**INTERVIEW**

**Attendees**

Researcher - NF

Teacher C TC

Teacher C1 - TC1

Headteacher C – HT C

NF So, ignore any transcription that comes up along the side because it’s always complete garbled nonsense, right. OK, so I sent the questions through, and I hope they don’t seem too many and overwhelming. And Headteacher C did share an awful lot with me. Headteacher C and other lovely members of staff in your school shared an awful lot with us when we visited a few weeks back. So, if you think things are things you’ve already said, anyway Headteacher C, then just you know, we can just skip over them, alright? So just go with the flow, as it were, in terms of what you want to share with us.

So basically, it’s kind of a reflection conversation and so when I did visit with EMTAS T4 back in was it, it was February, wasn’t it? I think, you were looking at talk rich and also at enquiry led. And you’d actually done an awful lot in terms of developing both of those since November, in fact, hadn’t you? Because you’d been on the teaching sprint and all the rest of it. So, just a kind of quick reflection on, have you done more since then or have you just continued the same kind of embedding?

HT C So we did a final feedback session with staff, and I took lots of notes and they made notes for me. I’ve now typed them up. I didn’t have that when you came in for the meeting. So, there’s about sort of 10, 11 bullet points here, of kind of overall findings from the end. Do you want me to just read those out?

NF Yes, just quickly and then if I can maybe have your notes on an email? If you and the teachers don’t mind? That would be great as well, yeah. Thank you.

HT C So, although our project started just in maths lessons, and staff felt that the principles have now been embedded in other areas of the curriculum as well. And that what we had found had developed over that time, was that opportunities for rich pupil talk were now being planned into lessons. Rather than just having, taking these on an *ad hoc* basis. And that that was particularly, at the beginning of lessons, rather than that being teacher-led at the beginning of the lesson, with that kind of three pot model. That those opportunities were planned in more, which was good. Those opportunities were being planned in more. One of the things we focussed on was not repeating what children had just said and that’s a bit of a habit that a lot of our teachers.

NF I think we all do it, don’t we?

HT C And staff said that was probably one of the most challenging habits to break.

NF Interesting.

HT C But a lot of people said that had been really beneficial, so just that tiny little switch and change in pedagogy, have made a big difference. Another comment, again across all of the year groups, was there was a greater focus on teachers listening to the groups talking, rather than the teachers being involved in that talk directly. And that it was described as having more organic opportunities for children to talk independently when discussing answers. Without the teachers needing to guide that conversation and talk. They said that most children were really enjoying challenging and agreeing with other children’s points of view. And that the children seemed to be sharing that it felt like a safe space for them to share their views and for them to talk. There was again a general consensus that even the quieter children were engaging more, than when they were perhaps more passive listeners beforehand. So particularly with those EAL children, children with special educational needs, and children who are naturally quieter.

Because we’d focussed initially on maths, there was conversation about mathematical language was now being used more accurately and more correctly in lessons. The pace of lessons was seen to be more productive and that the time for discussion was being seen as a more quality part of lessons, and that the level of engagement with certain children had therefore improved. Teachers commented that misconceptions were being picked up on more quickly, because they were listening in to the conversations, rather than the hands up and one or two children’s responses. Children were expecting to have to provide a response more often and then there’s a kind of next step. Teachers felt that some units of work might need streamlining more, to ensure that teacher talk wasn’t overloaded in some of the lessons. So that would be ongoing whilst we move through. So that was the kind of end point feedback features.

NF OK. That’s fascinating, an absolute mountain of feedback. So, when you say feedback, you mean in terms of using it as a teaching sprint in terms of the beginning, middle and end of that particular period?

HT C That’s right.

NF OK.

HT C Do you want to add this? [Question directed at TC]

NF Or on to something else?

TC No, I think it works really well just to give teachers just one thing to focus on.

NF Lovely.

TC Other than… And it fits in really well with lots of things we’ve been thinking about anyway. But I think it would have overloaded teachers to kind of give them that whole toolkit….

NF OK, lovely.

TC It works really well.

NF Yeah, no, that’s I mean that brings us into question 2 actually. It’s a really interesting view to take Teacher C. So, you chose to kind of control what teachers had, they were given specific things weren’t they? And everybody didn’t have access to the toolkit, am I right?

HT C Yeah.

NF OK, and so what you’re saying Teacher C is that that worked for you? As it were.

TC I think so, and I think teachers just generally felt overwhelmed by new ideas…. To have that. And we kind of all decided together didn’t we what that teaching scope was going to be. I think that worked, it made it manageable, it made us really focussed on how much difference that one aspect was making.

NF Right.

TC Probably had enough on other things. Like since then, I think one of the things the toolkit has is that the group sizes that you have. So, since we started in their teaching sprint, I’ve kind of felt it works really well to have tables of four. Because those discussions kind of work really well on tables of four. So, it’s kind of made onto other things, but we’ve kind of given it to staff as one thing to think about.

NF OK, I noticed that happening, in fact, when I was in. So, although you’d had the focus yes so using ‘sentence stems’, ‘teachers say less, children say more’. Some teachers seemed already to have migrated to some tables of four. I think or were talking about it. So yeah. Great.

TC Yeah, it worked really well.

TC1 By limiting the one facet of the toolkit, today is ‘sentence stems’, and initially just focussing on that, they also have confidence in an area we knew we needed to improve in, and then it has made us confident to try in different areas. I’m finding it particularly works beautifully in RE. And for a lot of children, then, who perhaps struggle to articulate that in written outcomes, I’m still knowing they’re accessing the curriculum, and I can still assess them. Because I’m listening to the conversations and that’s where they can still provide me with evidence and outcomes. So, limiting it to one thing, but the breath different subjects, is really helpful.

NF OK. That’s really interesting.

TC And you mentioned about expectations, and we’re kind of expecting all children to have something to contribute, which I think although that’s kind of overwhelming, especially for those kind of, EAL learners. The fact that they’re, we’ve got the talk partners, and then they’re pairing up with somebody else on the table, that expectation is not kind of personal to them. So, they’re feeling that they’re part of something and that they’re very much joining in even if it’s listening.

NF Yes, absolutely, sorry I’m just writing notes like mad. So, I am listening when I’m not looking at you. Yeah, so that’s interesting. So, you’ve got this sense of having done something. But it’s now going to become… it’s not that this is an end point as it were. I’m understanding that you’re going to continue, and that in some ways the teaching sprint and the doing it in maths was a trial, but it’s already kind of moving out into other subjects, other ways of kind teaching, and thinking.

TC Being embedded, isn’t it? It definitely feels like it’s spreading rather than kind of becoming [inaudible 00:09:19].

NF Yeah. It’s interesting. So, you were saying, entirely understandably, how difficult teachers are finding it to do things, like not repeat what the child just said to them. I mean you know we all do that. I even do it with grown up students. Yeah, I must try harder, but sorry, I’ve lost my own point now then. Oh, what was I going to say? No, it’s gone.

It was about this kind of notion of…. were you happy, those were changes you intended to make? Or was it that the changes kind of grew from? Do you know what I mean? So, in a way did the talking help you make changes you intended? Or was there kind of more to the way it was working for you?

HT C I think there was more really.

TC Yeah, the ideas of the toolkit fit. I mean we’ve done some stuff on ‘talk less teaching’, haven’t we? And about reducing teacher talk. So, it came kind of at the time that the ideas very much already fitted in with what we were thinking about.

HT C It brought these things together. And that raised awareness, I think was quite a big one. But people were doing almost instinctively, it raised awareness of that. And it was about making them small manageable changes in practice. The fact that we did it in a teaching stroke model where we were altering it, everybody being in it together, and the kind of whole school drive. That was important, you know? And the mix of the toolkit that we haven’t looked at yet. Again, I think that’s got to be, again take a small piece of it, school initiative, school improvement plans can just be so enormous.

NF Absolutely.

HT C You can't do it all, but there isn’t capacity in people’s lives and there isn’t enough time in people’s days. So, it’s little bits at a time, I think.

TC Yeah, and the teachers being part of the kind of evaluation process. It wasn’t like, ‘We’re going to do this and you’re going to do it forever.’ It’s like, ‘We’re going to try this and then we’re going to get some feedback and see if it did work’. So, it’s kind of being involved in the process rather than [inaudible 00:11:52].

HT C And we did these along the way, as well.

NF Yes you did, didn’t you? Yes. That’s great yeah.

HT C And people were [inaudible 00:12:06].

NF I mean….Sorry, go ahead, Teacher C1.

TC1 We learnt a lot about how we automatically do things, and we challenged ourselves. I mean certainly feel like I’m a more active listener now. I’d set up a discussion task, and then they talk around that. I hear them talking, but can I honestly say I was really listening to the conversation? We weren’t really listening and then became aware that I was repeating what they were saying. So, now it’s more of a… if they say something, I need to reframe it, I’ve listened to what they’re saying and now I can reframe it better, rather than just telling them they’re wrong or repeating it back. So, I’m kind of, it’s more subtle way to address those misconceptions through that dialogue, which is interesting to do.

NF That’s really interesting. I mean, it’s impossible for us to unravel one from the other, isn’t it? But you’re already focussed on wanting the teaching sprint, as it were, and on wanting a focus on oracy, weren’t you? So, it’s hard to know how far it would have happened without the toolkit anyway, do you know what I mean? Or whether the toolkit was part of the success? I’m not sure you can unravel one from the other there.

HT C Well, the focus on those sentence starters. I’ve seen some incredible discussions in Teacher C1’s class using the sentence starters. And the fact that we’ve then had to review those, for our younger children, because it was introduced to the whole school in the same way. So, that year 3 teacher said, ‘Actually that was too much’. Which is when we adapted the toolkit. Sentence starters and make them simplified for year 3.

NF Lots of schools did that as well. You’re very in a part of a general movement there of how people have used it yeah. Great, I know what I was going to say when I lost my train of thought 10 minutes ago, it was about assessments. So, some teachers or for some headteachers as well, there’s an anxiety around allowing talk because you feel a) there’s nothing productive happening because they’re not writing something, and b) you worry that you must assess it. Whereas I think my take on that might be, no, the assessment comes in the better-quality writing or the better understanding and reading comprehension. I wondered if assessment had been an issue for anybody or a worry, I guess for anybody?

TC I think [inaudible 00:14:41] she heard those conversations. So, for those children that find it harder to get those things down in writing in their book, we’re having more opportunity to kind of hear those conversations and see what they understand.

TC1 And sometimes, we make them write things down for the sake of having something in their books, and we have to then sort of have an [inaudible 00:15:02] informally for a while. ‘Why are we writing that down? Why are we recording that?’ but this means, that we don’t have to force something that isn’t kind of appropriate to that topic. And we’ve changed our reading, [to herself] putting my English hat on. We’ve changed our reading a while ago and called it ‘book talk’. But we still feel they need sometimes to have a written outcome. And I think perhaps, with my English focus, going back less of the written outcome and more of actually of listening to the discussions they have. It’s ok to have a lesson when we just read and talk. Would be another really positive step and seeing how they bounce ideas from each other. Which you also don’t get if you’re writing down. It’s just writing down what you think, but if that discussion is happening, it triggers other things in other children that they might not have considered. So, it’s much richer discussion, once they are able to do that.

TC Those things that always come up in discussion, that don’t get captured in the writing.

NF No it’s so hard, yeah. Yeah, certainly there was another school I was in, and the teacher said to the children, they were only year 1 actually. She was saying, ‘I now know much more about what you know than I would have done had I asked you to write that down’. Is basically what she said to them. Because the children were so able to say so much more as it were. But yeah, but it takes a brave teacher, doesn’t it? Or a brave school to unleash yourself from the written outcome thing. And I think it’s great that you’re already thinking and seeing those differences, in how you might respond to talk, but it’s great, wonderful. OK, I’m going to move on to my question ,4 if that’s OK? Unless you think we’ve missed anything out and it’s about the principles. You’ve already referred to them, yourself Headteacher C. I mean we wonder to what extent the talk of principles kind of drive things? Or whether ultimately people get embedded, you know, they think more about [inaudible 00:17:04]. What’s that?

TC Toilet refurbishment.

NF Is it something happening your end?

TC Yes, it’s a drill on the other side of this wall, I think.

HT C The toilet’s blocked the other side of my office.

NF It’s alright, it’s a school. Do you feel able to carry on, are you alright? It’s not too distracting.

HT C Yeah.

NF OK. So, in terms of these principles. To what extent are they kind of part of the conversations you have? Or do they perhaps take a bit of a back seat? After you’ve decided and it’s fine to say either, because I’m just genuinely interested in how they’re used.

HT C Yeah, I think once we’d headed off, the more practical bits were the ones that we focussed on.

NF Yeah, understandably, yeah.

HT C I mean I looked at the toolkit quite a lot initially. And then, obviously, I knew that Teacher C1 was keen on doing oracy work, as a focus. I knew that Maths was part of our school improvement plan. So, I think it’s something that you go to start with and then personalise as you’re following up on it.

NF OK.

TC1 I think if we were to come back, as a staff, and look at those principles, we may not be able to recognise them, you know? And say what are they. But if they were shared with us, we’d all go, ‘Oh yeah! That’s why we do this, and we do that, and that’s because…’ It’s quite explicit. [inaudible 00:18:49]

TC Part of belonging, part of the diversity and inclusion project. So, a lot of that kind of belonging aspect, we kind of, ‘Oh yeah! That fits in really well with what we’re doing’. In that piece of work.

NF OK, so the diversity inclusion project, is that with the RADE team?

HT C Yes

NF Yeah OK. Because one of the things, that, sorry.

TC We’ve got a hammer. Yeah, we’ve got our era group here, advocacy, part of the project [inaudible 00:19:20] really well. The era group did some work initially around kind of belonging, and so that all fits in really well with the toolkit, as well.

NF And Teacher C1, I know that HIAS English team are also doing things around oracy, have you been part of that as well?

TC1 Yes, on our corporate mission and the Hampshire conference we had talk 21? Come in and do some work with us, was it voice 21?

NF Voice 21 yeah, they’re a charity, they’re great.

TC1 And I’ve done some work before with them, on a previous course. We hadn’t signed up to them. But they have a lot of free material, and no need to partake, and they’ve been really helpful. Because our focus was more on using it in Maths, I haven’t shared it, shared the ideas for English. What I have done, when we’ve done something helpful, I’ve kind of slipped it from my notes, put it into a document. So, that when we do get to that point of kind of sharing all practical activities, because they are more English focussed, a lot of them. Then I have them ready to go as and when we are ready to take it in an English direction, as well. And then we’ll go and feed into other subjects but less so with maths, and I was keen that I didn’t want to muddy the waters on that.

NF OK, now none of the other schools have kind of aligned the higher stuff. I’m hoping to talk to I think it’s Emma from HIAS after Easter to see where the dots join. And maths coordinators in other schools, they’ve told me that the maths team are doing oracy. So, there’s quite a lot of us ploughing our own furrows and we should probably all talk. But I mean, not that I’m a Hampshire County Council employee, but it seems a good idea.

OK, lovely, thanks for that. I think question 5 we’ve kind of covered already. Because you’ve said so much about what you’re going to continue to do, and what your plans are for the future, in terms of these changes being sustainable over time. I wondered if you wanted to say any more about that? In terms of the changes that it’s made? And whether you think they’ll be lasting changes?

HT C Yeah, I think they are. And I think the changes have spread across the curriculum. I suppose it’s something where if you’re having staffing changes and new teachers coming in, it will need to be revisited, and you know. There’s so many things to do on there, beyond ten minutes, so many teaching lesson, so much to think about. I think it’s about revisiting it and just reminding and refreshing, you know?

NF OK.

TC I think we work well with that kind of ethos, in our teaching and learning policy. I don’t think it feels like something that we just will do and then it goes away, it’s in our midst [inaudible 00:22:23].

HT C It’s not going be a bolt on.

NF No, I certainly got that impression from talking with you all the way back in October. Headteacher C, that it’s kind of you’ve threaded it in, yeah. I just really like the way you’ve really made it work with your school improvement priorities. And that’s what we hoped for. That it wouldn’t be a bolt on, that it would be, well a toolkit. It’s not meant to be a, you know, a leading thing, it’s meant to be, a yes. Making things better, as it were, hopefully.

So, question 6 is, I’ve found an interesting one to discuss with people. So, we can always see practical changes. So, we can see somebody using sentence stems, or teaching in groups of 4, or having a learning objective as a question. But, I wondered, if you felt that in any way the working with the toolkit, has changed people’s kind of response to ways of working or mindset towards, particularly multilingual children and their needs? It might be hard to answer.

TC Yeah, I think it, and I think it’s made them more included, in the class. Working in smaller groups and the increase [inaudible 00:23:37] has made a difference. And I think through this and through the diversity and inclusion project, thinking about how we kind of reflect, the kind of diversity in our school in our curriculum, is something that’s kind of ongoing for us as well.

NF Yeah, OK.

TC And I think definitely from the talking point, even in class, they definitely feel more included. We don’t have many children across a class, that actually share a first language. So, and a lot of our children, although they have English as an additional language, they’re quite fluent. So, the amount of talk in first language is limited, because there’s not many children in the same class that share a first language.

NF And that’s the case for many Hampshire schools, isn’t it? Many languages but like one child with each one, absolutely, so yeah, the heritage link. But that kind of sense of them, being allowed to talk more, I guess, so they can get that sense of having more to say, maybe?

TC And being more listened to. Yeah.

NF Yeah and being more listened to.

TC1 And actually, if they’re being active listeners. Then they are able to, kind of, use the models to engage themselves. Rather than just sort of sitting and waiting for the teacher to come over and explain things.

TC Yeah, and it just helps all that language development, doesn’t it?

NF Yeah, absolutely, lovely, thank you. What’s been interesting is although we set out with it being an EAL and oracy thing, a lot of our conversations are just about all the children. Do you have any sense in which it’s specifically useful for EAL? Or do you feel that you can't really see different, you know, specific differences for that group compared to say any other group?

TC It’s hard, isn’t it? Giving children that confidence to talk in a smaller group definitely makes them, rather the hands up and talk in front of the whole class, which feels very overwhelming. To have that talk in like twos or in tens or a four. I think is definitely encouraging them to contribute a bit earlier. Yeah.

NF Yeah, lovely, thank you. OK. Question 7 says, is there anything you wish had been included in the toolkit that you were unable to find? Or that you think would be good to add?

HT C I think in terms of the bits that we used, having some you know where you’ve got all the sentence starters and what we call the A, B, C of discussion, to actually have something that was a slimmed down version of that. I think would be useful, because we kind of did that ourselves, didn’t we?

NF Do you mean, where you’ve got like the ‘Let’s talk sentence starters’ and then the other ones that are EMTAS T3’s. Just a smaller one because it’s a lot you mean? Yeah.

HT C The key ones, should come first. You can build the other ones. I think that would be a very useful tool.

NF I think what might likely happen is that, because a lot of schools in the pilot have done exactly what you say there. They slimmed it right down. Particularly, say for key stage 1 and reception. But we might try and just include examples from the schools that have piloted it, of how they did it. So, for other schools would see that. So sorry, that means you did all the spade work, if you’re happy to share your work. But I think that’s a really good idea, because pretty much everybody, nobody picked it up and made it work as it stood, as it were. Either of them, but they did adapt them a lot, yeah. No, that’s a good point. Yes, that kind of slightly more manageable. And maybe how would you introduce it. So, one school, an infant school, has introduced it, they’ve got four in reception, another six coming in year 1 and another 4 coming in year 2. So, they’re doing it over three years basically, the really long-term plan in terms of introducing those sentence stems. So yes, we should be able to bulk out, as it were, that sort of advice. Now that we’ve had our lovely 10 schools in the pilot, thank you. Is there anything else that you wish you’d seen? Or you think would be useful to include?

TC I don’t think so.

NF No, that’s fine, great. OK, and the last question. I think we’ve you know, we’ve talked about really, because it says how much do you think you might use it in the future? And I think, you’ve already said, basically you’ve got a longer-term plan for its use, yeah, lovely. So, we’re done on that one. OK, thank you, it’s been a joy working with you, I have to say.

And I hope we’re not done really, because two things. One is that I have some, a small fund to come into our pilot schools and have a photographer with me or a videographer with me, to capture images or video where teachers are happy to be filmed, which is always very difficult to find. But where they are, I know. So, that’s one thing after Easter. I’ll just write to everybody and say you know, ‘What would you be happy to have us in? And what you want to share? And the other thing is, is that although my funding for this particular project runs out, because that’s the nature of research funding. Obviously, this is just the beginning really, of what people are going to do with it. So, I would hope to follow up with you in sort of 6 and 12 months and when I drop in and you think, “Oh god! I don’t want to talk to her again!” That’s fine, but it would be great to be able to sort of talk with you, again. Yeah, we’ll be looking at you know, kind of, hopefully, rolling the talk it out to all Hampshire schools, at some point. When we’ve kind of tweaked it with all the wonderful feedback we’ve had from our pilot schools, so thank you, thanks very much.

HT C Well it’s been a pleasure and it’s been really useful and had a really positive impact on our school, so thank you.

NF That’s great, that’s the way it should work, isn’t it?

HT C Absolutely.

NF Research to a practice should be about both of us, and it’s absolutely lovely. Thanks so much, I’ll be back in touch and have a great Easter break when it finally comes, late one this year isn’t it? Yeah. Alright.

TC Bye.

TC1 Bye.

NF Take care all of you, bye, bye.