

Collaborative teacher evaluation to promote collaborative learning

A critical enquiry into teachers'
dilemmas with classroom talk

Douglas Barnes, 1969/2008

- Role of the teacher in using the social situation in the classroom to the best effect
- Too often the teacher moves too quickly to presentational talk and writing before allowing the pupils to explore ideas in small groups
- Hence the need for 'collaborative ' or 'exploratory talk' e.g. paired talk, small group, jigsaw, drama, open ?s
- Influenced by pragmatics but also by Piaget and Vgotsky as 'learning is both an individual and a social experience'.

From an **elocution model** to **talk for learning**

- Moving away from ‘an elocution model of spoken language....to a view of talk’ as the way children “represent” the world...by telling someone about it and in so doing clarifying it for ourselves’ (Howe, 1992:5).
- For at the ‘same time as they are learning to talk more effectively pupils should be talking to learn more effectively.’ (Doncaster LEA, Undated: 1).

Role of the teacher: Not a laissez faire option

- Use the social situation in the classroom to the best effect
- Careful choice of questions and topics
- Provide stimulus and support for a variety of forms of talk, including small group discussion
- Present in every subject but particularly in English
- Part of an extended scheme of work

New ideas? Centre for Policy Studies



Gove's Standards on Spoken English

Teachers should 'take responsibility for promoting ..the correct use of standard English whatever the teacher's specialist subject' DfE (2011)

Education has been in thrall to the progressives who believe that 'children should ne left to discover at their own pace and follow their own hearts'

(Gove cited by White 2010:304)

Cultural Restorationist/Black Papers

- S. Lawlor 'Children do not learn by talking' (1988)
- *Away with LEAs: ILEA Abolition as a pilot* (1988)
 - *Opting Out* (1988)
 - *Correct Core: Simple Curricula for English, Maths and Science* (1988)
 - *A levels: Fiasco and Future: A postscript to comparing standards academic and vocational 16-19*
 - *Teachers Mistaught* (1999)

Research in two phases: Focus on teachers' **dilemmas** with learning talk(because it ain't easy)

Phase 1

- Autobiography and life narrative interviews (role of talk in lives as pupils and as teachers)

Phase 2

- Identify a critical moment for talk to stimulate Video Assisted Teacher reflection

Subjects

- English teachers and Teacher educators (Schools and HEIs)

Critical Moment: A Case Study

- Pen Portrait and an example of a moment in a lesson
- Positives/Constraints/Interesting

Peter-reading with the puppet

- *'As I watched the video I saw a look of relief on my face when I was about to abandon the hard word 'synthesis' that was going over their heads...I had had that puppet out before and they had a relationship with the puppet.'*
- *'The overall constraint was that I had been asked to teach a lesson with a silly artificial learning objective.'*
- *'You could argue that it might be possible to teach synthesis in a meaningful way....perhaps there could be a way and this might improve my practice...but the way it is done is always so clumsy and instrumental. I prefer to take no notice of it really.'*

Cathy-Jubilee Jigsaw

'What I feel is that floating around is not as effective as having a more sustained interaction with 1 group. I think that's because initially they freeze..then a couple tell me what I want to know...if I stay a bit longer other children say what they think and you have a much better interaction. When I flick in and out.. there is tension at first and then they relax. If they are more used to me 'joining' the group for longer they will be less tense.'

'There are times on the carpet where you get the sense that someone's feeding back but when you sit with them it's more secure and lots of children contribute....it's a more natural form of 'real' talk.'

' Because we set for literacy it was not entirely one class so I had to send them back. If it had been just my own class I could have decided to substitute writing the article for guided reading.'

Critical Moment Framework used: Positives/Constraints/Interesting

- Adapted Tripp's notion of a Critical Incident and added concept of dilemmas not deficits
- Non-judgemental but evaluative
- Awareness of context
- Beyond the performativity agenda
- Allow for deeper reflections about relationships/feelings/institutional constraints

Emerging themes

- Teacher understanding of learning talk
- Teacher planning, rehearsal for learning talk
- **Teacher agency --Feeling relaxed and self-confident**
- Context
- Video Assisted Teacher Reflection of a Critical Moment for Talk can assist

Collaborative learning and teaching

- How do we promote collaborative talk in schools and HE1s?
- How can we develop collaborative approaches to teaching?

Classroom Talk: Are we listening to Teachers' Voices?

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