**SEDA Small Grants Abstract for website**

**Developing and Evaluating a Dialogic Teaching Approach to Support Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking in higher education is key to developing disciplinary knowledge and using problem solving skills for the world of work (Teo, 2019). Despite the development of a widely disseminated [Critical Thinking Skills Toolkit](https://kingston.box.com/s/6as40c4vytuza61ok250eb2w8rs17h3v) (Wason, 2016), by the Principal Investigator, there was a lack of convergence between the aims of the resources and a teacher understanding of how to use the toolkit in practice. The researchers believed that a dialogic teaching approach centred around educational dialogue (Cui and Teo, 2021) could develop students’ criticality and knowledge. This case study has therefore explored how teachers could develop and use a dialogic teaching approach to underpin their use of the Critical Thinking Skills Toolkit in the context of an already established community of practice (CritTALK). This enabled us to use authentic professional learning which was social and situated in teachers’ own working contexts (Webster-Wright, 2009).

A planned scheme of academic development sessions introduced teachers to a dialogic teaching approach, repertoires of talk and how these could link to the toolkit resources. In each session, teachers were introduced to a particular dialogic teaching repertoire and a critical thinking tool, for example questioning and the Argument tool. They were given an opportunity to develop a lesson plan and a short activity to try out in their practice. A pre and post questionnaire was sent to teachers to examine their perspectives before and after engaging in the community of practice activities (n=13). This was supported by focus groups (n=3) which explored participants’ developing understanding of the key concepts and their experiences of the workshops and their learning. Finally, teachers produced post-lesson reflections which outlined how they used the ideas from the workshops in their teaching. Due to the pandemic, data collection and teaching happened online.

Findings suggested that dialogic teaching provided a ‘hook’ for participants to make their tacit knowledge about critical thinking teaching practices more explicit. However, participants recognised the challenges of using dialogic teaching in an online environment and that further work was needed to develop their understanding of the epistemological perspective of dialogic teaching. This could be supported by simplifying the terminology around dialogic teaching (e.g Quick Guides), engaging students in discussion about dialogic teaching, developing their own dialogic stance and being open and acknowledging dialogic tensions.

Our open access  [‘Good Practice Guide: Supporting Critical Thinking Through Purposeful Classroom Talk’](https://kingston.box.com/s/rcm292cjx22q864vdfykyu4ka2spr8qt)  guide contains a series of examples of how colleagues from a range of disciplines have used dialogue teaching to support the development of criticality in their own teaching. It also contains five [Quick Guides](https://kingston.box.com/s/gppv3e1ilrhyxdirgimmeelpp9e0murh)  which summarise key tenets of a dialogic teaching approach: principles of dialogic teaching; questioning; discussion and argumentation; debating and dialogic feedback talk.

Cui, R., and Teo, P. (2021) ‘Dialogic teaching for classroom teaching: a critical review,’ *Language and Education, 35(3),* pp.187-203

Teo, P. (2019) 'Teaching for the 21st century: A case for dialogic pedagogy', *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction,*21 pp.170-178.

Webster-Wright, A. (2009) 'Reframing Professional Development Through Understanding Authentic Professional Learning', *Review of Educational Research,*79(2), pp.702-739.