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# TOWARDS DIALOGIC TEACHING

## rethinking classroom talk

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After decades of enthusiasm in some quarters but ambivalence or even neglect elsewhere, oracy seems at last to be entering the educational mainstream. Among discerning teachers and researchers the educational importance of talk has always been understood, but this is now being reflected in official initiatives too.

Dialogic teaching harnesses the power of talk to stimulate and extend children's thinking, and to advance their learning and understanding. It also enables the teacher more precisely to diagnose and assess. Dialogic teaching is distinct from the question-answer and listen-tell routines of mainstream teaching, aiming to be more consistently searching, reciprocal and extended. And it is generic to all patterns of interaction, not just whole class teaching. The approach is buttressed by three kinds of research evidence: on the relationship between talking, thinking and learning; on the historic problems of talk in British and American classrooms; and on the place of oracy and the effectiveness of oral pedagogy in many other countries.

***Towards Dialogic Teaching: rethinking classroom talk*** (Dialogos 2008, 60 pp, ISBN 0 - 9546943 - 6 - 4) succinctly presents the case and the evidence for dialogic teaching - not as a transient fad, but as the inevitable outcome of research by scholars working in diverse disciplines and cultures. *Towards Dialogic Teaching* sets out the repertoires and principles on which dialogic teaching is based, identifies classroom indicators to guide the development and evaluation of practice, reports emerging findings from school-based dialogic teaching initiatives, and offers guidance on further reading and support.

***Towards Dialogic Teaching*** now has two sequels: ***Education as Dialogue: moral and pedagogical choices for a runaway world*** (published by Dialogos in conjunction with Hong Kong Institute of Education, 2006); and a professional development DVD pack, ***Talk for Learning***, which contains lesson extracts from dialogic teaching project classrooms (published by Dialogos in conjunction with North Yorkshire County Council, 2006). For further information on these and order details go to [www.robinalexander.org.uk/dialogos.htm](http://www.robinalexander.org.uk/dialogos.htm)

Robin Alexander is Fellow of Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge, Professor of Education Emeritus at the University of Warwick, and Director of the 2006-9 Cambridge Primary Review, the most comprehensive enquiry into English primary education for forty years ([www.primaryreview.org.uk](http://www.primaryreview.org.uk)). His books include *Essays on Pedagogy* (Routledge 2008), *Culture and Pedagogy* (Blackwell 2001, winner of the AERA Outstanding Book Award), *Learning from Comparing: new directions in comparative educational research* (2 volumes, Symposium 1999 and 2000), *Policy and Practice in Primary Education* (Routledge 1997), *Versions of Primary Education* (Routledge 1995), *Changing Primary Practice* (Falmer 1989), *Change in Teacher Education* (Holt Rinehart and Winston 1984), *Primary Teaching* (Cassell 1984), *The Self-Evaluating Institution* (Methuen 1982) and others. For further information go to [www.robinalexander.org.uk](http://www.robinalexander.org.uk)

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