

TL 8: Sharing ownership over our criteria for quality

Leaving the first lesson of the Olympic challenge I thought; “*why did I spend more time talking than the kids?*” Trying to lead discussions was very unusual for my teaching style and I realised I needed to get the pupils doing the talking – not me!

They had been given the task of ranking the three enquiries for homework. When they returned, I asked them to talk as a group and agree on an order. I then gathered the pupils together in a circle.

“Enquiry 2 was rubbish.” Was all he could come up with – one of the brightest students in the class! This was going to be a disaster... There was a pause whilst he looked for someone to pass the conversation to; I just listened carefully, making notes of their conversations.

“It didn’t say anything – was just a lot of numbers with no reasons.”

“I thought 3 was best. It was easy to understand and said enough”

“But number 1 had more writing – it had more reasons in”

The debate continued with students mostly agreeing that number two was pretty poor, but unable to reach a consensus on whether one or three was best. Importantly, the reasons started to emerge as students realised I really **wasn’t** going to get involved and give them any suggestions. After 10 minutes, the conversation dried up.

“So what do we know makes a good enquiry now?” I asked.

Having had quality discussion time, all pupils were able to give some kind of response and we finally agreed on how we would judge each other’s enquiries. The pupils seemed pleased – **they’d** decided how I was going to mark their work and so felt more ownership over and understanding of the outcome.