

TRAINING SESSIONS

Block 9: Enhancing classroom practice – grouping and tailoring

Overview

- The ECF statements covered by the training sessions in this Block are shown in the table.
- These sessions are complemented by and draw on the self-directed study materials and mentor sessions.

In these training sessions, ECTs will:

Learn that
4.9 Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice
4.10 How pupils are grouped is also important; care should be taken to monitor the impact of groupings on pupil attainment, behaviour and motivation
5.5 Flexibly grouping pupils within a class to provide more tailored support can be effective, but care should be taken to monitor its impact on engagement and motivation, particularly for low attaining pupils

Learn how to
Stimulate pupil thinking and check for understanding, by:
4o Considering the factors that will support effective collaborative or paired work (e.g. familiarity with routines, whether pupils have the necessary prior knowledge and how pupils are grouped)
4p Providing scaffolds for pupil talk to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue
Group pupils effectively, by:
5m Applying high expectations to all groups, and ensuring all pupils have access to a rich curriculum
5n Changing groups regularly, avoiding the perception that groups are fixed
5o Ensuring that any groups based on attainment are subject specific

Session summary

The training sessions for this Block are:

Session	Content	Duration	ECF statements covered
9.1	Grouping pupils effectively	75 mins	4.9, 4.10, 5.5, 5m, 5n, 5o
9.2	Model collaborative work effectively	75 mins	4.9, 4o, 4p

Training Session 9.1: Grouping pupils effectively

The intended outcomes of this session are for Early Career Teachers to:

Learn that:

- 4.9 Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice
- 4.10 How pupils are grouped is also important; care should be taken to monitor the impact of groupings on pupil attainment, behaviour and motivation
- 5.5 Flexibly grouping pupils within a class to provide more tailored support can be effective, but care should be taken to monitor its impact on engagement and motivation, particularly for low attaining pupils

Learn how to:

Group pupils effectively, by:

- 5m Applying high expectations to all groups, and ensuring all pupils have access to a rich curriculum
- 5n Changing groups regularly, avoiding the perception that groups are fixed
- 5o Ensuring that any groups based on attainment are subject specific

Duration	75 minutes
Suggested pre-session activity for ECTs	None
To prepare for this session, trainers should:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the self-directed study materials for Block 9.

Activities	ECF statements	Suggested materials
<p>Introduction to the session (5 minutes)</p> <p>Explain to ECTs that this training session builds on knowledge developed through the self-directed study materials and mentor sessions. It also builds on the learning they have completed in Year 1, in particular in Block 3.</p> <p>It focuses on the following ECF statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.9 Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice ● 4.10 How pupils are grouped is also important; care should be taken to monitor the impact of groupings on pupil attainment, behaviour and motivation ● 5.5 Flexibly grouping pupils within a class to provide more tailored support can be effective, but care should be taken to monitor its impact on engagement and motivation, particularly for low attaining pupils. <p>Group pupils effectively, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5m Applying high expectations to all groups, and ensuring all pupils have access to a rich curriculum ● 5n Changing groups regularly, avoiding the perception that groups are fixed ● 5o Ensuring that any groups based on attainment are subject specific 		
<p>Reflecting on experiences of group work (15 minutes)</p> <p>Much has changed over the years about how we think pupils learn best. While there is of course absolutely room for pupils to work on their own and independently (as they should), there is a body of evidence that supports the idea that collaborative working not only supports pupils to develop social skills, but also their outcomes.</p> <p>Think-pair-share: What has been your experience of group work so far?</p> <p>Give ECTs the opportunity to discuss and share their experiences. Encourage them to share tips with each other for things that have worked well.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ECTs might have wanted to do a lot of group work but struggled to do so because of behaviour ● Some ECTs may have done group work successfully <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did they introduce the group work activity? 	4.9	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How many times have they tried it? ○ How did they decide who was in each group? ○ What was the group task? <p>The key point to emphasise here is that while there is evidence to support collaborative work being effective, it doesn't happen by accident. Teachers must design effective group work as well as teach their pupils how to do it.</p>		
<p>Developing success criteria for effective group work (25 minutes)</p> <p>One way to support pupils to perform group work effectively is to ensure that there is success criteria that is shared explicitly with pupils. This sets expectations about how pupils should behave and how they can work effectively together.</p> <p>Ask ECTs to work together in groups to define what a set of success criteria could be for effective group work. It might be useful to group ECTs into subjects or phases so that they can come up with an activity that works for them. Otherwise, there are some example group activities below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Measuring and recording heights and weights of objects in maths ● Develop a piece of fictional writing in English/literacy ● Carry out an experiment in science ● Practicing skills as a group in PE ● Composing a piece of music ● Doing a group artwork ● Exploring different causes of World War I in history ● Investigate different sources of renewable energy in geography ● Writing a presentation on causes of the Cold War in A-level politics ● Small group play activities in Early Years. <p>Some prompts to support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the attainment goals or task-specific success criteria? ● How do you want pupils to interact with each other? How will pupils achieve this? (e.g. Listen to each other by taking turns to talk) ● How will you ensure that pupils take individual responsibility for the work they need to carry out in the group? 	<p>4.9, 4.10 4o, 5m</p>	

<p>Extension question 1: How could you involve your pupils in developing the success criteria when you are back at school?</p> <p>Extension question 2: How will you monitor what the group is doing to ensure that the criteria is being met?</p> <p>Ask ECTs to share with the group what they have come up with.</p>				
<p>Grouping pupils flexibly (25 minutes)</p> <p>Share the following with ECTs:</p> <div data-bbox="112 654 1568 1085" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>Flexibly grouping pupils within a class is valuable because it allows you to tailor your support. However, it is crucial to monitor how it is going. If you keep groups fixed for long periods, especially if they are related to prior attainment, this can demotivate pupils who think they are in a lower-attaining group.</p> <p>Even if you teach in ‘sets’ in your school, it is important to remember that there will still be big differences between pupils.</p> <p>Any groupings that you create that are based on attainment need to be subject specific. If you are a primary school teacher, this means avoiding having a ‘top table’ that stays the same regardless of subject. In secondary schools, this is more challenging since your school may take a certain approach to setting pupils. Even if this is the case, it is important to mix groupings up within your class to avoid the idea that attainment is static.</p> </div> <p>ECTs to study the following two sets of information in pairs/groups:</p> <div data-bbox="112 1189 1568 1404" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>1. Homogenous or within-class attainment groupings This means pupils of very similar prior attainment level working together for specific activities or topics such as literacy. This might involve pupils of similar levels of current attainment being grouped together on specific</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>2. Heterogeneous or mixed-attainment groupings This means that pupils of diverse abilities are grouped together. This might allow for within-group scaffolding to take place, i.e. higher-attainment pupils are able to provide support to lower-attainment pupils. There are</p> </td> </tr> </table> </div>	<p>1. Homogenous or within-class attainment groupings This means pupils of very similar prior attainment level working together for specific activities or topics such as literacy. This might involve pupils of similar levels of current attainment being grouped together on specific</p>	<p>2. Heterogeneous or mixed-attainment groupings This means that pupils of diverse abilities are grouped together. This might allow for within-group scaffolding to take place, i.e. higher-attainment pupils are able to provide support to lower-attainment pupils. There are</p>	5.5, 5n, 5o	
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<p>tables for example, but all pupils being taught by their usual teacher and support staff and following the same curriculum (EEF 2018).</p> <p>The aim of this type of grouping is to match tasks, activities and support to pupils' current capabilities, so that all pupils have an appropriate level of challenge. This might enable you to spend more time with lower-attainment pupils. The evidence on within-class attainment grouping indicates that it is likely to be beneficial for all learners, providing an average benefit of three months' additional progress. However, there appears to be less benefit for lower-attaining pupils than for others. In the UK, within-class attainment grouping tends to be more common in primary than in secondary schools (EEF, 2018).</p>	<p>some known positive effects for higher-attainment pupils of taking on this role.</p>		
<p>Give the ECTs the opportunity to discuss their experiences with each other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does their school use setting? ● Do they tend to keep groups the same within their lessons or do they mix groups up regularly? ● Do they tend to use within-class attainment groups or mixed-attainment groups? Why? ● What are the main challenges of teaching mixed-attainment groups? ● What are the main benefits of teaching mixed-attainment groups? 			

Flexible grouping case study:

“In a typical lesson, I use a combination of individual, paired and group work. Pupils are in a seating plan because that’s my school’s policy and I do find it helps with my classroom routines. However, I review my seating plan each half term and make adjustments where necessary.

I use Talk Partners in my classroom – this is where before I ask pupils to answer a question, I give them an opportunity to discuss with their Talk Partner first. Usually, this is the person who is sitting next to them, but as I said, I review the pairings on a half-termly basis and do switch things up so that pupils get the opportunity to do Talk Partners with other pupils.

For paired written work, this isn’t automatically done with the person the pupil is sat next to. I think first of all carefully about what it is that I want pupils to do and then pair them up. For example, I recently asked pupils to complete a practice SATs paper and I put pupils into pairs where one of the pair was a higher-attaining pupil and one a lower. The higher-attaining pupil acted as a ‘coach’ to the lower-attaining pupil and they completed the task together.

I often use group work in my lessons but I had to work hard to teach my class how to do it effectively and they still sometimes get it wrong! Again, I think carefully about what the task is and devise my groups from there. I tend to put pupils into groups rather than allow them to self-select for this reason. Recently, I taught a lesson on different kinds of environments and put pupils into a home and an away team. The home team was made up of four pupils of mixed attainment – each pupil was numbered 1–4 and they had to go and work with an away team for a portion of the lesson on a specific environment, e.g. the ocean. The away teams were based on pupil prior attainment. This way, higher-attaining pupils got an opportunity to work together – I scaffolded their resources less and gave them some more challenging questions to consider. I was able to work with a group of lower-attaining pupils, which meant I hadn’t needed to spend ages scaffolding their resources in advance – I was the scaffold! After a period of time, the pupils had to return back to their home group and teach each other about what they’d found out – I scaffolded this using worksheets and question stems. The pupils had to create a presentation about the different environments they had learned about, which they shared with the class. At the end, I did a mini-quiz with pupils individually – this helped each pupil to see that they needed to take an active role in the work.”

Year 6 Teacher

<p>ECTs should read the write up from the Year 6 teacher (case study above) about the way in which they flexibly group the pupils on their own.</p> <p>They should then spend time in pairs or in small groups discussing the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what different ways are pupils grouped? • What different strategies has the teacher used? • What are the implications for your own practice? • Do you have any effective strategies that you can share with each other? 		
<p>Planning for action (5 mins)</p> <p>Ask the ECTs: Following this session, what will you do differently in your practice? What will you put into action in your lessons?</p> <p>This could be facilitated in a number of ways depending on the method of delivery.</p>		

Training Session 9.2: Model collaborative work effectively

The intended outcomes of this session are for Early Career Teachers to:

Learn that:

- 4.9 Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice

Learn how to:

Stimulate pupil thinking and check for understanding, by:

- 4o Considering the factors that will support effective collaborative or paired work (e.g. familiarity with routines, whether pupils have the necessary prior knowledge and how pupils are grouped)
- 4p Providing scaffolds for pupil talk to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue

Duration	75 minutes
Suggested pre-session activity for ECTs	None
To prepare for this session, trainers should:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read the self-directed study materials for Block 9.

Activities	ECF statements	Suggested materials
<p>Introduction to the session (5 minutes)</p> <p>Explain to ECTs that this training session builds on knowledge developed through the self-directed study materials and mentor sessions. It also builds on the learning they have completed in Year 1, in particular in Block 3.</p> <p>It focuses on the following ECF statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4.9 Paired and group activities can increase pupil success, but to work together effectively pupils need guidance, support and practice. <p>Stimulate pupil thinking and check for understanding, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4o Considering the factors that will support effective collaborative or paired work (e.g. familiarity with routines, whether pupils have the necessary prior knowledge and how pupils are grouped) ● 4p Providing scaffolds for pupil talk to increase the focus and rigour of dialogue. 		
<p>Factors that will support effective collaborative work (30 minutes)</p> <p>This builds on the previous training session in terms of the activity ECTs completed on success criteria. This should be acknowledged. This is an opportunity to recap and deepen understanding particularly in terms of how to explicitly teach routines for group work.</p> <p>ECTs to work in groups to script a routine for effective collaborative work. ECTs should use the knowledge they have developed around effective routines from Blocks 1 and 7 to support them.</p> <p>ECTs to share their script with another group. The group should provide critique and feedback on the routine.</p> <p>Success criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the routine <u>clear</u>? ● If I was a pupil, <u>would I understand what is expected of me</u>? ● If I was a pupil, do I understand how I will be judged for my performance in the group? 	<p>4.9 4o, 4p</p>	

<p>Exemplar routine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outlines the task, especially what pupils need to produce by the end ● Outlines success criteria ● Identifies group roles ● Identifies how long pupils have to complete the task. 		
<p>Scaffolding pupil talk (35 minutes)</p> <p>Share the following with ECTs:</p> <div data-bbox="112 662 1568 837" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Psychological research, increasingly supported by neuroscience, demonstrates the intimate and necessary relationship between language and thought, and the power of spoken language to enable, support and enhance children’s cognitive development...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Alexander, 2018</p> </div> <p>Questions for discussion – this could be in pairs or groups. It would be helpful to scaffold the talking task to model effective practice. For example, use think-pair-share and sentence stems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What do you understand by this statement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ That pupils learn to write well through high-quality classroom dialogue ● What role does talk play within your classroom? ● What is the importance of scaffolding? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Novice versus expert – if we want pupils to speak very well with sophisticated language, we need to support them to get there. ● What strategies have you used to scaffold pupil talk? <p>Share the following extract of a lesson observation write up carried out on a Year 5 literacy lesson:</p> <div data-bbox="112 1316 1568 1412" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>In the lesson, the pupils have been reading <i>Goodnight Mr Tom</i> and learning about life as an evacuee during World War II. Pupils have just finished the part where William returns back to Mr Tom having been to visit his mother in London.</p> </div>	<p>4.9 4o, 4p</p>	

Pupils are asked to discuss in pairs their thoughts and feelings. The teacher provides the following things to all pupils to scaffold discussions:

1. Sentence stems e.g. This part of the book made me feel...because...
2. A list of banned words, e.g. sad

Before setting the pupils off to begin discussions on their own, the teacher asked pupils to contribute some more challenging vocabulary that could be used in the discussions. Pupils contributed words like:

- Lonely
- Desolate
- Debris
- Tranquil.

When pupils contributed less sophisticated language, the teacher encouraged them to think of a different word and invited the other members of the class to help.

There is a Stage 2 EAL pupil in the lesson. This pupil is supported through the use of a more detailed speaking frame with some pictures attached to it.

ECTs should read the extract on their own.

They should then discuss the questions with a partner or group:

Questions for discussion:

1. How do the scaffolds provided increase the focus and rigour of dialogue?
2. Are there any other kinds of scaffolds that could work well here?
3. What are the implications for your own practice?

The following ideas could be used to support with the answers to Question 2 – these could be shared with ECTs on tables:

1. Rally robin or ping pong: in pairs pupils discuss a topic, talking one at a time – in turns.
2. Pairs squared: pair the learners, then pair the pairs.

3. Guided discussion: pupils are provided with a set of discussion cards; the first pupil takes a card, reads the question aloud and answers it; then the next pupil does the same, and so on.
4. Jigsaw: a word, answer, paragraph etc is split up into parts by the teacher; the pupils work together to piece the jigsaw together.
5. Paired heads Together: pupils work individually, then they huddle together to improve each other's answers.
6. Response chips: pupils are given a set of response chips, which say things like paraphrase, encourage, add an idea, praise an idea etc; pupils use the chips during discussion.
7. Round robin: pupils take it in turns to speak.

(Adapted from: Cooperative Learning: Quick Reference Guide of Kagan Structures)

ECTs to then work in groups to plan an activity for a lesson which uses scaffolded pupil talk. It could be helpful to group ECTs into subject or phase groups.

- What is the activity?
- What scaffolds are they going to use?
- What do the scaffolds look like?
- Why are they going to use them?

Lesson ideas:

- Exploring a piece of fictional writing in English
- Effects of the Boxing Day Tsunami in geography
- Causes of the Wall St Crash in history
- Solving equations within maths
- Photosynthesis in biology
- Food chains in primary science

Planning for action (5 mins)

Ask the ECTs: **Following this session, what will you do differently in your practice? What will you put into action in your lessons?**

This could be facilitated in a number of ways depending on the method of delivery.