

North
Yorkshire County Council

Education Service

**TALK FOR LEARNING:
THE SECOND YEAR**

Robin Alexander
University of Cambridge

Second report from the formative evaluation of
North Yorkshire County Council's Talk for Learning Project,
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Produced for North Yorkshire County Council by Professor Robin Alexander, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 2PQ.

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I

HIGHLIGHTS

1.1 North Yorkshire County Council's Talk for Learning Project (TLP) was initiated in April 2002 as part of the County's second Education Development Plan. During the school year 2002-3, 42 high performing schools participated in a programme designed, through the medium of 'dialogic teaching', to enhance the profile and power of classroom talk as a tool for effective teaching and learning. The programme is being evaluated formatively, and the report on the first year, published in autumn 2003, charted significant improvements in the quality of teaching, in pupils' motivation and engagement, and in their learning; it also made twelve recommendations for consolidating these successes and tackling problems encountered along the way. The second year's evaluation, reported here, tracks the progress of TLP in the 34 project schools actively involved during that period (Appendix 1). The previous year's evaluation procedures – a survey of all participating teachers, feedback from CAMAS TLP link advisers, observation and interviews in a sample of project schools – have now been augmented by a comparative study of KS2 test results in TLP and non-TLP schools which has been undertaken on behalf of the Authority by Marilyn Teale. The evaluation also refers to relevant sections of Ofsted reports on the six TLP schools inspected during 2003-4.

1.2 This second evaluation report concludes:

- Though interrupted during the autumn term 2003 by events beyond the project team's control, the progress charted in the 2002-3 evaluation report has been sustained throughout the project's second year.
- There is also progress towards spreading the project's reach from Y5/6 to other years, and from a small number of subjects to the curriculum as a whole.
- The teaching observed and videotaped in those TLP schools which have made most progress is now outstanding. It ably meets the stringent conditions of dialogic teaching, and exceeds in quality the claimed 'best practice' disseminated to schools nationwide in materials provided by DfES, QCA and the national strategies. Comparison of official and TLP videotapes shows this clearly, as does direct observation.
- Ofsted reports on the six project schools inspected during 2003-4 highly commend in each case the quality of speaking and listening, thus providing independent confirmation of the evaluation findings.
- Notwithstanding these successes, the project's impact has been uneven and the difference between what is being achieved in the more and less advanced project classrooms is more marked than it was a year ago. TLP has not yet achieved the consistent purchase across all project schools which is necessary if it is to provide the intended springboard for Authority-wide improvements
- This uneven implementation also means that it is premature to make other than cautious claims about the project's impact on KS2 test results. Yet with this caveat in mind we can note that (i) KS2 test results have improved more in TLP schools than across the LEA as a whole; (ii) these improvements are especially noticeable in Level 4+ writing, Level 5 reading and Level 5 mathematics; (iii) the L4+ writing and L5 reading improvements are higher in the TLP schools than nationally; (iv) improvements in the reading scores of boys are higher than nationally.
- In terms of the five dialogic teaching principles, the gap which now has to be bridged is between the *supportive* climate and *reciprocal* and *collective* interactions which many TLP teachers have worked hard to secure, and classroom talk which is consistently *purposeful* and sustainedly *cumulative* in that it accesses children's thinking, builds on the present understandings, probes and tackles their misunderstandings, and in every lesson demonstrates clear and substantial conceptual progress from start to finish. Such teaching makes full and judicious use of the different kinds of teaching talk. It shifts the balance from recitation to discussion and dialogue. It finds the most

appropriate mix of questioning, exposition and discussion. It gives no less attention to the repertoire of pupils' learning talk.

- The evaluation has uncovered a number of dilemmas relating to the planning and practice of dialogic teaching which need to be collectively explored and addressed as part of the next stage of the project's development.
- Though the Authority's TLP training programme was less extensive in 2003-4 than in 2002-3, the contribution of the CAMAS link advisers was no less warmly endorsed by the schools.
- The part played by schools themselves in the project's development is important, and the evaluation identifies conditions at school level which may support or inhibit success.
- Video continues to prove a vital tool for professional development and project evaluation. Last year's technical problems are now mostly resolved, though more discriminating use needs to be made of the three microphones, and the sound quality in some tapes is insufficiently good for the analysis of talk for which they were intended.

1.3 This report recommends:

- In view of the significant improvements recorded in the first two years of TLP, together with growing national and international recognition of the crucial importance of high quality talk in teaching and learning, TLP deserves the Authority's continuing and long-term support. TLP has the potential to transform children's motivation and learning and, as KS2 results are beginning to hint, to raise measured educational standards. The project's strategic potential is considerable.
- The drive to build a consistent F-Y6 programme of enhanced classroom talk in each school should be maintained.
- The full incorporation of the objectives and strategies of TLP into the School Development Plan of each participating school should be achieved as quickly as possible.
- Efforts to disseminate the project's thinking from TLP schools to the Authority as a whole should be stepped up.
- The potential of the video equipment provided to each TLP school should be more fully exploited. Schools can learn much from each other in this regard, especially in using video as a basis for professional evaluation, planning and development, and - with the children themselves - as a means of developing their metacognitive and metalinguistic understanding.
- The programme of professional support and training, both CAMAS-led and school-based, could pay closer attention to the specific needs of newly-qualified teachers and those experienced teachers who find it difficult to accommodate to alternative thinking and practice. Overall, the idea of structuring professional development round the emerging dilemmas and challenges of dialogic teaching should be encouraged.
- The examples of those schools which have brought parents, governors and children into the dialogic teaching frame could be more widely emulated. Ofsted and local initial teacher training providers could also be more closely involved.
- Sustained work is now needed to build on the collective, supportive and reciprocal culture of classroom talk which many project schools have achieved, in order to make talk consistently purposeful and cumulative. Although all five of the dialogic teaching principles are essential and little can be achieved unless the climate is right, it is in cumulation that the impact of dialogic teaching on children's conceptual understanding, and hence on standards, particularly resides.

1.4 The above are highlights only: the full list of findings and recommendations appears in Chapter 8. This report is written for the Authority's members, officers and advisers as well as for teachers, so it is for these various readers to decide which aspects - beyond the key findings and recommendations in Chapter 8, which are for everyone - merit their particular attention. Yet this is a *formative* evaluation, which means that it aims not just to inform decision-makers but also to support the continuing processes of professional development and educational improvement. For the teachers and advisers who are at the heart of these processes, therefore, we suggest that Chapter 6 deserves the closest scrutiny and most sustained discussion.

II

THE 2003-4 EVALUATION

2.1 Background

This is the second of a sequence of annual reports on the progress of North Yorkshire's Talk for Learning Project (TLP), a key element in the county's second Education Development Plan (EDP II). TLP aims to harness the power of talk to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the Authority's primary schools and to raise standards of children's attainment, especially but not exclusively in literacy and numeracy. Its principal medium is 'dialogic teaching.'

EDPII started in April 2002, and two months later staff from the nominated TLP schools came together for the first of their orientation and training sessions. They then worked with designated TLP 'link advisers' to identify the aspects of their teaching on which they would concentrate during 2002-3, and during the autumn of 2002 made the first of the video recordings which have played a key role in both professional development and the evaluation of the project as a whole and will continue to do so. Subsequent video recordings at more or less regular intervals served to provide the basis for self-evaluation, discussion with link advisers and forward planning, and these activities were supported by further day conferences for all participating teachers, which combined keynote presentations with the sharing of experiences, ideas and problems across all the project schools.

The first evaluation report, published in 2003, started by setting out the purposes, character, chronology and logistics of TLP. It then drew on various data sources in order to evaluate the progress and impact of TLP at the end of its first year, and to offer conclusions and recommendations for the next stage of development. The recommendations were responded to positively by the Authority, and in Chapter 3 of this second evaluation report we summarise progress to date on each of them.

2.2 Evaluation foci and procedures

As in 2002-3, the 2003-4 evaluation has been co-ordinated by the project's consultant, Professor Robin Alexander of Cambridge University, working to a specification agreed with the CAMAS TLP team. The evaluation has three main methodological strands which together have focused on the project's development and its impact on teaching, pupil engagement and pupil learning: (i) feedback from participants, (ii) school-based observation and interviews, (iii) analysis of test data. These procedures were supplemented, opportunistically, by scrutiny of Ofsted reports on those TLP schools which were inspected during 2003-4. The specific procedures were as follows.

Project development and impact on teaching, pupil engagement and learning: feedback from participants

- Questionnaire survey of participating schools (Appendix 2).
- Group interview involving the consultant and the CAMAS project team, based on pre-agreed headings and themes (Appendix 3).

Project development and impact on teaching, pupil engagement and learning: observation and interview

- Half day visits by the consultant (assisted by Sylvia Wolfe) to ten of the 34 project schools actively involved in TLP during 2003-4: classroom observation, viewing and discussion of video extracts, interviews with project teachers and heads (Appendix 4).

Project impact on pupil learning outcomes: comparative analysis of test results in project and non-project schools

- Analysis of 1999-2004 KS2 test results in reading, writing, mathematics and science, compared in project schools, the LEA and nationally.

Project impact on school planning and classroom processes: additional opportunistic data

- Analysis of all references to classroom talk in the six project schools inspected by Ofsted during 2003-4.

2.3 Teaching, engagement and learning

Apart from the Ofsted material, which of course is not formally part of the evaluation but provides a useful supplement to it, the most important change from the procedures adopted in the 2002-3 evaluation has been the introduction of a comparative analysis of KS2 test results in project and non-project schools. This was in direct response to a recommendation in the 2002-3 evaluation report. There, we identified three arenas in which the impact of TLP needed to be assessed:

- on teachers and teaching
- on pupil engagement
- on pupil learning processes and outcomes.

The first year's evaluation provided survey, observation and interview data on all three, and strong *prima facie* evidence on the first two. That is to say, advisers, heads and teachers reported, and the videotapes, observation and interviews confirmed, that teachers were rethinking the place of talk in teaching and learning, were modifying their practice, and were thereby more effectively engaging their pupils in the learning process. The evaluation also provided evidence of improved outcomes. Some, like writing and mathematical problem-solving, fell within the range of what is covered by national tests, but many more – notably in PSHE (a focus for many TLP activities during the first year) and of course talk itself – did not, for existing national tests are by their nature unable to access more than a modest proportion of the learning objectives which primary teachers properly pursue across the curriculum as a whole.

Nevertheless, it was deemed essential to begin to supplement the largely qualitative evaluation data with learning outcome measures which have common currency not just in every TLP school but also across the Authority as a whole and indeed across the entire country, because – inevitably and understandably – people will want to know whether dialogic teaching has an impact not just on classroom culture and pupil engagement (which it clearly does) but also on 'standards' as these are officially defined, that is, through the KS1 and KS2 national tests.

Accordingly, the second year's evaluation included this element. However, the exercise requires us to be duly cautious about the limits to using such test data in this context and at this relatively early stage, for the following reasons.

- Findings for this project based on KS2 test data are inferential rather than conclusive, because the tests in question do not explicitly assess speaking and listening; nor were they designed to assess the impact of talk on learning.
- Thus, where significant changes in a school's pattern of KS2 test scores are discernible, they may have causes other than the pedagogical changes generated by this project.
- It is still rather early in the project's development to expect gains in KS2 test results which can with confidence be attributed to TLP, for even by the end of the project's second year few pupils

in the participating schools have had more than one year's experience of the changing patterns of classroom talk.

- Our evaluation process data show that the number of classrooms where truly dialogic teaching takes place consistently, habitually and in accordance with the agreed dialogic teaching principles and indicators, and which therefore provide a fair test environment, is as yet (autumn 2004) still fairly small.

Mindful of these limitations, our second evaluation report includes a section on findings from the test score analysis which has been provided by Marilyn Teale, CAMAS Assessment Consultant for the Authority (chapter 7). What must be added to the above caveats, of course, is that as the project evolves and schools develop a coherent developmental approach to teaching and learning in which genuine classroom dialogue plays a significant and successful part, so it will become increasingly proper to expect the project to exert an impact on KS2 test scores and to attribute cause and effect with greater confidence.

2.4 Structure of the report

The structure of this second report is different from that of its predecessor. That started by providing a detailed description of the Talk for Learning Project and its place in the Authority's second Education Development Plan, together with an account of the approach to classroom talk which informs it. This material is not repeated: those requiring it can refer to the 2003 report, pp 4-7. Instead, in Chapter 3 we start by reviewing progress to date on last year's recommendations. Chapter 4 then compares facts and figures for 2003 and 2004 for the schools, classes and aspects of talk involved in the project, together with its costs. Chapter 5 considers the nature and effectiveness of the support for professional development provided by the Authority and the schools themselves. Chapter 6 looks at the progress and impact of the project in the classroom, drawing on feedback from teachers and CAMAS link advisers and on evidence from the interviews and classroom observation undertaken by the project's consultant in schools, adding for good measure material from Ofsted reports. Chapter 7 introduces the wholly new element which will be given increasing prominence as the project develops: comparative analysis of KS2 test results. Finally, chapter 8 summarises the main findings and sets out recommendations.

III

BUILDING ON THE FIRST YEAR'S EVALUATION

The first evaluation report ended (pp 22-24) with 24 key findings and recommendations. The Authority has reported action on the recommendations (numbered from the previous report, and in italics) as follows.

3.1 *(5) TLP is a project whose national as well as local importance is such that it should be properly funded. This will become all the more essential as the project's reach extends to the remaining classes in the 42 schools and beyond them to other schools in the county, and as the process of evaluating the project's impact on teaching and learning becomes more complex. The Authority should now explore ways of securing such funding, perhaps from DfES.* DfES funding was not pursued, because of concern that it might compromise the project's independence. However, links have been made with a parallel dialogic teaching project in Barking and Dagenham and with oracy initiatives in Liverpool and Hampshire, and through the agency of the project's consultant the North Yorkshire project gained double-page coverage in *TES* in January 2004 and featured in a well-attended symposium at the July 2004 international conference of the UK Literacy Association. Further, DfES is well aware of the project and the Primary National Strategy's director, Kevan Collins, has now met the TLP advisory team and teachers from many of the project's schools. He has also observed TLP in action in two schools.

3.2 *(7) In a project whose underlying ideas are somewhat complex and fundamentally challenge established professional habits, it is understandable that some teachers should initially have been somewhat daunted or confused. This does not, however, justify the 'dumbing down' of those ideas, and there is a strong case for returning to them at regular intervals to ensure that the principles of dialogic teaching are not diluted or distorted. In any case, the portfolio of TLP documentation needs to be re-assessed by the advisory team, in consultation with the schools, and perhaps extended as well as modified. It needs to serve as a permanent point of reference for the processes of planning, analysis and evaluation.* This is a specific, significant and recurrent concern of the training/development days, which have made a point of regularly revisiting the project's rationale, goals and principles.

3.3 *(8) It is essential that training reaches progressively more deeply into the issues rather than stays at the same level. Next year's training programme could usefully be planned as a whole, and could combine the existing function of 'sharing experiences' with systematic coverage of specific facets of talk, and issues of analysis and evaluation.* This has been acted on.

3.4 *(10) As the project progresses, teachers should be encouraged to extend the focus of their work with a view to covering eventually the different contexts and kinds of both teacher and pupil talk across the curriculum as a whole. At the same time, there is a need for greater precision than hitherto in the identification of the specific aspects of talk to be worked on at a given time. Further, where teachers have concentrated on pupil talk they should look at teacher talk too, and vice versa, and it should be understood that well-handled discussion and genuinely scaffolded dialogue require attention to the content as well as the context and dynamics of talk.* School data from this year's evaluation show that the curriculum and age-range foci of the project are being progressively extended. However, the level of precision in determining the aspects of talk to be concentrated on is variable, and in some cases school objectives remain somewhat vague. While some schools understand that dialogic teaching requires attention to both teacher and pupil talk, others are focusing too exclusively on one at the expense of the other. Some of these may be giving proper attention to basic preconditions for dialogue like thinking time and extended answers, but are not broadening children's repertoire of learning talk in accordance with project guidance.

3.5 (12) Schools need to check their video equipment without delay to ensure that it – especially the three microphones – works properly and that all systems are mutually compatible, so that the Authority can deal with any remaining problems before the start of next term. Schools could make better use of the technical support and training which the Authority has provided. There is also a case for more advanced training which deals less with basic video use than its application in the particular context of classroom talk, so that – a precondition for this project – all aspects of talk can be effectively accessed. There have been considerable improvements in this regard, residual equipment problems have been sorted out, and technical support is available on request to all participating schools. However, there is still a general reluctance to use the radio microphones and the sound quality on some videotapes is inadequate.

3.6 (13) The novel use of video in TLP is an area which deserves attention in its own right, and it could be included in any bid for external funding. Again, this has significant national implications. See 3.1 on the funding issue. The fuller exploitation of video lies ahead, and is discussed in chapter 4.

3.7 (15) The logistics of advisory support for TLP should be reviewed to ensure that the team are able to provide the support which is needed without being overburdened by it. Additional support mechanisms could also be considered – for example school clustering – though at this early stage in the project's development the dangers of dilution and distortion should be guarded against. Advisory roles in relation to TLP have been re-assessed, though unfortunately changes to the national inspection framework have offset the benefits of such rationalisation. More TLP schools are sharing their work on dialogic teaching within their clusters, and CAMAS is currently reviewing the role of clusters in the project's next phase.

3.8 (17) Schools could usefully examine how far various contextual factors, notably the use of space and time, support or inhibit the different kinds of talk they wish to promote. Sometimes, of course, such matters are not within their control. Teachers are now considering the management of space and time alongside the management of talk. Link advisers have worked hard at encouraging attention to cognitive/learning pace as well as organisational/interactive pace, though in less confident schools Ofsted pressure to see pace in traditional terms has inhibited progress. Similarly, some of the more confident schools have countered the Ofsted view that written work is the only valid evidence of learning by providing videotape evidence of children's engagement and progress in oral contexts.

3.9 (19) It is essential that the Authority and schools should now begin to track the impact of TLP on teaching, engagement and learning in more systematic ways, both at individual school level and at the level of the project as a whole – perhaps, in the latter case, as the next stage of the evaluation. Objectives for each school's project can now be identified with greater precision in 2003-4 than in 2002-3, and work is needed to secure agreement on indicators, record-keeping procedures and modes of evaluation, so that the trajectory of this important project can be reliably followed over the full period of EDPII (2002-7). As noted in section I of this report, this year's evaluation includes a strand based on analysis of KS2 test results in project and non-project schools within the Authority. For the moment, for reasons which have been explained, the findings of this analysis need to be treated with caution. However, the procedure will continue for the duration of the project and as dialogic teaching embeds itself more firmly throughout the full range of each school's work, so the security of KS2 test results as project evaluation data will increase.

3.10 (20) In the light of the report's positive findings on inclusion, the Authority may wish to examine the links between TLP and other parts of EDPII and perhaps to establish dialogue among advisers and teachers involved in the different elements. CAMAS is working on this, and has shared the project's thinking and findings with the Authority's Learning Support Team.

3.11 (22) It is essential that other classes in the TLP schools be brought into the project as soon as is practicable, and in particular that cohorts of children from the Foundation stage onwards should start to experience dialogic teaching and learning in a consistent and incremental manner as they progress from one year or class to the next. Given the project's initial focus on Y5/6, it is also

desirable that KS3 teachers be brought into the frame. The data show that project schools are involving more of their classes and teachers.

3.12 (24) *Moving from working with one or two classes in a school to a whole-school approach in which one year's dialogic teaching builds on that of the previous year will require work by the Authority and TLP schools on the developmental aspects of dialogic teaching, and documentation to provide teachers with appropriate signposts and indicators. At present, the approach does not differentiate age-related needs and strategies.* CAMAS is looking at ways to add materials which target the specific needs and concerns of teachers of younger (F and KS1) pupils.

IV

TLP FACTS AND FIGURES

Sections 4.1 and 4.7 of this section draw on the CAMAS data; the information in the remaining sections comes from the TLP schools' questionnaire.

4.1 Schools

For the June 2002 launch of TLP the Authority identified 55 'high performing' primary schools for possible participation in the Talk for Learning Project. For various reasons this number reduced to 42, all of which remained in TLP until the end of its first year. By the end of the second year, the number of 'active' TLP schools had decreased to 34. However, the reduction was in every case due to factors outside the project's control. Thus, four schools were forced to withdraw altogether because of major staff changes (usually the replacement of the head), while four others withdrew temporarily but will return to the project in January 2005, bringing the number of active schools up to 38. The full list appears in Appendix 1.

4.2 Classes and year groups

In the first evaluation report we recorded that, in accordance with the project's stated EDP intentions, most schools were concentrating the project in Years 5 and/or 6. By June 2004, again in accordance with intention and indeed the recommendations of the 2002-3 evaluation, one third of schools had shifted the focus of the project to Years 2, 3 and 4, while a smaller number had extended its reach to R and Y1. The consequence of this spread has been a slight reduction in the number of Y5/6 classes involved, but the overall pattern of change is clear: TLP is well on the way to becoming a whole-school project.

4.3 The curriculum

In 2002-3 the majority of schools concentrated on improving the quality of talk in English, science and PSHE (in which, for convenience, we include philosophy). By June 2004, in line with the extension of the project to year groups other than Y5 and Y6, we find schools diversifying in curriculum terms as well. Although English, science and PSHE/philosophy continue to top the table, mathematics, history, drama and other subjects now feature as additional foci for TLP in a significant proportion of schools.

4.4 Classroom organisation

In June 2003 two thirds of teachers were using whole class teaching as the main organisational forum for TLP, with one third concentrating on small group work. By June 2004, the organisational focus had shifted to something approaching a 50:50 balance.

4.5 Aspects of talk

In 2002-3, half of the participating teachers said they were concentrating their attention on improving discussion, whether at the level of the class as a whole or in groups, and just over one quarter were working on their approaches to questioning. By June 2004 the picture had changed noticeably, no doubt in response to video-based self-evaluation, suggestions from link advisers and messages from the training days. Well over half the teachers were concentrating on questioning, just under half on discussion, with a significant minority now adding important facets of talk such as encouraging extended pupil answers to questions, providing constructive feedback on those answers and encouraging pupil-pupil dialogue. Since these are three of the most critical yet neglected aspects of oral teaching this shift is to be welcomed.

4.6 Pupil needs

TLP was initially intended to address the needs of all pupils while giving particular attention to the most able. We found in 2003, however, that the latter group appeared not to be featuring at all in teachers' TLP-related planning and activities. On the other hand, many teachers were attending to children they defined as 'less confident' and/or 'less able', and one important finding from the first year was that classroom talk was becoming more inclusive. This was because the more open and supportive climate, in which children are given time to think and to contribute without fear of embarrassment about 'wrong' answers, was liberating the less able and less confident to participate more freely and uninhibitedly. In June 2004 the pattern had changed slightly. A minority of teachers were now concentrating, as recommended by the Authority, on more able children while apparently retaining their commitment to involving all the others. However, TLP's message about the most able pupils still appears not to be accepted in many TLP schools, perhaps because it is difficult to advocate an enhanced culture of classroom talk which deliberately favours or excludes any one group: one's natural inclination as a teacher in such circumstances is to try to include everyone.

In any event, the issue is not so much inclusion/exclusion as such as the quality of talk which, whether as speakers or as listeners, children experience. The questions to ask about the most able children, therefore, are whether the talk in which they participate is sufficiently challenging cognitively to move their thinking forward and whether it encourages the various modes of interaction and thinking signalled in the project's range of 'learning talk'. This is a matter of some importance in the context of the recent tendency for levels of pupil attainment to remain on an apparent plateau.

4.7 Finance

In June 2003 we reported that the estimated cost of TLP to the end of its first year was £205,128. This included conferences/training days, cover for teachers attending these events and for schools' own development activities, and a substantial start-up sum (£85,926) for the video kits with which each participating school was provided. The latter figure, of course, was not repeated in 2003-4, so the overall budget was lower: the Authority's own figure for the second year, taken from its base budget for EDP Priority 1, is £93,262. This was spent as follows: advisory time (£43,000); cover/supply for participating schools (£20,250); conferences/training days (£19,489); consultancy and evaluation (£11,223). The budget excludes the five TLP schools funded separately under the Scarborough Locality Plan (see Appendix 1).

These figures are not able to take account of 'hidden' time devoted to TLP by the CAMAS link advisers and the heads and staff of many of the project schools. This commitment cannot be quantified precisely, but we know that it is substantial.

SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Strategies

In this section we report on the progress of the five main strategies through which TLP seeks to provide or encourage support for professional development and hence improvement in teaching and learning: (i) the conferences/training days; (ii) the work of the link advisers; (iii) the dissemination of relevant documentation; (iv) video; (v) school-initiated development activities.

This combination was much as in the previous year, with one important exception. To encourage the full institutionalisation of TLP thinking and practice on which the project's long-term success depends schools were invited to incorporate dialogic teaching into their School Development Plans.

5.2 Conferences

In this respect TLP was heavily front-loaded, for from its inception in June 2002 to the end of the 2002-3 school year there were no fewer than five full conferences devoted to TLP orientation, training and, by the end of the year, evaluation. In contrast, there was just one such day in 2003-4, a 'refocussing' conference for all TLP teachers which took place in Boroughbridge on 9 February 2004. This event combined opportunities for teachers to view and discuss video extracts from each others' classrooms with keynotes from the Director of the Primary National Strategy and the project's Consultant which were intended to bring schools up to date on recent developments, to remind existing TLP schools of the project's principles, rationale and goals and to encourage other schools to join in.

The success of the latter objective will be considered as part of the 2004-5 evaluation. On other aspects two points should be made. First, the absence of a conference during the autumn term, though regretted by a number of participating teachers, was the result of three circumstances beyond the Authority's control: a full Ofsted inspection of the Authority, major staffing changes, including the departure of the Authority's Chief Adviser (who had been both the leader and advocate of this project since its inception), and an unprecedented level of advisory staff absence due to illness.

The other point is that teachers' response to this one event was somewhat mixed but also on the whole rather lukewarm. Teachers welcomed the chance to view and discuss videotapes and to network with other schools, and in general found the conference helpful in its attempts both to refocus thinking and identify the next steps. But a significant number found the treatment of technical matters on that occasion less than helpful, and the largest proportion of all, one third of respondents, did not even reply to the questionnaire items dealing with this conference. It is difficult to know what to infer from this, except perhaps that the conference provoked for its participants few opinions either way, whereas earlier events had generated stronger reactions.

5.3 Link advisers

During 2003-4 some eight members of CAMAS, led by Kathy Fiddes, served as link advisers to TLP schools. The team was augmented by Marilyn Teale for the KS2 test analysis which forms part of this second evaluation and, in a management capacity, Joan Ashmore the Authority's Principal Adviser (Primary). From September 2004 the team is being led by Mike Smit.

Each link adviser visited all of their schools, on average, between two and three times during the year, though in one case where TLP was linked to a Leading Teacher programme the number of visits rose to seven. In addition, link advisers attended planning meetings and the training day. The ability of link

advisers to sustain this level of commitment to their schools and the project was heavily tested during the period of staff absences referred to above.

Schools' feedback on the contribution of link advisers remained in 2004 as overwhelmingly positive as it was in 2003. They were viewed by the majority of teachers as being extremely helpful, supportive and constructive. In some cases they were described as 'vital' or 'an absolute lifeline' and in this context the predominance of small or relatively small schools and the problems of geographical isolation should be borne in mind. Only one school went against the grain in this matter, suggesting that for them a link adviser was 'not needed'.

It is not a comment on the quality of advisory support this past year to note that the departure of Edna Sutton, the Authority's former Chief Adviser, has been a loss to the project. Her enthusiastic endorsement of dialogic teaching, and her direct involvement in this project, contributed significantly to its initial impetus and success. It is important that the status of the project be maintained for at least the five-year period of the initial EDP commitment. The evidence from the first two years points to highly significant changes in the culture and quality of teaching and learning in many classrooms, but it also confirms that changes as challenging and complex as these take time and are likely to be uneven. Yet now more than ever the national and international evidence endorses the thinking behind this project not just as a way of improving teaching and of empowering children as learners and as future citizens, but also as a means of raising standards as these are currently defined and measured. In the short time that has elapsed since this project's inception, dialogic teaching has become a significant reform movement in the UK and USA. TLP should continue to be central to the Authority's strategic agenda.

5.4 Documentation

The 2002-3 report was circulated to all participating schools. It was also posted on the Authority's schools website and was thus made available to all of the Authority's schools and teachers. The practice of circulating copies of PowerPoint slides and/or overhead transparencies referred to at the training days was continued into the second year. In May 2003 the government published *Excellence and Joyment: a strategy for primary schools* and this was followed by the QCA/DfES guidance and materials on *Speaking, Listening, Learning: working with children in Key Stages 1 and 2*. The latter marked a significant and rapid shift of stance on the part of DfES, for when the Primary Strategy was published, speaking and listening were mentioned only once, yet within a few months the weight of criticism of the Strategy's neglect of talk had taken it to the top of its development and training agenda.

Thus, through a combination of official and independently-produced publications, TLP participants were, by the end of 2003-4, well supported in their professional development within the domain of classroom talk, and they were increasingly conscious that having started somewhat against the national tide, TLP was in effect blazing a trail which others were keen to follow. However, it should be noted that the government materials focus largely on *pupil* talk while dialogic teaching gives equal attention to teacher and pupil talk, arguing that the quality and cognitive power of what pupils say depends critically upon the questions teachers ask, the time and dynamics within which teachers enable pupils to frame their responses, and the way they receive and build upon those responses, as well as the wider opportunities for pupil-pupil talk in whole class, group, pair and one-to-one contexts which teachers provide. In this sense, therefore, although the focus on pupil talk is a proper reflection of the psychological truth that the development of language and thought go hand in hand, TLP seeks to go further: to liberate classrooms from those deeply-rooted habits which have tended to restrict interaction to closed questions, competitive hands-up bidding, factual or recall answers arrived at by spotting what the teacher expects, minimal feedback, negligible development from one answer to the next question, and little genuine discussion.

The majority of respondents to the school survey reported that they had both used and found useful the dialogic teaching principles and indicators which provide the basis for this project's approach to

classroom talk. A significant number referred to the QCA/DfES *Speaking, Listening, Learning* guidance, and to materials with a less direct talk focus such as those supporting primary school philosophy.

5.5 Video

In our 2003 evaluation report we showed that while video was a novel and pivotal aspect of TLP, with considerable power to sensitise teachers (and indeed children) to the uses of classroom talk, it was also a problematic one. The problems, mostly of a technical nature, had diminished markedly by June 2004.

During 2002-3 participating teachers videotaped their teaching four times on average. The actual range was from one to eight occasions. Video use increased slightly during 2003-4, with an average of five videotaped lessons per teacher and an impressive maximum in one classroom of no fewer than twelve tapes.

In the previous report we noted a reluctance to use the full range of microphones provided by the Authority (camera, conference and radio). This has persisted. Just under half of respondents in the school survey used only the camera microphone and most of the rest used two of the microphones but very rarely all three. Despite the fact that a judicious use of the different microphones will enable a recording to make classroom talk audible in most whole class, group or individual interactions, survey respondents cited 'poor sound' as the main residual problem they faced in using video for professional development. However, as a number also mentioned 'lack of time' as an obstacle to successful video use, it needs to be acknowledged that combining teaching with taping is rarely an easy proposition. Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that if in a project on talk the talk is inaudible, then there is little point in recording it.

CAMAS feedback filled out our understanding of this matter. Advisers confirmed that full and/or appropriate use of microphones remains a problem and suggested that the camera software (for transfer to CD/CVD) is not as good as it should be, though they pointed out that schools can use their E-credits for upgrading. Several teachers were concerned that editing and transfer consume considerable time, and some believe that this is a required feature of the project. CAMAS confirm that it is not: editing and transfer from VHS to CD is an option only, and the only requirement is that tapes are made, viewed and discussed in pursuit of professional development and evaluation.

School survey respondents were asked who had viewed their videotapes during 2003-4. All teachers, self-evidently, had viewed their own tapes, but nearly two thirds of them, strikingly and we suspect very unusually in British classrooms, had let children view the recordings. Mostly this was to satisfy children's curiosity, but in a small number of cases teachers were using video as a planned aspect of their *teaching*, not merely as an aid to its improvement. That is to say, they were using video to get children to reflect on talk, on its dynamics, on the taking of turns, on ways of establishing and maintaining attention, on the importance of listening, and of course on its substance. One teacher went a stage further and videotaped children talking about the experience of having viewed themselves on videotape, and what they had learned from it.

This dimension of video use, it is already clear, has massive potential to support children's metacognitive development and the establishment of a metalinguistic awareness that reaches well beyond the objectives of the National Curriculum prospectus for speaking and listening. It deserves to be explored and extended.

Other uses of video were more conventional, though none the less significant. Half of the respondents shared their video with their school colleagues, thus aiding the processes of dissemination and institutionalisation. A quarter showed them to teachers in other schools, often within school clusters, and an expanding minority showed clips to parents and governors as a way of bringing them into the initiative and of helping to convince them that written work is not the only work that matters.

Teachers cited 'self-evaluation and professional development' as the principal benefits of this project's use of video. The small number who worked on their videos with their pupils (rather than merely played them the tapes), cited 'the development of speaking and listening' while a larger number said they were using video as an aid to pupil assessment: again, another relatively novel use which deserves much wider application, nationally rather than in North Yorkshire alone.

There remains the question of what to video. CAMAS suggested that the choice of which lessons or parts of lessons to videotape needs more thought in some schools. However, the main concern now is that the project as a whole lacks a body of video material which exemplifies dialogic teaching in all its forms and at its best. The observational component of this year's evaluation confirms that dialogic teaching is now happening, so the next task is to try to capture it on tape.

5.6 School-supported development

During 2003-4 the Authority sought to encourage schools to take progressively greater ownership of the project by bringing more of their teachers into the frame and by building it into school-wide curriculum planning and professional development. More specifically, the Authority asked all project schools to incorporate talk for teaching and learning into their School Development Plans (SDPs).

Only a quarter of school survey respondents, however, said that this had been done, and others commented that though informal staff discussion about the project and its implications is taking place in many schools there is as yet relatively little evaluation by the schools themselves of its impact.

One quarter of respondents said that their schools were providing time and/or cover to support TLP, over and above that provided by the Authority for attendance at the training days. CAMAS point out that funding for such cover is available for all schools, so it would seem that the majority of them may well be absorbing this into the school budget for other purposes. The matter needs to be clarified.

Overall, the evidence from the school survey and CAMAS feedback suggests that participating schools need to look more closely at their own roles in TLP development and support. This is all the more urgent when we note the survey finding that a large number of schools suggested that the best professional development formula was to continue as at present – that is to say by combining training days with link advisers and video, thereby continuing to lean heavily on external rather than internal support.

VI

TLP IN THE CLASSROOM

6.1 Judging impact

As has already been explained, the impact of TLP is being judged by reference to three important aspects of classroom life: the character and quality of *teaching*, the extent of pupils' *engagement* in classroom tasks and processes, and the quality and outcomes of their *learning*.

The relationship between these is in one sense obvious: good teaching motivates and engages, and both good teaching and pupil engagement are preconditions of successful learning. However, the matter is in reality more complex, for the three elements do not stand in a simple linear relationship to each other and many other factors – some of them external to the school and beyond its control – bear on children's attitudes to classroom learning, their preparedness to engage in it, and the degree of success which teachers can achieve.

There is also a methodological problem: how, if cause and effect are multi-factorial, does one recognise and judge impact in the three chosen aspects of education? Here, given that this evaluation is not a piece of experimental research, we have to take a pragmatic though still principled line. We judge impact in this project by bringing to bear different perspectives and procedures on the familiar basis of triangulation. Thus, we ask participating teachers for their own assessments of what has changed in their thinking and practice and in pupils' engagement and learning because they are closest to the action and because what they think and say matters a great deal. But we also ask link advisers the same questions because collectively they see not just one classroom but all of them and are able to make comparisons and to set each teacher's work in a wider explanatory context. Then we go further and introduce an external perspective, drawing on the evidence of the consultant's observational visits and interviews in one third of the project schools. Finally, we add two sets of relatively objective data: videotapes of teaching and learning made at the very start of the project and at regular intervals thereafter, and the performance of children in the classes concerned in the Key Stage 2 national tests.

This approach not only enables the different perspectives to cover and supplement each other. It also allows very different aspects of the project to be studied. Thus test scores say something useful about learning outcomes but very little, and even then only inferentially, about teaching and learning processes. Teacher surveys and interviews tell us what and how teachers think, but not how their ideas and actions appear to others than themselves, or indeed whether when they assert something it is indeed true. Observation and video access and record teaching and learning as they happen, but are inevitably made selective by being viewed through the physical lens of the camera and the conceptual lens of the observer, and judgements based on such data which do not attend to teachers' intentions for the lessons in question have limited validity. And so on. No one procedure is necessarily superior to another; all have their limitations as well as advantages. Together, however, the procedures we have adopted provide a diverse and rich array of data which allow us to draw conclusions with reasonable confidence, though always with due caution, about the progress and impact of this project.

6.2 Teachers' views

This section draws on responses to relevant parts of the questionnaire reproduced in Appendix 2.

The character and quality of teaching

On the impact of TLP on *the character and quality of teaching*, respondents to the teacher survey highlighted the following, in order of frequency:

- Questioning has become more focused and varied.
- There has been a shift in the balance of teacher and pupil talk in favour of the pupil.
- Opportunities for talk are now increasingly built into curriculum and lesson planning.

A much smaller number said that:

- Talk generally is more focused and challenging.
- Children are being given more thinking time in which to formulate answers and other oral contributions.
- Talk is being encouraged for its own sake.

Only one teacher repeated what several asserted last year:

- The talking/writing balance has tipped more towards talk.

Pupil motivation and engagement

A large proportion of responses to the survey question about TLP's impact on *pupil motivation and engagement* centred on these four claims:

- Pupils listen to, support and encourage each other more.
- Pupils have become more willing and confident to express views and take what might previously have been considered risks.
- Pupils are more aware of the value of talk, including their own.
- Pupils are more focused, articulate, alert and responsive.

A smaller number of teachers said:

- Pupils are more prepared to challenge and disagree with each other, but without confrontation or embarrassment.
- Pupils are now more willing to listen to each other and are more prepared to modify their views in the light of what they hear.

What is perhaps disappointing here is that one third of teachers offered no response at all to the survey question about the impact of TLP on pupil engagement, when clearly it matters so much.

Pupil learning

Even more surprisingly, no less than one third of respondents failed to offer an assessment of the impact of TLP on *pupils' learning*. We cannot know whether this indicates lack of time or lack of recognition of the importance of the issue. Of those that did respond, the larger number by far highlighted:

- Improved written work, as manifested in larger written vocabularies, better descriptive writing and longer answers in the English SATs.

A smaller number of respondents mentioned outcomes which were generic rather than subject-specific:

- Improved powers of reasoning and logical thinking.
- Greater depth of thinking in answers.

Which pupils benefited most?

In section 4.6 we noted that the Authority's stated aim of using TLP to enhance the learning opportunities and performance of the most able pupils appeared not to be reflected at school and classroom level. This is further confirmed in survey teachers' responses to specific questions about which pupils benefited most and whether the project had had an impact on more able pupils. Nearly half the respondents failed to answer the latter question, while responses to the question 'Which pupils have benefited most?' showed no clear pattern. Here, perhaps, teachers were responding to the unique circumstances of their individual classrooms rather than to the Authority's collective intent. Alternatively, they may not share the Authority's (and the Government's) view that many of our most able children are underachieving and need particular attention.

6.3 A CAMAS perspective

This section draws on TLP link advisers' contributions to the group evaluation interview, the framework for which appears in Appendix 3.

Teachers and teaching

Link advisers report that:

- Teachers are critically evaluating their teaching and are becoming more confident and articulate in talking to others about it.
- Newly-qualified teachers need particular support in this aspect of their work.
- Some experienced teachers find it hard to change long-established classroom habits.
- Overall, practice has improved, and there is clear evidence of improvement over time.

Pupil motivation and engagement

Link advisers report that:

- There are noticeable improvements in pupil interest, engagement and enjoyment.
- Teachers are considering the cognitive as well as the social purposes of talk.
- Showing videos to the pupils increases their understanding of the various dimensions of speaking and listening, and helps them better to assess and modify their own role in oral activity.
- Videoing children talking about talk adds an additional and important dimension to this.

Pupil learning

Link advisers report that:

- There are clear improvements in mathematical problem-solving.
- Schools are indeed claiming that enhanced talk is improving the quality of pupils' written work (see 6.2 above), but firmer evidence on this is needed.
- Schools need to monitor the impact of TLP on learning in those subjects which do not feature in the national tests.

Conditions for success

Link advisers draw on their knowledge of the project schools to cite the following conditions for its successful implementation:

- A high and sustained level of commitment and involvement by the head.
- A recognition by teaching staff, collectively as well as individually, that they can and need to continue learning about teaching.
- Preparedness to take risks in teaching rather than stick to what seems safe or officially approved.

- Bringing parents and governors on side through meetings at which the project is explained and video examples are shown.
- Children's own commitment to and advocacy of talk, at school level (for example in assemblies) as well as in the classroom.

Conversely, CAMAS link advisers find that the less successful project schools are those in which:

- Heads are not fully committed to or involved in the application of TLP thinking to the school's practice.
- Teachers feel they already know all that they need to know about talk for learning or even that 'we do all this already.'
- Teachers play safe.
- Parents and governors are unaware of the project and its implications.
- There is little 'talking about talk' with the pupils, and lesson videotapes are not used as teaching material.

6.4 Observational evidence

Achievement sustained

In the 2002-3 evaluation report we reported evidence from direct observation and videotape of the following:

- Teachers were relying less on *bidding* (children competing with each other to answer questions by putting their hands up) and more on *nomination* (when teachers direct questions to named children) in order both to reduce the dominance of exchanges by certain children and to enable teachers to target their questions more precisely with children's individual capacities in mind.
- Teachers were fostering extended exchanges with the same pupil rather than moving from one pupil to the next after a single question; that is to say, they were shifting from an interactive strategy of *rotation* (questions round the class) to *extension* (pursuing a line of enquiry in depth with a smaller number of pupils while the others listen).
- Teachers were establishing ground rules for the conduct of collective talk which encourage children to listen carefully, not to interrupt, to think about what they hear, and to seek clarification if they do not understand).
- Teachers were working on the habitual tendency to repeat or reformulate children's answers, instead inviting other children to comment on them.
- Teachers were changing the balance of closed and open questions, and striving to avoid the heavily *cued elicitations* (for example mouthing or sounding the first letters of the required answer) which are part of the more familiar recitation-dominated teaching repertoire.
- Teachers were resisting the natural urge to fill silences after questions, and instead were waiting patiently for children to think about their answers, meanwhile discouraging the frantic hand waving and 'miss...miss...' which is so off-putting to the child who is struggling to marshal his or her thoughts.
- Children in collaborative discussion were beginning to listen to rather than talk at or past each other, and turn-taking was becoming *sequential* rather than *overlapping*, with far less of the habitual interruption which more commonly characterises adult as well as child discussion.

- Children were speaking within small groups or whole classes more loudly, clearly and confidently than is commonly the case in English primary classrooms.
- Children were venturing ideas, and offering speculation and hypothesis, rather than seeking to spot and provide the ‘right’ answer.
- Less able children were taking a more prominent part in lessons than they would in the more usual formula of closed (and competitive) question and answer followed by written work.
- Children were being encouraged to help each other to respond to the thinking challenges which the teacher had set.
- Teachers and children were talking about talk, thus countering the criticism that in English classrooms talk tends to be seen merely as the *medium* of teaching rather than as one of its *objects*.

Evidence from the observational part of the second year’s evaluation allows us to record that these trends were no flash in the pan but have been sustained. We can go further: the best work on dialogic teaching in North Yorkshire TLP schools is now outstanding, and exceeds in its quality the supposed ‘best practice’ in speaking and listening which is disseminated to schools nationwide in materials provided by the national agencies (DfES, QCA and the National Literacy, Numeracy and Primary Strategies).

It is also clear that the unexpected bonus of this project - using video as a *teaching* tool rather than merely for professional self-evaluation and development - has been tried by an expanding (albeit cautiously expanding) number of teachers.

A note of caution

That said, it is now clearer than it was during the first wave of enthusiasm that response to TLP, and the quality of the teaching with which it is associated, is highly variable. For example:

- As all the other data show, head teacher understanding of the role of high quality talk in learning, and of the purposes and proper character of dialogic teaching, is a precondition for success, as is head teacher support and involvement. The point cannot be overemphasised. The exception to this rule is where very experienced and talented teachers themselves take the lead, but this is the case in only a small number of project schools.
- Some school buildings and classrooms are much more conducive to dialogic teaching than others, and in certain cases teachers are being severely disadvantaged by the physical conditions within which they have to work. Thus, some classrooms may be too small to allow the flexible and changing layouts which the project has encouraged, or too susceptible to noise from other classes to allow the concentrated listening and more reflective exchanges which the dialogic repertoire requires.
- Sometimes the inappropriateness of physical conditions is a matter of choice rather than poor buildings. Thus, the effectiveness of some supposedly collective dialogues is reduced when children face the teacher but cannot see and therefore fully communicate with each other, or when the children sit on the floor and the teacher towers above them on an adult-sized chair.
- TLP is in some schools being assimilated into pre-existing initiatives (for example, philosophy and ‘thinking skills’). It may gain from this, or it may suffer dilution and distortion, especially among those say ‘we do this already’ and thus avoid giving proper consideration to what it is that they claim already to do. Dialogic teaching pursues some of the same objectives as primary school philosophy, but the two are far from identical. Similarly, there is a temptation to presume

that the DfES *Speaking, Listening, Learning* materials cover similar ground to this project. In fact the two initiatives are in important respects very different, though the differences are somewhat fudged because *Speaking, Listening, Learning* uses the terminology and ideas of dialogic teaching, but inappropriately and without attribution. Further, while *Speaking, Listening, Learning* concentrates on pupil talk, dialogic teaching explores the full repertoire: learning talk, teaching talk, the relationship between them, and their impact on pupils' learning and understanding.

- There is evidence that many schools are so far having more success in improving the *culture* and *dynamics* of classroom talk than its *content*. This means that while behaviours are changing, the transfer from changed teaching and increased engagement to improved learning may be less reliable or consistent.
- There is also evidence that the dialogic behaviours or indicators are being implemented selectively. Thus although dialogic teaching requires an appropriate use of a broad repertoire of different kinds of teaching talk, questions from the teacher remain far and away the most dominant form of teacher talk and there is less expository talk or indeed questioning from the children themselves, both of which also have an important place.
- Similarly, once questions are asked children are given generous thinking time and are encouraged to provide extended answers, but it is rather less common to find the remaining conditions being met: that is, that answers should be responded to in a way that helps the child and/or the class to learn from what has been said. It remains the case that after such extended responses the feedback is often minimal and judgemental ('excellent', 'good girl', 'not quite what I was looking for' or the not-so-ambiguous 'Ye-es...') rather than informative. Apart from failing to exploit a critical moment in the dialogic exchange, teachers providing this traditional form of feedback are probably also signalling an equally traditional message to their pupils: that in the end, though there is now more time to think and space to provide a fuller answer, the answers which count are still those that the teacher expects, and extended thinking time is not so much for thinking from first principles as for deducing even more accurately than hitherto what it is that the teacher wishes to hear.
- In other words, extended talk and dialogic talk are not the same, and the most frequently observed kind of teacher-pupil talk remains closer to recitation than to dialogue. Answers may be longer, but the questions they prompt are still often closed or relatively unchallenging. Feedback remains relatively brief and uninformative, and errors or misunderstandings may be glossed over rather than explored. As the project has repeatedly emphasised, a long answer is not enough: it's what happens to the answer that marks the true distinction between recitation and dialogue.
- Schools are properly giving attention to the various patterns of teacher-pupil *teacher talk* (rote, recitation, exposition, discussion, dialogue) and to the principles of dialogic teaching (that it should be collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative and purposeful). As yet, rather less attention is being given to the repertoire of *learning talk*, and the systematic building of children's capacities to narrate, explain, instruct, question, respond, build upon responses, analyse, speculate, explore, evaluate, discuss, argue, reason, justify and negotiate, and to judge when each form of talk is most appropriate. This means that the intellectual and social empowerment which dialogic teaching can offer may remain limited even when in other respects the pattern of talk has moved away from recitation towards discussion and dialogue.
- There is more group discussion, but *collective* (teacher-led) group discussion is generally more successful than *collaborative* (pupil-led). The reasons for this are obvious: in the one format the teacher retains control, in the other he/she hands control to the pupils. That being so, it is essential that alongside the production of ground rules for speaking and listening (which now feature in many TLP classrooms) pupils should be given the skills to conduct and participate in paired and group talk over which the teacher's control is less direct.

- The difference between the most and least genuinely dialogic classrooms is substantial and, possibly, expanding. Certainly it is more evident at the end of the project's second year than at the end of its first. This has important implications both for professional support and development in existing project schools and for dissemination across the Authority as a whole.

6.5 An Ofsted perspective

Six project schools were inspected by Ofsted during 2003-4: Danby, Dishforth Airfield, Kirkby Overblow, Le Cateau, Nawton and Selby Abbey. CAMAS trawled the resulting reports for references to classroom talk as it was recognised that they provided additional and entirely independent perspectives on the project's progress.

Most of the inspectors' references to talk were made in the context of speaking and listening as an aspect of the English subject curriculum rather than in relation to teaching generally. Given that the inspection teams are mostly unfamiliar with both this project and the ideas which have shaped it (though Ofsted's London-based senior staff and primary HMI team are certainly aware of these developments) this tendency was to be expected. Within that context, comments were without exception highly commendatory: 'skilful questioning ... incisive questioning ... careful questioning ... getting pupils to explain: teachers pitch questions at well-judged levels to challenge and extend ... high quality discussion ... good emphasis on discussion and evaluation ... pupils are confident and speak clearly ... pupils talk about their understanding ... pupils talk about their learning in a knowledgeable way ...' and so on.

Two of the reports made explicit mention of TLP and displayed a better understanding of its purposes and procedures. Another mentioned the initiative but misread it as being concerned solely with speaking and listening. However, the giveaway in the comments above, which represent the full range, is that the inspectors, like traditional recitation teachers, focused on teachers' questions much more than on pupils' answers and what teachers did with them.

Thus, although the 2003-4 Ofsted reports on project schools are encouraging for the project in that without exception the inspectors registered that the quality of classroom talk was impressive, it is clear that the project's agenda will need to include bringing on board not only children, parents and governors, as recommended by CAMAS (section 6.3), but also Ofsted inspection teams.

6.6 Dilemmas, not deficits

We have identified a number of emerging challenges and problems from the classroom evidence on TLP's second year. We prefer to express these challenges not as deficits to be rectified - hardly an encouraging response to a teacher who conscientiously seeks to transform his or her practice - but as dilemmas to be made explicit, discussed and resolved as part of the normal day-to-day process of professional consultation and development. These dilemmas arise directly from teachers' efforts to apply the dialogic teaching principles.

Below, the dilemmas are arranged hierarchically: the first three are straightforwardly organisational; the next four relate to ways of changing the conventional character of question-answer-feedback exchanges and of handling discussion. The last few, it must be admitted, are somewhat tougher.

- *Group discussion in a whole class context.* What is the best way of organising the rest of the class when we wish to promote concentrated and productive discussion in one or two groups, with the minimum of distraction?
- *Talk in collaborative group contexts.* How can we ensure that collaborative (pupil-led) group work is as disciplined and productive as group work which is teacher-led? What kinds of tasks are most appropriate? What kinds of skills do participants need? How can they be developed?

- *Conditions for whole class dialogue.* Carpet and circle time are valuable, but do they always provide the best conditions for genuine whole-class discussion and dialogue? Should the teacher always be seated on a chair above the children? What message does this convey? Should the children face the teacher rather than each other? What are the best conditions for whole class dialogue?
- *Bidding and nomination.* Dialogic teaching encourages us to reduce the dominance of ‘Now who can tell me...?’ questions followed by bidding, and to use more focused questions linked to the nomination of specific children. But bidding may still have a place. So what is the right balance of bidding and nomination, and how is each of them best used?
- *Questioning and telling.* Dialogic teaching requires the extension and appropriate use of a broad repertoire of different kinds of teaching talk, yet questions from the teacher remain far and away the most dominant form of teacher talk. Why is this? And what, in the promotion of children’s understanding, is the right balance of questioning and exposition? When should we question and when should we tell, inform or explain?
- *Meaningful feedback.* Dialogic teaching aims to replace habitual praise by feedback which informs and extends as well as encourages. What is the best way to achieve this? And is there still a place for praise on its own? If so, when? What is the ideal proportion of each kind of feedback?
- *Making discussion purposeful.* It’s all very well to provoke a lively and extended discussion, but should we not also ask where it leads? How and at what point do we pull the threads together and synthesise the understanding achieved in teacher-led discussion? How can we enable the children themselves to do this in group discussion which we do not lead?
- *Learning talk and teaching talk.* In the achievement of understanding, what the child says matters at least as much as what the teacher says. So how can we best develop, alongside our own teaching repertoire, children’s repertoire of learning talk?
- *Is extended talk dialogic teaching?* In project schools there’s undoubtedly more thinking time, and children’s answers and other contributions are becoming longer, but do these necessarily add up to dialogic? What is the essential difference between extended talk and dialogic talk?
- *Improving the content as well as the form of talk.* In terms of the five principles or criteria of dialogic teaching, how can we best ensure that classroom talk is cumulative and purposeful as well as collective, reciprocal and supportive? What does the teacher need (a) to know, (b) to plan and (c) to do and say in order to make dialogue genuinely cumulative and purposeful?

6.7 The challenge of cumulation

The last of these dilemmas requires further comment, for it comes to the heart of the challenge of transforming talk from recitation into dialogue.

The first three principles of dialogic teaching (collectivity, reciprocity and support) are essentially concerned with the *conduct* and *ethos*, or *form*, of classroom talk. The other two (cumulation and purposefulness) are concerned no less with its *content*. TLP has shown that we can dramatically change the climate of classroom talk by making it more collective, reciprocal and supportive, and by setting out ‘rules for speaking and listening’ which translate these principles into guidelines which children will understand and identify with.

This shift has been achieved in many of the project classrooms. Here, the transformation of the classroom climate and the growth in children’s confidence are palpable and impressive. It is this which has persuaded so many that everything has changed, for in a sense it has. But if the talk engages

yet leads nowhere, its appeal will soon diminish. The critical question concerns the impact of talk on learning, and this is why the other two criteria are so important. We must know where the talk is going, and do what is required to lead it there. That requires us to have a clear sense of purpose and a firm grasp of the content to be covered so that talk is indeed cumulative rather than merely extended. How do we achieve this, and what does it require of us?

Cumulation is possibly the greatest challenge of dialogic teaching, because while the other principles relate to questioning techniques and to classroom dynamics and relationships, cumulation is rooted in the structure and sequencing of subject matter and requires a clear conceptual map of what is to be taught, the ability to think laterally within - and beyond - that map, and the understanding of where the child is 'at' cognitively and what kind of intervention will scaffold the child's understanding from where he/she is to where the teacher wants him/her to be. The principles of collectivity, reciprocity, support and purpose make demands on professional skill and advance planning. Cumulation simultaneously makes demands on the teacher's professional skill, subject knowledge, and insight into the capacities and current understanding of each of one's pupils, and - compounding the challenge - the teacher's capacity to receive, and review what has been said and to judge what to offer by way of an individually-tailored response which will take both individual and collective thinking forward - all in the space of a few seconds. Teachers, we might even suggest, need thinking time, too.

These insights from the project's second year suggest that although the five dialogic teaching principles should be viewed as a package, it is helpful to teacher development and support to divide them into two groups. If we want to make the transformation a manageable one, we might concentrate first on getting the ethos and dynamics right, that is, making talk collective, reciprocal and supportive. In those classrooms where these conditions are established, we can then attend much more to the other two principles. Here, we can identify the purposes of the talk and use cumulation to steer it towards those purposes. We can work on listening to and building on answers and getting children to do the same. We can reflect on the feedback we provide. We can re-assess the balance of drawing out (questioning) and putting in (exposition). We can consider how ideas can not merely be *exchanged* in an encouraging and supportive climate but also *built upon*.

VII

WHAT THE KS2 TESTS SHOW

7.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this report we suggested that though this evaluation is considering TLP as a whole, the most important issue for us to address is the nature of the initiative's impact on teaching, pupil engagement and pupil learning. The largely qualitative data referred to so far have provided insights into the impact of TLP in all three areas and have raised questions which we trust will be addressed during the project's third year. We turn now to a question for which quantitative measures come into play: what has been the project's impact on pupil learning outcomes, as these are represented in the KS2 national test **results**? The analysis which follows has been provided by Marilyn Teale, the Authority's Assessment Consultant.

7.2 Analysis of all test results by subject

29 of the project schools have been identified as working with Y6 children for the two years since the beginning of the project in 2002. These 29 schools are referred to in the tables below as 'TLP'. The tables compare the attainment of the 29 TLP schools with all primary schools in the Authority ('LEA') and with national attainment results ('NAT') using percentage success rates at the levels shown.

Table 7.1
TLP, North Yorkshire and national KS2 results 2002-4, by subject

		2002	2004	02 to 04	2002	2004	02 to 04
		Level 4+			Level 5		
TLP	KS2	87.9	87.8	-0.1	43.8	47.4	3.6
LEA	reading	84.8	86.8	2.0	44.6	43.1	-1.5
NAT		79.5	83.0	3.5	38.0	39.0	1.0
TLP	KS2	65.3	73.1	7.8	21.7	20.7	-1.0
LEA	writing	63.2	68.9	5.8	18.8	21.6	2.8
NAT		59.5	63.0	3.5	17.0	17.0	0.0
TLP	KS2	82.4	84.5	2.1	34.5	33.8	-0.8
LEA	English	79.9	81.7	1.8	33.2	30.7	-2.6
NAT		75.0	77.0	2.0	29.0	27.0	-2.0
TLP	KS2	81.5	79.7	-1.8	35.9	40.6	4.6
LEA	maths	77.9	79.3	1.4	31.5	35.6	4.1
NAT		73.0	74.0	1.0	27.5	31.0	3.5
TLP	KS2	93.1	92.1	-1.0	45.4	51.2	5.9
LEA	science	89.0	90.1	1.1	41.2	47.9	6.7
NAT		86.0	86.0	0.0	37.5	43.0	5.5

The schools chosen for inclusion in TLP were already performing well (see the 2003 evaluation report, sections 1.1 and 1.3). Table 7.1 shows that in 2002, results for all tests at KS2 in the TLP schools were higher than for all LEA schools. The table also shows that in 2004, in some tests, the results in project schools were even higher than those for the LEA as a whole, and that the results in the TLP schools improved more than the results in the LEA as a whole. This is particularly noticeable for Level 4+ writing, Level 5 reading and, to a lesser extent, Level 5 mathematics. Improvements in the TLP group results for Level 4 writing and Level 5 reading are noticeably higher than the corresponding results nationally.

It is worth remembering at this point that where results are already high it is more difficult to make an improvement. The improvement in writing was therefore perhaps to be expected, as there is more room to improve here. Of the 29 TLP schools, more than half declared as their curriculum focus either English or a cross curricular approach.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2 below illustrate the trends in reading and writing, comparing results in TLP schools with those in the whole LEA and in all schools nationally. The comparative rate of increase in standards in TLP schools from 2002 to 2004 may be more easily seen in these graphs than in Table 7.1.

Figure 7.1
KS2 Level 4+ writing results 1999-2004: TLP, North Yorkshire and national

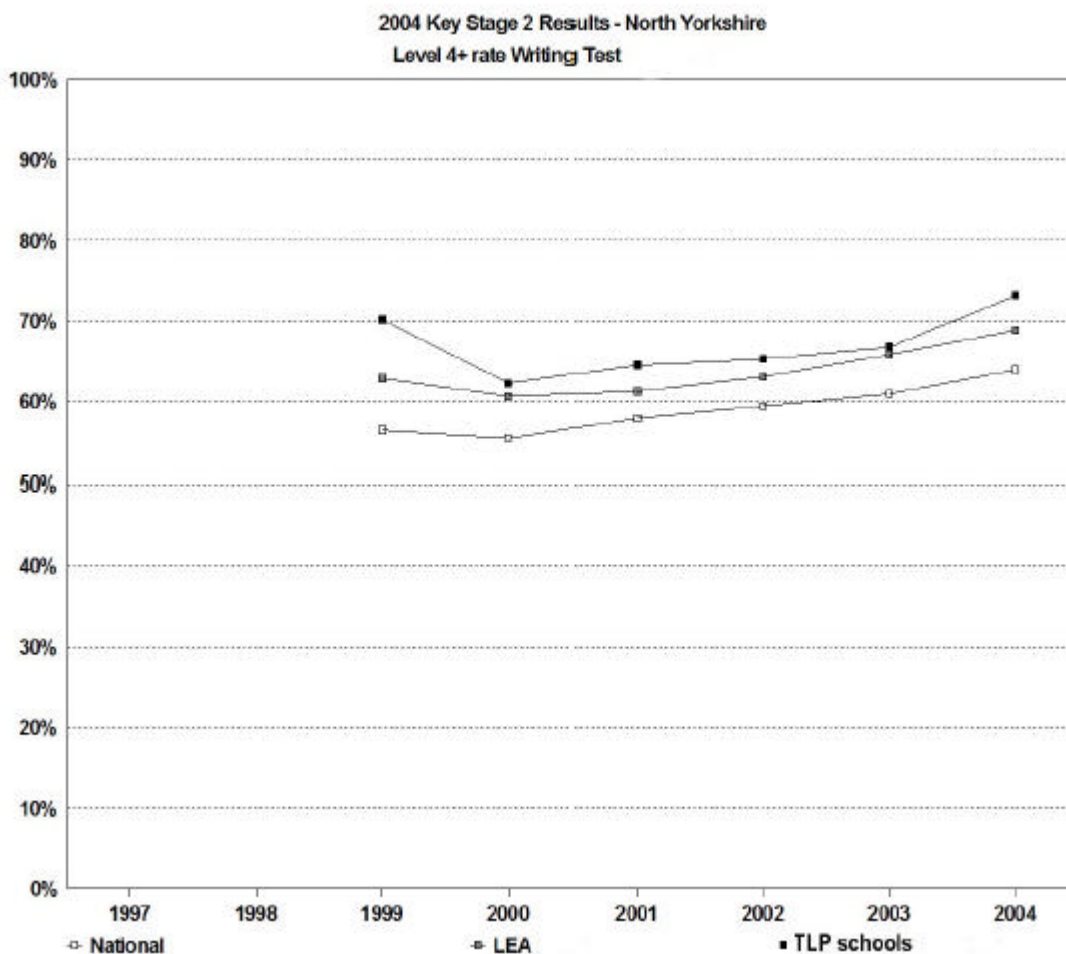
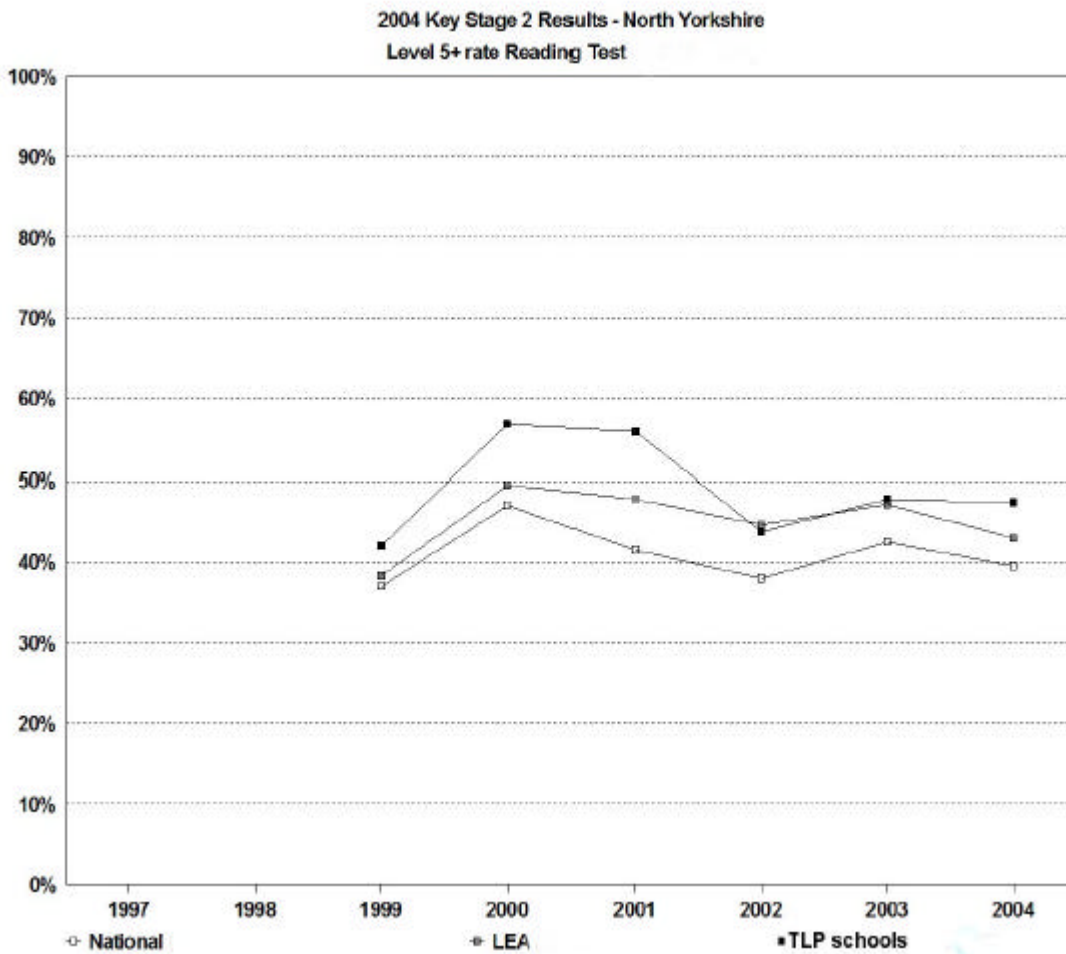


Figure 7.2
KS2 Level 5 reading results 1999-2004, TLP, North Yorkshire and national



7.3 Analysis of writing and reading test results by gender

The noticeably higher performance in Level 4 writing and Level 5 reading prompted a closer analysis of these results by gender.

Table 7.2 sets out results in writing for boys and girls separately. Here the improvement is more noticeable for boys than for girls. However, it is worth remembering that there was more room for improvement for the boys than for the girls. Table 7.3 sets out Level 5 results in reading for boys and girls separately. Once again, boys' improvement is more marked in TLP than locally and nationally.

Table 7.2
KS2 writing, 2002-4: boys and girls

KS2 writing	Girls Level 4+			Boys Level 4+		
	2002	2004	02 to 04	2002	2004	02 to 04
TLP	75.2	82.4	7.2	55.6	64.2	8.6
LEA	70.9	76.9	6.0	55.3	61.5	6.2
NAT	67.0	71.0	4.0	52.0	56.0	4.0

Table 7.3
KS2 reading, 2002-4: boys and girls

KS2 reading	Girls Level 5			Boys Level 5		
	2002	2004	02 to 04	2002	2004	02 to 04
TLP	49.6	54.6	5.0	38.0	40.2	2.2
LEA	48.3	50.4	2.1	40.9	36.1	-4.8
NAT	41.0	46.0	5.0	35.0	33.0	-2.0

7.4 Analysis of results in all tests using prior attainment

A key question is: are the results in TLP schools higher than might be expected when the prior attainment of these children is taken into account? To answer this question, attainment of pupils in the TLP schools in Key Stage 1 tasks/tests has been used as a starting point and these results have been matched to the corresponding Key Stage 2 results, to give a view of 'value-added'

Table 7.4 shows value-added using the measure recently introduced by DfES. This calculates value-added for each individual pupil relative to the national median performance. Table 7.5 uses a different methodology whereby the difference between the average point score at Key Stage 1 and the average point score at Key Stage 2 for each individual pupil is calculated and then aggregated to give the average for all pupils as one group.

Table 7.4
Value-added, TLP, North Yorkshire and national (DfES measure)

	2002	2004	02 to 04
KS2 value added			
TLP	100.3	100.0	-0.3
LEA	99.8	99.7	-0.1
NAT	100.0	100.0	0.0

Table 7.5
Value-added, TLP, North Yorkshire and national (average point scores)

	KS1 APS	1998	2000	KS2 APS	2002	2004
TLP		15.5	16.0		28.5	28.5
LEA		15.5	15.9		28.0	28.2
NAT		14.1	14.7		26.7	27.0
	KS1-2 Progress by APS			02 to 04		
TLP		13.0	12.5		-0.5	
LEA		12.5	12.3		-0.2	
NAT		12.6	12.3		-0.3	

At first sight it would appear that less value has been added for pupils in TLP schools than for those in LEA schools as a whole. However, the differences are small and statistically they are not significant. As noted elsewhere in this report, any conclusion from this and the other analyses in this section must be carefully qualified: teaching in full accordance with the dialogic teaching principles features consistently in relatively few TLP schools, and even in these schools pupils taking the 2004 tests may have experienced it for only a short time.

VIII

MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Main findings and (*in italics*) recommendations appear below. The numbers refer to the relevant sections of this report. Unlike its predecessor, the report does not contain an account of the rationale, principles and indicators of dialogic teaching on which the Talk for Learning Project is based. For these, see Part I and Appendix 3 of the 2003 report.

8.1 The second formative evaluation of North Yorkshire County Council's Talk for Learning Project (TLP) combined feedback from teachers and members of the CAMAS link advisory team, observation and interviews by the consultant in ten of the 34 currently active project schools, and - as a new element - comparison of KS2 test results in project and non-project schools. The evaluation also had at its disposal opportunistic data in the form of Ofsted inspection reports on six project schools. The evaluation focused on (i) support for professional development provided by the Authority and the schools themselves, and on (ii) the classroom impact of TLP on teaching, pupil engagement and the processes and outcomes of pupil learning. (2.1-2.3)

8.2 The first formative evaluation, published in 2003, contained a number of recommendations for the attention of the Authority. All have been acted on, though some require continuing attention. (3.1-3.12)

8.3 *Among those recommendations from the 2003 evaluation which require continuing attention are the following: the need for greater precision in determining the focus and objectives of school planning in respect of dialogic teaching (3.4); the need to give balanced attention to extending and improving the repertoires of both teaching and learning talk, rather than concentrating on one but not the other (3.4); the need to continue the effort to make TLP a school-wide initiative in which children have a consistent and developing experience of dialogic teaching and learning as they progress from Foundation Stage through the subsequent Key Stages (3.11); the need to give particular attention to what dialogic teaching and learning implies for early years planning and provision (3.12).*

8.4 The number of 'active' TLP schools decreased from 42 in June 2003 to 34 in June 2004, but in each case this was due to factors outside the project's control and four of these withdrawals were temporary: by the time this report is published the TLP list will include 38 schools. The evaluation shows that schools are extending the reach of TLP to classes other than Y5 and Y6, and to more aspects of the curriculum than in 2002-3, though English, science and PSHE continue to dominate. Schools are also broadening the scope of their work on different aspects of talk. Although TLP is proving to be an inclusive project, there is as yet little evidence of that more systematic attention, as required by the project's initial goals, to the needs of the most able children. (4.1-4.6)

8.5 *Schools could usefully consider not so much whether all children are experiencing good quality talk as whether that talk is sufficiently attuned to their various needs. This remains an issue in respect of the most able children, who need to be involved in talk which challenges and stretches them cognitively. (4.6)*

8.6 The Authority has offered a similar programme of professional support and training to that of 2002-3, though the number of conferences/training days was reduced from five to one, and a combination of advisory staff illness, CAMAS staff changes and the heavy demands of the LEA's Ofsted inspection forced a hiatus in the programme. While the contributions of link advisers were as warmly welcomed as in 2002-3, the one conference was less enthusiastically received. (5.1-5.3)

8.7 Video continues to prove, as was intended, a vital tool for teacher professional development, planning and evaluation. Some schools are extending video viewing to include children, parents and governors, and in one case tapes have been shown to Ofsted inspectors as an alternative to pupils' written work. Most technical problems have now been solved, and in any case Authority technical support is readily available. However, poor sound remains a problem, and few teachers are making full use of the three microphones provided. Some teachers are finding the time demands of video, editing and transfer excessive. Although a number of video clips have been shared and discussed at TLP conferences, there is as yet no body of video material which comprehensively and systematically exemplifies the different aspects of dialogic teaching. (5.5)

8.8 *Schools should be encouraged to make fuller use of the range of microphones provided, and to concentrate on ensuring that the recorded talk is sufficiently audible to permit the analysis and evaluation for which it was intended. The expenditure of massive amounts of time on editing and transfer to CD should be avoided. All that is required is that tapes are made and turned to professional and educational advantage. The Authority could give further attention to the accumulation of high quality video clips which exemplify the different kinds of teaching and learning talk, and dialogic teaching at its best. The use of video with pupils, as a planned aspect of teaching as opposed to professional development, is a novel and important spin-off of TLP, and its high learning potential is such that it should be more generally used in this way.* (5.5)

8.9 Schools are now playing a larger part in TLP-related support and professional development, as is essential if the project is to exert a genuinely school-wide impact. As yet, however, the development and evaluation of dialogic teaching features in relatively few School Development Plans. (5.6)

8.10 *The full incorporation of the objectives and strategies of the Talk for Learning Project into the School Development Plan of each participating school should be completed as soon as possible in order to consolidate efforts to shift TLP from a one-off project to a mainstream educational activity.* (5.6)

8.11 The teacher survey shows that teachers believe that TLP continues to exert a significant impact on their thinking and their teaching, and on pupil motivation, engagement and learning. However, there was surprisingly little comment on the latter three aspects, even though they are the ultimate test of the efficacy of what the teacher thinks, plans and does. (6.2)

8.12 *Schools could perhaps give more sustained attention to evaluating how dialogic teaching impacts on not just on teaching but also on pupil engagement and learning.* (6.2)

8.13 CAMAS feedback continues to reinforce the positive picture of the 2002-3 evaluation. However, it also draws attention to particular groups of teachers who need extra help and to both conditions for and obstacles to success at school level. (6.3)

8.14 *The project could usefully consider the particular developmental needs of (i) newly-qualified teachers and (ii) those teachers who are highly experienced but find it difficult to accommodate to alternative thinking about their practice. In encouraging growth at the level of the school, there may also be a need for specific training for some heads, since the evidence shows that their advocacy and involvement are critical to the project's success.* (6.3)

8.15 *The example of those schools which have brought parents, governors and indeed children into the frame should be more widely emulated.* (6.3)

8.16 The observational evidence confirms that the changes in thinking and practice are genuine and sustained. The best work on dialogic teaching in North Yorkshire TLP schools is now outstanding, and exceeds in its quality the supposed 'best practice' in speaking and listening which has been disseminated to schools nationwide in materials provided by DfES, QCA and the national strategies. However, the combination of observation and the link advisers' evidence also shows that a gap is

opening up between the quality of what is being achieved in the most and least successful schools. Some are disadvantaged by their physical circumstances. Some are assimilating dialogic teaching into existing initiatives in a way which may distort its character and dilute its quality. Some are being overly selective on the aspects of talk on which they focus, attending perhaps to questions but not to answers, or to teaching talk but not learning talk. Some appear not to understand the radical implications of dialogic teaching for mainstream practice. (6.4)

8.17 The approach to professional support and development now needs to become more differentiated, so as to accommodate the needs of teachers with different levels of skill and understanding. At the same time as continuing to secure proper engagement with the rationale, principles and indicators of dialogic teaching, and the extended repertoires of teaching and learning talk which dialogic teaching requires, the Authority could consider how the work of the most successful teachers can be extended, built upon and used to the advantage of all. However, no less than their colleagues, these teachers need to share ideas and refine their thinking and practice, and it is important that they are not used merely to showcase the project's achievements. (6.4)

8.18 Ofsted reports on the six project schools inspected during 2003-4 are extremely encouraging for this project. However, this judgement probably needs to be tempered by awareness that some of the inspectors appeared not to understand fully what the project was about. (6.5)

8.19 Ofsted, as well as parents and governors, needs to be brought into the discussion about dialogic teaching. (6.5)

8.20 The project is new and dialogic teaching is the default pedagogy in relatively few classrooms, so it is premature to make other than cautious claims about the project's impact on KS2 test results. With this caveat in mind we can note that (i) KS2 test results have improved more in TLP schools than across the LEA as a whole; (ii) these improvements are especially noticeable in Level 4+ writing, Level 5 reading and Level 5 mathematics; (iii) the L4+ writing and L5 reading improvements are higher in the TLP schools than nationally; (iv) improvements in the reading scores of boys are higher than nationally.

8.21 Project schools' performance in the national KS2 tests can become an increasingly important part of the TLP evaluation process, though the validity of these tests as evaluation data will continue to depend on the extent to which teaching in accordance with the dialogic teaching principles is extensive and sustained enough to justify their use, and must be coupled with caution about reading too much into measures which were designed for other purposes. CAMAS has indicated that it will be refining the analysis in future years. Assuming that it is technically feasible, CAMAS might also consider introducing a matched sample of non-TLP schools.

8.22 It is now clearer than a year ago which aspects of dialogic teaching make the heaviest and demands on professional understanding and skill. This report has expressed these not as professional failings or deficits but as challenges and, in some cases, genuine dilemmas of the kind that a complex activity like teaching necessarily entails. That is the spirit in which they can most constructively be addressed. (6.6)

8.23 It would be helpful if both schools and the Authority could encourage open discussion among teachers of the challenges and dilemmas which the evaluation process is uncovering, for example: handling concentrated and uninterrupted group discussion in a whole class context; securing optimum conditions for whole-class dialogue and pupil-led group work; the balance and appropriate use of bidding and nomination; reducing the dominance of questioning and finding the mix of 'drawing out' and 'putting in' (questioning and exposition) which in each set of circumstances is most likely to scaffold the pupil's understanding; balancing encouragement with genuinely informative feedback; generating discussion which is both open-ended and purposeful; balancing teaching talk and learning talk, and finding the best way for the teacher to use his/her talk to extend the pupil's repertoire of learning talk; understanding the difference between talk which is extended (longer thinking time,

fuller answers) and talk which is dialogic; attending to all five of the dialogic teaching principles, not just to the first three. (6.6)

8.24 It is now also clear that the dialogic teaching principles can usefully be separated into two groups: those (collective, reciprocal, supportive) which deal mainly with the context, climate and dynamics of classroom talk, and those (cumulative, purposeful) which deal no less with the knowledge, understanding and skill which the teacher wishes pupils to acquire or extend. The evidence shows that in a good proportion of project classrooms the climate and conduct of talk has changed, sometimes markedly, as teachers have responded positively to the first three principles. However, the pursuit of cumulation is evidently much more difficult, for it requires attention partly to *exchange structure* (especially the way answers are handled and built upon) and partly to the *conceptual structure* of the subject matter, for this informs the content of questions, answers, feedback, exposition and the other kinds of talk. In this important sense, dialogic teaching may test the teacher's subject knowledge as sternly as it challenges his or her interactive skill.(6.7)

8.25 *It is important to frame future professional support by an awareness that the dialogic teaching principles are to an extent hierarchical. The first stage is to enable a shift towards changes in the climate, structure and dynamics of classroom talk (collective, reciprocal, supportive) and, when these are secured, the next task is to work on using these to support the pursuit of specific content-related objectives through cumulation and a sustained and explicit sense of purpose. Although in some schools the challenge remains that of helping teachers to move away from the dominance of recitation teaching towards reciprocity and supportiveness, elsewhere it is a matter of achieving the second-stage transition to cumulation and hence scaffolding. This recommendation should be considered in relation to the earlier point (8.17) about making the project's professional support developmentally more discriminating. (6.7)*

8.26 *In view of the significant improvements recorded in the first two years of TLP, together with growing national and international recognition of the crucial importance of high quality talk in teaching and learning, TLP deserves the Authority's continuing and long-term support. TLP has the potential to transform children's motivation and learning and, as KS2 results are beginning to hint, to raise measured educational standards. It is hoped that the Authority will reassert the project's strategic importance and continue to sustain schools and advisers in their efforts on its behalf.*

Appendix 1

TALK FOR LEARNING PROJECT SCHOOLS, JUNE 2004

All Saints CE Primary School, Kirkby Overblow
Arkengarthdale CE Primary School
Askwith Community Primary School
Bedale CE Primary School
Braeburn Community Junior School (in separately-funded Scarborough Locality Plan: started with TLP in 2003)
Crayke CE Primary School
Croft CE Primary School
Danby CE Primary School
Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School
Forest of Galtres Anglican/Methodist Primary School
Friarage Community Primary School (in separately-funded Scarborough Locality Plan: started with TLP in 2003)
Giggleswick Primary School
Helmsley Community Primary School
Hinderwell Community Primary School (in separately-funded Scarborough Locality Plan: started with TLP in 2003)
Horton in Ribblesdale CE Primary School
Husthwaite Community Primary School (in abeyance during 2003-4 but will return to TLP from January 2005)
Hutton Rudby Primary School
Kildwick CE Primary School
Kirk Hammerton CE Primary School
Kirk Smeaton CE Primary School
Le Cateau Community Primary School, Catterick
Lothersdale Community Primary School
Markington CE Primary School
Nawton Community Primary School
North Rigton CE Primary School
Northstead Community Primary School (in separately-funded Scarborough Locality Plan: in abeyance during 2003-4 but will return to TLP from January 2005)
Nun Monkton Foundation Primary School
Overdale Community Primary School (in separately-funded Scarborough Locality Plan: started with TLP in 2003)
Selby Abbey CE Primary School
Sherburn in Elmet Athelstan Community Primary School
South Milford Community Primary School
St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Scarborough
St Wilfred's Catholic Primary School, Ripon
Sutton in Craven CE Primary School (in abeyance during 2003-4 but will return to TLP from January 2005)
Sutton under Whitestonecliffe CE Primary School (in abeyance during 2003-4 but will return to TLP from January 2005)
Threshfield School
West Cliff Primary School, Whitby
Wistow Parochial CE Primary School

Video

8. How frequently have you taped lessons during 2003-4?
9. Which microphones have you used? (*Circle*) Camera / radio / conference
10. Have there been any problems?
11. Who has viewed/discussed the tapes? (*Circle*) The teacher(s) involved / other staff / children / governors / parents / colleagues in cluster schools / other (specify)
12. What have been the main professional gains from using the tapes?

Support

During 2003-4 the LEA has continued to provide TLP schools with various kinds of support. Comment on how you have used these, and how useful you have found them.

13. Conferences and training days:
 - 9 July 2003 (2002-3 evaluation day)
 - 9 February 2004
14. Link adviser:
15. The published dialogic teaching principles and indicators:
16. Other documentation (specify):
17. Do you have any suggestions for how the LEA support and/or documentation could be improved?
18. What support has the school itself provided for TLP?
19. How helpful has this been?

The impact of TLP and dialogic teaching

20. Have you evaluated the impact of your school's involvement in TLP, for example as part of the school improvement plan? If so, by what means and against what criteria?
21. What changes, if any, have you noted in the character and quality of teaching as a result of TLP?
22. What changes, if any, have you noted in the extent and quality of pupils' motivation and engagement?
23. What changes, if any, have you noted in pupils' relationships?

24. What changes, if any, have you noted in the quality and outcomes of pupils' learning?
25. Have some pupils appeared to benefit more from dialogic approaches than others?
26. What has been the impact on more able children (a group specifically targeted by the Authority at the beginning of TLP)?
27. How, if at all, has TLP affected your view of those parts of the curriculum on which you have concentrated?
28. Has the project affected any other aspects of your school's work?

Obstacles to success

29. If you feel that your school's participation in TLP, and the benefits gained, have been *less* than you would have liked, what has caused this?

Next year

30. In 2004-5 how does your school hope to build on the successes/insights of its involvement in TLP so far?

Other comments

31. If there is anything you would like to add, please do so here.

Appendix 3

THE CAMAS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Talk for Learning Project: Year 2 evaluation, 2003-4

ADVISORY TEAM EVALUATION MEETING

Thursday 10 June 2004, Harrogate

Proposed themes for discussion

Note: this is different from the usual team meetings in that it is a formal part of the 2003-4 evaluation and will be led by the project's Development and Evaluation Consultant. What is said will be treated as data alongside the material from the school questionnaire survey, the school visits and the comparative analysis of test score trends in project and non-project schools. Colleagues' anonymity will be respected in the report. Some of the information sought below will no doubt be provided from documentary sources after the meeting, thus reducing the number of issues to be covered on the day. The framework will be used flexibly.

The schools: facts and figures

Number of schools now in TLP:

Changes from year 1:

Reasons:

Expansion to other schools - policy / procedures / issues:

Expansion beyond Y5/6 base in existing schools: average number / proportion of classes now involved:

Foci (curriculum / aspects of talk / children) - info should come from school questionnaires, but general trends?

List of schools, teachers, projects etc: need for full documentation for evaluation report, as in Year 1

Advisory support

Number in team now:

Range of roles:

Changes since Year 1:

Average number of school visits per team member:

Range of activities undertaken in school:

Issues arising:

Training days

Number, dates and principal focus of each:

Most effective format/activities:

Least effective format/activities:

Linking with national initiatives, e.g. Primary Strategy:

Finance

Costs of project to Authority in 2003-4:

Cover:

Hardware:

Other:

Funding sources

Funding issues for the future?

Video use

Residual technical problems:

Uses made by schools and advisers:

Are schools being more rigorous in their video-based analysis?

Issues:

Building on Year 1 / following up the Year 1 evaluation.

Discuss progress on the specific recommendations from the Year 1 evaluation report (numbers refer to pp 22-4):

(5) seek external funding:

(7) re-assess documentation and avoid 'dumbing down':

(10) extend school foci while achieving greater precision in focus identification and related analysis; look at teacher talk as well as pupil talk:

(12) sort out remaining video problems:

(15) re -assess the logistics of advisory support to achieve effective support without overburdening team members:

(17) looking beyond talk itself at contextual and organisational factors:

(19) (Key developmental cluster of recommendations)

- extend evaluation - track impact of TLP on learning outcomes as well as teaching and engagement:
- ensure each school is clear about its objectives:
- secure agreement on school use of indicators, record-keeping procedures and modes of evaluation:

(20) Build on findings about inclusion, working across the wider CAMAS team

(22) Start building cohorts experiencing dialogic teaching from Foundation stage upwards

(23) Constantly revisit core ideas and principles so as both to test them and to avoid regression / dilution / distortion:

(24) Project doesn't currently differentiate implications for different ages and stages: work on adding developmental aspect:

Overall assessment of progress / impact of project to date, and main gains during 2003-4

- Teachers and teaching
- Pupils' motivation and engagement
- The quality and outcomes of pupils' learning

Conditions for success in the most successful schools

Obstacles to success in the less successful schools

Issues to take forward to 2004-5

Other matters which team members wish to signal in the evaluation report

Appendix 4

PROJECT SCHOOLS VISITED BY THE CONSULTANT FOR THE 2003-4 EVALUATION

Askwith Community Primary School

Danby CE Primary School

Forest of Galtres Anglican/Methodist Primary School

Hutton Rudby Primary School

Kirkby Overblow All Saints CE Primary School

Kirk Smeaton CE Primary School

Markington CE Primary School

Selby Abbey CE Primary School

South Milford Community Primary School

Threshfield Primary School

All schools except Selby Abbey and Threshfield were also visited for the 2003 evaluation.