

# Standards Unit

## IMPROVING DIFFERENTIATION IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

### TOPIC 3: USING GROUP WORK TO DEVELOP LEARNING

#### Topic overview

This topic builds on the subject of differentiation by taking one teaching and learning strategy ('Using group work') and exploring in more depth how group work can be planned and managed to take account of individual learners and enhance learning.

The subject is divided into three parts, each of which contains an activity. The divisions are shown below, with approximate timings for each activity. These activities are designed to make up a coherent training programme which could be delivered as a half-day or one-day programme, or split into a series of shorter sessions.

#### Activity 1: Group techniques (30 mins)

This activity acts as a 'warm-up' exercise to give participants an opportunity to experience a particular group-work technique – wordstorming – used in two different ways. Participants can compare the different responses elicited by the two approaches.

#### Activity 2: Which group activity? (1 hr, 15 mins)

Participants explore a range of group work types:

- snowballing;
- empathy/experiential;
- co-operative learning.

Participants will consider how, and in what circumstances, these can be used. They

consider the implications for planning and managing group activities to ensure they take account of individual learners' needs.

#### Activity 3: Developing group activities and guidance (1 hr, 15 mins)

Participants apply what they've learned and devise their own group activity for learners. They're then asked to consolidate their learning by devising a checklist of good practice in planning and managing group work.

Each activity has facilitator guidance and participants' briefing sheets, also available on the 'CPD resource' and 'Supporting materials' CD-ROMs. The facilitator guidance includes details of resources you'll need and suggests PowerPoint slides to use. It also offers suggestions about how you might use and follow up the activity.

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#### FACILITATOR GUIDANCE

#### Activity 1: Group techniques (30 mins)

##### Facilitator notes

This topic enables participants to devise, implement and evaluate group work in the classroom or workshop and to consider how group work can be used to take account of individual learners' needs. By doing all the activities in Topic 3, participants will be able to experience the ways groups work and devise strategies and outcomes for further development in the classroom or workshop.

This activity is a warm-up session that gives participants first-hand experience of the outcomes of group work. It's about testing the 'mechanics' of wordstorming or thought showers<sup>4</sup>. There are two of these activities. The first is the traditional 'calling out ideas' style and the second uses a modified technique where learners write down their ideas. You're using these techniques to demonstrate to participants how well learners get involved in different kinds of group work. The activity is intended to develop participants' awareness of the need to manage both participation and learning outcomes for all learners.

##### PowerPoint slides

Slide 3 shows the objectives for the wordstorming activity.

Slide 4 provides a definition of differentiation

as a reminder, if needed.

Slide 5 summarises some success factors for planning group work that can be drawn together after the wordstorming activity.

Slide 6 identifies some issues associated with group work that may have arisen.

##### Now read the activity.

##### Objectives

- To recognise the value of group work and its contribution to understanding and learning.
- To understand the need to manage group work to meet the different needs of learners.

##### Resources

Review grid

Flipchart pens

Blank cards

##### Stage 1 Wordstorming (in groups) (5 mins)

In groups of four choose one of the following titles:

- Factors that affect motivation in the workplace.
- What makes great leadership?
- What makes great customer service?

<sup>4</sup>See Glossary.

Using wordstorming, generate as many ideas on the topic as you can. You'll need to nominate one member of the group to write the ideas on the flipchart.

### Stage 2 Wordstorming, the modified technique (in groups) (15 mins)

In groups of four, choose another title from the above list. Once a decision has been made, each participant should take a blank card.

Then, working as individuals, list as many ideas about the topic on the card as possible.

The facilitator then collects the cards and combines the ideas onto a flipchart. Once the list has been completed and written up it will be read aloud by the facilitator.

The groups re-form and the facilitator asks individuals in the groups to talk about how they felt doing each of the activities and their ideas.

#### Facilitator notes

Doing the activity in different ways allows participants to compare their experiences and find out why these varied. In the traditional brainstorm there may be many silent members of a group, or members who do not get a

chance to make a contribution. The group may gain less from the experience because these members do not offer their contributions. Also, these non-participating members may become demotivated.

This discussion can generate questions about the difficulties of group management and, in particular, what you need to do to ensure all members of the group both give and receive information. Often group work allows the confident and stronger members of the group to dominate. How can this be managed through various strategies?

#### *Possible discussion questions:*

1. As a learner, does it feel different in the two wordstorming activities?
2. Is there any evidence of different participation rates in the two sets of wordstorming activities?
3. Did either of the activities show a stronger outcome in terms of:
  - how much learners learned and understood; and/or
  - feedback to the teacher or trainer on the quality of a learner's understanding and reasoning?

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#### PARTICIPANTS' BRIEFING SHEET

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#### Activity 1: Group techniques (30 mins)

##### Objectives

- To recognise the value of group work and its contribution to understanding/learning.
- To understand the need to manage group work to meet the different needs of learners.

##### Resources

Review grid

Flipchart

Pens

8" x 5" cards

#### Stage 1 Wordstorming (in groups) (5 mins)

In groups of four choose one of the following titles

- Factors that affect motivation in the workplace
- What makes great leadership?
- What makes great customer service?

Using the technique of brainstorming, generate as many ideas on the topic area as you can. You will need to nominate one member of the group to write the ideas on the flip-chart.

#### Stage 2 Wordstorming, the modified technique: (in groups) (15 mins)

In groups of four, choose another title from the

above list. Once a decision has been made, each participant should take a blank 8" x 5" card.

Then working as individuals, list as many ideas on the topic on the card as possible.

The facilitator will then collect the cards and combine the ideas onto a flipchart. Once the list has been completed and written up it will be read aloud by the facilitator.

The groups will then re-form and the facilitator will ask individuals in the groups to talk about how they felt doing each of the activities.

TOPIC 3: USING GROUP WORK TO DEVELOP LEARNING – GRID FOR REVIEW OF GROUP ACTIVITIES

Group activities			
Snowball			
Empathy/ experiential			
Co-operative			