

## **Educational dialogue: Supporting your colleagues through facilitation**

### **Week Two: Revisiting the theories and impact of educational dialogue**

#### ***Video content***

##### ***Introduction:***

In this module we will: (i) discuss what we mean by educational dialogue; (ii) revisit theory behind educational dialogue; (iii) review the categories of educational dialogue; and (iv) look at evidence that dialogue promotes student learning. Your objective this week is to review the resources and theory with the lens of how you will present it to your colleagues in an engaging and accessible way in order to promote their buy-in to the approach of educational dialogue.

You will benefit from collating your own set of resources and readings outside of the ones included in the 'read' section. If you want to use the video and the resources from this week for a workshop with your teachers, you are very welcome to do so.

##### ***Part 1: What is educational dialogue?***

Dialogue is more than just 'talk'. In dialogue, participants listen to each other, they contribute by sharing their ideas, justifying their contributions and engaging with others' views. Knowledge is collectively built over time through linking the contributions between speakers. Educational dialogue is also about critically challenging others' ideas to improve the quality of thinking and exploring and evaluating different perspectives and reasons.

Starter resources and brief video guides are included in the 'read' section of this week's materials.

##### ***Part 2: Theoretical perspectives on educational dialogue***

While there is not enough time to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical underpinning of educational dialogue in one module, it is still important to start here when we discuss what dialogue looks like in practice and it will similarly be important for you to start here as well when you are facilitating your colleagues.

Theoretical perspectives on dialogue draw on sociocultural theory, which highlights the co-construction of new meanings when participants actively engage with one another's ideas. The following quote from Neil Mercer shows that a key strength of sociocultural theory is that it explains how students can learn from dialogue and interacting with others in addition to how this contributes to a collective understanding as well.

*"Indeed, one of the distinctive strengths of sociocultural theory is that it explains not only how individuals learn from interaction with others, but also how collective understanding is created from interactions amongst individuals." (Mercer, 2012)<sup>1</sup>*

### **Part 3: Categories of dialogue and evidence of impact**

The video for module 2 reviews examples of dialogue categories, and the T-SEDA pack contents can be downloaded in the 'read' section for the full list. The categories of dialogue that appear to be strongly associated with learning gains are building on ideas, invitation to build on ideas, and challenging others' views respectfully. More about the evidence of the impact of educational dialogue is discussed in another video resource, included in the 'read' section of the week's materials.

### **Part 4: Examples of dialogue in the classroom**

This section offers examples of educational dialogue from OER4Schools. You can use these with your colleagues:

*Example 1: Here is a brief example of an interaction between a teacher and a student, Kenneth. Read through the following transcript and reflect on strengths and weaknesses you see in terms of supporting educational dialogue.*

**Teacher:** *What have you got as an answer?*

**Kenneth:** *My main answer is two twelfths... as the (inaudible) is one sixth.*

**Teacher:** *One sixth isn't right.*

**Kenneth:** *Isn't right?*

**Teacher:** *No.*

**Kenneth:** *((stops and whispers, long pause))*

*What did you think about this exchange? No particularly useful feedback was provided and Kenneth gives up. Look at the transcript again and write down alternative responses that might encourage rather than stop dialogue and thinking.*

*A few suggestions could include asking if others in the class agree, asking if someone else can try to reply, etc.*

*Example 2: Read through the following transcript, and reflect on strengths and weaknesses you see in supporting educational dialogue.*

**Teacher:** *What's happening here? I'm talking about halving and we're sharing by 4. Why? Is there a relationship between those two that we already know? Nadia.*

**Nadia:** *Because 4 is in the 2 times tables.*

**Teacher:** *Mmm, doesn't really explain how it's going to help us here, sharing by 4. Why does halving help us to share by 4, or how could we share by 4 using halving? Go on Zack.*

**Zack:** *Halving twice.*

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<sup>1</sup> N. Mercer, C. Howe (2012) Learning, Culture and Social Interaction 1, 12–21

*In this example, the teacher used 'challenge' to push for a better explanation and this is followed by a student elaborating and building on his classmate's response.*

*This video content was created by Meaghan Brugha for the course Educational dialogue:  
Supporting your colleagues through facilitation, available here:  
<https://mbrugha.github.io/course-in-a-box/>*