Scaffolding Talk through Collaborative Learning: Workshop for KS2 and 3
Led by Stuart Scott

“When children learn language they are not simply engaging in one type of learning among many, rather, they are learning the foundations of learning itself” (Michael Halliday)

The act of talking and thinking increases the number of connections and cells that build the brain. Talk fuels brain development. Robin Alexander’s “Towards Dialogic Teaching; Rethinking Classroom Talk”

Research has shown that putting children into groups and leaving them to solve problems by themselves is not enough to ensure that they will use cooperation and dialogue to good effect. Yet research has also confirmed Douglas Barnes’ earlier conviction that talk amongst pupils can make an important contribution to their learning. Collaborative learning activities provide scaffolding to ensure that children will talk about what we would like them to talk about, but they will at the same time have the freedom to construct new meanings through using exploratory talk.

All the most effective interventions that narrow the gap researched by the Educational Endowment Foundation involve talk. Collaborative Learning is one of them.

on Wednesday 22nd January 2014 (9.30-3.40) at NATE, 50 Broadfield Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S8 OXJ

CLP is a non-profit making teacher network. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate tried and tested examples of effective group talk for learning strategies across all phases and subjects. More information and a growing number of free activities can be downloaded from our website:

www.collaborativelearning.org

Cost: £125 for NATE members (£175 non-members) including lunch and refreshments. Special offer to encourage partnership work: two participants from same school only £200. Please apply either to Rebecca Walker at NATE rebecca@nate.org.uk or to the project sending either a cheque or official order to: Collaborative Learning Project, 17, Barford Street, London N1 0QB

Email: stuart.scott@collaborativelearning.org

Please include the following information:

Names of participant(s). Name and address of school. Email addresses of participants.

Invoice, confirmation of places and further information for participants will be sent by email.
Scaffolding Talk through Collaborative Learning:

The new curriculum for England puts it this way:

“Pupils should be taught to develop their competence in spoken language and listening to enhance the effectiveness with which they are able to communicate across a range of contexts and to a range of audiences. They should therefore have opportunities to work in groups of different sizes – in pairs, small groups, large groups and as a whole class. Pupils should understand how to take turns and when and how to participate constructively in conversations and debates.” (Primary Guidelines)

“The national curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils’ development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language continues to underpin the development of pupils’ reading and writing during key stage 3 and teachers should therefore ensure pupils’ confidence and competence in this area continue to develop. Pupils should be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate, as well as continuing to develop their skills in working collaboratively with their peers to discuss reading, writing and speech across the curriculum.” (Secondary Guidelines)

If you have already downloaded and used collaborative learning strategies from our website, please bring this workshop to the attention of your headteacher/CPD coordinator. This will provide an ideal way to spread the practice in your school. We offer a special rate for two participants from a school, because we strongly believe that teacher collaboration in planning and implementation is powerful and we wish to nurture it. Please try to find a colleague in your school who would like to come with you to this workshop. Before attending the workshop please identify topics you are planning to teach in the near future and which do not already feature on the website. Please bring the planning for these topics and any necessary information with you to the workshop, since we hope to work with you on the development of new activities which you can introduce to your pupils. If you let us know about your topic in advance of the workshop we will look for supportive activities in our large paper archive and bring them with us. If you have time please take a look at our research page and read the short pieces by Douglas Barnes and Robin Alexander on the importance of the role of exploratory talk in developing thinking.

The shape of the day will be as follows:

Why and how collaborative learning is effective in scaffolding the development of language and thinking. Exploring ways in which collaborative classrooms can provide an ideal environment for assessment, improving teacher questioning, making difficult concepts accessible.

An opportunity to become familiar with a range of collaborative learning strategies.

Practical advice on planning, making and using four collaborative strategies:

- Sorting information on a key visual/graphic organiser.
- “Introduce Me” role play activities.
- Using sorting boards/matrices to develop Connect Four games for revision and subject clubs.
- Information Gap using longer texts and improving access to complex content.

After the workshop the activities we have developed will be piloted in your classrooms, tweaked and revised and then made available on our website.

If you are interested in collaborative learning CPD for your whole school staff please contact:

stuart.scott@collaborativelearning.org