Developing questioning and dialogue in art and design

Following the training in the generic unit Questioning and dialogue, it is important to consider how the key messages of the training apply to art and design. As part of the whole-school focus on assessment for learning, this subject development material is intended to help you consider the key messages of the training unit and identify any areas requiring development in your department.

The following is a brief summary of the training unit.

Objectives

- To recognise effective dialogue for learning and how it helps pupils to become more independent learners.
- To understand the importance of questioning in creating effective dialogue.
- To consider strategies which develop whole-class and/or group dialogue.
- To understand that some strategies to promote dialogue are planned in advance while others involve seizing opportunities during a lesson.

Key messages

- Classroom dialogue is an essential component of assessment for learning because it:
  - enables teachers to make informed judgements about pupils’ learning and, therefore, make immediate adjustments to their teaching;
  - enables pupils to develop their own learning as, through talk, they become more aware of their own learning needs and pathways to improvement. Therefore it progressively enables pupils to become more self-aware, independent learners.
- In effective dialogue, pupils’ responses are well developed, build on or are informed by the ideas of others and often demonstrate higher levels of thinking. Where it is well established, pupils are willing to take risks or to challenge each others’ ideas in a constructive way.
- Teachers are highly influential in triggering and sustaining the kind of dialogue that promotes and sustains learning in whole-class and small-group situations. A teacher’s own talk is an excellent means of securing inclusive dialogue, where learning results from the interactions between teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves.
- While some strategies to promote learning through dialogue rely heavily on advance planning, others require a more responsive approach and are brought into play as evidence of pupils’ understanding and misconceptions is revealed during a lesson.
• Questioning is often the first move in setting up interactive classrooms. Questions are key to formative assessment as they enable pupils to realise what they know and, more importantly, what they partly know and can then guide them to further develop their understanding.

• It is possible to achieve a classroom environment where dialogue is initiated and developed by pupils but this requires preparation and takes time to evolve.

**Reviewing existing practice in questioning and dialogue**

The following progression table provides a tool for a department to self-review current practice and to help identify an appropriate starting point.

As a department, agree and highlight the statements that best reflect the practice of the whole department. At the bottom of each column is a reference to the tasks that will support your current practice and provide the appropriate material to develop from this point.

Having completed this review you should read ‘Making effective use of the subject development material’ on page 4.
### Teachers

The subject leader has identified that:
- in most lessons whole-class talk is usually teacher to pupil to teacher as part of ‘hands up’ questioning
- teachers’ questions have a sense of ‘seeking the right answer’
- teachers lack strategies to build pupils’ confidence to contribute
- teachers do not invite pupils to support, expand on or constructively challenge each others’ responses
- group or paired dialogue rarely occurs and then only as a result of advanced planning.

Teachers are planning opportunities for dialogue in their lessons.
Teachers are trialling and practising specific strategies to improve the quality of dialogue, e.g. use of ‘wait time’ and ‘no hands up’ questioning.
Strategies include the use of different types of questions to trigger and sustain dialogue.
Teachers are gaining in confidence in their use of paired and group dialogue to support learning.
All pupils are encouraged to, and expected to, contribute to discussions.

### Pupils

The subject leader has identified that:
- some pupils rarely contribute to discussions. Questions tend to be answered by a small number of ‘enthusiasts’
- pupils’ responses to questions are typically brief, often one word, recall or repetition
- when pupils speak out in whole-class discussions they are sometimes mocked by their peers
- during whole-class discussions some pupils are ‘caught out’ as not listening
- group and paired discussions rarely last long or discussions drift off task.

Pupils are increasing in confidence in discussions and contribute willingly.
Pupils’ responses are more extended, show increasingly higher-order thinking and their views are supported by evidence.
During whole-class discussions, all pupils listen and respect the contributions of their peers.
In group and paired discussions all pupils contribute and are beginning to learn from each other. Discussions are usually well focused.

### Focusing

- Teachers
  - The subject leader has identified that:
  - in most lessons whole-class talk is usually teacher to pupil to teacher as part of ‘hands up’ questioning
  - teachers’ questions have a sense of ‘seeking the right answer’
  - teachers lack strategies to build pupils’ confidence to contribute
  - teachers do not invite pupils to support, expand on or constructively challenge each others’ responses
  - group or paired dialogue rarely occurs and then only as a result of advanced planning.
  - Teachers are planning opportunities for dialogue in their lessons.
  - Teachers are trialling and practising specific strategies to improve the quality of dialogue, e.g. use of ‘wait time’ and ‘no hands up’ questioning.
  - Strategies include the use of different types of questions to trigger and sustain dialogue.
  - Teachers are gaining in confidence in their use of paired and group dialogue to support learning.

### Developing

- Teachers
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  - Teachers are trialling and practising specific strategies to improve the quality of dialogue, e.g. use of ‘wait time’ and ‘no hands up’ questioning.
  - Strategies include the use of different types of questions to trigger and sustain dialogue.
  - Teachers are gaining in confidence in their use of paired and group dialogue to support learning.

- Pupils
  - Pupils are increasing in confidence in discussions and contribute willingly.
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  - During whole-class discussions, all pupils listen and respect the contributions of their peers.
  - In group and paired discussions all pupils contribute and are beginning to learn from each other. Discussions are usually well focused.

### Establishing

- Teachers
  - Lessons typically involve advanced planning for strategies to trigger and sustain dialogue, e.g. ‘big questions’ are broken down into a series of smaller questions.
  - Teachers are more confident in judging when to use strategies which respond to evidence of learning in their lessons, e.g. ‘wait time’ and ‘cueing in pupils using gestures and prompts’.
  - Teachers use appropriate resources and engaging activities to help focus and sustain dialogue.
  - Teachers have established protocols and a supportive environment in which pupils can speak with confidence.

- Pupils
  - All pupils regularly contribute to whole-class and group discussions.
  - Pupils listen carefully to each other. They respond to, and build on, what others have said.
  - Pupils typically give extended responses, demonstrate high-level thinking and can support their views.
  - Pupils are confident to take risks by sharing partially formed thinking or challenging others in a constructive way.

### Enhancing

- Whole-class and group dialogue is an integral feature of lessons across the school.
- Teachers routinely orchestrate classroom dialogue as an integral part of learning. The move from teacher exposition to classroom dialogue is seamless.
- The role played by dialogue to accelerate learning and develop pupils’ independence is well understood. It informs both teachers’ advanced planning and the strategies they use in response to critical learning moments during dialogue in lessons.
- Teachers’ intervention in dialogue is minimal as pupils are well practised in whole-class and group discussion.

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  - Teachers’ intervention in dialogue is minimal as pupils are well practised in whole-class and group discussion.

- Pupils
  - Pupils’ responses are routinely well developed, build on or are informed by the ideas of others and demonstrate high-level thinking.
  - Pupils are comfortable with whole-class ‘basketball’ dialogue. They are confident to take the lead in initiating and building on dialogue.
  - Pupils are confident to take risks, to challenge the ideas of each other and be challenged.
  - Pupils reflect on the dialogue process and know how to get the most from it.
  - There is always a ‘buzz’ in the air during classroom dialogue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focusing</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Establishing</th>
<th>Enhancing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start with task 7A</td>
<td>Start with task 7B</td>
<td>Start with task 7C</td>
<td>Start with task 7C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making effective use of the subject development material

The tasks you have been referred to are intended to focus the development or extension of questioning and dialogue in art and design and provide guidance on how to embed this into the regular practice in art and design lessons.

The results of the self-review will have suggested the appropriate task(s) to support your department’s development needs.

To make best use of the supporting material the following sequence will be helpful.

1 Read the task and the supporting exemplification.
   This describes how a department has approached the task and worked through each of its stages. It is given as an example of how the task might be addressed. It is not intended that you follow this approach, which is given as a guide to the process that will support improvements in your subject.

2 Identify what the department did and the impact it had on pupils.
   Discuss as a team the example provided and establish the key areas that helped to develop this practice and the impact it had on pupils. It will be helpful to identify the changes in teachers’ practice and how these impacted on pupils’ learning.

3 Agree and plan the actions that will develop your practice.
   As a department, agree how you intend to approach this task. Clarify what you are focusing on and why. The example given will act as a guide, but be specific about which classes, which lessons and which aspects of the curriculum will be your points of focus.

4 Identify when and how you will evaluate its impact on pupils.
   The purpose of focusing on this is to improve pupils’ achievement and attainment in art and design. You will need to be clear on what has helped pupils to learn more effectively in your subject. Part of this will be how your practice has been adapted. You should jointly identify what has worked well and which areas require further attention.

5 Having evaluated these strategies consider what steps are required to embed this practice.
   You will need to undertake an honest evaluation of what you have tried and the impact it has had on your teaching and on pupils’ learning. One outcome might be that you need to spend longer on improving this area or you may be in a position to consider the next task.

Other departments in the school will have been focusing on this area and you should find out about the progress they have made.

You may find that some teachers in the department will require further time to develop and consolidate new practice, while others will be ready to progress further through the tasks in this area (while continuing to support their colleagues). Practice across a department will need to be consolidated before focusing on a new area of assessment for learning.
The subject development tasks

Handouts and slides referenced in the text are found in Unit 7, ‘Questioning and dialogue’ of the Assessment for learning whole-school training materials folder (DfES 0043-2004 G), and on the Assessment for learning whole school training materials CD-ROM, 2nd edition, (DfES 1240-2005 G CD).

Task 7A
Observe several lessons across your department, either directly or on video, to identify the characteristics of effective dialogue which:
• feature strongly (and the strategies used to achieve them);
• are absent or might be improved.

You could use the observation template on handout 7.5 and the cards on handout 7.4 as prompts for this analysis.

Task 7B
Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of classroom dialogue across the department, identify one feature of dialogue you wish to improve. For example, ‘dialogue is reciprocal, i.e. pupils respond to and build on what others have said’.

Highlight the feature you have chosen in handout 7.8 (these are shown across the top of the matrix). Work together to agree and tick the different strategies you could use to develop the aspect of dialogue you want to improve.

On the basis of this, choose two or three strategies that will help to develop dialogue. Then, as a department:
• collaboratively plan several lessons in which these strategies will be trialled;
• observe or video the lessons using handout 7.5 to analyse the quality of the dialogue and the strategies used;
• focus evaluations of the lesson on the impact of the dialogue on developing pupils as independent learners.

Task 7C
Ask your pupils to consider the features of effective whole-class dialogue and work with them to focus on ways to improve them. For example, pupils might agree a protocol for developing whole-class ‘basketball’ dialogue. You may wish to prompt their thinking using the column headings on handout 7.8.

As a department, use handout 7.8 to identify and record those strategies that can help the pupils to develop features of dialogue they have identified for improvement. Agree which are dependent largely on advanced planning for their success and which are more reliant on the seizing of opportunities during the lesson. Use this information to collaboratively plan, teach and review a sequence of lessons, being mindful of which professional development activities are most likely to support this (see slide 7.4).

The following pages provide examples of each task.
Task 7A

Observe several lessons across your department, either directly or on video, to identify the characteristics of effective dialogue which:
• feature strongly (and the strategies used to achieve them);
• are absent or might be improved.

You could use the observation template on handout 7.5 and the cards on handout 7.4 as prompts for this analysis.

Context

Following three years’ successful development work on assessment for learning, a review of progress identified questioning and dialogue as the key whole-school focus to further enhance practice.

As part of a whole-school approach to developing questioning and dialogue, all staff took part in a twilight training session on this unit.

In a subsequent department meeting, a week later, subject leaders were asked to undertake a review of their questioning and dialogue practice using the progression table on page 3.

The art and design department identified their stage as focusing and consequently referred to task 7A to take their practice further. Over the last year, the department had started to make increasing use of Bloom’s taxonomy to structure their approach to questioning. In their lessons, they had tried to move away from the overuse of recall-type questions towards questions that would make more cognitive demands on their pupils.

It was felt that the 50-minute period provided limited opportunities to develop pupils’ abilities to respond to works of art and design and use this information to inform development of their own work.

Making effective use of group and whole-class dialogue would enable teachers to address some of the problems created by this time limit, by actively engaging pupils in explanatory, analytical talk where they could listen to each other’s ideas and extend their thinking.

Staff reviewed their last audit and action plan to consider the impact of strategies they had put in place. This raised their awareness of the need to observe each other’s lessons, establish a shared understanding of the range of strategies currently used and determine the strategies needed to extend their practice.

Process

At the next department meeting teachers spent some time considering handout 7.4 from the generic questioning and dialogue training unit.

To start a process of observation and shared understanding the head of department recorded a lesson and produced a transcript of a piece of dialogue. The transcript was of a Year 9 art and design lesson (see appendix 7A.1). (This transcript presents a short passage of dialogue that was observed during an art and design lesson and is used in this example as an alternative to a video extract.) She asked the teachers to work in pairs and use handout 7.5 to
annotate the transcript. The results of their ensuing discussion are shown on appendix 7A.2.

Teachers decided that this example did not give enough opportunities to recognise different strategies and there was no example of group work. They wanted more evidence of current practice across the department and therefore decided to draw up a schedule that would allow each pair to carry out an observation of each other over the following six weeks. They decided to use handout 7.5 to identify features of effective dialogue and to record strategies used. One teacher suggested that, in the absence of a video, an audio recording could be made of some lessons.

The pairs met after they had observed each other to discuss the lessons. Appendix 7A.3 is a transcript of the observed dialogue.

Teachers identified the effective features of classroom dialogue and noted potential areas for development. Their lesson observations, the discussion around the Year 7 dialogue and the comparisons between the Year 9 and Year 7 transcripts were seen as effective ways to evaluate features of effective classroom dialogue.

**Evaluation**

Results of the dialogue audit were shared at the meeting. It was clear that peer discussion was being developed and having an impact on the type of responses pupils were giving. The strategies used in the Year 7 lesson meant that pupils gave longer and better considered answers that then had a positive impact on the range of ideas produced in their sketchbooks.

All teachers said that they were becoming more aware of the type of questions they asked and felt that they had moved away from asking predominately closed, recall-type questions, such as, *What did we say Botticelli was trying to do in this painting?* Observations showed that they had started to develop alternative strategies for checking knowledge such as:

- asking a volunteer pupil to recap on the key points previously covered;
- using a cloze passage as a starter;
- displaying the key points with a deliberate mistake and asking the pupils to find it.

However, opportunities for pupils to articulate their ideas and engage in higher-order thinking were still underdeveloped. It was also clear from the observations that classroom dialogue across the department was predominately of the teacher to whole class or teacher to individual pupil (‘ping-pong’) type rather than purposeful group talk or sustained dialogue across the whole class.

Teachers agreed that using the prompts from handout 7.5 had been useful in enabling them to clarify their own thinking about how to create opportunities for effective dialogue. They found the opportunity to reflect on their own practice helpful and consciously included some of the strategies in their lessons. For example, one teacher had been trying to create opportunities for pupils to build on each other’s ideas and, in an observed Year 7 lesson, had used the strategy of ‘jigsaw’ groups to structure the discussion about ‘Self-Portrait with Badges’, by Peter Blake, following reflection on what had been learned from the second (Year 7) art and design transcript.
The observing teacher commented that pupils appeared more confident and that they readily volunteered contributions in this small-group situation. Pupils were also beginning to build on each other’s ideas, extend their own views and, during the plenary, were given a chance to share their own thought processes.

Several of the department had been unfamiliar with the term ‘jigsaw’, so the teacher explained the organisation as follows.

Each of the four ‘expert’ groups had been allocated one heading from Content, Form, Process and Mood and, after discussing this, they reformed into ‘home’ groups to discuss all four aspects.

(See Unit 3, Developing objective-led lessons in art and design, appendix 3A.1.)

The head of department offered to circulate copies from the appropriate section in Unit 7, The management of group talk, from Literacy across the curriculum (DfEE 0235/2001), so that staff could all look at different ways of organising groups before re-examining lesson plans.

Staff agreed that they needed to look at ways to create opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking by building on each other’s ideas. They also decided that they would focus on developing sustained dialogue between pupils (‘basketball’ rather than ‘ping-pong’).
Lesson transcript 1: Year 9 class

Teacher = T
Pupils listed by pseudonyms

T: Can everybody listen, please, and look quietly for a moment at this reproduction of a painting by George Braque that I have put up on the wall. Today we are going to consider a particular art movement that will form the basis of our next project. We are going to start by looking at this particular painting entitled ‘Houses at L’Estaque’, painted in 1910.

Points to A1 poster of the painting, displayed so that all members of the class can see it.

Does anyone recognise any key characteristic of this painting?

Teacher gestures towards the central and lower areas of the painting and then looks across the class. Three hands go up.

T: Look carefully at the painting. Does this look like any other kind of painting you may have seen before? We are focusing on the style of painting here. Look at the shapes in the painting. This style of painting is particularly associated with several major artists of the 20th century and perhaps the most famous artist of that century.

Three more hands go up. Teacher selects one of these pupils.

T: Yes ... Emma?

Emma: Is it abstract, sir?

T: Not quite Emma. Good try though. It does have some characteristics of Abstraction, but we can recognise some strong shapes in the painting. What are they of? Anyone?

T: Yes ... Tara. What can you see in the painting?

Tara: Is it houses and trees, sir?

T: That’s right Tara. Well done. We can see houses and trees here and here.

Teacher indicates where trees and houses are in the painting.

What do these shapes look like? Yes ... Mike?

Mike: Like boxes and ... children’s building blocks, or something.

T: That’s helpful Mike. OK. Has anybody yet thought what this artistic movement was called? The style of painting starts with paintings made up from some simple geometric shapes. A little like boxes or children’s building blocks, as Mike put it. Any ideas yet?

Pause of five seconds. Those who had their hands up, now put them down.

No? No-one? Well, this movement is called Cubism.

Why do you think it is called that ... Sarah?

Sarah: ‘Cos the buildings are made up of cubes, sir?
Teacher pauses and looks round class. Two hands shoot up.

Tim:
No sir, but they still look like they are made from cylinders and sort of geometric shapes.

Ellie:
Because it looks like a view through trees and of buildings, and everything looks like it is made from simple three-dimensional shapes.

T:
Well done. What’s the style of painting called, Martin?

Martin:
Cubism.

T:
That’s right. Cubism. And what are the characteristics of Cubism in this early painting by Braque?

Peter frowns and thinks very hard, but is unable to answer. Eight pupils have their hands raised.

T:
No idea? Tell him Angela.

Angela:
The picture looks like it is made up of geometric shapes.

T:
Good. I want to check that you all understand this before we move on. Do you understand now, Peter?

Peter nods.

Right. Now to explore this idea a little further, we are going to start a line drawing activity using the selection of musical instruments I have arranged on the table in the centre of the room. You have your drawing boards already on your tables with an A3 sheet of paper ready for you to use. We are going to start an outline drawing for 5 minutes, before all moving two seats to the left and then continuing the drawing from that position, on top of the first drawing. Repeating this move every 5 minutes until you have completed six drawings. OK. Can you quieten down and start the first drawing now, please.
Lesson observation sheet – Art and design: Year 9:
Cubism (see annotated sheet – appendix 7A.1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature of effective dialogue</th>
<th>Strategies used to trigger and sustain dialogue</th>
<th>Whole class</th>
<th>Group work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is engaged with the dialogue</td>
<td>Pupils are cued in using gestures and prompts</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern of dialogue is ‘basketball’ rather than ‘ping pong’</td>
<td>Some partially correct answers are used to prompt responses from other pupils</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher prompts to encourage continuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dialogue is reciprocal, i.e. pupils respond to and build on</td>
<td>Pupils are cued in to expand on each other’s answers</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>what others have said</td>
<td>Teacher prompts to encourage continuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are willing to take risks, e.g. being prepared to</td>
<td>Teacher models interest and enthusiasm for the subject that encourages contributions from pupils</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbalise partially formed thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are willing to challenge and see the value in challenging</td>
<td>Partially correct answers are identified as such, but pupils are encouraged to expand on each other’s answers</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>each other’s ideas in a constructive way</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pupils demonstrate higher levels of thinking, e.g. analysis,</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>synthesis, prediction or evaluation and speculation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are engaged in and enjoying their learning</td>
<td>Teacher models interest and enthusiasm for pupils’ responses</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson transcript 2: Year 7 class

Teacher = T
Pupils listed by pseudonyms

T: Today we are going to consider the ways in which artists have explored self-image. I know that you will have done some work on self-portraits when you were in your primary school and we looked at some portrait paintings at the end of the last lesson. But for this lesson I want you to start by considering what things you would include in a self-portrait that would describe you. Start by making a list of objects in your sketchpad, associated with you and your life or your hobbies and family. Then share that list with your partner and see if your partner thinks these items are good choices that describe you and your personality. You will then have a chance to add or take things away from your list to try and make sure you have selected the best five or six things.

Pupils start to make their lists and then after 40 seconds, a few start to share their ideas. After 2 minutes most are completing their sharing and a few are adding items or amending their lists.

OK. Now if you have a look at the contents of this box. I have assembled some items from my own collection that share similar characteristics to the items that the artist Peter Blake might have assembled if he had been asked to do this before painting this picture. Look carefully and consider why I might have selected these, what might it tell you about me. Is this similar to the list you have started to write in your sketchpads?

Teacher tips a pile of objects onto the table surface and indicates a painting projected on the interactive whiteboard. The painting is ‘Self-Portrait with Badges’, by the artist Peter Blake, painted in 1961.

I want to discuss this painting a little, to give you all an example of how an artist would use these ideas and their selection of objects to inform their painting.

Teacher indicates a painting.

Now this painting was painted in 1961, so some aspects of the painting will make it look a little different than if it was painted today, but most of the characteristics should be recognisable. The painting is of the artist, Peter Blake, probably standing around in his back garden dressed in denim trousers and jacket and wearing a red shirt and baseball boots. These clothes are not uncommon today but think about the time this was painted and consider that at this time they would have looked more surprising, as this was when people were only just able to get denim and baseball boots. You might notice there seem to be connections with America. Why is this? Can you make out what the badges say or are about? And what is he holding in his right hand and why? Also, the composition is very traditional and very static, just like some of the portraits we looked at at the end of the last lesson. So I want you to look and then think carefully before making a 3-minute study in your sketchpads and label this with your ideas. Then you can share your ideas with your partner. See if you are able reach the same conclusions.
**Class settles quickly to make studies in sketchbooks. Some talking quickly subsides as all try to complete and label their drawing. Within 2 minutes, many pairs are sharing their drawings and comparing ideas about the painting. Teacher uses this time to move around the class and eavesdrop on discussions and scan labelled studies in sketchpads. After 4 minutes, teacher goes back to the front and stops the class discussion.**

T: **OK. Let’s hear the range of ideas you have discussed with your partners.**

*About half the class put up their hands. Teacher waits for 5 seconds. A few more hands go up.*

T: **Claire – your group? Pair?**

**Claire:** The person in the picture is standing very still and looking dead bored. *Pointing at the painting projected on the whiteboard.*

T: **You mean Peter Blake? You think he looks bored?**

**Claire:** Yes. Peter Blake. Yeah, he does sort of look bored.

**Amrit:** Yes we thought he looked bored but cool. Or he thought he looked cool.

T: **That’s interesting. Why do you both think he looked cool?**

**Claire:** It’s like he is really proud of his clothes and baseball boots. All the badges show what he’s into, music and stuff. And he’s holding the Elvis magazine so you can see the cover. Like he’s showing it off.

T: **I think I know what Claire and Amrit are suggesting, but can any other pair suggest why Peter Blake is wearing all these badges and is dressed this way?**

*Again about half the class put up their hands. The teacher chooses a pupil who has not put up their hand.*

T: **Ian. What did you and Jamie think about this?**

**Ian:** Err, yes. We talked about some of the badges, me and Jamie thought that we could see some English badges, ’cause there’s the British flag on one.

T: **The Union Jack?**

**Ian:** Yeah, Union Jack and some with pictures of Elvis, same as the cover of the magazine.

**Jamie:** We tried to look at what was on the badges, but we couldn’t see the detail and didn’t recognise most of them. Also, he has got a big American badge stitched to his jacket, so we thought his jacket must be American.

**Ian:** And his baseball boots are American. So we thought he must like America.

T: **Good, that’s interesting. Any other thoughts about this? Looks around the class at other groups to see who seems to want to respond to this.**
Some pupils stretch their hand up higher. Teacher points to John and nods.

John: Yeah, he looks American, but the background could be anywhere. Peter thought he could be stood in my back garden.

Teacher: OK … John and Peter think it could be John’s back garden, but it could be anywhere. Ian and Jamie think Peter Blake is trying to dress like an American, and has badges and a magazine that supports this idea. Also Amrit and Claire think he is trying to look cool.

What do others think? Andy.

Andy: The background is dark and he is brighter. It’s like he’s saying look at me, I’m into America, my badges tell you what interests me and the music I like … Elvis Presley, rock and roll and I’ve got all the gear.

Teacher writes ‘INTERESTS’ in large letters on the board and then adds ‘fashion’ below it.

Teacher: Who else thought about these words before? Points to board.

Almost all hands go up.

Teacher: OK. Well can anyone make a connection between all of these items and the composition compared with the examples we looked at last lesson and suggest what Peter Blake was trying to do in this painting?

Teacher waits 12 seconds. Ten hands went up immediately after he stopped speaking. Five more go up in the pause.

Good. How about Emma? What did you think?

Emma: The painting’s really straightforward, the composition and things, it’s simple. He’s just stood there trying to look cool and say here I am, this is me. All my interests and …

Andy: Hobbies. His music, he’s into rock and roll, that’s from the 60s when this was painted, I think?

Teacher: Thanks Andy. Yes, that sounds right. Anyone know anything about the 60s? What do we know of this period?

Most hands go up and many talk excitedly and laugh as they share their ideas.

Teacher: OK, come on let’s share these ideas across the whole group. How does knowing about the 60s help us understand a little more about this painting?

Kathy: It tells us what everyone was into. What interests they had.

John: No. Not everyone was into rock and roll. There were all different groups who were into different kinds of music and dressed in different ways.

Teacher: Not everyone liked Elvis and wore badges.

Paul: Yeah. Not everyone liked Elvis and wore badges.

Teacher: Right. So can you put all this together and try and sum up this painting. What is it about? Try and include the word ‘interests’ this time.

John: Peter Blake has painted a self-portrait that tells you about his interests, the music he likes and the fashion that goes along with that. He looks cool because he’s saying this is who I am.
T: Good. Remember that today we are going to try and do the same thing using the list of objects you started writing in your sketchpads. I want you all to think again about this list and consider whether you will be able to put all these things into your picture, without them looking as though they have just been ‘dropped in’ to the picture. The picture has to look natural. You also need to look cool, like Peter Blake thought he was in the painting.

Teacher indicates to the painting projected on the whiteboard and further clarifies the task, using as an example the objects and clothes he has brought with him to exemplify and model how he might develop his plans for a similar self-portrait.
Task 7B

Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of classroom dialogue across the department, identify one feature of dialogue you wish to improve. For example, ‘dialogue is reciprocal, i.e. pupils respond to and build on what others have said’.

Highlight the feature you have chosen in handout 7.8 (these are shown across the top of the matrix). Work together to agree and tick the different strategies you could use to develop the aspect of dialogue you want to improve.

On the basis of this, choose two or three strategies that will help to develop dialogue. Then, as a department:

- collaboratively plan several lessons in which these strategies will be trialled;
- observe or video the lessons using handout 7.5 to analyse the quality of the dialogue and the strategies used;
- focus evaluations of the lesson on the impact of the dialogue on developing pupils as independent learners.

Context

Following their earlier developments in task 7A on identifying the characteristics of effective dialogue and strategies used through paired lesson observation, the art and design department in School A identified which features of dialogue they wished to improve.

Several weeks on, the department had allocated their next available department meeting to reflect on pupils’ dialogue in the intervening weeks and plan their next stage of development. They were determined to further develop teaching strategies that would promote whole-class discussion and dialogue, moving on from their tendency to use predominantly teacher-led questioning as the means to develop dialogue.

Process

The department meeting had been identified as the first suitable opportunity for the team to plan their next stage of development, following the paired lesson observations.

They met to review the features of effective dialogue outlined on handout 7.8 from the generic unit. They selected ‘pattern of dialogue is “basketball” rather than “ping-pong”’. They felt that this would address their intention to engage pupils more actively in explanatory, analytical talk, where they could listen to each other’s ideas and extend their own creative thinking. They agreed that talking about art and talking together adds to pupils’ critical awareness.

They worked in pairs to agree and tick the different strategies they thought would best address the pattern of dialogue they wanted to develop. They also included ‘higher-order thinking questions’. The department felt that this would extend developments already under way. They wanted to use this focus to promote pupils’ wider study of other artists and make connections with previous learning about media and technique. The strategies are outlined in appendix 7B.1.
Teachers used the remaining time in the meeting to work again in pairs and plan several lessons, in which they would be able to use these strategies. They drew up a schedule of lessons and selected several from across the team that could be recorded on video, so that they could evaluate their use of these strategies at the next department meeting.

They agreed to make further use of handout 7.5 to focus on the selected feature and the impact of the strategies used. They were generally happy with the features that were being used by other teachers in the school, but wanted to add ‘speculation’ to ‘analysis, synthesis, prediction or evaluation’, to better reflect learning in art and design.

Before the next department meeting they worked in different pairings to view video footage of the lessons they had recorded and agree some judgements on the impact of the strategies they had used. At the meeting, they worked together as a team to review selected sections of the lesson videos and share their comments and judgements on the impact of the dialogue on developing pupils as independent learners.

**Evaluation**

Through the recorded video teachers noted the enthusiasm pupils showed for peer discussion. The pre-planned questions worked effectively to maintain pace and focus these discussions, allowing teachers, at times, to allocate different questions to pairs in order to develop dialogue and the exchange of different views across each class. This had an impact on pupils’ designs and finished work, showing a wider range of ideas.

The ‘no hands up’ questioning strategy had worked well in ensuring that all pupils were developing a response to the questions. When viewing the videoed lessons teachers noted that although some pupils were still eager to answer and seemed a little frustrated at not being selected each time, the use of ‘no hands up’, in combination with the other strategies used, resulted in more pupils having developed opinions and judgements about artists’ work and how it linked to their own designs. Boys, in particular, showed extended ideas in their planning, rather than just accepting their first ideas.

One pair of teachers had focused particularly on the use of Bloom’s taxonomy and had collaborated to pre-plan challenging questions to promote effective peer discussion, linked to their use of ‘no hands up’ questioning strategies.

Together they created a set of questions for each of the levels of thinking and used these as part of a lesson looking at the work of Andrew Wyeth as an example of an artist who produces challenging and thought-provoking portraits. The pair used these questions to engage pupils and develop more critical consideration of the issues of representation and meaning in the creation of a portrait of an elderly relative.

The examples of the questions and the portrait used in this lesson are in appendix 7B.2.

After viewing the videotapes, both teachers were pleased with the response of pupils. They concluded that the quality of discussion was much improved and this resulted in greater depth to the views expressed. They analysed the impact in the following ways.
• Through the ‘application’ questions, pupils considered ways in which they would apply what they had learned to improve their own portraits.
• The ‘analysis’ questions enabled pupils to identify with the character and consider ways in which they might portray their own relative, learning from experience of other artists’ work they had seen.
• The teachers observed that the ‘synthesis’ and ‘evaluation’ questions had helped pupils not only to plan their approach more thoughtfully, but also to refine and adapt the composition and content of their painting shown in their sketchbooks.

The teachers found it helpful to focus on just two or three strategies enabling them to plan opportunities for paired discussions. Pre-planning the questions had led to greater breadth of discussion and depth of perspective in the views expressed by the pupils.

Their evaluations led them to consider their further use of Bloom’s taxonomy to pre-plan questions and extend this practice into their GCSE groups. They agreed that after a term of implementing these strategies they would allocate a further department meeting to review impact on pupils’ attainment.
## Strategies for promoting classroom dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of effective dialogue</th>
<th>Teaching strategies</th>
<th>Pattern of dialogue is ‘basketball’ rather than ‘ping pong’</th>
<th>Dialogue is reciprocal, i.e. pupils respond to and build on what others have said</th>
<th>Pupil contributions are well-developed sentences or phrases</th>
<th>Pupils are willing to take risks by sharing partial understanding</th>
<th>Pupils are willing to challenge each other’s ideas in a constructive way</th>
<th>Pupils demonstrate higher levels of thinking</th>
<th>Pupils reprocess their thinking as a result of dialogue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Everyone is engaged with the dialogue</td>
<td>Rich questions</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher talk does not over-dominate the dialogue</td>
<td>Big questions</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Higher-order thinking questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions linked to resources or tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer discussion following a question</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wait time after a teacher question</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wait time after a pupil response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Varying length of wait time</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘No hands-up’ questioning</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Using wrong or partially correct answers to prompt responses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiating whether answers are right or wrong and why</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pausing to survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eavesdropping on group dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cueing in pupils using gestures and prompts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modelling prompts and body language to encourage continuation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acknowledging where pupils demonstrate effective dialogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group-work strategies</td>
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Bloom’s taxonomy

Developing higher-order thinking through questioning in the context of looking at works of art and design

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour important in learning. Bloom found that over 95% of the test questions pupils encounter require them to think only at the lowest possible level ... the recall of information.

Bloom identified six levels within the cognitive domain, from the simple recall or recognition of facts, as the lowest level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest order, which is classified as evaluation. Verb examples that represent intellectual activity on each level are listed below.

1. **Knowledge**: arrange, define, duplicate, label, list, memorise, name, order, recognise, relate, recall, repeat, reproduce, and state
2. **Comprehension**: classify, describe, discuss, explain, express, identify, indicate, locate, recognise, report, restate, review, select, and translate
3. **Application**: apply, choose, demonstrate, dramatise, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, practise, schedule, sketch, solve, use, and write
4. **Analysis**: analyse, appraise, calculate, categorise, compare, contrast, criticise, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, and test
5. **Synthesis**: arrange, assemble, collect, compose, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, manage, organise, plan, prepare, propose, set up, and write
6. **Evaluation**: appraise, argue, assess, attach, choose, compare, defend, estimate, judge, predict, rate, score, select, support, value, and evaluate

This guidance is intended to help teachers to order and phrase suitably challenging questions when using works of art, craft and design to inform and develop pupils’ thinking and response, and to inform the development of pupils’ ideas, imagination and creativity.

As teachers we tend to ask questions in the ‘knowledge’ category 80% to 90% of the time. These questions are not bad, but using them all the time is. Try to use a higher-order level of questions. These questions require much more ‘brain power’ and more extensive and elaborate answers. On the next page are the six question categories as defined by Bloom.
# Bloom’s taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Skills demonstrated</th>
<th>Question cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge</strong></td>
<td>• observation and recall of information</td>
<td>list, define, tell, describe, identify, show, label, collect, examine, tabulate, quote, name, who, when, where, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of dates, events, places</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• knowledge of major ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• mastery of subject matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td>• understanding information</td>
<td>summarise, describe, interpret, contrast, predict, associate, distinguish, estimate, differentiate, discuss, extend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(understanding)</td>
<td>• grasp meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• translate knowledge into new context</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• interpret facts, compare, contrast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• order, group, infer causes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• predict consequences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>• use information</td>
<td>apply, demonstrate, calculate, complete, illustrate, show, solve, examine, modify, relate, change, classify, experiment, discover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• use methods, concepts, theories in new situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• solve problems using required skills or knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>• seeing patterns</td>
<td>analyse, separate, order, explain, connect, classify, arrange, divide, compare, select, explain, infer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organisation of parts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognition of hidden meanings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• identification of components</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Synthesis</strong></td>
<td>• use old ideas to create new ones</td>
<td>combine, integrate, modify, rearrange, substitute, plan, create, design, invent, ‘what if…?’, compose, formulate, prepare, generalise, rewrite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• generalise from given facts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• relate knowledge from several areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• predict, draw conclusions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>• compare and discriminate between ideas</td>
<td>assess, decide, rank, grade, test, measure, recommend, convince, select, judge, explain, discriminate, support, conclude, compare, summarise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• assess value of theories, presentations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make choices based on reasoned argument</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• verify value of evidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• recognise subjectivity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at, thinking and responding to works of art and design using Bloom’s taxonomy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>To apply Bloom’s theory of developing higher levels of thought processes to looking at, thinking and talking about works of art, craft and design.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Typically when learning about art and design, pupils are encouraged to look at works of art to develop their understanding of the artist, the period or movement, the process, technique or content, the artistic form and emotional response or mood evoked by the work. Judgements are often subjective and operate principally at a level of knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their views, but are more rarely taken beyond comprehension and through the intermediate stages of application, analysis and synthesis. This focus is limiting because the purpose of looking at works of art is twofold. Firstly, we wish to enrich and enhance the quality of life of pupils and develop their cultural understanding. Secondly, we hope to develop pupils’ visual literacy skills and their ability to look and think in order to develop their own response to art works, which will in turn inform their own imagination and ideas for the art they are making. They can learn about technique, process, composition, use of mark, shape, colour, organisation of content and elements, the use of signs and symbols or cultural references and, ultimately, meaning. Questions that teachers ask can direct pupils to the realisation that visual literacy has a greater purpose than just acquiring facts about an artist. It is hoped that pupils can learn to ‘read’ a work of art and make connections between the work they are viewing and other art works they have seen at different times, or between other art forms and other areas of learning. Higher-order questioning can lead pupils to make these ‘connections’ leading to a more developed or imaginative response, which will in turn establish it as a life-long habit and enrich the experience of looking at works of art.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>For any identified visual literacy activity, develop questions that reflect the progression of thinking and responding from the literal (descriptive) level to the evaluative. Not all levels need to be developed for every art work. Consider a range that will lead the pupil to the greater purpose of looking and responding. Each level of Bloom’s original taxonomy has been restated for clarity and simplification. Examples of appropriate questions or directives are given to illustrate each level. The familiar portrait ‘Anna Christina’ by Andrew Wyeth has been used to assist understanding and enable the exemplification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Click on the following link to view the painting ‘Anna Christina’ by Andrew Wyeth (1967). http://www.archive.com/archive/W/wyeth/anna_christina.jpg.html

The painting is held at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Wyeth has remained visually and emotionally attached to the real world, a world all but forgotten by his contemporaries and the 20th century. The importance of this cannot be overestimated. In this way, Wyeth has served as a link with the great tradition of artists responsive to life and humanity that was essentially severed following the post-impressionists, and which is now in the early stages of resumption.

Wyeth reacts to and expresses the character of the people whose lives he has passed through and shared. He searches out the pose, the look in the eye, the set of the mouth, the significant facial wrinkle, the sweater out at the elbow, the signals a dress gives when it has been worn a thousand times, retaining the form and posture of the wearer.
He sees significance in the simplest objects, implements, animals and landscapes of a rural life. A basket, a stump, a hound, an egg-scale, a hillside painted by Wyeth contain a meaning, rising to the level of symbol, which is a blend of the meaning – poetic and divine – inherent in all things in life, and the depth of Wyeth’s emotional response and visual commitment to them. Wyeth’s sensitivity, perception and symbolic intensity elevated him above the run-of-the-mill illustrator-artist.

The painting of Christina Olson, ‘Anna Christina’, 1967, depicting her sitting against a foggy background, is a marvellous character study emphasising a prominent, hooked nose, eyes that pull against each other as one looks toward the viewer, a jutting lower lip and weathered cheek. But it doesn’t just hold up as a solid head. It is again the extraordinarily talented illustration of a head, rather than the three-dimensional re-creation of a head in the sense of Rembrandt, Vermeer, Cézanne, etc.

The questions below are designed to develop higher-order thinking in response to this painting and several others by the artist Andrew Wyeth, as preparation by pupils who are planning to make a painting of an elderly relative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>The recall of specific information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who was Andrew Wyeth?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where did he live? And what country do his paintings depict?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Who is the person in the painting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is tempera?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension</th>
<th>An understanding of what has been viewed and of other work by the artist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What sorts of scenes are depicted in the Andrew Wyeth paintings you have seen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What kind of painting is this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where might this picture have been painted or where did the sitter pose?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What can you tell us about the person in the picture, just by looking and thinking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you suggest what Anna Christina might do?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application</th>
<th>The converting of abstract content to concrete situations – applying what is known and understood to real situations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you describe the way in which the artist will have organised the room for the portrait to be painted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you were to use the same pose in your painting of an elderly relative, what would you include in your painting to tell us about your relative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How might your painting be different?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How long do you think the sitter had to pose for the portrait? Could you sit still for that amount of time? How do you think the artist might have organised the blocks of time for each sitting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you describe the stages the artist may have gone through from start to finish to complete this painting?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>The comparison and contrast of the content to personal experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What kind of person do you think Anna Christina is?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How would you react if you met her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can you compare Anna Christina to a member of your own family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think the painting is an honest description of the person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you know anyone who this painting reminds you of? Can you describe that person?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you heard Anna Christina talking, what would she sound like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthesis</td>
<td>The organisation of thoughts and ideas, and information from the content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • What do you think the sitter (Anna Christina) is thinking?  
• If you were to pose for a portrait, what would you think about to pass the time?  
• Draw a selection of compositional studies to show how you would use a similar informal pose if you were planning to make a painting of an elderly relative. Try to include the actual chair they would sit in and the background of the room where they would pose and where you would make the painting.  
• Make a list of the things you would want to include in your painting.  
• Describe what your posing figure would look like if viewed from several different viewpoints around them. Make some sketches if this would help you.  
• What other way could you make a portrait, that tells us more about the person in the picture? | |
| Evaluation | The judgement and evaluation of characters, actions, outcome, etc. for personal reflection and understanding |
| • Do you think Anna Christina is a real person?  
• Why do you think Andrew Wyeth wanted to paint this portrait?  
• What does the style of painting tell you about Anna Christina?  
• What do you think the clothes she is wearing and the chair she is sitting in tell you about her?  
• Do you think this is an honest painting?  
• Would you want to make your painting of an elderly relative like this painting by Andrew Wyeth? How would you make it different?  
• How does this portrait compare with others you have seen?  
• Why do artists make portraits and not just take photographs of people to exhibit? |
Task 7C

Ask your pupils to consider the features of effective whole-class dialogue and work with them to focus on ways to improve them. For example, pupils might agree a protocol for developing whole-class ‘basketball’ dialogue. You may wish to prompt their thinking using the column headings on handout 7.8.

As a department, use handout 7.8 to identify and record those strategies that can help pupils to develop features of dialogue they have identified for improvement. Agree which are dependent largely on advanced planning for their success and which are more reliant on the seizing of opportunities during the lesson. Use this information to collaboratively plan, teach and review a sequence of lessons, being mindful of which professional development activities are most likely to support this (see slide 7.4).

Context

Having spent two terms focusing on developing questioning and dialogue, the art and design department in School A used a designated department meeting to review their practice and particularly the impact on the quality of classroom dialogue and pupils’ finished work.

Teachers agreed that pupils were becoming more aware of the value of their discussions and most were beginning to appreciate that their answers were now more detailed. Pupils were also aware that their work had improved. The department was keen to make effective use of ‘pupil voice’ to support their future developmental work. They wanted to enlist pupils as partners in moving their learning forward and realised they needed to make them aware of the different features of effective dialogue. Their pupils needed to learn to articulate more clearly an emotional response to inform their personal vision in art and design. This would later impact on their GCSE coursework, by enabling them to more effectively explore ideas and experiment with alternative views in order to inform their own designs.

Process

Each teacher used an extended plenary session to remind pupils in their Year 8 class about strategies that they had already been using. The teacher then explained that pupils were going to carry out a task on their own to decide in which features they were most confident. The teacher linked this to how effective dialogue could impact on their later GCSE work.

Each pupil was given a set of cards cut out from handout 7.9 and then asked to place the cards in two piles: actions they felt they had carried out on several occasions and those they did not feel confident about doing. When they had completed this they joined a partner and discussed their reasons for sorting the cards in that way. The teacher then led the final part of the plenary and together the class agreed the features on which they wanted to focus.

At the next department meeting teachers discussed the features that pupils had identified. They used handout 7.8 to identify strategies they could use to develop the particular features, and they discussed which would require
pre-planning and which would be likely to arise naturally during the course of the lesson (appendix 7C.1). They then split into pairs to plan a series of lessons that would highlight the identified pupil focus and incorporate useful teaching strategies.

The lesson transcript (appendix 7C.2) is from one of the lessons that the teachers had videoed (based around Unit 8C: Shared view, from the QCA schemes of work). This unit had been chosen as it focused on small-group activity and a collective response. Teachers felt that this would create just the right kind of low-risk class environment for the pupils to share their partially formed ideas and for other members of the group to build upon them.

Each teacher was to observe one of the lessons in the planned sequence. All members of the department felt that it was important to arrange for the paired teachers to meet as soon after the lesson as possible to review the observations and so a half-hour time slot was designated for this purpose.

**Evaluation**

It was clear that pupils valued being actively involved in deciding the next phase of the development process. In the original plenary, teachers had been surprised how well some of the pupils had been able to articulate their ideas about the relative impact that features were likely to have on their learning.

When teachers came to reflect upon the lesson they commented that having the objective for group talk clearly stated and given equal priority with the subject-specific objectives provided a clear focus for pupils.

The observing teacher commented that even less-confident pupils were beginning to volunteer comments and noted their positive body language when ideas were offered, for example nods of agreement. More importantly, there was a marked rise in attainment brought about through this exploration of ideas. Pupils were experimenting with alternative views and this was reflected in the quality of their own designs.

The department agreed that time spent in constructive dialogue made pupils’ practical work more productive. There was a marked improvement in standards in the final piece of work produced by these pupils compared with the site-specific work that Year 8 pupils had produced in previous years. Most pupils now had extended notes and drawings in their sketchbooks and they had particularly exploited and understood the characteristics of different materials. Also, ideas were more thoroughly developed and work progressed more efficiently and at a faster rate. Pupils no longer perceived problems as a great difficulty, but rather as an opportunity for shared thoughts which would provide clarification and move their learning forward.

Teachers agreed that the process of collaborative planning, observation, sharing findings and reviewing together had been really useful. They were determined to ensure that time was always set aside for observing and reviewing each other’s lessons in the future, partly as an ongoing review of progress but more importantly to ensure that the changed practice was embedded and having an effect on standards.
# Strategies for promoting classroom dialogue

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<td>Varying length of wait time</td>
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Lesson transcript 3: Year 8 class

Teacher = T
Pupils listed by pseudonyms

T: You all know how we have been using talk to move our learning forward, particularly over the last term. As part of the plenary in the last lesson you were thinking about those features that would make our talk more effective and you carried out the card-sorting activity (see handout 7.9) to help focus our choices. What came out of that discussion was a decision that we should focus on two of the features of effective dialogue. These are, firstly, “being willing to take risks by sharing partial understanding”, and secondly, “responding to and building on what others have said”.

In this lesson, I will be introducing you to the work of three contemporary sculptors, Andy Goldworthy, David Nash and Anish Kapoor. These three sculptors are all British-based. They work in a variety of scales, but often on a large scale, and have different approaches to creating work for a specific site. We will be looking at some of their work as we begin a new collaborative project about developing a ‘shared view’. In this project, you will be collaborating in small groups to design and create a piece of temporary site-specific sculpture for our locality. I will also be asking you to carry out some further investigation in your group and for homework, as you develop your ideas and research further examples of the work of sculptors.

We have three main learning objectives for today’s lesson. Firstly, to learn about the work of sculptors who create temporary site-specific pieces and explore the connections between the materials and techniques they use and the site in which the work is presented. Secondly, we need to learn how to use this information to agree the things (criteria) we need to consider as we begin our own project for a piece of site-specific sculpture. We also have a learning objective for developing our talk. This is to take risks by sharing partial understanding and respond to and build on what others have said.

Teacher pauses.

I want to take a pause here, before we start to look at the sculptures to check whether everyone understands the purpose of the next project and see if anyone has any questions so far. Please be prepared to say if there is anything you don’t understand.

Teacher looks around the room and waits for 20 seconds to make sure that all the pupils have had a chance to consider what has been said and phrase a suitable question. A few hands rise slowly and then several more after 10 seconds.

T: Yes Michael, what do you want to know?

Michael: Will we be able to choose the groups we work in sir?
T: Yes, to some extent you already have, as you will be working in your
current groups around your table. The ones we have created to also
help us develop our group talk. You all have a mix of boys and girls and
you can see that no group is larger than five pupils.

Judy, what was your question?

Judy: What does site-specific mean?

T: Good question. You should have come across site-specific before in an
erlier art and design project, perhaps in your primary school. For those
of you who are unfamiliar with the term, I can explain it best as a piece of
artwork designed and created to be placed or exhibited in a particular
site, e.g. outside a building, in a landscape or … on a wall. Now
everybody, let’s just pause to think and discuss this with your group on
your table. Hands down for a moment.

Let us all check and share our understanding of site-specific sculpture
before we continue. Think about any examples of artwork you have
seen that you think might be site-specific. You may have seen
something in another country when you were on holiday, from the car
when travelling or when visiting London, or another town. You have 3
minutes to discuss and share your ideas. I will be using ‘no hands up’
questioning at times in this lesson today, so I will be picking four groups
and ask you to share your list with the class. OK, off you go.

Groups begin talking and sharing ideas. Some pupils are thoughtful and
then contribute ideas, others listen to the examples before realising that
they too have seen some site-specific sculptures and share their
examples. After 3 minutes, the teacher stops the discussion and picks
four tables to answer.

T: Right then. I would like to hear all the examples from these four tables
(teacher indicates each table selected) and those of you with your
hands up, please put them down. There will be a chance to ask further
questions later. As you listen to the groups you’ll start to develop your
ideas and so after we’ve heard from them you’ll be able to start putting
down some of your ideas as drawings and designs.

This table here (indicates a table of thee boys and two girls towards the
front), who will start first in your group?

Donna: I made a list of what everyone said (Donna holds up her sketchbook and
indicates a list). Three of us all thought that the Angel of the North was
site-specific.

T: Excellent, yes, that is probably the best example. Go on.

Donna: Peter said he had seen something similar near the motorway below
Bristol. A figure made of sticks.

Peter: Yeah, it was higher than a bus and just striding across a field, right by
the motorway.

T: Yes, it is a figure made of willow withies, pointing to the south, standing
in a field next to the M5. Anything else?
Donna: We had all seen sculptures on buildings and in town squares, on um ... Donna looks at the others for help.

Jim: In response to Donna. Lots of them were up on big blocks and things, like in Trafalgar Square. The others in the group nod in agreement.

Tim: We thought that you can see some sculpture in fountains, coming out of the water.

Sita: And there is a figure of ... ahh ... Nelson up on that Column. Yeah, Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square. The group all agree.

T: Yes, well done, all of you. Can you all picture seeing sculpture on these ‘blocks’ that Jim referred to? Does anyone know what these blocks are called? Just think for a moment, then have a go and share your ideas. Don’t be afraid to get the name wrong, you might trigger the correct name for someone else. After a few seconds, a few hands go up slowly. Remember we are learning to take risks by sharing partial understanding. A few more hands rise hesitantly. Teacher waits until all those likely to indicate a preparedness to share their ideas have raised their hands.

T: Let’s start with Meera, and then hear what others think.

Meera: Are they called stands? Several hands go down and these pupils indicate that they would have said the same thing.

Jill: Column?

Peter: They are not all tall and round (responding to Jill). Is it more like a platform?

Tina: Yes but some are low like a stage. Is it stage?

Evie: Is it like a dais? A kind of stage. We learned about that in English, in Shakespeare. Several others nod in agreement. All hands have gone down by this point. The teacher looks around room and checks if anyone else has a view to share.

T: Those big blocks are called plinths. Teacher writes ‘Plinths’ onto the whiteboard. These come in all shapes and sizes, but are mainly rectangular. Some are high, like the ones in Trafalgar Square. But you could have your sculpture standing on a plinth or a dais, which is a form of low raised area in a room, a kind of low stage, or you could use a column. Pauses to let the class consider these options. Equally, you can change the shape and size of these to suit what you design, or have your sculpture standing on the ground or in grass, as in the examples of the Angel of the North or the withie figure we mentioned. Pauses and checks class are all focused and there are no more waiting pupils to share their views.

T: Well done, that’s a good start. Take another 2 minutes before I select the other groups to share their views, and see what else you can suggest.

Teacher waits 2 minutes.

And now this group (indicates table at the far left corner). What can you suggest?

Pupils benefit from sharing their ideas and we see how their talk has led their ideas in a particular direction. Each adds to the views expressed by others in the group.

Pupils learn how to express their ideas in response to the question. They supportively build on each other’s views.

Teacher ensures that all who want to express a view are able to. Pupils feel secure in the risk-free environment.
Martin: We all thought about sculptures on the side of churches and in …

Aisha: Niches. (Aisha adds comments, to help Martin explain.)

Martin: Yeah, niches. And we all thought that gargoyles are a kind of sculpture. Also, there are two sculptures on the green outside the cathedral. They are both just on a sort of brick surface, it’s level with the grass.

T: Did you consider why they were like that?

Martin: Yeah, Alan said it was so they couldn’t be stolen. They’re bolted down. But Aisha thought it was so they couldn’t be knocked over. Binta thought it was also because they have to mow the grass and you couldn’t get the mover under the edges because they are so curved. Binta agrees and adds comments.

Binta: Yes, I think it’s because the sides are curved. The grass would grow under the edges and when the grass was cut, it would look really messy, because you couldn’t get to all of it.

T: Yes Binta, that’s a good point and one to consider when designing site-specific sculpture. Do you all think you could ‘strim’ around sculptures? (Mimes strimming grass.)

Aisha: Yes, if it was made of metal, but some sculpture is made of wood or other materials like …

Martin: With that figure made of withies, the grass would grow up through it and it would look really messy! You can’t strim around that kind of thing.

Peter: You can if you are careful.

Alan: But most large areas of grass are mown with big ride-on machines, like at school.

T: So if you were to site a sculpture at school, would you need to take account of this?

Alan: Yes, I think so.

Donna: I would still put the sculpture on a surface like brick or concrete, level with the grass, because then you can even mow with large mowers.

Angie: You would still have to take care of what it was made of though, if the mower was going to go close to the sculpture.

T: Why?

Aisha: Because the materials would be damaged and you’d spoil the sculpture.

Binta: Could we put a barrier around it to protect it?

Martin: But wouldn’t that spoil the way it looked? I think those sculptures by the cathedral look better because they seem to just touch the ground, almost float.

T: So, is this something else we have to take into account?
Most of the class nod in agreement. Teacher writes ‘Is the sculpture easy to maintain?’ on the whiteboard.

Teacher then goes on to take the views of the other two groups and their examples of site-specific sculpture. Discussion goes on to focus on whether sculptures in an art gallery are site-specific and what can be included. After 5 minutes the teacher moves the group on to show them examples of sculptures from the three sculptors he mentioned. These are projected on to the whiteboard. Discussion about what materials the sculpture could be made from is encouraged to develop as many views as possible and the development of ideas begins in groups before pupils start to work in their sketchbooks and make maquettes. This addresses the remaining lesson objectives.

The plenary reviews how their use of group talk to build on each other’s views had contributed to an analysis of the criteria for site-specific sculpture and ensured that all groups were working effectively as all had been engaged in the discussion. Ideas were more developed as a consequence.