

Teacher Education Design Principle + code:	15. Teacher education should promote teachers' use of group work to support children's inquiry processes and creative learning. TE: GWork
Specific Teacher Outcome(s):	15.1 Teachers should have knowledge of the value of collaboration for inquiry and creative thinking and learning. 15.3 Teachers should be able to organize group work, aligning ways of grouping children, task design, teaching and assessment strategies in different ways to promote collaboration amongst children in science and mathematics. 15.4 Teachers should be able to use resources and teacher intervention appropriately to foster collaboration in science and mathematics. 15.5 Teachers should be able to assess group work. 15.6 Teachers should be able to use effective strategies for sharing ideas and discussions from different groups.
Factors linked with:	T: Ped; P: Collab; G: SmallG; A: Strat; M: Var; M: Expl; P: Scaff
Type of material (image – interview (int) – classroom extract (class):	Classroom extract (class), Interview (int)
Originating from:	
Country report :	D4.3 - Germany
Case:	Case 3
Episode:	Materials
Teacher:	Alex
Age Group:	6
Selected episode present in D4.4 Appendix	No

Emphasizing the role of group work.

This episode was observed during a lesson sequence on materials and their properties. In small groups (3 children, groups randomly assigned,) the children had to explore one kind of material (e.g. wood) and to set up a poster (prepared A3-worksheet) with the specific characteristics of this material. The teacher placed emphasis on the role of collaboration and reflected about the group work with the children.

Classroom extract

A: Think about in your group. Each group gets o-n-e poster und you have to fill it in t-o-g-e-t-h-e-r as a group.

[...]

A: It is always very, very important that you think about your common goal as a team. [...] How do you feel when 2 or 3 of your group don't help you with your work [...] or are kidding around all the time? [...]

C: Then it's actually not a group anymore.

A: What is it instead?

C: It's only 1 or 2 children then who work. It's only a real group if everyone works together. For example, like we did it [...], everyone had got something to do. [...]

A: The better you work together as a group, the better your result. [...] The more you work together as a team, the better is the result at the end.





Interview

I: In both lessons, you decided to let the kids work in small groups and you randomly assigned them to groups. [...]

A: Exactly, with the help of playing cards. I always do it randomly. One reason is that otherwise it's always the same children working together. And the other reason is that there are always some children who are left over. That's really unsatisfying for everyone. [...] And the great advantage is that children who usually don't have much to do with each other, suddenly start to interact. That makes group work very dynamic. I don't influence group composition as regards the amount of boys and girls. I leave that to chance. They can cope with that, they know it, and it's important for the years to come.

I: That's also one of your goals, isn't it?

A: Absolutely.

I: You also made that very clear. That it matters to you that everyone works with everyone. And what's with the difficulties? [...] How do you deal with that?

A: [...] I actually try to intervene and help in the concrete situation. But mostly, I'm alone and that means that often I just don't notice it. That's why it's so important in the early years to reflect not only on the content at the end of the lesson. You also have to take time to reflect on the group work; to just talk about it with the children: What worked out well? What didn't? Why didn't it work out? And then, to make the children understand little by little that the advantage of working in a group is to have much more ideas and therefore to have the chance of a much better result. But in order to make that work, it is necessary to remain reticent sometimes and to discuss things within the group. But that's part of a learning process and children just cannot do that at the beginning and that's why you still have to [...] start early to practice that. [...] It won't happen overnight. But you have to talk about it again and again, and to give advice. [...]

I: Talking about assessment. How do you do that?

A: Yes, that's a difficult topic. Absolutely.[...] There are certainly group works [...] where you can see very well the result of their common work. And of course you observe a lot then. [...] I often take notes.



© 2014 RHEINISCHE FRIEDRICH-WILHELMS-UNIVERSITÄT BONN

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.



The project CREATIVE LITTLE SCIENTISTS has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 289081.