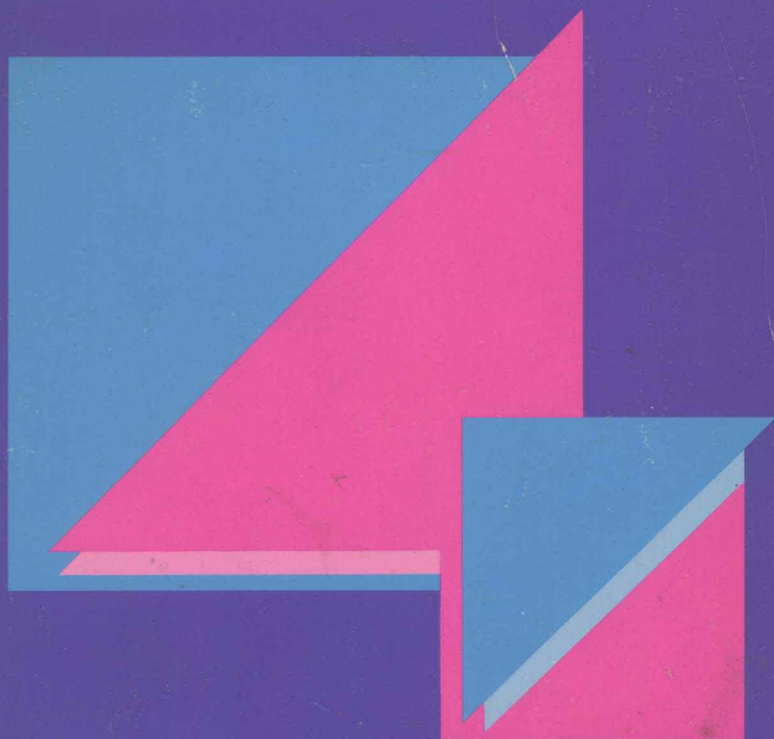


Teacher-Child Partnership

The negotiating classroom

Foreword by
Professor Maurice Galton



John Ingram & Norman Worrall

Teacher-Child Partnership The Negotiating Classroom

John Ingram and Norman Worrall



David Fulton Publishers
London

David Fulton Publishers Ltd
2 Barbon Close, London WC1N 3JX

First published in Great Britain by
David Fulton Publishers 1993

Note: The right of the authors to be identified as the authors of their work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

Copyright © John Ingram and Norman Worrall

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 1-85346-232-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

Typeset by Witwell Ltd, Southport
Printed in Great Britain by BPCC Wheatons Ltd, Exeter

Acknowledgements

Of all the acknowledgement pages I've read in the past, never knowing the people named there, I never thought it would come to the point where I also would have to go through the process. I guess that really there have been three groups who led to and developed the ideas we have used over the last ten years in developing the negotiating classroom; the children in our classrooms, our friends and our colleagues.

The children have moved on now from the first classrooms and are in the adult world; as workers, as students and travellers. We learnt so much from and with them and still do. We pioneered together, failed sometimes, had successes, talked together a lot and had many fine times – to them, thank you.

To friends, mostly teachers, working every day in their classrooms: Bev Selway in Morden, with whom I discussed so many of the ideas, late into the night over so many coffees, Bob and Maggie Stewart in Suffolk, Dave Mewes in Middlesex, Amar Girdhar in Hounslow, Alison Laver in Canterbury, Rosemary Stevens in Kent, Bev Woolhizer, Dennis Hickey, Sandy Pellens and Sue Dunn in Oregon, John and Heather Dykes in Gladstone, Professor Maurice Galton in Leicester, Mike Walsh in Birmingham, Dom, Lee, Jess, Annie, Adam and Jenna in Chicago – how poor I find words are to express such a debt – thank you.

To colleagues at London University, Southlands College Wimbledon, National Louis University Chicago, Oregon State University, Lewis and Clarke University Oregon and Canterbury Christ Church College – thank you.

Lastly to the one person, who ten years ago I went to with an idea for a classroom, a classroom that many said would never work, a way of working with children to empower and give them voice and who said 'Let's do it'. The friend, no longer a colleague, who questioned, argued, supported and motivated over a decade – Norman Worrall –

viii

all that can be said is that without your help it would never have been.
Thank you Norman.

John Ingram
Christ Church College, Canterbury
October 1992

Foreword

This is a timely book. The recent 'Three Wise Men's Report' has again turned the spotlight onto primary classroom practice. That report makes sensible suggestions about the need for a better balance between the use of whole-class, group and individualized teaching strategies, but it fails to address itself to some of the major problems which face teachers when they attempt to move away from forms of direct instruction and adopt other teaching styles which empower pupils to take control of their own learning. Such approaches are a necessary part of the primary teacher's repertoire since research evidence suggests that direct instruction is not a very effective strategy when the objective is to develop the pupils' conceptual rather than procedural knowledge.

In the past the polarization of the debate between traditional and progressive teaching methods has tended to suggest that the latter approach was almost akin to anarchy. The exemplars often quoted were those such as A. S. Neil's Summerhill.

Those who advocate pupil empowerment, however, also recognize that this has to be done within a framework which recognizes that teachers have legitimate purposes in the classroom which pupils must also respect. Pupils do need a structure in which to work but it should not be assumed that that structure needs to be imposed by the teacher.

This book offers an alternative whereby through negotiation, it is possible to have both the teacher's and the pupils' needs satisfied. It makes a valuable contribution to our better understanding of primary pedagogy.

Maurice Galton
January 1993

Contents

List of Figures and Tables	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Foreword.....	ix
1 The Nature of Partnership Through Negotiation.....	1
2 What Goes on in Conventional Classrooms?	16
3 Which Sort of Classroom do Children Prefer for Learning?	24
4 Initiating Partnered Negotiation in the Classroom.....	29
5 Building on the Basic Partnership	44
6 Can Children Negotiate Work at Key Stage 1?.....	56
7 Moving Children on to Key Stage 2 Through Negotiated Partnership.....	67
8 Involving Parents and Colleagues in Partnered Negotiation: The Future	76
9 Ten Points for Getting Started	88
References	94
Index	95

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 2.1: Children's self-report sheet.....	18
Figure 2.2: Number of lessons recorded by the class as a whole for the first and last five weeks of the autumn term.....	19
Figure 2.3: 'Do you find keeping up with your lessons very easy, very hard or just right?'	21
Figure 4.1: Who initiates negotiations?.....	31
Figure 4.2: What types of curricula activity do children negotiate for?.....	33
Figure 4.3: Effects of negotiations on children's choices of activities.	35
Figure 4.4: Children's negotiation styles.	36
Figure 4.5: What types of questions are used in negotiation?	39
Figure 4.6: Children's preferred social organization for activities. ..	42
Figure 6.1: Percentage of total time for each National Curriculum core subject allocated to a given activity over the five week period.	65
Figure 8.1: The triangle of learning in negotiated partnership.	82
Table 2.1: Breakdown of coping strategies used by back-markers and front-runners to maintain curriculum contact.....	22
Table 3.1: Effect of changing components of classroom organization on children's evaluations.	26

CHAPTER 1

The Nature of Partnership Through Negotiation

What is this strange thing we are calling ‘teacher-child partnership through negotiation’? Teachers we spoke to had definite ideas but typically felt that negotiation as they understood it did not have a place in their classroom:

My children need direction; they need to be told what to do, otherwise there would be mayhem.

Well, we have a National Curriculum now; maybe in the past you could have let children make decisions about their learning, but not now; we have to get through the attainment targets.

It’s an interesting idea but the parents would never allow it.

It’s too progressive for me, I’m a traditional teacher, I’ve worked that way for a long time and it works, I’ll stick with that.

Now, consider the following brief encounters:

1. A 15-year-old enters a classroom on a Monday morning.

T: Sit down, open your English book and copy down the words on the board ...’ sit down (raised voice) ... come on we haven’t got all day ... don’t forget the date.

15-year-old: Miss ..., Miss

T: I said open your book and copy the work on the board.

After some chair scraping, bag searching and pencil sharpening, the 15-year-old begins to follow the instructions.

2. At a staff meeting on the National Curriculum the staff of a primary school are given a set of record-keeping forms, intended to link with the school mathematics scheme.

Headteacher: These record forms are to be kept on each child in your class or group and passed on to the next teacher. They represent the minimum records on mathematics for the children to be kept by us all. They should be available for inspection at all times.

T: What about the current records we keep?

Headteacher: These new records are to be the official school records and must be

kept by all of us. Any others you may want to keep as well represent a useful extension but are not to replace these.

Whatever partnered negotiation may be, it is fairly safe to say that it is traditionally assumed to be absent in these examples.

Classroom partnership at work

It is the start of morning session, post-register, in an urban primary classroom, 16 children aged 7 and 8 years are seated in a circle of chairs, facing inwards with the teacher as part of the circle and seated on the same sort of chair. Teacher waits for silence.

T: Right, now who's doing what?

JB: Sir, can I do some music; me, Caroline and John?

T: What were you doing yesterday?

JB: Ummm, my house.

T: House?

JB: Yea, and Clare's going to help me do the table and chairs.

CT: Yea, I'll do the table and chairs for her.

T: Is the house finished?

JB: Yes.

T: So what do you mean you want to do music?

JB: You know, the boat I'm going to make soon. I'm going to do some kind of music about boats, water.

T: So you want to do music to what?

JB: To do er, do something about boats ... music about boats.

T: When were you doing work on boats before?

JB: I'm just going to do some music on boats.

T: So you were doing your house yesterday, you rigged up the electrical circuit and now you want to some music on boats. What sort of music are you going to do? What sort of instruments are you going to use?

JB: I think we'll use the harp and you know, that er, electric organ.

T: Ok, who are you going to work with?

JB: Caroline and John, I'll take care of him and make sure he doesn't muck about.

T: Er, I think you should work with John, not three of you.

JB: Ok.

T: So you need a tape recorder from the language area and you need to go to the hall and plug the synthesizer in.

We shall use this extract as a running example and draw on it throughout the chapter. While it is an actual transcript from the classroom, it is rather long to be typical. Usually teacher-child negotiative interactions are much shorter, as Chapter 4 will show. The

importance of this running example is that it highlights most of the action elements that model partnership through negotiation in the living classroom. The teacher has deliberately set up a classroom context to frame in the children's minds their responsibility as negotiative partners for their own learning experiences. He has done this both physically through layout of the chairs, and temporally by starting the morning with this meeting. The teacher uses his knowledge of the children, the classroom resources and classroom language to move the children to a position of planning, reflection and self-organization, both physical and social, for their curricular activities.

Outside this simple classroom snapshot there is a wider confusion about what negotiation in fact is. From just a quick scan of dictionaries, negotiation has at least three slightly different definitions.

Conference, talks, parley, pow-wow, palaver, debate, exchange of views (*Roget's Thesaurus*, 1979).

Negotiate; to traffic, to bargain, to confer for the purpose of mutual arrangement, to cope successfully (*Chambers*, 1975).

Bargain, contract, arrange, construct, agreement, compact, understanding, adjustment, co-ordinate (*Strauss*, 1978).

Furthermore, the example of partnered negotiation in the transcript above of JB and his boat music, contains elements found in six major areas of application outside the world of the classroom. There are:

- Business and politics
- Interpersonal conflict resolution
- Language acquisition and development
- Play
- Classroom interaction
- Coping behaviours

We can use these applications to find useful pointers for shaping up the idea of negotiation for learning.

Business and political negotiation

A whole range of studies in this field share a common view of negotiation. They see it as a process to bring about a resolution of differences. Negotiation is a game that has identifiable and limited pieces to be manipulated, really like a game of chess or backgammon, where a fixed number of elements, moves and counter-moves exist. The player (the negotiator) is seen as being able to train, to improve performance at the game.

We saw this element of negotiation in the teacher's insistence that

JB gives fuller details of the proposed activity and not simply state that the activity should be music:

T: So what do you mean you want to do music?

JB: You know, the boat I'm going to make soon. I'm going to do some kind of music about boats, water.

In this business-political context the players themselves, be they individuals, groups or nations, are of no overriding importance; what is of importance are the moves, their quality and the product of these moves. We may think of the 'game' of negotiating for hostages as a typical example, as in Fredrick Forsyth's *The Negotiator*, where the hero has only one aim, to use his skills at negotiation to release the kidnap victim. Such 'business' negotiation can again be seen when the teacher hints to JB that the planning of an activity needs more detail:

T: So what do you mean you want to 'do' music?

He indicates that the details of JB's 'move' for music require more specification if it is going to be accepted into the game.

Communication plays a paramount role in most notions of negotiation and this is particularly so in the business model. Part of the business use of communication is a constant referring back to the pre-negotiation aims, the game plan, the preferred outcome for the negotiator. We see in our example that the teacher aims to move JB to increasing specification of detail in the planning negotiation. This is the skill he wishes JB to develop; it is a major part of the teacher's own game plan:

T: So you were doing your house yesterday, you rigged up the electrical circuit and now you want to do some music on boats. What sort of music are you going to do? What sort of instruments are you going to use?

This continual referring back to objectives is also like the lesson plan of the student in teacher training, using it as a referral map to steer through the lesson (a kind of A-Z of continuity through the current learning).

One of the more regrettable aspects of business negotiation is already in our classrooms. This is when teachers attempt to maximize children's efforts while children attempt to minimize them. This aspect is represented in Woods (1990) use of the term 'open negotiation'.

Open negotiation is played out along set and practised lines and with a great deal of effort being applied by both teacher and pupil in the study of their opposite number before, during and after the negotiations. The final aim for both is then to maximize/minimize effort and production. Rather than a climate of partnership, it is one of 'competitiveness'. This rather pessimistic aspect of classroom life

emphasizes the 'objective' nature of teacher-child relationships. We are therefore implying that to negotiate in the classroom, teacher and child need to enter the partnership 'deal' honestly without hidden aims. We see this 'honesty' in JB's recognition that the teacher will perceive problems with John joining the activity group:

JB: Caroline and John, I'll take care of him and make sure he doesn't muck about.

As teachers, what we can take from the business model is an emphasis on the teacher and the child sharing the same classroom language if they are to share the same classroom aims. Without a common language, the teacher and child will focus on different aspects of classroom life, the teacher on production and the child on giving the teacher what the teacher wants to the detriment of real interest and learning.

Power also plays an important part in the business model. It becomes obvious that if negotiation is to succeed, our classrooms may need to shift some responsibility and with it 'power' from the teacher to the children. Power in the traditional classroom obviously lies mostly with the teacher. We should recognize, however, that in some situations this power undergoes a redistribution. For instance, Woods (1990) outlines how children unhappy with implementation of new classroom regimes or practices actively pursued counter-strategies. The children thus created a shift of power by using their behaviour as a lever to bring about renegotiation of the new practices. When compromise had occurred, the power was then returned to the teacher in the form of 'good', submissive behaviour in step with the teacher's directions.

Woods gives another example. In a centre for truants where the pupils demanded chalk and talk and a highly structured form of traditional teaching, any attempt to move to a more liberal regime always led to disruptive behaviour. The children wanted simply to write neatly in their books; no more, no less. In a less dramatic way, such adjusting and equilibrating of power occurs in all classrooms.

Of course, the power of children is based not only in the way in which they can use their behaviours but also in their weight of numbers in relation to the teacher. Both elements work to bring about a compromise between the teacher's aims and the children's. Since these power processes already exist, albeit covertly, in all classrooms, why not make such redistribution of power explicit and use it to the advantage of learning as in the Teacher-JB transcript?

Negotiation and conflict resolution

Unlike the case of business, negotiation in conflict resolution starts

from the idea that differences between negotiators (teachers and children) are to be explicitly identified from the start. In our example, the teacher does not attempt to hide his doubts about JB's bid for the three children, JB, Caroline and John, to work together on a music activity:

T: Er, I think you should work with John, not three of you.

Whereas in business the skills of manipulation were paramount, in conflict resolution, honest communication, compromise and open expression become paramount. The aim is to create empathy, the ability to see the classroom and curriculum through the eyes of others, be the 'other' teacher or child.

Schools in the United States have been involved in developing negotiation between children along these lines for some time. Roderick's article, 'Johnny can negotiate' (1987), is a study of playground arguments and how child 'conflict managers' can act as go-betweens in these situations. The skills emphasized in this kind of training are those needed in the negotiating classroom; active listening and direct communication.

Negotiation in the context of language acquisition and development

The angle here is the developmental nature of negotiation skills. From birth children are immersed in interactive behaviours and subsequent moulding by the care-giver. Negotiation is seen as a developing part of an everyday life skill. Children therefore enter school already skilled in the use of negotiation having learnt its rudiments through the process of language development.

We saw that JB has no hesitation in initiating a fairly complex negotiation for a 7-year-old:

T: Right, now who's doing what?

JB: Sir, can I do some music; me, Caroline and John?

T: What were you doing yesterday?

JB: Ummm, my house.

T: House?

JB: Yea, and Clare's going to help me do the table and chairs

Sociolinguists begin with this fact, that from birth the child is interacting with the care-giver. How, with each language interaction, does the care-giver accept each initiation by the child and develop and extend it?

The process is seen as one of systematic 'negotiating' of meaning and syntax between the child and care-giver throughout the early years

and on into later life, just as we saw JB developing the meanings and syntax of classroom negotiation – the language of partnership – with teacher. The key ideas in this perspective are evidently not those of formal skills training or of gamesmanship, nor is there even explicit recognition of each party's position. Rather they are the ideas of social interaction, obviously developmental in nature, and based in unconscious as well as conscious interactions between care-giver and child. An important aspect of this interactive process can be observed in studies of telegraphic speech; the moving toward shared language structures which develops between mother and child as they interact.

It can again be seen in the learning of a second language. When the child emits a word or phrase or guesses a response to a cue, the teacher responds by leading the child through a defined and structured network of negotiations towards an agreed or 'true' meaning. We see this as we follow JB's initial opening negotiation:

T: Right, now who's doing what?

JB: Sir, can I do some music, me, Caroline and John?

through to the end result:

JB: I think we'll use the harp and you know, that er, electric organ.

T: Ok, who are you going to work with?

JB: Caroline and John, I'll take care of him and make sure he doesn't muck about.

T: Er, I think you should work with John, not three of you.

JB: Ok.

The child uses this negotiation to work through and reach an agreed meaning in a way which is best suited to the individual child. This idea of working through to an agreed meaning suggests we need to consider the individuality of partnered negotiation. Negotiation is a movement towards the teacher and the individual child sharing the same conceptual view of each other's ways of working and each other's role within that individual partnership.

Negotiation and play

The use of negotiation in play research is similar to its use in the language model. Both place emphasis on developmental aspects. Pretend play is seen as a process of negotiation involving children's attempts to reach a shared meaning in order to structure and maintain their play activities:

You be doctor, I'll be patient ...

Alright, I'll be the doctor you be the patient.

This classic fragment emphasizes the two-way active interaction between both partners. An important element in play negotiation, and one that extends the sociolinguistic interpretation, is the view that the quality of the process changes as the form of the child's play itself develops. Different elements that make up play negotiation are held to develop at different points and at different rates for different children. Thus individuality is again important. This is brought out if we compare JB's extended style of negotiation with the single input of CT:

CT: Yea, I'll do the table and chairs for her.

More detailed individual differences in classroom negotiation will be shown in the transcripts of a number of children in Chapter 4. We will see that children negotiate from a very individual repertoire of skills. The teacher accordingly needs to adjust his or her negotiating approach to support the individual child's repertoire.

Inherent in this play perspective, then, are two emphases: an emphasis on development, and an emphasis on movement through social interactions to a position of shared meaning. Experienced nursery assistants and teachers are well aware of their responsibility for developing toddlers' 'negotiative skills' such as sharing, turn-taking and bargaining. They emphasize the individuality of the process, recognizing that different children are at different positions in their development of these skills. But if negotiation and partnership skills are developing during the early years in the child's natural environment, it could be asked why we then apparently de-skill them on entering school.

Moreover, nursery teachers typically take notions of partnered negotiation a step further by recognizing variability within the individual child. That is to say, when working with a 3- or 4-year-old, the negotiating skills that the child might use one day may be reported as not used on later occasions although they would still be available in the child's negotiating repertoire. This latency principle is not brought out in the negotiation models outlined earlier. Rather, they tacitly assumed that as long as situational factors are held steady, then the same type of negotiative behaviour is to be expected.

Classroom interaction: the relationship between school knowledge and negotiation

Of all forms of knowledge, school knowledge in particular is 'socially constructed'. It is the type of knowledge found in most classrooms, supported by the National Curriculum, and given further validity by the transmitting teacher.

Teachers use a range of processes to convince children of the validity of classroom knowledge. In the National Curriculum we see from the form and content of classroom knowledge that teachers are already using pseudo-negotiative skills on the children. These skills are 'pseudo' in the sense that the teacher is only mock-'negotiating' with the child, using a fixed agenda of curricular experience, rather as in the business model. This appears to be one strategy that teachers have adopted in order to link the seemingly different demands of a prescribed National Curriculum with the notions of child-centred education.

Knowledge negotiation and business negotiation do appear to have certain similarities. The teacher is often aware of using negotiation in the manipulative sense. There is often in the teacher's mind an explicit end-objective, perhaps some parcel of facts the child should be able to repeat, perhaps the development of a skill, or often simply a basic docility. To such an end, teachers use this highly structured pseudo-negotiation, with its finite moves, set expectations and set responses. We now begin to see a much broader use of negotiation, one linked to institutional knowledge and to the infrastructure of schools and classrooms as places that mould and shape knowledge.

If partnered negotiation is to become an accepted part of classroom strategy, teachers have to allow it in some way to become part of school 'knowledge'. One well-known attempt to change the nature of acceptable school knowledge and approach to learning can be found in the experience of Countesthorpe College. The College is run on an explicit model of negotiation with five basic principles:

1. Teacher and child to be seen as equal.
2. Teacher and child interests to be explicitly valued.
3. Direct speaking and active listening to be emphasized.
4. Learning activities to be planned, with clear objectives and two-way feedback between child and teacher.
5. Children's self-directed learning to be preferable to teacher-directed learning.

Heavy emphasis is placed on the teacher as facilitator. Rather like our teacher in the JB transcript, the Countesthorpe teacher runs negotiation as a lattice of the five principles (see Hincks, 1986).

It is also clear that the strategies of partnered negotiation need to be used within an explicit classroom approach that supports them and where the approach is clearly identified by teacher and children. One element of such 'explicitness' in the JB example was the way in which the teacher organized the classroom day to begin with a public negotiation session which holds value for all parties: