



Thinking Environments

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The classroom remains one of the key places where students learn. It is of course by no means the only place in which they learn, but it is the one which we as educators can have the most control over. To learn, students need to have certain skills, one of which is the ability to listen and interact with their peers and the teacher.

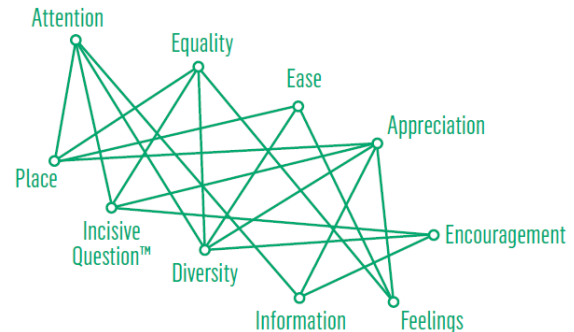
Nancy Kline, in her 1999 book, *Time to Think*, outlines ten principles which we can use in any environment in order to facilitate improved thinking and discussion. The principles can be applied equally to the workplace or a classroom and provide a useful framework for a thinking, and therefore learning, environment.

The ten principles are:

Attention, Equality, Ease, Appreciation, Encouragement, Feelings, Information, Diversity, Incisive Questioning, Place.

There is not space here to outline each in detail, but Kline's book provides an excellent description of each and how they can be facilitated. A number of them (Attention, Appreciation and Encouragement) work together and rely on students being able to actively listen to each other. To be an active listener is itself a skill which students will need to be taught if a high quality Thinking Environment is to be created in the classroom.

Active Listening is defined by Nelson-Jones (2014) as '...more than 'hearing' someone's words. It means fully attuning to the feelings and views of the speaker, demonstrating unbiased acceptance and validation of their experience'. It is a common experience that, rather than actively listening to what somebody else is saying, we are in fact thinking about what we might say next. Alternatively, we may focus on one thing that the speaker has said and be thinking about



Adapted from Nancy Kline's Thinking Environment

that, ignoring what ever else comes next in the conversation. Rost and Wilson (2013) have some good ideas about how to teach the skill of active listening in their book *Active Listening*.

It is worth considering adopting the principles of Thinking Environments if you want to develop better discussion work in the classroom. There are some initial ideas on Nancy Kline's website <https://www.timetothink.com/thinking-environment/the-ten-components/> to get you started.

References

- Kline, N. (1999). *Time to think: listening to ignite the human mind*. Ward Lock.
- Rost, M., & Wilson, J. J. (2013). *Active listening*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315832920>
- Nelson-jones' theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy, 6th edition. (2015). Protoview, 2(6).

Talking point: Diverse Voices Diverse Literacies

Jean Wood

On October 30th we were fortunate to have hosted a literature and literacies one day conference, entitled *Diverse Voices Diverse Literacies*. Speakers included Associate Professor of Education Dr Verity Jones, whose interests lie in social and environmental justices in education, and Dr Sabina Little, who explores the links between language, identity, and belonging, and the role of multilingualism in society. Such wide-ranging and innovative considerations of literacy are a long way from some practices that are demanded of schools. Jean Wood has been reflecting on Dominic Wyse's blog posts for UCL on the teaching of reading.

Wyse discusses the approach to teaching reading in England's primary schools, with its heavy emphasis on synthetic phonics. The key elements of this approach include early phonics testing, mandatory participation in synthetic phonics lessons for at least two years, prioritising phonics over meaning and syntax, daily separate phonics lessons, and the use of decodable books. Wyse argues that this approach is narrow and lacks alignment with research evidence. He

suggests that the government's Phonics Screening Check test adds to the pressure and highlights the effect that the government's recommended phonics schemes, enforcement by Ofsted, have on initial teacher training.

If our student teachers are to support pupils to view reading as windows and doors to explore the world and mirrors to reflect their own developing identities (Bishop, 1990), how can we support them to move discussion beyond decoding and towards understanding, absorbing, questioning, challenging ...and enjoying?

Reference

- Bishop, R. S. (1990). Mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors. Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom, 6 (3). *Perspectives: Choosing and Using Books for the Classroom*, 6(3), ix-xi.

For more information, please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJImJ79JKNl>



The Lived Experiences of a Secondary Phase Early Career Teacher on the Early Career Teacher Programme in England

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This on-going case study investigates the experience of an Early Career Teacher (ECT) entering our profession and undertaking the ECT programme. It builds on earlier research at BGU undertaken by Quickfall et al., (2022) into experiences of ECTs during the Covid-19 pandemic which recognised the importance of relationships within schools, the value of support given by school leaders and the need to acknowledge the challenges of beginning our professional career.

In the UK, and Internationally, there are serious issues of attrition in early career teaching (e.g., Passy and Ovenden-Hope, 2020). The Early Career Framework (ECF) promises a two-year structured support to bolster early experiences of teachers and providing support systems for novice educators. This should, in theory, ensure that teachers in their formative career phase are afforded dedicated periods to focus solely on their professional development (DfE, 2019).

Sadly, however, research suggests that only 14 percent of ECTs and a mere nine percent of mentors thought that the approved Early Career Teacher Programme (ECTP) was an effective use of time (Booth, 2022).

Our current case study suggests that our participant shares these reservations. It employs an IPA-informed methodology to give a nuanced exploration that both captures the uniqueness of the participant's experience and provides scope for interpretative insight.

The participant reports that although their '*experience of doing the PGCE at university was really positive*', during the ECTP they

did not '*feel that [they] were being stretched at any point*' and that completion of the training modules would '*just slip*' because they '*didn't see them as beneficial*'.

As we explore the data in more detail, we hope to interrogate whether reduction of elements found to be valuable in the earlier research - of the importance of relationships, the value of support by school leaders and acknowledgement of the challenges of beginning a professional career – are contributing factors to the disillusionment found in this instance.

We will be happy to share this research with you when published.

References

Booth, S. (2022, April 22). *Early career framework risks heads snubbing new teachers*. Retrieved from Schools Week: <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/early-career-framework-risks-heads-snubbing-new-teachers/>

DfE. (2019, January 28). Early career framework. Retrieved from Department for Education web site: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-career-framework>

Passy, R., & Ovenden-Hope, T. (2020). Introduction . In R. Passy, & T. Ovenden-Hope, *Exploring Teacher Recruitment and Retention* New York: Routledge.

Quickfall, A., Wood, P., & Clarke, E. (2022). The experiences of newly qualified in 2020 and what we can learn for future cohorts. *The London Review of Education*.

The importance of relationships mapped across the Teachers' Standards

TS7

Maintain good relationships with pupils; use approaches which are appropriate to pupils' needs.

TS2

Be aware of pupils' capabilities and prior knowledge and plan teaching to build on this

TS3

Foster and maintain pupils' interest.

TS1

Set goals that stretch and challenge pupils of all backgrounds, abilities and dispositions; establish mutual respect.

Relationships

TS8

Communicate effectively with parents; colleagues and parents respond to advice from colleagues.

TS6

Make use of formative assessment and give pupils regular feedback.

TS5

Adapting teaching to the strength and needs of all pupils

TS Part II

Treat pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect

TS4 / TS6

Use relevant data to monitor progress, set targets and plan subsequent lessons

With thanks to Matt Dunn



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The Secondary PGCE newsletter is designed to enable our partnership school professional colleagues to remain up to date with the team's current research interests.

Would you like to hear more about a project? Would you like to get involved in our research? Do you have any research you would like to share? Please do let us know. You can email beyondite@bishopg.ac.uk if you are interested or give us a call on 01522 527347.