

4 Planning for pupil-pupil discussion

<p>Plan to offer the task in a form that will encourage collaboration</p>	<p>Prepare shared tasks in a <i>form</i> that will encourage discussion. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources <i>to share</i> (e.g. one copy between three) and ask for outputs that are jointly produced. • Provide <i>big</i> resources so that reasoning may be visible and shared, such as large sheets of paper, felt-tipped pens or 'mini-whiteboards'. • Require <i>joint outcomes</i>: e.g. a poster or a report. Make pupils share responsibility for this.
<p>Plan how you will arrange the room</p>	<p>Arrange tables and chairs so that pupils are facing each other while working together. When computers are used, then pair two pupils to a computer and give them space and resources to record their joint thinking (e.g. using mini-whiteboards). Encourage turn taking when using the computer.</p>
<p>Plan how you will group pupils</p>	<p>Most pupils are more able to discuss in smaller groups than larger ones: pairs or threes is often most effective.</p> <p>Some teachers find a <i>snowball</i> approach helpful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils first tackle the task individually. They have time to think before they are asked to discuss. • Pairs are then formed and pupils are asked to try and reach agreement. • Pairs then join together so that a broader consensus might be reached. • Groups of four then report back to the whole class in a plenary discussion.
<p>Plan how you will introduce the purpose of discussing</p>	<p>Plan your introduction to pre-empt the questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Why do you want us to discuss?" • "What do you want us to discuss?" <p>For example: <i>This lesson is not about 'me showing you a method and then you using it'. No, I want to see if you can find your own methods. There is more than one way of doing this! I want you to discuss your own ideas for starting on this problem.</i></p>
<p>Plan how you will establish ground rules</p>	<p>Introduce ground rules for pupils such as those outlined on Handout 3. Such behaviours are not established overnight, but over a long time through consistent reinforcement.</p>
<p>Plan how you will end the discussion</p>	<p>Most teachers ask pupils to report back on their discussion in some way. All pupils should be encouraged to prepare for this. Try not to pass judgments on their responses while they do this or this may influence subsequent contributions. (See Handout 5)</p>