How Does the Use of Positive Language in Relation to Hemispheric Specialisation Influence the Climate of the Learning Environment?

Mary Murray
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To What Extent Does This Affect the Self-Concept and Self-Esteem of Everyone Involved?

Does This Raise Expectations and Help to Promote an Ethos of Achievement?

Mary Murray
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Abstract

The use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation in the working environment was studied in two classes, P7 and P6/7, to evaluate the affect on the self-concept and self-esteem of those involved and to investigate whether or not this raised expectations and promoted an ethos of achievement.

The way in which each brain hemisphere processes language was explored with the pupils and teachers then the positive alternatives to negative words and phrases were introduced. These were used throughout the period of research.

Self-concept and self-esteem were measured using published scales before and after intervention. The results of these scales showed an increase in self-concept and self-esteem, particularly in the children with the lowest initial scores. The overall study strongly indicated that, when used consistently, expectations were raised and it helped to promote an ethos of achievement.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background

It has long been established that children perform better in a learning environment with a strong, positive ethos. Many new initiatives have been introduced in recent years with a view to achieving this, from Emotional Literacy to various thinking skills strategies. All of these advocate the use of positive communication and positive thinking.

However, from the author’s studies into Educational Kinesiology, in particular the way in which the different hemispheres of the brain process language, and through working with various ethos improvers, it is the author’s belief that there is an important aspect which needs to be addressed. Although most of these initiatives promote positive communication, the author has not encountered any which deal with the issue of particular emotive words and phrases which cause stress. Therefore this study is focused on the use of alternatives to the words try, hard, difficult, bad, failed, problem and can’t.

In particular, it was envisaged that the research would address the following questions:

1. How does the use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation influence the climate of the learning environment and relationships and attitudes within it?
2. To what extent does this affect the self-concept and self-esteem of everyone involved? Does this raise expectations and help to promote an ethos of achievement?

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the research project is;
To introduce and evaluate a strategy to substitute the use of the negative and stressful words try, hard, difficult, bad, failed, problem and can’t, for positive alternatives in the learning environment and measure the affect this has on self-concept, self-esteem, expectations and ethos.

In order to achieve this, the specific objectives of the research are;
1. to identify and critically evaluate previously published work into the use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation.
2. to develop a strategy for introducing this positive language in the classroom setting.
3. to develop a method to evaluate the impact of this positive language from the teacher’s and child’s perspective.
4. to implement and critically evaluate the strategies developed in 2 and 3, with follow up visits to observe and encourage.
5. to evaluate the impact of intervention using the strategies developed in 2.
1.3 Examining the challenge

There is constant pressure within the education system to raise standards and meet targets. Teachers are continually seeking strategies to engage all pupils, yet there are children in every classroom who do not have a positive self-image. This includes high achievers as well as the more obvious group of children with learning challenges and dyslexic tendencies. They are self-critical and often tell themselves that the work they are faced with is ‘too hard’. They are the children who are often asked to ‘try harder’, adding more pressure to an already stressful situation.

It is widely recognised that the way we think and feel about ourselves is closely linked to our successes and ‘failures’. Many positive thinking and positive communication initiatives have been introduced into the learning environment with a view to raising self-concept, self-esteem and achievement. However, the author believes that the positive language aspect has not been fully addressed. The words highlighted in the research aim (Section 1.2) are linked to the emotional response we have to a given situation or task and colour the way we approach it.

1.4 Benefits

It is envisaged that encouraging children to approach tasks using positive language will remove unnecessary stress and information processing blocks, allowing them to believe they can achieve. This would have personal benefits
for the children in that it would enable them to experience success thus raising self-concept and self-esteem.

Many behaviour challenges in classrooms are caused by children who have become disillusioned and consider themselves low achievers or even ‘failures’. This is further explained in chapter 2.6. It is hoped that the work carried out in this project will raise children’s expectations and belief in themselves thereby contributing towards an ethos of achievement.

1.5  Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

Ch 2. Literature Review – a survey of the literature relating to objective 1

Ch 3. Methodology – the methods used to address objectives 2 to 5

Ch 4. Results and Discussion – the research findings linked to the objectives

Ch 5. Conclusions - conclusions drawn from the results obtained

Ch 6  Recommendations - suggestions for further work in the field
2. Literature Review

In this section, previously published literature relating to hemispheric specialisation and the emotional response to language is reviewed.

2.1 Background Theory

The author developed an interest in this subject during studies of Professional Kinesiology Practice (1). This is an alternative therapy that uses muscle testing to locate blocks and stresses in the body and implements various techniques to correct these. There are many aspects to kinesiology and the area that most relates to positive language is Educational Kinesiology (2). This is a system of techniques and exercises designed to integrate the two hemispheres of the brain making learning easier and less stressful.

The first step in working with Educational Kinesiology requires an explanation of brain function as it relates to specific learning tasks. On inspection the brain appears to be made up of two symmetrical halves connected by a massive bundle of nerves, called the corpus callosum, containing some 200 million fibres. This provides communication between the two halves and allows the transmission of memory and learning. There are many ways in which the brains are lateralized, including anatomically and chemically, but the two hemispheres are asymmetrical in many of the functions they perform.
The following table, taken from Unicorns Are Real – A Right-Brained Approach to Learning (3) lists some of the skills or curriculum area strengths generally attributed to the left and right hemisphere.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left Side</th>
<th>Right Side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>handwriting</td>
<td>haptic awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>symbols</td>
<td>spatial relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language</td>
<td>shapes and patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading</td>
<td>mathematical computation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phonics</td>
<td>colour sensitivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locating details</td>
<td>music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking</td>
<td>art expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>following directions</td>
<td>creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening</td>
<td>visualisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>auditory association</td>
<td>feelings and emotions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1: Skills Associated with Hemispheric specialisation

2.2 Split-Brain Experiments

Hemispheric specialisation began to be uncovered in the 1960s in experiments carried out by Roger Sperry at the California Institute of Technology (4). He conducted extensive studies on a number of patients with epilepsy whose corpus callosum had been severed. This operation had been administered in order to confine a seizure to one half of the brain, so that the other half could carry on
functioning normally, enabling the person to take some medicine or summon assistance. This process successfully controlled the severity of the patient’s epilepsy with almost no noticeable side effects.

However, what was noticed was that the disconnected hemispheres functioned as two independent brains, an observation that went against earlier thinking. In the late 19th century two neurologists, Paul Broca and Karl Wernicke, discovered, through the observation of brain-injured people and corpses, that speech is processed in the left hemisphere of the brain. Subsequent experiments indicated that the right hemisphere served no other purpose than to switch signals into the left brain for higher-order processing. Therefore it was decided that the left hemisphere was the dominant brain, an idea which fitted well with the prevalence of right-handed people in the world. This theory continued until Sperry’s split-brain operations.

Experiments were carried out with people who had had their corpus callosums severed. Because of the way our eyes are wired to the brain, it is possible to communicate exclusively with one hemisphere or the other by stimulating the right or left visual field. Things in the left field of vision are seen and interpreted by the right hemisphere and vice versa.

If a patient was given something to hold in his right hand, he could say what he was holding since the information was going to the verbal side of the brain. If the object was in his left hand, he could not describe it but was able to draw it with his left hand. He could also point out the object again with his left hand,
knowing intuitively what it was, since the right hemisphere had both recognised and remembered the object.

Further research revealed that each hemisphere is capable of reasoning, remembering and communicating. The formerly dull right brain was shown to have a sense of self and time. The right hemispheres of split-brain patients exhibited a sense of humour and it could communicate with the left through emotional pathways in the interconnected limbic system.

The studies demonstrated that the left and right hemispheres are specialized in different tasks. The left side normally takes care of the analytical and verbal tasks, while the right side usually takes care of space perception and artistic tasks. The right hemisphere can only produce rudimentary words and phrases, but contributes emotional context to language. Without the help from the right hemisphere, you would be able to read the word ‘candle’ for instance, but wouldn’t be able to imagine what it is. The same would be true for the words ‘hard’ and ‘difficult’ too. We use the right side of the brain to add emotion to the language we use.

For those of us with the two hemispheres integrated, it has been shown vividly in brain scan sequences that both sides are constantly cooperating as a seamless whole. In the reading and reciting of a poem it can be observed that the information goes to the left side initially, is sent to the right side for individual word understanding, back to the left for recoding the words, to the right again for visual and emotional imagery then to the left side to process the information.
and recode it into speech motor movements. With these processes, the words and emotions are linked and the poem comes alive. It is, therefore, clear from this that in order to process information and to think and learn effectively in the classroom, both hemispheres of the brain need to be able to communicate well.

2.3 Emotional Response to Language

Another example of the emotional response to language is evident from work carried out in 2003 by American psychologists Atchley, Hardi and Enloe. The following is the abstract from their article ‘Hemispheric asymmetry in the processing of emotional content in word meanings: the effect of current and past depression’ (5)

“We examined hemispheric lateralization of emotion processing by comparing the performance of clinically depressed, previously depressed, and control individuals on a divided visual field task. Participants were asked to make effective valence judgements for each in a series of laterally presented person-descriptive adjectives. Study results suggest that the right-cerebral hemisphere is preferentially sensitive to the context of language. Among targets presented to the right hemisphere, depressed and previously depressed participants were significantly faster and more accurate in their judgement of negative target words, while controls responded more quickly and accurately to positive target words.”
No such effects were observed for targets presented to the left hemisphere. It is hypothesized that affective sensitivity may result in differences in semantic organization across individuals who vary in affective experience.

Although there are many reasons for depression other than simply stress, it would be reasonable to assume from this that our experiences colour the way we interpret the emotional side of language. Therefore, it is important that we create a learning environment where the use of positive language and thinking is consistently encouraged in order to enhance self-concept and self-esteem.

2.4 The Needs of a Healthy Brain

As previously mentioned, the corpus callosum provides the communication between the two cerebral hemispheres. In order to think and learn in an integrated way, the brain as a whole has six basic needs. If the brain is deprived of any of these, stress is created and our ability to process information can be disrupted. The communication between the two hemispheres can become blocked. There are some ways in which we can help to meet these needs in the school environment. A healthy brain needs -

1. A Healthy Diet – A whole school programme promoting healthy eating will help here.
2. **Water** – This is essential for the sending of messages to and from the brain. We need to drink 6 to 8 glasses each day. Having water available in the classroom helps to address this.

3. **Oxygen** – A stuffy room is not the best environment in which to learn. Opening a window supplies much needed oxygen.

4. **Exercise and Movement** – Every movement we make is a signal being sent to the brain. Whole body movements make the whole brain work. Brain Gym (6) is a set of movements and activities designed to enhance whole brain learning. Many techniques are suitable for classroom use.

5. **Adequate Rest** – The brain needs time to repair and regenerate. Adequate sleep is essential for optimum information processing. This should be included in a whole school health programme.

6. **Security and Lack of Stress** – Children perform better in a learning environment with a strong, positive ethos. I believe that the use of positive language enhances this as it motivates children and encourages high self-esteem. The way we communicate with children and the language we choose to use greatly influences the environment in which they learn.

When we are under stress we are often not able to think in an integrated way. Research indicates that children’s performance is strongly influenced by their belief that they have the capacity to succeed. In her book ‘A Guide to Better Thinking’ (6) Anne Kite sets out a programme of strategies to teach children how to become positive, critical and creative thinkers. Step one of her ‘Six Steps to Successful Thinking’ begins with ‘I can do it if I think I can’. In her section on positive words she delivers strategies intended to help children not to
talk themselves down and to move from an ‘I can’t’ to an ‘I can’ attitude. The idea is to focus on the positive rather than the negative to build confidence and self-esteem. Each section in her book delivers a message for the children to remember. Her message for this section is ‘Positive thinkers use positive words’.

The strategies she advocates and the positive words she lists compare closely with those found in Educational Kinesiology, with a few exceptions. Anne Kite uses the words ‘try, hard, difficult and problem’ which, in Educational Kinesiology, are considered to be stress words.

2.5 Educational Kinesiology

The Educational Kinesiology programme (2) is designed to help adults and children to understand how they learn or block learning. It explains in simple terms brain function as it relates to specific learning tasks, then sets out simple movements and activities to promote integrated information processing.

In Educational Kinesiology, the corpus callosum is described as a bridge or barrier between the two cerebral hemispheres. It can enable the two sides to work in an integrated way but in some stressful situations the communication pathways can become blocked.

The right hemisphere receives information through the senses but is unable to express itself or to use the data. The gestalt abilities to intuit, to make
associations, to remember and to know require cooperation with the left hemisphere. In Educational Kinesiology the right hemisphere is known as the Reflex/Gestalt brain.

The left hemisphere is critical, judgemental and analytical. Without the gestalt sense, it cannot remember what it learns and must do things over and over again. In Educational Kinesiology the left hemisphere is known as the Try/Analytic brain. The goal is to have both hemispheres switched on, but under stress we may become partially blocked in one side or the other.

The ‘try’ brain is so called because it is where we use effort to analyse information. Indeed, most dictionary definitions of ‘try’ begin with the word ‘effort’. As an adjective, the definition of ‘trying’ is ‘hard to endure’ or ‘extremely irritating’. Through muscle testing, kinesiologists can show that the act of ‘trying’ often causes stress and blocks in information processing.

Muscle testing reads our brain responses in much the same way as a lie detector. Non-postural muscles will become momentarily less strong when something causes a stress. Therefore, when pressing gently on an outstretched arm, a kinesiologist can detect a stressful thought or action by the ‘switching off’ of the deltoid muscle. This can be experienced by asking a participant to hold his arm out to the side at shoulder height and pushing gently downwards at the wrist. Asking him to ‘do his best’ to keep his arm outstretched should produce a ‘switched on’ response. The arm should stay strong. When asked to ‘try harder’ or ‘try your hardest’ more energy is diverted to the ‘try’ brain causing a stress
response and the arm is easily pushed down. Putting more energy into the left brain limits our ability to solve challenges as we are not thinking in a fully integrated way.

Therefore, asking children to try harder is causing more stressful thinking than asking them to do their best. Most dictionaries give the meaning of ‘try’ as ‘make an effort, test out or put strain on’. This implies that a task will not be easy and that there is every chance of not succeeding. Muscle testing in these situations has indicated that this is the case.

The same ‘switched off’ muscle response shows when a task is viewed as ‘hard’ or ‘difficult’, indicating that the negative emotional context of the language used has a stress effect on the thinking process. This is similar to the results of the valence testing, carried out by Atchley, Hardi and Enloe, where the chemical responses to the emotional context of language on depressed and previously depressed participants were significantly faster and more accurate in their judgement of negative target words.

If the same task is viewed as ‘not easy’ or ‘a challenge’, muscles will stay strong as the emotional context of the language is positive. This allows the person access to whole brain information processing rather than diverting too much energy to the ‘try’ brain or producing an emotional ‘fight/flight’ response. Atchley, Hardi and Enloe’s control participants responded quickly and accurately to positive target words which is similar to the ‘switched on’ response achieved when we talk to ourselves in positive language.
2.6 Self-concept and Self-esteem

Each person’s ability to deal with stress depends upon the individual’s chemical makeup and personal experiences. These factors affect our self-concept and self-esteem. The terms self-concept and self-esteem are often confused as they are interlinked. For the purposes of this research the author chose to use the terms as defined in Myself As a Learner Scale (7) and B/G Steem (8).

A person’s self-concept is his perception of his unique personal characteristics, including appearance, ability, attitudes and beliefs, and his view of his position and value in relation to others. In Myself As a Learner Scale this is divided into four facets; general, academic, social and physical self-concept. The scale is constructed to measure all four facets of self-concept and will be used before and after the intervention, as detailed in Chapter 3, in order to measure changes which may occur. To fully address the research aim, the findings of the general and academic facets, as well as the overall scores reached, will be discussed in Chapter 4.

B/G Steem is a scale constructed to measure self-esteem and, as with Myself As a Learner Scale, will be used as a measure of the effects of the intervention. As defined in B/G Steem, self-esteem is the total evaluation a person makes of himself and the degree of respect with which he regards himself. A high self-esteem provides a child with the confidence to attempt challenging things without the fear of not succeeding. A child with a low self-esteem finds it
‘difficult to try’ to find strategies and is restricted by his ‘fear of failure’. He protects himself and continues to behave in a manner consistent with a poor self evaluation. A child in this category is reluctant to face the possibility of not succeeding and will avoid situations which might expose him.

Low self-concept and low self-esteem can also have an adverse effect on behaviour. A child who does not succeed no matter how ‘hard he tries’ will become frustrated and disillusioned. If a child does not have a good picture of himself then there are fewer constraints on his behaviour. He does not care how other people value him because he does not value himself.

The purpose of this research is to measure changes brought about by the intervention outlined in the aims and objectives in chapter 1, but in raising self-concept and self-esteem it may well follow that some inappropriate patterns of behaviour will change too. The authors of B/G Steem (8), Barbara Maines and George Robinson, state that:

‘An improved picture of self might reduce inappropriate behaviour. When an individual thinks more highly of himself then old patterns of behaviour become incompatible with the improved view of self. When a child believes he is really a ‘good kid’ then change can occur.’

2.7 Methods of Data Collection

Using the above scales to measure the impact of the positive language intervention, as outlined in chapter 3, would give a statistical measure of the
changes that may occur and would produce an easy method of comparing the
results of the different study groups. However, the scales alone would not give
any indication of the way in which the language was used and how the
participants felt about the changes they are being asked to make.

Therefore it was necessary to use a variety of data collection methods in order
to obtain a wider picture of results. The following table lists the methods chosen
and the reasons for these choices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Method</th>
<th>Reasons for Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myself As A Learner Scale – self-concept measure</td>
<td>Statistical evidence which can be displayed in graph form to illustrate changes that may occur through the intervention and to make comparisons between the study groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B/G Steem – self-esteem measure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General observation during visits to study groups</td>
<td>Listening to children talking to each other and describing their own experiences gives an insight into whether or not the changes in language have transferred over to everyday use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written and pictorial evidence in worksheet format</td>
<td>Allows the children the opportunity to express their ideas and feelings about the use of positive language in a variety of formats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires for teachers of study groups</td>
<td>Gives an opportunity to express personal opinions and observations of the process and to put forward comments and suggestions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.11 : Data Collection Methods

A more detailed account of each method can be found in the following chapter.
3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this section the methods used to gather evidence to address the project objectives 2-5, as laid out in Chapter 1, are outlined. The study was essentially comparative in nature involving three groups of children in two schools and data collection was enabled by a series of visits to the schools by the author. Appropriate data analysis was subsequently implemented.

3.2 Research Sample

The three study groups were chosen from two Edinburgh city centre schools in the same cluster group with similar catchment areas. From this point the groups are known as: Group A, Group B and Group C for ease of reference.

In Group A, a P6/7 class of 22 pupils took part in the intervention. This group was made up of twelve P6 pupils and ten P7 pupils. The school roll was 210, organised into 9 mainstream classes, two of which were composites.

Groups B and C were from the same school. The school roll was 320, organised into 13 mainstream classes and two small classes for pupils with particular speech and language challenges.

In Group B a P7 class of 25 pupils took part in the intervention.
Group C was a P7 class of 23 pupils who were not given any positive language input. Their self-concept and self-esteem were measured at the beginning and end of the project and the results formed a comparison opportunity with the groups A and B taking part in the intervention.

3.3 **Data Collection Phase**

Research data was collected via a series of six visits to both schools. The purpose of the visits and the data collected are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Data Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. To explain the principles of hemispheric specialisation and integrated information processing to the class teachers and to show how the language we use can affect how we approach tasks 2. To work with teachers to identify and find substitutes for negative language</td>
<td>1. Completed diagram of functions of left and right hemispheres 2. Completed worksheet listing substitutes words to be used in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1. To access initial self-concept and self-esteem measures 2. To access initial self-concept and self-esteem measures of comparative group not involved in intervention 3. To explain the principles to the children as set out in Visit 1 Purpose 1 and 2</td>
<td>1. Completed Myself As a Learner Scale and B/G Steem scales to determine the level of self-concept and self-esteem at the start of the intervention. 2. Completed Myself As A Learner Scale and B/G/ Steem scales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Details of Visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|3  | 1. To assess how much had been remembered from Visit 2 and to find out how it had impacted on their thinking so far.  
2. To explore ways of encouraging the use of positive language on a day to day basis | 1. Observation. Actively listening to responses in discussion. |
|4  | 1. To reinforce the use of positive language by exploring the feelings associated with 'trying hard' and 'doing your best' | 1. Pictorial evidence of how the children perceive negative and positive thinking. |
|5  | 1. To encourage the use of positive language to describe own achievements as well as in the approach to tasks. | 1. Pictorial evidence of what they consider to be their achievements. |
|6  | 1. To evaluate self-concept and self-esteem in order to identify changes that may have occurred through intervention.  
2. To reapply measures to comparative group.  
3. To collect teacher responses to the intervention. | 1. Completed self-concept and self-esteem measures as in visit 2  
2. Completed self-concept and self-esteem measures as in visit 2  
3. Completed questionnaires |

Table 3.1: Research Visits

### 3.4 Details of Visits

#### 3.4.1 Visit 1

This visit was split into two sections. The first section was a teacher induction session. The objectives of this section were:
(i) to familiarise the teachers with the background information on hemispheric specialisation (as detailed in Chapter 2),

(ii) to identify negative words which create stress in thinking and learning.

(iii) to find positive substitutes for these words.

The teachers involved were released from their classes to participate.

The induction session comprised a series of tasks.

(i) The principles of hemispheric specialisation were explained in order to understand the emotional link of the language we use.

(ii) A worksheet was completed to show the thinking and learning functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The six things a healthy brain needs to function well were listed: water, nutrition, oxygen, body movement, rest and security or lack of stress. This was done in order to identify the aspect to be investigated, as the use of negative language in thinking and learning creates stress and therefore interferes with information processing. A blank and completed example of this sheet is attached to the end of this report (see Appendices 1 and 2).

(iii) The different ways in which the two hemispheres process language were outlined. The left side processes the actual language we use while the right side processes the emotions involved in what we say and hear. e.g., ‘This work is hard.’ The left side of the brain hears and understands the whole sentence, the right side processes the emotional word ‘hard’ and stress is created. ‘This work is not easy.’ means the same thing. The left
side of the brain hears and understands the whole sentence, the right side processes the emotional word ‘easy’ and is much more ready for the challenge. Descriptive words and phrases influence emotions which, in turn, influence self-belief and self-esteem. There are certain words and phrases which create a negative state or promote ‘failure’, even though this does not appear to be the conscious meaning intended. The negative words to be focused on for this research project were listed: try, hard, difficult, bad, failed, problem, and can’t.

(iv) The next step was to demonstrate how these words can affect thinking and learning. Feeling the effects of ‘trying hard’ and ‘doing your best’ makes it easier to understand the purpose of the research.

The Arm Test. Each teacher was asked to lift her arm to shoulder height, keeping the other relaxed at her side. Gentle downward pressure was applied just above her wrist while asking her to hold her arm in position. She was then asked to ‘try hard’ to keep her arm in that position while pressure was applied for two seconds ten times consecutively. With each application of pressure, the command ‘try hard’ was emphasised. One teacher was able to hold her arm in position for six applications of pressure, the other for eight. After allowing a few minutes rest, the process was repeated but the command this time was to ‘do her best’ to keep her arm in position. Again the command, ‘do your best’ was repeated with each application of pressure. In both cases pressure could have been applied many more than ten times without their arms
dropping. Both agreed that the phrase ‘try hard’ created stress whereas ‘do your best’ was much more relaxed and easier to achieve.

Try The definition of the word ‘try’ was explored, as explained in section 2.5. Most dictionaries give the meaning as ‘make an effort’, ‘test out’ or ‘put strain on’. ‘Try’ implied that a task might not be successful and adds extra pressure, whereas a clear instruction is unambiguous and easier to follow. To illustrate this each teacher was asked to analyse two commands that people tend to use as interchangeable; ‘Take this pen from my hand’ and ‘Try to take this pen from my hand’. The second command implies that there might be a challenge involved.

When a new concept is explained to children, they are then asked to ‘try it’. Many will expect not to succeed. If the instruction is ‘Now you do it’ or ‘Have a go’ children are much more likely to start off with the belief that they can achieve the task and are therefore much more likely to succeed.

(v) The final part of the worksheets (see Appendices 1 and 2) was completed, finding positive substitutes for the negative words selected for the research project.

3.4.2 Visit 2
The objectives of this visit were;

(i) to evaluate pupils’ self-concept and self-esteem at the start of the process of intervention using defined scales.

(ii) to apply the same scales to the comparative group.

(iii) to encourage the use of positive language through the process used with teachers in visit 1

To enable self-concept to be measured, the Myself As A Learner Scale was used. This is a scale for assessing general academic self-perception. It consists of 20 statements relating to themselves as learners inviting a range of responses from (a) Yes, definitely, to (e) No, definitely not. (see Appendix 3 for a blank Myself As A Learner scale)

To enable self-esteem to be measured B/G Steem was used. This scale consists of direct questions requiring a YES or NO response. There are 20 self-esteem questions and 7 questions relating to Locus of Control. The theory of Locus of Control, as discussed by Rotter (9), suggests that we differ in the extent to which we believe our own behaviour causes the consequences that we subsequently experience. Some children are less likely to strive for achievement when they believe that outcome is greatly influenced by chance or by outside factors beyond their control. It is hoped that using positive language will encourage the belief that they can bring about improvement and this will be noticed and valued. (See Appendices 4 and 5 for a blank B/G Steem scales)
The process of teacher induction outlined in visit 1 was repeated with the children. The class worked in pairs for The Arm Test so that they could experience the feeling involved in ‘try hard’ and ‘do your best’. The children were invited to find the positive alternatives for the given negative words and phrases so that they would have ownership of the process.

### 3.4.3 Visit 3

The objectives of this visit were:

(i) to ascertain how much the children had remembered and understood.

(ii) to explore possible methods for remembering to use positive language on a day to day basis.

The class discussed which words or phrases had been easy to change and which were more challenging. The children explained the strategies they had used to encourage the use of positive language in the classroom and how successful these had been.

### 3.4.4 Visit 4

By this point, the children had experienced approaching tasks using positive language and the objective of this visit was to evaluate how they perceived the thought processes involved in carrying out a challenging task when thinking negatively, then carrying out the same task when thinking positively. This was done in three stages.
1 The children were asked to close their eyes and visualise a ‘difficult problem’ to solve, one in which they would have to ‘try hard’. They were then given an outline of a head (see Appendix 6) and asked to express in words or pictures what they thought was going on inside their heads. They could use cartoons, patterns, pictures, words or any other representation of their choice.

2 In order to clear their thoughts of negative words or phrases, an Educational; Kinesiology technique called Positive Points was introduced. Positive Points are neuro-vascular points on the forehead between the eyebrows and the hairline. When held lightly, these points are helpful in repatterning conditioned responses to emotionally charged thoughts. They help to draw the blood supply to the front of the brain and away from the primitive flight or fight responses. It was pointed out to the children that holding these points is useful whenever they feel as if they are ‘trying hard’ and yet not able to think clearly. The children were asked to hold these points and think about the same ‘challenging’ task. This time they would ‘do their best’ despite the fact it was ‘not easy’.

3 They were each given another outline of a head. Using the same instructions as in stage 1, they were asked to express what they thought was happening in their brains when they were thinking positively.

3.4.5 Visit 5
The objective of this visit was to encourage the children to use positive language to describe themselves and their abilities as well as using it to approach tasks in class.

When we talk positively about our own talents and abilities we are often perceived as boasting. Therefore people tend to talk more easily about the things they can’t do rather than celebrate the things they are good at.

The task during this visit was to look at what the children believed they were good at and to encourage them to talk positively about their skills and talents.

The children were given the outline of a tree with a trunk and six leaf areas (see Appendix 7) They were asked to write their name in the trunk in a way which said something about themselves. In the six leaf spaces they were asked to draw or write about six things they believed they were good at. They were encouraged to look at hobbies and interests and social skills as well as school based activities. It was expected that those with a high self-esteem would be able to think of five or six things easily whereas those with a lower self-esteem would find this task more challenging. While they did this, they were encouraged to talk about any challenges they had met in developing these skills and talents and how they felt about their achievements.

A discussion followed about how using positive words and phrases might make it easier to learn new things that were more challenging and less enjoyable for
them. The discussion also included looking at the way we often use negative language to describe positive situations. When people ask “How are you?” the response is usually “Not bad.” Should we be replying “Good”? When work is being discussed we often say “This story is not bad at all!” More positive feedback would surely be “This story is good.” Positive language encourages positive thinking which in turn helps to raise self-esteem.

3.4.6 Visit 6

The objectives of the final visit were:

(i) to reapply the self-concept and self-esteem measures in order to identify changes that may have occurred through the intervention.

(ii) to reapply the above measures to the comparative group.

(iii) to distribute questionnaires to the teachers involved asking for views of the intervention (see Appendix 8 for sample questionnaire)

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed by appropriate means. The findings are outlined and discussed in Chapter 4: Results and Discussion.
4 Results and Discussion

This chapter outlines the research findings of:

- each individual visit
- the project as a whole

4.1 Individual Visits

In this section, the observations and findings of each visit are discussed.

4.1.1 Visit 1

The information on hemispheric specialisation presented to both teachers involved in the intervention process was well received and understood. The physical demonstration of muscle testing to show the effects of positive and negative language helped to convince both teachers that this was a worthwhile topic to pursue. Both were surprised by the stressful response they felt when using the phrase ‘try hard’ in the Arm Test.

After exploring the definition of the word ‘try’ and having felt the physical effect of ‘trying hard’, both teachers agreed that ‘try’ is a very common word used without conscious thought to its meaning. During discussion, it was agreed that it did indeed imply that a task might not be successfully accomplished and that it added extra pressure to a situation.
It was agreed that between Visit 1 and Visit 2 the teachers involved would analyse their own use of the word. They would listen to how often this was used and what was really meant by the word ‘try’.

The positive substitutes for negative words and phrases chosen by each teacher were essentially the same in each school. (see Appendices 1 and 2 for the full list of substitutes selected)

Some examples of the substitutes are:

- try changed to have a go
- try hard changed to do your best
- difficult changed to not easy
- problem changed to challenge

4.1.2 Visit 2

Verbal feedback from both teachers concerning the use of the word ‘try’ reinforced what had been discussed in Visit 1. They were keen to make the substitutes in language and to find out the effect that this would have on learning and teaching as well as self-concept and self-esteem.

The self-concept and self-esteem measures were administered before any reason for the visit was given to the children. This reduced the chance of results being influenced by what they thought was required in this particular situation.
4.1.2.1 ‘Myself As A Learner Scale – Self-Concept

The pattern of scores was similar in all three groups (see Figure 4.1). The children with the lowest scores were, almost without exception, those identified by their teachers as low achievers and children who talked negatively about themselves and their learning.

Group A showed the same pattern of scores as the other two groups, but at a slightly higher level. (see data in Table 4.I) This may have been related in some way to a formative assessment initiative which had recently been implemented in the classroom, whereas Group B and C were in a school where this was still at the planning stage. There did not seem to be any other obvious factor which would be responsible for this slight difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.I : Average Scores for Self-Concept
4.1.2.2 B/G Steem – Self-Esteem

Results are divided into five categories, very low, low, normal, high and very high. Taking 20 specific self-esteem items from the scale, the categories are represented by the following scores shown on Table 4.II below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;12</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 – 14</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 17</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 20</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.II: Self-Esteem Categories
The scores for each group are shown in Table 4.III below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Very High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group C</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.III : Group Self-Esteem Scores

Those with a very low or low self-esteem score also produced a low score in the self-concept scale above. Once again, Group A exhibited higher scores than the other groups.

4.1.3 Visit 3

Discussion with classes indicated that the children had remembered what they had learned during Visit 2 and had implemented the positive substitutes enthusiastically.

Group A had constructed cards showing the positive substitutes to be displayed on their desks as reminders. The class as a whole felt that using these substitutes helped them to tackle learning situations positively.

Group B had produced posters showing the positive substitutes. These were displayed around the classroom as reminders. They had also devised a chart
where they could display the names of children who had managed to catch their
teacher using negative words and phrases. This introduced an element of fun and
helped to keep the process high profile.

4.1.4 Visit 4

By Visit 4 the children had had enough experience of using the positive
language to be able to describe any differences they felt between ‘trying hard’
and ‘doing their best’. Most children could recall situations where using positive
language had made them feel calmer and more able to process information. This
was most evident to them in maths activities.

The children expressed their positive and negative thought processes in a variety
of ways. Each child completed two heads. One showed how negative words
affected their thinking; the other showed how positive words affected their
thinking.

Three examples are discussed below. Head A illustrates how each child views
information processing when tackling a task using negative language. Head B
illustrates information processing when tackling a task using positive language.

Example 1

Head A (see Appendix 9) shows a set of cogs which are unable to turn because
they are jammed by a spanner. When approaching a task using negative
thoughts and language, this child described the thinking process as ‘having a spanner in the works’.

Head B (see Appendix 10) contains a light bulb and the phrase ‘I believe I can do it’. He described this as being able to think clearly.

**Example 2**

Head A (see Appendix 11) shows challenging maths tasks and facial expressions of frustration and confusion. This child described feelings of panic when thinking negatively and not being able to locate the information she needed.

Head B (see Appendix 12) shows sunshine and smiles. As in example 1, positive words encouraged self belief and an ability to think more clearly. She also included the phrase ‘I believe I can do it’.

**Example 3**

Head A (see Appendix 13) shows a combination of words and pictures depicting confusion and lack of understanding.

Head B (see Appendix 14) contains the statement ‘Relax, the answer will come.’

These examples were typical of the worksheets completed by all of the children. They remained enthusiastic about continuing with the initiative.
4.1.5 Visit 5

Due to maternity leave Group A had a change of teacher which created a different ethos within the classroom. Although anticipated, this change had happened earlier than expected and at short notice. The new teacher had not had the positive language input explained to her and therefore continuity had been lost.

Group B remained enthusiastic and committed to the intervention.

During this visit discussion took place as to how negative language can influence all aspects of life. The children could recall numerous incidents where the phrase ‘not bad’ could easily have been changed to ‘good’ and agreed that this would have created a more positive atmosphere. The children were able to identify situations in and out of class where they had talked negatively about their own abilities and achievements. Many said that if you talk positively about things you can do others think you are boasting.

The task during this visit was to identify six things that they felt they were good at or proud of. These they drew in the six spaces provided on their worksheet. They were then asked to talk positively about these achievements.

This proved to be the most challenging task they had been asked to do during the process of the research. Only one child managed to complete all six without
input from an adult. (see Appendix 15) This child had scored highly in both the self-concept and self-esteem measures.

The majority of the children were able to identify four talents or abilities with some only managing one or two. The number they produced related directly to their scores in Visit 2, those with a low score completing the least number of spaces. They were able to talk positively about what they drawn. This was probably because of the weeks spent using positive language. It is not possible to say if this would have been the case before the intervention. The children all agreed that it felt good to talk positively about their achievements.

4.1.6 Visit 6

The self-concept and self-esteem measures were reapplied to all three groups in order to identify changes that may have occurred through the intervention. The results before and after intervention are compared and discussed in Sections 4.2.1 Self-Concept and 4.2.2 Self-Esteem.

Questionnaires were given to the teachers of Groups A and B. The questions were:

1. Did the information given to you at the beginning of the project clearly explain the purpose of the study?
2. How do you feel the children responded to the challenge?
3. Do you think it has made a difference to the way in which any of the children approach tasks?

4. Will you continue to use any aspect of the positive language programme?

5. Any other comments.

The responses in both questionnaires reflected what had been observed in each of the classrooms.

**Group A**

This questionnaire was completed by the teacher who had not been with the class from the start of the project (see Appendix 16). The responses reflect the lack of continuity which had occurred because of this change. Her responses to each question were:

1. *Yes – even tho’ I came in ½ way through.*

2. *Well during the sessions with you maybe some of them took on the ideas.*

3. *Honestly not sure ... sorry!*

4. *I’ll do my best!*

5. *Always interesting to hear new ideas.*

These responses reflected what had been observed during visits. Initially the teacher and children had been committed to implementing the positive language programme and gave positive feedback about the experience. However, this was not a priority for the replacement teacher and therefore continuity was lost.
Through discussion with the children in the final visit, it was evident that many had continued to use the positive substitutes and believed it made a difference to how they approached learning tasks.

**Group B**

This group had really taken the initiative on board and the teacher’s responses in the questionnaire reflected this (see Appendix 17). They were:

1. *Yes, the aims were clearly set out for both myself and the children.*
2. *They were fabulous – much better than me! Positive language became a major focus in our classroom.*
3. *I have definitely noticed a difference in quite a few of the children – confidence levels have increased and they are more relaxed about tackling tasks or new challenges.*
4. *Most definitely. The changes in words/phrases i.e. try – have a go, difficult – not easy have proved a big success. I much prefer using positive language and it comes quite easily now.*
5. *This has been a very good, positive experience and the children really seemed to enjoy it. It definitely made our classroom a more positive place to be!*

Again, this reflected what had been observed during visits. There had been commitment and continuity throughout the project with teacher and children maintaining enthusiasm for the initiative. This may well be the reason why
Group B showed the greatest difference in self-concept and self-esteem scores as shown in the next section.

4.2 Overall Project

In this section, the self-concept and self-esteem measures are used to indicate the overall changes that have occurred during the research period.

4.2.1 Self-Concept

Self-concept scores before and after intervention are compared in Figures 4.2 to 4.4 and Table 4.1V.

![Myself As A Learner Scale](image)

Figure 4.2: Myself As A Learner Scale – Group A
Figure 4.3: Myself As A Learner Scale – Group B

Figure 4.4: Myself As A Learner Scale – Group C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Average Score Before Intervention</th>
<th>Average Score After Intervention</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1V: Average Myself As A Learner Score
The figures would indicate that intervention with Group B has had the largest effect on Self Concept.

For Groups A and B the most significant differences appears to occur at the lower end of the scores. The majority of these children were identified by their teachers as low achievers and those who originally talked negatively about themselves and their abilities.

These children were much more positive in their approach to tasks at the end of the project. It would be interesting to discover if a longer period of positive language implementation had an effect on the achievement and attainment of these children.

Group C show a similar pattern before and after intervention which would indicate that it is the positive language initiative that has caused the improvements in the self-concept scores of Groups A and B.

4.2.2 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem scores before and after the intervention are compared in Figures 4.5 to 4.7 and Table 4.V
Figure 4.5: B/G Steem Score – Group A

Figure 4.6: B/G Steem Score – Group B

Figure 4.7: B/G Steem Score – Group C
By allocating a weighting to each category as indicated in Table 4.VI and taking account of the distributions of B/G Steem Scores shown in Table 4.V, a before and after intervention overall weighted B/G Steem Score can be evaluated for each group (see Table 4.VII). The difference in overall scores gives a measure of the impact of intervention on each group for comparative purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.VI : Category Weightings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Before Intervention</th>
<th>After Intervention</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>+7</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.VII : Overall Weighted B/G Steem Scores

Group A shows an improvement of +8 after intervention. Their score was the highest at the outset but the difference was lower than that of Group B possibly due to the lack of continuity through the change of teacher.

With an improvement of +16, Group B shows the most significant increase in self-esteem scores. This reflects the enthusiasm, commitment and continuity discussed throughout Section 4.1.

Group C were not involved in the intervention and their scores remained relatively consistent over the research period.
5 Conclusion

It would appear from the results presented in Chapter 4 that the use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation does influence the climate of the working environment, raising self-concept and self-esteem and helping to promote an ethos of achievement.

These results have been realised through specific objectives. The conclusions of their effectiveness are detailed below.

1 to identify and critically evaluate previously published work into the use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation.

Although there was education based literature available relating to positive thinking strategies, there was very little to be found on the use of positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation. Therefore the literature review was undertaken from the Educational Kinesiology and medical perspective. The research discussed in Section 2 indicates that we need both hemispheres of the brain to process language effectively and that our choice of words affects our emotional response to it.

The observations made throughout this project would suggest that using positive language does produce a positive emotional response making information processing less stressful and helping to create an ethos of achievement.
2 *to develop a strategy for introducing this positive language in the classroom setting.*

A range of strategies was used throughout the intervention to accommodate all learning styles. The induction session with teachers and children consisted of the giving of information, practical experiences and worksheet activities. The children were also invited to create their own methods for remembering the positive language substitutes thus giving them ownership of the initiative.

The activities in the follow up visits invited verbal, written and pictorial feedback which allowed a range of opportunities to accommodate preferred styles.

3 *to develop a method to evaluate the impact of this positive language from the teacher’s and child’s perspective.*

A variety of methods of evaluating the impact of the positive language intervention were chosen. Published self-concept and self-esteem measures were used. Written and pictorial evidence, general observation and teacher questionnaires were used to further illustrate the findings of the published measures.
to implement and critically evaluate the strategies developed in 2 and 3, with follow up visits to observe and encourage.

The induction sessions with teachers and children were well received and all involved were enthusiastic about taking part in the process. The practical activities showing the stresses created by ‘trying hard’ were invaluable as participants were able to feel the responses to the language. The worksheet activity showed that the information given about positive language in relation to hemispheric specialisation had been understood.

The children were always keen to discuss their experiences of using the chosen positive substitutes and many described feeling calmer and more able to think clearly when ‘doing their best’ rather than ‘trying their hardest’.

The time allocated for visits to classes proved to be inadequate on occasions as there was not always time for children to complete the pictorial activities. The activity in visit 4, where they were invited to draw or write about how their brains processed information, was one such situation where extra time would have been beneficial. The quieter and less confident children were able to express themselves in this situation and talking one to one with them as they worked indicated that using positive language was helping to develop their self-concept and self-esteem.

Creating their own methods of remembering to use the positive substitutes did give them a sense of ownership. Group B’s method of catching the
teacher out when she used negative language added an element of fun as well as keeping the initiative high profile.

As mentioned before, the change of teacher for Group A caused a lack of continuity and it highlighted the need for consistency when introducing any new initiative. They had produced higher self-concept and self-esteem scores in the first instance, but Group B showed the greater improvement from beginning to end of the research period.

5 to evaluate the impact of intervention using the strategies developed in 2

The scores of the self-concept and self-esteem measures clearly indicate that the intervention has had a positive impact on the ethos of the learning environment. The positive language initiative was well received by teachers and children, particularly those in Group B where it had become an integral part of classroom life. The teacher of Group B felt that the changes which had taken place because of this work were significant enough for her to wish to continue using the substitutes.

We learn through life to use negative language and to learn to use positive substitutes automatically takes time. The timescale of the project was relatively short and it would have been interesting to see the impact over a longer period of time.
There are many initiatives that can be implemented in the learning environment to enhance self-concept and self-esteem and the use of the positive substitutes in this project has proved to be one. When used consistently, those participating felt that it helped to create a positive ethos in the classroom.

It is only through actively listening to our own language and that of others, then using positive substitutes ourselves that we can tell this works. The ideas explored in this project could prove to be a powerful addition to a school’s positive behaviour or learning and teaching policy.

6 Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this research, the author would make the following recommendations:

1. The period of intervention should be extended to allow the use of positive language to become an automatic process and to investigate the long term affects on self-concept, self-esteem and achievement.

2. The use of positive language should become a part of either the learning and teaching policy or positive behaviour policy of a school. A whole school approach to positive language would encourage raised self-concept and self-esteem and ensure continuity and consistency.
7 References


(7) Burden R., “Myself As A Learner Scale” The NFER-NELSON Publishing Company Ltd. 2000


(9) Rotter, “The Role of Psychological Situations in Determining the Direction of Human Behaviour”, University of Nebraska Press. 1954
Appendices

1. Blank positive language worksheet
2. Completed positive language worksheet
3. Blank Myself As A Learner Scale
4. Blank B/G/ Steem Scale for boys
5. Blank B/G/ Steem Scale for girls
6. Blank outline of head
7. Blank outline of tree
8. Sample questionnaire
9. Example 1 of negative language head
10. Example 1 of positive language head
11. Example 2 of negative language head
12. Example 2 of positive language head
13. Example 3 of negative language head
14. Example 3 of positive language head
15. Completed tree worksheet
16. Completed questionnaire from teacher of Group A
17. Completed questionnaire from teacher of Group B
Positive Language

The brain needs oxygen.

1. difficult
   hard
   not bad
   problem
   failed
   effort
   stupid

2. good
   try
   now you try
   try harder
   If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again

3. don't hang on that chair
   don't fiddle with that pencil
   don't answer me back
   don't push
2. Positive language

The brain needs:
- oxygen
- nutrition
- water
- rest
- movement
- security

Left:
- piece by piece
- following directions
- language
- numbers
- instructions
- symbols
- 'zero in'

Right:
- big picture
- creative
- emotional
- visualisation
- feelings
- spatial awareness
- 'scans'

2. difficult = not easy
   hard = not easy
   not bad = good
   problem = challenge
   failed = didn't succeed
   effort = energy - challenge
   stupid = silly

3. good try = good go - you gave it your best
   now you try = have a go
   try harder = do your best
   if at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again.
   if at first you don't succeed, have another go

4. don't swing on that chair = keep the chair legs on the floor
   don't fiddle with that pencil = put the pencil down
   don't answer me back = don't push
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I'm good at doing tests.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I like having problems to solve.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>When I'm given new work to do, I usually feel confident I can do it.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Thinking carefully about your work helps you to do it better.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I'm good at discussing things.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I need lots of help with my work.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I like having difficult work to do.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I get anxious when I have to do new work.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I think that problem-solving is fun.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>When I get stuck with my work, I can usually work out what to do next.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Learning is easy.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I'm not very good at solving problems.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I know the meaning of lots of words.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I usually think carefully about what I've got to do.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I know how to solve the problems that I meet.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>And lots of schoolwork is difficult.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I'm clever.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I know how to be a good learner.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I like using my brain.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Learning is difficult.</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL SCORE
B/G-Steen Primary Scale for Boys

Please answer all the questions. Put a ring around YES or NO.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is your school work good? yes no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Do you like being a boy? yes no</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are you strong and healthy? yes no</td>
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<td>4. Does someone else always choose what you wear? yes no</td>
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2. How do you feel the children responded to the challenge?

3. Do you think it has made any difference to the way in which any of the children approach tasks?

4. Will you continue to use any aspects of the positive language programme?

5. Any other comments.

Thank you so much for helping me out with this project!
Believe I can do it. Challenge doing your best not easy.

Easily

I'm able

Relax the answer will come
1. Did the information given to you at the beginning of the project clearly explain the purpose of the study?
   Yes - even tho' I came in the way through.

2. How do you feel the children responded to the challenge?
   Well during the sessions with you - maybe some of your tools and ideas.

3. Do you think it has made any difference to the way in which any of the children approach tasks?
   Honestly not sure ... sorry.

4. Will you continue to use any aspects of the positive language programme?
   I'll do my best!

5. Any other comments.
   Always interesting to hear new ideas.

Thank you so much for helping me out with this project!
1. Did the information given to you at the beginning of the project clearly explain the purpose of the study? Yes, the aims were clearly set out for both myself and the children.

2. How do you feel the children responded to the challenge? They were fabulous - much better than me! Positive language became a major focus in our classroom.

3. Do you think it has made any difference to the way in which any of the children approach tasks? I have definitely noticed a difference in quite a few of the children - confidence levels have increased and they are more relaxed about tackling tasks or new challenges.

4. Will you continue to use any aspects of the positive language programme? Most definitely. The changes in words/expressions i.e. try - have a go, difficult - not easy have proved a big success. I much prefer using positive language and it comes quite easily now.

5. Any other comments. This has been a very good, positive experience and the children really seemed to enjoy it. It definitely made our classroom a more positive place to be!

Thank you so much for helping me out with this project!

Thank you!