Mc Namara, D. & Waugh, D. (1993) Classroom Organisation: A Discussion of Grouping Strategies in the Light of the Three Wise Men's Report, Journal of School Organisation, Vol.13, No.1, pages. 43- 50.

Mortimore, P. *et al.* (1988) School Matters, Open Books in Dean, J. (1992) Organising Learning in the Primary School Classroom, page. 168, Routledge, London.

Moyles,J. R. (1993) Just a Matter of Routine? Organising for Learning in the Early Years Classroom, pages. 44-52, Education 3-13: The Professional Journal for Primary Education, Vol. 21, No. 1, March.

Rathbone, M. (1988) Improve Your Teaching, pages. 37-39, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, Scholastic, Bright Ideas Management Books.

Rogers,C. & Kutnick, P. (1990) The Social Psychology of the Primary School, pages. 15, 105, Routledge, London.

Thacker, J. *et al.* (1992) Group Work in the Primary Classroom, pages. 5, 11, 12, Southgate, Credition.

Thacker, J. *et al.* (1992) Group Work Skills: Using Group Work in the Primary Classroom, pages. 5, 11, 12.

Barker, L. (1970) Streaming in the Primary School, NFER in Dean, J. (1992) Organising Learning in the Primary School Classroom, page.168, Routledge, London.

Campbell, J. (1995) A Hard Task to Master. Journal of Times Educational Supplement, Vol. February 17, page. 6.

Campbell, R. **(1991)** Carpet Time in Infant Classrooms, Journal of Primary Teaching Studies, Vol.6, No.1, pages. 85-91.

Collins, N. (1986) New Teaching Skills, pages. 43, 45, 46, 54, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Dean, J. (1992) Organising Learning in the Primary School Classroom, pages, 161-170, Routledge, London.

DES: Department of Education and Science (1978) Primary Education in England: A Survey by H. M. Inspectors of Schools, London: HMSO in Galton, M. & Williamson, J. (1992) Group Work in the Primary classroom, page. 7, Routledge, London.

Galton, M. & Williamson, J. (1992) Group Work in the Primary Classroom, pages. 10, 11, 143, 144, Routledge, London.

HMI (1978) Primary Education in England, "The Primary Survey", HMSO in Dean, J. (1992) Organisin

Learning in the Primary School Classroom, page. 167, Routledge: London.

Kelly, A. (1978) Mixed Ability Grouping: Theory and Practice, pages. 96- 98, Harper and Row, London.

Kerry, T. & Sands, M. (1982) Handling Classroom Groups: A Teaching Skills Workbook. DES Teach Education Project Focus Books, pages. 5, 15, Macmillan Education, Basinstoke.

Marland, M. (1993) The Craft of the Classroom: A Survival Guide to Classroom Management in the Secondary School, pages. 91-93, Heinemann Educational, London.

short supply. For teachers, it gives them the opportunity to circulate and correct individual pupil's work and enables them to tailor a range of tasks more appropriately to children's needs and abilities. It has been shown that group work is more useful for pupils themselves. It is also more enjoyable and interesting for both classroom teacher and pupils. On the other hand, giving pupils opportunities to co-operate can be lost if bad behaviour becomes common. The practical pedagogical issue facing the class teacher is that, given that he or she has limited and finite resources of attention, time, and energy, how can he or she best organise the class so as to balance the requirement to sustain and manage order in the classroom and at the same time, attend to promoting children's learning, and do so in the light of his or her own educational standards and beliefs. Moreover, group work requires a lot of effort and attention from the classroom teacher.

The study considered group work as a primary phase that should be taken for mainstreaming special needs children in mainstream schools.

Bibliography

Alexander, R. (1991) Primary Education in Leeds in Mc Namara, D. and Waugh, D. (1993), Classroom Organisation: A Discussion of Grouping Strategies in the Light of the Three Wise Men's Report, Journal of School Organisation, Vol.13, No.1, page. 44.

Allen, J. (1971) Pairing and Grouping in Kelly, A. (1978) Mixed Ability Grouping: Theory and Practice, page. 98, Harper and Row, London.

group work skill if they are to learn effectively in groups. It can never be assumed that it is enough to divide the class up, announce the activity, and leave the individuals with the group to interact purposefully.

Conclusion

This study has explored one of the major kinds of grouping in the primary schools, this is group work.

There are some characteristics of group work, which should be understood by teachers before using group work. An understanding of these characteristics make it easier for teachers to be able to decide when to use group work, and with which pupils they should use group work.

Group work uses the interactions between pupils as part of the learning process. In group work, pupils are encouraged to reflect on, and perhaps articulate, what is happening in the group and how they feel about it Even where the group is tackling a practical task the feelings and reflections of the members are explored.

Group work is not always appropriate for each classroom pupil. Each teacher has to decide when and where it makes sense to try it. Moreover, when the classroom teachers want to create group work in the classrooms, they may face some problems or difficulties which may make them think twice about group work.

The study argued that group work allows children to learn from each other and removes the stigma and failure from special needs children, such as, slow learners. It teaches pupils to be self reliant and not teacher-dependent, and gives them a chance to work at their own pace. It allows more children access to apparatus which is in

be hurt by exposure to this appraisal. On the other hand, other children who see a pupil being rewarded for a limited outcome consider their own treatment unfair unless they understand the rationale behind the teacher's judgement.

- The most common form of class grouping is homogeneous groups formed on the basis of some index of ability. Thus children in mixed ability classes, which may have been formed in order to overcome the divisive effects of streaming, are, in effect, streamed with the class. Such a move does not disguise the effects of grouping according to ability and children are well aware of whether they are in 'higher', or 'lower' groups. Indeed, the status of able children is likely to be enhanced within mixed ability classroom organised into groups because less able children can turn to them for advice when the teacher's attention is elsewhere.

- To organise the groups according to one measure of ability does not ensure homogeneity for the learning process. Children grouped according to, say, their reading ability may well differ in terms of other criteria such as mathematical ability or motivation.

- When children are grouped for one educational purpose, such as to form homogeneous ability groups or co-operative friendship groups, it is possible or likely that the groups so formed confound attempts to attain other worthwhile goals or expose the teacher to charges of partiality or discrimination. This is because the groups may well be similar in terms of social class background, ethnicity, or gender.

- The teacher cannot organise children into groups and assume that the groups will work productively and harmoniously. It may be necessary to prepare and train children and provide them with

ing on the demands which close collaboration makes on pupils, group work helps to refine such personal qualities as: receptivity, self-expression, objectivity, empathy, validation, encouragement, confidentiality, trust.

- Teaches pupils to be self-reliant not teacher-dependent. It has also gives pupils a chance to work at their own pace.
- Allows more children access to apparatus which is in short supply.
- Enables teachers to tailor a range of tasks more appropriately to children's needs and abilities.

Group Work Disadvantages

- Giving pupils opportunities to co-operate can be lost if bad behaviour becomes common. As the teacher is in a less dominant position in these circumstances, it is often hoped that teacher-pupil relationships will be improved. Too often, however, there is a bad effect on the teacher-pupil relationship, as the teacher turns into a wandering nagger, constantly hurrying groups along, rarely able to teach and thus losing satisfaction as the pupils lose their contact with him.

- Teachers attempt to give the pupil individual ownership of their ideas while at the same time minimising any sense of personal failure. In most situations, teachers will have an understanding of the individual child's capability, based upon past experience, and will, therefore, attempt to set them realistic goals. As a result of this some children will be rewarded for doing less amounts of work than others because it is the teacher's judgement that this accords with their capabilities. A teacher is naturally reluctant to make public these considerations lest the slower learning pupils should

- Group work is a semi-safe environment in which pupils can experiment with roles and take a chance on expressing ideas and feelings. It is safe because the pupil is among peers and protected by the possible intervention of the teacher. Their remains, however, the risk of some ridicule, or a delaying effect in the progress of the group. Learning how to accept the feelings of others is as important as building up the confidence to express their own, and group work can be the setting for this type of learning.

- Teachers and pupils can learn through group work situations when to intervene and to keep out of the way of good progress. Equally they can learn when to ask for help with a good chance of getting it, because they can appeal not just to the teacher but to anyone who seems to be appropriate.

- Monitoring the progress of individuals, and the programme in general, is likely to be easier in a group work situation than in formal whole class session because the teacher is free to circulate and concentrate on the monitoring progress. Indeed, group work being based on feedback is a self-monitoring educational process.

- Pupils can learn to distinguish between their real and imagined selves. There are myths about who each person is and what each is capable of doing. Some of these myths are undermining. Group work can progressively put these myths to the test without totally undermining the sense of identity.

- Improves individual pupil's self-image in that by working in groups the children come to respect each other's strengths and weaknesses.

- It is appropriate for social education because it enhances interpersonal skills which are so basic to social education. By focus-

- Allows teachers to concentrate their time on a group which requires support while other groups work on a consolidation project which needs less constant attention.
- Distributes the responsibility for learning among the pupils.
- In group work several groups are working at the same time, the teacher is able to circulate and has a good chance of sitting alongside a significant number of pupils without hindering general progress.
- Helps pupils to work together co-operatively and allows them to help each other and learn from each other, thus removing that stigma of failure for slow learners
- Pupils are given a chance to work at their own pace, and become less teacher-dependent.
- In group work, communication throughout is paramount. This is true of practical as well as discussion groups. Even though there is a lot of chatter, not all of it will be on the task, but most of it will be useful. Pupils will be explaining things to each other in their own language. Some of the information may have originated from the teacher, but it will be translated by the pupils.
- In group work a free exchange of ideas is possible. Pupils can express thoughts, feelings, attitudes and information. They can witness the way other pupils are tackling or clarifying problems and learn from this.
- In order to proceed, groups have to regulate their interactions. Individuals have to learn to adopt helpful roles. They have to learn to listen, to express ideas clearly, to settle disputes and reach consensus. They have to learn how to give and receive support. They may have to learn some formal roles.

8. Grouping by Interest

Most teachers provide some opportunity for choices of interests in the course of the day or week, and this may involve allowing children to choose a group working at a particular topic (Dean, 1992).

In this strategy, children should be grouped according to the interests they show, and they must be given time to get to know each other's interests and to group themselves accordingly. There is an overlap here with grouping by friendship, since there is some evidence to suggest (Allen, 1971) that many teachers will themselves have observed that the interests pupils have outside the school seem to prove stronger than those developed in school and that friendship plays an important part in choice of activity and interest in any kind of project (Kelly, 1978).

Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

Although group work considered as a reasonable technique because it introduces an educational solution for pupils' educational problems, but it can disappoint theses pupils if all the advantages and disadvantages are not considered. Some of these advantages and disadvantages have been set out by different authors and researchers such as Dean (1992), DES (1978), Collins (1986), Rogers & Kutnick (1990), Kerry & Sands (1982), Marland (1993), Galton & Williamson (1992), Mc Namara & Waugh (1993), Alexander *et al* (1991) whose finding has been summarised as follow:

Group Work Advantages

- Enables teachers to provide work of an appropriate level of difficulty for pupils.

7. Friendship Groups

Most of the pupils like to work with their friends and there will be occasions where friendship groups work well. There are two caveats, however. There is also the problem of the child whom no one wants and the group where one dominant child does all the work .There are also ethnic questions for the teacher to solve. A teacher may need to do some engineering in such cases. Thus a teacher needs to use a mixture of groupings, sometimes forming ability groups or groups at the same stage of learning, sometimes deliberately structuring groups, so that children learn from one another, and sometimes using friendship groups. This enables children to gain from the different contributions of other children (Dean, 1992).

This approach is favoured by many teachers who encourage the grouping of pupils according to friendship patterns within the class or more strictly speaking, allow pupils to group themselves according to friendship patterns. Friendship is a more important factor in school than many teachers realise. In particular, it has an important bearing on behaviour. It is unwise for teachers to ignore such friendship patterns, therefore, but whether they should go to the other extreme and use them as only basis for grouping pupils is questionable (Kelly, 1978).

This grouping is not recommended for special needs children who suffer from low self-esteem. However, it is useful when used with noisy special needs children who disturb others in the classroom. This grouping can be used as a treatment for them for good behaviour.

If children are tested in order to group them, problems arise when some children gain unexpectedly high or low results, perhaps due to external influences. Choosing the tests is problematic, and if several different tests are used, then there are inevitably difficulties in assessing the mark. Borderline cases, equal scores, and the limitations on the practical sizes of groups all add to the complications (Rathbone, 1988).

In the classroom where ability groups are maintained throughout the year, competition can be fierce, not only amongst children, but also amongst parents. Parent pressure is often brought to bear on children, the school and teachers and this can sometimes affect the social atmosphere of the classroom. The implications of ability groupings in a mixed age class can give even greater cause for concern. If children of a certain age are put into lower ability group than younger children, it can affect the children's self image and result in behavioural problems (Rathbone, 1988).

Where work is differentiated according to the abilities of pupils, a quieter working atmosphere tends to prevail. Introductions to lessons are mostly orderly and children are attentive. However, seating arrangements often make it difficult for all children to see the teacher or the chalkboard and in such cases some children do not pay attention and are occasionally disruptive (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

The quality of children's work varies, in the main, according to ability although some pupils produce poor work when seated near to disruptive colleagues or when they themselves are misbehaving, (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

has the opportunity to re-group for different activities, however, and this will help to prevent some children assuming that they are in the bottom group for everything and poor at all school work (Dean, 1992).

The advantages of such an arrangement is that it provides the teacher with relatively homogenous groups to work with avoiding some, if not all, of the social difficulties associated with streaming on a large scale. Furthermore, it is relatively easy for such a grouping to be changed for different subjects or to allow for the different rates of progress of individual children. Thus, it would be claimed that a pupil can be working with fellow pupils of roughly equivalent ability in all subjects where this kind of approach is felt to be relevant and can be readily moved 'up' or 'down' as his position changes in relation to the others (Kelly, 1978).

Rathbone (1988) claims that the problem with ability grouping is that the children in the lower ability groups are made to feel inferior. To avoid this, teachers can vary the 'end-product' of a piece of work. Children with lower ability can often speak well and are able to hold their own in a discussion. If the children have to write up a discussion, a group who are poor at writing may not be able to produce a piece of work to compare with the efforts of other higher ability groups (Rathbone, 1988).

Methods of choosing groups of children by ability are often criticised. If teachers rely on their own intuitive for knowledge of children, an unconscious bias is likely to appear, knowledge of the children's parents, home background, accent, dialect, brothers and sisters, etc, may all influence the teacher's opinions of a child (Rathbone, 1988).

Ability grouping is preferable for some mathematics work where further progress is entirely dependent on the understanding of previous work. A group of children should not be working together at the same level if they are at different levels of understanding. In these cases, it might be better if the children worked individually. If children are grouped specifically to give them extra help in a particular area of the curriculum, perhaps because they are having difficulties, or because special provisions are being given to those who may be classified as 'gifted', it is obviously better to group the children according to their ability (Rathbone, 1988).

The attitudes and expectations of the teacher and the school make all the difference to the way children view ability grouping and to its value as a form of organisation. A good teacher can make each group feel that they are special and deserving of the best attention or that the children in some groups are failures, although few teachers deliberately reinforce failure. It is important that the school encourages more able groups to be sympathetic towards the less able pupils, who having been withdrawn into a less able group may also draw conclusions about themselves from the accommodation, books and materials provided for them which demonstrate the value placed on them by the school and the teacher. A group which meets in poor accommodation with ancient books and materials, possibly designed for younger children, draw their own conclusions. Withdrawal grouping becomes more acceptable if the very able are sometimes withdrawn and if other groups formed with different criteria, are also withdrawn from to time. What is true of ability grouping within the school will also be true within the classroom, especially of grouping which tends to be permanent. The classroom teacher

Conversely, a teacher might consider the developmental stages of a group of children and deliberately mix the stages, so that the immature might be learn from the more mature. This might be a useful thing to do in drama for example (Dean, 1992).

4. Grouping by Learning Needs

There will be occasions when a teacher selects a group which are at about the same stage to work with, perhaps introducing new work, checking or consolidating past work or drawing together the work of a previous session. Grouping by learning needs allows groups to vary from day-to-day and week-to-week as children progress and their needs change. It also makes evident the value of analysing the needs of individuals (Dean, 1992).

5. Social Learning Groups

Children need to acquire the skills of working with others .A particular individual may also benefit from working with children who provide good models by virtue of being older or good workers or good group members or just a good influence (Dean, 1992). Such a group might contain a slow learner or a disabled child who can be supported by the other children.

6. Ability Grouping

In mixed-ability classes, teachers group the pupils according to their abilities (Barker, 1970). Pupils will be grouped according to their previous achievements in the subject concerned and can then be pushed on at a rate that is right for their level of attainment in a group with others whose pace of working is roughly similar. In this kind of situation, the teacher prepares not one class lesson but four or five group lessons, and thus covers the content of the course at a rate appropriate to each group (Kelly, 1978).

Mortimore *et al* (1988) found that teachers are not sufficiently aware of age differences among children within the same class and make little allowance for this. Younger children are generally regarded as less able even though they make normal progress but from an earlier starting point. A child's date of birth may have all sorts of consequences for his or her education. A child who is among the oldest in the class may appear to do well and this in turn may be motivating. A child who looks mature may be treated as older and is thus encouraged to behave in more mature ways. A child who is one of the youngest may be stimulated to emulate the older children and may thus make good progress. On the other hand such a child may become depressed about doing less well than older children and develop a self-image which suggests a person who is not very competent and consequently may cease to try very hard. A child who is young within the class may also be under-estimated, especially a child who is small and immature. Teachers and others will speak to the child as a younger child and their expectations may be lower than the child's ability justifies. Teachers need to be aware of their tendency to treat children as being the age they appear to be and the effect of this (Dean, 1992).

3. Development Groups

The teacher is concerned to achieve a measure of homogeneity not by grouping for age or ability but by grouping according to the stage of development. This is most likely to be relevant in practical work like physical education, but might be used in other areas (Dean, 1992). This setting has been very common in secondary schools, but less used in primary schools.

The Formation of Groups

Different kinds of grouping are needed for different activities. Children should have the opportunity to be part of different groups and that grouping should be flexible and varied. Group composition should be a conscious decision on the part of the teacher. Groups may be formed as follows:

1. Grouping for Class Management

There are many situations where the teacher needs to divide a class in order to undertake particular activities. This kind of grouping is very common in physical education and in art/craft activities because there is a limited amount of space and equipment which has to be shared. It is also necessary to group children from time to time for the teacher's benefit to make work easier. For example, if a teacher wishes to demonstrate or show children something it cannot be seen properly if the group is too large (Dean, 1992).

2. Grouping by Age

The majority of primary schools group children into classes by age when they can, although an age group may represent a wide ability group. There is evidence from the HMI Primary Survey (1978) that so far as junior age children are concerned, children in classes with a single age group tend to achieve more than those in classes of mixed age.

Classes of mixed ages may be the better solution, especially if the teacher involved considers the children as individuals and is concerned to extend the thinking and achievement of the older and more able children as well as that of the younger children (Dean, 1992).

However, the work station method of organisation has the disadvantage that class teaching is difficult unless a large space can be created away from work bays. Children will need to have drawers separated from tables if they are to reach pencils, rulers and so forth without disturbing others (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

7. **Large Groups**

A large group can be from a full class group to the whole school, for example, in the daily assembly. A large group does not lend itself to discussion as easily as a smaller group and it is much easier for a child to opt out in a large group. On the other hand, there are activities, such as some aspects of music and dance, where the large group provides an experience of involvement and participation which is very valuable. Large groups require much more detailed preparation than small groups. It may be more possible to group children according to the needs of future development.

Working in groups of six, children often waste time arguing over professional standards and disturbing each other. In such classrooms the teacher spends much time demanding a lower noise level. Although children sit at tables of six, they are rarely required to work co-operatively as a group of six and most commonly work as individuals (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

However, in this method, Children may work better when a variety of approaches are employed, especially when teachers have given thought to devising the method most suited to the task. Those classrooms in which resources are readily available, and in which children can easily find materials without reference to the teacher, are generally the most productive and the least disrupted (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

6. Work Bays

This strategy can also be called a 'work station', a method of organising children in the classroom, is that of developing work bays in which children work individually, in pairs, or in small groups, according to the task in which they are engaged. A classroom might include the following:

- An art bay where up to six children can work.
- A craft and technology bay for up to six children.
- A writing area for up to four children.
- A carpeted reading area for up to eight children.
- An investigations table at which two children can work.
- A reference corner for children to visit throughout the day and for two children to work in as a lesson.
- A mathematics area with equipment at hand to be used in the area or taken to a work situation.

This method has the following advantages:

- The teacher can concern him-herself most with the children undertaking tasks which require a lot of teacher input, while others are working on projects which require little assistance.
- The use of bays usually involves having some tables placed against walls and this releases space in the rest of the class-room.
- Children learn to focus upon discrete subject areas in line with some current thinking on curriculum delivery.
- The judicious spacing of children reduces possible conflict between pupils.
- Materials can be readily available for each activity and can easily be located by pupils, saving time at the beginning of lessons.

in higher education, and which is being introduced into some primary schools, namely the 'square' or 'horseshoe' model. Desks are arranged around the edge of the classroom with children facing into the middle of the room (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993). This method also has been discussed by (Moyles, 1993). This method has the following advantages:

- Allows every child to see the teacher during the class lessons.
- Children can see each other and they are more inclined to listen to each other's contributions than when they are seated in rows with their backs to colleagues, or in groups where eye contact and visibility are the difficulty.
- A large space is available in the middle of the room for stories, large pieces of artwork, etc.
- Children are able, when required, to work in pairs or groups of three which are productive and unlikely to exclude people.
- The teacher can see, at a glance, what every child is doing and reach those with problems quickly.
- This strategy allows flexibility and enables a variety of teaching methods to be employed (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

5. Pairs and Trios

This form of grouping has a good deal to offer and probably is insufficiently used. A pair of children tackling a mathematical or scientific problem may benefit considerably from talking it through. This also applies to the situation in which one child teaches another.

This method not only helps the mathematical or scientific learning by making different aspects of the problem explicit, but it makes demands on each child's language ability (Dean, 1992).

'on-task', seating arrangements may vary (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993). This strategy has been discussed also by Campbell J. (1995) and Campbell R. (1991).

However, where all children are given the same task, noise level and disruptive behaviour may increase as some children finish work before others, although many teachers hand prepared additional work for such pupils (Mc Namara and Waugh, 1993).

3. Single Class Integrated Day

In this strategy, children are organised into groups and each group given a different task. Often children work individually within the groups, although some tasks demand co-operation between children.

Classrooms tend to be very lively and often noisy and disrupted. Children who attempting to produce, for instance written work are particularly hampered in their efforts by the distraction of working near others who are undertaking particular activities.

The method has the advantage that limited resources can be used almost constantly and that the planning for a series of activities, once prepared, can be adapted in the light of the experience of the first group to attempting them.

However, written work and tasks requiring concentration are frequently poorly done and many children achieve very little during lengthy work sessions. For example after 75 minutes working on writing a letter, two pupils in a group of five in one class have not completed the first sentence and no child has finished that letter (Mc Namara and Waugh,1993).

4. The 'Square' or 'Horseshoe'

This is another strategy of organisation which is typically found

1. Individual Work

This term can be used to describe a situation where children work on individual tasks which may be chosen by the children or by the teacher. These tasks could arise from topic work or a class activity or be a development of the child's own ideas.

Individual work also can be used to describe children who work at their own pace through a structured scheme. This may mean that every one is doing English or Mathematics at the same time, but the actual work each child is doing is different.

Individual work would seem to be most appropriate for a situation in which there is a range of ability within the group, but a common theme. For example, an environmental study might involve a variety of different questions and working plans so that the work could be matched to the ability of the class learning which needs to be done step-by-step. Such aspects of work which are concerned with individual understanding and practice learning which is matched to individual need, and differentiates children according to their ability, stage of development and the stage they have reached in the work in hand and in the classroom curriculum providing individual opportunities for creative and practical work, though this may contribute to a common goal (Dean, 1992).

2. Whole Class Teaching

This usually involves the teacher in introducing a lesson to the whole class who then complete tasks which are sometimes the same for all children and are sometimes differentiated according to the abilities of the children. The method is associated with a traditional classroom and the children generally spend a good deal of time

5. Adjourning

This final stage refers to the phase when the group comes to an end. Without this phase being completed satisfactorily, the experience will seem unfinished and awkward in some way. Groups need to look back over their time together and forward to the next step. There is often a great reluctance to part and this may be expressed in plans to meet again. Endings are particularly hard for some pupils and these difficult feelings may be shown through behaviour that seems to push the group apart.

These stages are experienced by all groups regardless of the length of their existence. A short -lived group will spend less time at each stage, whereas a longer- running group will not only draw out the stages, but also have more chance to return and recycle.

However, some groups can become labelled as 'difficult'. This would appear to happen because they have got stuck at one of the earlier stages, and cannot pass on to the productivity stage. If this is understood, and the problem identified, then it is possible to help a group overcome such difficulties. There is no such thing as a bad group, just problematic group dynamics.

Group Work Strategies

In the primary school classroom, children can be organised for learning in groups of many kinds, varying in size, composition and permanency. Each kind of grouping has its advantages and disadvantages for particular activities and particular children and a strong case can be made for doing some work on an individual basis, some in a variety of different groups and some on a traditional class basis. These strategies are considered below:

this means trying to make it work in ways which seem familiar, it usually follows that each person behaves in the way they have learnt to react in their best known group. Obviously this is no easy task and it can seem impossible that those pupils will ever come together as a group. At the same time the group will be struggling to find its own feet. After the former dependency stage, this can feel particularly difficult to those in leadership roles. After appearing to have been needed by everyone, the leader now feels that it is all falling apart and that the group would rather that he or she went away. This stage may be judged to be the teacher's fault. One way in which this model is helpful is in bringing about a realisation that all healthy groups need to go through this stage in order to work well together.

3. **Norming**

This is the third stage which comes about as the group begins to work out how it will behave. The patterns of behaviour become the 'norm' for that group. Each group will make its own norm, although there will of course be similarities between groups. In doing this, the formation of a successful group seems possible again. This stage leads into fourth stage.

4. **Performing**

'Performing', is where the task of the group is achieved. In school, the task of the group might be said to be learning. In this way, the model seems to start at one end and work smoothly and continuously through to the other. The group will need to return to earlier stages at times because it is not possible, for instance, to deal with all the conflict the first time through. A new task or a new project may set off a mini-version cycle again.

collaborative group work for cases where all pupils in the group are expected to work together to produce a single outcome (Galton and Williamson,1992).

Stages of Group Work

There are natural stages in the development of a group. All groups go through stages and knowledge of these stages can be a great help to a teacher. These stages are highlighted by Thacker *et al* (1992):

1. Forming

Forming is the first stage when a group first comes together. In a room there may be a group of strangers, or people who know some people but not everyone. What they have in common is that they are to become a group. At this stage, it is not know whether they will become a group which is merely so in name only, or one which will work well together. What is likely, however, is that there will be lot of anxiety since those coming together are not sure what will be asked of them and how they will be treated or how they will treat each other. At this point the group is very dependent on the leader because it wants to know where the boundaries are, and what types of behaviour are permissible. This is a familiar situation for teachers at the start of the year. Although they are in the leadership position, most teachers are also feeling anxious. They are asking themselves whether they will get on with these children, how the class will seem, what standards and rules to impose this year and so on.

2. Storming

This is the next stage, which is also familiar to teachers. In this stage each member is trying to make the group comfortable. Since

is attending to one group of children the other pupils are expected to continue to collaborate with each other. The task is organised in such a way that individual pupils within the group contribute to the joint outcome. Thus, children may be asked to discuss how to plan a scientific experiment together, making certain that the testing is fair and deciding how best to record their observations. On another occasion, children might be asked to compose a mime which would then be performed in front of the rest of the class. This arrangement calls, a 'co-operative group'. They distinguished between two situations of group work:

The first situation they called 'co-operative group work' as the situation where pupils work on the same task but each have individual assignments which eventually are put together to form a joint outcome. One extended example of this kind of activity involved the children in planning a day trip for the class within a limited budget. Within this objective, matters such as the location, transport, food and activities had to be decided upon and planned for. Each pupil took responsibility for different aspects of the task (Galton and Williamson, 1992).

The second situation of group work is 'collaborative group work'. This involves all children contributing to a single outcome and often involves problem-solving activities, particularly in cases where the group has to debate a social or moral issue and produce an agreed solution or recommendations. However, the distinction between co-operative and collaborative group work is not always clear-cut. In planning the outing, for example, the teacher may decide that the pupils should work in pairs. We shall, however, always refer to such cases as co-operative group work and reserve the term,

The study will explore group work in the primary classroom and will examine the characteristics of group work; the stages of group and its development, group work strategies including the formation of groups and the advantages and disadvantages of group work for special needs pupils and mainstream pupils in the mainstream schools.

Definition of Group Work

Group work encompasses knowledge, attitudes and skills which, when put into effect, allow a group of whatever age to work together constructively, achieving their tasks in a way with which everyone is happy. The curriculum, with its rich variety of tasks performed by children in small and large groups, is precisely the kind of work programme enhanced and facilitated by effective group work Just as with other educational tools, such as writing (Thacker *et al*, 1992).

Collins (1986) used the term, group work, to refer to teaching approaches which are based around pupils working together collaboratively, and paying as much attention to the process by which the task is undertaken as they pay to the task itself. When a teacher subdivides a class into small groups as a strategy for classroom management this does not necessarily mean that this teacher is going to employ a group work approach. The teacher might choose to address each group formally or set individual assignments within groups (Collins, 1986).

However, Galton and Williamson (1992) defined group work as a kind of grouping which seeks to make more effective use of the time teachers have for contact with pupils. Moreover, when the teacher

The study was based in this field on the experience of developed countries such as the United State and the United Kingdom.

The study considered that group work is a primary phase that should be taken for mainstreaming special needs children in mainstream schools.

Introduction

Groups play a large and important part in the lives of all of us. We are all members of a number of small groups; the family, the office or department, and our membership of these groups is perhaps the single most important factor in our lives. Certainly, it is through membership of these groups that our lives and attitudes are shaped and modified and it is to these groups that we owe our most easily recognisable loyalty. It is easier to see ourselves as members of small groups of this kind than of society as a whole.

Most of us spend our lives living and working with groups of other people. We are born into families, which are small groups and we continue to develop and live or work in groups, large and small, for the rest of our lives. However, one of the most familiar and important groupings, is that used by the teacher with his or her class in the primary or junior stage of education that is "group work" (Thacker *et al*, 1992).

Group work requires effort from the classroom teacher. It is useful for the pupils themselves and enjoyable and interesting for both the classroom teacher and the pupils.

GROUP WORK IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

DR . Salwa Mostafa Khusheim

مستخلص الدراسة

تتناول الدراسة أحد اهم الجوانب المكوِّنة لتنظيم المدرسة الإبتدائية، و هو العمل الجماعي في صفوف المرحلة الإبتدائية.

و تبحث الدراسة العمل الجماعي في الصف الإبتدائي، بحيث تتناول خصائص العمل الجماعي، و مراحل تكوين المجموعة و تطورها، و طرق العمل الجماعي. كما تبحث الدراسة مميزات و مساوئ العمل الجماعي لكل من الأطفال العاديين و الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة الذين يدرسون في المدارس العادية.

واستندت الدراسة بتجربة الدول المتقدمة في هذا المجال و هي الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية و المملكة المتحدة من خلال الأبحاث و الدراسات السابقة.

و قد اعتبرت الدراسة بأن العمل الجماعي هو مرحلة اولية يجب اتخاذها لدمج الأطفال ذوي الاحتياجات الخاصة في مدارس الدمج.

Abstract

This study will explore one of the most important structural aspects in the organisation of the primary school, this is: group work in the primary classroom.

The study will explore group work in the primary classroom and will examine the characteristics of group work; the stages of group and its development, group work strategies including the formation of groups.

This study will examine the advantages and disadvantages of working in groups for special needs pupils and mainstream pupils in the ordinary schools.