Power-Up Dialogue Facilitation Guide

A Short Guide for Teachers

The Power-Up lesson plans are designed to spark student reflection and support meaningful dialogue around digital citizenship and the values that contribute to becoming a responsible, ethical, and healthy digital citizen. As a teacher, your role is not to provide all the answers, but to guide students as they think critically, share perspectives, build understanding together, and decide on actions to take to become the best digital citizens they can think of. Creating space for meaningful dialogue is key to making this possible.

About the importance of dialogue

"'Dialogue' does not refer to just any kind of talk between people but more specifically it refers to that kind of talk in which every answer gives rise to another question" (Phillipson & Wegerif, 2017).

As Phillipson and Wegerif (2017) explain in their book on Dialogic Education, dialogue offers the opportunity to establish shared thinking or to think together about a topic or issue that matters to those involved. It's not just about exchanging ideas, but about opening up new possibilities through listening, questioning, and critical reflection.

To enable meaningful dialogue, participants need to be open to hearing different perspectives, asking thoughtful questions, and exploring the underlying meanings behind what is said. Learning how to participate effectively in dialogue is also learning how to think. It requires the creation of dialogic spaces where different ways of understanding a situation or topic can come into contact, and where students can shift between viewpoints to reach deeper insight.

Even when students are not speaking out loud, the dialogic space continues internally, sparking new thoughts and helping them process and expand their understanding. When these spaces are nurtured, new ideas and skills can emerge, either individually or through thinking alongside others.

Given the complexity, novelty, and ever-changing nature of the topics around digital technologies and digital citizenship, it is essential for both students and teachers to practise dialogue. By learning to listen to each other's perspectives, think critically, and work toward shared understanding, they can develop the knowledge and skills needed to navigate present and future digital challenges with greater awareness, confidence, and care.

The 4Cs for Dialogue and Thinking Together

To establish meaningful dialogue in the classroom, the learning environment must support four key qualities: **Caring**, **Collaborative**, **Critical**, and **Creative** thinking (Phillipson & Wegerif, 2017). These qualities help build a *dialogic space* where students feel safe to think, share, and grow together.

As a facilitator, you can **model and encourage behaviours** that reflect each of the 4Cs or **co-create ground rules** with your students to support them. By cultivating these in your classroom, you will help students not only understand digital citizenship more deeply but also develop the skills to think and act together in today's complex digital world.

1. Caring

Dialogue begins with trust. As a facilitator you can start by creating a caring environment where students feel safe to express their ideas, ask questions, and even disagree, knowing that their voices will be respected. Behaviours that you can model and promote include:

- Organising the space so that everyone can see each other and make eye contact.
- Taking turns and speaking one at a time.
- Listening and showing interest through body language and thoughtful responses.
- Using kind and respectful language, especially when expressing disagreement.
- Being sensitive to others' emotions and reactions.
- Taking all contributions seriously and avoiding dismissive or mocking responses.
- Demonstrating genuine care for the conversation and the topic being explored.
- Giving students time and space to think before speaking. For example, allowing them to reflect individually, then discuss with a partner before sharing with the whole class helps them develop their ideas, find the right words to express them, and feel more confident contributing to the discussion.

2. Collaborative

Dialogue is not a debate, but a shared effort to build understanding. Students should be encouraged to listen actively, build on each other's ideas, and work together to explore a topic more deeply. Behaviours that you can model and promote include:

- Building on what others have said by making connections or adding new ideas.
- Participating actively and offering ideas, even if they are tentative or unfinished.
- Helping them express their thoughts clearly and confidently.
- Acknowledging different viewpoints and making an effort to understand them.
- Creating opportunities for quiet children to also participate.
- Working together to find common ground or reach a shared conclusion.

3. Critical

Effective dialogue involves questioning and reflection. Students learn to evaluate the ideas being shared, consider evidence, and weigh different viewpoints before reaching conclusions. Behaviours that you can model and promote include:

- Asking for and offering reasons or evidence to support ideas.
- Seeking clarification to ensure shared understanding and precise use of language.
- Noticing similarities and differences between ideas, and refining key concepts.
- Breaking complex issues into smaller, more manageable parts.
- Exploring the possible outcomes or implications of different ideas.
- Evaluating arguments to draw conclusions based on strong reasoning and evidence.
- Being open to changing one's mind when presented with convincing evidence.

4. Creative

Dialogue can lead to new ways of thinking. A creative space encourages students to imagine possibilities, explore alternatives, and co-construct fresh ideas or solutions that feel meaningful to the group. Behaviours that you can model and promote include:

- Proposing alternative viewpoints or fresh ideas.
- Offering speculative thoughts or "what if" scenarios.
- Using relevant examples to illustrate or expand on ideas.
- Drawing comparisons that help deepen understanding.
- Making unexpected or insightful connections between different ideas.
- Breaking out into small groups to promote divergent thinking.

Applying the 4Cs for using the Power-Up lesson plans

As mentioned, creating a dialogic space that is caring, collaborative, critical, and creative helps foster deeper shared understanding. It also opens the door for reaching collective agreements, between you and your students, and among the students themselves, on the core virtues and skills needed to grow as responsible digital citizens.

The Power-Up lesson plans, grounded in our framework, include basic, intermediate, and advanced learning objectives to help you structure the session and guide students' thinking. Each lesson plan includes activities that provide space for individual reflection and practical engagement with the topic, helping students explore their ideas before entering into dialogue. Lastly, the lesson plans include dialogue prompts that you can use, adapt, or change to guide conversations.

To help facilitate this process, you can:

- **Co-create classroom ground rules** that reflect the 4Cs.
- **Use the prompts** included in each activity—or adapt and create your own—to spark conversations that embody caring, collaborative, critical, and creative thinking.
- **Encourage multiple perspectives** by asking questions like "Who sees this differently?" or "Can someone add another angle to this idea?"
- **Bring the reflection back in**, with short written or verbal reflections to help students process what they've learned and consider how it applies to their lives.

Whether students identify risks, explore scenarios, or imagine new ways to use digital technologies guided by the lesson plans provided, the 4Cs can serve as your compass for thoughtful, respectful, and transformative dialogue.

For more information about dialogic education and practical strategies for applying the 4Cs in your classroom, we invite you to consult the book *Dialogic Education: Mastering Core Concepts Through Thinking Together* by Neil Phillipson and Rupert Wegerif (2017). It offers valuable insights and tools to help you create meaningful, student-centered dialogue across a range of topics.