In recent years, efforts to promote dialogic education to improve the quality of classroom talk to bring about deeper understandings of concepts by students has focused predominantly on the primary school classroom (Higham, Brindley and van de Pol 2014).

The approach employed by the CamTalk project over the past 4 years has been to develop a series of case study accounts of teachers of various secondary school subjects, all of whom have tried to incorporate dialogic teaching principles into their classroom practice following an extended CPD course. This has enabled researchers both to examine teachers’ ideas/views about dialogic teaching and to investigate how they enact these in their particular subjects.

Perhaps counterintuitively, Maths teachers have been among the most enthusiastic participants on this course; while teachers of other disciplines have assumed that Maths cannot be dialogic as there is only one right answer, Maths teachers have seen the opportunity of dialogic approaches to promote problem solving and stimulate discussion around different approaches.

This study focuses on a Year 13 mathematics lesson from an expert teacher. It was video recorded; the teacher was interviewed both before and after using a semi-structured interview schedule. An exploratory approach has been taken in analysing both the interview and video material, with data being coded thematically to answer the following questions:

1. How effective was the CPD course in improving the teachers' understandings and practices of dialogic education?

2. What, if any, distinctive features emerge of dialogues in the discipline of secondary school Maths?

Preliminary findings cast valuable light on both the challenges and affordances of dialogic approaches in the secondary context. These include: limiting factors around assessment and examination; differences in student ability; and the possibility and nature of multi-faceted subject-specific dialogues in Maths.

This study should add depth and scope to the symposium discussion of Mathematics education alongside the other submitted paper on this topic.