



HORBURY BRIDGE CE J&I ACADEMY

TALK PARTNERS

PURPOSE

Talk Partners is a highly effective and inclusive learning strategy because it requires all children to be active participants in lessons. Children are paired up and at points in a lesson, may be asked to give an answer, discuss an idea, or give an opinion to their partner. This may be followed by the teacher randomly selecting a pair to share their joint answer with the class or to summarise their partner's answer. A 'hands up' approach which selects only a few children to answer can mean others may not be engaged or thinking. Talk Partners allow all children to have their ideas and answers listened to and discussed with their partner and expects all children to have a view or answer to share. For many children, it is less threatening to share answers with a partner first than in front of the whole class and so can develop confidence and willingness to 'have a go'.

IMPACT OF TALK PARTNERS

- Inclusive and supportive class ethos
- All children are engaged and active-reduces 'hands up'
- Children who would not otherwise contribute are able to do so
- Increased self esteem as all children are contributing
- Effective tool for assessment (AfL) as the teacher can gain immediate knowledge of children's understanding
- Thinking time and talking improves and consolidates learning
- Extends vocabulary
- Thinking and talking leads to improved writing
- Speaking and listening skills developed- children need to explain their thoughts clearly so that their partner understands them and have to really listen to their partner because they may need to repeat or summarise this
- Thinking skills developed in articulating views and answers clearly
- Social benefits-increased tolerance/respect, developing life skills of working with others, collaboration, motivation
- High achievers use higher order cognitive skills eg explanation, when working with others
- Essential life skills to work with others and communicate effectively



PRINCIPLES

Talk partners are most effective when the teacher:

- Gives sufficient thinking time before a response is required;
- Resists the impulse to leap in;
- Selects random talk partners rather than friendship, gender or ability;
- Changes partners fortnightly or weekly;
- Avoids recall questions which rely on memory rather than thinking;
- Doesn't summarise in a way which ends discussion;
- Responds to children's answers and thoughts with sensitivity.

ENSURING QUALITY FOR TALK PARTNERS

To establish and embed quality talk partners, everyone will:

- Share the rationale for talk partners with their class so that the children understand the reason for these and benefits for their learning and have time to explore any worries about working with different people
- Develop with the children an agreed set of 'success criteria' for talk partners ie 'What a good talk partner is like' (See Appendix 1)
- Display this rationale and success criteria and refer to these whilst establishing successful talk partners
- Self/peer evaluate before changing partners eg reflect on 'How well did I do as a talk partner?', 'What my talk partner did well'
- Model good/bad talk partners eg by role play
- Review regularly with the children their thoughts and opinions so that any issues are addressed
- Allow time for talk partners to get to know each other when they change eg a short ice breaker activity



APPENDIX 1

What Makes A Good Talk Partner?

Typical points the children may discuss and agree about being a good talk partner and the reasons for having them:

Being a good talk partner

Give eye contact/look at your partner when they are speaking

Wait until your partner has finished speaking before you speak

Take turns to talk

Be open minded and listen to your partners ideas-don't just think that your idea is the best

Respect each others ideas

Keep to the point/don't talk about things you haven't been asked to talk about

Listen carefully/listen when your talk partner is talking

Patience and listening skills

Cooperation and concentration

Why we have talk partners

To find out other people's strengths

Find out other people's ideas

Make friends with new people/get to know others better

It is good to work with other people

Learn more things

Deeper thinking and learning

Everyone gets a chance to share their ideas/answers with someone else

Talking about something makes us explain it clearly and consolidates our learning

Keeps everyone on task

Helps each other to learn