Please watch the following video:

The Conversational Framework

Supplementary Notes from the video.

i.   Overview of the Conversational Framework

Diana Laurillard's *Conversational Framework* (2002) is a practical guideline for designing learning environments. It was intended to help teach teachers to think about teaching and learning from the students' point of view. It not only aligns with the learning theories of conceptual learning, experiential learning, social constructivism, constructionism, and collaborative learning (Laurillard, 2012) but also design frameworks such as problem based learning and authentic learning.
The framework has taken the key findings from these learning theories and concluded that learners need practice, feedback, access to information and the opportunity to collaborate for effective learning to take place. (Laurillard, 1993)

It is important to look at the term conversation in the Conversational Framework as it is not only related to oral communication but refers broadly to any sort of communication which can take place through a variety of media. It is the first framework to synthesise the different learning theories as well as challenge what digital technologies offer to teaching and learning. Diana Laurillard asks this question 'what does learning need from technology?' not, 'what have all these technologies got to offer?' (Laurillard, 2002)

Reflection and iteration are important components of the framework. Self-reflection also comes under the term conversation and being able to converse and discuss what the learner knows or doesnt know is crucial to the learning process. (Sharples, 2005).
The act of iteration and approaching the same topic repeatedly but from different angles and not simply repeating the topic without changes or modifications produces a deep learning. "The idea that the more demands from the teacher, practice environment and peers to create ideas and actions and the more information, guidance, feedback, comments and shared outputs available, the more the learner is likely to iterate through the cycle that promotes learning". (Laurillard, 2002, p. 130)

Explaining the Framework.
 It starts with the learner at the centre of the framework with the Learner concepts and Learner practice. Each assist the other as the learner is presented with a concept and then through feedback and support puts this concept into practice.
There are four other categories: Teacher concepts, Peer concepts, Learning Environment and Peer practice.

The top half of the diagram represents dialogue and theory while the bottom half represents experiential learning, action and practice. There are a series or arrows and loops connecting each concept that can continue until the learner and teacher are satisfied that

the intended learning outcome has been achieved. The vertical flow of the arrows represent adaptations that the teacher can make in the lesson to accommodate the students. This is termed as modulate (the adaptation of knowledge or beliefs and theory) and generate (the practice that is created and reflected upon because of the theory.)

ii)   Key Components of the Conversational Framework

A key component that the Conversational theory aims to achieve is to embrace all the potential teaching-learning activities that can used to make learning design effective.
In this framework there are six important components that need to be addressed to fully understand the framework. These are Acquisition, Inquiry, Discussion, Practice, Collaboration, Production.

Learning through Acquisition

Learning through acquisition is what learners are doing when they are listening to a lecture or podcast, reading from books or websites, and watching videos. While many view this as an inactive form of learning as students are required to follow the teacher's theories and ideas through a structured narrative Laurillard points out that "Students do need to learn what others have discovered, to hear about expert ways of thinking and practicing, and what is known already in their field." (2002, p. 106)
Digital technologies have not changed this component significantly, learners are now moved onto the internet to research instead of paper print forms but the basic motivations and processes remain unchanged.

Learning through Inquiry

"Inquiry-based learning is seen as important because it rehearses students in the fundamental skills of learning that are essential for developing their own knowledge, which should be continually adapted, and refined." (Laurillard, p. 123)
This will cause the learner to reflect on the concepts and ideas being taught and the learner being in control of their learning and development. This is presented in the framework though loops where the learner can repeat the process many times for the information to be interpreted. It is important in this component that the learners are not navigating through the resources themselves without adequate feedback.
Laurillard points out that in this component the teacher is still defining the learning outcomes and that the students' output is assessed on whether the outcomes are achieved or not. The teacher needs to take care to set up a supportive environment to guide and scaffold the activity that the learners do. (2020) These digital activities could be in the form of quizzes, simple games or scenarios.
The framework suggests that rather the teacher give an assignment and the learner receives a grade the teacher is a guide and support to answer questions and monitor the students' progress. "There is an idea that the students themselves collaborate and give and receive feedback and with this additional feedback and motivation provided by other learners there is likely to be more iteration around the modulate/generate cycle prompting further development and ideas lessening the need for teacher feedback and guidance". (2002, p. 126)

Learning through Discussion

The social aspect of learning is vital to any learning environment whether it is formal or informal. Peer discussion plays an important role in a classroom as it is a way to alleviate the one-way transmission that is often found in lectures or traditional classrooms. The work of Vygotsy (as cited in Laurillard, 2002) explains the importance of communication and

dialogue saying that "all the higher [psychological] functions originate as actual relations between human individuals" before they can be internalized as cognitive development (p. 128).

Learning through discussion requires the learner to articulate their ideas and questions as well as responding to the teacher and peers. This component in the framework is essential as the critique of ideas and their development creates a more conceptual understanding to a topic.

To make peer discussion however requires careful planning and support by the teacher, it does not simply happen by asking the question 'discuss amongst yourselves'. (Luarillard, 2012).

Learning through discussion comes in several forms: with or without the teacher present, teacher-led or student-led, small groups or large groups, structured or unstructured, embedded within other methods, or stand-alone. We now also have the choice of face-to-face or online, and synchronous or asynchronous through Social networks, forums, online meetings and discussions or webinars. (Mill, 2006)

Learning through Practice

'Learning by doing' or 'learning through experience' is a way for the learner to understand and use the knowledge of a discipline (Laurillard, 2002)

Learning through practice enables the learner to adapt their actions to the task goal, and use the feedback to improve their next action. Mostly done on an individual basis it is an essential part of the learning process. Feedback may come from self-reflection, from peers, from the teacher, or from the activity itself, if it shows them how to improve the result of their action in relation to the goal.

Learning through Collaboration

This is an important component and Laurillard describes it as the "cooperation between learners where the focus is the social and cultural description of how the group constructs a shared outcome." (2002, p. 188) It is important to note that this differs from cooperation, where the learners are individually working as part of a team. The idea that collaboration is that learners need to produce something together and the participation and negotiation with peers is crucial.

Learning through collaboration embraces mainly discussion, practice, and production. Building on investigations and acquisition is about taking part in the process of knowledge building itself. Through digital technologies this could be in the form of Simulations, AR/VR, intelligent tutorials or strategic games.

Learning through Production

Learning through production is the way the teacher motivates the learner to consolidate what they have learned and embedding this knowledge. It helps by getting the learner to explore the concept through different angles as they create something. This could be achieved by creating a blog, video or a presentation.

It is important to mention the different types of digital technology that support each of these components. They are:

- Narrative media (Explaining , demonstrating and describing)
- Interactive media: (Facilitating reflection, checking understanding and providing feedback(both learners and teacher)
- Communicative media: (allows exchanges between teachers/facilitators/learners)
- Adaptive media: facilitates experimentation and practice

- Productive media: Using the knowledge learnt and articulating and demonstrating (Mill, 2008)

Each of these media types can be used within the six learning types to consolidate the learning.

iii.   The Framework's strengths

Laurillard explains that the best learning experiences need to combine all six learning types (2002) and while these are key in the Conversational Framework the way digital media is approached and utilized is also important.

Both teachers and learners need to have positive attitudes towards a learner-centred, holistic approach in order to benefit from task performance as well they need to possess knowledge and skills such as digital literacy and communicative competence.

A key strength of the framework would be the opportunities for both teachers and students to use technology to create, communicate and develop ideas as well as build relationships with their peers and teacher. Technology could be what "bridges the gulf between formal and experiential learning." (Sharples, 2005) Due to the amount of collaboration and peer work such as describing, and redescribing concepts, learning through practice, completing tasks together and reflecting on their actions, these relationships are key. In peer interaction there is no expert so learners that are struggling with a concept can be supported by their without the influence of the 'expect' or teacher. (Laurillard, 2002)

Another strength in the framework would have to be the opportunities of repetition and practice. Technology supports this further as it creates opportunities for learners to repeat the learning cycles of generating and modulating their concepts and practice. (Laurillard, 2012)

With the support of digital teaching practices the learners sense of self-efficacy with this framework. The focus on peer collaboration, discussion and production can not be achieved without the learners taking responsibility for their own learning. Laurillard highlights that the whole point of formal education is to help students develop greater efficacy in the physical and social world outside the classroom. (Laurillard, 2012, p. 42)

What also stems from self-efficacy is the importance of intrinsic feedback and reflection. This is especially valuable in a digital learning environment as learners can practice in their own time, pace and place and can receive immediate feedback. It also adds to the speed of the response, iteration and practice. (Laurillard, 2015) By the student creating their own deeper awareness and perception it often has a more significant impact than the student receiving extrinsic feedback from the teacher in the form of a grade or mark. (Laurillard, 2002)

The framework's Issues

There is a potential issue with adopting the Conversational Framework as it could result in the teacher dominating the conversation and becoming the "sage on the stage". (Heinze, A., Procter, C., & Scott, B. 2007, p.239) The teacher is involved with the feedback and reformulating the lesson where they see fit and is active in many of the six components. In higher education and the corporate world there is a clear move away from this notion, especially with the move into digital technologies. There is a strong push for communication to be student initiated and actioned and the teacher as a facilitator or a 'guide on the side' for learning to occur.

This framework also relies on the learners being intrinsically motivated and student engagement being high. A key consideration with this is what keeps the learner generating actions and articulations and if this stops in one of the components how will this affect the learning outcomes. Heinze, Procter and Scott (2007) criticise the framework not only for being complicated but it would only apply with students who will do everything required of them. They point out that this is due to the amount of performance tasks related to the same target structure that need to be completed for the iteration to occur. They also mention that because there is a high level of teacher-student engagement it might be considered boring and laborious by many students and teachers alike.

The framework could also present difficulties for the teacher as not only is it best practice for learning to incorporate all six of the learning types but to incorporate the multiple media avenues. While this can give the teacher huge scope to ensure that learners are given ample opportunities to learn it also creates a complexity for the teacher to monitor each student and adapt the learning task for each individual. If the teacher has a large class then some learners might be missed out and exclusion for some learners could result.

iv. How could this framework be approached in a ESOL class

The real strength of this framework is that regardless of different delivery modes such as face-to face, blended or online distance it can be adapted to suit each.

Adopting this framework for a formal, blended language class for Intermediate level could be successful because there are many components that the students can move through to understand a language skill.

With the intention of creating asynchronous online components for the class and face-to-face synchronous sessions to help the students practice their speaking and listening.

As studies and research have shown ESOL learning is "extraordinarily heterogeneous" (Baynham, 2007, p. 67) and classes are what I would consider noisy as they are mostly made up of talk. As well as being the main medium of teaching it is also what is being taught. "Turning talk into learning an (classroom) and learning into talk (for outside) requires thorough understanding of second language learning and its pedagogy."(Baynham, 2007,p. 67)

The Conversation Framework is key for this as it allows students to build their knowledge through the teacher's targeted structures. They can practice with the teacher and then collaborate with their peers for further explanation and practice. As with a language classroom the need to scaffold, especially with grammatical structures, is essential. This can be achieved in the acquisition component of the framework and then the task could be adjusted if needed as the students enter the next phases of inquiry and discussion.

Another key aspect of the framework that would apply to a language classroom is the looping and practice opportunities that are given. Students can potentially practice a particular grammar structure or vocabulary in all six components and repetition (iteration) going back and forwards getting the learners closer to learning the goal. The idea of repetition as a basis of learning derives from memory research, that repetition consolidates the memories as the neural networks involved are more exposed. (Martinez & Derrick, 1996).

Another way that this framework could be useful in a blended language class is by the teacher using digital tools nimbly it is allowing the students to have sufficient time on task and the opportunity to formulate a response. This could be by the learners spending time in the practice phase using interactive media such as online quizzes or simple games

individually before they are in the face-to face classroom environment. In doing so they are given enough time to reflect on what they know before they are asked to collaborate with their peers.

In an ESOL environment there is the need for learners to feel safe to practice and the need for teachers to create this space. With the framework learners have the opportunity to collaborate which can be done online or in the f2f classroom. Shehadeh (as cited in Baynham, 2007) points out that "collaboration enhances students' self-confidence and develops their ability to discuss, negotiate and pool their ideas. It then develops trust and respect between peers and increases their willingness to collaborate and confidence in helping and assisting their peers." This in turn goes back to my previous comment that language learning is heterogeneous in nature and relies on the collaboration of teacher and learners. Creating a collaborative learning environment is vital for students to have necessary practice with a particular language skill. The Conversation framework places a heavy emphasis on collaboration and this can be achieved either using digital technology or traditional means.

Also there is a need for authentic learning and connecting the classroom with learners' outside lives. Laurillard views authentic learning important as it situates concepts and subject specific ways of thinking in a real world context, providing students with an opportunity to practice the activities of their subject, and reflect on the feed-back that context provides. (2002, p. 167)

If the students are not driven by a practical goal even if this is broken down with for example a particular writing task (writing a letter of complaint) then there needs to be a level of authenticity. The purpose of any formal learning environment is that the learner can then take the skills learnt and apply them in a real world context. The framework allows this to be achieved particularly in the production component. By having the learners, if we use the example of a letter of complaint, use social media (twitter) to write a complaint they are exposing themselves to using the formal lesson in an everyday context.

"In a nutshell the Conversational Framework attempts to encapsulate
what we know about the nature of formal learning, what students bring to
learning, what it takes to learn, and what it takes to teach."(Laurillard, 2012 p. 119)

References:

Alshwiah, A. A. (2017). *The effect of applying Laurillard's conversational framework (LCF) on the development of writing skills: Perceptions and engagement of students in a Middle East context* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester).

Baynham, M. (2007). ESOL : effective teaching and learning. *National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) Institute of Education,* University of London.
http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/id/eprint/22304

Forte, C. (2012) *Learn Something More: Dianna Laurillard's Conversational Framework*.
https://christineforte.wordpress.com/2012/04/15/learn-something-more-dianna-laurillards-conversational-framework/

Heinze, A., Procter, C., & Scott, B. (2007). Use of conversation theory to underpin blended learning. *International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies,* 1(1), 108-120.

Laurillard, D, (2002). *Rethinking University Teaching: A Conversational Framework for the Effective Use of Learning Technologies*, 2nd edition. London: RoutledgeFalmer

Laurillard, D. (2012). *Motivating and enabling the learning cycle. In Teaching as a design science: Building pedagogical patterns for learning and technology*. Routledge.

Laurillard, D. (2016). Learning number sense through digital games with intrinsic feedback. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *32*(6).
https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.3116

Martinez Jr, J. L., & Derrick, B. E. (1996). *Long-term potentiation and learning.* Annual review of psychology, 47(1), 173-203.
https://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/courses/ceredocs/oldwikis/g6.pdf

Mill, J (2008, May 26) *Learning as conversation.*
https://johnmill.wordpress.com/2008/05/26/laurillards-conversational-framework-1/

Ng, C. F. and Ng, P. K. (2015). A Review of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations of ESL Learners. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Culture, Languages and Literature*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 9-10 June 2015. Manuscript received April 3, 2015.

Sharples, M. (2005). L*earning As Conversation : Transforming Education in the Mobile Age. Foundations,* 147–152. Citeseer.
http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.134.4715&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Tamplin, J (2020) *Informed use of technology in teaching: Reflections on Laurillard's Conversational Framework.*

https://jeanettetamplin.wordpress.com/2020/07/23/informed-use-of-technology-in-teaching-reflections-on-laurillards-conversational-framework/

Karolinska Institutet. *Diana Laurillard 6 Learning Types.* https://ki.instructure.com/courses/115/pages/diana-laurilliards-six-learning-types

Xue, S. (2020). A conceptual model for integrating affordances of mobile technologies into task-based language teaching, *Interactive Learning Environments*, DOI: 10.1080/10494820.2019.1711132