discussions. You may already have ground rules for talk in your class – we'll be looking at these again. We'll also consider key phrases that will help children articulate their ideas and promote good dialogue. Finally, we'll consider the progression of dialogue and argumentation skills as they feature in the CLLP.

What we mean by 'argumentation' are the skills needed to position your ideas and seek agreements. 'Dialogue' can be seen as a little different, as it does not require the need to all come to an agreement at the end. So sometimes we seek a common view, and other times it's fine that we all have different ideas and can empathise and include those of each other.



Alexander's (2008) principles for a dialogic classroom

- **Collective:** teachers and children address learning tasks together, either as a group or as a class, rather than in isolation
- **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 children build on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and enquiry
- **Purposeful:** teachers plan and facilitate dialogic teaching with particular educational goals in view

Much has been written about Dialogic Classrooms (there's a great new book out by Robin Alexander called 'A Dialogic Teaching Companion' which is well worth a read, where he extends his original ideas about dialogic teaching).

If you look at the principles for a dialogic classroom as set out by Alexander in 2008, you can see they represent a positive ethos where learning and enquiry are a joint endeavour. Reflect on these principles for a moment – you may need to pause the video - how would you recognise them in practice? What would you hear and see in such a dialogic classroom? How are these principles reflected in your class?



A study of studies

- i) open questions
- ii) extended contributions that build and elaborate on others' ideas
- iii) differences of opinion that are acknowledged, explored and critiqued
- iv) lines of inquiry that are integrated through linking and coordination of ideas and concepts
- v) metacognition that enables children to reflect on their own dialogue practices.

Howe and colleagues (2019)

Christine Howe and her colleagues from Cambridge conducted a systematic review of many studies that describe the effective features of dialogic teaching in finer detail. They found that across all of the studies the features of dialogic teaching could be grouped into 5 areas.

The first is about the importance of open (and authentic) questions – that is, questions that are not just testing knowledge but lead learners to think deeply and explore their ideas. As teachers then, it is not just the asking of these questions that is important, but also how we follow up on them, to probe more deeply and sometimes challenge them.

This means that our learners don't simply give short factual responses but can extend their ideas. Importantly, other children are encouraged to build on the ideas of their peers, thinking about how they can relate to what has been said.

This means that there will be differences of opinion – these need to be acknowledged and explored – sometimes 'common ground' needs to be found so that consensus can be reached.

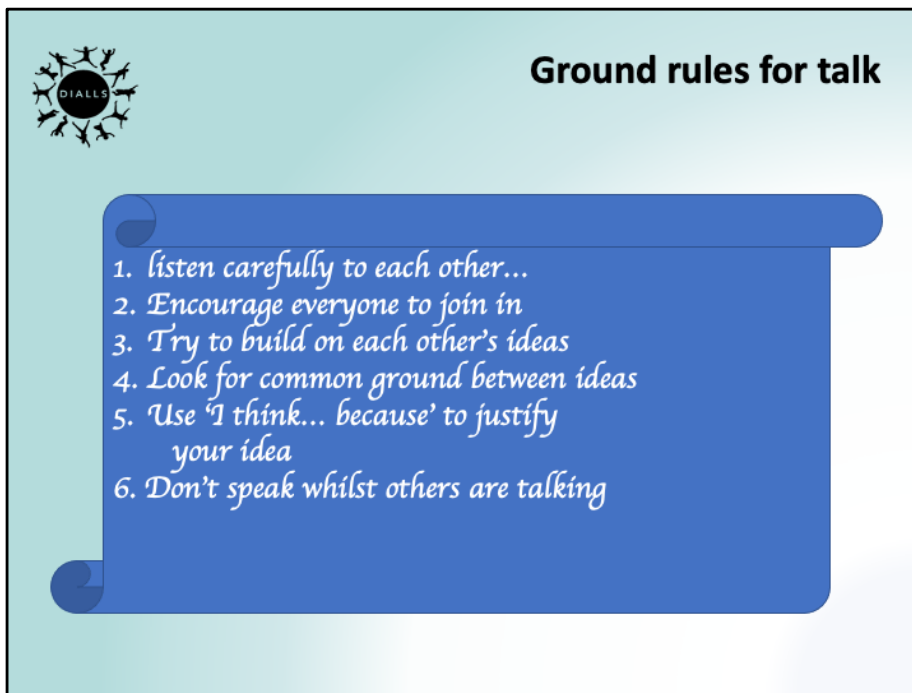
All of this leads to a coherent discussion where ideas are co-ordinated and children can learn from each other.

Finally, directing children to reflect on their talking and thinking enables them to recognise when it is successful.

You can read more about these ideas in an article following the link below:

Christine Howe, Sara Hennessy, Neil Mercer, Maria Vrikki & Lisa Wheatley (2019):
Teacher–Student Dialogue During Classroom Teaching: Does It Really Impact on
Student Outcomes?, *Journal of the Learning Sciences*,

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2019.1573730>



How can we ensure these principles happen?

Many classrooms include ground rules for talk – these might look something like this. You may have a similar set in your class. Take a couple of moments to note down what they are.

Ok, let's think about ground rules in a little more detail.

Ground rules for talk can be divided into three broad areas. Those that are about other people, those that are about the talk itself and those that are about the ideas. Sometimes, a fourth area is covered – that of behaviour. Have a think about the rules for talk you have established in your class. Are they about people, talk or ideas? Or are they actually a list of behaviour rules? Do these sometimes overlap?

You may have developed these rules with the children – spend time thinking with them about each rule – is it about people, talk or ideas? How can you make sure all three are covered by your list? How are tolerance, empathy and inclusion reflected in these rules?

A truly dialogic classroom will support children to challenge ideas and have their ideas challenged – within a supportive setting – what rules will you need to establish

to enable this?

Should they even be called 'rules' or are they more 'agreements on how we will make discussions work'?

To investigate these ideas further you might want to look at the Ed:Talk materials that are available on the Faculty of Education Cambridge website.

http://edtoolkit.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/files/EDTALK_TOOLKIT_latest.pdf

These ideas will help you to reflect on your own talking classroom.



How can we support children to develop their talk skills

- Have ground rules that are explicit – and make the differences between them salient
- The type of task and discussion need to promote **GENUINE** discussion
- **Model:**
 - The explicit language ('I agree with...' 'Building on what X said...' 'Going back to Y's point...')
 - The disposition of tolerance, empathy and inclusion
 - Feedback that makes this explicit (teaching **accountability**)

If you look at the Guidance on Using the Lesson Prompts document (which can be found in the age phase sections of the CLLP) you'll see that we suggest you start the CLLP by developing some ground rules (for KS1 these are included as part of the first session). We would suggest that you regularly return to these 'rules' or 'agreements' to see if they need to be adapted. Doing this after a discussion is a great way of encouraging children to reflect on their talk skills. In the lesson prompts we have included a goal for dialogue and argumentation in each session. Make this explicit to the children and return to it at the end of the lesson – how was it achieved?

The best way to encourage meaningful dialogue is to engage children in genuine/ or authentic discussions. Asking 6 year old children about whether or not they should drop litter is not a genuine discussion as they are well aware of what the 'answer' should be. Instead, asking them about why they think people drop litter, or if their sweet wrapper blew into a busy road should they retrieve it, encourages a more nuanced discussion. This is what we are aiming for in DIALLS.

Finally, it is important to model language that you want to hear – so rather than quizzing children by always asking them what they think, help them to shape their language by modelling it: for example, by saying: 'I see your point Billy, but I think.....'

because...'

If you want to see tolerance, empathy and inclusion in your classroom, you will need to model it!

Feedback to children explicitly about rules to do with people, talk and ideas (eg – 'Thank you Sally for including Sam and noticing he had something to say', or 'Tim, I like how you built on Sarah's idea', 'Well done Becky, you used, I think... because..., to explain your reasoning')

Look again at your ground rules – is there any key language that you could model?



The Language of Dialogue

- **reasoning** (I think... because)
- **building on other ideas** (building on...; I would like to add...; in addition...; I agree with... because)
- **challenging ideas** (I disagree with... because; on the other hand...; another view is...)
- **asking for elaborations/clarifications and justification** (could you explain...; can you tell me why...; I'm sorry I'm not sure what you mean...)
- **linking** - to other learning, other texts, experiences, world knowledge (that reminds me of...; It's a bit like...)
- **acknowledging changes of mind** (now I think... because...)

It's useful to have key phrases to model to students to help them develop their talk skills. We have included some phrases to model to children in the CLLP lesson prompts. You might find that children adopt the phrases, but it takes a bit longer for them to use them meaningfully – you can model this and also gently challenge them. Using a plenary to reflect on the objectives for dialogue and argumentation at the end of each DIALLS session will help children to develop their skills. A key part of a dialogic classroom is that discussions are not led solely by the teacher, but children also ask questions, invite each other to contribute and ask for elaborations too – so encourage this by stepping back a bit when the discussion is flowing.




The Language of Provisionality

'Provisional' language enables creative thinking BUT also serves a key purpose for establishing a social cohesion:

Maybe
Possibly
Perhaps
Could
Might

If you listen carefully to people in groups sharing ideas, you may well find that certain words are commonly used when ideas are proposed. Words like 'maybe, perhaps, could and might' serve two purposes in conversation: The first allows for open ended thinking as ideas are proposed as possibilities for others to agree, build on or disagree with.

The second purpose is more subtle – these words allow us to share ideas but accept that they are only provisional and we might change our minds if the wider group disagrees. This builds social cohesion as it establishes an ethos where it is ok to disagree, and ideas are not set in stone.



Building in goals for talk

LESSON PROMPTS
The House

Dialogue and Argumentation:
Encourage the children to build on each other's ideas in order to reach shared ideas

Cultural Theme
Understanding what home is and ideas of 'belonging'

Discussion Prompts


About the film:

- Why do you think the family decided to leave the place they used to live at?
- How did their decision affect their old house? Why did the old house feel like that?
- Why do you think the old house went looking for them?
- Where was 'home' for the family?

Beyond the film:
"Living in urban areas is better than living in rural areas. Justify your opinion, explaining why"

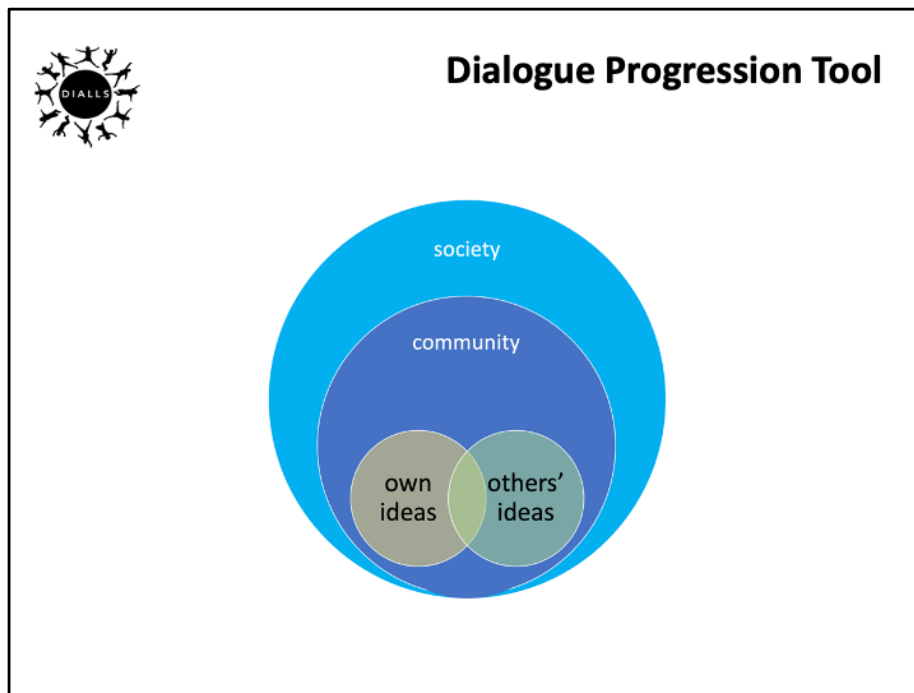
What does 'home' mean? Why do we 'belong'?

Ideas for Cultural Expression
Create a collage of ideas for how we define 'home' and 'belonging'



Each session concentrates on objectives for talk skills in addition to the content of the discussion. These should be shared with the students and reviewed at the end of the lessons. Think about how they can be achieved through group work and whole class work

In the Lesson Prompts you'll see that there is a Dialogue and Argumentation objective to concentrate on in addition to the theme of the discussion. These objectives are designed to build over time, as children become more sophisticated in their responses.



To support the CLLP we have developed a **Dialogue Progression Tool** as part of our **Scales of Progression for Cultural Literacy Learning**.

Much has been written about the different kinds of talk 'moves' that people make as they engage in dialogue together. Several coding schemes have been devised to analyse these moves, to look at this talk in action as it happens in classrooms, to define the complexity of argument and to set standards. In the CLLP we set out a progression of learning objectives for Dialogue and Argumentation, and these are drawn from previous research and theory around educational dialogue, talk for learning, argumentation and oracy skills.

In our **dialogue progression tool** we look specifically at how talk enables us to act with tolerance, empathy and inclusion, thinking about not only our own ideas, but how they relate to the ideas of others and how we can work together in a dialogic community.

We can demonstrate these different dimensions to dialogue through this diagram:

The diagram shows how our ideas and how we express them are contextualised. In the broadest sense we are part of a society where we need to learn to live together and be socially responsible (the themes in the Cultural Learning Progression Tool).

However, discussions about how we live our lives, that explore our values and identities, happen within communities such as our classrooms and involve us developing our own ideas whilst importantly engaging in the ideas of others. Central values then, are to be inclusive in creating and acting in our communities, learning to tolerate the multiplicity of views that might be shared there. We need to develop our own ideas, but also listen carefully to those of others, empathising with their positions, sometimes building on what they say towards new thinking. We also have to learn to deal with multiple perspectives; this might mean tolerating the ambiguity of multiple viewpoints with no one 'correct' answer, or it might mean seeking common ground in a pursuit of agreement.



Dialogue Progression Tool

Community: Collective ideas and actions, working together as a community

Strength of own argument: Justifying, reasoning, prioritising argumentation and the development of one's ideas

Relating to others: empathising and considering how others might see things and how this might enrich our own ideas, prioritising dialogue and connecting to others

Dealing with multiple perspectives: seeking agreements, or accepting multiple perspectives

The DIALLS dialogue progression tool captures these different elements of talk, thinking about how each might progress into a sophisticated engagement, through organising the indicators of dialogue into four dimensions: Community; Strength of own's own idea; relating to others and dealing with multiple perspectives.



Dialogue Progression Tool: Indicators

	beginning	developing	sophisticated
<p>The indicators below will help you to assess children's dialogue in terms of each dimension. You may find that children display behaviours from across the range of indicators, and that this is very context specific. Try to consider their development across all four of the dimensions to build a community of learning together, where ideas can be shared, built on and challenged in an empathetic, tolerant and inclusive environment. Click on each indicator to take you to a page of examples. Click on the DIALLS logo in the top right of each page to bring you back here.</p>			
community - collective ideas and action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *listening to each other (actively and patiently) *joining in through offering ideas *encouraging everyone to contribute (celebrating diverse perspectives) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *acting inclusively by inviting others to contribute *working together to agree an idea *exploring differing ideas to seek common ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *negotiating differing ideas to seek agreement *evaluating ideas and choosing a course of action
strength of own idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *giving reasons using because 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *justifying reasons beyond simple 'opinion'; often using a specific context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *justifying ideas by making links to broader/general knowledge
relating to others - incorporating ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *thinking about the ideas of others (restating ideas) *respecting ideas of others (agreeing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *relating to others by engaging with their ideas maybe inviting to expand *empathising with ideas that are different to one's own *building on the ideas of others to include them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *probing someone to find out more about their alternative viewpoints *building on the ideas of others towards new thinking
dealing with multiple perspectives (plurality)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *recognising that others may not agree with us and vice versa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *challenging ideas respectfully *changing one's mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *acknowledging and explaining changes of position *discussing alternatives to evaluate them *linking ideas to synthesise them

The tool is organised into three very broad stages of progression: beginning, developing and sophisticated. These are not based on age, but rather the demonstration of key indicators in dialogue. Also, this is not a tool intended to assess individual children, but to think about groups or your class more generally, to help you plan for talk in the classroom.

We note that it is not desirable to break down the complexities of dialogue into a tick list of linear skills. The aim of the tool is to support teachers in recognising what good dialogue sounds like when it is happening – and to think how they might support children to develop it.

On the first page of the **dialogue progression tool** you will see the indicators laid out as a grid, showing stages of progression (beginning, developing and sophisticated) and the dimension of the dialogue (community, own ideas, relating to others, multiple perspectives).



Dialogue Progression Tool: Indicators

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If you click on an indicator, the tool will take you to an example page

Dialogue Progression Tool: Examples



Negotiating differing ideas to seek agreement

Referencing different ideas and perhaps using provisional language to propose

KS2 example (small group)

Aubrey	So I think my - is home the same as everyone in your group - I think we should kind of discuss that, because I don't think, personally, it would be. Your - I feel comfortable in my home but - and I like it a lot, but it's not where I was born in. It's not like the house I was born in. So I think it - I would call it my home, but then if you look back, it's not my full-on-house.
Lily	I disagree with you, Aubrey, because I was born in London and I moved when I was like born, but I don't remember that. I don't treat it as my home even though I was born there because I don't remember, I don't like look back on it. We don't have many pictures of it. It's just 'cos uhm -
Aubrey	Yeah.
Lily	Cos that wouldn't be my home because I don't remember and it's not where I think I grew up and -
Aubrey	But then with you, you did have a house before and that is kind of where you grew up. So if you were in London, yes, you were in London, but then, if you moved to Great Missenden and then moved again, it still does kind of link.

Teacher notes

Students are discussing what home is and whether a house and a home are the same thing. Lily disagrees with Aubrey and Aubrey tries to identify in Lily's contribution reasons why in fact they can reach an agreement despite the disagreeing attitude.

..., where you can see children engaged together in discussion that features this indicator. There are some teachers notes that explain how the talk shows the indicator. The examples are not 'perfect'; they represent how messy classroom talk can be and are included to help you to identify similar types of talk in your classroom. You will notice in your classroom that the children might demonstrate some quite sophisticated behaviours in some of the dimensions but need more work on others.



Dialogue Progression Tool Next Steps

	beginning	developing	sophisticated
	You will find that children display behaviours in their dialogue from across the range of indicators. The tool is not intended to be a precise ticklist of skills, but to help you to reflect on how the children's dialogue is progressing. The ideas below are intended to support you to understand how you might move children forward in their discussions.		
community - collective ideas and action	In this phase you will find that teacher modelling is key to including all children in the class, and that you lead the ethos of community. Praise children when they actively include others in asking for their ideas. Discussions may mostly be whole class, but use of talk partners will enable more voices to be heard.	Groupwork in this phase will enable children to take responsibility for including each other. Set up roles in each group, giving children the task of feeding back about how well their group included each other. You might assign a child the role of being an 'encourager' who is specifically looking out for inclusive behaviours by group members.	At a sophisticated level students will be able to assign themselves roles and goals to complete tasks. Using mini plenary sessions in groupwork time asking the class to reflect on their task progression should focus on their ability to work as a group, not just the activity. Set up situations where the value of ideas can be evaluated and encourage reflection on this.
strength of own idea	Even younger children are happy to use 'because' to explain their reasoning. Once they confidently do this, gently challenge reasons that could be developed more fully.	In this phase it is important that children begin to reflect on the validity of an argument beyond simply their opinion but using evidence from the context of the activity (perhaps the text they are sharing). Dialogic teaching which prompts elaboration of ideas will support children to think more critically.	Students should be well versed in providing evidence for their arguments, and this should draw on more generalised knowledge, in addition to their own experiences, and intertextual references as they draw on other sources.
relating to others - incorporating ideas	Children are often so concerned with their own ideas to share that they are not listening fully to each other. Model how to incorporate and refer to another's idea and draw their attention to when their ideas relate to each other. Praise children when they make this explicit by naming each other.	In this phase children commonly use 'Building on...' as language to signal their attempts to make their points relevant to the flow of the discussion. You might find that they use this language even when they are not actually building at all. Once you are satisfied that they are confident and happy to use terms like 'Building on X...' or 'Referring back to Y...' begin to challenge them if you feel they are using this language superficially.	In groupwork you will expect to see that students are able to probe each other to find out more about each other's ideas. A truly dialogic classroom might bring those skills into whole class work too, so that the teacher is no longer the central conduit for the discussion but children respond to, and probe each other. Challenge them to identify the 'heart' part of an idea and how it relates to others.
dealing with multiple perspectives (plurality)	Understanding that it is okay that ideas might differ is key here. Teach children to use 'I disagree with that idea, because...' and be clear about disagreeing with an idea, rather than the individual.	Once children are able to disagree and accept multiple viewpoints they should be encouraged to consider if new ideas have made them change their mind. Modelling 'I've changed my mind - I did think X but now I think Y' shows the children that changing position can be a valuable move.	When encouraging students to feed back about their groupwork, ask them to reflect on the changes of position that happened. This will enable them to track and synthesise ideas, as well as to consider their reasoning in a change of position.

Next Steps

Of course, recognising that the children are displaying particular indicators of cultural literacy through their talk is only the first step. On the front page of the **dialogue progression tool** we have also included some next steps to consider as a teacher. As we know that developing dialogue skills is not simply a 'ticklist' of linear, fragmented skills, these next steps talk generally about the kinds of activities and classroom ethos to promote to bring DIALLS alive!



Professional challenges

- Classroom talk happens 'in the moment' – how can you teach yourself to make decisions that promote a dialogic classroom – to anticipate the moments where this might be difficult
- Learning from other teachers:
 - Counting not just the frequency – but the meaningfulness
 - Who speaks (and what are the patterns)
 - Teachers found under pressure they reverted to 'people' ground rules

Classroom talk happens 'in the moment' and it's difficult to really understand how your input is affecting how children interact. Recording your own teaching is invaluable (you don't need to share it with anyone!) as it really helps you to understand what is happening.

Of course, it's easy for people to write books about what we should say and do as teachers. In practice we know that teaching involves making split second decisions about which contributions to follow up and reflecting on your practice shouldn't mean 'beating yourself up' about missed opportunities or overlooked contributions. A couple of reflections from teachers who have implemented 'talk' projects in their classes are worth considering.

Firstly, teachers found that it wasn't about the frequency with which children used key phrases like 'I agree with X... because' or 'Building on what X said' but how they used them – and if they were used meaningfully

Secondly, they found it interesting to look closely at 'who' in the class speaks most and what the patterns of this engagement are – do some children dominate, and are other ideas lost?

Finally, they noted that when under pressure (of time, generally) they reverted to

prioritising ground rules that were about 'people' (and behaviour).



That's it for our second session – we hope it's given you food for thought.
The final PD session will take you into the wonderful world of wordless films!