

Episode transcript

Prior to the lesson in which this particular sequence was recorded, the pupils wrote stories (under conditions of limited time to simulate the national tests) and then received feedback from their teacher, including targets for revising their stories. Immediately before this lesson they rewrote part of their stories. In this lesson they share their different targets, and then discuss one pupil's attempts to improve his story. The beginning of this latter discussion is captured below. The pupil, Harry, has read his first story out loud. The teacher, Ms. Leigh, then says, "We're going to be your judges now. So we're going to have X-factor. We're going to decide marks out of ten for how much Harry has improved in the second version of his story." This is the point at which the transcript begins.

Lesson Transcript¹:

1 Ms Leigh: OK so (.)
2 we're going to be your judges now
3 we're going to have X-Factor
4 pupils: ye:ah
5 Ms Leigh: we're going to deci:de
6 William: [(hums X-Factor theme and gestures)]
7 Ms Leigh: [marks out of ten
8 for how much (.)
9 Harry has improved
10 in the second version of his story
11 Harry: [(begins to take off his jumper)]
12 Ms Leigh: [so he had to make sure
13 Karen and Olivia
14 ((begins listing on fingers))
15 that he wasn't missing out any words (.)
16 and he had to make sure as well
17 that he was adding enough detailed description
18 to give us some idea (.)
19 about what was going on (.)
20 OK let's see
21 marks out of ten
22 and a reason for why please
.
. ((3 minutes later - Harry has read out the second

¹ Key transcription conventions:

(text) - Transcription uncertainty
(xxxxxxx) - Indistinguishable speech
(.) - Brief pause (under one second)
(1) - Longer pause (number indicates length to nearest whole second)
(()) - Description of prosody or non-verbal activity
[- Overlapping talk or action
[
text - Emphasised relative to surrounding talk (underlined words)
te:xt - Stretched sounds
sh- - Word cut off
>text< - Speech delivered more rapidly than surrounding speech.
TEXT - Shouting
(.hhh) - Audible inhalation

. version of his story and the pupils have discussed it
. in pairs))
.
101 Ms Leigh: fingers up
102 i::n
103 five seconds
104 to show me how many marks out of ten
105 you think this one is worth
106 so in five seconds you're going to hold up
107 ((holds up one finger))
108 one finger if you think it's only one out of ten
109 ((holds up ten fingers)) ten out of ten
110 ((holds up seven fingers)) seven out of ten
111 >ready five four<
112 everyone should have their fingers up with a decision
113 three (2)
114 two one zero
115 ((Pupils raise hands to illustrate score))
116 Harry: ten
117 oh my
118 Ms Leigh oo okay
119 Harry: I have a nine over there
120 that's good
121 [I have a nine
122 William: [and you've got a nine next to you [(xxxxxx) ((pointing))
123 Harry: [er I have a nine
124 I have a nine
125 Pupil: dude you have a ten
126 Harry: a ten where
127 we have a ten
128 Ms Leigh: okay Harry
129 I want you to pick three separate numbers
130 and ask them to explain why
131 ((Harry stands up out of his seat))
132 Harry: excuse me
133 explain why you've only give me a five
134 William: because
135 Pupils: ((laughter))
136 ((most pupils put down their hands))
137 William: becau:se in the first story y-
138 you had more descriptive (.) words
139 and you didn't ex-
140 in the second story you didn't [explai:n the:
141 Julie: ((to neighbouring pupil) [(xxxxxxxxxxxxx)
142 William: man who was changing the weather
143 and
144 the characters (.)
145 a:nd
146 in the other one-
147 because in the first one you had (.)
148 better descriptive words
149 in that one you had more

150 Harry: ((*leaning forward*)) d-
151 Ms Leigh: Julie what were you going to say because you-
152 I could see you ((*makes whispering noise*))
153 on the back there
154 Julie: yeah like because h- the better-
155 the first one was better because he had like
156 more descriptive words
157 but in that one he didn't like
158 describe the:
159 person who was changing the weather much
160 Harry: because I didn't get that far though
161 I didn't get that far
162 [(so it's like-)]
163 Ms Leigh: [Tamara
164 what did you think about
165 the quality of the words that he used
166 Tamara: they were quite good
167 but (2)
168 he could've used like more descriptive words
169 Ms Leigh: give me an example
170 Tamara: li::ke (2)
171 (some xxxxxx)
172 Ms Leigh: (come on) William you've spoken now
173 so for example
174 my personal choice
175 I really liked e:r
176 scalding ((*pointing out words on the whiteboard*))
177 er blazed
178 peaceful
179 placid
180 and there's another one
181 [obscuring
182 Pupil: [what does placid mean
183 Ms Leigh: calm
184 radiance
185 I thought actually the word choices were very advanced
186 what would you have preferred to have seen
187 Pupil: obscuring
188 Tamara: erm more like (.)
189 I don't know really
190 it's just hard to explain
191 Ms Leigh: okay
192 Harry: you can say it's rubbish
193 I don't mind
194 Ms Leigh: would you say that
195 Tamara: no
196 Ms Leigh: why not
197 Tamara: because he's still got loads of really good words a:nd
198 (1)
199 (no xxxxxxxx)
200 Ms Leigh: sorry could you speak up
201 no:

202 Tamara: (erm)
203 (2)
204 Ms Leigh: the reason that I'm asking you is because
205 I know that you're very similar to Harry
206 in the- words that you choose for your writing
207 comes out of a lot of the books that you read
208 you actually-
209 you've both got very good vocabularies
210 so you choose very good words to put into your work (.)
211 and you've gone from having
212 a clear description that everyone understood
213 to actually having a very extended vocabulary
214 so:
215 I was very pleased with the words that you chose
216 maybe you need to kind of
217 do a little bit
218 well like you said there
219 you've only got towards the section
220 with the characters
221 when you talked about erm Scarlet a:nd was it her hair
222 Harry: yeah
223 Ms Leigh: that was ideal for the description
224 wouldn't you say ((*pointing at Tamara*))
225 Tamara: uhmm
226 Ms Leigh: why
227 what was different
228 Tamara: just (2)
229 just the way (he put it)
230 I can't really explain
231 Ms Leigh: so hers was
232 ((*reading from text*)) bellowed Scarlett
233 her simply put up hair
234 brushing to the side because of the cold breeze
235 so it actually tells us more about the character there
236 rather than just saying
237 she's got hair
238 it's tells us (what it was like)
239 okay Callum what did you give-
240 oh sorry
241 I shouldn't do that should I
242 Harry
243 you had two more choices for people who gave you marks
244 Harry: why did you give me a ten out of ten Gina
245 Gina: well because the description was really good
246 and (.) erm
247 instead of using like just
248 hot a:nd sunny
249 you actually use- used like
250 scalding heat blazed and
251 it was really good description
252 and it was very very like
253 like it was like level four or five in vocabulary
254 because it was really really good

255 and erm
256 the way you described Scarlett was really really good
257 Ms Leigh: why
258 what did it do for you as a reader
259 Gina: because
260 it makes you think (.) that she like
261 she's really nice and pretty
262 and erm you-
263 you want to: know more about her
264 because erm like you've described her so well
265 Ms Leigh: excellent
266 okay so it does tell you
267 that good description has to give the reader
268 a clear picture inside their mind
269 when I read erm William's story
270 I knew what was going to happen
271 because we planned it together
272 and when I actually read it
273 it didn't-
274 he told me he was going to:
275 go into a tunnel of the inky blackness (.)
276 and then I found out nothing else
277 I didn't know if it was a stone tunnel
278 a concrete tunnel
279 I didn't know if it was a soil tunnel
280 because he didn't have that description through there
281 so using those descriptive words
282 to give a picture to the reader
283 right Harry we've had
284 a girl and a boy
285 so now somebody else who's given you
286 not a ten out of ten
287 not a five out of ten
288 [come on who's going to give Harry some honest feedback
289 [(Callum changes from six fingers to four))
290 Callum: me ((moves hand in Harry's direction))
291 Harry: er ((looks around the room))
292 William: four ((points to Callum's hand))
293 (2)
294 Harry: Callum go on then
295 why did you give me a four
296 Callum: er well like
297 you never really explained as much
298 [as like the first one
299 [(Rachel and William raise their hands))
300 Harry: I didn't get up to there [peo:ple
301 Callum: [yeah but you c-
302 (2)
303 okay
304 you could have like done the characters
305 like you and the teacher or whatever you were
306 [or was you even in it

307 Harry: [((looks back at first version of story on his desk))
308 oh you mean describe the teacher [and stuff
309 Callum: [yeah
310 Harry: aw right yeah
311 William: ((changes from one raised hand to another))
312 ((to Ms Leigh)) I've just got a comment
313 Ms Leigh: ((to William)) hold on one second
314 ((to Harry)) do you agree
315 Harry: yeah I-
316 yeah I- I guess so
317 I missed out-
318 all I said is he had a quiet voice and that's all so
319 I suppose I could have described him a bit better
320 like that he had a like
321 that he had erm (.) thick glasses
322 erm neatly- neatly thingy
323 side-partin martin
324 and stuff
325 Pupils: ((Laughter))
326 Ms Leigh okay
327 using that simple phrase here
328 Scarlett her simply put up hair
329 gives me lots of details about Scarlett
330 because now I can see Scarlett inside my head
331 her hair's put up
332 so maybe she's one of these people
333 that likes to be able to
334 run around
335 without having to spend lots time touching her hair and
336 checking she looks right in the reflection
337 you know
338 it tells me that she's a person that's
339 maybe clean tidy organised efficient
340 it's simply put up but she looks quite attractive
341 so she cares about her appearance
342 but not enough to be vain
343 so a simple phrase like that
344 actually helps to give you lots of character details
345 if you'd have said erm
346 the teacher's placid voice
347 it tells you straight away
348 using the word placid
349 that actually the teacher's nice and calm
350 just like me hey Callum
351 William & Callum ((Laughter))
352 Ms Leigh: if you said
353 the teacher's placid voice droning on as usual
354 it would have told you two things
355 calm
356 but also
357 really quite boring
358 not like me hey Callum

359 William & Callum: ((Laughter))
360 Ms Leigh: so
361 using those little character phrases
362 does help you to give you detail
363 okay
364 Karen you haven't had much to say today
365 Karen: erm
366 well I like the speech tags (1)
367 I like the adverbs
368 Ms Leigh: okay tell me
369 well tell us what you mean by speech tags
370 because I always say
371 don't forget your speech tags
372 and you go
373 uh
374 Pupils: ((Laughter))
375 Karen: you know like erm
376 instead of said
377 Ms Leigh: okay
378 for example
379 what have we got in here today
380 that actually caught your imagination
381 and you thought
382 oh I'm going to steal that and put that into my work
383 because your speech tags are good as well
384 Karen: bellowed
385 Ms Leigh: yep definitely
386 bellowed
387 and that's not just a
388 ((said quietly)) what are you doing
389 or a
390 ((louder and sterner)) what are you doing
391 or a
392 ((shouting)) what are you doing
393 Pupils: [((Laughter))]
394 William: [what are you doing
395 Ms Leigh: [(xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx isn't it
396 it shows you how it's being said
397 that's what we mean by speech tags
398 okay
399 I'll come to you in a second
400 hands down
401 because we're going to run out of time in a moment
402 we're thinking about our stories today then
403 Harry we could've-
404 do we all generally agree
405 his story improved from yesterday
406 Pupils: yeah
407 William: ((Clapping))
408 Ms Leigh: oh that's nice
409 a big round of applause for Harry

410 Pupils: ((Clapping))
411 Harry: should I bow
412 Ms Leigh: Pardon
413 Harry: should I bow
414 Ms Leigh: No
415 Pupils: [((Laughter))]
416 Ms Leigh: [that’s taking it too far
417 right
418 so what you’re going to do with your partner is

Towards Dialogue Project References:

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