



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Faculty of Education

Talking the Talk

With confidence and conviction

An evaluation of the Talk The Talk programme

**Final evaluation
John MacBeath
June 2016**

Acknowledgements

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TALK THE TALK

Purpose and intervention

Background and development of the programme

Talk The Talk is now approaching its fourth year of work with schools. Following three years of the *Speak Out Programme* by Speakers Trust and funded by Four Acre Trust, the programme has evolved from what was originally a competition in public speaking (the *Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge*) now focusing on all children, many of whom may lack confidence, not simply in public speaking but in their everyday relationships in their schools, classrooms and lives beyond. This is often inhibiting of their potential achievements, aspirations and social attitudes. Talk The Talk is now inclusive across whole cohorts with a commitment to including all children, with the strapline 'Confident Communication for Life'. The intent is to focus on what may be called the 'soft skills', difficult to measure and therefore often marginalised or neglected in school priorities and exam targets.

There has recently been a change in the nature of the offer to schools. Originally Talk The Talk was provided without charge but the decision to charge schools stemmed not simply from economic considerations but as an indication of how much a school would value the intervention and, having made the investment, more likely then to follow it through. The offer is of one full day's training with a suite of follow up lessons that can be delivered by a school's own teachers. The cost to schools of approximately £10 per student amounts to a 60% discount of the £625 costs incurred. £250 per session plus free use of the web lessons – is the charge to the school.

In 2014/15 the target of 400 sessions was exceeded by 51, providing a similar target for 2015/16. To date this includes 44,000 children trained across nearly 2000 sessions. The trainers are a selected group with the requisite enthusiasm and skills in working with young people and described as 'a particularly good bunch with a conscientious approach'. All have been evaluated successfully by Richard Hull. A recent addition to support the main programme is the training of teachers in presentation skills, encouraging student communication and positive behaviour management through confident communication.

The evaluation

The evaluation, commissioned by Talk The Talk's John Bothamley was designed to measure the impact of the programme against its objectives as played out in seven schools over a period of around four months. To what extent did it achieve the following?

Help young people to:

- Develop the use of structure in presentations, essay writing and exam answers.
- Identify and use persuasive language techniques to get one's message across.

- Nurture employability skills, interview techniques and key presentation methods.
- Organise and present ideas with a sense of audience, body language and posture.

Talk The Talk describes itself as ‘An engaging confident communication masterclass run over a full school day’ in which students learn how to deliver confidently without notes, how to plan and deliver a speech, in turn helping to develop a stronger essay writing structure and approach to assessment. These skills, it is suggested, should transfer not only into other social and out-of-school contexts but into other domains such as writing essays in which the structure of what is to be conveyed comprises a generic skill.

The programme’s key features are described as ‘inclusive and supportive’, ‘all about enabling young people to find their voice’, to gain confidence in themselves, dealing constructively with nerves, able to communicate not just in the classroom but ‘for life’. Confidence has to be not just expressed in schools and classrooms but should travel and be sustained in other settings, in the workplace and in job interviews, for example.

The nature of spoken language and body language are seen as closely allied so that identifying and using persuasive language techniques is conveyed by the confidence one portrays through an authoritative stance and delivery. This principle draws on a considerable amount of evidence from behaviourist and social psychology in which our physical posture creates a kind of feedback loop into how we perceive ourselves – I am behaving confidently therefore I am more confident.

The focus on verbal and social communication is an important complement, or antidote, to the predominate activity in class work in which great reliance is placed on the written word and the validation of oneself as a learner comes primarily through the written word in assignments, tests and exams. There is an ample corpus of research to show that there has been both the narrowing of assessment but also illustrating its detrimental impact on young people’s confidence and perception of self worth.

Key to the success of the programme is the selection and training of expert trainers, coaching and supporting students in class sized groups of 22-28, held in a space (normally a classroom) in which chairs are arranged in a semi-circle and a whiteboard or flipchart are used to portray key ideas and graphics and record student responses. As the commitment of teachers, or a teacher, is seen as important, the same teacher is asked to remain throughout the day with the class being trained.

A sample of schools

The participating schools were:

- **Axe Valley Community College**, a state non-selective mixed community college, located in Axminster, Devon with a capacity for around 800 students.
- **Avonbourne College** is a foundation school with academy status located in Bournemouth, Dorset. A single-sex all-girls school for 11- to 16-year-olds with a capacity for around 1000 students.
- **Harewood College** is a secondary school with academy status in Bournemouth, for boys aged 11 to 16, currently with a roll of 767.
- **Lewis Girls' Comprehensive School** is a comprehensive school in Glan-y-Nant, Pengam Wales with a capacity for around 800 students. The School was established subsequent to its partner school Lewis School, Pengam.
- **Risca Community Comprehensive School** is a community comprehensive school located in the town of Risca near Newport on the eastern side of the Caerphilly County Borough, South Wales currently with a role approaching 350.
- **Ysgol Gyfun Emlyn** secondary School is in the town of Newcastle Emlyn straddling the border of the counties of Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire in west Wales.
- **Ysgol Henry Richard School** is located on two campuses, a junior and a senior school located in Tregaron, Ceredigion in Wales.
- **Ysgol Y Berwyn** is a bilingual secondary school for 11 – 18 year olds, serving a wide rural area, situated in the small town of Bala.
- **The Marches School** is based in Oswestry, Shropshire. It was the first academy to be created in Shropshire.

From each class five young people were selected for interview on three occasions separated by a period of two or three months.

This gave a total of 9 schools x 5 students x 3 occasions (although not all students were available on every occasion and some schools were unable to accommodate three rounds of interview). The total number of interviews, transcripts with students' ratings was 93. In addition, one or more teachers also provided evaluations and in some cases a parent as well. These were complemented by in-depth interviews in two of the schools.

Measures of success

How is 'success' in meeting Talk The Talk objectives to be judged? The 'high' immediately following an event, the break from routine, new faces and the enthusiasm they bring to the occasion, together with no prior history or reputation of the young people the trainers face, need to be factored in to any summative judgments. Hence the importance of revisiting these young people over a fairly extended period of time.

How much weight does one give to self report, a subjective measure susceptible to change of mood, time and place? It is important therefore to draw on other sources of evidence, and in this case to triangulate the data - juxtaposing the students' own accounts with those of teachers and independent researchers.

The evidence

A question of ethos and culture

How much of Talk The Talk impact may be attributed to the ethos and culture of the school and how much to the local community and to its cultural legacy? Two visitors' impressions may tell something of the story.

I was extremely impressed with the school and was made to feel very welcome. I was greeted courteously and in a professional manner by the reception staff. I am of the opinion that the school is set up in such a manner that it provides a positive environment from a teaching, learning and pastoral perspective.I was furnished with refreshments. Thus, school staff put in a great deal of effort to ensure the interviews ran smoothly and that both myself and the interviewees would feel comfortable and secure.

By contrast:

The building is run down and looks a pretty depressing place on a cold, wet and windy afternoon. The staff in reception, who are behind glass sliding shutters, are not particularly welcoming and there is a complicated signing in method using a computer, which is temperamental and further distances the visitor from the reception staff, who are not eager to help.... all staff I met in corridors had difficulty in making eye contact and in responding to a greeting.

Perhaps too much may be made of the contrasts, the weather factor, the impact of the physical environment, the difference between two different visitors themselves. The importance of the school's location, its accessibility and its place in the community have also to be factored in the equation. For example, the second school is described as 'serving a remote area in mid-west Wales' and although many of its students come from a nearby town it is perhaps significant that those randomly selected for participation and interview were more likely to come from a farming or rural background. By contrast the first school is located in the suburbs of a major city and served by its immediate feeder Primary School.

The following accounts from the interviews in the second school throw further light on the reticent nature of the students:

C presents as a very nervous girl. She smiles and is friendly but, it would appear, lacks confidence. Throughout our conversation she was pleasant and polite but it was hard to get her to talk spontaneously.

C entered the room diffidently. She is a tall girl and stoops slightly. She smiled and was very pleasant throughout the time I spent with her but she was reticent to speak.

L was very timid. When we started talking together she spoke very quietly and gave very brief answers. She did settle and became slightly less self-conscious but she remained quite taciturn.

R was not particularly lacking in confidence in our meeting but he was very difficult to engage. He was rather semi-detached in the conversation until I got him talking about sheep. He warmed up a bit then but was still hard work.

This may be explained, of course, by why these particular students were chosen for the programme and in all cases, despite their reticence in interview, there was a positive comment on the programme:

C had enjoyed the programme and felt that it had helped her structure her thinking both when she had to present something and when she had to write something.

C: *"When I do a presentation in English or in Welsh, I use it (the structure)".*

L had enjoyed the workshop and had found it very helpful. She liked having the booklet to refer to and used it frequently. She said that she didn't like speaking in public but the structures she had learnt on the workshop day had really helped her.

L: *"I still wouldn't choose to get up and talk but the booklet helps".*

L's mother agreed: *"Talk The Talk has given her a structure"*

R said that he had enjoyed the workshop day as a change from normal lessons. He added that he is now more likely now 'to check things out and make sure of everything' but he can structure it now.

T said that the workshop had helped him in lots of ways. He used the structure in any presentation he needed to give and in his written work -

T: *"I use what I learnt to structure lots of things".*

A measure of confidence: evidence from one school

The overall trend for young people to profess greater confidence with each iteration of the programme may be illustrated by pupils' self rating in **Avonbourne College**, together with comments by their teachers.

KD

Interview 1: 2,1,3 (total 6)

Interview 2: 4,3,3 (total 10)

Interview 3: 4,4,5 (total 13)

Teacher:

I do think she has had quite a significant change since the Talk The Talk in that her confidence in talking to her friends, her peers as well as adults including me, who she has never even had teach her before. She's quite happy to come and discuss things with me if she needs to. She's really definitely grown a lot since the Talk The Talk. Probably, one of the ones that's had the most impact long term and hopefully, you will see that later

In interview **KD** described her increased self confidence:

"I felt like it boosted my confidence a little bit more and I feel more confident talking to people and talking in front of my classmates. I felt that I could talk to people more and introduce myself more...[particularly]... outside of school.. Before [the training session] I felt nervous and didn't want to talk to anyone and after the session I feel I can talk to people now".

HM

Interview 1: 1,3,4 (total 8)

Interview 2: 4,4,4 (total 12)

Interview 3: 4,5,3 (total 12)

Teacher:

"Obviously I saw her on the day of the Talk The Talk and I saw her really come out of her shell. I am seeing more of that as the weeks have passed. She's not entirely confident - she still becomes withdrawn from time-to-time but from what she was like at the very beginning, she's definitely very much improved in terms of communicating with students as well as adults – and it is nice to see that change."

SM

Interview 1: 3,4,3 (total 10)

Interview 2: 5,5,5 (total 15)

Interview 3: 5,5,5 (total 15)

Teacher:

"I have seen a difference from the beginning of the year until about now. She would often, despite sitting at the front of the class with her friends...I would never have got an answer out of her, whether voluntarily or by asking her directly. But now her hand goes up, she's more than willing and she will even argue back, which is great! So there's a confidence there in that class setting that she feels confident to be able to put her view across"

Asked in interview as to what she had got out of the day and what had changed, SM said that she was more confident both in and out of school. She added that her participation in class had increased and improved her confidence in asking questions : "I ask more questions now" which made her, she said, "feel good" .

KR

Interview 1: 1,3,1 (total 5)

Interview 2: 3,3,4 (total 11)

Interview 3: 4,5,5 (total 14)

Teacher:

"More recently I think her friendship circle has grown. I think that she participates more in class now. She is certainly a lot more on the radar. She sometimes gets into a bit of trouble but that could be possibly because she is getting a bit of a voice. So she's certainly on my radar now...Before her friendship group were very similar, they were very quiet, they were the lower ability. She's broadened it out, and there are a few good characters and a few she may need to distance herself from again!"

And, as **KR** herself says

"Before [the training session] I would never sign up for courses or anything because I was like really shy and everything. Now I sign up for courses and stuff and like do more activities with them".

KA, absent from the second and third interviews, gave herself relatively low ratings before the workshop (2,3,4) but was seen by her teachers as already confident, but nonetheless having grown further in confidence as a result of her single exposure to the training:

Teacher:

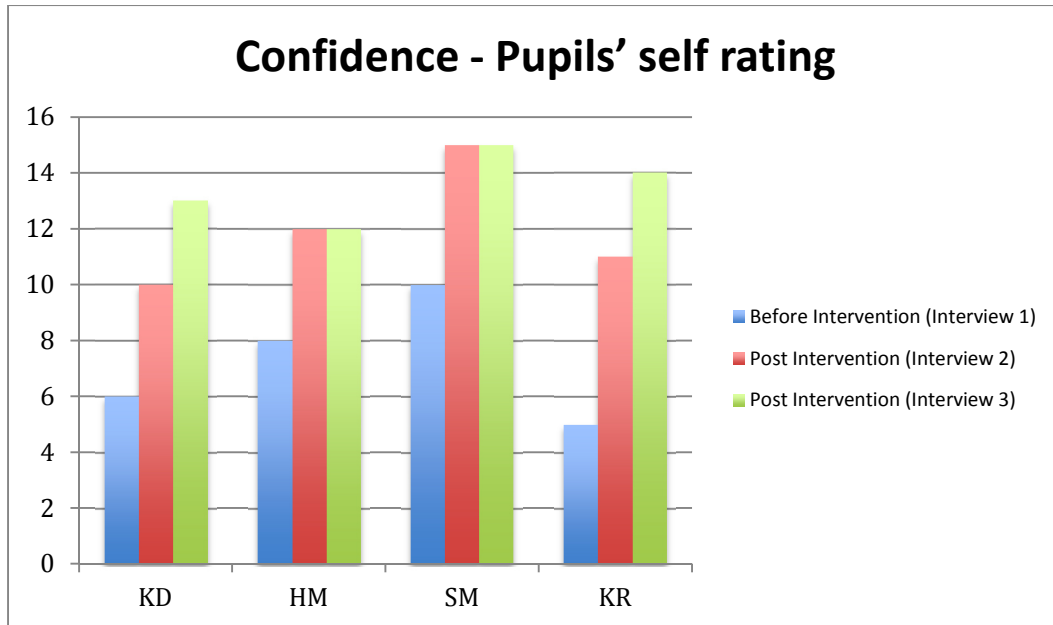
"KA is a really lovely girl – if you look at the programme you are evaluating, she initially would have been the one who was most confident out of them all. That being said, I still think she's grown in confidence – or maintained that level of confidence as we've gone through the weeks post the Talk The Talk day. I think she has made progress with her confidence."

Another member of staff describing the change in **KA**'s confidence, commented:

"I have been to Disney Land with her on a trip and I've seen a massive change. Her stature has grown for a very small child – her stature has grown and she's a lot more confident, willing to talk to others and you can see there is a confidence in her that wasn't there last year when I taught her".

The degree to which **KA**'s growth in confidence may be explained by maturation or other social factors is difficult to disentangle but when asked if **KA**'s enhanced confidence could in some way be linked to the TTT training – this teacher stated:

"I would imagine so, certainly, because just the way she approaches things now – if you look at her compared to all the other girls as well, there is something slightly different to the way she approaches it than just maturity".



Triangulating the data

For every pupil there are not only their own gradings over time but assessments by a teacher, or teachers, and sometimes by a parent. These assessments show:

- In general, higher ratings by students with each successive iteration
- Improving ratings by teachers
- Significant differences between students' and teachers' ratings
- Significant differences between parents', students and teachers' ratings

As a general tendency teachers tended to give students a lower score than students themselves. The following table illustrates some of the differences between teachers' and students' ratings in relation to each of the three tasks:

- Talk about breakfast
- Greet the mayor and bring him along to the class
- Speak up when others are speaking

	Student	Teacher
JM	4,2,3	3,2,2
NJ	3,1,2	1,2,1
KD	4,3,3	2,3,3
SM	5,5,5	2,2,2
KR	3,3,4	2,1,2
CB	4,4,4	2,1,1 + 3,3,3
CD	3,3,4	2,1,2
TJ	5,5,5	4,4,4
RW	5,5,5	4,4,2
RW	3,2,2	1,2,1

The varied kinds of tasks are designed to test self-confidence in different ways but when the scores in this table are analysed there appear to be only minor differences in how the three risk factors are judged. For the ten students above, and their teachers, the means across the three tasks are as follows:

	Talk b'fast	Greet mayor	Speak up
Students (mean)	3.9	3.3	3.7
Teachers (mean)	2.2	2.2	2.0

There is a significant exception to the general pattern in only one school. In this one school in every instance students rated themselves lower than their teachers' ratings. Taken together with their own self-reporting this is evidence of very low self-esteem.

Behaviour settings and high hurdles

To what extent do we understand behaviour and its responsiveness to different settings? The very structure of classrooms virtually dictates the response of students and of teachers as, from the very first day of school, children have learned the rules and sanctions, what is acceptable and unacceptable, who speaks and who listens. They have also absorbed the conventions of language and the conscious and unconscious labelling of 'ability' and, perhaps the most insidious and powerful of conventions - right and wrong answers. As a teacher commented in relation to quiet and reluctant participants, it is something that can all too easily become a habit, reinforced over time by self-determining feedback.

What is clear from comments by many of the young people is their reluctance to volunteer, the fear of being wrong and the attendant ridicule of their peers.

"I would worry about people taking the mick out of me if I spoke up"
(**K**, Axe Valley)

"I would worry about saying something wrong in front of the class"
(**N**, Axe Valley)

"I hate talking in front of people in case they laugh" says **H**, described by a teacher as 'nervous and flustered' finding it difficult 'to find the right words'.

(PH) He's very reluctant to get involved in that side. He doesn't want to put his hand up to contribute. He doesn't want to get involved in the class learning in case he's wrong and feels a bit silly.

"I would refuse to even stand up let alone say anything", said the pupil, speaking for some of her classmates who found speaking out a daunting challenge. Words such as 'scary', 'worrying', 'intimidating', used by some young

people in interviews convey the perceived height of a hurdle too ambitious to attempt. But there was, for most, a willingness 'to make the most of the experience':

"Prior to the training I'd have tried to get out of it, now I'd be nervous but still go for it and make the most of the experience" (OE)

The significance of behaviour in school and classroom as compared with other contexts becomes clear from teachers' comments about students' confidence in other settings.

"T is a member of the Guitar Club so he likes to get involved in things and T has got up and played bass in front of his year group before in assembly. So he is able to perform in areas where he is confident."

The transition from primary to secondary school has been the subject of considerable research over half a century. It has documented ways in which this affects young people, in particular shy young people lacking in confidence, easy targets for bullying and intimidation. As one parent in **Ysgol Y Berwyn** commented. 'She was a leader in her primary school but is now much less confident in secondary.'

We are all different people in different settings and this applies to different classrooms and different subjects. Being 'good at' a subject makes all the difference to self confidence while seeing yourself as 'not good at', Maths, for example, can act as a form of self fulfilling prophecy.

It is also evident that young people respond differently to different teachers so that, as comments from two teachers show, a student perceived as 'confident' by one subject teacher may be seen as 'lacking in confidence' by another.

(IH) A very bright boy, high potential, contributes in class, not afraid to put his hand up, not afraid to have a go.

Wanting to go with the flow, not wanting to be challenged. Just wanting to turn up to school, do their stuff, tick their boxes, go home again.

Reluctance to contribute, as explained by a number of teachers, has often to do with communication skills and the feedback that one gets from peers and teachers in social situations. First and second language is also a factor as parents, teachers and young people themselves explained. While fluent and confident in Welsh they were hesitant and reluctant to speak in English. As one teacher commented in grading a student 'I would have given straight 5's if this were in Welsh'.

By contrast, the culture of Talk The Talk sessions is one that encourages experimentation and creates a collegial and supportive ethos. As young people

take the plunge to address their peers they are applauded by their peers and congratulated by the trainer.

There is another aspect to the training which was commented on by teachers. Not all young people lack confidence but by virtue of their own self confidence it may make them oblivious to their peers. As one member of staff commented:

'EU is very self confident, with good language skills but the values of the training day had been for him to realise that others found speaking difficult and that he has learned to be more aware of how he might inhibit or offend others'.

Living in the shadows

C's teacher provides a powerful metaphor, talking about the shadowlands of classrooms:

C, I wouldn't say he's shy, but because he's not the smartest or the sportiest, he likes to remain in the shadows".

There is a substantial body of research on the 'invisible' and 'forgotten' children, living in the shadows, surviving on the margins of school life, often seated in the marginal areas of classrooms, strategically, or by default, escaping their teachers' attention. Often well behaved, keeping their own counsel, never volunteering they manage to rarely draw attention to themselves, rarely articulating their difficulties or acting out their frustrations. This group includes what have been described as the 'easyriders', their life made easier by teachers' preoccupations with the disrupters on the one hand and the high achieving volunteers, on the other. They are not classified among the more obvious 'special needs' young people who make their own demands on teachers' time and expertise.

Talk The Talk trainers

The trainers are a select group, skilled at putting young people at their ease, able to speak their language. They meet as a group to prepare before sessions and to exchange feedback following the event.

Teachers commented on the trainers' skills and the creation of an 'atmosphere' or 'ethos' of collaboration:

"Well structured and planned, trainers are professional and competent"
(Teacher, Lewis Girls' School)

"A shy girl, who hates talking in front of anybody. She will speak grammatically and her presentations have improved. The presenter of the workshop had been particularly good at bringing her round".
(Teacher, Ysgol Henry Richard)

“Before the session I didn’t think they would be able to, by the end of the day, to stand up and do the presentations they were doing. So I think they learnt a lot from it. There was a lot of collaborative work between the students. They were very good at pointing out each other’s errors to improve – what they did well”.

(Teacher, Harewood Boys College)

“There was a really nice atmosphere for the day where they worked together as a team to improve their presentation skills. They learnt a lot from the training”.

(Teacher, Harewood Boys College)

“Their confidence, as I said, by the end of the day was a lot higher, they were a lot livelier, more likely to stand up in front of the class. More likely to stand even without their notes and speak off the top of their heads which to begin with was very difficult for them to do. Yes, overall it was a very positive experience.”

(Teacher Avonbourne College)

They got an awful lot from it I think. Some of the students I knew, some from my tutor group - before the session I didn’t think they would be able to by the end of the day stand up and do the presentations they were doing. So I think they learnt a lot from it. There was a lot of collaborative work between the students. They were very good at pointing out each other’s errors to improve – what they did well.

(Teacher, Harewood Boys College)

R, a teacher in Avonbourne College, was asked whether she had detected any differences in the students that are part of the evaluation post the training. She said:

“It is probably too early to tell at the moment but even things like passing them along the corridor they perk up and are a lot more responsive”.

Issues of pace and variety

A teacher at Risca College wrote:

“At some points the students could have been more engaged. Some tasks could have been abbreviated and a faster pace would have helped. Maybe a timer so they know how long they’ve got to complete the task? Transition between tasks was sometimes a bit ragged and lost time. Loads of good aspects but some mission drift allowed. The groups could have been sub divided into smaller groups. Perhaps an e.g. of a ‘good’ speech could have been given at the start of the day – maybe a video”

From one observer’s viewpoint the length of time and the balance of activity balance needed to be rethought:

An initial two hour period within only one break for physical activity near the beginning seemed too long, despite apparent engagement of the students. Opportunities to talk with one another did help to break the pattern but there were also quite extended periods of exposition.

The nature of the activity is also relevant as Talk The Talk is, at it's best, significantly different from typical teacher-led classroom discourse. The following observation suggests the need to provide a more distinctive alternative to a teacher-directed pedagogy:

The Q and A session took a form strikingly similar to what happens in classrooms where the teacher knows the answer and pupils have to guess what that right answer is. Getting the 'right' answer is then met with affirmation and congratulation. To his credit C listened and responded positively to a range of answers but, at the same time, shaping responses to get to the desired right answer, sometimes eventually supplying this himself. Giving the first letter of the right answer, which was on the 'board' is generally known as 'cued elicitation'.

The danger of this form of didactics is that attention is then skewed towards those who are more adept at knowing or guessing what the teacher has in mind.

While wrong or inappropriate answers were always treated with thought and courtesy, it was very apparent, however, that volunteered answers came from less than a quarter of the participants. An off-the-cuff sociogram of Q and A interactions showed one student in particular regularly volunteering and being called on. There could be a case here for a 'no-hands-up' protocol and a think-pair-share in which the trainer allows a little thinking time then chooses a response from a pair.

The following comments are worth noting as they are atypical but underline the importance of pace, variety, activity and the need to avoid the emphasis on writing which is so prevalent in the day-to-day of classroom routine.

- Other groups had more games, would like it to be more interactive
- Other groups sounded more fun
- I'd have liked more games like some of the other groups did
- It was the same, thing all day – planning
- We spent a lot of time writing in our books
- Too much planning and not enough activity
- It was a long day sitting there without breaks
- Dragged it out a bit
- The session was rather rushed at the end
- Break it up a bit

Conclusions

The evidence points very persuasively to a highly successful intervention, in particular for shy and reticent students, helping to increase their skills and confidence. The following all appear to be key elements in the success of the programme

- The selection, training and skills of the training team
- The review and critique following sessions in the school
- The openness, desire for, and response to, evaluation
- The management of space and physical arrangements of classrooms
- The structure of a whole school day
- The pace, momentum and variety of activities
- The creation of a collaborative and non-threatening ethos
- The use of praise and positive feedback
- The encouragement of peer-to-peer feedback

Given that these are critical strengths of the programme it should make it easier for the training team and individual trainers to listen to, and take on board, some of the less positive feedback from students or teachers. These were few, embedded within a generally positive appraisal, but nonetheless noteworthy, pointing to some potential improvements.

- Limit the amount of direct input, or lecturing, by the trainer
- 'Read' the engagement and vitality among the group and be prepared to change activities and the restore the dynamic
- Be open to unexpected insights and contributions by students
- Ensure that the key elements of the programme are given time

The balance between planning and flexibility requires a high level of skill but it is one that benefits from what the American scholar Elliot Eisner calls the 'enlightened eye, the ability to see what others do not see -a high level and complex skill which relies on knowing *where* to look and *how* to see. This is the key distinguishing feature of 'connoisseurship', perceiving what is salient within the environment, within the group, and together with empathic understanding to recognise that what *you* see is not what others see. Learning to see yourself and the social situation through the eyes of young people may be paralysing or may be empowering.

Six key attributes of successful teachers identified by the researcher Jacob Kounin in the 1970s are relevant in this context.

Scanning: keeping an eye on the whole group and the nature of activity in the classroom

Overlapping: the ability to deal with a number of things simultaneously rather than sequentially

Withitness: the ability to understand the simultaneity of activity, to recognise and to predict the patterns of behaviour among the players

Momentum: maintaining the flow and being prepared for the unexpected

Satiation: knowing when there is an overload of information, when 'enough is enough' and stopping the activity.

Transitions: moving seamlessly from one activity to another without disruption.

These are skills that many of the trainers will already practice, perhaps intuitively rather than as result of training or specific input, but mutual discussion, ongoing sharing and rigorous evaluation will help to address where there may be weakness and build on the manifest strengths of what already exists.

John MacBeath

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John MacBeath is Professor Emeritus at the University of Cambridge, Director of Leadership for Learning: the Cambridge Network and Projects Director for the Centre for Commonwealth Education. Until 2000 he was Director of the Quality in Education Centre at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. As well as his interest and research on leadership he worked for over a decade with schools, education authorities and national governments on school self-evaluation. Five books on self-evaluation have been addressed mainly to a teacher and senior management readership. These include Schools Must Speak for Themselves, Self-Evaluation in European Schools, Self-evaluation: what's in it for schools? Self-evaluation in the Global Classroom and School Inspection and Self evaluation - all published by Routledge and now in twelve European languages. All of these books derive from collaboration with schools, with teachers and school students, the Global Classroom book being written mainly by school students from eight different countries. Issues in School Improvement, a CD-rom resource for schools in Hong Kong, contains many of these self-evaluation tools in both English and Chinese while an addition to self evaluation and inspection Hong Kong is an interactive website illustrating good practice in Hong Kong special, primary and secondary schools.

He acted in a consultancy role to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNESCO and ILO (International Labour Organisation), the Bertelsmann Foundation, the Prince's Trust, the European Commission, the Scottish Executive, the Swiss Federal Government, the Varkey Group in Dubai (Emirates) and the Hong Kong Education Department. He was a member of the Government Task Force on Standards from 1997-2001 and was awarded the OBE for services to education in 1997.

Further information about Talk The Talk visit www.talkthetalkuk.org