

## What does supportive trainer talk look like?

### Content Support

Where a trainer looks to support the participants in their learning of the content of the training session.

- **Eliciting knowledge or views from teachers**

- a) **T:** The one particular term I'm looking for. This is a measure that could be for individuals or for countries or whatever which.... which is a measure of how much energy they are using energy .... The effect is on the rest of the world.
- b) **T:** X, if, if you were using this, would you change anything? Is there anything you don't like about it?  
**P:** *I think it's OK.*  
**T:** If you think it's OK , what do you particularly like about it?

- **Responding to what teachers say**

- a) **P:** How does that [the assignment] differ from the lesson plan? That's why I don't understand.  
**T:** A lesson plan has a different format. It's usually tabular. And you are writing in full sentences and paragraphs in your main body of your assignment. As well as referring to a rationale for individual parts of the material, you are also referring to the literature.
- b) **P:** Grammar translation  
**T:** I'm going to ask that question back to you how could it be grammar translation? You didn't necessarily mention it .. That part could be.. ?

- **Describing or providing content**

- a) **T:** Well, I think a self-assessment is more of a type of an approach to formative assessment really.... Let's say I'm giving verbal feedback to you now, X. ... as a teacher, I want to encourage you ...to achieve a target ... recognising what the learner did well and then giving them a next step. We can call this a medal and a mission. But we need to think about this in a CLIL context... You can give medals and missions that could be related to your subject, the science, the maths, but I want you to also think about... language. So here, we've got an example of a medal that is related to the subject. You gave a thorough explanation of the different processes of erosion. But their mission is related to language and your next work. Pay more attention to punctuation
- b) **T:** So how do we, how do we deal with distraction? Well, I've come up, come up with a couple of things. The first thing is... if people come into a class of mine, I ask them first to turn off notifications on their phone... then essentially you've got a quiet phone and a phone that's not illuminating every 10 seconds with new chat

## Process Support

Where a trainer looks to support the participants in their understandings of learning processes within the training session.

- **Providing a commentary on the intended training/learning process**

- a) **T:** I have two more activities. But it doesn't mean that everybody has to finish at the same time to do the next two activities, we're going to do some differentiation.
- b) **T:** OK, so again, just think if you haven't thought through already, and make a few notes about any approaches or methods, yeah? I want you to keep them fresh, because we're going from one to the next and then we're going to go back in a minute. Thank you.

- **Commenting on the learning process**

- a) **T:** First, make a dummy  
**P:** *Make a...?*  
**T:** ... dummy..  
**P:** *What is this, dummy?*  
**T:** A dummy is not the real thing. I have brought some scrap paper.  
 [Later]  
**P:** *We can make a dummy at first*  
**T:** Thank you... you're already using and you're recycling the vocabulary, Yes, you can all make a dummy
- b) **T:** I really love the way that we're kind of building up on other ideas, right? The first one was quite simple. Yes, just to read aloud a pop-up book, our learners will be more motivated because they are magic. Then follow up activities, making a list of all the places that are mentioned. Now we're getting more sophisticated, describing 3d pictures

- **Reflecting in action**

- a) **P:** *So, I don't know what summative is. Do we have to guess ... or we should know as teachers?*  
**T:** ... maybe this is erm something that I could have found out more about at some point before setting the task. I had assumed that these.... and I may be also from previous discussions that we had in in other sessions, I'd assumed that these terms were familiar, formative and summative.
- b) **T:** Are we talking synchronous? Rather ...Did you mean synchronous?  
**P:** *Synchronic exists, doesn't it?*  
**T:** Does it? Don't ask me! I.. It It may well do. Synchronic... Well, there you go...'concerned with something, especially a language, as it exists at one point in time'. See? You learn something every day. Did you know that one? Did you know that one?  
**P:** Yes.

## Group Support

Where a trainer looks to support the development of a cohesive group environment which fosters appropriate learning.

- **Creating a group discourse**

- a) **T:** What is one area that is missing, one type of task that we looked at in some detail on Monday? Can anybody remember? ...If I say, Irish schools, early 20th century... this might jog your memories.
- b) **T:** I think XXX would be happy with some general English as well, wouldn't you, XXX? At the right level (Laughs)

- **Making the pedagogical natural**

(When the trainer interacts in a natural way (as a person) within the pedagogical role.)

- a) **T:** And I am not really a very skilful person when it comes to using my hands. Terrible really, my father used to say that I have two left hands.  
**P:** *My father too*  
**T:** Oh good. So, you will feel you have no hands at all right? But hey, seriously, if I can do this then you can do this then everybody can do this.
- b) **T:** How are we doing for time? Blimey... time has flown. Advantages team let's em Excuse me, can you do the honours for me please? I like this magnetic strip thing, it 's very good. Yeah,  
**P:** ... *very useful.*  
**T:** It's a... it saves the walls. doesn't it.?

- **Sharing personal experience**

- a) **T:** I know we used to do that in our Latin lessons. When I was at school. We had to learn Latin Our Latin course book had nothing but those kinds of questions
- b) **T:** And sometimes, I remember I... I was teaching a CELTA course in, in Poland and most of the trainees on the course were Polish. And they were doing discovery technique and, and then they supposed to be using it in the classes that they taught. And one day they said this is taking so much time with us. Why don't we just tell them?

## Further reading

### Trainer talk in the training room

[http://www.alanwaters.org.uk/img/TRAINING\\_TRAINING\\_ROOM\\_SKILLS.pdf](http://www.alanwaters.org.uk/img/TRAINING_TRAINING_ROOM_SKILLS.pdf) (accessed 29/1/20)

Wright, T &. Bolitho R (2007) *Trainer Development* [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) : Chapter 7: *Talk in Training Courses* (deals with both teacher and trainer talk in the training room)

### Trainer talk in post-observation lesson feedback

Copland, F. (2011) *Legitimate Talk in Feedback Conferences* *Applied Linguistics* 33/1: pp 1–20

Copland, F. (2011) *Negotiating face in feedback conferences: A linguistic ethnographic analysis* *Journal of Pragmatics* 43 pp 3832–3843

Engin, M. (2012) *Trainer talk: levels of intervention* *ELT Journal* 67/1 pp 11-19

### Teacher talk

Cullen, R. (1998) *Teacher talk and the classroom context* *ELT Journal* 52/3, pp 179–187

Cullen, R. (2002) *Supportive teacher talk: the importance of the F-move* *ELT Journal*, 56/2, April pp 117–127

Gil, G. (2002) *Two complementary modes of foreign language classroom interaction* *ELT Journal*, 56/3 July pp 273 – 279

Senior, R. (1997) *Transforming language classes into bonded groups* *ELT Journal* Volume 51/1 January 1997 pp3-11

Thompson, G. (1997) *Training teachers to ask questions* *ELT Journal* Volume 51/2 April 1997 pp 99-105

Thornbury, S. (1996) *Teachers research teacher talk* *ELT Journal* Volume 50/4 October 1996 pp 279-289

Wong J. and Waring H.Z. (2009) *'Very good' as a teacher response* *ELT Journal* Volume 63/3 pp 195-203

### Learner talk

Chang, G.L., & Wells, G. (1987). The Literate Potential of Collaborative Talk. In Maclure, M., Phillips, T, and Wilkinson, A. Eds 1988) *Oracy Matters: The Development of Talking and Listening in Education* pp 95-109 Milton Keynes: Open University

Mercer, N. (2002) *Developing Dialogues* In Wells, G. & Claxton, G. (2002) *Learning for life in the 21st: Century Sociocultural perspectives on the future of education.* pp 141-153 Oxford: Blackwell. Available from [https://people.ucsc.edu/~gwells/Files/Courses\\_Folder/documents/Mercer.DevelopingDialoguepdf.pdf](https://people.ucsc.edu/~gwells/Files/Courses_Folder/documents/Mercer.DevelopingDialoguepdf.pdf) (accessed 29/1/21)

Mercer, N. (1995) *The Guided Construction of Knowledge: Talk amongst teachers and learners* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd

Thinking Together project <https://thinkingtogether.educ.cam.ac.uk/> (accessed 29/1/21)