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Promoting NQT linguistic awareness of dialogic teaching practices

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Published in:
Literacy

DOI:
[10.1111/lit.12163](https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12163)

E-pub ahead of print: 28/09/2018

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication on the UWS Academic Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bignell, C. (2018). Promoting NQT linguistic awareness of dialogic teaching practices: a dialogic model of professional development. *Literacy*, 53(3), 150-159. [LIT12163]. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12163>

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Introduction

At a time of increasing pressure on teacher training providers to meet a wide range of training demands, time constraints and the requirements of Teachers' Standards (Forde et al, 2016) require universities to make difficult decisions about curriculum content and trainee teacher learning experiences. Furthermore, the Teachers Standards in England (Department for Education, 2011) have been criticised for marginalising the teaching of pedagogical content knowledge - knowledge of how subject content can best be translated into viable learning experiences - in favour of compliance to 'best practice' models of teaching (Alexander, 2011). In light of this, it is recognised that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) may benefit from more sustained models of professional development (Walter and Briggs, 2012) that draw upon expert pedagogical mentors (Yaffe, 2010) to promote teacher self-monitoring and guide reflective practice (Dymoke and Harrison, 2006; Spencer et al, 2017).

As a teacher educator with a long-term interest in the potential of classroom discourse to open up teacher-pupil dialogue, the researcher was acutely aware of the above constraints on teacher training and potential affordances of a more sustained model of continuing professional development (CPD). In light of this, the research project sought to establish whether a more dialogic model of CPD might support NQTs' development of dialogic teaching in the primary classroom.

Classroom discourse is a key area of interest in educational research. Many authors have demonstrated a sustained focus on talk and its relationship to learning (Alexander, 2004; Cazden, 1988; Littleton and Howe, 2010; Mercer, and Howe, 2010; Nystrand, 2001; Sharpe, 2008; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Wells, 2009). These researchers have enriched understanding of classroom talk with regard to: the linguistic patterning of talk; the sociocultural factors that influence that patterning; and the challenges teachers face when seeking to address and undermine normative classroom talk behaviours.

This paper focuses on dialogic teaching through exploring the findings from research undertaken with three newly qualified teachers (Bignell, 2012). The research sought to examine: the extent to which a dialogic approach to teacher professional development might facilitate teacher self-evaluation as a means of developing a more dialogic classroom; and the factors that influence dialogic teaching in the primary classroom. This article focuses primarily on the enabling factors and, in doing so, exemplifies key talk moves that opened up dialogic spaces in these teachers' classrooms. With an emphasis on the detail of teacher-pupil interactions, the research embraced sociocultural theories of learning and drew upon linguistic analysis of recorded episodes of teaching.

A Sociocultural Perspective on Learning

Historically, Vygotsky (1978) recognised the important relationship between language and thinking. He proposed that learners construct knowledge through a process of social interaction where intermental activity (that which is social and interactional) results in the development of intramental (individual cognitive) capability. This has become known as the sociocultural theory of learning. Bruner (1990) furthered this explanation, proposing that children use language as a cultural 'tool' to problem solve the world around them. Thus, understanding and interaction are inextricably linked (Adams, 2006). The implications for classroom learning are self-evident since, "in educational settings, language is the primary mediational tool through which learning occurs" (Rogers, 2005, p.12).

When conceiving of language as a cultural or mediational tool, then the relationship between spoken language and dialogic teaching is clear. If through social interaction pupils are afforded opportunities to gain insights into one another's thinking, dialogic teaching might provide a tool with which to scaffold this interaction more effectively

(Sedova, et al, 2014).

Dialogic Teaching

Alexander (2003, 2004, 2005, 2010) has been influential in furthering the case for dialogic teaching in schools. He defines dialogue within teaching as “achieving common understanding through structured, cumulative questioning and discussion that guide and prompt, reduce choices, minimise risk and error, and expedite the ‘handover’ of concepts and principles” (Alexander, 2010, p. 30).

Bakhtin’s theory of the dialogic nature of language has significantly influenced research into classroom talk, and many researchers (Alexander, 2010; Lefstein, 2006; Mercer & Littleton, 2009; and Sharpe (2008) to name but a few) recognise their work as being built upon a foundation of Bakhtinian theory. Bakhtin proposed that all utterances are part of a “living language” (Bakhtin, 1930s/1981, p. 288) and that, through dialogic interaction between speakers, the meaning of language is shaped and reshaped for both speaker and listener(s). As such, participants in dialogic interactions become active constructors of knowledge through engaging in discourse with others.

However, within the field of classroom talk there is much research to suggest that, rather than assuming a dialogic stance, teachers and children appropriate a socially determined interactional exchange as an everyday part of classroom life (Nystrand et al, 2001). This ‘initiation-response-evaluation’ (IRE) or ‘initiation-response-feedback’ (IRF) exchange is dominant in many classrooms in the United Kingdom and America (Lyle, 2008; Nystrand et al, 2001; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Lefstein (2006) describes the IRE exchange as follows:

Teachers *initiate* discourse by lecturing or asking predominately predictable, closed questions, usually designed to test pupils’ recall of previously transmitted knowledge and/or to discipline inattention. Pupils *respond* with one-or two-word answers. Teachers *evaluate* student responses, praising correct answers (“well done!”) and censuring error (“you haven’t been paying attention!”). Teachers dominate talk by controlling the topic and allocation of turns, by speaking more often than pupils and for longer periods of time and, indirectly, by privileging pupil contributions that are essentially a re-voicing of previous teacher utterances (p. 1).

Within the IRE exchange, the teacher assumes the role of the “powerful participant...controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 46) and the pupils fulfil their “discoursal and pragmatic rights and obligations” (Fairclough, 1985, p. 57). Bakhtin describes such an exchange as pedagogical dialogue - not authentic dialogue which results in a “genuine interaction of consciousness” but, in fact “monologism at its extreme” (Bakhtin, 1984, p.81 cited in Nystrand et al, 2001, p. 3). In contrast, Haworth (1999) proposes that dialogic talk offers an alternative that is characterised by “high levels of explicit intersubjectivity” (Haworth, 1999, p. 114).

This intersubjectivity might, in turn, be underpinned by five principles of dialogic teaching (Alexander, 2004) ; these principles envisage a learning environment that is:

- **Collective:** teachers and children address learning tasks together, whether as a group or as a class;
- **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 steer classroom talk with specific educational goals in view.

(Alexander, 2004, p. 38)

Resnick and colleagues have developed Alexander's five principles into a model referred to as accountable talk (Michaels et al: 2008; Resnick et al, 2007; Wolf et al, 2006), where accountable talk evidences not only a chain of meaningful exchanges between teachers and pupils (cumulation) but also assumes that such talk should be accountable to standards of reasoning and knowledge. In the classroom, accountable talk assumes that pupils will support points made in dialogue with explanation of thinking and reference to wider knowledge.

A number of researchers have begun to identify talk moves that might open up dialogic teaching in the classroom. Nystrand et al's work (2001) suggests that where classroom talk tends towards genuine dialogue: teachers make use of authentic questions; pupils and teachers uptake points; and teachers withhold evaluations of pupil responses. Sharpe's (2008) research furthers understanding of dialogic moves with its proposal that teachers can increase the prospectiveness of the questions they ask by replacing evaluative feedback on pupil answers with a pivot move that invites pupils to "explain, justify or amplify their responses" (p. 138). This is supported by Myhill et al's (2016) proposal that skilful management of dialogic teaching entails use of teacher requests (through probes) for explanation and elaboration from pupils.

The Challenges of Dialogic Teaching

However, it would seem that, for teachers, enabling dialogic teaching is more complex than simply adhering to Alexander's (2010) five principles. Alexander (2010) notes that whilst teachers may be committed to the principles of dialogic teaching, many experience a discrepancy between intended and enacted discourse practices such that "the most frequently observed kind of teacher-pupil talk remains closer to recitation than to dialogue" (p. 24). The recitation referred to here is akin to the IRE exchange described previously. Sedova et al (2014) reflect that a scarcity of dialogic teaching in empirical studies of classroom practice may not be attributable to teachers' disapproval of dialogic principles, rather that teachers may not understand how to implement these fully and effectively. Mercer and Dawes support this view, noting that:

Most teachers do not have a high level of understanding of how talk 'works' as the main tool of their trade and very few have been taught specific strategies for using talk to best effect.

(Mercer and Dawes, 2009, p. 363)

In addressing the dilemma of equipping teachers with the dialogic tools of their trade, Lefstein (2006) warns that those committed to dialogic teaching should be wary of promoting dialogical idealism. He notes that if teachers were to promote genuine Bakhtinian dialogue they would risk their role becoming that of a fellow participant and that, framed in this way, it would be difficult for a teacher to fulfil his/her mandated obligation to assess pupils and teach the statutory curriculum. Lefstein instead proposes a pragmatic approach of "pedagogicising" dialogue through "constructing a model of dialogue that is appropriate to the school context" (Lefstein, 2006, p. 8). He concludes that the teacher should see him/her self not simply as a facilitator in the classroom but as a guiding adult. Offering further advice to researchers seeking to support the

strengthening of dialogic teaching in practice, Mercer and Howe (2012) propose that support should be offered to teachers in identifying specific strategies to promote dialogic forms of talk in their classrooms. Jones and Hammond (2016, p. 1) propose that educational linguistics may be the tool for, “making dialogic moves more visible so that they may be better understood with respect to their educational consequences”.

This research project addresses this call for researchers and teachers to work together to identify strategies that might support teachers in more effectively promoting dialogic forms of talk in the classroom. In doing so, it considers the way in which a dialogic model of researcher/teacher interaction (as a form of professional development) helped the participant teachers to use the language of dialogic teaching to describe, analyse and develop dialogic interactions in their classrooms.

Methodology

The aims of this study were to identify:

- Whether a dialogic approach to teacher professional development might facilitate teacher self-evaluation as a means of developing a more dialogic classroom.
- Factors that might enable dialogic teaching in the primary classroom.

The research assumed an ethnographic perspective (Bloome and Green, 2004) in that video data sought to capture naturally occurring classroom talk so as to offer insights into the development over time of the dialogic (or otherwise) nature of this talk. It was framed as a co-constructed teacher/researcher inquiry (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2003). In this respect, the research design sought, in many ways, to mirror the research focus. It was anticipated that working alongside the teachers in transcription and analysis would scaffold their developing thinking through dialogic discussion whilst simultaneously offering insights into the ways in which dialogic teaching theory was interpreted and enacted in their practice.

The research recognises that the “twin perspectives of dialogic teaching and educational linguistics” can offer complementary ways of researching pedagogic action (Simpson, 2016, p102). Thus, as with Sedova et al’s (2014) research in this field, one intention was to work with the teachers to describe communication between teachers and pupils in detail, so as to identify recurring linguistic patterns that might offer insights into ‘next steps’ for the participant teachers and pupils.

Three newly qualified teachers in three primary schools in the South of England took part in this research. Pseudonyms are used when referring to these teachers (and the pupils in their classes). Teaching contexts varied, with: Natalie teaching pupils aged 7-8 years in a state-funded middle school; Val teaching pupils aged 10-11 years in a Catholic school; and Deborah teaching pupils aged 9-10 years in a state-funded primary school. Whilst there were only three participants, the research sought to offer a rich insight into the teachers’ experiences of enacting dialogic teaching.

The teachers had completed their undergraduate teacher training at the same university and had been taught previously by the researcher. They had chosen to participate in the research project as they: had experienced a university-led session focused on dialogic teaching; recognised the research as an opportunity for CPD; and were keen to collaborate so as to provide insights into their experiences of dialogic teaching for other new and experienced teachers. They were opportunistically sampled, being the first three teachers who responded to a call for participation in the research.

Over a period of nine months, video-recorded episodes of these teachers’ interactions with their pupils were the focus of teacher-researcher professional dialogue. This on-

going dialogue resulted in adaptations to the support offered to the teachers that, in turn, informed post-project recommendations.

Using a mixed methods research approach, data were collected in the form of researcher field notes, teacher action plans, pre and post-project interviews with each teacher and audio recordings of teacher/researcher discussions. This data supplemented video recordings and transcripts of classroom discussions between the teachers and pupils (group sizes ranged from seven pupils to the whole class). The video recordings particularly gave privileged insights into the teachers' and pupils' experiences of enacting dialogic teaching in the classroom. Meetings took place with each of the teachers on three occasions throughout their first year in teaching. At these meetings, the teacher and researcher 'loosely' transcribed and reflected upon video extracts of the teachers' lessons before undertaking action planning for developing dialogic teaching (an example action plan is included in Appendix One).

Data Analysis

Video data were analysed in two stages, initially in collaboration with the teachers (in part as a form of CPD) and subsequently, post data collection (by the researcher), to ascertain whether the episodes of talk evidenced increased teacher skill in facilitating dialogic teaching in the classrooms.

Initially, at each meeting, a simple content analysis was undertaken, and relevant prosodic and paralinguistic information was often commented upon but not transcribed. The content analysis drew upon Alexander's (2004) principles of cumulation, reciprocity and purposefulness. For example where evidence was seen in the transcripts of a pupil 'building on' another pupil's contribution (cumulation and reciprocity), the researcher and teacher discussed/agreed which aspects of the pupil talk signalled or facilitated this 'build on'. Where the teacher sought to steer the talk (purposefulness) making reference to previous pupil contributions (cumulation) the same teacher/researcher discussion of interactional behaviour took place. Thus, a loose coupling of Alexander's (2004) principles and teacher/pupil interactional moves began to emerge.

Whilst Alexander's five principles (2004) of dialogic teaching were initially used to focus the in-school discussion of transcripts, it became clear that these were insufficiently detailed for the teachers as a framework for thinking and talking about their teaching interactions in terms of dialogic characteristics. As such during the early stages of data collection, the teachers were often dependent upon the researcher to probe thinking during shared analysis and insufficiently equipped to reflect and analyse independently. The teachers lacked a key metacognitive resource – a concise language to first describe, and then analyse, their dialogic (or otherwise) classroom interactions.

Thus, as the data collection period proceeded, the teachers/researcher worked together to identify in the transcripts illustrative examples of potential dialogic talk moves, drawing upon the work of key authors in the field to 'give name' to these moves. For example: Alexander's (2004) teacher prompts, probes, withhold evaluation and pupil-to-pupil questions; Nystrand et al's (2001) uptake (cumulation) and withhold evaluation (which seemed to promote shared reasoning); Sharpe's (2008) pivot move; and Resnick et al's (2007) pupil thinking and linking phrases. This developing bank of descriptors of dialogic teaching (prompt, probe, withhold evaluation and pupil thinking and linking phrases), accompanied by examples from each teacher's transcripts provided teachers and researcher with a shared language for talking about dialogic teaching and provided the teachers with the metacognitive resource to gain increasing control over how they interacted with pupils (Nystrand et al, 2001). However, at this stage analysis was 'loose,' framed by loosely transcribed video and discussion of pertinent examples within these rather than detailed linguistic analysis.

Second stage analysis sought to establish whether the episodes of talk evidenced increased teacher skill in facilitating dialogic teaching in the classrooms. This required first the production of detailed and accurate transcripts of each of the video extracts. Once complete, transcripts were coded according to the functional patterning of teacher-pupil talk within, noting those talk moves which appeared to: open up a dialogue between the teacher and one pupil; open up dialogue between pupils; or encourage pupils to contribute for an extended turn (often demonstrating a shift into higher order thinking/reasoning). The next layer of analysis focused on grammatical form (e.g. questions, anaphoric references, conjunctive adjuncts and declaratives) to which functions were loosely assigned (e.g. use of pupil anaphoric references to signal cumulation). Next, recognising that the teacher and pupil *turns* demonstrated regularity, turns were coded according to main function and appropriation of ‘preferred’ ways of speaking (Maybin, 2006) were noted. Key functions included: low control acknowledging move (LCAM); repeated utterance; revoiced/reformulated utterance; praise; correction; exposition; steering question; summary of a range of pupil views; teacher linking phrases; and teacher probe. Finally, based upon the context of the dialogue and preceding and succeeding turns, clarity was given to the key function code e.g. whether a repeated utterance from the teacher seemed to open up extended pupil talk (repeated utterance with a rising intonation as if a question) or close down talk (repeated utterance as a form of returning the turn to the teacher). From this detailed analysis, it became clear that the teachers were increasingly using key talk moves to scaffold dialogic interactions in the classroom.

Whilst a number of findings arose from the research, three key findings are explored below.

Results

Teacher promotion of key talk moves can scaffold pupil dialogic bids and assist pupils in demonstrating cumulation and reciprocity.

Arising from second-stage analysis, transcript coding identified two key interactional bids that the teachers frequently used to scaffold pupils in demonstrating cumulation and reciprocity. In doing so, these bids opened up the dialogic space between pupils. These were:

Table 1

The extract of transcript below, exemplifies pupil linking and thinking phrases.

Example 1: Pupil Linking Phrases and Pupil Thinking Phrases

Context: The pupils are discussing with their teacher (Natalie) experiences of learning to read as part of a unit of work focusing on transition. They had previously discussed how transitions (e.g. forthcoming transition to Middle School) often require pupils to acquire new skills, relating this to experiences of transitioning to First School and learning to read. At this point, Eva has suggested that learning to read is a key skill that aids success in school and later life and Luke ‘uptakes’ her point.

Line Number	Message Unit
1	<u>Going back to what Eva said I agree with her</u>

2 Because when you have tests you need to read,
3 when you get to the older stages you need to
4 read for jobs and then when you get a job you
 need to know what you should do.

In line 1, Luke (using 2 linking phrases - underlined) makes explicit reference to Eva's previous suggestion that learning to read is a key skill before going on to signal his agreement. He then, in lines 2-4, shares this reasoning using the thinking phrase 'because when' and a series of temporal (when) and causal (then) connectives to make explicit to the group the relationship between learning to read and being able to undertake work in later life.

Pupil use of linking and thinking phrases draws upon the work of Resnick et al (2007) and Michaels et al (2008). The use of such thinking and linking phrases were frequent throughout all of the episodes of teaching and explicitly encouraged by the teachers. For example, at the start of one of the latter episodes of teaching Deborah reminded her pupils:

If somebody says something really interesting that you would like to add on to you can say "I agree with such-and-such because" and if they have something that you would like to ask them, you can ask people questions the way I do. If I ask somebody something, they give me an answer, I can then prompt them even further by saying, "Why do you think that?". You can do that too, to your friends.

All three teachers also scaffolded pupil use of the language of cumulation through the use of speaking 'aide memoir', encouraging the pupils to appropriate key phrases in order to signal cumulation and reciprocity. In Natalie's class pupils were given cards at the start of discussions that included phrases such as:

- 'I agree with...'
- 'I disagree with...'
- 'When X said... it made me think...'
- 'I want to add to what X said'.

In Val's classroom, these were displayed around the interactive whiteboard, and Deborah's pupils were given time to reflect to video (after discussion lessons) upon their developing cumulation skills, somewhat in the style of the Big Brother diary room. These scaffolds were supportive to pupils in the early stages of the project, reminding them of the importance of cumulating contributions to discussion. As the project progressed, the pupils continued to use the phrases taught by their teachers and introduced their own less formal (but equally appropriate) phrases such as, 'Yeh but...' or 'And also...'

Strategic use of key teacher interactional moves can scaffold pupils' extended responses, demonstrations of reasoning and cumulation of others' contributions.

Arising from second stage analysis, transcript coding identified three key teacher interactional bids that frequently scaffolded pupils into offering more extended responses, sharing of reasoning or demonstrating cumulation and reciprocity. These bids also opened up the teacher-pupil dialogic space. These were:

Table 2

The transcript extracts below, exemplify these teacher dialogic bids.

Example 2: Prompts – Teacher Cues for Cumulation or Reciprocity

Context: The teacher (Deborah) and pupils have been discussing the question, ‘what is authority and why do we need it?’ and have begun by describing examples of authority justifying their views. Up to this point they have suggested lawyers, the law and parents as examples of authority; the teacher takes the next turn.

Line Number	Message Unit
1	Beth said she thinks that authority is not
2	necessarily about people bossing you around
3	It could also be about people trying to look after you
4	What do you think about that? (directed to group)

Here, the teacher uses an explicit cue, a prompt to other pupils to scaffold pupil uptake of Beth’s points. In this case, the prompt constitutes a summary of Beth’s contribution (lines 1-3) followed by an invitation to the group to cumulate her point (line 4).

At the start of the project, all three teachers used few prompts. Natalie, reflecting on talk in her classroom mid-way through the project, noted her anxiety at stepping in to the discussion too soon and closing down pupil talk. This had resulted in talk that was wide ranging and pupil-led but that often lacked key qualities of true dialogue as it did not evidence the “structured cumulative questioning and discussion which guide and prompt, reduce choices, minimise risk and error, and expedite ‘handover’ of concepts and principles” (Alexander, 2010, p. 30). By the end of the project, Natalie reflected on her use of prompts as follows:

I've learned that I don't have to feel guilty...I am there to prompt them and I am there to facilitate it and there is nothing wrong with that and [discussion] is not something that they should just be automatically doing without me...the teacher has a role and that has made me feel a lot more comfortable.

Natalie’s reflections here are reminiscent of Lefstein’s (2006) reminder to the teacher to regard him/her self as a guiding adult in dialogic teaching in the classroom.

Example 3: Probes – Teacher Cues for Cumulation

Teacher probes were used on numerous occasions to encourage a pupil to develop his/her point but were used most frequently by Natalie. Unlike a prompt (an invitation to others in the group to uptake or cumulate), the teachers used probes to return to the pupil who had just contributed. In doing so the teachers demonstrated skilful management of dialogic teaching (Myhill et al, 2016), using probes to encourage pupils to “explain, justify or their responses” (Sharpe, 2008, p. 138). Deborah tended to explicitly scaffold pupil reasoning with probes such as:

Context: The teacher (Deborah) has just begun a discussion about Macbeth with her whole by asking the pupils to give share their views about the text and/or key characters, offering reasons for these.

Line Number	Speaker	Message Unit
1	Mark	Macbeth's not a very nice person
2	Teacher	<u>Why do you think that?</u>
3	Mark	Because he always goes by his wife's orders
4		But he shouldn't he should make things up for himself

Here she asks a direct question, encouraging Mark to make his thinking explicit and accountable to the group (Michaels et al: 2008; Resnick et al, 2007).

Natalie also used direct questions (see Example 1 for context), for example:

Line Number	Speaker	Message Unit
1	Eva	Basically, everyone needs to learn to read
2	Teacher	OK that's a big statement Eva, so <u>you need to be able to back that up</u>
3		<u>Why?</u>
4		
6	Eva	Well most people have paperwork
7		If you have a job you have paperwork and you
8		always have bills everyone has bills

However, she also probed pupils by revoicing their contributions with an upward intonation (as if a question). In the extract below, Emma has been furthering an argument that people who work in banks engage mostly with numbers rather than letters and words. The probe below demonstrates Natalie's revoicing of Emma's contribution.

Line Number	Speaker	Message Unit
1	Emma	You won't read if you are working in a bank
2	Teacher	You don't need to read if you were working in a
3	Emma	bank?
4		You need to read the <u>money</u> to make sure it's the right amount so you can give people the right change

Example 4: Low control acknowledging moves/withhold evaluation

All three teachers encouraged pupils to extend an initial contribution through the use of low control acknowledging moves. For example:

Context: The pupils have been asked to draw on their knowledge of Greek gods and goddesses to design their own Greek god to be used as the main character in a piece of fictional writing. The group (seven girls and their teacher Val) is brainstorming the qualities that would make the 'best god'.

Line Number	Speaker	Message Unit
1	Penny	I have another idea
2		OK you know how they had that bull like the bull
3		half man half bull
4	Teacher	Go on
5	Penny	What if there was a half girl half man and then like
6		all the girl's powers were on one side and all the
7		man's powers on one side?

In this extract, the teacher's response in line 4 serves to acknowledge the pupil's contribution whilst simultaneously returning the turn to the same pupil without comment, feedback or evaluation. This low control acknowledging moves provides the space for the pupil to then extend her contribution and, in doing so, make her reasoning for the design of a Greek god explicit to the rest of the group (Michaels et al: 2008; Resnick et al, 2007).

The teachers perceived the process of shared analysis and action planning to be significant in strengthening their skills of dialogic teaching.

In the post-project interview, Val noted that dividing the work of transcription, analysis and reflection provided the opportunity to, "step outside yourself, you can be reflective and then move forward". She reflected on the analysis as, "the key part because that is where the discovery happens". This discovery through dialogic discussion had been a key motivator for the research. Deborah, in interview, referred to the rewinding and replaying of video as a necessary part of the analysis of her teaching. She noted that if asked to reflect upon her teaching without video, "I wouldn't have had a clue what I had done or what they had said". She also noted of the shared transcription and analysis:

Collaborative recording and looking at it and transcribing are hugely useful. If I had done that by myself I don't think I would have learned anything...I would have seen things there that weren't there. I would have missed things that were there. The dialogic research has allowed me to find more characteristics that I can hone in on, so that I can understand dialogic talk better and promote dialogic talk rather than just talk.

Natalie also referred, in interview, to the shared reflection and analysis as being key to helping her to "hone in on" and "fine tune" her classroom talk in order to "promote dialogic talk rather than just talk". She further reflected upon the process of shared video analysis:

There are things that I could read but without you probing me I wouldn't have understood...that has been the key factor for my professional development...you can't do it on your own. You can't learn from it on your own.

Deborah also reflected on her time in university and how interactional experiences as a learner had shaped her developing understanding of dialogic teaching in the primary classroom:

I remember the kinds of questions you used to ask me...it's pushing you to think more and not just to be satisfied with the first answer you have given, to then go further. And I think there is a lot of that in [name of University]... I've had the experience of what discussion is like when it works.

As Nystrand notes, understanding how classroom discourse unfolds and teachers' and pupils' constitutive role in the process is key for teachers seeking to "gain informed control over how they interact with students" (Nystrand et al, 2001, p. 47).

Discussion

This small-scale research project concludes that teacher promotion of key talk moves can scaffold pupil dialogic bids and further cumulation and reciprocity in classroom interactions. Such moves can support pupils in providing extended responses,

demonstrations of reasoning and cumulation of others' contributions. For the NQTs in this project, shared analysis of teacher transcripts/video and subsequent action planning was perceived to be significant in strengthening their skills of dialogic teaching.

Mercer and Dawes (2009), when reflecting upon their dialogic talk research with experienced teachers, note that "most teachers do not have a high level of understanding of how talk 'works' as the main tool of their trade and very few have been taught specific strategies for using talk to best effect" (p. 363). This study sought to explore this challenge in order to identify whether a dialogic approach to CPD might facilitate teacher self-evaluation as a means of developing a more dialogic classroom.

The research afforded reciprocity of learning for teachers and researcher; this was facilitated through dialogic discussion about videoed classroom practice. The inquiry itself provided a CPD opportunity for the teachers and, through our shared reflection upon the videos, enhanced our understandings of the complexities of dialogic talk in the classroom.

It is clear that the process for these NQTs of developing the tools of their trade required a committed and sustained focus. The time and effort required to: understand and enact the principles of dialogic teaching; reflect upon episodes of teaching; and action plan for developing interactional goals is not to be underestimated. At the end of the project, the teachers acknowledged that they had just begun their journeys, "towards dialogic teaching" (Alexander, 2010).

During the collaborative inquiry, the teachers and researcher had drawn upon the work of Alexander (2004) and others (Nystrand et al, 2001; Resnick et al, 2007; Sharpe, 2007) to provide a shared language to talk about talk and the 'tools' to independently reflect upon the teachers' developing skills in leading dialogic teaching in their classrooms. In a context where it is acknowledged that teachers may not understand how to implement dialogic teaching practices effectively (Sedova et al., 2014), Mercer and Howe (2012) recommend that teachers should be supported in identifying specific strategies to promote such talk in their classrooms. The shared language used between the teachers and researcher in this project had heightened the teachers' linguistic meta-awareness, making "dialogic moves more visible" (Jones and Hammond, 2016, p.1). In doing so, it had given linguistic specificity to analysis, discussion and reflection upon talk in these classrooms, supporting the teachers to begin to skilfully manage dialogic teaching (Myhill et al., 2016) in their teaching and learning interactions.

As such, the research recommends that early career teachers should be offered informed support from experienced teachers to video and analyse their classroom talk with a view to developing the dialogic tools of their trade. However, in light of the above quote (Mercer and Dawes, 2009, p.363), it is clear that experience may not always equate with knowledge or expertise with respect to dialogic teaching. Throughout the research, the participant teachers were clear that open professional dialogue, underpinned by a shared language to talk about and reflect upon the talk in their classrooms, enabled them to describe (and so better understand) interactional behaviours. The above descriptors of dialogic bids had facilitated teacher meta awareness of dialogic teaching practices, enabling them to consciously appropriate key interactional talk moves.

Thus, it seems clear that equipping teachers with linguistic descriptors (and accompanying examples) of the types of interaction that can open up dialogic spaces in the classroom may provide a metacognitive resource for teachers seeking to reflect upon classroom talk behaviours within the context of professional dialogue. In light of this, schools should consider making use of the above examples of dialogic bids (along with

video of teachers' own teaching) to scaffold on-going professional discussion about dialogic teaching.

Concluding Reflections

Whilst the participant teachers focussed on developing dialogic teaching skills over a sustained period, it should be remembered that dialogic teaching is only one of the many talk tools in a teacher's repertoire of effective classroom talk (Alexander, 2010). Clearly, teachers need to strategically select the talk that best meets the needs of the learners and learning at key points within a lesson.

With regard to teachers beginning to strengthen their skills of dialogic teaching, it is clear that reference to the above dialogic bids may provide a scaffold for productive professional dialogue about classroom talk. However, Skidmore and Gallagher (2005) remind us that effective dialogic teaching cannot be reduced to a tick list of measurable properties. In light of this, school leaders should be cautious in the way they use these descriptors of dialogic interactions. They should be used as a scaffold for opening up dialogue rather than as a monitoring tool that might close down dialogue and undermine teachers' commitment to promoting dialogic spaces in their classrooms.

Whilst a good deal has been learned from this research, most schools/teachers do not have access to a researcher to support NQT CPD. Thus, in terms of next steps, future research should seek to find out what teachers consider the most effective video CPD models for promoting the professional dialogue that might underpin dialogic teaching in the classroom. As Lefstein and Snell (2011) note, if dialogic teaching is to have a place in primary classrooms, then academics must seek out models of professional development which empower *teachers* to lead professional dialogue and facilitate the "micro-analytic perspective" (p. 912) that is necessary to distinguish dialogic teaching from other types of pedagogical talk.

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Table 1

Pupil Dialogic Bids	Explanation
Pupil linking phrase To signal cumulation	Pupils use phrases to demonstrate that they are aware of and intend to comment on previous contributions to the discussion.
Pupil thinking phrase To signal reasoning	Pupils not only share their view but also offer reasoning to justify the viewpoint and make this explicit to the group.

Table 2

Teacher Dialogic Bids	Explanation
Prompt To cue pupil 'uptake' - cumulation or reciprocity	The teacher makes explicit connections between ideas before encouraging pupils to comment upon these.
Probe To cue an extended response/shared reasoning	The teacher returns to the pupil who has just spoken to ask for a more extended response or to seek justification, clarification or reasoning.
Low control acknowledging move Teacher withholds evaluation	Moves such as 'ok', 'go on', 'uh hu' or non-verbal moves (such as a look directed to the student who has just spoken) that encourage that pupil to continue/extend his/her contribution.

