

# ***Developing High Level Comprehension and Critical Thinking Skills as a Pathway to Resilience in Rural schools***

Dialogue and Ideas Lab Series on Resilience  
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# ***Developing High Level Comprehension and Critical Thinking Skills as a Pathway to Resilience in Rural schools***

## Background

Collaborative partnership between the Centre for the Study of Resilience and The Pennsylvania State University.

Education as a pathway to resilience

Academic achievement

empowerment

Self/community/national development

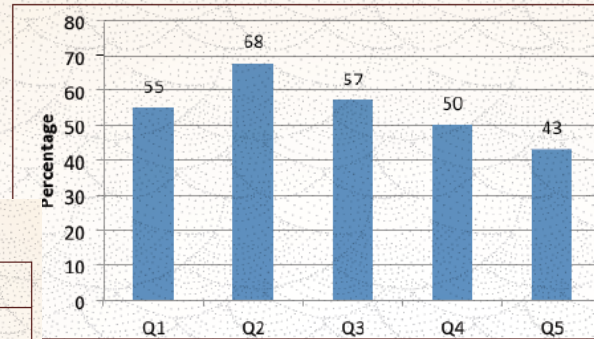
National statistics show that despite steps taken to improve reading comprehension there has been no significant change in older learners

SA - Diagnostic report on matric results showed comprehension as a major contributing factor to under-achievement in the exams

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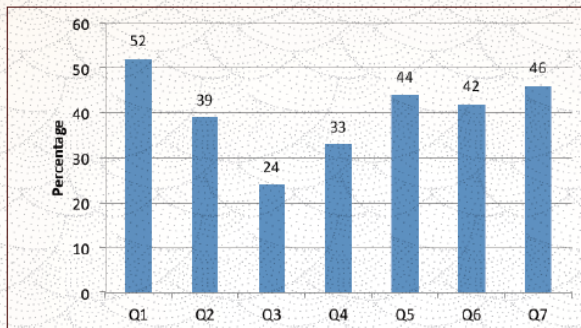
## 2015 English FAL Final year results – DoE (2015a) Diagnostic Report

Graph 6.3.1 Average marks per question expressed as a percentage in Paper 1



Q1	Comprehension
Q2	Summary
Q3	Analysing an advertisement
Q4	Analysing a cartoon
Q5	Language and editing skills

Graph 6.6.1: Average marks per question expressed as a percentage in Paper 2

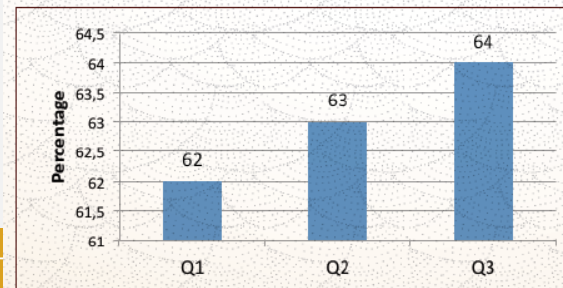


Q1	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Q2	<i>Lord of the Flies</i>
Q3	<i>A Grain of Wheat</i>
Q4	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
Q5	<i>Nothing but the Truth</i>
Q6	<i>Short Stories</i>
Q7	<i>Poetry</i>

### Findings:

Can apply routine procedures, but struggle with those that require more independent or creative thought

Graph 6.8.1: Average marks per section expressed as a percentage in Paper 3



Section A	Essays
Section B	Longer Transactional Pieces
Section C	Shorter Texts

# ***Developing High Level Comprehension and Critical Thinking Skills as a Pathway to Resilience in Rural schools***

## Rationale

Improving quality education in a challenging rural environment

## Purpose

To investigate the adaptation and use of the Quality Talk Model in a South African school

## Primary Research Question

How can adaptation of Quality Talk for use in a South African rural high school inform knowledge on critical-analytical pedagogy?

## Research Methodology

Co-inquiry model

Collaborated partnership with the goal to produce ***context and practice-linked knowledge*** that is ***empirically and theoretically sound***

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## Quality Talk (QT) Model

- Developed in school-based intervention research by Karen Murphy and her team
- It has proven effective for use by teachers in the United States to engage students critically and with comprehension in classrooms.
- QT is an evidence-based approach to reading and instruction.
- It involves discussions that promote students' high-level comprehension of text, critical-reflective thinking and epistemic cognition about and around text.
- The approach is premised on the belief that talk is a tool for thinking, and that certain kinds of talk can contribute to high-level comprehension.

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## Theoretical Framework

Cognitive & Sociocultural theory

### Quality Talk Model

1. Ideal Instructional Framework
2. Discussion Elements
3. Teacher Modelling and Scaffolding
4. Pedagogical Principles

### South African Context

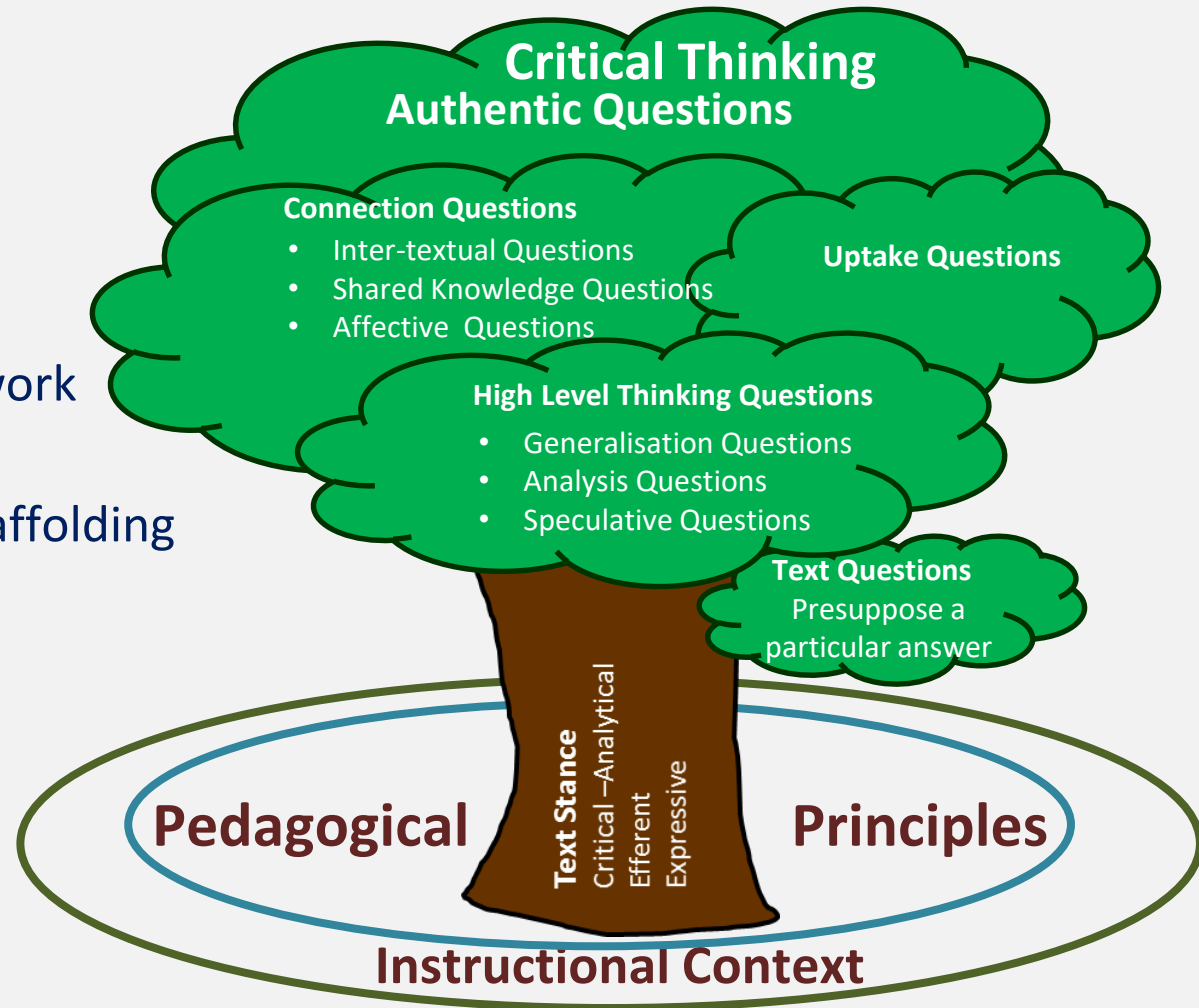
- Context and Culture
- Multilingualism

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## Theoretical Framework cont.

### Quality Talk Model

1. Ideal Instructional Framework
2. Discussion Elements
3. Teacher Modelling and Scaffolding
4. Pedagogical Principles



(Adaption of Wilkinson et al., 2010)

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South African Context

## **Multilingualism**

Teacher preparedness to teach English as FAL

Learner Proficiency

Dialogical Space

## **Culture and Context**

Cultural worldview

Cultural communication

Context



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## Research design

### Intervention research

#### **Phase 1 = Baseline**

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

#### **Phase 2 = Intervention**

Processes in the form of professional development

1. Professional learning conversation with teachers about Quality Talk
2. Use the data collected to engage with teachers on the model through personal experience and reflect on the role of talk in their
3. Collaborative inquiry and provide resources for implementation in their context

Build on 3 iterative cycles

1. Observe the classroom observations with the teacher
2. Adapt QT practices
3. Evaluate the effectiveness

} 10  
Intervention  
Sessions

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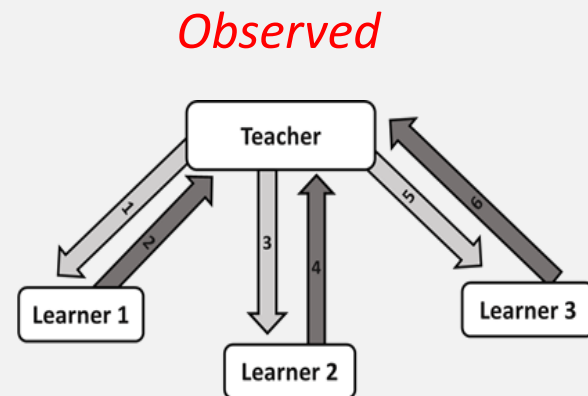
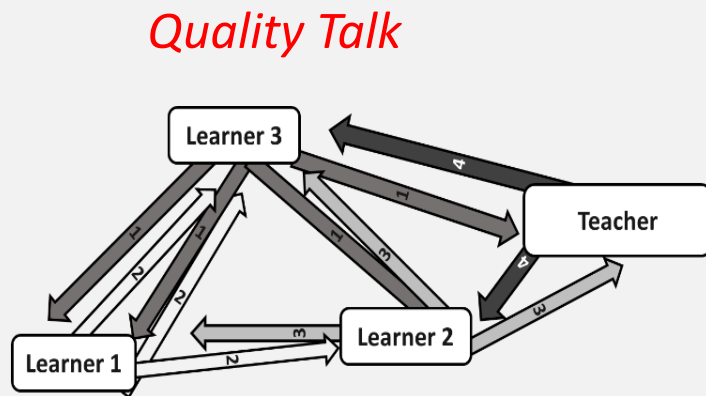
## *Phase 1 = Baseline*

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

### Instructional Frame (Video Observations & Teacher Interviews):

How the teacher creates the conditions for productive talk in the classroom.

- Control – text & discourse patterns



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## ***Phase 1 = Baseline continued***

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

### **Discussion Elements (Video Observations):**

Types of questions asked and the type of responses (*observed to date*)

Questions		Responses	
<b>Test</b>	<b>X</b>	Elaborated explanation (Claim, reason, reason)	-
<b>Authentic</b>			
Uptake	-	Explorative talk (Build knowledge together)	-
Higher Level	-		
Connection	-		

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## *Phase 1 = Baseline*

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

### Teacher Moves (Video Observations)

How the class and discussion process is managed (*observed to date*)

- Promoting
- **Modelling**
- Marking
- Challenging
- **Instruction**
- Procedural

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## ***Phase 1 = Baseline***

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

### **Pedagogical Principles (Interviews & learners' exercise books)**

Teacher's belief system on language and learning are developed and taught

- Teacher role = Learner centred
- Learner role = Active participant
- Process vs Product = Both are NB

*Observed to date:*

- Teacher role = *Teacher centred*
- Learner role = *Passive recipient*
- Process vs Product = *not seen*

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## ***Phase 1 = Baseline***

What elements of Quality Talk Model are being used in the classroom

*Next Step.....*

## **South African Context (reflective journal, interviews, observations & fieldnotes)**

- Rurality
- Culture
- Multilingualism

**Then Phase 2**