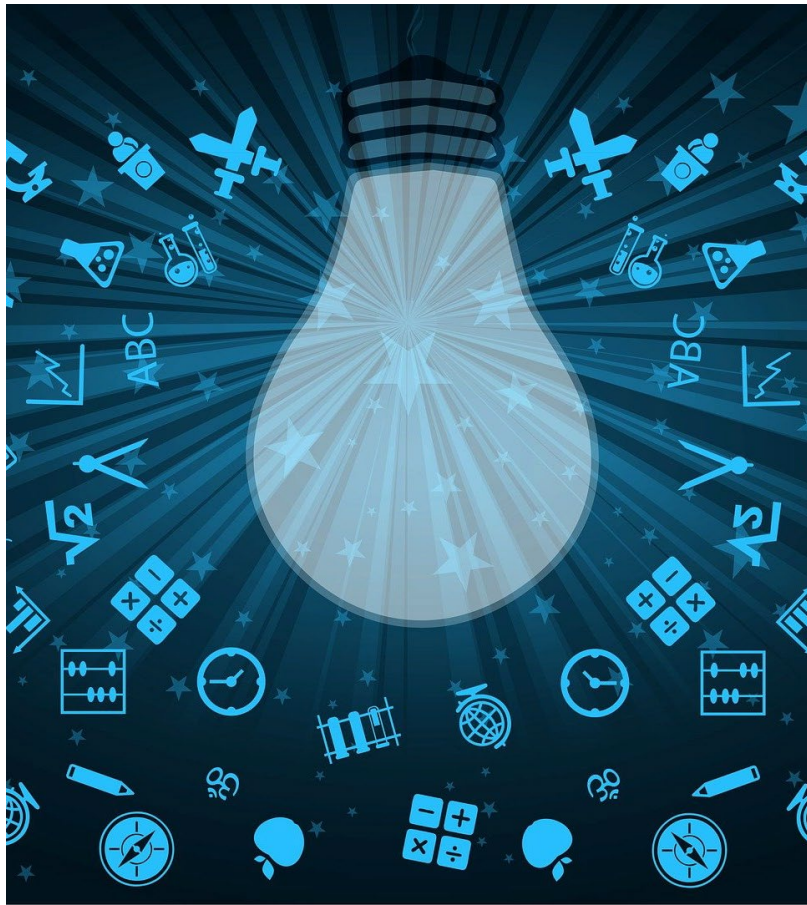# Digital dialog – Do the Exploratory Talk ground rules enhance collaborative learning in online group work?

Martha Clabby Kjølseth

Assistant Professor

University of
South-Eastern Norway

USN School of Business

Go to www.menti.com and use the code 86 21 36

Observations about learning

Learning has evolved from fixed transmission to a negotiable process where students integrate new knowledge (Biggs and Tang, 2011).

Collaborative learning is more likely to take place when students engage constructively with each other (Calcagni and Lago 2018; Havnes 2016).

Technology can "open dialogic spaces for students to reflect, argue and get feedback on their understanding" (Ludvigsen et al. 2020 p. 76).

If digital dialog offers so much learning potential, why do students complain about doing assignments in breakout rooms?

How do students develop skills in collaboration?

A growing number of educators employ teaching methods that center on the use of spoken language as a tool.

Exploratory Talk ground rules seek to establish norms for students to engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas.

Ground rules encourage students to think aloud together, get feedback, modify their ideas, and argue their viewpoints (Mercer, Hennessy, and Warwick, 2017).

Exploratory Talk Ground Rules (ETGR)

Partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas

Everyone participates by offering the relevant information they have

Tentative ideas are treated with respect

Ideas offered for joint consideration may be challenged

Challenges are justified and alternative ideas or understandings are offered

Opinions are sought and considered before decisions are jointly made

Knowledge is made publicly accountable and so reasoning is visible in the talk

(Mercer and Dawes 2008)

Purpose

- To investigate how and to what extent educating students about Exploratory Talk ground rules can enhance digital dialog in an online course in International Management.

Research methodology

- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Data collection

- Written reflections of 15 students

Reflections from students about their online group work:

- "everything worked great and Zoom was better than expected"
- "learned different things from each other's, and that was great"
- "No one was offended when ask to explain their opinion"
- "group project to be better format to learn in terms of discussing; true depending on the group, communication, and individual humbleness."

- "best way for me to learn is not to participate in group project but to listen to the teacher"
- "personally wanted to work alone"
- "like least different ways to solve a problem"
- "Being in a group is time consuming"
- "group did not pay much attention since we did not know each other"

Our findings

- The teacher has key role in creating a safe environment (Borokhovki et al., 2016).

- ETGR enhances learning why everyone is engaged (Mercer et al., 2017).

- Learning in breakout rooms requires space for reflection (Wegerif, 2008).

- ETGR can empower the social process of learning (Kim et al., 2020).

How ETGR influences interaction

Figure 7.2
A model showing how Exploratory Talk ground rules influence dialog
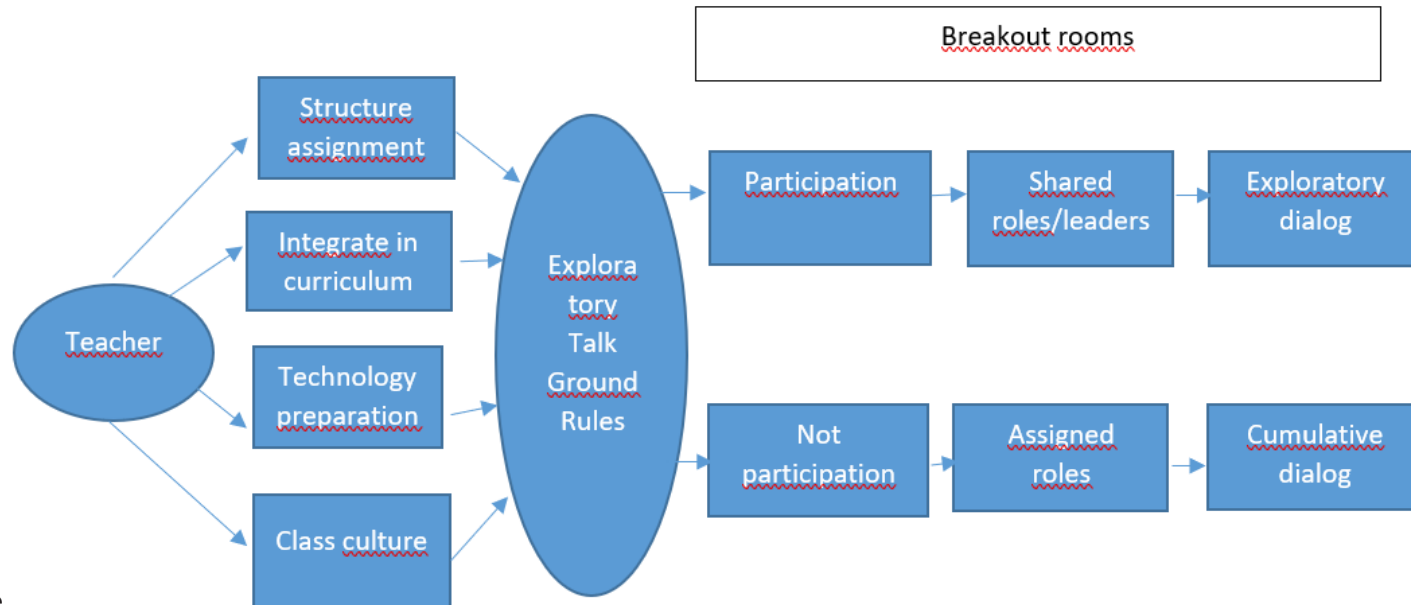
Please share your thoughts about:

How can teachers create a class culture that promotes Exploratory Talk?

References

Biggs, John B., and Catherine So-kum Tang. 2011. *Teaching for quality learning at university : what the student does*. Buckingham ;,Philadelphia, PA: Society for Research into Higher Education : Open University Press.

Borokhovski, Eugene, Robert M. Bernard, Rana M. Tamim, Richard F. Schmid, and Anna Sokolovskaya. 2016. "Technology-supported student interaction in post-secondary education: A meta-analysis of designed versus contextual treatments." *Computers & Education* 96: 15-28. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.11.004.

Calcagni, Elisa, and Leonardo Lago. 2018. "The Three Domains for Dialogue: A framework for analysing dialogic approaches to teaching and learning." *Learning, Culture and Social Interaction* 18: 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2018.03.001.

Havnes, Anton, Bjørg Christiansen, Ida Torunn Bjørk, and Elisabeth Hessevaagbakke. 2016. "Peer learning in higher education: Patterns of talk and interaction in skills centre simulation." *Learning, culture and social interaction* 8: 75-87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lcsi.2015.12.004.

Kim, Min Kyu, In Heok Lee, and Yinying Wang. 2020. "How students emerge as learning leaders in small group online discussions." *Journal of computer assisted learning* 36 (5): 610-624. https://doi.org/10.1111/jcal.12431.

Ludvigsen, Kristine. 2020. Creating Spaces for Formative Feedback in Lectures : Understanding how use of educational technology can support formative assessment in lectures in higher education. The University of Bergen.

Mercer, Neil, and Lynn Dawes. 2008. "The Value of Exploratory Talk." In *Exploring Talk in School: Inspired by the Work of Douglas Barnes*, edited by Steve

Mercer Hodgkinson, Neil, 55. London: London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Mercer, Neil McKay, Sara Hennessy, and Paul Taylor Warwick. 2017. "Dialogue, Thinking Together and Digital Technology in the Classroom: Some Educational Implications of a Continuing Line of Inquiry." https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.13777.

Wegerif, Rupert. 2008. "Dialogic or dialectic? The significance of ontological assumptions in research on educational dialogue." *British educational research journal* 34 (3): 347-361. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701532228.