Expanding the dialogic space in the English classroom: A pedagogy for the 21st century?

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TRANSFORMING TEACHING
INSPIRING LEARNING

Outline

1. **The 21st century educational landscape**
   - Singapore's framework for 21st century competencies
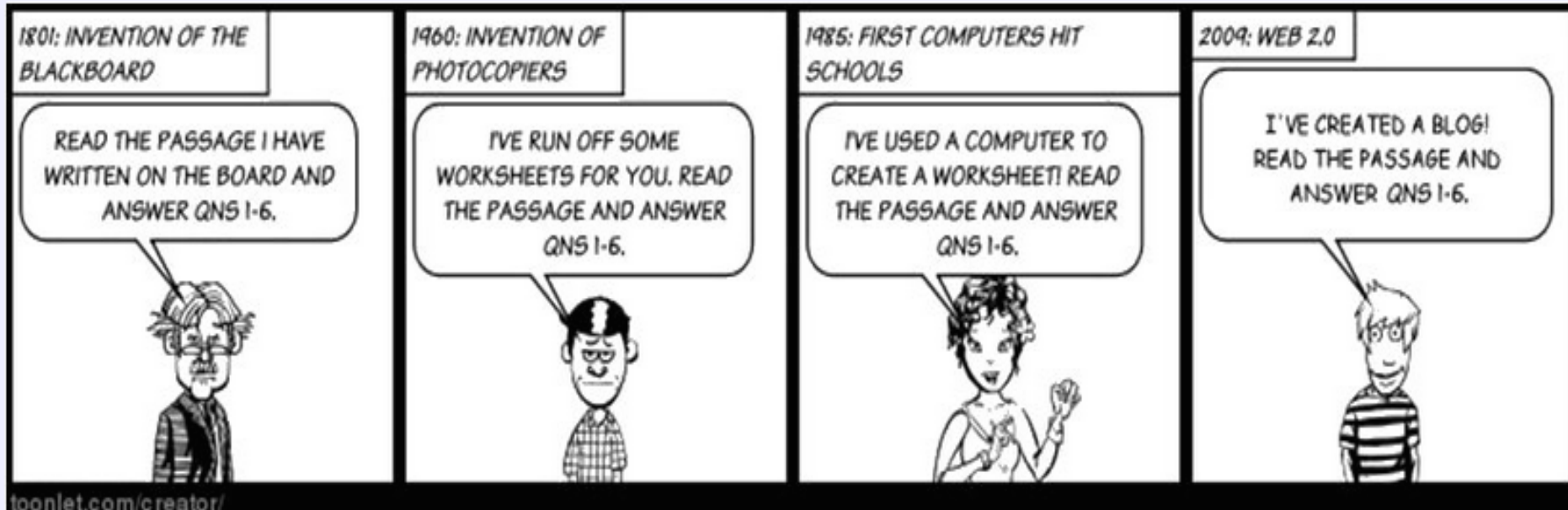   - Singapore's English Language Syllabus 2010

2. **Dialogic Teaching**
   - Theory and practice
   - Dialogic Teaching in Singapore

3. **Dialogic Teaching in the English classroom**
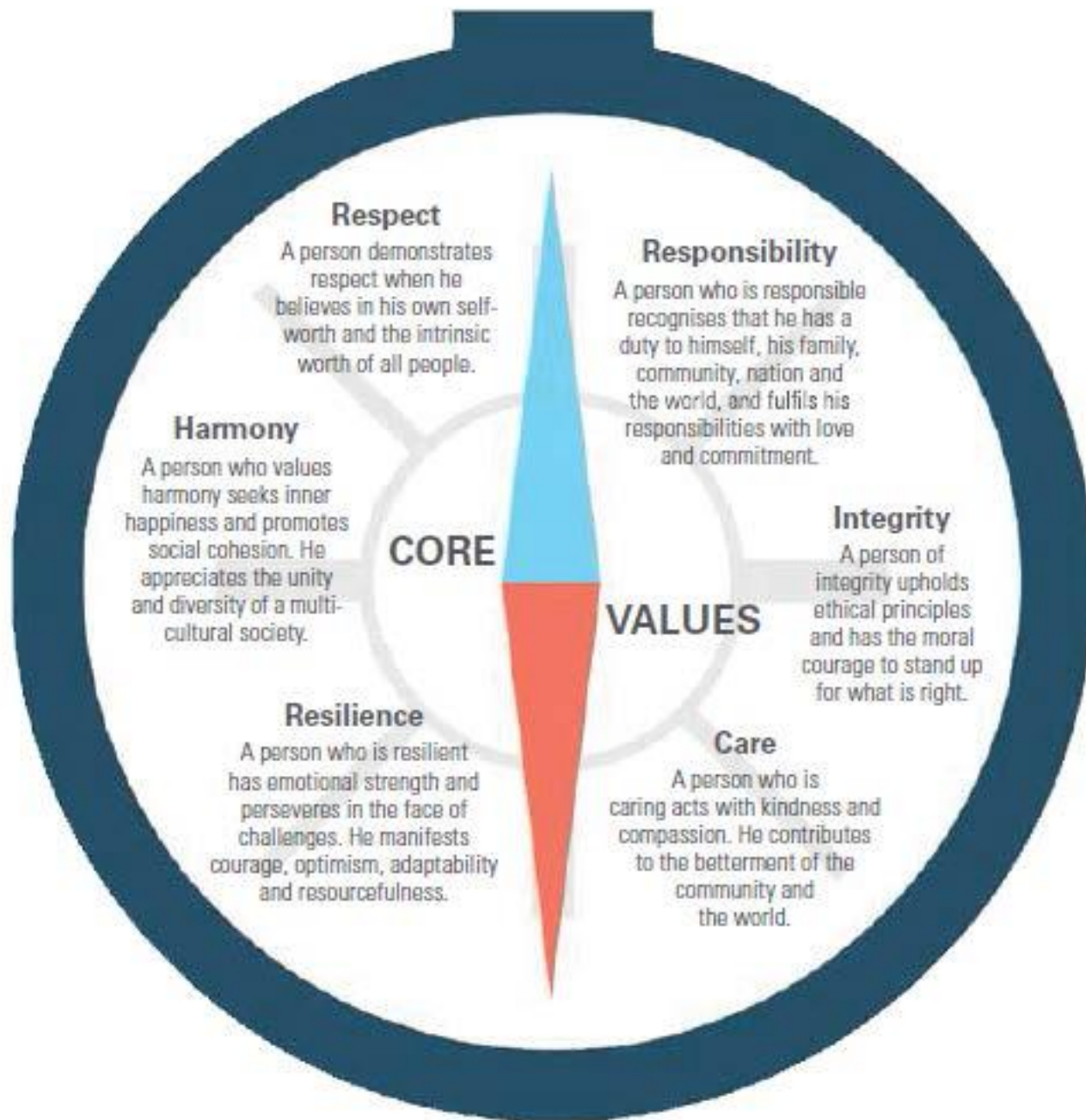   - Challenges & implications

Education in the 21ˢᵗ Century

20th Century versus 21st Century Teaching			
1	Learner-constructed knowledge from multiple sources and experiences	8	Learner-centred, skill-focused
2	Knowledge from limited, authoritative sources	9	Limited media, single-sense stimulus
3	Focus on macro issues and global citizenship	10	Teacher-centred, information-focused
4	Individualised learning based on created exercises	11	Collaborative learning based on authentic, real-world projects
5	Integrated, formative assessment *for* learning	12	Media-rich, multi-sensory stimuli
6	Emphasis on critical, creative and lateral and divergent thinking	13	Focus on school and local community
7	Emphasis on factual learning & literal, linear and convergent thinking	14	Isolated, summative assessment of learning

20th Century Teaching	→	21st Century Teaching
1	Teacher-centred, information-focused	→	Learner-centred, skill-focused
2	Knowledge from limited, authoritative sources	→	Learner-constructed knowledge from multiple sources and experiences
3	Individualised learning based on created exercises	→	Collaborative learning based on authentic, real-world projects
4	Limited media, single-sense stimulus	→	Media-rich, multi-sensory stimuli
5	Emphasis on factual learning & literal, linear and convergent thinking	→	Emphasis on critical, creative and lateral and divergent thinking
6	Focus on school and local community	→	Focus on macro issues and global citizenship
7	Isolated, summative assessment of learning	→	Integrated, formative assessment *for* learning

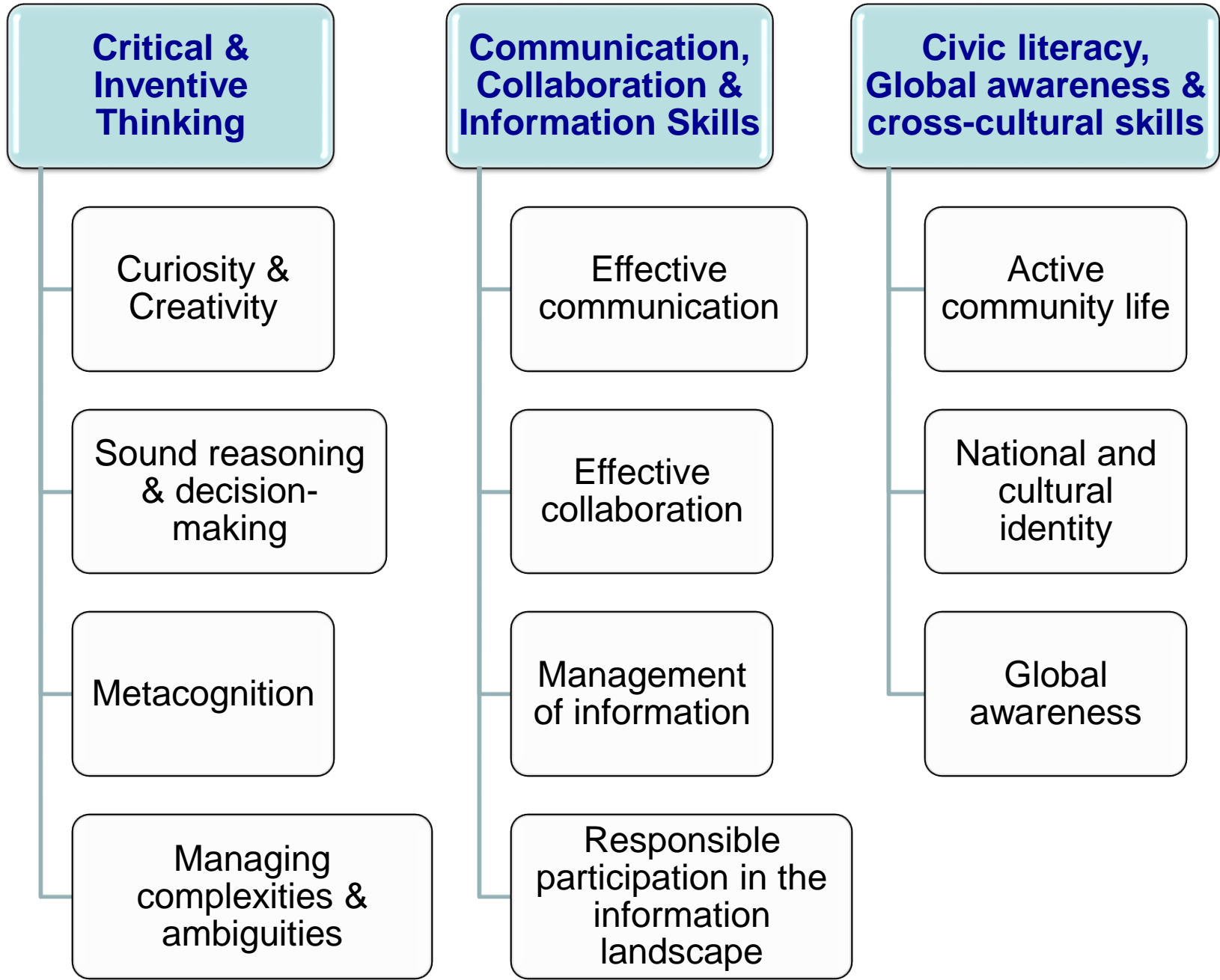# Singapore's Framework of 21st Century Competencies

Respect
A person demonstrates respect when he believes in his own self-worth and the intrinsic worth of all people.

Responsibility
A person who is responsible recognises that he has a duty to himself, his family, community, nation and the world, and fulfils his responsibilities with love and commitment.

Harmony
A person who values harmony seeks inner happiness and promotes social cohesion. He appreciates the unity and diversity of a multi-cultural society.

Integrity
A person of integrity upholds ethical principles and has the moral courage to stand up for what is right.

CORE VALUES

Resilience
A person who is resilient has emotional strength and perseveres in the face of challenges. He manifests courage, optimism, adaptability and resourcefulness.

Care
A person who is caring acts with kindness and compassion. He contributes to the betterment of the community and the world.

Singapore's Framework of 21st Century Competencies

21st Century Competencies

Critical & Inventive Thinking	Communication, Collaboration & Information Skills	Civic literacy, Global awareness & cross-cultural skills
Curiosity & Creativity	Effective communication	Active community life
Sound reasoning & decision-making	Effective collaboration	National and cultural identity
Metacognition	Management of information	Global awareness
Managing complexities & ambiguities	Responsible participation in the information landscape	

Singapore's Framework of 21st Century Competencies

2010 Singapore English Language Syllabus
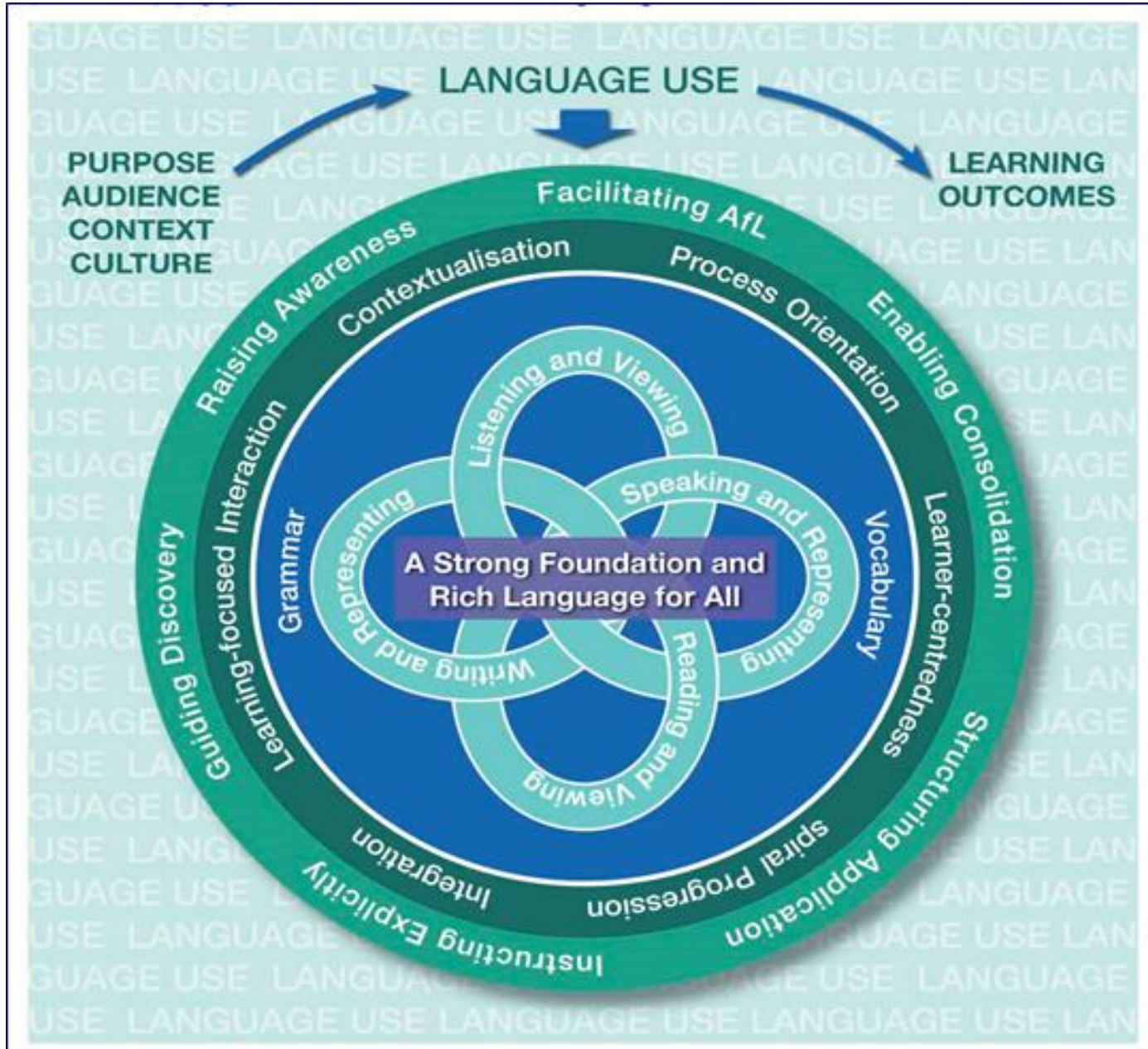
Key Feature of EL Syllabus

Language learning in the 21st century goes beyond the 4 basic language skills and necessarily embraces a multimodal construal of communication

"The EL curriculum will be enriched through the use of a variety of print and non-print resources that provide authentic contexts for incorporating the development of information, media and visual literacy skills in the teaching of listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and representing." (English Language Syllabus 2010, p. 9)

Principles of EL Teaching and Learning

CONTEXTUALISATION	• Learning activities are situated in authentic and meaningful contexts of language use
LEARNER-CENTREDNESS	• Teaching is responsive to learners' needs and interests
LEARNING-FOCUSED INTERACTION	• Providing a rich environment for students to learn through communication, participation and collaboration
INTEGRATION	• Teaching receptive and productive skills together with grammar and vocabulary in an integrated, rather than discrete, way
PROCESS ORIENTATION	• Teaching of processes with modelling and scaffolding
SPIRAL PROGRESSION	• Skills taught and reinforced at increasing levels of difficulty and progression

2010 Singapore English Language Syllabus
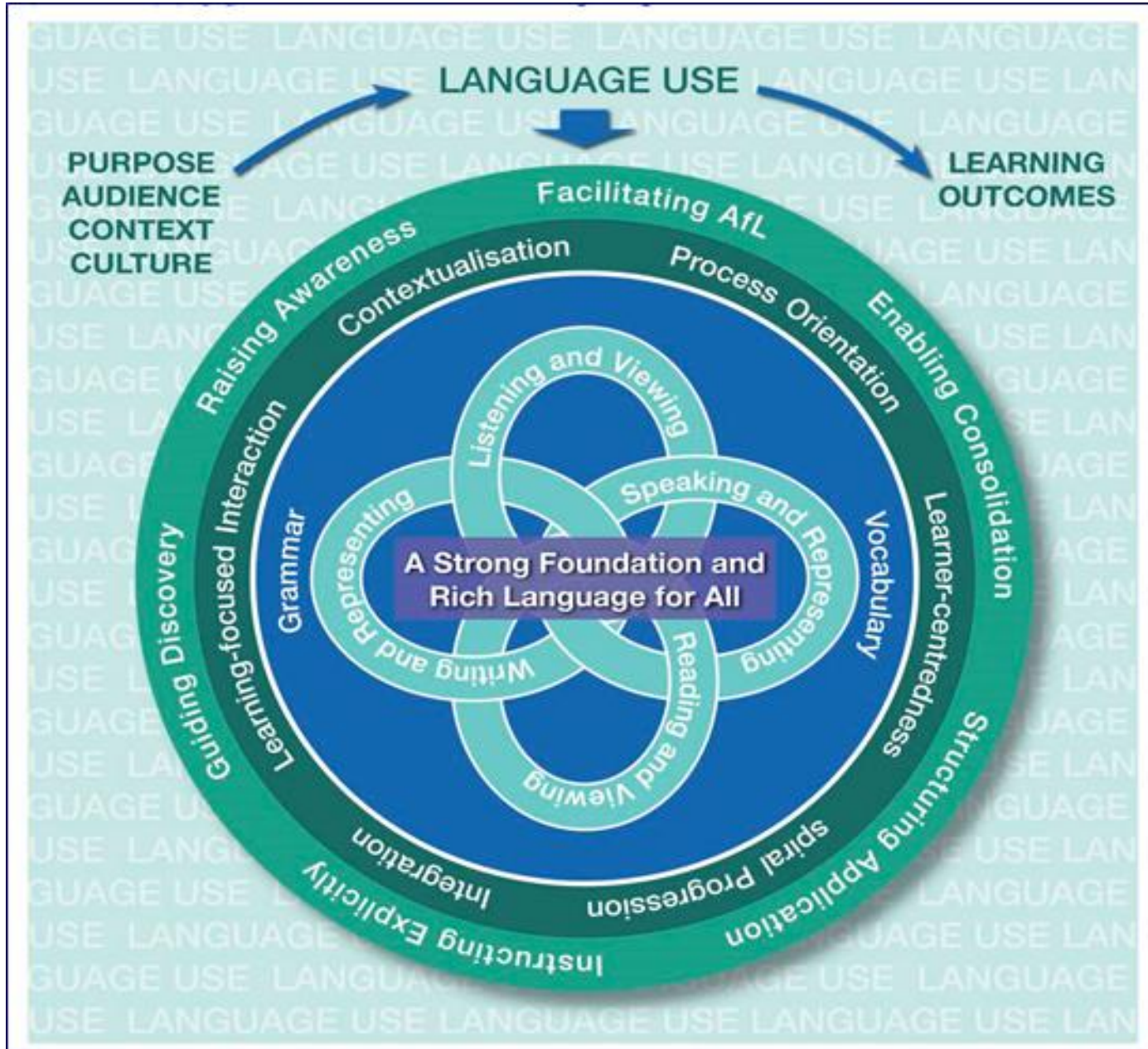
Outline

✓ The 21st century educational landscape
  ✓ Singapore's framework for 21st century competencies
  ✓ Singapore's English Language Syllabus 2010

2. Dialogic Teaching
  – Theory and practice
  – Dialogic teaching in Singapore

21ˢᵗ century learners

"My term paper is almost finished. I updated my software, defragmented my hard drive, bookmarked an online dictionary, and installed new ink cartridges. Now all I need are some words and a topic!"

2020 Singapore English Language Syllabus

Will introduce **new approaches** to EL Teaching:

- "Inquiry through Dialogue" (primary – secondary)

- "Dialogic Teaching" (pre-university)

Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogue

Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction

— Mikhail Bakhtin —

Bakhtin's Theory of Dialogue

- Thinking, knowing and learning occur in and through dialogic speech

- Monologic utterances involve the submission to and acceptance of the fixity of meanings expressed through 'authoritative' texts and talk

- **Dialogic utterances** involve the resistance, reshaping and re-accentuations of these meanings. They therefore encourage us to question, challenge and thereby expose the constructedness of knowledge (Bakhtin 1981, 1986)

What is "Dialogic Teaching"?

- Dialogic teaching refers to an approach that seeks to encourage students to question ideas and opinions from their peers, teachers or textbooks, to produce greater negotiation and construction of knowledge (Alexander, 2008)

- It is based on the principles that classroom talk should be (1) collective, (2) reciprocal, (3) supportive, (4) cumulative & (5) purposeful (Alexander, 2004)

Dialogic Teaching Principles

- **Collective** → moving away from teacher-dominated lessons towards learner-centredness
- **Supportive** → creates a safe environment where all contributions are valued; fosters mutual respect and other-centredness
- **Reciprocal** → fosters collaboration where students ask questions of, and respond to, one another, and not just the teacher
- **Cumulative** → students learn to build on one another's contributions, possible only through active listening and understanding of others
- **Purposeful** → fosters coherence and sense of discipline by focusing on achieving goals set

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- Interdependent thinking through 'exploratory talk' (Mercer & Littleton, 2007)

The Practice of "Dialogic Teaching"

- Empirical research has shown that dialogic pedagogies are effective in promoting the quality of classroom talk and academic achievement (Applebee et al., 2003; Howe & Abedin, 2013; Higham et al., 2014; Wegerif, 2007)

- "A substantial body of research on classroom interaction has shown the significance of dialogic classroom talk in fostering students' linguistic and cognitive development, mastery of content and engagement in learning" (Haneda, 2016, p. 1)

- The educative power of dialogic teaching lies in teaching students not what to think but *how* to think (Reznitskaya et al., 2009)

The Practice of "Dialogic Teaching"

- 'Quality Talk' programme, Penn State University, U.S.A.
  http://www.qualitytalk.psu.edu/

- 'CamTalk', Cambridge University, U.K.
  https://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/camtalk/
  (Hennessy et al., 2016)

- 'Accountable Talk', University of Hong Konghttp://kb.edu.hku.hk/accountable_talk.html
  based on work by Michaels, O'Connor and Resnick (2008):
  - Accountable to the learning community
  - Accountable to knowledge
  - Accountable to rigorous thinking

The Singapore Context

- 2½-year qualitative baseline study involving 18 teachers in 7 schools (Teo, 2016)

- Data comprised 36 hours of lesson transcripts, 18 teacher interviews and 18 focus group discussions with 71 students

- Lesson transcripts were analysed by first looking at the structure of the talk to identify emerging patterns and categories of talk

- A coding scheme based on these patterns was subsequently developed to probe more deeply into teacher talk, focusing on the Initiation and Follow up (Feedback) moves

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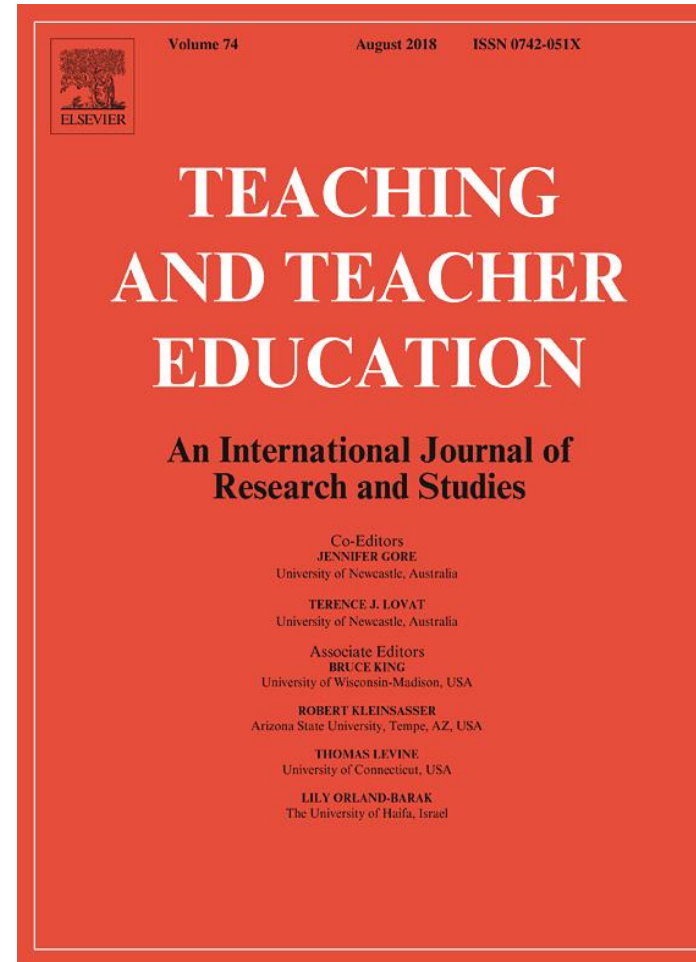
Coding Scheme

|		
QUESTION	**Display (Dis)**	Elicits specific and generally agreed-upon answers, such as facts or prior knowledge
	Exploratory (Exp)	Invites response with no predetermined answer, often opinions, suggestions, ideas and hypotheses
	Rhetorical (RheQ)	Asserts a point or makes a claim by asking a question the answer of which is obvious
FOLLOW UP	**Acknowledges (Ack)**	Acknowledges student response, typically with "Okay" or "Thanks"
	Evaluates (Ev)	Evaluates student response positively or negatively; includes acceptance or rejection of response
	Asks for clarification (Cla)	Elicits clarification or elaboration
	Asks for justification (Jus)	Elicits reasons or explanation
	Counter-argues (CArg)	Provokes students to think deeper by presenting an alternative perspective, counter-point or by playing the devil's advocate

General Findings:
Type of questions (%)
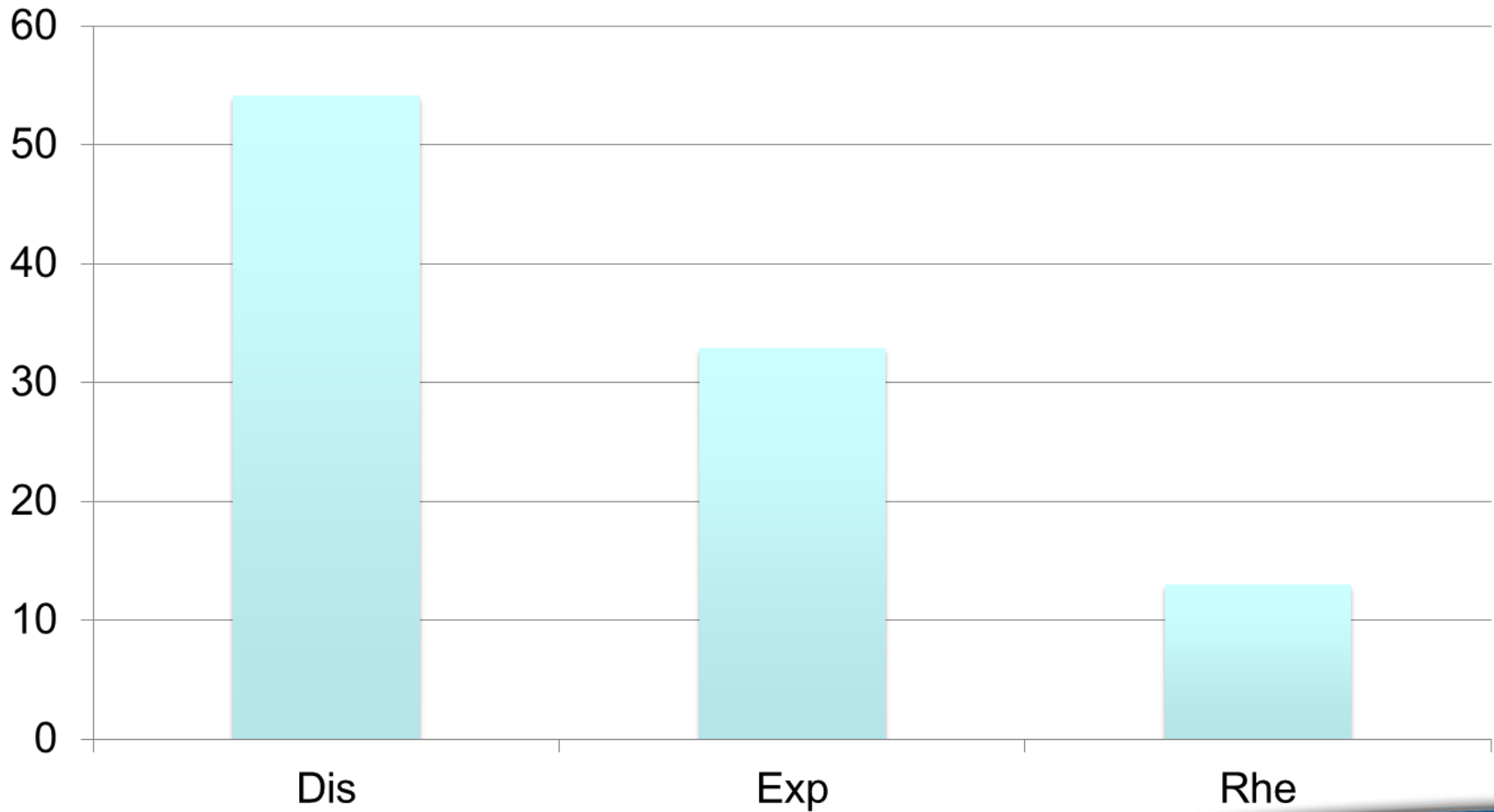
General Findings:
Type of follow up (%)
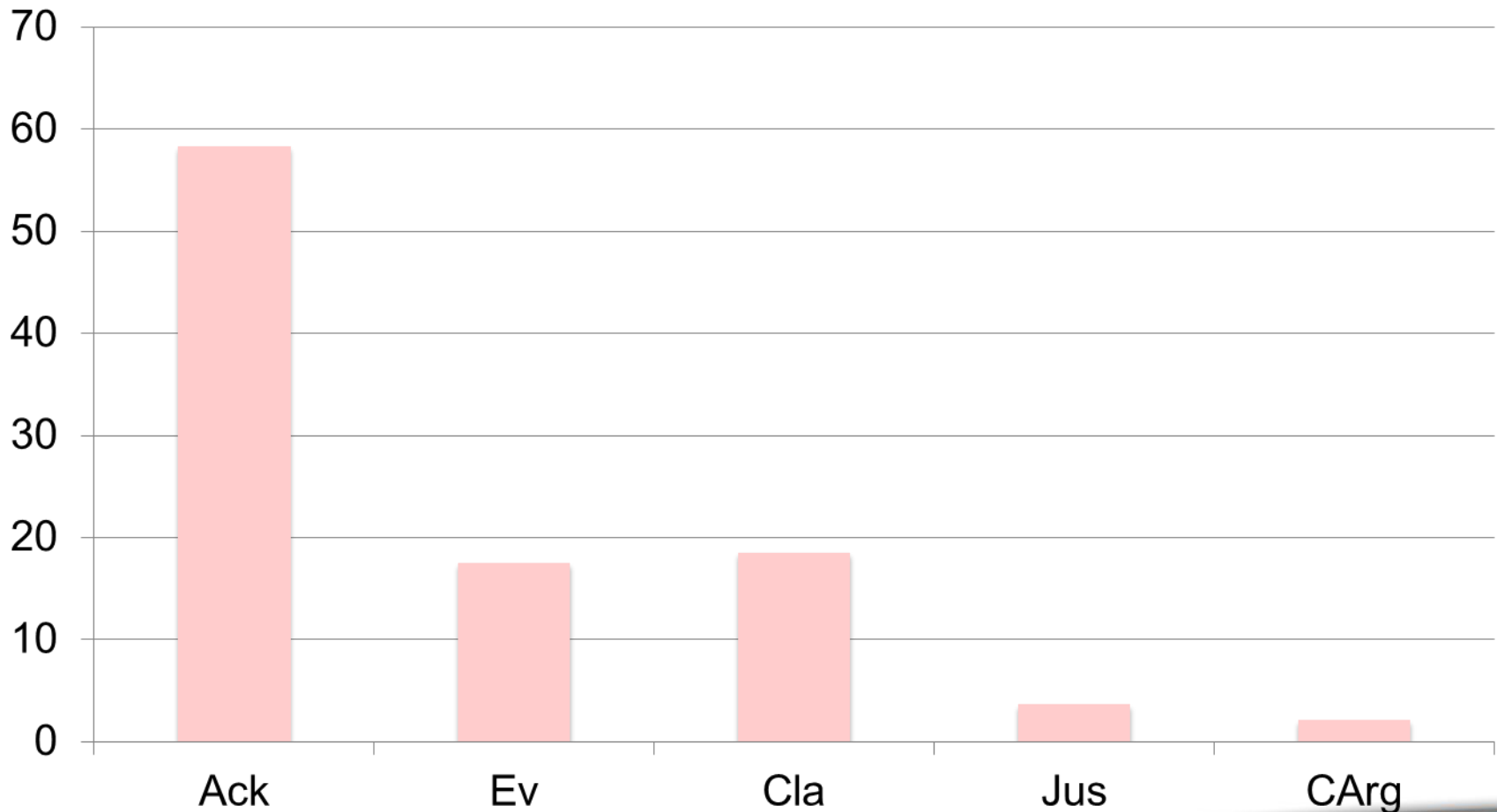
"Dialogic Teaching":
Snapshots from the Singapore English classroom

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  – Dialogic teaching in Singapore

3. Dialogic Teaching in the English classroom
  – Challenges & implications

Dialogic Teaching and the English classroom

- "Dialogic Teaching" as a way to promote authentic language use through active participation (listening and speaking), including paraphrasing, in speaking and writing

- "Accountable Talk" as a way of promoting reasoning skills and multiperspectival thinking, useful for the generation of content and pivotal in academic writing

- "Quality Talk" as a way to promote 'high-level reading comprehension of text' by establishing 'ground rules' and practising language structures ('discourse elements')(see Murphy et al., 2018)

Description of Discourse Elements   Source: Murphy, et al. (2018)

Discourse Element	Initiator (Teacher/Student)	Description
Authentic question	Teacher/student	A question in which the person asking does not know the answer or genuinely wants to know how others will answer
Test question	Teacher/student	An inauthentic question that presupposes an answer
Uptake question	Teacher/student	A question that occurs when a person asks a question about something that someone else previously said
High-level thinking question	Teacher/student	A question that elicits generalization or analysis
Speculation question	Teacher/student	A question that requires students to consider and/or weigh alternative possibilities
Affective question	Teacher/student	A question that elicits information about students' feelings or about their personal experiences in relation to the content they are discussing
Intertextual question	Teacher/student	A question that elicits a reference to other literary or nonliterary works
Shared knowledge question	Teacher/student	A question that elicits reference to information that may be assumed to be common knowledge among the students in a given discussion
Elaborated explanation	Student	A statement of a claim (e.g., position, opinion, or belief) that is based on at least two independent, conjunctive, or causally connected forms of support (e.g., reasons or evidence)
Exploratory talk	Student	An instance or episode of student talk in which students co-construct knowledge together
Teacher move	Teacher	A question or response intended to support or scaffold students' discourse (e.g., modeling, summarizing, marking, prompting, challenging)

Understanding 21st Century Texts through Quality Talk

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- In EFL contexts, where learners have been used to 'overwhelmingly receptive, teacher-centred classrooms, struggling with culturally situated reluctance to express opinions in front of classmates' (Shea, 2018; Haneda & Wells, 2008)

Better than best practice: Developing teaching and learning through dialogue
By Adam Lefstein, Julia Snell

2013 | Routledge

Introducing Dialogic Pedagogy:
Provocations for the Early Years
By E. Jayne White

2015 | Routledge

Home > Vol 6 (2018)

Dialogic Pedagogy: An International Online Journal

The purpose of Dialogic Pedagogy Journal is to advance international scholarship and pedagogical practice in the area of dialogic pedagogy. The journal is multidisciplinary, international, multi-paradigmatic, and multicultural in scope. It is accepting manuscripts that present NEW and/or significantly expanded previous scholarship that addresses dialogic nature of teaching and learning in formal institutional and informal settings. The relationship between pedagogy and dialogue should not be limited to or defined by any particular institutions, specific settings, age of the participants, or fields – new visions and insight on particular tensions can arise from debates among paradigms, practices, and events, and DPJ supports diverse, sometimes even oppositional positions. Hence, we encourage any research scholars and practitioners with an interest in dialogue and pedagogy to submit articles for editorial consideration. More...

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Dialogic Teaching as a 21st Century Pedagogy?

DT PRINCIPLES	CORE VALUES	21ST CC

Collective → learner-centredness

Supportive → respect

Reciprocal → collaboration

Cumulative → building on one another's contributions

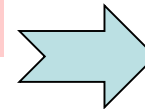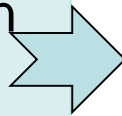**Purposeful → coherence; sense of discipline**

Respect

Harmony

Responsibility

Communication

Collaboration

Criticality

Challenges of "Dialogic Teaching"

- Crowded classrooms

- Teachers' belief in the transmissionist rather than constructivist approach to teaching

- Test-driven instruction which encourages 'right' versus 'wrong' answers

- Focus on written work rather than oral skills as evidence of student learning

- Teachers' lack of skills in using talk to promote student learning, especially how to respond to student talk (Smith and Higgins,2006)

Implications of "Dialogic Teaching"

- Balance between form and function:
  - Adopting a 'dialogic stance' aimed at promoting student thinking, and not just employ discrete forms of questioning

- Not authoritarian, but authoritative:
  - Being 'dialogic' entails a change in teacher-student relationship, e.g. teacher as a 'co-inquirer' (Matusov, 2009) or even 'co-learner' (van de Pol, Brindley & Higham, 2017)
  - But, it is also 'ultimately the authority of the teacher that makes dialogic interaction work, especially in L2 settings, through the assertive coordination of focus and participation' (Shea, 2018, p.14)

Closing thought

"We are no longer the sage on a stage,   or guide on the side,   but meddler in the middle".
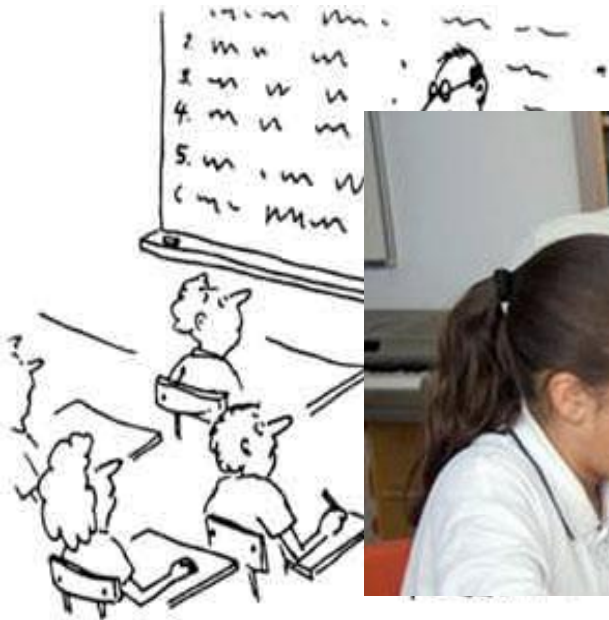
"I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!"

Erica McWilliam

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