

## Enquiry Question

How effective is introducing 'Think, Pair, Share' into my classroom.

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### ***Rationale***

This research study was undertaken to investigate the use of Think-Pair-Share as a co-operative learning approach to teaching and the impact it has on enhancing pupil discussion. This was also used to measure pupil confidence when answering out. Indeed, the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence promotes co-operative and active learning styles in practice. Think-pair-share should allow for thinking time and then allow pupils to share their answer with a partner, before sharing it with the class. Cobb argues that by sharing their ideas, students take ownership of their learning and negotiate meanings rather than rely solely on the teacher's authority (Cobb et al. 1991). In this way, the individual has the opportunity to hear another opinion before sharing it with the full class. This can also be beneficial for the teacher to effectively circulate and listen in to pupil discussion. In other words, this can be used as a formative assessment strategy.

There is no doubt that formative assessment is an integral part in every day teaching and learning and allows teachers to plan for and support the learning. When formative assessment is used effectively, the positive impact it can have cannot be overlooked. Andrade (2010) notes that formative assessment has a direct impact on student achievement, engagement and encourages learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

### ***Aims***

The aim of this Professional Enquiry was to discover what happens when Think, Pair, Share is used as a form of AifL in a P3/4 classroom.

### ***Methodology***

This study was undertaken in a North Lanarkshire primary school. The sample for this study comprised of a composite primary three and four classroom. This class consisted of twenty one children in total, all of whom were involved in the study. Pupil engagement and understanding was observed over a two week period before Think, Pair, Share was introduced into the classroom. Notes were taken specifically on what individuals contributed well to class discussion and what individuals appeared disengaged. This AifL strategy was then implemented consistently over a two week period. Pupil behaviour and engagement was monitored for any changes.

### ***Findings***

Before Think-Pair-Share was introduced to the classroom, pupil engagement and understanding was closely monitored. Pupils studied a book relating to their IDL topic in class which was used as a stimulus for ideas and conversation. This provided opportunities for children to show basic understanding by answering questions on the book, verbally and written recording. All pupils appeared fully engaged with the text. However, when discussing the story, the same individuals would take the lead and answer any verbal questions asked.

Following the four week intervention, think-pair-share was introduced into the classroom. Pupils studied a follow up text in class to the previous story. Pupils were required to answer basic comprehension questions – literal and inferential. Think-pair-share instigated pupil discussion. Some pairs used their ‘thinking’ time well and this was evident in their responses. Most pupils were engaged in relevant discussion and were keen to feedback their answers. From listening into discussions, few pairs of the children were ‘off task’ and not discussing the question asked. It was also apparent, that one pair of children appeared uncomfortable talking to each other and little discussion took place. Using lollipop sticks, pupils were randomly selected to share their partner’s thoughts on the text with the class. Some pupils struggled to answer and it was clear that some individuals has not paid close attention to their partner’s thoughts. Pupils became more aware of this and all children were able to effectively feedback as the weeks continued.

### ***Conclusions***

There is no doubt that, pupils enjoyed using think-pair-share. Pupils were given a questionnaire in response to think-pair-share. All pupils provided positive feedback on using this method. To begin with, pupils would sometimes complain over pairings. However, as the children became familiar with the technique, implementing it into practice began to run smoother. Throughout the time it was used, it appeared to increase pupil engagement and allowed pupils to gain an in depth understanding. It also benefited those who require additional support with their critical thinking skills, whereby they could be supported by their peers. Think-pair-share provided pupils with the opportunity to learn from their peers. Meanwhile, other pupils were keen to share their own opinion instead of that of their partner’s thoughts. In spite of this, using think-pair-share sustained learner engagement for a longer period of time.

There is no doubt that this AifL strategy ensured that children were on task and benefited from discussions with their classmates. In theory, this strategy should engage all learners in discussion, with an emphasis on those who are less keen or lack the confidence to answer out. However, following the four weeks of implementation, the AifL strategy was removed and the impact was assessed. When participating in questioning and answering the majority of pupils contributed well, despite the strategy being removed. This group of pupils were very confident and all pupils contributed well across the curriculum. It is for this reason that this particular AifL could be class specific and work more effectively with individuals who are less willing to participate. Additionally, it was made difficult for the teacher to listen in to all conversations to ensure the children were discussing the topic. Some pairs had to be reminded of the discussion point. In spite of this, learners could successfully contribute as confident individuals and enjoyed using think-pair-share.

### ***Implications for Future Practice***

I think that think-pair-share is a useful tool for increasing pupil engagement and enhancing the learning taking place. It must be considered that two different texts were used over the time period, therefore pupils may have demonstrated better engagement and understanding simply due to pupil preference in the lesson content. Indeed, think-pair-share will not fully engage all learners as there will always be children who struggle to focus. However, I did

notice an improvement within my classroom which has made me explore other AifL strategies for questioning. I think that by using a variety of questioning strategies, including think think-pair-share, these can enhance pupil engagement and the overall learning.

### Bibliography

Andrade, H., and Cizek, G. (2010). Handbook of formative assessment. New York: Routledge.

Cobb, P., Wood, T., Yackel, E., Nicholls, J., Wheatley, G., Trigatti, B., & Perlwitz, M. (1991). Assessment of a problem-centered second-grade mathematics project. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 22(1).