This bibliography puts in more or less chronological order Robin Alexander’s publications on spoken language in learning and teaching up to February 2015. It starts with observational and discourse studies undertaken in the north of England during the 1980s and early 1990s. Then follows the Culture and Pedagogy international study out of which Alexander’s approach to dialogic teaching developed. Towards Dialogic Teaching presents this approach in detail, and Essays on Pedagogy extends the dialogic principle into wider aspects of education, reasserting the importance of an international perspective. Next come evaluation reports from two of the UK local authorities with whose teachers Robin Alexander has worked. The bibliography also includes relevant articles and book chapters. It ends with the 2010 final report of the Cambridge Primary Review, which gives dialogue prominence not only in pedagogy but also among education’s guiding principles; the 2012 DfE paper that persuaded the UK government to take spoken language more seriously in its framework for the 2014 revised national curriculum for England; and a note about a new project on dialogic teaching, social disadvantage and educational attainment from which publications should begin to emerge in 2015-16.

Talk for learning and teaching is just one aspect of Robin Alexander’s research from the past 30 years or so, and the 27 publications listed here are part of a larger corpus over 270 which includes work on many other aspects of education both inside and outside the UK. This breadth of focus underlines his claim that classroom talk cannot properly be handled in isolation from the curriculum and pedagogy of which it is an intrinsic part, or without engaging with the culture and history which shape educational policy, school ethos, teachers’ assumptions and of course language itself.

Classroom interaction in British classrooms (late 1980s/early 1990s)
These studies from the PRINDEP and CICADA research projects (funded respectively by Leeds City Council and ESRC) include (i) quantitative analysis of classroom interaction, (ii) electronic analysis of coded discourse transcripts and (iii) qualitative analysis of lesson transcripts. Together they confirm and analyse in British settings the recitation/IRE default identified earlier by Courtney Cazden and others in the US (plus less frequently discussed variants such as pseudo-enquiry), and they begin to point the way to alternatives.


Dialogic teaching: the main texts
Culture and Pedagogy is a large-scale macro-micro comparative study, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, of culture, policy and pedagogy in England, France, India, Russia and the United States. It culminates in quantitative and qualitative cross-cultural analysis of classroom talk which includes transcribed extracts from videotaped lessons in each country. The analysis covers both linguistic and paralinguistic aspects of classroom talk, and relates what is said by children and teachers to the pedagogy and culture that shape it. Out of this analysis comes the author’s approach to dialogic teaching. Towards Dialogic Teaching sets out research foundations, justifications, repertoires, principles and classroom indicators, while Essays on Pedagogy extends dialogism into wider aspects of curriculum and pedagogy.

Evaluation reports from school-based dialogic teaching initiatives in two local authorities

These come from collaborative development initiatives in two of the many local authorities with which the author has worked.


Miscellaneous articles, chapters and monographs


Multimedia materials

Dialogue and the Cambridge Primary Review

The Cambridge Primary Review (supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) makes dialogue, pupil voice and the empowerment of both children and teachers fundamental to educational advancement, building them into aims, the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment and professional development.


Talk reform and national policy

Robin Alexander also addresses the challenge of raising the profile and quality of classroom talk in a country where historically it has not been treated with the seriousness it deserves, either professionally or in education policy. The 2010-13 government review of the national curriculum presented an opportunity to encourage the much-needed cultural shift, and in February 2012, in response to Alexander’s representations, the Department for Education (DfE) hosted a seminar to consider the issues and how they might be addressed. The DfE response to a Freedom of Information request revealed that his keynote at this seminar persuaded the government to give spoken language a more prominent place than was its initial inclination:


Classroom talk, social disadvantage and educational attainment

Robin Alexander’s latest project, a joint venture of the Cambridge Primary Review Trust and the University of York supported by the Educational Endowment Foundation, combines randomised control procedures and qualitative analysis to test the capacity of dialogic teaching to increase engagement and raise educational standards among children who are socially disadvantaged. Publications from this project will be added to this list as they appear, starting in 2015-16.

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