

THE LANGUAGE OF LEARNING

Here are some of the terms we have used in this book.

Cognitive conflict: Cognitive conflict is created when contradictions are identified and options examined. It is the disagreement between two or more of the ideas or opinions a person holds concurrently. It is this conflict or 'wobble', which causes more reflection and the questioning of assumptions.

Concept: A general idea that groups things together according to accepted characteristics.

Construct: Shorthand for stage three of the Learning Challenge in which participants construct meaning by connecting, explaining and examining patterns and relationships.

Cumulative talk: Talk that is characterised by repetitions, confirmations and elaborations.

Dialogue: Dialogue is conversation and enquiry. Dialogue combines the sociability of conversation with the skills of framing questions and constructing answers.

Discussion: The action or process of talking about something and exchanging ideas.

Disputational talk: Talk that is critical of individuals (and their ideas), focuses on differences, is competitive and is all about being seen to 'win'.

Enquiry: A process of questioning ideas, information and assumptions and of augmenting knowledge, resolving doubt, or solving a problem.

Eureka: Taken from the Greek word for 'I found it', the eureka moment is reached as students climb out of the pit with a new sense of clarity and understanding.

Exploratory talk: Talk that is characterised by longer exchanges, use of questions, reflection, explanation and speculation.

IRE: The 'IRE' structure of classroom interaction is: teacher *Initiation* – student *Response* – teacher *Evaluation*. Teachers use this most common pattern of classroom talk to ensure that pupils remember what they already know. This is not what we mean by dialogue.

Knowledge: Acquaintance with facts, truths or principles. Generally considered to be a step removed from understanding, which is when someone is able to relate, explain and evaluate.

Language of reasoning: The words, phrases and concepts that structure thinking, discussion or writing of any complexity. They help people think about everything else.

Learning intention: A learning intention describes what students should know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson or series of lessons.

Metacognition: Literally meaning 'thinking about thinking', metacognition is an important part of dialogue. It encourages students to think about the way in which they are thinking, how they are using the strategies, and how they might improve for next time.

Pit: A metaphor to identify the state of confusion a person feels when holding two or more conflicting thoughts or opinions in their mind at the same time.

Reflection: Giving serious thought or consideration to a thought, idea or response.

Skills: The abilities to carry out those processes necessary for gaining understanding, completing tasks or performing in any given context.

Success criteria: Summarise the key steps or ingredients students need to accomplish the learning intention. They encompass the main things to do, include or focus on.

Understanding: The mental process of a person who comprehends. It includes an ability to explain cause, effect and significance, and to understand patterns and how they relate to each other.

Wobble: User-friendly term to describe a state of cognitive conflict.

Zone of Proximal Development: Used by Lev Vygotsky to describe the zone between actual and potential development.

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