

Pupil Talk – A Quick Guide

Types of Talk:

Disputational Talk

- ✓ Talk in which there is a lot of disagreement and everyone just makes his or her own decisions.
- ✓ There are few attempts to pool resources, or to offer constructive criticism of other people's suggestions.
- ✓ There are often a lot of interactions of the, "Yes it is! – No it's not!" kind
- ✓ The atmosphere is competitive rather than co-operative.

Cumulative Talk

- ✓ Talking which everyone simply accepts and agrees with that other people say.
- ✓ Students do use talk to share knowledge, but they do so in an uncritical way.
- ✓ We hear students repeating and elaborating each other's ideas, but they don't seem to evaluate them carefully

Exploratory Talk

- ✓ Talk in which everyone engages critically but constructively with each other's ideas.
- ✓ Everyone offers what relevant ideas they have, and everyone's ideas are treated as worth consideration.
- ✓ We hear students asking each other questions and answering them, asking for reasons and opinions and giving them.
- ✓ When decisions are made, they are group decisions based on agreement.

To introduce exploratory talk in the classroom:

- ✓ Raise the pupil's awareness of the value of talk as a tool for thinking
- ✓ Create a set of ground rules
- ✓ Include talk specific learning objectives in lesson plans
- ✓ Model exploratory talk
- ✓ Evaluate the talk