



CAMBRIDGE

Empowering educators with metacognition and dialogic talk strategies

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Cambridge Schools Conference, June 2025
Future-ready: preparing learners to thrive

Workshop objectives:

Introduce

Metacognitive and dialogic talk strategies

Strengthen

Critical thinking through structured conversation

Enhance

Problem-solving by applying metacognitive strategies

Foster

Innovation by challenging assumptions and generating ideas

Deepen

Self-reflection

Consider the following



- Spend a minute considering what is going on in this image.
- Turn to a partner at your table and in turns explain what you think is going on, explaining how you came to that conclusion.
- Reconsider what is going on in this image following your conversations.

What is dialogic talk?



- Open-ended, exploratory conversations where all participants actively engage with each other's ideas
- Participants challenge assumptions and build collective understanding
- Participants engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas
- Support their views/statements with reasons/evidence
- Check understanding by asking questions
- Build on each other's responses

Traditional classroom discussion

Typically, teacher-led

Focuses on correct answers rather than exploration of ideas

Often follows the pattern: question-response-evaluation

Encourages individual participation, but discussions may be brief and surface-level

Dialogic talk

Encourages open-ended, student-driven conversations

Focuses on reasoning, questioning, and collaborative meaning-making

Allows students to challenge, build upon, and refine each other's thinking

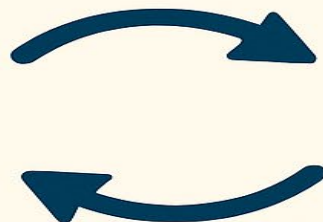
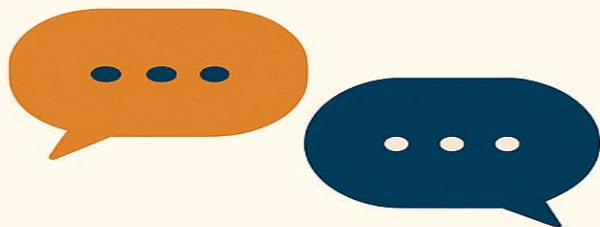
Shared learning experience, fostering deeper engagement and critical thinking

Metacognition and dialogic talk

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIALOGIC TALK AND METACOGNITION

DIALOGIC TALK PROMOTES METACOGNITION

- ✓ thinking about thinking
- ✓ reflection and self-regulation
- ✓ monitoring understanding



METACOGNITION ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF DIALOGIC TALK

- ✓ contribute more purposefully
- ✓ evaluate arguments critically
- ✓ facilitate others' learning



CLASSROOM IMPLICATIONS

- explain their thinking
- justify their decisions
- reflect on what and how they learned



What is metacognition?



It involves:

- more than thinking about thinking
- learners gaining the power of self-regulation in their learning
- being aware of how you learn, process information, and make decisions
- the ability to monitor, regulate, and evaluate your thought processes to improve understanding and problem-solving.

Setting up for dialogic success



- Dialogic talk norms
- Roles
- Prompts e.g. “Have you thought about...?”
- Assessment
 - Self-assessment rubrics
 - Peer assessment rubrics
 - Teacher rubrics and observation
- Developing a shared understanding

Dialogic talk norms

Listen actively

- Take turns speaking and show you are listening

Build on ideas

- Use phrases like: "I like what..." or "I also think that..."

Challenge respectfully

- Disagree constructively; "Could we also consider...?"

Include everyone

- Invite everyone to speak; and avoid speaking too much

Use evidence

- Support your ideas/reasons with evidence

Dialogic talk roles

- **Facilitator** – keeps the discussion moving and respectful.
- **Challenger** – helps the group think more deeply by asking questions, challenging ideas respectfully, and inviting other perspectives.
- **Speaker** – reports out on behalf of the group.
- **Note-taker** – records main insights or decisions.
- **Timekeeper** – keeps track of time.

Applying our dialogic talk skills to metacognitive tasks!



On the next slide, you will see a short poem.

Take a minute or two to quietly read and think about the poem.



Hope Is the Thing With Feathers

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson

<https://poets.org/poem/hope-thing-feathers-254>

Applying our dialogic talk skills to metacognitive tasks!

- Remember your roles
- Ensure each person speaks at least twice
- You have **7 minutes**

Discuss the following:

What message do you think the author is conveying about hope in this poem?

Debrief Questions

- How did listening to others shape your ability to articulate your own perspective?
- During or after the dialogue with colleagues, was there a moment where you reconsidered or refined your assumptions about the poem? Why?
- What impact did the roles have on group discussions?

Implications for practice

- How can we apply these metacognitive and dialogic talk strategies to other areas of our teaching practices?

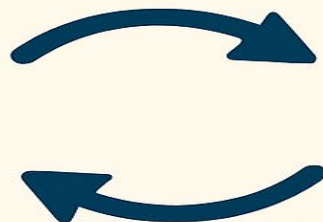
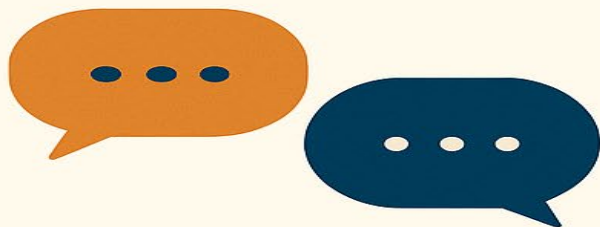


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Who's Who by Benjamin Zephaniah

I used to think nurses
Were women,
I used to think police
Were men,
I used to think poets
Were boring,
Until I became one of them.



Reflection

How has your thinking changed as a result of this session?

I used to
think...



Now I
think...

Your feedback

Please let us know your
views on this session

Scan the QR code and share your
feedback with us



Any questions?

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References

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Thank you!

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