

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF ORACY

Learning to talk, learning through talk

1. Talk rules and talk goals
2. Mixing up groups
3. Talking points
4. The 3rd turn
5. Philosophy circles
6. Intercepts
7. The language of power
8. Implementation



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Learning to talk, learning through talk

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Cambridge Schools Conference, March 2024
Effective communication: from competence to confidence

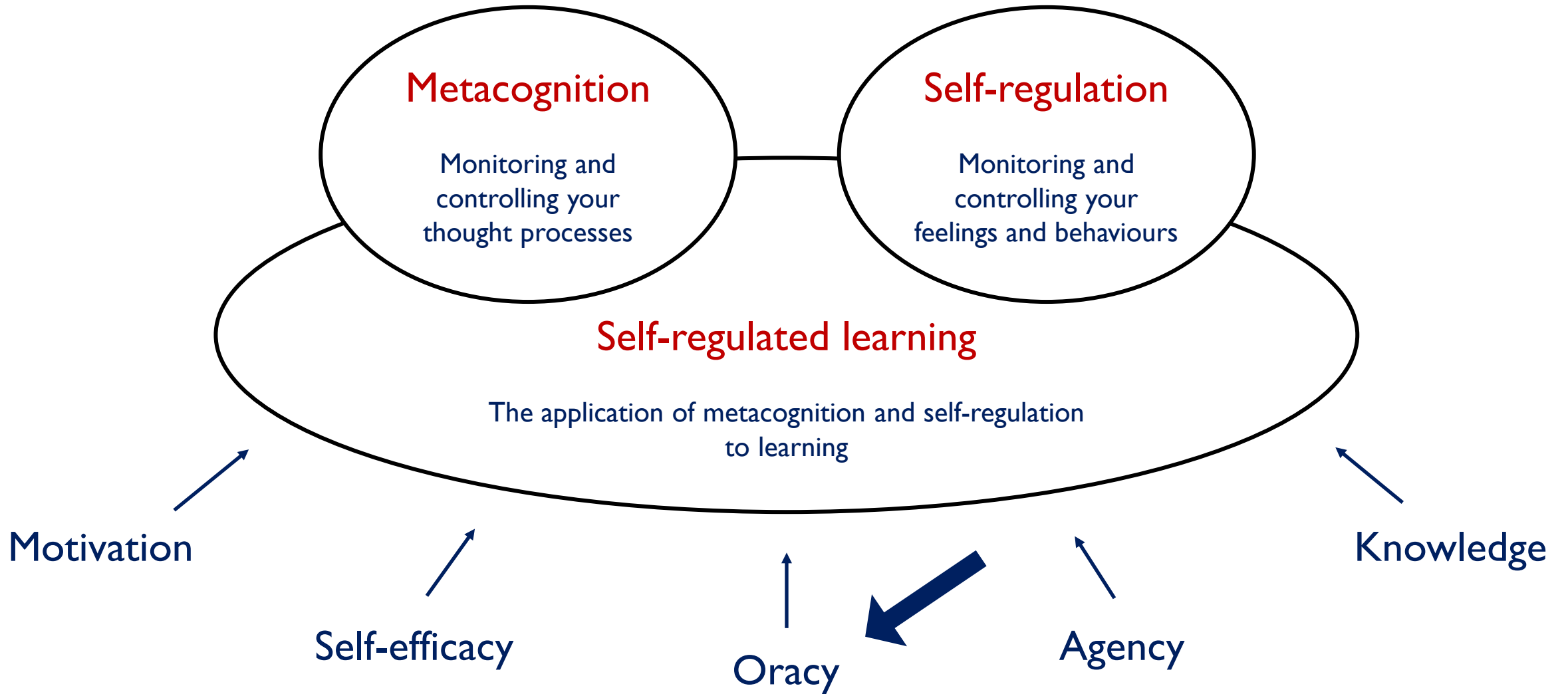


RETHINKING EDUCATION
Education's Critical Friend



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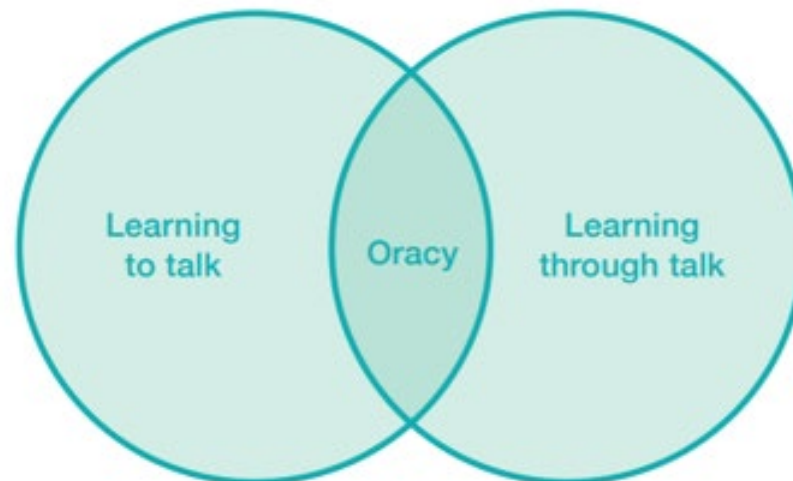
IS ORACY CURRICULUM OR PEDAGOGY?

- ORACY EDUCATION

- Physical
- Linguistic
- Cognitive
- Social and emotional

- A CURRICULUM concern

- Learning to talk



- DIALOGIC TEACHING & LEARNING

- Debates
- Discussions
- Questioning
- Philosophical inquiries

- A PEDAGOGICAL concern

- Learning through talk

For a PDF + glossary,
→ oracycambridge.org

Physical

Voice

- Pace of speech
- Tonal variation
- Clarity of pronunciation
- Voice projection

Body language

- Gesture & posture
- Facial expression & eye contact

Linguistic

Vocabulary

- Appropriate vocabulary choice

Language

- Register
- Grammar

Rhetorical techniques

- Rhetorical techniques such as metaphor, humour, irony & mimicry

Cognitive

Content

- Choice of content to convey meaning & intention
- Building on the views of others

Structure

- Structure & organisation of talk

Clarifying & summarising

- Seeking information & clarification through questioning
- Summarising

Self-regulation

- Maintaining focus on task
- Time management

Reasoning

- Giving reasons to support views
- Critically examining ideas & views expressed

Social & Emotional

Working with others

- Guiding or managing interactions
- Turn-taking

Listening & responding

- Listening actively & responding appropriately

Confidence in speaking

- Self assurance
- Liveliness & flair

Audience awareness

- Taking account of level of understand of the audience

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TALK RULES

Spoken Language and New Technology (SLANT) study

→ 3 kinds of talk:

- Disputational
- Cumulative
- Exploratory



Prof. Neil Mercer

THREE TYPES OF TALK

DISPUTATIONAL:

- Lot of disagreement – pupils just make their own decisions
- Few attempts to pool resources, or offer constructive criticism
- Lot of interactions of the 'Yes it is! – No it's not!' kind
- Atmosphere is competitive rather than co-operative



THREE TYPES OF TALK

CUMULATIVE:

- Pupils simply accept and agree with what others say
- Pupils wait until someone else stops talking so they can share their own idea
- The talk 'stacks up' – pupils do use talk to share knowledge, but they do so in an uncritical way
- Pupils repeat and may elaborate each other's ideas, but don't evaluate them carefully



THREE TYPES OF TALK

EXPLORATORY:

- Everyone is encouraged to contribute
- Everyone listens actively
- Pupils share all relevant information
- Focus on reasoning – use of the word ‘because’
- Contributions build on what has gone before
- Pupils ask questions of one other to seek clarity
- Ideas may be challenged – but pupils address the point, not the person
- The group seeks agreement for joint decisions



HOW CAN WE BRING ABOUT MORE EXPORATORY TALK?

GROUND RULES!

- Ground rules are already usually in place - but often
 - a) unspoken
 - b) unhelpful - e.g.
- Don't speak if you aren't 100% sure you're right
- Don't contradict the most popular member of the group
- If you have the right answer, keep it to yourself



CREATING TALK RULES FOR EXPLORATORY TALK

THE HAT METHOD:

- Give pupils two scraps of paper each
 - “When group talk goes well...”
 - Place into hat (→ anonymity)
 - Repeat for “When group talk goes badly...”
- Compile into two lists (do this overnight)
- Place them side by side
- Ask pupils to distil them into ~7 talk rules
 - “How can we increase good group talk and decrease bad group talk?”



TALK RULES: CHILD-FRIENDLY LANGUAGE

1. We will try to make sure everyone contributes equally
2. We will share all relevant information
3. We will give reasons for what we say
4. We will listen carefully to others and think about what we hear
5. We have a right to “pass” and to just listen for a while
6. We will think about what we want to say before starting to speak
7. We will politely challenge others if we disagree
8. We will be open to changing our our minds
9. We will try to work toward agreement

TALK GOALS

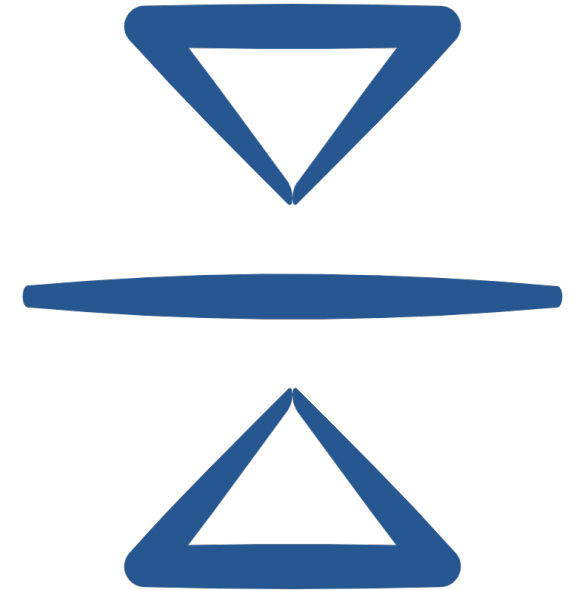
- Children should choose, ideally from a list - e.g.
 - Talk rules - each child picks one to focus on
 - A simplified version of the Oracy Skills Framework →
- They don't need to be overly specific, e.g.
 - “I will plan what I want to say before I start speaking”
 - “I will try to speak less today to let others have a say”
 - “I will give reasons for my thinking”
 - “I will make notes to force myself to listen”
- Bookend a classroom discussion, e.g.
 - Share goals at the start (e.g. in pairs)
 - Refer back to them at the end



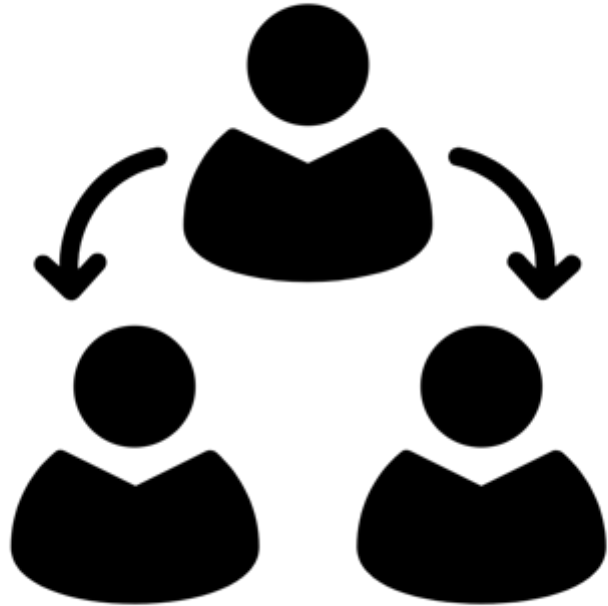
REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box – please use a number to indicate which talking point you are responding to:

1. 'Group work is not a good use of valuable learning time.'
2. 'We should use talk rules in meetings as well as in lessons.'
3. 'I can't see how I will find time to set talk goals in lessons.'



MIXING UP GROUPS

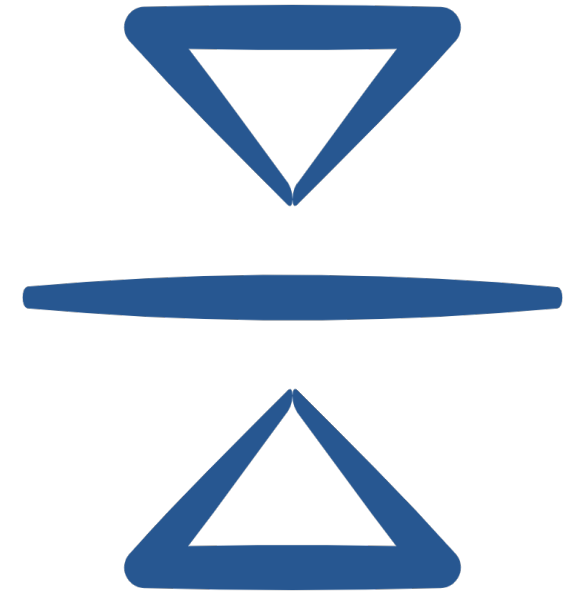


- Term 1 – 2s, students choose
- Term 2 – 3s, students choose
- Term 3 – 4s, students choose
- Term 4 – 2s, teacher chooses
- Term 5 – 3s, teacher chooses
- Term 6 – 4s, teacher chooses

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box – please use a number to indicate which talking point you are responding to:

1. 'It's not a good idea to let children sit in pairs of their own choosing'
2. 'It's important that children and young people learn to get along with people they may not like very much.'
3. 'Mixing up groups will cause behavioural problems that I can do without'



TALKING POINTS

As well as asking questions, trying using ‘talking points’ to stimulate discussion in lessons, e.g.:

“What are the advantages and disadvantages of using pesticides?”



“It is unethical for farmers to use pesticides.”



TALKING POINTS

“Talking Points are statements which may be factually accurate, contentious or wrong. They provide a focus for speaking and listening and a chance to find out what others think. They can be thought-provoking, interesting, irritating, amusing, simple, brief or wordy.

Talking Points are easy to write, read and understand. They offer a way in to thinking more deeply about the subject under discussion. They enable everyone to say what is on their mind, so that others can decide whether they agree or disagree.”

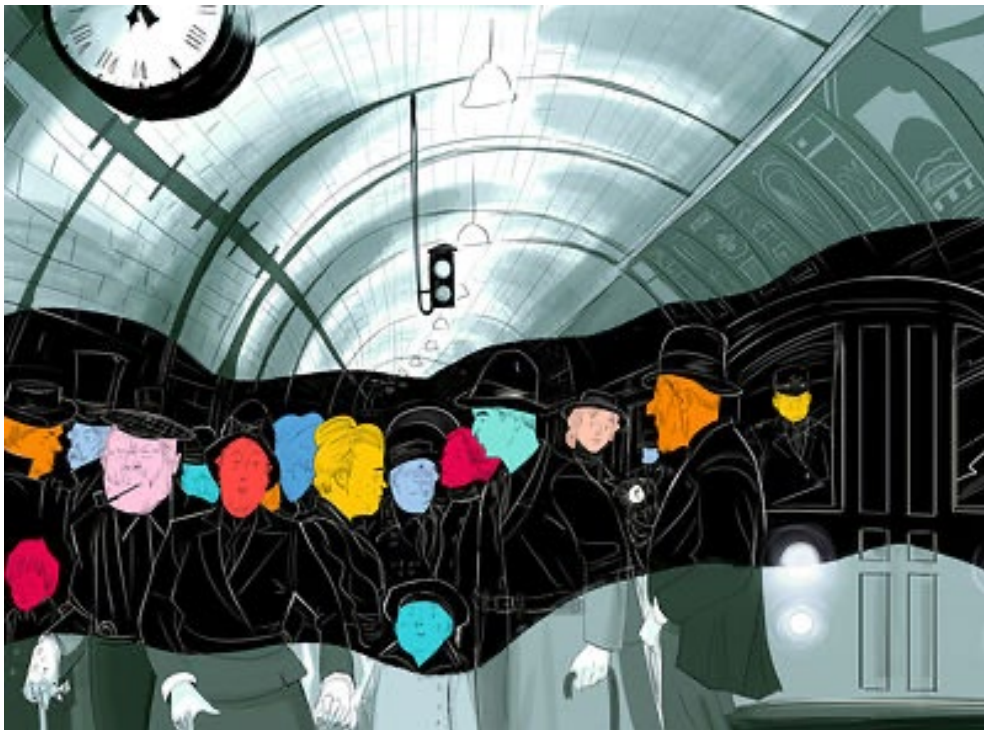
(Dawes, 2008)



EXAMPLE: IN A STATION OF THE METRO, BY EZRA POUND

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:

Petals on a wet, black bough.



1. The station was very busy.
2. The writer liked what he saw.
3. The writer was alone.
4. He was waiting at the station for someone he knew.
5. No-one spoke to him.
6. 'Petals on a wet, black bough' sounds like a Japanese picture.
7. The poem is a kind of haiku.
8. The poem does not contain any verbs – this makes a difference.
9. Both lines are equally important.
10. The black bough is dark and foreboding; the petals are cherry blossom.
11. This poem is about good things that come out of bad situations.
12. The poem is not about anything, it is just a picture.
13. The poem is an instant of human thought, not really a real situation.
14. The semi-colon could be erased.

EXAMPLE: THE BEDROOM AT ARLES, BY VAN GOGH

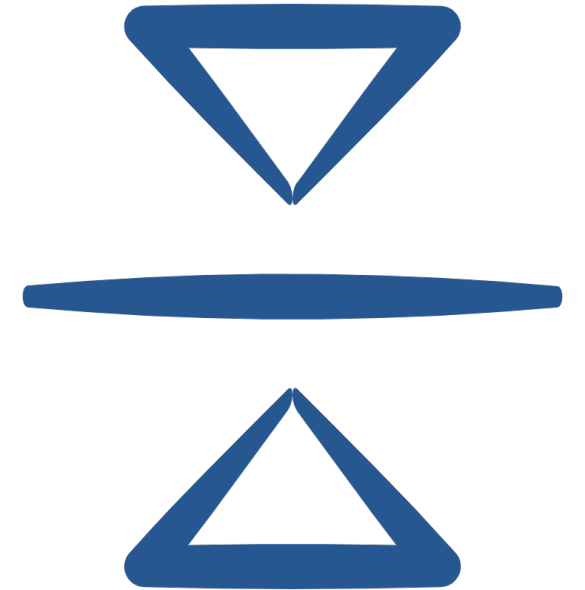


1. This picture shows “absolute restfulness”
2. The walls are pale violet, the floor tiles red, and the chairs are yellow wood.
3. The scarlet bed cover looks warm.
4. The shutters are closed; they are green and let in some light.
5. There is no white in the picture.
6. There are no shadows but the room still looks real.
7. Vincent had very few possessions.
8. All his coats were blue.
9. Vincent enjoyed painting this picture.
10. He also painted the portraits he shows hanging on the walls.
11. The room does not look comfortable.
12. A room is not an interesting subject to paint.

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box – please use a number to indicate which talking point you are responding to:

1. 'We don't have time to debate everything in lessons – there is so much to cover'
2. 'I can't see how turning a question into a statement makes much difference.'
3. 'Talking points provide a safe way for children to take a variety of positions on a topic.'



THE 3RD TURN



- 1) Teacher asks a question
- 2) Pupil answers
- 3) **What happens next?**

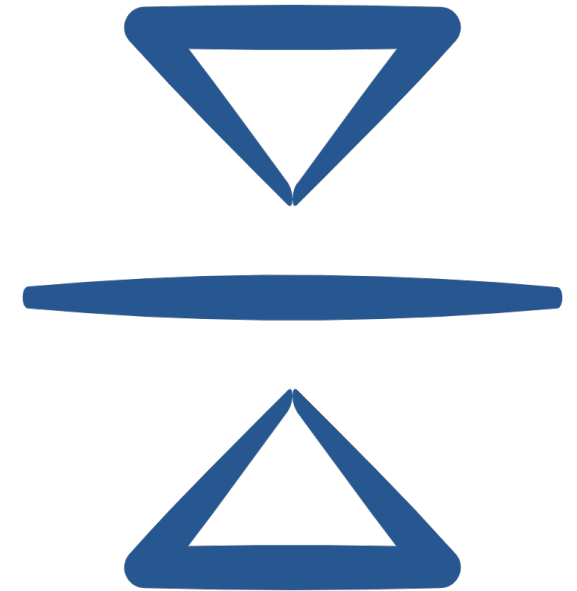
Many options:

- Repeat back what the pupil said, to check understanding
- Ask them to rephrase in more subject-specific language
- Ask ‘So what?’ or ‘Why?’ repeatedly
- Pivot to another pupil:
 - *‘X, do you agree or disagree?’*
 - *‘How does this compare with what X said earlier?’*
 - *‘Does anyone have an argument against this?’*

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box:

List some different ways in which a teacher might respond to a pupil on the 'third turn' in a learning conversation



PHILOSOPHY CIRCLES

- 1) Settling activity
- 2) Present the stimulus
- 3) Identify the 'big ideas' that sit behind the stimulus
- 4) Generate philosophical questions inspired by the stimulus
- 5) Share the questions
- 6) Vote for the question most people want to discuss
- 7) First words – whoever wrote the question starts the dialogue
- 8) Build the dialogue (main part of the lesson)
- 9) Construct an answer
- 10) Final words – either about the question or about the inquiry itself

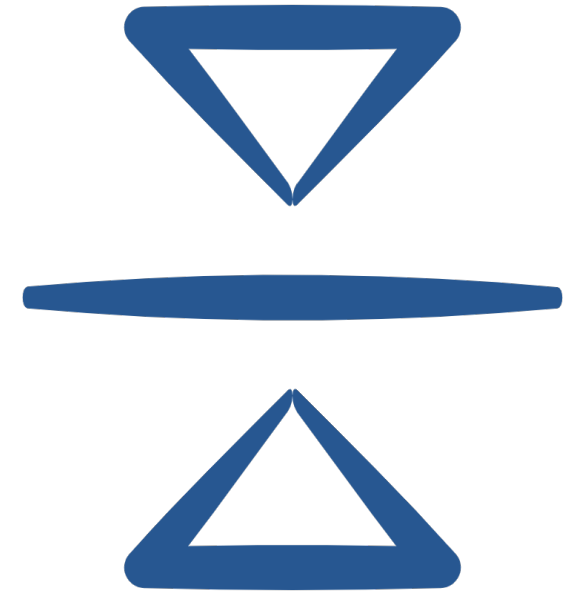


REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box:

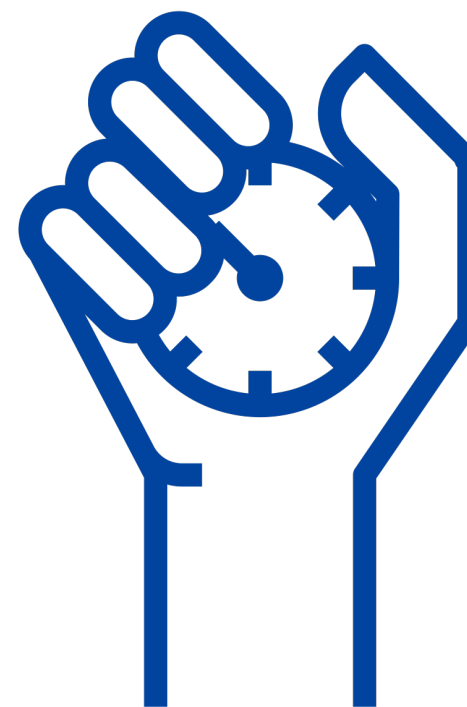
How might you use philosophy circles in your practice?

Bookmark – bit.ly/re-p4c (4 min)



INTERCEPTS

- A ‘stop the clock’ moment: ‘catch the flow of the lesson in mid-flight and suspend it for a few moments while we take stock’ (Alan Howe)
- Invite the class to reflect on how the lesson is going and how we might make it even better. Can be done as a conversation that pupils ‘listen in on’ (teacher plus a colleague/pupil)
- *‘We talk together about the number of pupils who haven’t contributed yet, and how we might intervene to improve the overall quality of the story, for example by asking the class to see if they can come up with either a twist or change of direction. The group of 10 and 11 year olds are obviously intrigued: they have never been privy to the professional dialogue about how a lesson is going between two adults before.’ (AH)*
- Monitor and control: self-regulation in a nutshell!

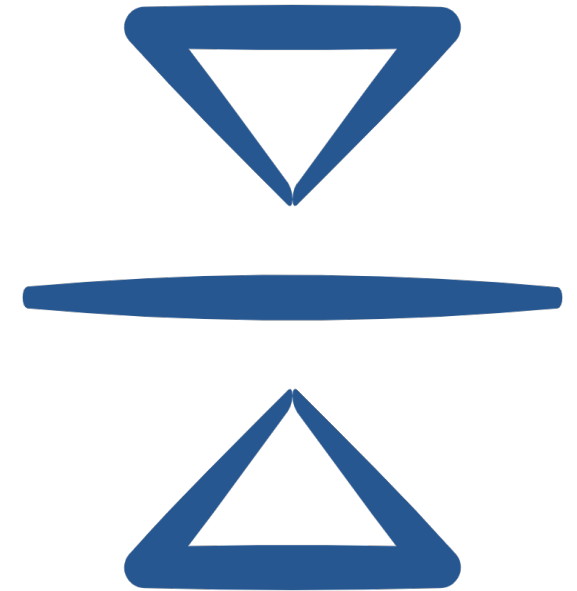


REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box:

How might you use intercepts in your practice?

Bookmark – bit.ly/re-intercept (blog)



THE LANGUAGE OF POWER

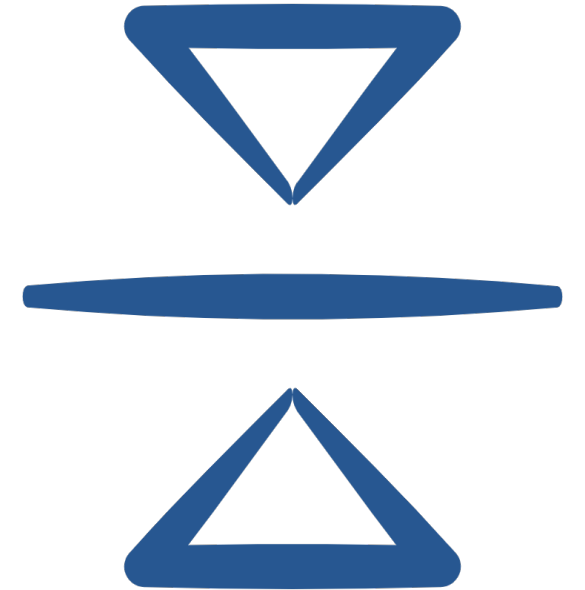
- 1) Asyndeton (short, breathless sentences)
'Veni, vidi, vici'
- 2) Anaphora (repetition)
'We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets...'
- 3) Antithesis (contrast)
'Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country'
- 4) Metaphor ('x is y')
On average, we use one every 16 words!
- 5) Hyperbole (exaggeration used for emphasis or humour)
'I'm so hungry I could eat a horse'
- 6) Rhyme ('rhyme as reason' effect.)
'If the glove don't fit, you must acquit!'
- 7) Tricolon (the rule of three)
'Here, there and everywhere!'

REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

Respond in the chat box:

How might you use the 'language of power' in your practice?

Bookmark – bit.ly/re-power-tedx (18 min)



IMPLEMENTATION: STEPS TO SUCCESS

A (baseline)	B (next steps)	C (mid-point)	D (almost there)	E (target level)

STEPS TO SUCCESS EXAMPLE: THE DIALOGIC CLASSROOM

A (baseline)	B (next steps)	C (mid-point)	D (almost there)	E (target level)
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher questions and talking points elicit, engage and challenge thinking and reasoning• Dialogic talk moves such as thinking time, turn-and-talk, think-pair-share and cold calling are used consistently to good effect• Pupils listen carefully to one another as well as the teacher, regularly making reference to previous contributions• Pupils prompted to reason, explain, justify

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher asks most of the questions. These tend to be short and frequent, requiring correct answers• Teacher defaults to 'hands-up questioning', allowing confident pupils to dominate classroom discussions• Teacher questions often directed at individuals (e.g. 'Thomas, tell me...')• Teacher does not allow much 'thinking time' when asking questions• No use of dialogic talk moves such as think-pair-share, turn-and-talk or cold calling				<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher questions and talking points elicit, engage and challenge thinking and reasoning• Dialogic talk moves such as thinking time, turn-and-talk, think-pair-share and cold calling are used consistently to good effect• Pupils listen carefully to one another as well as the teacher, regularly making reference to previous contributions• Pupils prompted to reason, explain, justify

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STEPS TO SUCCESS



- Can be used at a number of levels:
 - Whole school (or groups of schools)
 - Department (secondary) or year group (primary)
 - Classroom teacher
 - Pupils
- Powerful coaching tool
- Monitoring and evaluation

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