

## **Teaching strategies which promote and develop dialogic teaching and learning with the IWB**

This section includes a wide range of strategies and ideas that can be effective in promoting and developing dialogic teaching and learning in the classroom. There are areas that overlap, and the list is, of course, not exhaustive – we would be pleased to hear other suggestions and practical ideas that colleagues may have!

**1. During lessons:** The following section focuses on teacher strategies and approaches that can be used effectively during lessons to contribute to the development of learning through dialogue, supported by using the IWB.

### Developing pupil-pupil dialogue

- Encourage pupil-pupil talk – explicitly identify opportunities within lessons to get children talking in pairs and groups; you can ask them to evaluate their experience and feed this back into the class talk rules/class ground rules for talk; use talk partners to help children get used to learning through talking and sharing their ideas
- Get pupils to monitor talk – this can be an interesting thing to do, as it enables children to recognise different aspects of dialogue (you could give them a simple checklist to look out for, eg agreeing, asking another person a question, disagreeing, changing your mind); we often ask children to report on what their group has been talking about – why not get them to report on how they are talking about it?
- Convey the significance of communication skills – explicitly stating why it is important to listen, comment, question etc.
- Encourage and model productive dialogue: the impact of the teacher in developing this area is significant, especially when working on higher-order skills. Teachers can focus specifically on supporting pupils with:
  - justifying – drawing out reasons, asking for evidence
  - developing reasoning and application skills (eg interpreting visual images relevant to the lesson)
  - constructing arguments (eg by using role play or a storyline)
  - positioning – helping pupils to decide where they are with their thinking on a particular issue
  - evaluating ideas / claims / arguments by considering evidence (fact/opinion)
  - posing counter-arguments – eg playing devil’s advocate
- Develop dialogue skills – make it easy for pupils to participate in dialogue by having available (up on display on the IWB or on cards available for children to access easily) possible sentence openers, eg ‘I agree with X because...’, ‘Could you explain a bit more about ...?’

### Continuing the development of learning over time

- Make the purpose and the scope of learning clear to children – give them the ‘big picture’ (how does our learning fit in with our daily lives and with what we already know?); use mind maps on the IWB to indicate how learning is developing, supplement with key images and annotations to represent key concepts – you can return to this at the start of a lesson or use it in the plenary to get children thinking about next steps

- Use children's experiences in and out of school to help to establish the context (eg in a unit of work about personal safety, share ideas about potential problems and difficulties which they may have encountered)
- Reignite understanding: as well as using a straightforward mind-mapping technique, possibly expand the reviewing of ongoing learning by using class wikis, learning platforms, class discussion forums/blogs; making content accessible to children so they can continue learning outside the classroom (you could hyperlink to prior work or resources to support this); also, use the particular facilities of the IWB to make this exciting and motivating, eg using games to match pairs, create the 'square of truth', posing multiple choice questions, challenging children to create an argument using key vocabulary and images which have been used throughout the learning (there are lots of Flash games which can be easily adapted and used with IWBs)

Involving pupils in co-constructing knowledge – for many teachers, this is an area which becomes a real turning point in the development of dialogue in their classrooms; the IWB is especially helpful in facilitating this (ideas below are largely IWB-focussed)

- Give status to children's contributions, particularly encouraging them to be original; as well as giving focussed praise and acknowledgement, these practical strategies are useful:
  - ask children to annotate flipchart pages with words, phrases, ideas, drawings, diagrams
  - use images/objects on flipchart pages for children to move about, link, shrink, enlarge etc, getting them thinking about how they are showing what they understand
  - display work (on IWB or in other forms) for other groups to see (eg on a learning wall display – flipchart pages can be printed off and enlarged); this is motivating, gives status to children's input and may also stimulate continued discussion
  - save and print annotated flipcharts to use as a resource for talk groups
  - ask children to look at work from other groups, question each other, compare with their own group's perspective – teacher can actively bring in discussion about whether seeing other groups' work actually made us change our minds or help us to learn something new
  - give children the chance to work at the IWB to manipulate/link/develop ideas, eg give individuals/pairs a flipchart page to work on (encourage them to use hyperlinks to previous files from work in class or to link to helpful websites)
  - give children a set of photocopied mini-images and ask them to use images, words and phrases/sentences to construct diagrams which represent the outcomes of the dialogue/ learning which has been taking place (this does allow for assessment of the level of children's understanding and their ability to distill this into a written form; some children will find this very challenging, and will do better to have the chance to talk it through with an adult so that their meaning can be made clear)

Helping children to learn that ideas often change as we learn – this section is also heavily dependent on the climate for learning which exists in the classroom, and is greatly influenced by the level of teacher skill in supporting children in this more challenging aspect of dialogue

- Model open-mindedness and tolerance of uncertainty
- Really listen to pupil responses to fully understand what they are trying to convey – and handle unusual/ unanticipated ones supportively
- Discuss examples of when we have changed our minds, therefore showing children this can be a good thing to do
- Be a genuine learning partner alongside children – it is very powerful for children to see ongoing learning happening to someone they may assume already knows everything!
- Demonstrate good subject knowledge and understanding of continuity and progression leading to building of knowledge through a unit of work
- Sometimes withhold evaluative comments and feedback to encourage children to become more experienced in saying what they really mean/ feel/ want to say
- Resist the urge to repeat children's responses or reformulate them – this shows that we expect responses to be listened to the first time; alongside this, encourage children to question each other (you can model this, eg 'I'd like to ask you something else about what you just said...', 'Does anyone else have a point they would like to make after hearing what X said?')
- Draw children into the learning through mystery, suspense, an unusual angle or approach; this encourages interest and motivation, and can also help children to identify with the learning going on

**2. Key approaches:** these last sections comprise aspects of practice which can be worked on specifically by the teacher, either to develop their own competence and understanding, or with the children to give them experience, build up their confidence and help them to engage with learning through dialogue.

### Guiding lesson flow

- Make sure you plan for different kinds of talk to take place at different stages in your lessons; eg, presentational talk during plenaries, discussions to explore ideas gathered from group work
- Plan to use the IWB in a range of ways, especially involving pupils directly, eg:
  - try not to always use the IWB to frame a lesson – use it flexibly as the learning dictates
  - relinquish teacher control of the IWB and give children experience in using it actively and developmentally during a lesson
  - use the IWB alongside other non-digital resources (books, artefacts, paper, ordinary whiteboard or chalkboard) in an integrated way, as a place to draw together and keep ideas which you can return to at a later stage

Developing pupil questioning: we often work on our own questioning skills as teachers, but less so on helping pupils to develop higher order questioning skills. You could have short, focussed sessions to give pupils experience of approaches such as speculation, analogy, problem solving, debate, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and ‘thinking outside the box’. There are many resources around which could be used (eg in the various ‘thinking skills’ programmes available), but the particular facilities of the IWB make it extremely valuable here, eg making it possible to use sound, video, images and text very easily to stimulate a focussed session. You can back this up with example questions, key vocabulary etc., to support children in beginning to make contributions.

### Encouraging evaluation and synthesis

- Make evaluation and synthesis explicit through the language you use with pupils to help them understand what is happening; guide discussion sometimes, or sustain it (asking questions, encouraging children to ask each other questions), use neutral encouragement to extend an argument (‘Tell me a bit more about this...’, ‘Go on...’). If you are able to draw on saved, collective IWB work, you can make the synthesis and links very clear.
- Plan for thinking and talking time in your lessons – and allow enough time for this (too often we expect children to do a lot of thinking and talking in too short a time, and when they are not able to get to the point we want them to reach, we tell them what we wanted them to find out!); be sensitive and adaptive to all aspects of what is going on in the lesson, and keep the focus on the pace of *learning*, not just the pace of the lesson.