SECONDARY TEACHERS' DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE OF DIALOGIC TEACHING

Janneke van de Pol1, Rupert Higham2, Sue Brindley1
1University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK, 2Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

Background
Much attention has been paid to dialogic teaching (DT), that is characterised by: (1) collective: addressing tasks as a group, (2) supportive: safe classroom atmosphere, (3) reciprocal: participants react to one another, (4) cumulative: participants build on each other's contributions, and (5) purposeful: the teacher has a purpose in mind (Alexander, 2008). DT is effective in promoting students' academic achievement; however, a monologic approach is still prevalent in classrooms (Alexander, 2008). Changing communication structures within the classroom is difficult. Studying teachers' learning processes of DT is therefore crucial. As DT is relatively new in secondary education (Higham, Brindley, & van de Pol, 2014), we conducted a case-study, focusing on two teachers' developing understanding and practices.

Research methodology and analyses
Two highly motivated secondary teachers participated in this study: Mitchell (Mathematics; year 7 and 9) and Alice (History; year 13). They took part in a blended CPD programme (CamTalk) aimed at DT. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted regarding the teachers' DT understanding and practices. Furthermore, they videotaped three lessons that were used for video-stimulated interviews and coding of DT practices. Qualitative within-case and cross-case analyses were conducted. Furthermore, we used a coding scheme for DT (cf. Snell & Lefstein, 2011). Each turn was coded for: actor (relative many student turns: collective), turn type (students' questions: supportive), authentic/non-authentic questions (authentic questions: collective, reciprocal, and supportive), and uptake/no uptake (uptake: reciprocal and cumulative). The interrater reliability was substantial.

Research findings and contribution
Understanding: Mitchell stressed the notion of democracy being linked to reciprocality whereas Alice emphasised the notion of co-learning being linked to collectiveness.
Practice: Mitchell's and Alice's lessons became quite collective with a teacher/student contribution ratio of 60/40. Alice's lessons were extremely supportive (indicated by authenticity), whereas this was less so for Mitchell; yet, his lesson starters did get more supportive over time. Regarding cumulation, students in Mitchell's class increasingly responded to each other (also indicated reciprocity), but were not always necessarily taking up each other's points which is similar to previous research (Alexander, 2008). For Alice, students increasingly responded to each other via her but did take up each other's points increasingly.

The results of this study can inform further CPD in the area of DT; taking up these highly motivated teachers' interpretations as additions to Alexander's principles might be valuable. In addition, more attention might be needed for the implementation of cumulative talk when learning to implement DT.