

The dialogic approach: replacing monologue with dialogue

Joanne Davies is Second in Charge of Learning Area of English and HaSS, intermittently Acting Head of Department at Clarkson Community High School. She started her journey at Clarkson as a student in 2002 and graduated in 2007



‘Professor John Hattie’s work in Visible Learning (2009) has been essential underpinning for transformational change at Clarkson Community High School (CCHS)’ (Young, 2016).

Hattie is renowned for his philosophy on ‘Visible Teaching and Learning’. He states that ‘accomplishing the maximum impact on student learning depends on teams of

teachers working together, with excellent leaders or coaches, agreeing on worthwhile outcomes, setting high expectations, knowing the students’ starting and desired success in learning, seeking evidence continually about their impact on all students, modifying their teaching in light of this evaluation, and joining in the success of truly making a difference to student outcomes.’ (Hattie, 2012). The Visible Teaching and Learning theory is grounded upon an analysis of hundreds of meta-analyses de-

termining the effect size of numerous influences on student achievement.

Hattie, in collaboration with Klauz Zierer, defined and articulated 10 approaches to thinking that educators can adopt to maximise student outcomes (Hattie & Zierer, 2018).

John Young, Principal of Clarkson Community High School, has seen the difference visible learning makes. At Clarkson the faculty and staff are continuously propounding the question, *how*

As we move forward, we are consistently evaluating our impact at Clarkson Community High School guided by Visible Learning and **Invitational Learning**

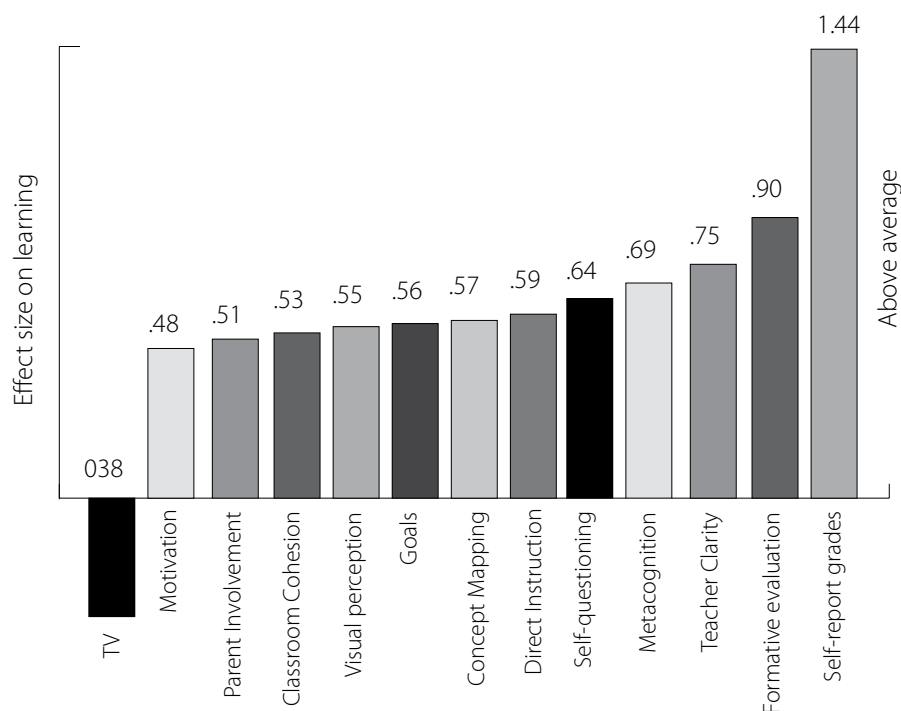
can we accelerate student learning? Our response to this query... an amalgamation of our research, shared beliefs, teaching and learning pedagogies and the use of data to inform instruction at a whole-school level, and at a classroom level. Young explains that “it is our *belief* that implementing Invitational Learning theory throughout every facet of our school has provided us with the best framework for success in re-culturing, re-structuring and re-timing of Clarkson Community High School” (2016).

Invitational Learning Theory provides an over-arching and encompassing framework cognisant of foundations, elements, domains, levels and dimensions that seem to influence human success or failure (Purkey & Novak, 2008)

‘A student is the most important person ever in this school ... in person, on the telephone, or by mail. A student is not dependent on us ... we are dependent on the student. A student is not an interruption of our work, the student is the purpose of it. We are not doing a favour by serving the student ... the student is doing us a favour by giving us the opportunity to do so. A student is a person who brings us his or her desire to learn. It is our job to handle each student in a manner which is beneficial to the Student and ourselves’ (Purkey & Seigel, 2002).

Staff at Clarkson Community High School adopt an evidenced-based approach to teaching and learning. According to Michele, ‘it is the process of evidence to inform teaching and learning, it must be explicit and accountable (equitable, representative, valid and reliable)’ (Bruniges, 2005). In order to successfully accommodate for our students and their individual learning needs, we conduct a data review every five weeks (Tables 1 & 2), led by the Head of Learning Area (HOLA) for each subject area. This cyclical process enables the meta-analysis of students’ academic performance, as well as, allowing staff to examine, reflect upon, and to seek evidence to answer the following question; how effective and successful

Visible learning a meta meta-analysis by John Hattie



To maximise effectiveness Hattie encourages educators to focus on influences above 0.4

Year 7 English Joanne Davies

Time	A	B	C	D	E	NA	
Review 1	Term 1 Week 5	7	5	5	3	3	2
Review 2	Term 1 Week 10	6	7	4	2	3	2
Review 3	Term 2 Week 5	6	7	4	2	5	0
Review 4	Term 2 Week 10	7	5	6	5	1	0
Review 5	Term 3 Week 5	5	6	9	3	0	0

Table 1: Represents data of year seven students (7.3) in English, from Term 1, 2018. This table shows that over the duration of the year the number of students achieving D’s and E’s has steadily declined

are our teaching methods and practices?

As we move forward, we are consistently evaluating our impact at Clarkson Community High School guided by Visible Learning and Invitational Learning.

Furthermore, we are always striving for excellence in our professionalism and performance as a school and as individual

educators of the Education Department. I strongly agree with former Director General of Department of Education Sharyn O’Neil that as educators we should be striving for high-performance and high-care. This strategic plan highlights the importance of success for all students, high quality teaching, effective leadership

Year 7 English Mr Jones

Time	A	B	C	D	E	NA	
Review 1	Term 1 Week 5	2	3	7	3	4	1
Review 2	Term 1 Week 10	3	1	8	7	4	0
Review 3	Term 2 Week 5	1	2	7	5	3	1
Review 4	Term 2 Week 10	1	2	8	5	3	0
Review 5	Term 3 Week 5	1	5	5	7	2	1

Table 2: Represents data of year seven students (7.1) in English, from Term 1, 2018. This table shows that over the duration of the year the number of students achieving Ds and Es has steadily declined, and the number of students achieving B's has increased

and strong governance and support. We support this notion at Clarkson and ensure that we operate within the parameters of the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership Professional Standards for teachers and school leaders, and the School Curriculum and Standards Authority. To achieve this, our leaders and educationalists follow the Performance Management process to review and reflect upon our individual performance and teaching pedagogies.

Cooperative learning: harnessing the power of peers

In the English-speaking world, interest in the role of talk in classroom teaching and learning extends back to the 1960s (Wilkinson, 1971).

Dialogic teaching and learning is founded on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, Barnes's (2008) concepts of exploratory talk, Wells' (1999) dialogic inquiry approach, Gee's (1989) concept of D/d discourse, and Rosenblatt's (1994) transactional theory of reading.

Who does most of the talking in classrooms? Based on your own experiences, you're likely to procure the same conclusion: Teachers!

Scaffolded dialogue is extremely different from practices commonly seen in many classrooms where teachers construct question and answer sessions, and students bid competitively for the opportunity to

give generally brief answers. In contrast, dialogic teaching is characterised by comparatively lengthy interactions between a teacher and a student or group of students in a context of collaboration and mutual support (Alexander, 2000).

George Zegarac and John Hattie (2013) embrace the belief and exhorts teachers to adopt a mind frame that leads them to choose dialogue, not monologue. In the classroom environment we want to encourage higher levels of thinking, and allow students to gain accessible, long-term knowledge and understandings of concepts being taught. To achieve this, we must adopt the dialogical classroom approach. Hattie (2012) further expounds that "cooperative learning is most powerful after the students have acquired sufficient surface knowledge to then be involved in discussion and learning with their peers – usually in some structured manner. It is then most useful for learning concepts, verbal problem-solving, categorising, spatial problem-solving, retention and memory, and guessing".

Lev Vygotsky concurred with the notion of replacing monologue with dialogue. For Vygotsky, language is the medium by which children acquire more than information (Vygotsky, 1962)

The ultimate question is raised ... *how do we maximise student outcomes?*

One mindframe described by Hattie,

entitled 'I engage as much in dialogue as monologue', has been effective in accelerating student outcomes (Hattie and Zierer, 2018).

In the HaSS and English Department, we utilise the '6Ps framework for Quality Questioning' as a guide when developing lesson plans and units of work to ensure we are providing the students with maximum opportunities for discussion (prepare the question, present the question, prompt student thinking, process student responses, polish questioning practices and partner with students) (Walsh & Santos, 2017). The framework is to assist students with the following:

- Focus their thinking on specified content knowledge
- Use cognitive processing strategies to develop deep understandings and long-term retention of content
- Ask academic questions to clarify or extend understandings
- Monitor progress toward learning targets through self-assessment and use of formative feedback
- Develop personal response-ability by using structural supports for thinking, and
- Contribute positively to the creation of a classroom learning community in which thinking is valued.

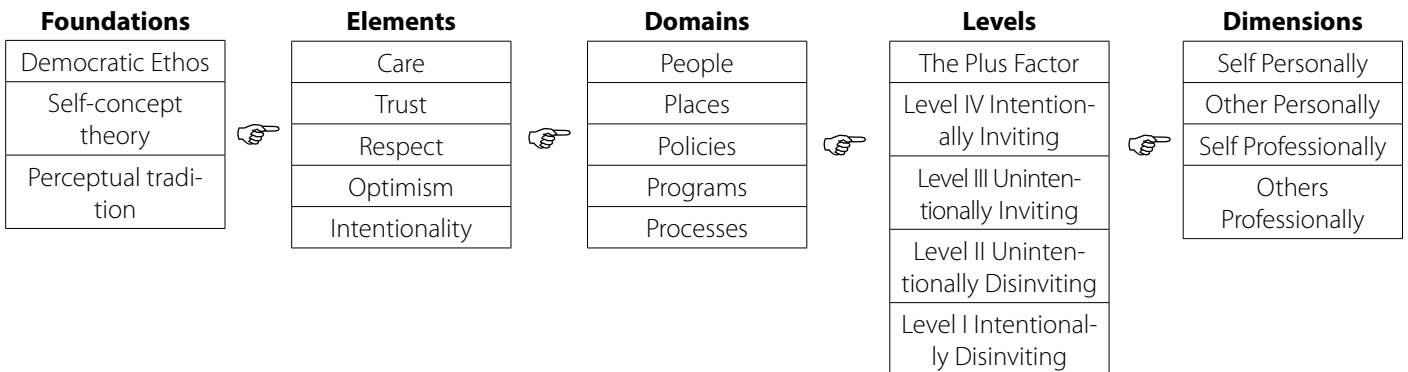
After completing my own research on the theory of 'dialogue vs monologue', I am now espousing the dialogic approach to teaching and learning and shifting from a monologue to a dialogue methodology.

Furthermore, I have been utilising the following strategies (suggested by Mercer & Dawes) in my teaching practices (2010):

- Provide small group discussions before whole-class discussions
- Encourage a range of responses before providing feedback or judgement
- Seek justifications and explanations of answers
- Allow students to nominate others instead of the teacher doing so
- Set ground rules collectively as a group
- Use reflection for examining quality of talk within the discussion
- Model the language behaviours you expect from your students.

As Second in Charge for the English and HaSS Department, it is indispensable that I share and communicate with

Invitational Theory



my colleagues this successful and effective teaching pedagogy. I will coordinate and lead engaging learning area meetings and use the opportunities to present the research and data of the importance of dialogue in the classroom and apprise my colleagues of the dialogical teaching practices.

Furthermore, I will provide support and guidance in the classroom to assist in successfully developing dialogical environments.

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Joanne Davies is Second in Charge of Learning Area of English and HaSS, intermittently Acting Head of Department at Clarkson Community High School. Ironically, she started her journey at Clarkson as a student in 2002 and graduated in 2007. Whilst completing her education she was awarded student of the year (two years in a row) and received the 'Caltex' accolade in 2007. Joanne returned to Clarkson Community High School in March this year as a qualified classroom teacher. She is currently working towards attaining her Level 3 Classroom status with the intention of becoming a Head of Learning Area in the future.

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