

# The many shades of 'exploratory talk' for collaboration

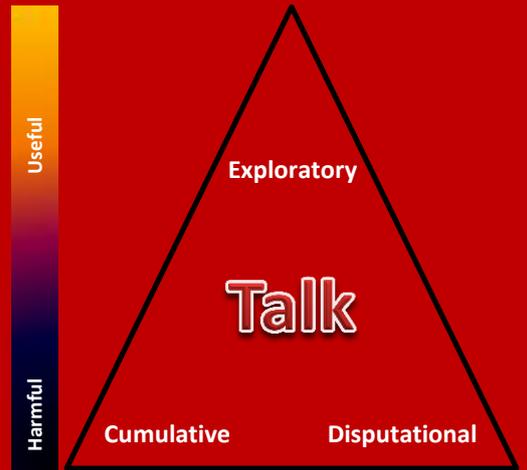


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## Research rationales

Professional collaboration is in the air, sometimes inflated with the attributes of axiomatic and self-evident learning. But in reality collaboration can be difficult to shape, messy to understand, or even in certain occasions harmful for learning. We know very little indeed about the conditions and processes that can deem some collaboration scenarios more or less fruitful than others.

The current study aims to understand the cognitive, social and affective conditions and processes in a particular context of teacher collaboration called lesson study (LS). It adopts the sociocultural beliefs about the pivotal role that language plays in our cognitive and social life and aims to decode LS collaboration through detailed analysis of teachers' talk. The discourse coding framework is informed by discourse theories such as conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis and Mercer's (1995) tripartite talk theory.



## Research design



Mercer (1995) cautions about the harmfulness of "cumulative talk" and "disputational talk" in collaboration and proposes "exploratory talk" as a useful way forward to foster productive collaboration and learning.

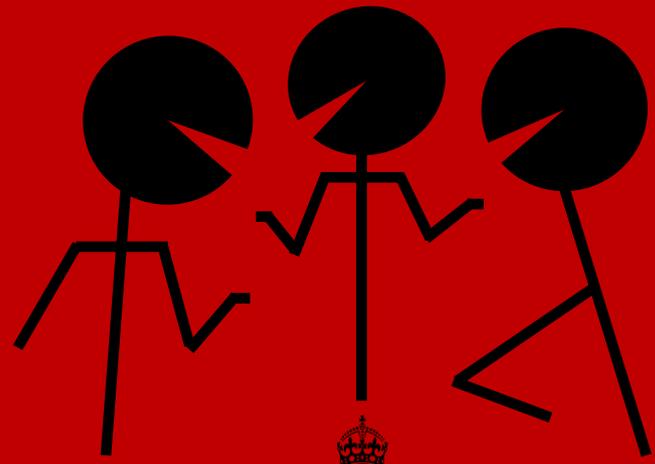
## Research findings



**Exploratory talk with a disputational orientation**

**Characteristics:** (a) Actively engage in the proposal, appraisal and development of ideas; (b) encounter some disagreements and confrontation due to individual differences; and (c) make few efforts to create a safe, non-judgemental, and supportive discursive environment.

**Efficacy:** 'rocky' collaboration, moderate learning



KEEP CALM AND LET'S TALK...

**Exploratory talk with a cumulative orientation**

**Characteristics:** (a) Actively engage in the proposal, appraisal and development of ideas; (b) attend to each other's affective needs and offer mutual recognition and support; (c) build solidarity as a team and maintain a positive and uplifting discursive environment.

**Efficacy:** fertile collaboration, rich learning



## Research impact

The key outcomes from this research are a set of analytic instruments for understanding the cognitive, social, and affective conditions and processes in contexts of collaboration, making it possible to diagnose, intervene, and support the development of collaboration among professionals such as teachers.