



Evaluation of 'Doing Dialogue'

Final Report prepared for

Ecsite-uk

March 2006
PSP/O4/033



Contents

<i>Summary of conclusions</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>1. Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>2. Facilitation Training</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>3. Content development</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>4. Doing Dialogue Events</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>5. Toolkit</i>	<i>24</i>



Summary of Conclusions

People Science & Policy Ltd (PSP) was commissioned to develop an evaluation strategy for the Doing Dialogue (DD) Programme. The Programme has three parts:

- Facilitation training;
- Content writing; and
- DD events for young people.

Ecsite-uk's long-term objectives for this project are to:

- assess and develop the facilitation skills of Science and Discovery Centre (SDC) staff;
- assess the conduct and impact of the DD events; and
- build capacity for evaluation in SDCs of similar programmes in the future.

Evaluation method

Facilitation training

PSP observed the first facilitation training session and surveyed all those who attended the first three sessions. The facilitators who led the first DD event were surveyed after the event.

DD events

PSP observed the pilot DD event and surveyed the students at that pilot event. We then observed the first main DD event and have surveyed the students at the end of the first three events.

Facilitation training workshops

The facilitation training workshops were valued by the participants. The workshop is providing useful material and in particular is building participants' confidence in their existing skills. The most important element of the training workshop appears to be the facilitation styles session and we recommend that this remains as the cornerstone of the workshop.

Subject specific content training for facilitators is important and may require greater emphasis in the future.

The broad applicability of the training does suggest that it could be useful to many staff in SDCs. The DD programme offers an opportunity to roll out the facilitation training at minimal cost, but it may also be possible for Ecsite-uk to develop a quasi-commercial training product to deliver to members more generally.

Content development

The content preparation process was exhaustive with extensive trialling. It has produced a lot of strong material, indeed there may be too much for material for some students to cover within the timing constraints of the DD event. The material at the pilot was quite "fiddly", but had been further developed by the time of the first event.



In the pilot, some students did not like the fact that different groups had done different things. This may be something that has to happen in the full-scale events if students are not capable of progressing at the same speed. An option may be that there is a core set of tasks and material and that facilitators have additional material that can keep the more able students stretched to be used as appropriate.

DD events

The premature babies doing dialogue event has proved to be an enjoyable and informative event. Over 90% of the participating students thought that it was enjoyable and only 1% thought that it had not been useful for any school subjects.

The strengths of the event are its interactivity and the challenging nature of some of the components. The least favoured elements of the day were those that were seen as easy or irrelevant. For some students the freedom to express themselves was an important part of the experience.

Take-up of the events has been lower than expected. Follow-up work with teachers by the DD team will be a vital part of understanding why teachers participate and how the project can be most effectively marketed.



1. Introduction

1.1 *The Doing Dialogue (DD) programme*

People Science & Policy Ltd (PSP) was commissioned to develop an evaluation strategy for the Doing Dialogue (DD) Programme. The Programme has three parts:

- Facilitation training;
- Content writing; and
- DD events for young people.

Ecsite-uk's long-term objectives for this project are to:

- assess and develop the facilitation skills of Science and Discovery Centre (SDC) staff;
- assess the conduct and impact of the DD events; and
- build capacity for evaluation in SDCs of similar programmes in the future.

1.2 *The evaluation*

In keeping with the strategy of DD to both deliver a programme and build capacity in the SDC sector, this evaluation is designed to serve two purposes. Firstly, there was an independent evaluation of the early stages of the DD programme to provide an external assessment of the various components. Secondly, PSP's evaluation has provided an evaluation toolkit and accompanying guidelines that will enable ecsite-uk, and the participating SDCs, to run their own evaluation of the remainder of the DD programme.

PSP has access to specialist software and tools that are not currently available to ecsite-uk, so the final toolkit provided is based on standard software packages rather than bespoke research tools.

As the DD programme has developed, there have been timetable changes to allow the evolving programme to cope with logistical requirements, not least the needs of the schools that have participated in the programme. The evaluation has therefore also evolved. With the limited budget for the evaluation, the goal of both PSP and ecsite-uk has been to maximise the effectiveness of the resources available by carefully targeting activity. PSP observed the first facilitation training session and surveyed all those who attended the first three sessions. The facilitators who led the first DD three events were surveyed after they had delivered the event. PSP observed the pilot DD event and surveyed the students at that pilot event. We then observed the first main DD event and surveyed the students at the end of the first three events.

1.3 *This report*

This report covers the early stages of the DD programme, culminating in the first three DD events and the roll-out of facilitation training to SDC staff. Section 2 of the report focuses on the facilitation training, section 3 looks at the process of content development, while section 4 considers the first three DD events. Finally, section 5 gives a brief overview of the evaluation toolkit, which is supplied as a separate standalone package.



2. Facilitation Training

Three facilitation training workshops have been delivered so far, in three different SDCs. The first session was observed by PSP. Participants at all three (31 in total) were invited to complete a web-based questionnaire after the training. In total 23 responses to this survey have been received.

As the survey is a census of all who took part, the results are representative. The numbers however, are too small to justify presenting percentages.

In addition to the survey immediately after the training workshop, facilitators at the DD events are being asked to complete a web-based questionnaire after the DD event to allow an assessment to be made of the relevance of the training that they had received. Although three DD events have been run so far, two were in one location, so only a small number of facilitators have been involved in delivery.

2.1 Structure

There were initially five main elements to the facilitation training:

- Introduction and context;
- Facilitation styles;
- Engagement and body language;
- Containment (largely to do with behaviour); and
- Theory into practice.

This report reflects that original structure, however following the interim evaluation report, the DD team reviewed the structure. After the review the core elements were amended as follows:

- introduction and context
- blocking behaviours
- practicing recording
- body language
- questioning
- difficult participants
- group theory
- forum theatre practice

When tying together the delivery of an activity with post activity evaluation the names or descriptions of sessions are important as these provide the hooks on which respondents will hang their answers. If these descriptions are not meaningful to the respondents then the evaluation will suffer. This is discussed further in section 2.5 below.

2.2 Participants

2.2.1 Experience

Almost all the of the facilitation training participants were experienced at working with young people, moreover about half agreed that they had some experience of facilitating



debate and discussion with young people. A similar proportion reported that they had experience of facilitating debate and discussion with adults.

Almost all of the participants had a degree in science or engineering and two thirds had post-graduate qualifications. Two thirds had been working in SDCs for less than three years and only one participant reported working in the sector for more than five years. This profile suggests that the participants are SDC staff who are looking to develop their careers by undertaking further training.

2.2.2 Motivation

The facilitation training was not seen as simply providing preparation for the DD event. Indeed only a couple of participants cited this as a goal for their participation. Most participants were looking to improve on existing skills and to gain some practical experience of facilitation. Many were also looking to develop their knowledge of facilitation techniques.

2.3 Outcomes

2.3.1 Knowledge and skills

The purpose of the training was to prepare people for facilitating DD events. Participants felt that, in particular, they had gained confidence in their existing skills and practical tips from the training, with almost all participants citing these as things they had gained. About two thirds said that they had gained new knowledge, but as very few cited new skills, the knowledge is likely to be contributing to confidence in their existing skills. The training is therefore providing reassurance and encouragement rather than a whole new way of thinking or behaving. For a short workshop that is aiming to prepare people for a specific event rather than fostering new ways of working, this can be regarded as a satisfactory outcome.

2.3.2 Applicability

The broader goals that participants cited were reflected in how they thought that they could apply what they had learnt. Whilst virtually everyone thought that the training would help with running debates, two thirds thought that it would help more generally with school activities, a third thought that it would be useful for public events and a third also thought that it would help with staff management. Hence the course is helping to build capacity in the sector, as intended.

2.4 Strengths

When asked which of the elements of the workshop had been useful, all of the sessions were cited by at least a third of the respondents, suggesting that all the elements had contributed something. However when asked to nominate the most useful session, two-thirds selected 'facilitation styles'.

"I hadn't realised that there were different styles of facilitators, so it was very useful."

"Brought about a lot of discussion about what the actual role of a facilitator is which was good as think this is very hazy for most people. Really good way of putting it across"



“There can not be a single role which a person uses when facilitating. It is important to realise just where and when it is appropriate to slip into a particular role.”

Trainees

Four people thought that ‘theory into practice’ was most useful and three (all from the same workshop) nominated the ‘engagement and body language’ session

“I like to come away from training with something practical I can do.” (‘Theory into practice’)

“It is always easy to listen to how things should be done it is not so easy to put them into practice, realising this before you sit in front of a group is always useful.” (‘Theory into practice’)

“Helps to re-inforce the experience I have had and teach staff the importance of these skills” (‘Engagement & body language’)

“I learnt most from the Engagement and body language element, as I had little previous experience or understanding of this area.” (‘Engagement & body language’)

“This was useful as it is easy to forget about how your body language can affect a group and that being over enthusiastic can be just as bad as appearing bored.” (‘Engagement & body language’)

Trainees

2.5 Weaknesses

Participants were also asked to nominate which sessions they thought had not been useful. Nobody nominated ‘facilitation styles’, so clearly this should remain as a central part of the course. Three or four people nominated each of ‘introduction and context’ and ‘theory into practice’.

“The context could have been set more - although we were limited for time” (‘Introduction’)

“These particular aspects were common sense to me and as some members of our group demonstrated they had very different opinions to the leaders of the session in the case of the intro/context.” (‘Introduction’)

Trainees

The relatively small numbers of people that nominated these sessions does not suggest that either of them should be dropped. A couple of people commented on the ‘containment’ session in the questionnaire to the effect that they were not sure what this meant and questioned whether they had missed or not noticed this element.

“This may or may not have been useful - I just don't know what it means.”



“I missed this completely! This jargon word was not used, or so fleetingly that I missed it”.

Trainees

This session has subsequently been renamed ‘difficult participants’ to make the objective clear.

More interestingly, nine people said that the ‘engagement and body language’ session was not useful. These respondents all came from the two workshops where no-one rated this session as the most useful; indeed, they represent half of the participants at these two workshops.

“This wasn't UN-useful, I guess I just knew about this already. It's not really hard to tell if someone's not interested in what you're saying!”

“Fun but too obvious.”

“I felt that it was covering skills that I and others on the course already had. The topic is also one that, except for very extreme cases, is very much dictated by individual style and attitudes. Therefore I felt it did not lend itself particularly well to being a set topic.”

Trainees

2.6 Relevance to the DD event

Seven of the ten respondents to the post event questionnaire had attended the facilitation training. Two regarded it as very relevant, four as quite relevant and one person thought that it was not very relevant.

“I've been teaching since I was 16. I've taught in schools for 20+ years. I came to the training to make sure I wasn't missing a trick and found that I wasn't.”

Facilitator

After delivering the DD event all five elements of the training session were cited as being useful, but the most valuable element was the facilitation styles session. Six of the seven nominated this as useful and five as the most useful element. Responses to the question, ‘why was this most useful?’ included:

“Because you could check that you were expanding their knowledge, playing devil's advocate and try out all the styles so that that particular group get the most out of it.”

“Because we all have a natural style, which may or may not suit the situation, so we need to know about other styles which may be more useful/appropriate.”

Facilitators

On reflection, the facilitators felt that the training could have been improved with more time devoted to practical examples.

“More time, with greater emphasis on theory into practice.”



“Longer session, more role play with the activity styles. For example reading case studies and getting group to work through these, tips on how to move things along.”

“Perhaps more actual practice and role play at being a facilitator.”

Facilitators

2.7 Things that might be added

2.7.1 Recording

Recording of debates was not covered in the facilitation training. If the intention is to analyse the debates and use them to provide input to wider debates, then both conversations along the way and final outputs are important sources of data. A short session covering how this can be achieved (and how the data collected can be used) might be appropriate. For some debate activities the conversations throughout the event can be as informative as any “conclusions”.

2.7.2 Ground rules – end point

In the workshop that was observed, one participant mentioned the importance of explaining to students the end points and required outputs of the different sessions/tasks within a DD event. This point could be included in the introductory session about the role/purpose of the facilitator.

2.8 Timing

From observing one workshop, there was some time pressure, but this had helped to keep energy levels high. At that stage it was suggested that if other material were to be added then it would be worth extending the workshop timetable slightly, but probably by no more than 30 minutes to keep the feeling of a sharp active event. We understand that subsequent workshops have indeed been slightly longer.

2.9 Training alternatives

One of the DD event facilitators had been on, and recommended, a longer two-day facilitation course that allowed more practical work and reflection¹. It is unlikely that there will be adequate resources for all DD facilitators to go through this sort of training. However, part of the roll-out of the DD programme includes training a cohort of science centre staff to deliver facilitation training. In addition to the training planned under the umbrella of the DD programme, this “training the trainers” could include signposting to other useful training resources.

It might be possible for ecsite-uk to develop this short workshop into a “product” for members which a charge is made. Any charging regime would need to reflect the input that has been made by a number of SDCs to the development of the product so far.

2.10 Content training

At the first facilitation training session, there was a certain amount of concern about the need for specific training regarding the content of the “Premature Babies” event. Although this fell outside the remit of the evaluation brief, a couple of questions were

¹ Group Facilitation Methods ICA UK



included in the post-event questionnaire for facilitators. The content training had been successful in that overall the facilitators felt that their relevant knowledge had improved. This knowledge included both medical/scientific knowledge of premature babies, and the treatment regimes available and understanding of the social, economic and ethical issues associated with the treatment of premature babies. There were however a number of suggestions made about how the content training could be improved.

“More time to do it, so I felt sure of the content of the activities.”

“How to support staff members and school pupils who are very affected by the subject. Our staff members were quite affected by the content of the workshop.”

“Larger array of information about definitions and treatments”

“The training for me was mainly running through the activities that would be held on the day. I feel perhaps a training session just about premature babies so we get a good all round knowledge of the subject prior to going through the events of the day may be useful.”

Facilitators

2.11 Conclusions

At the observed workshop, the overall impression was of a lively, well planned and well delivered session that covered most of the key issues. The feedback from participants reinforces the positive impressions created during PSP’s observation. For them, the workshop is providing useful material and in particular it is building their confidence in their existing skills.

The most important element of the training workshop appears to be the ‘facilitation styles’ session and this should remain as the cornerstone of the workshop.

After the first workshop there was a discussion about timing and the length has been increased slightly. For this type of training, which appears to be largely “refreshing” existing skills, keeping the time restricted engenders the feeling of a focused event. If more material is to be added then something will need to be removed. Responses from two of the workshops suggest that the ‘engagement and body language’ session might be dropped, but this was received far more positively in the third workshop. After discussion with the ecsite-uk team, we understand that there was no difference in the way that the session was delivered, so this finding may simply reflect the previous experience of participants.

The facilitation training is relevant to the delivery of DD events, but the broad applicability of the training does suggest that it could be useful to many staff in SDCs. The DD programme offers an opportunity to roll this out at minimal cost, but there may be a quasi-commercial training product that can be developed out of this workshop for ecsite-uk to deliver to members.

Subject specific content training for facilitators is important and may require greater emphasis in the future.



3. Content Development

So far content development has focused on the first Doing Dialogue topic “*Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life*”. The planned process was:

- joint writing and development events to develop new discussion & debate events
- a lead co-ordinator for each topic
- broad membership of the development team drawing from ecsite-uk, participating science and discovery centres and teachers
- securing topic-specific input from invited experts prior to writing events and review/checking of the science content before trialling
- trialling new events at partner SDCs.

This is an exhaustive process and has been followed for the first topic. Within the budgetary constraints it was agreed with ecsite-uk that it was most appropriate to focus evaluation effort on the final stages of content development, when materials were being trialled.

A full-scale pilot was run with a school in the locality of one of the participating SDCs. This pilot was run with two groups of students (25 in total), with each group facilitated by one of the principal developers of the premature babies material.

The pilot event was observed by PSP and in addition, the pilot students completed a draft of the proposed evaluation questionnaire for participating students. Taken together, these provided some important insights into the materials and how they could be refined.

3.1 General observations

Overall the students were highly engaged and approached most tasks in a thoughtful and constructive manner. However:

- these were top-set students (albeit towards the lower end of the target age range);
- behaviour levels were very good given the non-classroom setting (a teacher was present at all times, which will have helped);
- both facilitators were very comfortable and confident with the material; and
- the overall group size was small, reducing noise and distraction.

These provided ideal piloting conditions but in full-scale events the likelihood of variable ability levels, less exemplary behaviour and potentially less confident/experienced facilitators will all impact on the dynamics of events.

All the tasks needed fairly careful explanation, sometimes including ‘why’ students were doing them as well as ‘what’ they should do. Facilitation training should include the importance of checking that participants understand tasks once they are under way. Some students found it easier to ask questions and ‘admit’ that things were not clear once they were working in small groups/pairs.

The day was very full and in less conducive conditions it may not be possible to cover all elements of the event as constructed for the pilot.



3.2 Language

Some of the language used in the support materials needed explanation/clarification. This was particularly true for the role play material e.g. prognosis, empowerment, health care manager. The language used should be reviewed and where it is simply not possible to find more common words, then facilitators need to be briefed to be aware that they may need to explain the words to ensure that all participants understand the material.

3.3 Enjoyment

The students overwhelmingly enjoyed the event. This was evident in both the discussions PSP held with them after the event and in their responses to the questionnaire, where only one student said that they had not enjoyed the event. In conversation after the event, in the absence of the DD team, things that were mentioned in a positive light included:

- Doing something different
- Learning a lot (particularly in relation to foetal development)
- Having fun whilst learning
- Being able to talk about issues
- The inclusion of moral questions
- Preparing and giving the feedback
- Having refreshments available

In response to the written questionnaire the “best bit” of the DD event was widely felt to be the role play elements with two thirds of students citing this.

“Because it’s the part I learnt the most from”

“Because we got to act which was fun and it was serious and not off the topic”

Students

There were some aspects of the day that were seen as less enjoyable. About a quarter of the students cited each of the following as the “worst bit”:

- The pregnancy timeline
- Looking at newspaper articles and talking about facts and opinions
- The decision-making game
- Talking about which premature babies should be treated

The rationales for these responses were quite different, for example some students found the session about which babies should be treated quite uncomfortable.

“Because it is not fair on the babies who don't get treated, made you feel sad”

Student

On the other hand, the newspaper session was seen as quite difficult and not clearly relevant.

“It was a bit boring and I don’t think it was interesting and had anything to do with the roadshow”

Student



Similarly, some thought that the game added little and there was a suggestion that the pregnancy time line was boring and (from one student) that they already knew about this.

“Because I already knew about it and it was kind of boring” (‘Time line’)

Student

3.4 Impact - utility

In the follow-up questionnaire the students were asked “*Was ‘Premature babies :decisions at the edge of life’ useful for any of these school subjects?*” and they were offered a range of subjects, from which to choose, with multiple selections being allowed. Almost all of the students felt that the event had been useful for biology, science and PSHE/Citizenship. In addition, about a third mentioned RE/RS and a third mentioned drama. When, however, they were asked “*Which subject do you think ‘Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life’ was most useful for?*” the group was just about split 50:50 between biology and science. This view that the event was driven by biology, but had interesting wider implications is reflected in the comments from the lead teacher (see section 3.8).

Despite the quote from one student about the ‘pregnancy timeline’, almost half of the participants rated this session as the one in which they learnt most. Interestingly, almost all of the other sessions were nominated by at least one respondent as the session in which they learnt most, suggesting that the great majority of the day’s content is contributing to the students’ understanding of the science and the issues.

No one cited the feedback session or the decision-making game as the session from which they learnt the most. Moreover, in response to the question “*Which bit of ‘Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life’ did you learn least from?*” a quarter cited the decision-making game and a quarter mentioned the newspaper exercise.

3.5 Decision-making game

The aim of the ‘game’ is to stimulate discussion and debate about who should be responsible for making decisions at different points within an individual’s life. In observing the decision-making game it was clear that the tendency was for the students to treat it as just that, a game, (i.e. try to get to the end and “win”) rather than use it as a tool to stimulate discussion.

There is some potential for the game to be used as a stimulus tool, but it would need longer and a more detailed introduction (to explain that it is not about “winning”) than was possible in the time available during the pilot. Given the small impact of this session it could be an element that is removed from what is a fairly hectic day.

3.6 Newspapers – facts and opinions

In principle this is quite an important session as it tries to encourage critical analysis of information. However, it was clearly one of the more difficult sessions for the students and consequently they took less out of it. These students were towards the lower end of the target age range, which could have had an effect, nevertheless it may be worth simplifying this element of the programme.



3.7 Feedback session

Agreeing a ‘policy’ and preparing the feedback took quite a lot of time (more than 30 minutes for a group to agree a policy and rehearse a ‘performance’). This is an important part of the day for the individual groups as it should help them draw together the breadth of subject matter that they have encountered. It is important to allow adequate time for students to prepare a conclusion. In a full-scale event, there is unlikely to be time for ten groups to give the sort of dramatic feedbacks prepared by the pilot students. Preparing simpler feedback will save time during the feedback element, allowing more time for discussion of the policy.

3.8 Feedback from the teacher

During the day the evaluator had a number of conversations with the lead teacher and some key points that were raised are set out below.

- Biology had been the initial hook for agreeing to take part, but the cross-curricular aspect could help to “sell” the activity. While teachers are keen to foster interaction across subjects, time and practicalities mean that it cannot always be done.
- The teacher thought that it was important to give students experiences that are out of the ordinary and encourage thinking and discussion, benefiting their education in a rounded way, for example by including some science, some citizenship, developing language and communication skills and working in teams.
- The teacher observed that the role of facilitators was vital and was impressed with the pilot facilitators, but commented that others would need to be as well prepared and confident.

3.9 Expert support

There was no “expert” support at this pilot. It was clear from some of the questions that there is a role for the planned expert to input to discussions. However, this will have to be managed in such a way as to provoke discussion rather than be seen to be providing the “right answers”. Having a breadth of input, with some conflicting views, should help with this.

3.10 Conclusions

The content preparation had produced a lot of strong material, possibly too much for some students. Time-tabling will be important in the full-scale events.

The material at the pilot was quite “fiddly”. A much more robust and professional pack has been developed for the full roll-out. This pack has made the materials easy to collect and store so that the facilitators do not have to spend a lot of time sorting the materials to ensure that they are ready for use.

In the pilot, some students did not like the fact that different groups did different things, this may be something that has to happen in the full-scale events if different students are not capable of moving at the same speed. An option may be that there is a core set of tasks and material and that facilitators have additional material that can keep the more able



students stretched. One element of the programme that seems most suitable to keep as an option is the decision-making game, which appeared to add little to the pilot event. Aside from this, there did not seem to be any sessions that could easily be removed from the core of the event.



4. Doing Dialogue Events

At the time of writing, three DD events had been run for a total of 117 students. This is a somewhat smaller number than had been anticipated with events being designed for up to 100 students at a time. However, during the initial roll out of the programme, smaller numbers have provided an opportunity to fully test the events and supporting material.

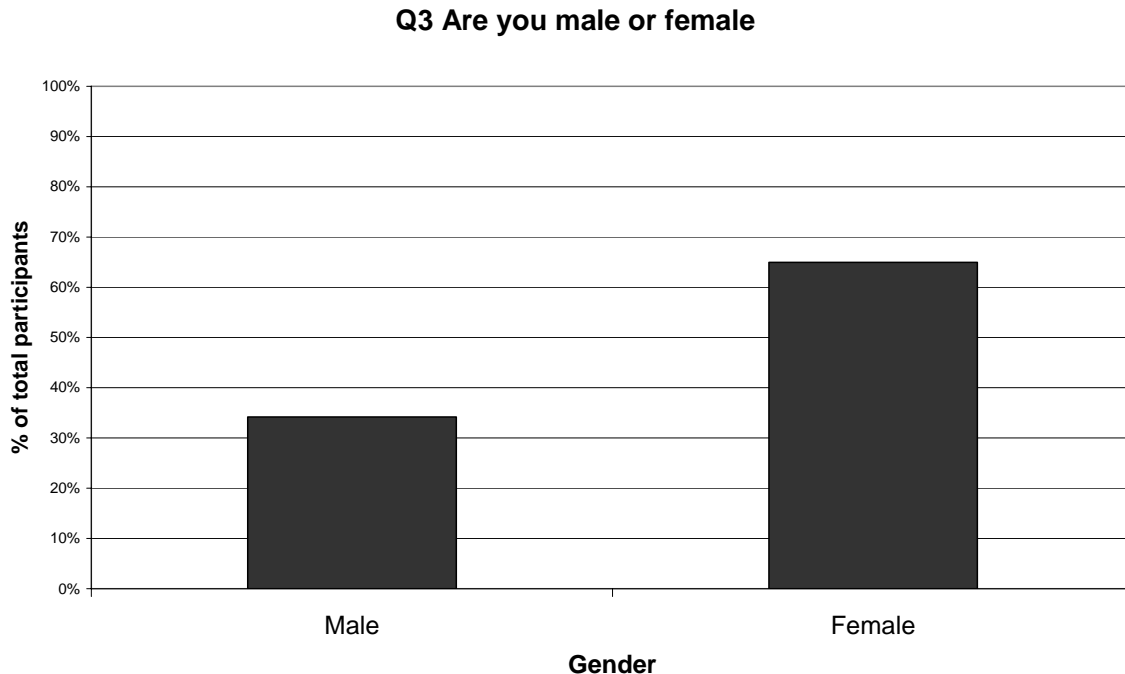
Feedback questionnaires have been collected from all participants and the findings from these questionnaires form the core of this section, which also draws on qualitative observational results from the first main stage DD event.

4.1 Who has taken part?

Participating students have been asked for their year group, gender and ethnicity to allow a picture to be built up of who had participated in the events.

The most striking finding is that to date female students have formed a large majority of the participants, with virtually two thirds of the participating students being female. If this trend continues in future events, the reasons for this could be worth exploring in follow-up conversations with teachers. Questions that could be explored include whether female students are choosing, or being chosen, to take part, or whether students are being chosen from subject groups that are female dominated.

Figure 1 Gender (base =117)



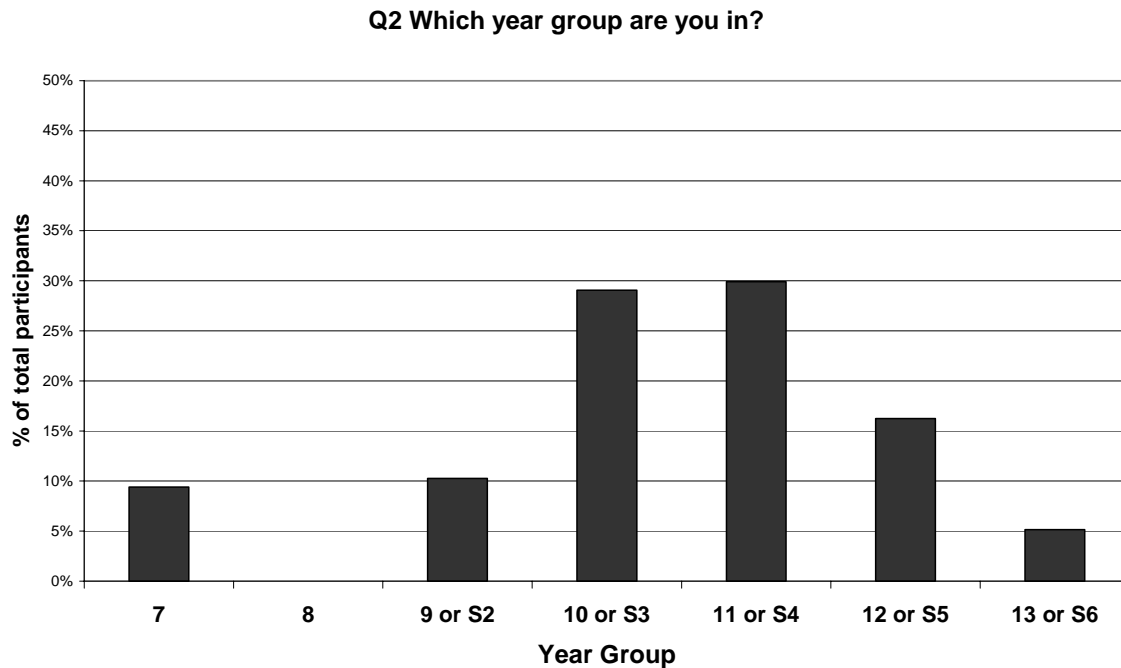
Section 4.5 below explores some emerging differences between male and female students’ responses to the evaluation questionnaire.

Figure 2 shows the age profile of participating students to date. The activity was originally designed for students in years 9-13 (S2-S6). Thus far all the target years have been represented, with the greatest number of participating students have come from the middle years of the age range. At the first event there were also students who were much



younger. These students were from Gifted and Talented groups and with the higher ability levels, despite their age, all the students were able to engage on some level even though language not always accessible to all. Language issues were not restricted to scientific terminology for example “impartial” needed to be explained by a facilitator working with the younger students. On the whole the material seems to better suited to older students i.e. the target age range.

Figure 2 Year group (base =117)



From the data collected so far, no sub-analysis of the responses by year group has been undertaken as the sample numbers for each year group are too small. The largest group currently only contains 35 students. However analysis tools have been set up within the data handling spreadsheet (see section 5.3) that will allow this work to be done as more students take part in subsequent events, increasing the size of the sub-groups.

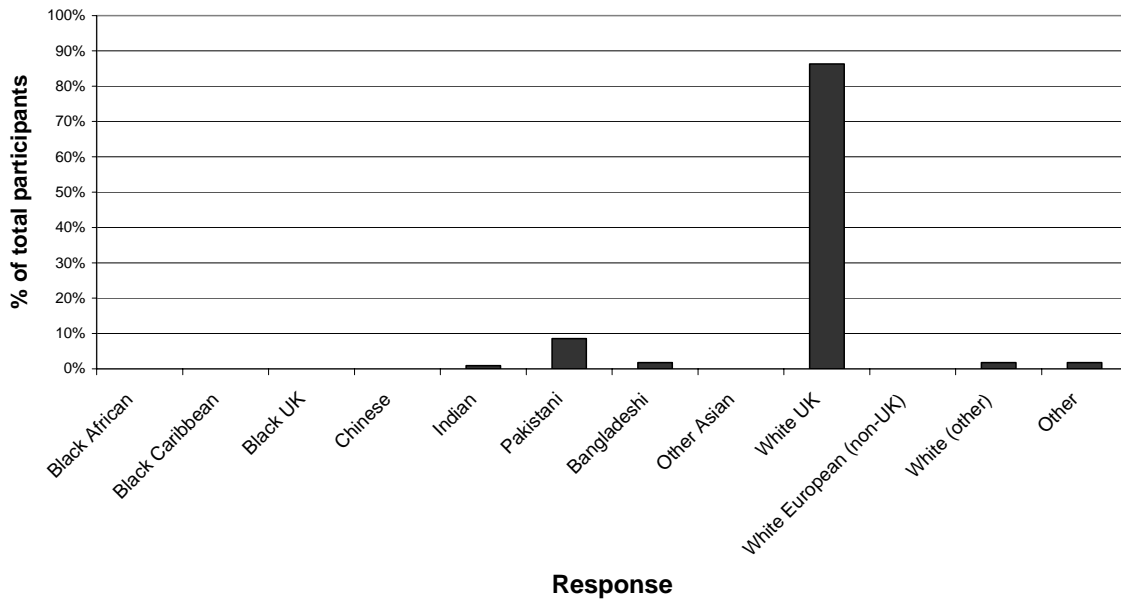
The final demographic issue that the questionnaire explores is ethnicity and as figure 3 shows, to date most of the participants have classified themselves as white UK. The distribution of ethnic groups will to some degree reflect the location of events. So thus far, the majority of the non-white UK participants attended the Birmingham event.

As with the year group data, the sizes of sub-groups do not yet justify separate analysis, although analysis tools have been supplied that will enable this as the data set increases in size.



Figure 3 Ethnicity (base =117)

Q13 How would you describe your ethnic origin?

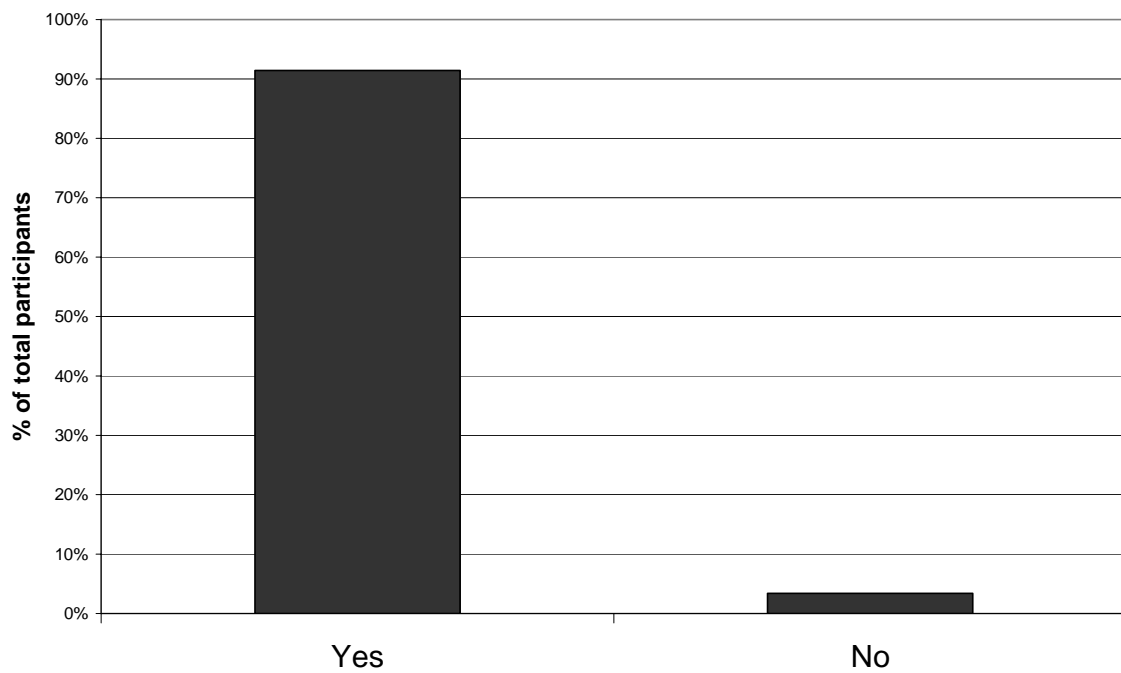


4.2 Enjoyment

Figure 4 shows that, as in the pilot, the participating students thoroughly enjoyed the activity.

Figure 4 Enjoyment (base =117)

Q4 Did you enjoy "Premature babies:decisions at the edge of life"

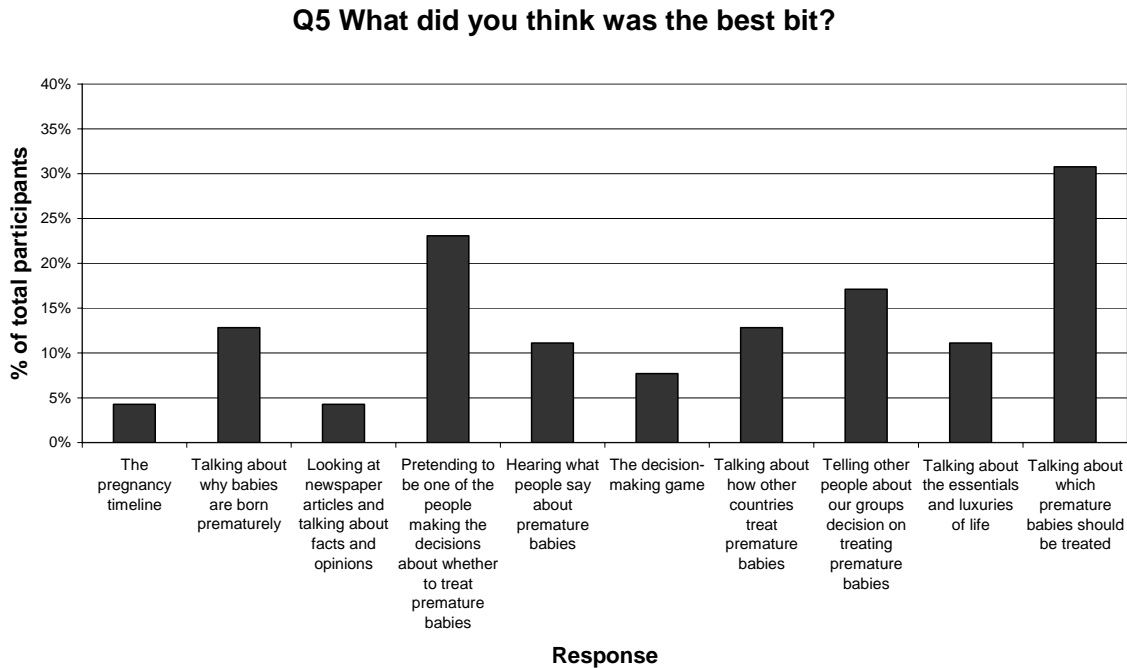




4.2.1 Strengths

Students were asked to nominate the best bit of the event and as figure 5 shows, every session was nominated, with three being more enjoyable than the others.

Figure 5 Best bit (base =117)



The students were asked to say why they had selected the specific sessions. Below are quotes from students that had selected the three most popular sessions.

- Talking about which premature babies should be treated
- Pretending to be one of the people making the decisions about whether to treat premature babies
- Telling other people about our groups decision on treating premature babies

The quotes show that while “fun” is an element, many students cited the fact that these sessions were interactive and while challenging, also rewarding. The students also appreciated the fact that the structure of the event gave them opportunities to talk rather than merely listen.

“Because there was so many different options it really got you thinking about what is and isn't fair.”

“Everyone interacted with each other and discussed the views.”

“Most in-depth discussion, less patronising, more engaging.”

“Because we did a case study and it was interesting to hear what actually happened to the babies in life.”

Students that had selected the “Talking about which premature babies should be treated” session



“It gives you and idea of what its like to make decisions like that.”

“Because you can see things from their eyes.”

“Because it gets you to consider the decisions from a different point of view.”

Students that had selected the “Pretending to be one of the people...” session

“Because I liked the way my group was able to present the ideas- in our case we used drama and a bit of comedy.”

“Because we had spent a lot of time on this, it paid off in the end.”

“Most fun and where we could express our views.”

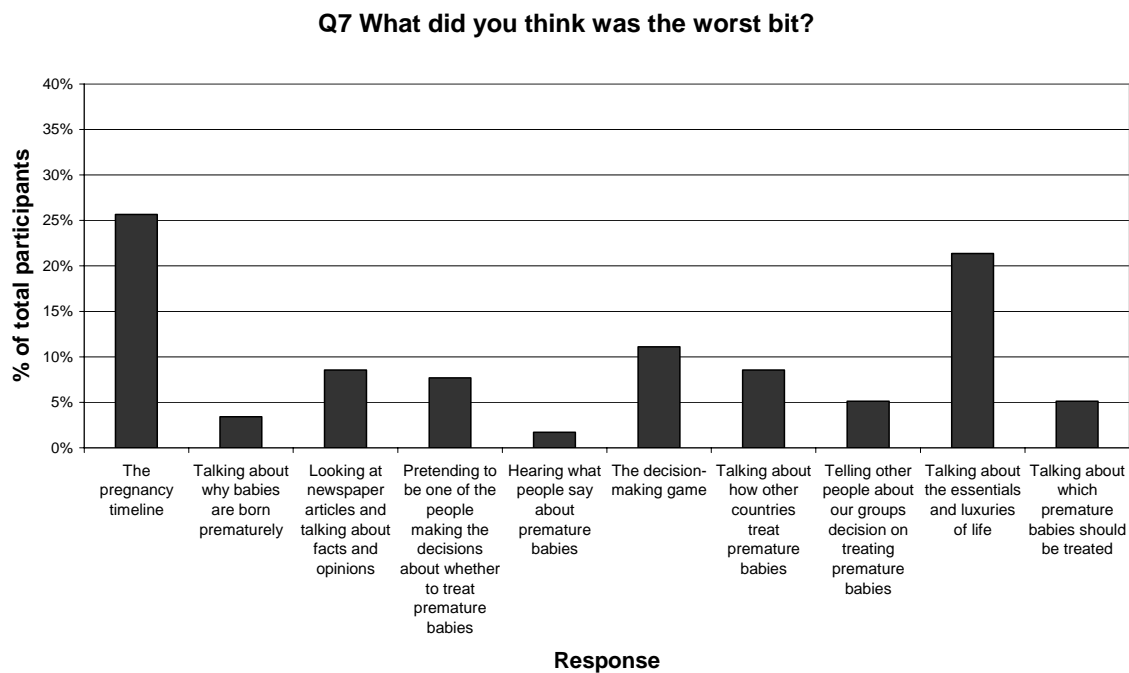
“I learnt something new and was able to use information to come up with an informed policy.”

Students that had selected the “Telling other people...” session

4.2.2 Weaknesses

Students were also asked to nominate the worst bit of the event and as figure 6 shows once again every session was nominated, with two standing out as being much less enjoyable than the others.

Figure 6 Worst bit (base =117)



Again the students were asked to say why they had selected particular sessions. In some cases a session was selected because students had not done it, for example the session with newspaper articles was not used in Newcastle. Some students in Newcastle had been involved in piloting work, so when a student responded *“I had already done it before in my school”* with regard to the pregnancy timeline, they had. Nevertheless an analysis of the qualitative responses for the two least popular sessions does shed light on why they were selected.

There main reason for students nominating “The pregnancy timeline” was that in some events the style of delivery did not leave scope for the students to think or explore data.



“Easy as it contained the week stages on the card.”
 “Too easy (numbers given).”
 “It was basic and something a year 7 should do.”
 “The dates were given.”
 Students that had selected the “Pregnancy timeline” session

With regard to the “Talking about the essentials and luxuries of life” session for most students the issue was a lack of relevance

“Didn't really seem to be very relevant to topic.”
 “Didn't find it very interesting or useful.”
 “It was not challenging and quite boring.”
 “It had nothing to do with premature babies.”
 Students that had selected the “...essentials and luxuries of life” session

However in one session, there was also some disquiet over the role played by facilitators.

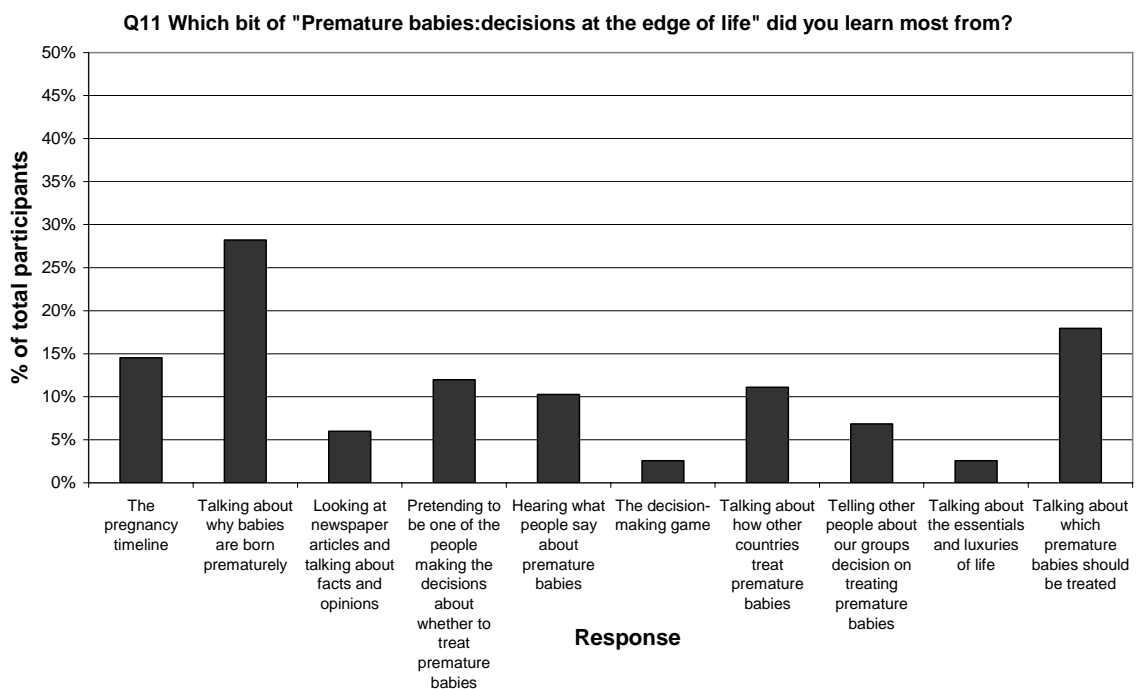
“Some of the leaders tried to make us change our opinions which was unfair.”
 “You were told what to put.”
 Students that had selected the “...essentials and luxuries of life” session

These responses re-inforce the suggestion in the previous section that the most enjoyable sessions are those that are challenging and open up new thoughts.

4.3 Learning

The students were asked to nominate the sessions that they felt that they had learnt most and least from, figures 7 and 8. It is no surprise to see that the three sessions from which students learnt most are three that have significant amounts of information provision.

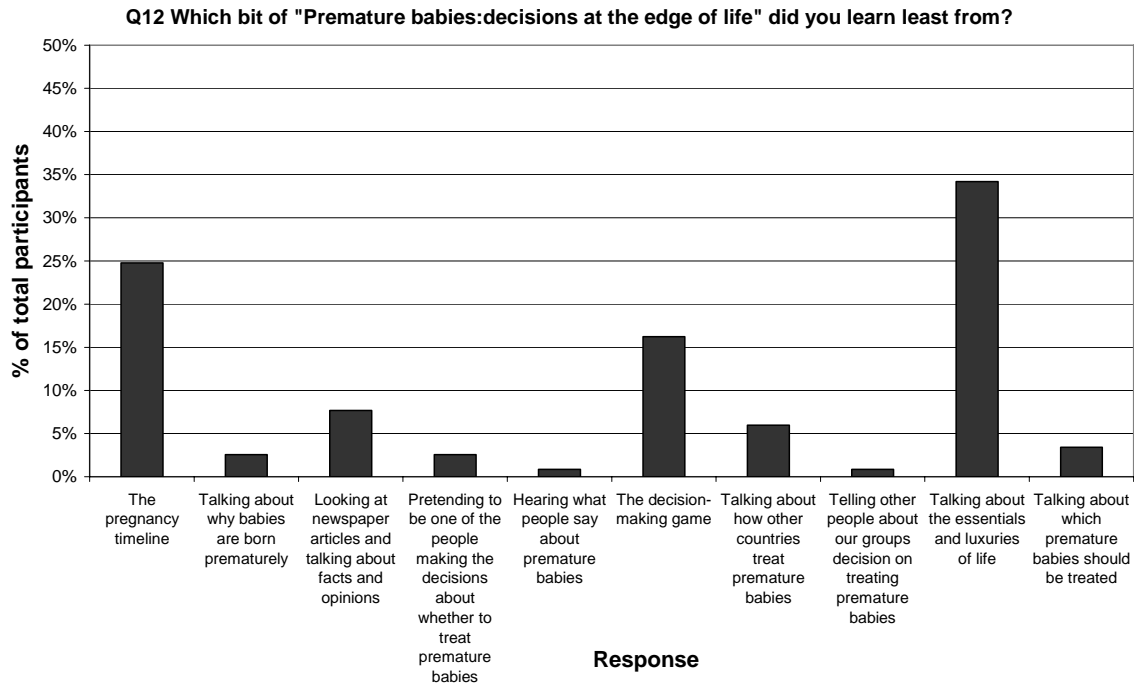
Figure 7 Learnt most from (base =117)





However the pregnancy timeline is also the second most cited session in the learnt least figure. It is interesting to none of those attending the Birmingham workshop cited the pregnancy timeline as the session from which they had learnt least. This may mean that the learnt least response is currently being influenced by the fact that a number of students in Newcastle had done this activity before.

Figure 8 Learnt least from (base =117)



As the data set grows the DD team should be able to see whether there are factors associated with the different events that are influencing these responses.

It is however quite clear that the session that was regarded as least useful in terms of learning was “Talking about the essentials and luxuries of life”.

4.4 Relevance

Students were asked to identify the school subjects for which the premature babies was useful and also the subject for which it was most useful (figures 9 and 10). As well as offering a list of subjects from which to choose, students were given the option of writing in any other subject that was not on the list. The other subjects that were cited were:

- General studies
- Child development
- Ethics
- Philosophy and ethics

Figures 9 and 10 show that as in the pilot the event is seen as science, and specifically biology, based, but with useful wider effects.



Figure 9 Relevance to any school subjects (base =117)

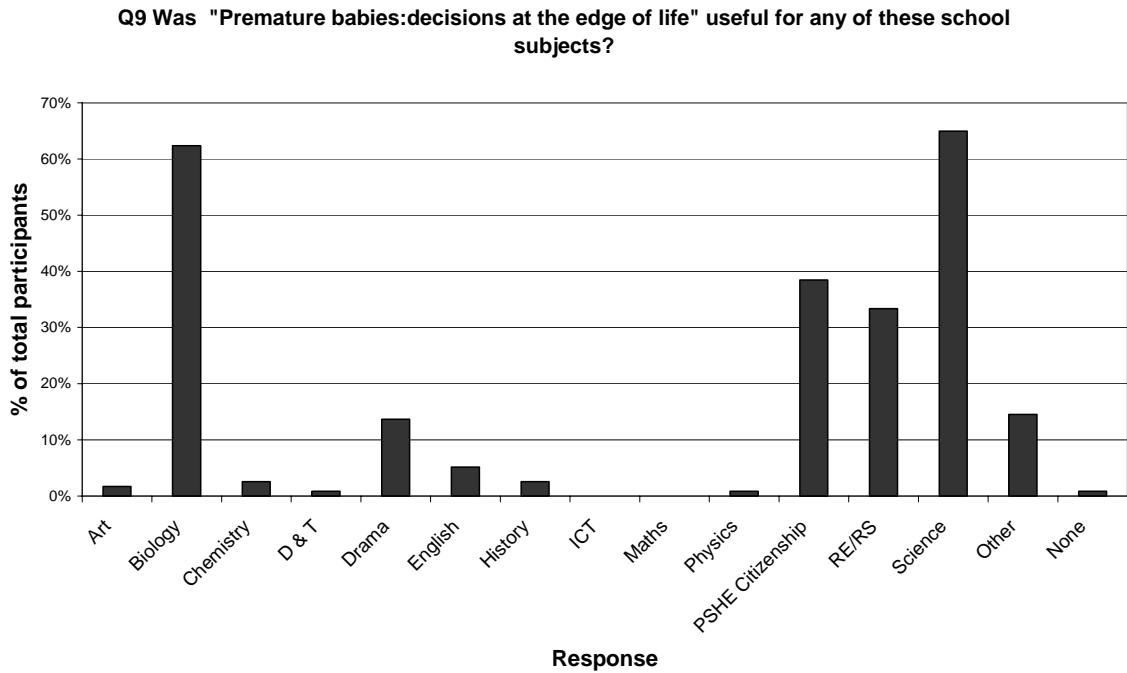
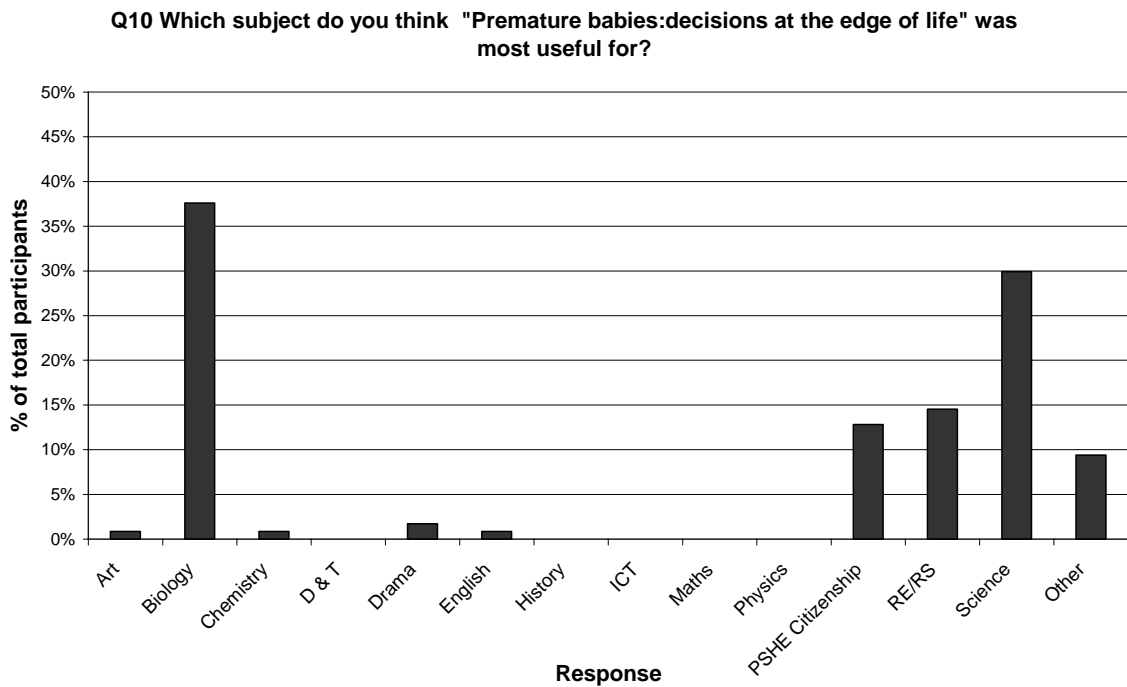


Figure 10 Most relevant school subject (base =117)



4.5 Gender differences

The relatively small sub-group sizes mean that it apparent differences between sub-groups should be treated with caution at this stage. Because every participant is responding, the data is a census and thus representative of all who participated. However when sample sizes are very small the potentially distorting effects of outlying perspectives cannot be



known, so at this stage some tentative observations are offered, with the proviso that sub-group analysis will be a more powerful tool as the data set increases in size following future events.

Figure 11 shows that although students of both genders believe that the event was most useful for science or biology, this is more marked for male students. Three quarters of male students cited science or biology whereas only two thirds of female students cited these subjects. The female students were more likely than the male students to believe that the event was most useful for non-scientific subjects such as PSHE/Citizenship or RE/RS.

Figure 11 Most relevant school subject by gender (base =117)

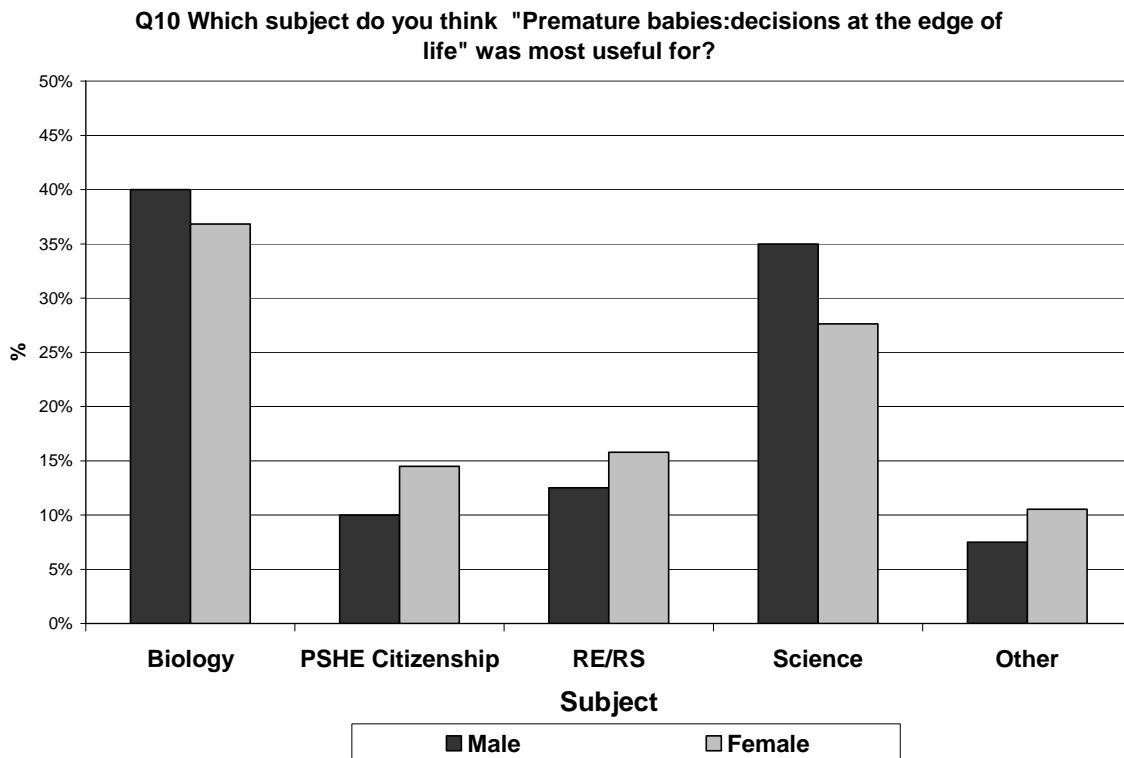


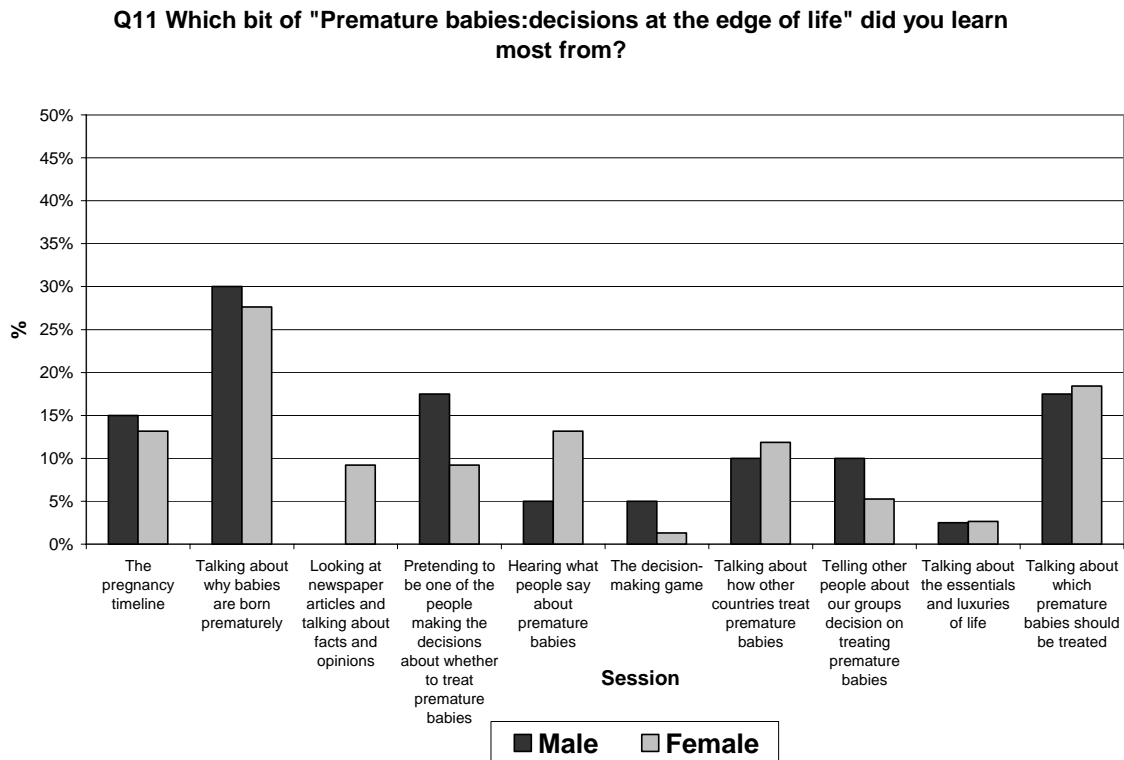
Figure 12 shows the elements of the event that students believed they learnt most from by gender. Comparing this to figure 7 we can see that for the three sessions that were felt to most aid learning overall:

- the pregnancy timeline;
- talking about why babies are born prematurely; and
- talking about which babies should be treated

there is little difference between the genders. However, for some of the other sessions there do appear to be gender-based differences emerging. So male students are more likely than female students to cite the role and game playing sessions as most supportive of learning. Whereas the female students are more likely than the male ones to cite word and paper-based sessions.

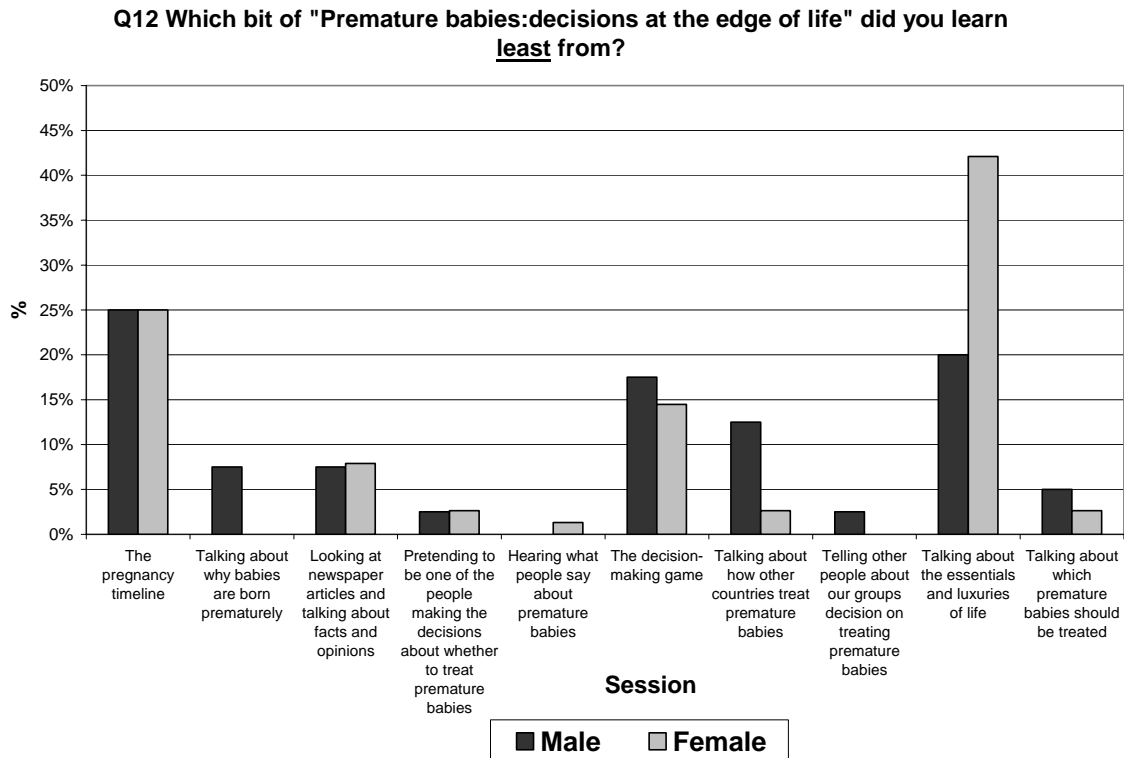


Figure 12 Learnt most from by gender (base =117)²



We can also see that the female students were much more likely than the male students to report that the “Essentials and luxuries” session contributed least to learning (figure 13).

Figure 12 Learnt most from by gender (base =117)



² NB Some students marked more than one response, so the column totals add up to more than 100%



4.7 Marketing

There may be some issues about marketing the premature babies event as the early events have attracted smaller numbers than anticipated.

We spoke to teachers at the pilot event and at the first full event. Their view was that the DD model does not provide core curriculum support, but rather additional stimulus and it is notable that in both of these events school teachers identified more able students to take part.

The teacher follow-up by the DD team should shed more light on why teachers are getting involved and how the project can be most effectively marketed to them. In particular it will be important to investigate whether decisions on participation are being governed by the style of the event or the specific content.

4.8 Conclusions

The premature babies doing dialogue event has proved to be an enjoyable and informative event. Over 90% of the participating students thought that it was enjoyable and only 1% thought that it had not been useful for any school subjects.

The strengths of the event are its interactivity and the challenging nature of some of the components. The least favoured elements of the day were those that were seen as easy or irrelevant. For some students the freedom to express themselves was an important part of the experience.

Further qualitative work with teachers will be an important part of the project to support effective marketing of DD events.



5. Evaluation Toolkit

There are three basic types of tool provided in the evaluation toolkit, these are:

- structured questionnaires;
- semi-structured interview guides; and
- a data Handling Spreadsheet.

5.1 Structured Questionnaires

There are three structured questionnaires in this toolkit. These are designed to ensure that specific sets of people are asked the same questions in the same way after experiencing one facet of the Doing Dialogue (DD) project “Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life!”

The three questionnaires are:

- Facilitation training questionnaire
- DD student questionnaire
- DD facilitators questionnaire

Each serves a different purpose as described in the relevant sections below.

5.1.1 Facilitation training questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be completed by those people who have taken part in Doing Dialogue facilitation training. The questionnaire is a word document that can be e-mailed to the training participants, completed on screen, saved with the responses and e-mailed back to the DD team.

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to provide ongoing feedback to allow the DD team to monitor whether or not the training session is continuing to meet the requirements of trainees.

5.1.2 DD student questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be completed by the students who have taken part in the “Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life!” Doing Dialogue events. The questionnaire is a word document that should be printed out and distributed towards the end of event. The event leader should ensure that there is one for every participating student, along with some “spares”.

The questionnaires need to be completed after the event, so it is important that time is allowed for this, bearing in mind that both students and teachers may regard the event as complete and be looking to leave in order to meet travel timings. The mechanics of distributing and collecting the questionnaires will be, to some extent, governed by the nature of the working space. Bearing in mind that the emphasis is on confidentiality, it might be appropriate to brief facilitators on the importance of giving participating students some “space” to complete the questionnaires, envelopes or boxes could be provided so that each facilitator can ask students to put the completed questionnaire (un-named) straight into a group envelope or box.



5.1.3 DD facilitators questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be completed by those people who facilitated at a Doing Dialogue event. The questionnaire is a word document that can be e-mailed to the training participants, completed on screen, saved with the responses and e-mailed back to the DD team.

5.1.4 Issues

By their nature structured questionnaires offer less scope for respondents to express themselves than semi-structured interviews. There is a balance to be struck between the resources required to administer different methods of data collection, the amount of time that respondents will be asked to give up and the usefulness of data that can be acquired. The challenge is to ensure that all participants are asked questions that in themselves, and in the way they are delivered, facilitate answers that will help the DD team to understand how the project is working and how it can be improved. Respondents will not always react as hoped.

“There isn't anywhere to criticise this procrustian questionnaire (sic). Teachers get a telephone interview. We get to tick boxes on a computer and get forced into a range of preconceived answers. Awful.”

Facilitator

5.2 Semi-structured interview guides

There are two semi-structured interview guides in this toolkit. These are designed to explore a range of issues with specific sets of people who have been involved with the Doing Dialogue project “Premature babies: decisions at the edge of life!” The two interview guides are:

- expert’s interview guide
- teacher’s interview guide

Each serves a different purpose as described in the relevant sections below.

5.2.1 Expert’s interview guide

There was the intention that DD events might include “experts”, broadly defined as people with relevant specialist knowledge or experience. Follow-up conversations with these experts will allow the DD team to assess a number of things:

- Why did the expert get involved?
 - Do they do this sort of thing often?
- How well prepared did they feel?
- Were they hoping to get anything in particular out of the event?
 - Did they get it?
- Was the contribution they were asked for appropriate to their skills and the needs of the participating students?
- The expert’s perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of the event.
- The expert’s perceptions of ways of improving the event.



- Whether they would take part in similar events again, or recommend to others that they should? (A useful indicator of their overall satisfaction.)

5.2.3 Teacher's interview guide

Teachers have a crucial gatekeeper role and will be responsible for championing DD events within a school. The project is marketed to teachers so it is crucial that the DD team understands what attracts teachers to the project and what ensures that they are satisfied with events. Follow-up conversations with these teachers will allow the DD team to assess a number of things:

- The types of teachers that are getting involved.
 - Why did they get involved?
 - How did they find out about the event?
 - Their views on the booking process and logistics.
- What they were hoping that their students would get out of the event
 - Did they get it?
- The teacher's perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of the event.
- The teacher's perceptions of ways of improving the event.
- Whether they would bring students to similar events again, or recommend to colleagues that they should. (A useful indicator of their overall satisfaction.)

5.3 Data Handling Spreadsheet

The data handling spreadsheet supplied with the toolkit is designed to be used in conjunction with the DD student questionnaire. This workbook allows the responses of the students to be brought together to give a quantitative overview of the students' views of the events.

5.4 Guidance Notes

Accompanying guidance notes have been provided to Ecsite-uk and there is also the capacity to call on PSP for additional help as the toolkit is used.