

## The Fundamentals of Educational Dialogue – Week 6 video transcript

Welcome to the final week of this course. This week our key theorist is from Brazil. Paulo Freire is one of the most influential educational thinkers of the last few decades and his work on dialogic pedagogy precedes much of the work we have looked at so far. However, Freire is approaching dialogue from a very different vantage point. It is one that argues that educators and learners must be aware of how educational and in particular modern schooling structures are intertwined with the colonial project. This fundamental awareness enables a transformation not just of individuals but also of structures with the aim of decolonising education.

It is easy to assume that colonisation is a thing of the past and that today's learners are operating in 'free' societies. However, we are all living through the impact of colonisation and the inequalities that it still produces. Whether we are teachers or learners, descendants of colonisers or colonised, for Freire, we all need to centre social justice at the heart of educational practices. Education should support learners to be 'free' and dialogic pedagogy does this by valuing the forms of knowledge that deprived communities possess. Such knowledge is welcome in the dialogic space and taken seriously. In taking a dialogic stance we are open to our own transformation as well as that of others.

Research across the world and in very different contexts has shown that when schools involve local communities and value learners' home cultures and the types of community knowledge which is often dismissed by educators, learners' achievement in standardised tests improves. For our purposes this week, the work of Ramón Flecha in demonstrating huge jumps in learners' achievement through implementing 'Successful Educational Actions', that he derived from Freirean pedagogy, is important. Like Alexander's work and that of other theorists, Flecha's work is dependent on some deep philosophical principles and cultivating a dialogic ethos. It is not simply, do this in your classroom, and everything changes. So, please bear that in mind as you work through this week's materials.

The 'Successful Educational Actions for all' project focused on supporting schools to engage parents and learners communities to build communities of learning. Schools across the world have used 'Interactive Groups' where parents and other volunteers come in once a week to work with small groups of children to solve problems through dialogue. Volunteers are not expected to have subject knowledge but are encouraged to use all their existing knowledge and skills to help learners work together and dialogically address problems. This approach

helps bridge the gap between 'school knowledge' and 'real-life knowledge'. Learners are engaged in real dialogues that help them to develop an open-minded and collaborative ethos to their learning. This is fundamental to everything we know about dialogic pedagogy.

The second 'Successful Educational Action' we will look at is Dialogic Gatherings, and in particular, Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLGs). These are a way to engage whole groups of learners with classical world literature. The idea is that such literature draws learners into engagement with life's big and powerful questions, thereby eliciting responses which lead to high quality dialogue. The open nature of the gathering, where the teacher acts only as facilitator for dialogue, enables learners to deeply engage with the text as well as the ideas it contains. Weekly gatherings allow learners to develop a dialogic community where trust and the valuing of all learner's voices enables deeper engagement. There are no right or wrong answers and therefore, the fear of being wrong is replaced by the enjoyment of trying out ideas and reflecting on others' views.

The great thing about 'Successful Educational Actions for all' is that there are some wonderful resources to help you try out these activities in your setting. This will take some planning, so we don't expect you to do this within this week, but do think about how you might try these actions out.

Last week, we raised the question as to whether 'Educational Dialogue' is a 'western' practice. This week we have looked at a form of dialogic pedagogy that arises from Brazil. There are also projects that trace concepts of educational dialogue in Confucian, Buddhist, Jewish and Islamic educational traditions. Farah's research is in dialogic halaqah. Halaqah is a traditional circle of learning found in Islamic cultures. Farah will be running another six-week MOOC on Dialogue in Islamic Education (Course 1A, which runs parallel to this series of MOOCs) and you are all welcome to join. We are also currently completing Course 2 in this MOOC series in the coming months, which we plan to launch in the autumn. Course 2 is based around the Teacher Scheme for Educational Dialogue Analysis (T-SEDA) pack, which you began to look at in Week 4. Course 2 will be a six week course to support you to get the most out of T-SEDA and to conduct your own classroom inquiry. Meaghan has also developed Course 3, which is already available and linked to from the homepage of this site. Course 3 is designed for local facilitators who wish to work with groups of educators to use T-SEDA to develop more dialogic practices. It supports you to plan how to work with a group effectively to maximise classroom transformation.

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to staying in touch!