3.5 Grouping students – Trainer Notes

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- demonstrate understanding of key terms related to class interaction patterns
- manage seating arrangements for pair and group work with fixed classroom seating
- analyse the advantages and difficulties of different student groupings

**KEY CONCEPTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction patterns</th>
<th>open pairs</th>
<th>co-operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>open class</td>
<td>mingle activities</td>
<td>pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>group work</td>
<td>seating arrangement</td>
<td>variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair work</td>
<td>team activities</td>
<td>individual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed pairs</td>
<td>purpose</td>
<td>group dynamics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MATERIALS**

- Interaction patterns + Answer Sheet
- Seating arrangements + Answer Sheet
- What do you think about classroom interaction patterns? + Answer Sheet
- Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork

**Procedure**

1. **Learning Outcomes**

   Explain learning outcomes for session to participants

2. **Interaction patterns**

   This activity prepares participants for the first worksheet activity, which checks understanding of basic interaction patterns.

   - Ask participants to come into the centre of the room (or a space in the classroom where it is possible for all of them to stand together).
   - Tell them to work individually and think of 3 words or phrases they associate with teacher roles in the classroom (from the last session).
   - Next they find a partner – this should be the person on their right. Ask them to work in pairs, tell each other their 3 words or phrases – are they the same, or different?
   - Now together with the pair standing on their left tell them to make a group and to tell each other their partner’s 3 words/phrases.
   - Ask them to sit down in their groups and complete the worksheet. Interaction patterns.
   - Feedback – see Interaction patterns – answer sheet.
3 Seating arrangements

The aim of this activity is to encourage participants to find ways around fixed classroom seating to enable them to vary interaction patterns. The activity also serves as a model for a pairwork task.

- Divide participants into pairs
- Focus on diagrams on worksheet Seating arrangements – explain they need to come up with solutions to the problems of fixed desks.
- Feedback – see Seating arrangements – answer sheet. If possible, demonstrate with the furniture available.

For an article comparing whole class work with groupwork, see following link.

4 Mingle

This activity gives participants practice in a mingle and leads on to groupwork.

- Dictate this statement:
  *The traditional classroom format of learners sitting in rows facing the teacher is not helpful for language learning.*
- Participants spend a couple of minutes deciding how far they agree/disagree with it and their reasons.
- They mingle, telling each other their opinions, and trying to find 3 others with the same opinion as themselves.
- When they find 3 others, they form a group and sit down.
- In groups, write a new sentence which reflects their common opinion.
- Groups present their opinions to the class. If group opinions are mainly similar or mainly different, discuss why.

5 What do you think about classroom interaction patterns?

This activity focuses participants on the advantages and potential disadvantages of different interaction patterns. The previous activities serve as reference points.

- Participants work individually to complete the table on What do you think about classroom interaction patterns?
- Next, they work in groups and compare their answers.
- Feedback – see What do you think about classroom interaction patterns? - suggested answers. Explain that the next activity will be looking at how to deal with problems.

For a discussion on why it is a good idea for learners to interact with each other, see following link.
6 Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork

- Participants work in groups and discuss the difficulties which can happen with pair and group work. *Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork - Part 1.*
- They write down their ideas in the solutions column. *Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork - Part 1.*
- Next, give worksheet with suggested solutions. *Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork - Part 2.*
- They match the solutions to the difficulties and compare with their own ideas.
- Feedback – see *Dealing with difficulties in pair and groupwork – suggested answers.*

If participants are interested, elicit other difficulties they may have experienced and have a whole class discussion on them.

7 Reflection

- Ask participants to think about something they learned in this session and to tell this to a partner.
- You may wish to have a brief plenary feedback on learning points which emerged from the session.