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Evaluation of Dialogic Teaching: improving classroom talk

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		[ ] Protocol
Registration date 04/10/2016	**Overall study status** Completed	[ ] Statistical analysis plan
		[X] Results
Last Edited 30/10/2018	**Condition category** Other	[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
The Dialogic Teaching intervention (designed and delivered by Professor Robin Alexander and Professor Frank Hardman) aims to improve the quality of primary classroom talk as a means of increasing pupils' engagement, learning, and attainment, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The intervention includes training for teachers, ongoing in-school monitoring and support, and a pack containing study and reference materials and a development and mentoring manual. Schools are also provided with necessary equipment for video and audio recording and teacher cover is paid for any time when participating teachers are away from their classrooms. The intervention emphasises dialogue through which pupils learn to reason, discuss, argue and explain, in order to develop their higher order thinking and articulacy. The aim of this study is to find out whether the Dialogic Teaching intervention improves pupil attainment across the curriculum after one year (science, maths, and literacy), and whether it improves Key Stage 2 attainment in English and Mathematics after 2 years.

Who can participate?
Primary schools in the Leeds/Bradford and Birmingham local authorities with at least two Year 5 classes, a high proportion of free school meal (FSM) entitled children (over 20%), and no previous significant involvement in Dialogic Teaching.

What does the study involve?
80 participating schools are randomly allocated to either the intervention or the control group, using a technique that ensures each has schools that are balanced in terms of percentage of pupils using English as an additional language, percentage of pupils entitled to FSM, and Key Stage 2 attainment. Schools allocated to the intervention group receive training for teachers (delivered by the development team), ongoing in-school monitoring and support, and a pack containing study and reference materials and a development and mentoring manual. Schools are also loaned all the necessary equipment for video and audio recording, and cover is paid for any time when participating teachers are away from their classrooms. In the first year of the study, training is provided to all teachers of pupils in Year 5 in intervention schools. At the end of the first year, teachers of Year 6 (i.e. the same group of pupils who received the intervention in the first year) are offered the same training, reference materials, and equipment, although this will not be a compulsory part of the study. Schools allocated to the control group are advised to

employ a business as usual approach. Control group schools have access to the intervention and associated equipment at the end of the study. After one year all children from both groups are assessed with either a Progress Test in English, Mathematics or Science. Key Stage 2 attainment scores for English and Mathematics are also compared for all children the following year.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
By participating teaching practice may change, leading to increases in pupil engagement and pupil spoken language. These changes in pupils' responses to classroom activity may lead to improved attainment in science, literacy, and numeracy (i.e. across the curriculum). There are no anticipated risks for staff or pupils participating in the study.

Where is the study run from?
80 schools based in Leeds, Bradford and Birmingham local authorities

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
January 2015 to December 2017

Who is funding the study?
Education Endowment Foundation (UK)

Who is the main contact?
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Contact information

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Public

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Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

N/A

Study information

Scientific Title

Efficacy trial: three-level clustered randomised controlled trial of a Dialogic Teaching intervention initiative delivered to teachers aimed at improving pupils' engagement, learning, and attainment

Study objectives

The impact evaluation will address the following two research questions:
1. Does the Dialogic Teaching intervention improve pupil attainment across the curriculum after one year (science, maths, and literacy)?
2. Does the Dialogic Teaching intervention improve Key Stage 2 attainment in English and Mathematics after 2 years?

The theory of change for this intervention suggests that changes in teaching practice will lead to increases in the quality of pupil engagement and pupil spoken language (oracy) observable in the classroom (these are being assessed by the Delivery Team as part of their work). These changes in pupils' responses to classroom activity are in turn predicted to raise levels of attainment in science, literacy, and numeracy (i.e., across the curriculum).

In the process evaluation, we will address the following research questions:
1. What are the relationships between the training programme, teachers' changing practice, changing classroom interactions, and pupil outcomes?
2. Are there differences in the way that the intervention has been implemented by teachers in different schools?

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Faculty of Development and Society Ethics Committee, Sheffield Hallam University, 15/09/2015, ref: 11/09/15

Study design

Three-level clustered randomised controlled trial

Primary study design
Interventional

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Dialogic teaching

Interventions
This study is an intervention trial that employs a three-level (pupils within classes within schools) clustered randomised controlled trial design. Randomisation is at the primary school level, with half of the schools forming the intervention group and half of the schools forming a control group. Minimisation methods employed to achieve a balance of schools allocated to both intervention and control groups:
1. The intervention group: This includes training for teachers, ongoing in-school monitoring and support, and a pack containing study and reference materials and a development and mentoring manual. Schools also loaned all necessary equipment for video and audio recording, which are essential parts of the process, and cover costs paid for any time when participating teachers are away from their classrooms. In the first year of the trial, training is provided to all teachers of pupils in Year 5 in intervention schools. At the end of the first year, teachers of Year 6 (i.e. the same cohort of pupils as received the intervention in the first year) in intervention schools are offered the same training, reference materials, and equipment, although this will not be a compulsory part of the trial.
2. The control group: During the course of the project schools are advised to employ a business as usual approach. Control schools will have access to the intervention and associated equipment at the end of the project.

After 1 year all children from both groups are assessed in either a Progress Test in English, Mathematics or Science (equivalent number of pupils per class). Key Stage 2 attainment scores for English and Mathematics will also be compared for all children the following year. The evaluation team are also undertaking a process evaluation with intervention schools that will include a combination of surveys, interviews, lesson observations, analysis of the training materials/monitoring data.

Intervention Type
Other

Primary outcome(s)
1. Literacy, measured using the Progress Test in English, GL Assessments after 1 year
2. Numeracy, measured using the Progress Test in Maths, GL Assessments after 1 year
3. Science knowledge, measured using the Progress Test in Science, GL Assessments after 1 year

Key secondary outcome(s))
Key Stage 2 attainment scores in English and Mathematics after 2 years

Completion date
01/12/2017

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Primary schools in Leeds/Bradford and Birmingham local authorities
2. At least two Year 5 classes
3. A high proportion of children receiving free school meals (FSM) (over 20%)
4. No prior involvement in dialogic teaching

Participant type(s)
Other

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Mixed

Sex
All

Key exclusion criteria
1. Not having at least two Year 5 classes
2. A proportion of FSM children over 20%

Date of first enrolment
01/04/2015

Date of final enrolment
18/06/2015

Locations

Countries of recruitment
United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre
Sheffield Institute of Education
Sheffield Hallam University
Unit 7 Science Park
City Campus
Howard Street
Sheffield
United Kingdom
S1 1WB

Sponsor information

Organisation
Education Endowment Foundation

ROR
https://ror.org/03bhd6288

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Education Endowment Foundation

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan
All data will be stored on a secure server which only named researchers have access to – there is no weblink.
Outcome data from GL Assessment (Progress Test scores in English, Maths and Science) will be matched with data extracted from the National Pupil Database (NPD); all data will be held in an anonymised format so no individual pupil can be identified. Opt-out consent was obtained from pupils/parents for data collection, linkage and storage.
Outcome data is extracted from the NPD and provided in an anonymised format (no pupil names are stored in these data files) and ethical consent for accessing the NPD data (and attaching it to the baseline data IF this was collected) was obtained at baseline using an opt out consent form.

IPD sharing plan summary
Stored in repository

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Funder report results	results			No	No
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes