

Introduction to Thinking Together

Lesson One: Talking about Talk

What teachers say

Children may be reluctant to work in groups arranged by the teacher. It is a good idea to give them an overview of the purpose for these lessons, and to tell them that if groups are based on friendships, they may tend to agree without critical consideration. Explain that children have been put in these groups because each of them has a positive contribution to make. It is a good idea to seat children round the corner of a table, rather than opposite each other, or in a row -it makes it easier for all to participate equally.

Note : This lesson could be tackled over two shorter sessions if preferred. It is divided into two parts

Resources

Picture cards about situations or things that could involve talk
Word cards cut up

Objectives

To raise children's awareness of talk
"We are learning to talk about talk"

Possible criteria for success:

Children are able to talk to each other about the kind of talk that might be happening in a range of situations.
Children can describe their discussion to the whole class.
Children are able to listen to each other
Children can say some of the things that make a good talker
Children can say some of the things that make a good listener

Part One

Whole Class Introduction

Begin with a whole class discussion about talk. These questions could be starting points for the discussion.

Who thinks they are a talkative person?
Who thinks they are a quiet person?
Who do you like talking to? Why?
When are you asked not to talk? Why?
Why is it really helpful to be able to talk?
What sort of things can we do by talking together?

Now show the children one of the pictures. Ask them to describe what they can see happening in the pictures.

Group Work

Arrange the class into groups of 3.
Give each group one of the picture cards and ask them to talk together to decide what talk could be going on and agree on some words to describe the talk. One member of the group needs to record these. Sticky post it notes might be useful here. Allow a few minutes for this discussion.
You could also give them the word cards so that they can use these as a framework for the discussion of what is happening in the picture.

Whole class Activity

Ask each group to report back on what talk they thought might be happening in their picture, using the list of words to help. Make sure they give reasons for their ideas.

Part Two

Now select some of the word cards, choosing words that did not occur in the previous activity. Ask what they think the words mean. Can they use the words in a sentence?
Explain that as well as talking, they are now going to practise listening to each other.

Group Work

Ask the children to find a partner. Explain that you are going to time them for one minute. In that minute one partner is going to tell the other about something. It could be a pet, a brother or sister, a favourite toy or game, a recent shopping trip, or perhaps a birthday.

When one minute has passed, ask the partners to swap roles. Now repeat the activity.

Now ask some children to report back to the class what their partner has told them.

Repeat the group activity two or three times, asking the children to find new partners.

Plenary: Whole class work

Remind the children that the lesson has been about talking.

Who did they find was a good talker? Why?

Collect some ideas together about what makes a good talker:

- Someone who can share their ideas,
- Someone who gives reasons for their ideas,
- Someone who will try to answer questions about what they have said

The lesson has been about listening as well as talking.

Who did they find was a good listener? Why?

Collect some ideas together about what makes a good listener:

- Someone who looks at you while you are talking,
- Someone who sits still,
- Someone who shows you that they are interested in what you have said.

Now link these ideas about talking and listening to situations when children are asked to work in groups at the computer.

How might things that make a good talker and a good listener be useful?

Look at the word cards again. Why might some of these words be helpful when you are working in groups at the computer? What kind of work is better done when you are working with other people at a computer?

Evaluation: discuss whether the objectives have been achieved.

Possible extension activities

- Look up definitions of talk words
- Find talk words in books or other learning resources that the children are currently using.
- Make a talk word list: record words they hear about talk.