University of Huddersfield Repository

Pressler, Shirley J. and Erwin, Phil

Friendship and ‘talk’ as a facilitator of children’s learning in a ‘natural’ classroom setting: exploring ‘talk’ and ‘task progress’ to inform classroom practice.

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/4690/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Friendship and ‘talk’ as a facilitator of children’s learning in a ‘natural’ classroom setting: exploring ‘talk’ and ‘task progress’ to inform classroom practice.

Shirley J. Pressler
University of Huddersfield

Philip G. Erwin
Edge Hill University

Background
Uses of analogy, peer support, friendship and types of talk used have all been shown to have an impact on children’s problem solving and reasoning (e.g., Azmitia & Montgomery, 1993; Mercer, 1995; Mercer et al, 2004; Schacter, 1999), and to impact differently on boys and girls (Keogh et al, 2000).

This study investigated the relationship between sophistication of talk (from disputational through to cumulative and finally exploratory) and sophistication of analogy problem solving.

Method
Social exchanges were observed amongst three groups of girls and three groups of boys consisting of either (i) four friends, (ii) four acquaintances, or (iii) a mixture of two friends and two acquaintances in a learning context using an established problem analogy termed ‘Battleship’ – ‘Growth’ (Pressler & Williamson, 2002).

Findings
Conversation was analyzed in terms of types of ‘talk’ (e.g., disputational, cumulative and exploratory) in conjunction with sophistication of problem analogy outcomes across the different friendship groups. Varying patterns of communication, as evidenced in the ‘types of talk’, in relation to progress with the ‘task’ were evident for the different friendship groups, which also appeared to differ in respect of gender. Complexities in communication related to friendship and gender and the implications for classroom practice, especially that concerning collaborative learning or that involving conflict and/or co-operation are relevant in connection with what constitutes ‘progress’ for the learner.

It is concluded that the research findings may have implications in respect of the ‘outcomes’ focused orientation of current educational policy in the UK.