

Types of talk

Douglas Barnes

Exploratory
(Learning Talk)



Presentational
(When the thinking
has been done)

Quotes taken from *Exploratory Talk for Learning* by Douglas Barnes

"...the ability to think aloud and to share thoughts with others is not universal, and is not necessarily linked to academic intelligence. Some young people need help to develop these skills and even to discover what discussion is."

"When young people are trying out ideas and modifying them as they speak, it is to be expected that their delivery will be hesitant, broken and full of dead ends and changes of direction"

"...learning is seldom a simple matter of adding bits of information to an existing store of knowledge"

"...retrieving and transforming what we already know is a crucial part of learning"

"The difference between the two functions of talk is that in presentational talk the speaker's attention is primarily focussed on adjusting the language, content and manner to the needs of an audience, and in exploratory talk the speaker is more concerned with sorting out his or her own thoughts"

"Many teachers move towards presentational talks too soon, when pupils are still at the stage of digesting new ideas."

"Both presentational and exploratory talk are important in learning. Teachers need to be sensitive to the differences between them and use them appropriately"

"It is important not to allow ourselves to idealise group discussion: it is a valuable resource in a teacher's repertoire but it is not a universal remedy..."

"How teachers behave in lessons, and particularly how they receive and use their pupils' written and spoken contributions is crucial in shaping how pupils will set about learning and therefore what they will learn"