

Taxonomy Teams

Randomised seating strategy

Do your learners sit in pretty much the same seats every day? Do they feel uncomfortable when you move them? Do you have cliques and/or loners in your groups? If you answer yes to any of these questions, then there is a strong chance that you are not sufficiently building the social infrastructure of your new groups.

If you use positive, educationally sound randomising seating strategies from day 1, then the issues above could well be a thing of the past.

To run Taxonomy Teams, all you need is an element of your subject that can be considered in two taxonomic levels. This is much easier than it sounds; below are few examples.

Animal care

Tier 1	Tier 2				
	1	2	3	4	5
Terriers	West Island White	Yorkshire Terrier	<i>Terrier 3</i>	<i>Terrier 4</i>	<i>Terrier 5</i>
Retrievers	Labrador	Golden Retriever	<i>Retriever 3</i>	<i>Retriever 4</i>	<i>Retriever 5</i>
Sheepdogs	Shetland Sheepdog	<i>etc.</i>			
Toy dogs	Shih Tzu	<i>etc.</i>			
<i>etc.</i>					

Motor vehicle

Tier 1	Tier 2				
	1	2	3	4	5
People carriers	Ford Galaxy	Citroen Picasso	<i>Carrier 3</i>	<i>Carrier 4</i>	<i>Carrier 5</i>
Sports cars	Aston Martin DB9	Audi R8	<i>Sports 3</i>	<i>Sports 4</i>	<i>Sports 5</i>
Saloon	Jaguar XF	<i>etc.</i>			
Hatchback	Ford Fiesta	<i>etc.</i>			
<i>etc.</i>					

Education

Bloom's taxonomy?

Physics

Laws and their properties?

Biology/physiology

Body parts and bones?

You get the idea..

This strategy not only randomises the seating, it also means learners: learn from the conversations they need to find their group colleagues; have fun (as it feels like a game); do not feel that they are simply being manipulated to split them up from their friends.

The number of tier 1s and tier 2s that you need depend on the number of learners you have in your class, the number of groups you want, and the size of each of those groups.

Instructions

This example uses food groups.

- Print the Food Group Cards sheet and cut into 20 separate cards.
- Print the Food Group Labels and cut into five separate labels.
- Place one Food Group Label on each desk.
- Randomly arrange the Food Group Cards on a table next to the entrance to the room.
- As learners arrive, ask them to take one card each, but do not say why.
- At the appointed time, ask learners to sit in their Food Group Categories. Do not tell them to which category they belong; allow them to find their category through discussion with their peers. If any learners are experiencing particular difficulties, use coaching questions to help them find their group.
- If your group has less than 20 learners, then either reduce the number of categories or the number of items in each category.
- If your group has more than 20 learners, then increase the number of items in each category.

Food Group teams

Tier 1	Tier 2			
	1	2	3	4
Fruit and vegetables	Spring onion	Banana	Orange	Carrot
Meat, fish, eggs, beans (non-dairy sources of protein)	Chicken	Cod	Egg	Lentil
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta (starchy foods)	Weetabix	King Edward	Basmati	Spaghetti
Milk and dairy foods	Semi-skimmed milk	Gorgonzola	Yoghurt	Soya drink
Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar	Cola	Chocolate	Butter	Biscuits

Food Group Cards

Print this page and cut into 20 separate Food Group Cards.

Spring onion	Banana	Orange
Carrot	Chicken	Cod
Egg	Lentil	Weetabix
King Edward	Basmati	Spaghetti
Semi-skimmed milk	Gorgonzola	Yoghurt
Soya drink	Cola	Chocolate
Butter	Biscuits	

Food Group labels

Print the following two pages and cut into separate Food Group Labels.

Fruit and vegetables

**Meat, fish, eggs, beans
(non-dairy sources of protein)**

**Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta
(starchy foods)**

Milk and dairy foods

**Foods and drinks high in
fat and/or sugar**