

# Talk The Talk

CONFIDENT COMMUNICATION FOR LIFE



## TALK THE TALK:

CONFIDENCE, COMMUNICATION AND COLLEGIALITY

AN EVALUATION OF THE TRAINING WORKSHOPS DELIVERED  
IN SCHOOLS ACROSS ENGLAND & WALES BY TALK THE TALK

JOHN MACBEATH AND ALEX ALEXANDROU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*There was a consistent trend in improved confidence ratings from all participants.*

The aspirations for the workshops are to enable young people to find their voice, to gain confidence in themselves, to deal constructively with nerves, and to be able to communicate not just in the classroom but in other social contexts, and with a broader range of people. These aims appear to have been quite comprehensively achieved. The most salient testimonies from young people referred to their discovery of their own voice and expression of their latent skills, carrying social and vocational benefits.

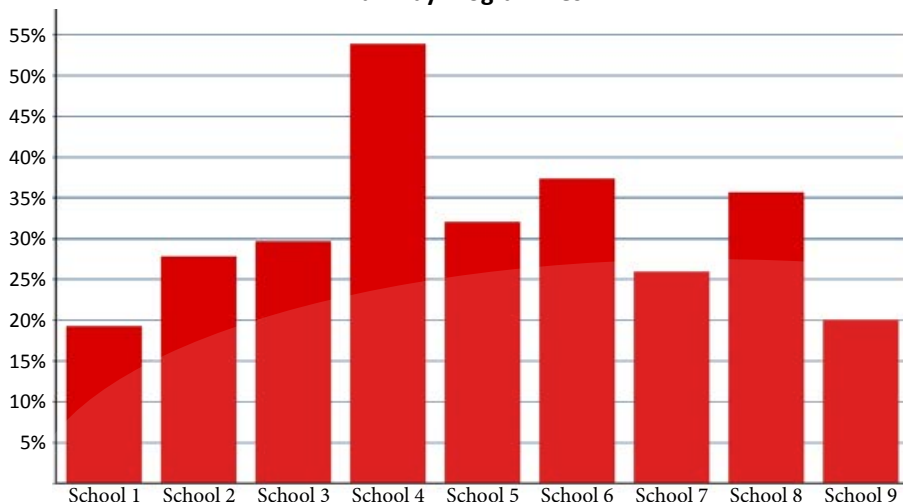
Two years on from the 2016 evaluation ***Talking the Talk: with confidence and conviction*** the initiative has been complemented and enriched by developing insights and a more elaborated and structured programme – offering support to all age-ranges in secondary school via ***Talk About Transition, Talk About Communication, Talk About Communication Plus*** and ***Talk About The Future***. There is huge credit from all participants to the skills, patience and enthusiasm of the trainers. Teachers are virtually unanimous in the praise of their skills in their words, their ‘inspiration’, ‘focus’, ‘skills’, ‘encouragement’ and inclusive approach.

In 2018, 2190 students across twelve secondary schools in England and Wales were involved. Eighteen Talk The Talk trainers were involved in delivering these workshops. The evaluation team observed Talk About Transition workshops, Talk About Communication workshops and Talk About The Future workshops involving students from Years 6 -12.

In addition to interviews conducted by the evaluation team, follow-up individual and group interviews with students and teachers who had participated in the workshops, lasting on average 10 minutes each were conducted in each of the schools. These interviews were transcribed and analysed with key recurring themes identified by the research team.

As the evidence suggests, the impact on individual self-knowledge and classroom relationships is clearly one of the major gains from the workshop experience.

**Pupils' Self Rating - Percentage Increase In Confidence  
Full-Day Programmes**



**Talk About Transition** workshops worked particularly well, helping students to develop friendships and dealing with what is, typically, an occasion for both anticipation and apprehension. This was clearly helpful to their form tutors in alerting them to what they might need to look out for, and to work on, in the initial weeks of the first term. The activities and conduct of the workshops had, teachers agreed, created a positive atmosphere, making it easy for students to get to know children from different schools in an enjoyable and safe space.

In preparation for their talks within **Talk About Communication**, viewed by many students with trepidation, trainers suggested that the talk be structured around five key points, represented by the five fingers, which students then practised with a partner. That most students were able to deliver their talk, although not always remembering the five points, was owed to the encouragement and support of the trainer. However halting or embarrassed the presentation, it was always applauded by the trainer with encouragement for the group to do the same.

**Talk About The Future** workshops have a tangible impact as the students realised that they had much to learn in terms of presenting themselves for interview and then learning to project the positive aspects of their character and their achievements, which many students had a tendency to underplay. The feedback they received from the trainer was clearly invaluable, based on his or her personal experiences of interviewing and being interviewed.

**Professor John MacBeath**  
**October 2018**

## Talk The Talk: Confidence, Communication and Collegiality

What teachers had to say...

*The students have developed strategies in relation to confidence, communication and being able to cope with the pressures of communicating, engaging and interacting in public settings such as the classroom.*

*It was lovely to see the relationship between the trainer and the pupils develop throughout the day – so many pupils left school with a lot more confidence than they came with!*

*Incredible trainer, so much energy and really got all the students engaged!! Highly recommended for any future classes in any schools.*

*The trainer was really involving with the kids. They have all responded very well to his stories and interactions. It was really good how he managed to make students comfortable in doing something which was beyond their comfort zone.*

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