

ECAD7004C

	Targed/Target	What I have done in this assignment.
Targed/Target 1	Ensure all references have met Harvard standards throughout the whole assignment.	• Completed my reference list as I completed the research project. • Read though my assignment to ensure the references met Harvard standards. • Submitted my reference list out in alphabetical order (English) • Researching how to indent a quote properly. • Included my references and further reading in order to show development.

**Professional and Pedagogic Studies: Researching the Learning:
what, how and why am I teaching?**

**Design, conduct and critically evaluate a close-to-practice research
project (lesson study) focusing on the model of the transformative
teacher in developing practice that has a positive impact on the
learner.**

What effect does grouping children have on their pedagogical development?

Cyflwyniad

This research paper focuses on the impact of seating plans which correlates to the effect grouping children has on their ability to reach their full potential within a complex classroom environment. After reflecting on my first teaching experience I began to question whether grouping children on their ability was the most beneficial way for children to learn?

In order to deepen my knowledge on this pedagogy, that has been widely criticised; myself and two other student teachers decided to carry out a lesson study each to determine the impact different seating arrangements have on the quality and quantity of work produced by primary students, along with the effect on their emotional wellbeing. To ensure a fair lesson study, we decided to keep all factors of the lesson such as the resources and learning outcome the same and only changed one factor, the seating arrangements of the pupils. As the research was carried out within three different schools, we decided that one class would focus on grouping students in groups of ability, another was based on grouping children based on their age and another on social behaviour and random selection as a means of gaining an overview of the most beneficial method of grouping children.

During most of my experience I found that children the classrooms were primarily divided into groups of ability, however research by Grant (2019) like many others such as Roberts (2016) criticises this method and states that the system of grouping by ability is 'outdated, indefensible and entirely unfit for purpose'. Whilst furthering that grouping children accordingly to ability is primarily to do with classroom management and does not have any educational benefits for students. Furthermore, Pace and Price (2005) summarises that classroom arrangements significantly impacts student's behaviour which can directly affect students' achievements. Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) and Moore and Glynn (1984) also agree and highlight that student's location within the learning environment influences a student ability to respond and learn.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to determine whether these critics are correct and concur whether Vygotsky theory of using mixed ability as a means of scaffolding learning is the most beneficial method to develop children pedagogy.

Y Cyd Destun

In order to provided context of the learning environments, the research was carried out within three different schools based in Carmarthenshire. As suggested by Blackburn (2015), in order to provide some consistency, we ensured that we focused on one age group (Year 4 pupils). Despite teaching the same numeracy lesson and attempting to keep all aspect the same, there were some variables out of our control, such as location and size of the school which Cajker and Wood (2016) and Dawson (2013) state can impact our results.

School A is a small primary school based in a deprived rural town with roughly only 40 pupils in the whole school which is divided into two different classes, therefore the lesson was carried out with the whole of key stage two students present (7-11 year olds) along with two teaching assistants (TA).

School B was also based in what is classed as a 'deprived' rural area that has over 100 pupils within the whole school, the class in focused was a mixed year 4 and 5 class which was supported by one TA and a child with severe ALN.

Whereas School C is what is classed as a large 'super school' which has over 500 pupils based just outside a popular economical city. The lesson in study was based in a class with mixed year 3 and 4 students and one TA.

Methodology:

According to Kumar (2014: 2)

"Research is not only a set of skills, but also a way of thinking. Within this framework of thinking, you usually question what you observe, try to further explore, understand and explain your observations, and draw conclusions and inferences to enhance your practice skills and their knowledge base."

Therefore, as stated by Hobart and Frankel (2009) it is vital that we as teachers continue to develop our professional practice and development by carrying out systematic research that will allow us to make better informed decision within the classroom that will benefit the children. Carrying out this research has allowed us to link research theory, policy and practice together in order to ensure purpose in everything we do as teachers. Mckinsey et al (2007) and Warwick et al., (2016) believe an effective teacher is one that is flexible, inquisitive, adaptable and one

that is ready to develop by enhancing their knowledge which Estyn (2020) states has direct impact on raising standards of teaching. Hill (2013) agrees that action research and lesson studies are the only way to increase standards in teaching and Hattie (2009:22) furthers that it is vital that we as researchers involve children in the process in order to ensure their views are valued. Despite, Merriam-Webster (2020) emphasising the benefits of teachers carrying out research, she highlights that it is only effective when it is done ethically and supports the wellbeing of the child (Donaldson, 2015).

In order to gather as much evidence as possible, it was decided that we would use triangulation as a means of gathering evidence to support our research. We decided to use a range of methods such as observing using a 'jotting method' along with a pre-designed observation sheet that provided clear qualitative and quantitative data following the Louven Scale. We also used semi-structured group interviews in order to gather the children's views and feelings after the lesson study. Following this, we adopted Brookfield's reflective model in order to reflect on the lesson and make necessary changes in order to achieve the best possible outcome and understand why and how certain seating plans affect pupils' intellectual, social and emotional behaviours by linking it to practice (Dudley, 2014).

Prior to the research being carried out we began by reflecting on our first teaching experiences which led us to question the benefits of grouping children by abilities. Following this we researched how to carry out effective research following the British Education Research Association (BERA) (2018) and recommendations by Bjuland and Mosvold (2015).

According to the Assessment Reform Group (2002) observing is

'The process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go next, and how best to get them there'.

Fletcher-wood (2016) and Freeboy (2003) emphasise that by observing it allowed us as researchers to capture evidence of skills, disposition and feelings. By observing directly, we were able to see human behaviour as well as physical actions on how the students respond, involved themselves and sat within the lessons; all characteristics of which portray important information to us as researchers. We also looked at expressive behaviour, use of language and communications that took place between the children. As seen within appendix 5; We used two methods of observing. The first being structured which the checklist highlights looked for specific information and unstructured observations that allowed us to note the use of narratives to correspond with events that happen at random.

As we were in a group of three carrying out the research this meant that while one person was teaching the other two teachers were observe the teacher and pupils in focus, which Canning (2010) believes is very effective as a means of seeing directly how student react to certain situations, such as the change of seating in this case. As two people were observing at the same time, Brodie (2013) agrees with Canning (2010) and expands by saying that having more than one person observing the same situation at a given time increases the reliability of the information as more evidence and details are likely to be noted which therefore provide a better reflection of the lesson (Sharman et al., 2007:3, Griggs, 2015). However, Hobart and Frankel (2009) disagrees and states this can cause complications as people can interpret the same lesson in several ways depending on their views, beliefs and previous knowledge. As the observations were only carried out over 1 hour lessons, this highlight that the research finding are primarily a snapshot of the situation and not the full picture, Dewey (1991) states it would be more beneficial if we were to observe over a longer period of time as children can naturally react differently to different visitors being in the room (Barnard, Drey and Bryson, 2012). This would allow us to take into consideration the children background and notice any change in their characteristics (Dewey, 1991).

Therefore, to overcome this obstacle we all agreed to follow the jotting method of recording our notes in order to remain 'subjective'; we all agreed to only note factual details directly at the time of the event (Flewitt, 2005). By planning our observations sheets collaboratively prior to the research beginning, it meant that we knew exactly what we were looking for, which meant we were able to define what we meant by 'lles and ymglymiad' as seen within appendix 5, in order to ensure consistency and use effective time management during the observation (Cable, Miller and Drury, 2005; Coady, 2010).

As part of the research we decided to use semi-structured group interviews as a means of gathering additional information on the voice of the child, which upholds the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12. This provided us with vital information as it allowed us as researcher understand how and why they reacted the way they did to the change of seating. In addition to this is, it provided an insight on how the elements we changed during the lesson impacted on their feelings, which Successful futures (2015) and Dudley (2014) highlights is central to children's health and wellbeing. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) and Gilliam (2000) define 'interview' as a verbal exchange between parties, which consists of clearly structured questions, listening attentively and the ability to pause, probes and prompt appropriately. Therefore, meaning the success of an interview heavily depends on the communication skills of the interviewer (Clough and Nutbrown, 2007).

In order to ensure consistency fairness, we asked the children the same 9 questions and gave them all equal time to answer. As suggested by Cohen et al (2011) he believes that using open and closed questioning such as seen within appendix 5, are detrimental to the research as the answers provided rich qualitative and quantitative data on how the children felt about changing seats to sit near pupils with different intellect, age or social behaviour, which we as researchers can use to gain better understanding of the impact and compare children's data (Patton, 1980; Opie, 2004).

We interviewed all the children together and explained the purpose of the interview Gomm (2004) states it allows the children to feel at ease. However, one of the main downfalls of interviewing children together, due to the pupils age, is that some copied the answer of their peers and therefore might not be a true reflection of how they really felt (Gomm, 2004). This is where, Katz (2008) research becomes vital, as she believes that interviews are only successful once trust, respect and honesty is upheld; which we tried to do by the student teacher of their school leading the questions as relationships have already been established.

Please see Appendix 6 for reflection analysis of each observation following Brookfield Lens which looks at the perspective of the teacher, student, the researchers with links to relevant literature.

Ethical Consideration:

Whilst carrying out research it is important to recognise that our own beliefs and values can impact on the results of the research, therefore there are many steps we put in place in order to minimise this and remain subjective by understand research guidelines such as British Education Research Association (BERA, 2018), Ruling Research Data Policy PCYDDS and Ethical research guidelines by the Education Workforce Council (2019) whilst planning, carrying out the research and storing all the information correctly in accordance to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) as a way of upholding the students the right to privacy.

Some argue that the topic of grouping children by their ability needs considerate ethical considerations. Reggio Emilia philosophy states that children should be viewed as rich and powerful with rights rather than needs, therefore Barnes (2016) questions is it right for us to group children by their ability as it is heavily linked to children being stereotyped and categorised which can lead to them comparing themselves to other children and increases their awareness that they are not able to achieve high standards (Dewek, 2003). Therefore, the confidentiality of the children ability and all sensitive information will not be disclosed; no children will know why they have changed seats and the link to their ability. As teachers carrying our research, we recognised our professional responsibilities and code of conduct we

must adhere to in order to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all the children in our care outlined by the Code of Behaviour and Professional Practice with the Education Workforce Council (2019).

Throughout the research, all student had name tags on so that no one felt singled out or highlighted throughout the lesson which allowed us to know specifically which three children we would be focusing on throughout the observation. Adhering to BERA (2018) and PCYDDS (2020), Consent was gathered from the school, and that of ALL the parents and children in the class as we felt this was the most ethical and inclusive way of beginning our research. Following this, the class teacher from each school chose three pupils of varying abilities in order to minimise bias, validity and reliability (Welsh Government (APADGS,2008).

As stated as good practice by Flewitt (2015), I ensured the children had a copy of their letter of consent so that they could read it, I also read the letter out loud in order to ensure that all pupils fully understood and had the opportunity to ask any questions. Furthermore, all of the pupils and school names have been kept confidential, the schools have been categorised under School 1, 2 and 3 and the children have been classified under Child A,B and C within their school, i.e. Child 1A will represent one specific child within one of our researched schools.

Despite mentioning in the ethics form that we might be recording the interviews, research by Palaiologou (2012) suggests that this would be unethical as there would be a high likelihood that the pupils faces, school uniform and layout of the classroom would give the identity of the school and children. Therefore, despite following the GDPR (2018) guidelines on storing sensitive information we felt that this could jeopardise the research and therefore decided against recording (Mukerji and Albon (2015).

After reflecting on the first study lesson carried out in school A, we realised that all three students were female, therefore agreed that we would ensure a mixture of boys and girls in the next two observations in order to not discriminate and provide an inclusive reflection and fair without bias in order to provide validity and reliability to the results (Brookfield; Ely, 1991).

The unfamiliar student teachers were introduced to the class briefly so that the pupils understood the purpose of the observations, which Denscombe (2007) and Reed and Canning (2010) believes is the best way of addressing children curiosity yet still ensuring the other teacher do not impact on the research. As my placement school had a child with severe ALN, it was paramount that I showed photographs of the students' teachers to him prior to them visiting the school. Change can often cause him some distress, I also ensured that I talked the pupil through the observation process of the lesson study so that he was able to do his 'now and next visual timetable' and understand the structure of the day. Therefore, this shows the

importance of the planning process prior to carrying out research as the child's reaction could heavily impact the findings of the research and distract the other students (Cohen et al., 2011).

It is important to remember that the research has heavily depended on the student's participation throughout the research, therefore this was always a risk for us as researchers as the children could pull out of the research at any time by showing a red card (BERA, 2018; Nachimas and Nachimas, 1992 Cited in 'research methods in education': 91). Thus, highlighting one of the reasons why we gathered consent off more than three students prior to the research beginning.

Please see more information in the ethical form.

Literature Review:

Most primary schools in Wales teach children by grouping them into groups of abilities. This is a very controversial method that has been criticised by many. Barnes (2016) states that there is no evidence to suggest that there are any educational benefits for the children and furthers by saying that this system is 'outdated, indefensible and entirely unfit for purpose'. 'Recent evidence also indicates that ability grouping, of itself, does not raise standards, and in some cases can actually lower them. It can also have detrimental effects on pupils' personal and social development'. Therefore, with our changing new curriculum advised by Donaldson (2015) placing an emphasis on creating ambitious, capable learners and a new assessment framework, grouping children from such a young age will have significant negative impact to children's self-esteem as it instil a 'can't do' approach (Roberts, 2019).

Robins and Trzesinewski (2005) furthers by stating that children within primary school are still adapting to teaching strategies and therefore believes it is unfair to categorise them by their ability. According to Snider and Schumitsch (2006) ability grouping promotes labelling and stereotyping which can often destroys academic motivation, especially among the slow learning students; positive self-esteem, motivation and praise are all regarded to be the conditions that aids student achievements. Bandura (1997), Vygotsky and Piaget all emphasise children taught within mixed abilities often leads to better collaboration as the higher ability children can scaffold and model what is expected and provided a benchmark for the lower ability students as they begin to imitate these behaviours. Schoon (2006) states that teaching within mixed abilities also allows children to build resilience as they collaborate with others that have different attitudes, varying family support. By children understanding simple factors like this, that every child is unique it will prepare them for the real-world Bruner (1990).

Child-centred teaching methods embrace the child as a whole and give emphasis in meeting the socio-emotional and cognitive needs of the child. Therefore, Ireson and Hallam (2001)

believes that by teachers teaching children within groups of ability means that they can differentiate the work more discretely and tailor the lesson so that each child gets the most out of the lesson; which is important as differentiating work is one of the main roles of a teacher (Estyn, 2020). McGillicuddy and Devine states (2020) concludes that it can also be deflating for a child of lower ability to sit next to a child of higher ability as they might feel they might not understand the activity as well and feel inferior. However, as mentioned by Sutherland and Topping (2002) all learners are individuals and naturally progress at their own pace; in practice once a pupil has been placed into a certain group they usually remain in that group for the term or academic year. Therefore, how often should we assess children and change their groups?

By placing children into ability groups, Dudley (2013) states the opportunity for growth mindset and the willingness to take risks with their answers. Children in lower groups quickly have low expectations of themselves. In contrast, some may also agree that by pupils being taught in mixed abilities, the high ability children are often held back as they spend most of their time explain concepts to other students rather than excelling and challenging themselves further. However, Piaget and Einstein believe, a child only truly understands and remember a concept once they can explain it to someone else. Therefore, is it right to categorise children at all?

Lesson Study in School 1

Following the lesson study based within School 1 it was clear to see the impact the change of seating had on the pupils; See appendix 5 School 1. The teacher changed where the children were sitting from their usual ability groups to sitting near pupils of the same age. Research by Llewelyn-Greenfield (2011) states that grouping children by their age is not beneficial for the children as it does not meet the individual needs of each pupil (Cotton, 1997).

Following Gibbs and Brookfield reflective model, it is clear to see from appendix 5 and 6, that Cotton (1997) and Llewelyn-Greenfield (2011) points are valid. The observation showed that child A was the most competent during task and would have preferred to have completed the task independently. She got 'bored' during the task as she had to explain to her peers several times what they needed to do. Due to the unintentional lack of resources, she also had to wait her turn and as a result went ahead by using 'mental maths' and problem solve. Katz (2008) argues that this is as a result of pupil A not being challenged as the work was too easy, and therefore highlights the disadvantage of sitting in age ability groups as it is difficult for teachers to differentiate group work according to the children level of development.

Once questioned how she felt about changing seats and working with other children the same age of varying abilities, she stated that she didn't feel challenged during the activity as she spent the majority of the time explaining to the other children how to work out the answers and

would have preferred to have sat in her original seat (Appendix 5). However, Schoon (2003) argues that it is good practice for children to change who they naturally sit by as too often children will choose to sit in the same seat and get comfortable, however resilience is built by working with a range of people and therefore deems this experience essential for Child A despite her not being academically challenged. In school children are taught in mixed ability schools, however the role of the teacher is essential, Estyn (2020) and McKinsey (2007) emphasis that having planned extended task and using effective assessment for learning or different teaching strategies would have beneficial in this instance in order to meet Child A individual progress. (Hattie, 2010). Thus, Betts (200) and Rogers (2019) States that this method is ineffective as it does not motivate the more talented and able children.

Whilst focusing on Child B, she came across as the less able as she sat back and allowed the other children to problem solve and take the lead; The teacher did recognise this and went down to her level to give her further explanation of the task which did better her understanding. However, Ireson and Hallam (2001) agree that this child would have benefited from being taught within her ability as the teacher would be able to sit with the group and provide her with more support (Dudley, 2014). Betts and Shkolnik (2000) also indicates that with the correct procedure in place, mixed ability classes can serve education well as it allows teachers to 'cope with the demands that this brings'.

Despite the school being very small and having a sense of closeness amongst all the peers, Gregory (1984) suggests that it is likely that the child might have feel uncomfortable and shy as she has never directly had to work with the other children in the observation before. Following a discussion with the teacher, it was interesting to see that this child was summer born; as research by Roberts (2019) suggests that it is wrong to categorise children within primary schools as they have little time to develop their learning skills, especially those born in the summer as they have had less time to learn compared to the autumn born children who are nearly a year older.

Child C resilience, confidence and ability meant that the research had little effect on her wellbeing as she was a natural leader. During the interview, Appendix 5, showed that she was just happy to sit near her friend and socialise with other peers as maths was her favourite subject her interest was already captured at the beginning of the lesson.

To conclude, Meghir, Crawford and Dearden (2007) state that grouping children by age is simply encourages children to fit in the education irrespective of their intellectual, social and emotional needs, which serves as a disadvantage to those pupils who have their birthday at the end of the year as the work will not be tailored to their individual needs which is emphasised by Donaldson (2015) as being paramount within the new curriculum. However, I

feel all children still learnt vital lessons during the activity, whether it being academically or socially.

Findings:

All the students had relatively good wellbeing and involvement in the lesson by all scoring 3 or above. 2/3 reached the learning outcome, however one pupil did copy which we felt is due to lack of confidence. Two out of the three felt they benefit from sitting within mixed abilities as they stated they felt they had learnt off their peers (Appendix 5- School 1).

Lesson Study in School 2

During this lesson study, the children had the ability to choose where they sat to complete the task, which was the only lesson that ultimately supported the voice of the child and allowed children the freedom that Donaldson (2015), UNCRC (2020) and Estyn (2020) promotes. Grant (2019) states that by students sitting in mixed abilities and different social groups it is likely to encourage collaborative working whereby they can problem solve and learn off one another, which coincides with Vygotsky theory. Literature by Daniels (1998) states that the class seating plan has the potential to encourage positive behavior. Pace and Price agrees (2005) that mixed ability grouping encourages children to thrive.

The evidence of work produces and comments during the observation (Appendix 5) all highlight the progress child C made as a result of sitting with peers more able than her. As stated by Gifford (2015) praise also played an important part in increasing child C mental wellbeing as she was very unsure at the beginning of the task, however her confidence soon grew as she was reassured by her teacher that she was on the right track, her peers role modelling also supported motivated her to reach her full potential.

Appendix 4, showing the work produced by the children supports this as all three children worked within different groups to meet the learning outcome of the activity and becoming independent, capable learners (Donaldson, 2015). Despite pupil B stating in the interview (Appendix 5) that 'he'd rather sit with smart people in his usual seat' than in the seat he sat in today was very interesting as beknown to him he was coincidentally sat with peers of the same ability as him. However, as this lesson study was based in my PTE school; it was difficult not to use my prior knowledge to understand why this could be as child B can often rely on his peer to lead tasks. However instead, the lesson study meant that others relied on him to lead as he had a natural interest and understanding of rugby and therefore was the more knowledgeable other. Despite him stating ' he did not feel he was supported by his peers' , Vygotsky and Einstein supports and believes that mixed ability grouping is a very beneficial way of teaching as they state a child will only truly understand a concept once they can explain

it to someone else. Grant (2019) also supports this collaborative way of teaching and emphasises that mixed ability grouping allows children to learn off each other and become resilient as they learn to understand that they all have different talents and interests (Schoon, 2003). I.e. despite the lesson study focusing on numeracy skills, they were able to use their knowledge of rugby, communicating, counting and reasoning in order to complete the task successfully. Teachers also find that even within a single subject, such as maths, students have varied abilities; some that may struggle with arithmetic usually find shape and space work easier.

Findings:

After looking back the evidence gathered during the observation, this was the only lesson out of the three whereby all students met the learning outcome, which is extremely interesting as all the pupils were sat 'randomly' meaning their abilities were mixed. This is supported by Moore and Glynn (1984) who suggests that a pupil location within a class can impact on the number of questions asked and their understanding which consequently influences student's achievement of the success criteria, whether negatively or positively.

After analysing appendix 5, Child C showed signs of low wellbeing, however I believe that this is because she has natural low self-esteem in regards to academic achievement as a result of being categorised by her level of ability previously; however her interest in rugby and ability to work with others meant she benefited from working with her more able peers as she was not distracted by the behaviours in her usual group.

Lesson Study in School 3:

During this lesson, children were moved from their original seating whereby they were categorised based on their behaviour, which Grant (2019) and Lyle (1999) states is the only benefit of grouping children; to sitting in groups of their ability. As seen within the feedback of the observation field notes in appendix 5, the child that I feel was disadvantaged the most was child B. Child B has been categorised within the lower ability group 'Group Brown'. As this child was sat amongst peers of the same level of her it meant that despite her being eager to carry out the task she had very little understanding of what was expected of her and decided to put an X in every box on the worksheet. Therefore, it is arguably what did this child gain by sitting within her ability group as she really would have benefited from additional explanation and a role model to ask questions too. Despite some may argue that this is primarily a teacher role, within a class of 31 it isn't always possible to provide each child 1 to 1 attention. Piaget believes that children will increase their independence and learn best from each other by making mistakes; He furthers that the role of the teacher is to simply facilitate learning (Vygotsky, Bruner).

Despite child B failing to meet the learning outcome, I do believe this was heavily down to the fact that he had very little interest in rugby (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002) and therefore got easily distracted. Furthermore, Child A did have interest in the activity however he was sat next to someone who didn't and therefore that distracted child A. Bakkenes et al (2010) believes that this could be due to learning method adopted by the teacher, Unlike lesson two the teacher didn't use the interactive white board and research element in order to inspire the children and introduce the task. Despite not all students having a natural interest in rugby at first, Leavy and Hourigan (2016) state it is the teacher responsibility to provide student with a range of learning experiences and knowledge that relate to real life (Donaldson, 2015). Cajkler and Wood (2016) agree however emphasize that children need time to grasp new concepts, therefore had we as researcher had time to observe over a longer period perhaps the results would have been different.

To conclude, Research by Goldberg (1966) and Grant (2019) found that ability grouping had no effect on academic achievement, and I believe this is reflected within the evidence of the research gathered. Despite this, as mentioned by Cajkler and Wood (2016) and Leavy and Hourigan (2016) there are other factors that could have influenced our results such as the interests of the students and the teaching methods of the teacher (Pillen et al., 2010; McNiff, 2014).

Findings:

Evidence shows that only one of the children met the learning outcome whilst being sat in their groups of ability, and further analysis following Brookfield reflection suggest Child A could have achieved high standard of work. Despite this, the wellbeing of all pupils was very good.

Recommendations:

Despite the research being carried out within three different school, it meant that we only had a small sample of 9 students to analyse. Bradbury (2015), Creswell, J.W. (2012) and Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that a much larger cohort of pupils need to be observed over several different schools in order to see true impact grouping children have on their ability; thus making the evidence gathered more accountable, valid and reliable (Sachs, 2010).

Holliday (2007) and Thomas (2013) also state that by allowing researcher to observe over a longer period it would have allowed us to get to know the student's characteristics better and provide us with background on the children. This would have allowed us to have a 'fuller picture' and not just a snapshot as many observations allow (Sharman, 2007) as we as researchers would better understand many factors can influence how a child is feeling and therefore impact on their involvement in the lesson.

Research carried out by Betts and Shkolnik (2000) indicates that mathematics achievement found zero difference in mathematic scores in matched ability groups and non-matched ability groups, therefore questioning the validity of our research as it was too based on numeracy skills (Gifford and Rockliffe, 2012). Therefore, observing a different topic would also provide more reliable results (Smith et al, 2012; Siencyn, 2010).

Despite teaching the same lesson to all students in order to ensure consistency and limit the factors that could impact on the results; in order to ensure engagement and enthusiasm of all children it would have been better to plan an activity that supports the children's interests; however this was challenging as we were all teaching different themes within out PTE (Dudley, 2013; Lewis et al., 2004; May and Perry, 2011).

Conclusion:

To conclude, as highlighted above there are many advantages and disadvantages to grouping children within primary school. Many Teachers highly regard ability grouping within a classroom due to easy of differentiating and tailoring lessons as well as a way of managing behaviour; However, this does not seem to reflect the benefit of supporting children's individual needs (Robins and Trzesinewski, 2005; Ireson and Hallam, 2001).

Carrying out this research was broadened my knowledge on grouping children on their ability as there is extensive knowledge that suggests that teaching within mixed ability is more beneficial for the pupils pedological development as they scaffold each other and learn of the knowledgeable other. (Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner).

However, as this researcher was based on the small sample of research, it would be beneficial to carry out more research on this topic in order to make better informed decisions within the classroom. Therefore as part of the next PTE whereby I will develop my professional practice in accordance to standards supported by the Education Workforce Council (EWC) (2020) I will continue to develop and extend my range of teaching strategies in order to ensure that every pupil reaches their full potential (Donaldson, 2015).

Word Count: 5,892

6,000 maximum- (5,000 + 10% = 5,500 + 500 extra for the extra lesson study being in a group of 3)

Biography and Further Readings:

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