

What Happens When I Introduce “Think, Pair, Share” to the Classroom?

Scott Crawford

Group 3 I

Rationale

The group wanted to research how effective using co-operative learning techniques is in boosting pupil participation in class. In particular we wondered if using “Think, Pair, Share” encouraged pupils to volunteer answers and feel more engaged with the lesson as they would have the opportunity to validate their responses with a partner. This might allow them to feel more confident to share them with the class and avoid potentially giving an embarrassing answer. Florian and Kershner (2009) write about the influence of inclusive pedagogy in the classroom and how to incorporate collaborative practice to encourage the participation of all learners. This is reinforced by the principles set out for Curriculum for Excellence by the Scottish Government (2004). In the Curriculum for excellence pupils are encouraged to be “confident individuals” which led the group to identify “Think, Pair, Share” activities as a potential area where pupils could boost their confidence in the classroom.

Aims

The aims of this practitioner enquiry were to introduce and monitor the use of the technique “Think, Pair, Share” in the classroom to investigate what impact it had upon pupils’ participation in the class. By observing the impact of this technique, I hoped to get an overview of how less confident pupils could be encouraged to engage with and understand lessons.

Methodology

To carry out this enquiry, I worked with an S1 class, which was mixed ability and also contains pupils that have English as an Additional Language. This class was chosen as it is a class that have settled particularly well and their learning would not be greatly disrupted by experimenting and changing the usual routine of their music lessons. I incorporated “Think, Pair, Share” into a series of revision starters, integrating it with a topic on Scottish music. The class have previously used techniques similar to “Think, Pair, Share” during music lessons, however I used a very structured approach when carrying out research for this enquiry as opposed to the more relaxed style of “discuss with your partner” type questions that the pupils are used to. This allowed me to get a more accurate picture of their response to the “Think, Pair, Share” approach and not just general co-operative approach to learning.

This particular focus group was an interesting group to choose as it would allow my group to see if there was any difference in impact between using “Think, Pair, Share” in a Primary School to High School at this early stage. The questions that were asked were generally based on recalling and collecting information regarding previously learned concepts e.g. “Name one style of Scottish vocal music, and one instruments commonly found in Scottish music”. After carrying out the activity, responses were collated into a mind map on the board.

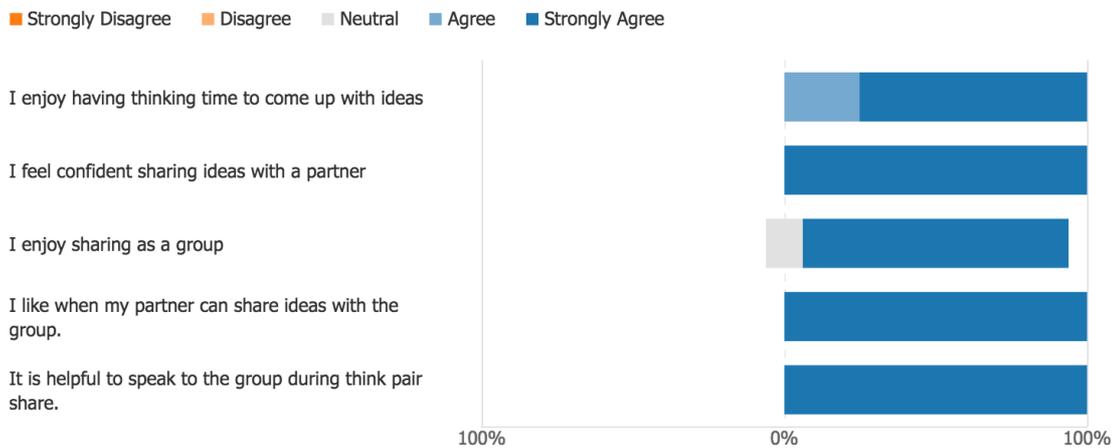
Findings

I gathered evidence in a number of different methods when carrying out this enquiry which returned mixed results. I used post-it notes for pupils to record their answers on, for a quick and easy way to review answers from the class. Pupils were given a minute to write down their own answers, a minute to compare and share their answers with the class and then the

whole classes answers were collated on the board. From studying the post it notes collected from the pupils it was clear that more pupils were engaging with the task than when this activity was trialled with another first year class. To compare, the majority of pupils were able to provide a post-it with at least two answers to each question, whereas when using a similar activity without the structured “Think, Pair, Share” approach, a large portion of pupils were unable to provide answers to any of the questions. When observing the class whilst they were participating in this activity, I was able to see that more pupils were becoming actively involved in the activity rather than I have previously encountered when carrying out individual based activities – particularly in pupils with EAL. This was partially due to the accountability of the pupils - at the beginning of the activity I explained that at least one partner in every group would have to provide an answer to contribute to the class’s mind map.

3. Think PAir Share

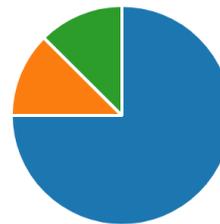
[More Details](#)



6. Would you like to use Think, Pair, Share more often?

[More Details](#)

Yes	6
No	1
Unsure	1



Through questioning the pupils, I was able to find out more about the quality of the responses received. On the whole, pupils were able to participate and provide an answer that was correct, and it was noted that there were less pupils that were too shy to speak out. However, many pupils were only able to provide an answer without being able to explain it, e.g. were able to name a type of Scottish vocal music, but were unable to substantiate this with any definition. The pupils that seemed to benefit most from this exercise were pupils that were pupils that are not particularly high or low achieving pupils, and a few responses to the survey indicated that pupils did not see the purpose of the task. It did not necessarily

encourage pupils who were already reluctant to join in with activities, and other pupils were reluctant to share their answers with their partners – especially in partnership with a wide range of ability.

Conclusions

Although there were a number of factors which affected this enquiry, it seems on the surface that the introduction of “Think, Pair, Share” has had a positive influence in the classroom. Feedback from pupils indicated that it was an exercise that most enjoyed, although there were some pupils that did not engage. It was difficult to get an accurate picture of the pupils’ reaction to this activity as during the research period, lessons were particularly disrupted – due to both school closures and other departmental activities which restricted the time and regularity of the study. Pupils seemed to have benefitted from learning from each other’s knowledge as they were able to build class mind maps without any input from the teacher however this is hard to say for definite after such a short and irregular period of observation.

Implications for Future Practice

This study was carried out using an S.1 class however in the future, “Think, Pair, Share” could be trialled with classes in the senior stage as it has proved to be a useful tool for recalling knowledge so could be integrated into exam revision lessons. In future practice, I would also try to use this technique in this structured style much earlier on in the school year – especially with S.1 classes. It encouraged pupils to communicate with each other and would be useful for developing social skills and building new relationships with others in the class. In the future I would also consider using “Think, Pair, Share” at other points in the lesson as well. Using it as an exit strategy rather than a starter activity would help to recall and recap recently learned information.

Bibliography

Florian, L. & Kershner, R. (2009). Inclusive pedagogy. In H. Daniels, H. Lauder, & J. Porter (Eds). Knowledge, values and education policy: A critical perspective. London: Routledge.

Scottish Government (2004) Curriculum for Excellence