

Aims of the session/Nodau'r sesiwn

- Be clear about nature and significance of communication skills, and in particular classroom talk;
- Understand key terms such as 'dialogic teaching and 'exploratory talk'' ;
- Identify characteristics of effective classroom dialogue. potential barriers and ways to promote 'good' talk.



**1. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT INTERACTION
IN THE CLASSROOM?/**

**1. BETH YDYM NI' N EI WYBOD AM
RYNGWEITHIO YN YR YSTAFELL
DDOSBARTH?**

<https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/333b9656-6d18-4993-88bb-289ddc07a057>

In pairs, answer the following

Mewn parau, atebwch y canlynol (Gwir /Anwir)

- On average, teachers talk for 50% of classroom time
- Teachers' talk less as the year level increases
- Teachers' talk less as the class size decreases
- On average, about 20% of class time is devoted to group discussion
- Children mostly answer each other's questions
- On average, teachers ask around 100 questions a day
- Most children are given about 5 seconds to answer a teacher's question
- Less able children are given more time to answer than more able pupils
- Ar gyfartaledd, mae athrawon yn siarad am 50% o amser ystafell dosbarth
- Mae athrawon yn siarad llai wrth i lefel y flwyddyn gynyddu
- Mae athrawon yn siarad llai wrth i faint y dosbarth leihau
- Ar gyfartaledd, rhoddir tua 20% o amser y dosbarth i drafodaethau grŵp
- Fel arfer, mae plant yn ateb cwestiynau ei gilydd
- Ar gyfartaledd, mae athrawon yn gofyn tua 100 cwestiwn y dydd
- Rhoddir tua 5 eiliad i'r rhan fwyaf o blant ateb cwestiwn athro.
- Rhoddir mwy o amser i blant llai abl ateb nag i ddisgyblion mwy abl.

What is Oral Language?



Talking

Listening

Communicating what has
been heard or read or seen

Language of
Literacy

Language
of Social
Interaction

Language
and Thinking

Getting along
with people

Talk as a means
of learning

Alexander, R. (2010:9)

‘Talk has always been one of the essential tools of teaching, and the best teachers use it with precision and flair. But talk is much more than an aid to effective teaching. Children, we now know, need to talk, and to experience a **rich diet** of spoken language, in order to think and to learn. Reading, writing and number may be the acknowledged curriculum ‘basics’, but **talk is arguably the true foundation of learning.**’



Not a new idea. In 1975, Douglas Barnes suggested that ‘learning floats on a sea of talk’.

Pollard, A (2008)

- Identifies three main talk types:
- Talk related to learning;
- Administrative talk;
- Disciplinary talk.

Which do you think most teachers engage most in?



- Nodi'r tri prif fath o ymddiddan;
- Ymddiddan sy'n gysylltiedig â dysgu;
- Ymddiddan gweinyddol
- Ymddiddan disgyblaethol
- Pa un ydych chi'n credu mae'r rhan fwyaf o athrawon yn ei ddefnyddio?

Sinclair and Couthald (1975)

- Most classroom talk organised in a series of three-part exchanges:
- Initiation by teacher
- Response by child
- Feedback comment
- IRF
- Y rhan fwyaf o ymddiddan yn y dosbarth wedi'i drefnu'n gyfres o gyfnewidiadau tair-rhan
- Yr athro'n eu cychwyn
- Ymateb y plentyn
- Adborth
- IRF

Galton – the ORACLE study

‘Teaching in today’s primary schools ...a matter of teachers talking and children listening. Of this talk by far the largest amount consists of teachers making statements... Open or speculative or challenging questions ... are still comparatively rare. The demands of the various National Curriculum subjects ... still appear to place too heavy an imperative on teachers to cut down the amount of pupil participation in order to ‘get through’ the curriculum content’.

(Galton et al 1999b:33).



2. WHAT WORKS WELL?

2. BETH SY' N GWEITHIO' N DDA?

1. Dialogic Teaching/ Addysgu Ymddiddanol

Work of Alexander and others

- Pupil and teacher engagement.
- Construct meaning.
- Talk as the vehicle.
- Promotes cognitive development.
- Citizenship, sense of self.

Characteristics of dialogue:

- Collective;
- Reciprocal;
- Supportive;
- Cumulative;
- Purposeful.

Dialogic teaching/ Addysgu ymddiddanol

Purpose	Explore thinking – eg children summarise and share thinking; express ideas; listen to others.
Organisation	Everyone takes part
During dialogic teaching...	Children pay attention to one another; take extended turns; ask and answer questions; challenge and question. Teacher supports and facilitates but does not necessarily speak a lot.
Talk tools	What is your opinion? Could you say more? Have you considered? Remember when...?
Ground rules	Children prepared to explain their thinking; ask questions; reason; listen.
Outcomes	Shared understanding. Developing knowledge. Respect.
Notes	Some may need help to listen actively. Need to feel valued.

2. Sustained Shared Thinking/ Meddwl Parhaus ar y Cyd

- An episode in which two or more individuals “work together” in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking and it must develop and extend.

Siraj-Blatchford et al., REPEY, DfES 2002

An example – the light up shoes/ Enghraifft – esgidiau sy'n goleuo

T: Wow! Look at your shoes. That is so cool!
They light up when you step down.

C1: Yes, they do this (jumps up and down)

T: How does it happen? How does it light up?

C1: Because they are new.

What was said next?

Beth a ddywedwyd nesaf?



The S and S bit

T: Um. Mine are new and they don't light up.

C2: No, because they light up when you step down on them (steps down)

T (steps down) That's funny. Mine don't light up when I step down.

C3: No, no, no, you have to have these holes (points to the holes).

T: (points to her shoe) But I have holes and mine still don't light up, and Josh has holes, and his don't light up either. I wonder why?

C4: I think you need batteries. Kids, you need batteries.

C1: Yeah, you need batteries to make them work (thinks).
But I didn't see batteries when I put them on.

C4: I think they are under the toes.

C2: I can't feel the batteries under my toes.

T: I wonder how we can find out about this?

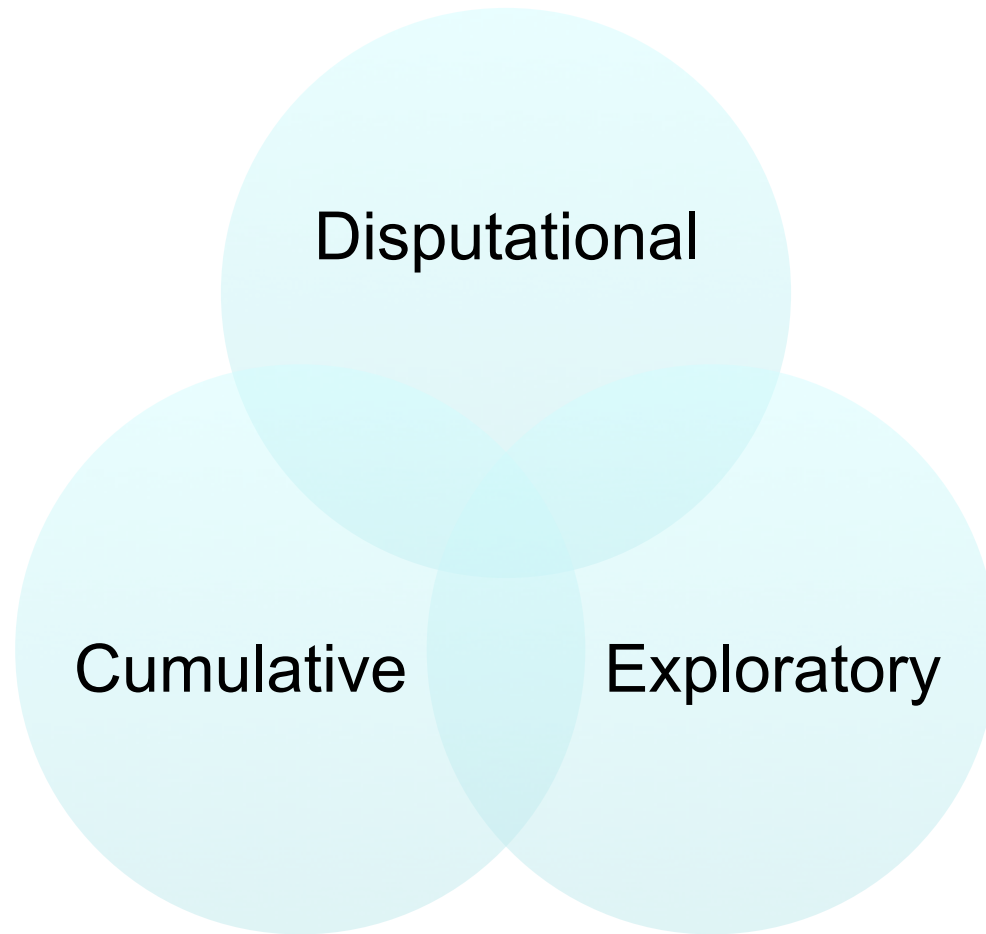
Source/Ffynhonnell - EPPE

SST/Meddwl Parhaus ar y Cyd

- Trust and confidence;
- Use of language of thinking;
- Time;
- Genuine ownership;
- Open questions;
- Flexible language;
- Modelling by adults;
- Learning extended
- Ymddired a hyder;
- Defnydd o iaith feddwl;
- Amser;
- Perchenogaeth diffuant;
- Cwestiynau agored;
- Modelu gan oedolion;
- Dysgu wedi ymestyn

Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2009) 'Curriculum, pedagogy and progression in sustained, shared thinking', *Early Education Journal* 57

3. 3 types of talk - Mercer



- **Disputational:**

- A lot of disagreement and everyone just makes their own decisions.
- Few attempts to pool resources, or to offer constructive criticism.
- A lot of interactions of the 'Yes it is! – No it's not!' kind.
- The atmosphere is competitive rather than co-operative.



- **Cumulative:**

- Everyone simply accepts and agrees with what other people say.
- Children do use talk to share knowledge, but they do so in an uncritical way.
- Children repeat and elaborate each other's ideas, but they don't evaluate them carefully.





Exploratory talk

‘Exploratory talk is that in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other’s ideas. Statements and suggestions are sought and offered for joint consideration. These may be challenged and counter-challenged, but challenges are justified and alternative hypotheses are offered. In exploratory talk, *knowledge is made publically accountable and reasoning is visible in the talk.*’

Mercer, N., Wegerif, R., Dawes, L. (1999) Children’s talk and the development of reasoning. *British Educational Research Journal* 25 (1) 95-111

Exploratory talk

Purpose	Problem solve; share ideas, opinions, reasons; negotiation
Organisation	Small groups
During exploratory talk...	All are invited to contribute. Information is shared; agreement is sought; everyone listens
Talk tools	What do you think? Why do you think that? I agree/ disagree because... Shall we decide that...
Ground rules	Everyone invited to speak; contributions respected; reasons are asked for and given; ideas are considered.
Outcomes	Group agreement on decision/ course of action. Group responsible for decisions. Children support one another.
Notes	The task must necessitate discussion.

Exploratory talk

- Hesitant and incomplete
- Try out and arrange ideas
- See what others make of these
- ‘Think aloud’
- Think together – ‘interthink’
- Enquire and collaborate
- Make meaning
- Requires shared motivation and purpose.
- Compared to ‘presentational’ talk



Activity 1

- Consider the transcripts.
- What sort of talk do you think they demonstrate?

Phone Kings

Yeah?

Ow. Fanks for answerin', geezer - know what I mean?

Gimme dat. Where you been, fool? Makin' us rinse out our credit leavin' you messages and dat

Hey. Mr Dawes is well on the war-path with you bruv yeah?

Cos of the bag and that?

What bag? Cos you missed the lesson you cheat!

Gimme dat. Da bag weren't a problem - Tegsy never mentioned it - he bottled it - Oi, you coming over to mine later to play computer?

Nah man, I'm at home now. I got business I gotta run. What business?

Business that minds its own - sucks teeth - I'm out.

Para-linguistic feature

Handwritten annotations:

- accent (pointing to 'Fanks', 'answerin'', 'geezer')
- abbreviation (pointing to 'Gimme', 'bruv')
- dialect, metaphor (pointing to 'war-path')
- abbreviation, dialect, metaphor (pointing to 'Cos')
- ellipsis (pointing to 'bottled')
- abbreviation (pointing to 'Tegsy')

3. LISTENING IS IMPORTANT TOO

3. MAE GWRANDO' N BWYSIG HEFYD

Listening/ Gwrandu

'There was an old owl who lived in an oak
The more he heard the less he spoke
The less he spoke, the more he heard
Oh why can't we be like that wise old bird'



Active listening/ Gwrando gweithredol

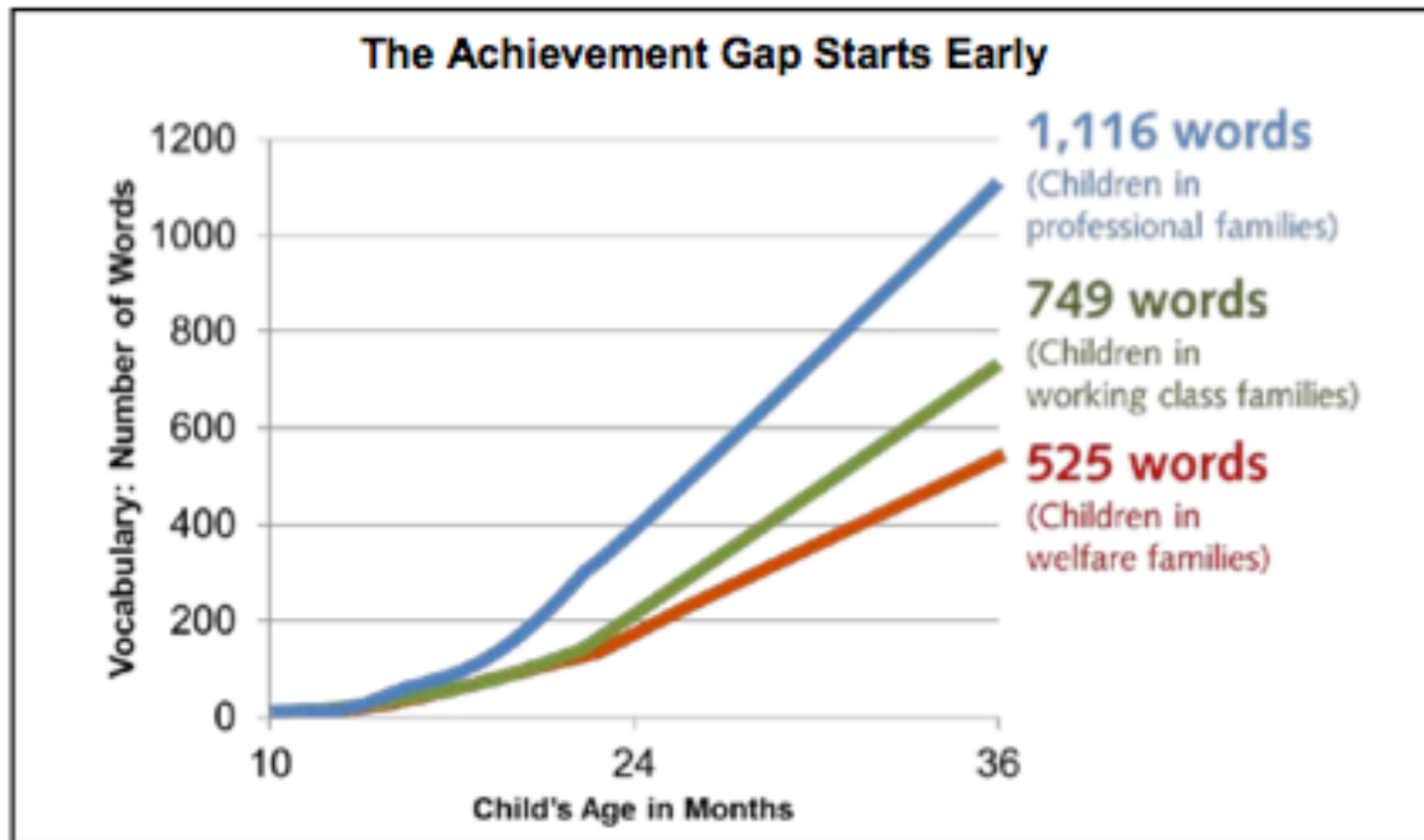


- Still the mind
 - Focus attention
 - Listen well
 - Respond to what you hear
- ‘A farmer has seventeen sheep in his pen. All but nine escape. How many are left?’
- Llonyddu’r meddwl
 - Hoelio sylw
 - Gwrando’n dda
 - Ymateb I’r hyn a glywch
- ‘Mae gan ffarmwr un deg saith o ddefnaid yn ei gorlan. Mae pob un namyn naw yn dianc. Faint sydd ar ôl?’

4. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?
4. BETH YW' R HERIAU?

Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children

Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley. Brookes Publishing, 1995 (4th printing, January 2003)



Major findings:

- Children from all three groups of families started to speak around the same time and developed good structure and use of language.
- Children in professional families heard more words per hour, resulting in larger cumulative vocabularies.
- In professional families, children heard an average of 2,153 words per hour, while children in working class families heard an average of 1,251 words per hour and children in welfare-recipient families heard an average of 616 words per hour. Extrapolated out, this means that in a year children in professional families heard an average of 11 million words, while children in working class families heard an average of 6 million words and children in welfare families heard an average of 3 million words. By age four, a child from a welfare-recipient family could have heard 32 million words fewer than a classmate from a professional family.
- By age three, the observed cumulative vocabulary for children in the professional families was about 1,100 words. For children from working class families, the observed cumulative vocabulary was about 750 words and for children from welfare-recipient families it was just above 500 words.
- Children in professional families heard a higher ratio of encouragements to discouragements than their working class and welfare-supported counterparts.

What are the implications of this?

<http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c3b/differences.htm>



Other potential challenges

- Relative scarcity of talk to challenge children;
- Low level of demand in questions;
- Closed questions have prevalence (90%);
- All-purpose not specific praise;
- Children working in groups not as groups;
- Rarity of pupil-led discussion.
- Talk environments of children's lives
- 'Elaborated codes' – the work of Bernstein
- What can you do to counteract the challenges?

PRACTICAL IDEAS

Activity 2- Talk about talk

- Are you good at talking?
- Do you ever get asked to stop talking? By whom? When?
- Does anyone ever try to make you talk when you don't want to?
- Do you know anyone who is easy to talk to?

Activity 3 – sorting talk

- Use the words on sheet 1A.
- Put them into the boxes on sheet 1B.

With children – you could:

- Use a dictionary to clarify unfamiliar words
- Only add words to boxes once group agrees
- Find new words using a thesaurus

Shared Rules



Our rules for exploratory talk:

- 1 We will talk together to think about what to do.
- 2 We will share what we know with each other.
- 3 We will ask everyone to say what they think.
- 4 Everyone will listen carefully to others and consider what we hear.
- 5 We will give reasons for what we say.
- 6 We will pay attention and try to think of good ideas
- 7 We will decide what to do only when everyone has said all they want.
- 8 We will try to agree about what we think

Activity 4 – deciding rules

- Look at sheet 3B
- Decide which of the rules you agree with and which you do not think are useful.
- After you have discussed these complete the ‘Ground Rules’ for your group.

Make talk visible

- ‘Grab that idea and hold it down’
- Give feedback on quality of pupil talk
- Evaluate your own talk publically

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

The TALK learning objective of the lesson is:

So during group work I am listening out for:

(use this to fill in box [] on the tally chart)*

Tally Chart

talk partners type of talk	1	2	3
Asked a good question			
Made an interesting criticism or challenge			
Made a good suggestion			
changed their mind			
Gave a good reason			
Shared relevant information			
Listened carefully			
Tried to reach			

Have a go - reasoning



CONCLUSION
CASGLIAD

To summarise/ I grynhoi

- Talk in classrooms has many purposes, social and educational.
- Teacher-pupil talk is often 'asymmetrical'
- To make use of talk as a tool for learning children need opportunity
- Mae gan ymddiddan yn yr ystafell ddosbarth sawl pwrpas, cymdeithasol ac addysgol.
- Yn aml, mae ymddiddan athro-disgybl yn 'anghymesurol'
- I wneud defnydd o ymddiddan fel offeryn ar gyfer dysgu, mae angen cyfleoedd ar blant.

Further Reading

- Alexander, R (2010) 4th ed *Toward Dialogic Teaching* UK: Dialogos
- Grigg, R (2015) *Becoming an Outstanding Primary School Teacher* London: Routledge Chapter 11
- Hayes, D (2006) *Inspiring Primary Teaching* Exeter: Learning Matters chapter 4 p.67-85 / chapter 6 p.102-118
- Mercer, N., Hodgkinson, S. (2008) *Exploring Talk in School* London: SAGE
- Pollard, A (2008) *Reflective Teaching* London: Continuum.
- http://www.thinking.networks.net/an_interview_with_neil_mercer.htm
- <http://www.teachersmedia.co.uk/videos/body-language-techniques>

