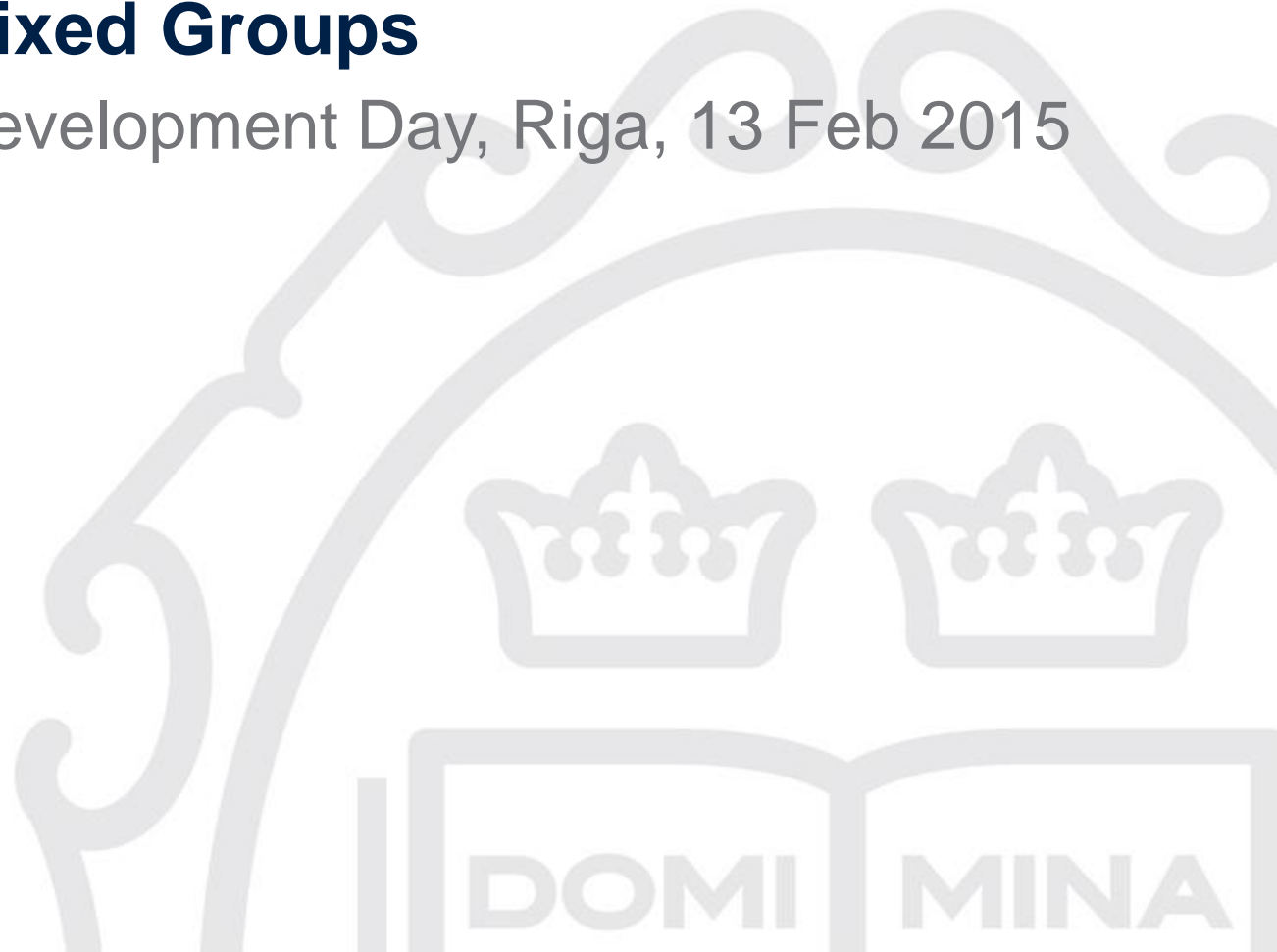


Working with Mixed Groups

Oxford Teacher Development Day, Riga, 13 Feb 2015

Edmund Dudley



In this session

- **What do we mean by *mixed ability*?**
- Challenges and opportunities
- Using materials flexibly
- Designing your own activities



A day out on the river

What can you do on the river in the summer in Oxford?

Which punt would you choose? Why?

Are students the same as punts? 😊



punts

Mixed-level classes

Grouping students by level: does it really give us same-level groups?

Every learner has an individual range of levels.
Every class is a mixed-level class.

Scrivener (1994/2005:69)

Mixed classes

More than just 'ability'

- Work with a partner.
- Think about your learners. How do they differ from each other?
- Continue the list
 - language-learning ability
 - language knowledge
 - learning style
 - attitude to the language

Mixed classes

Differences between learners

- language-learning ability
- language knowledge
- learning style
- attitude to the language
- cultural background
- mother tongue
- intelligence
- world knowledge
- learning experience
- knowledge of other languages
- age or maturity
- gender
- personality
- confidence
- motivation
- interests
- independence
- self-discipline
- educational level

Ur (1996:304)

In this session

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
- **Challenges and opportunities**
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Heterogeneous groups

The pros and cons

Pros:

- Diversity and variety
- Promoting tolerance and acceptance of differences
- Co-operation and peer-teaching

Cons:

- Keeping everyone interested
- Catering to different needs
- Finding suitable materials



Keeping students on task

What we can do

They are not interested in the topic

- Personalise topics
- Generate interest in tasks
- Offer choices
and incentives

Keeping students on task

What we can do

The language is too difficult / easy

- Provide extra support
- Provide extra challenges
- Differentiate activities

Keeping students on task

What we can do

They do not feel involved in the lesson

- 'Signpost' goals and activities
- Work in pairs and small groups
- Give students classroom roles
- Offer choices
- Respond to students' feedback

In this session

- What do we mean by *mixed ability*?
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Using materials flexibly

Compulsory and optional

- Think of two more words to add to each group:
 1. **meat:** chicken, ...
 2. **vegetables:** potato, ...
 3. **fruit:** pear, ...
 4. **drinks:** juice, ...
- Now you have 30 seconds.
→ Write as many different fruits as you can!



Using materials flexibly

Compulsory and optional

What are the strengths of this activity?

- Everyone gets a chance to contribute
- Stronger students do not dominate
- Students need to listen to one other
- Students can learn from one other



Using materials flexibly

Open-ended prompts



Speaking

8 **Get ready to SPEAK** Work in pairs. Read the situations (1–4) and discuss what you think might have just happened.

- 1 Children are laughing.
- 2 A businessman is running and looking at his watch.
- 3 A girl is holding her head.
- 4 A man is standing next to a car in the middle of the road.

Using materials flexibly

From closed to open prompts



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2 Match a word in A to a word in B to make compound nouns. Then match them to the definitions 1–7.

A ■ chocolate ■ fruit ■ ham ■ ice ■ olive ■ orange
■ tomato

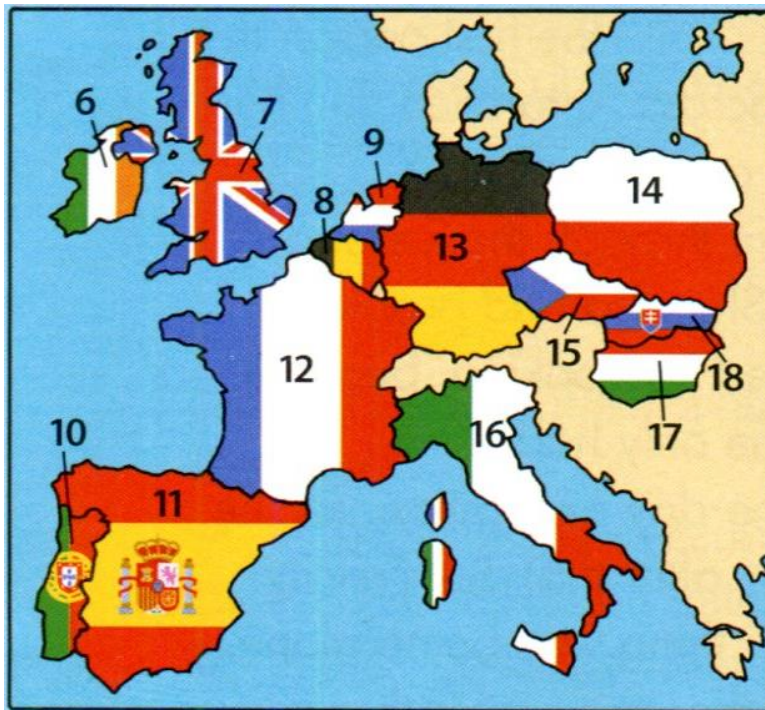
B ■ cake ■ cream ■ juice ■ oil ■ salad ■ sandwich ■ sauce

Using materials flexibly

From closed to open prompts



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Where would you write these words on the map?

- football
- music
- love
- beauty
- food

Now explain your choices.

Using materials flexibly



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1  **2.02** Complete the dialogue with the doctor's questions (a–e). Then listen and check.

a Are you allergic to
[redacted]?

b Have you had any other
[redacted]?

c Have you put any [redacted]
in it?

d Is it [redacted]?

e When did it [redacted]?

Using materials flexibly



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Doctor Good morning. What can I do for you?
Patient Well, I've got a problem with my eye.
Doctor Oh, yes. I can see that. ¹ _____
Patient Three or four days ago.
Doctor I see. ² _____
Patient Yes, it's very sore. It hurts when I blink.
Doctor Let me have a look at it. Yes ... the eyelid is very swollen. ³ _____
Patient Yes. I got some eye drops from the chemist's, but they didn't do anything.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a Are you allergic to penicillin? | c Have you put any drops in it? |
| b Have you had any other symptoms? | d Is it painful? |
| | e When did it start? |

Using materials flexibly

Mediation activity

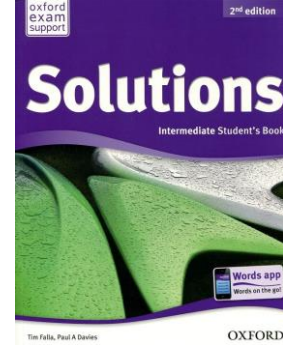
Student A: Doctor (only speaks English)

Student B: Patient (only speaks L1)

Student C: Mediator (speaks both languages)

Doctor Good morning. What can I do for you?
Patient Well, I've got a problem with my eye.
Doctor Oh, yes. I can see that. ¹ _____
Patient Three or four days ago.
Doctor I see. ² _____
Patient Yes, it's very sore. It hurts when I blink.
Doctor Let me have a look at it. Yes ... the eyelid is very swollen. ³ _____
Patient Yes. I got some eye drops from the chemist's, but they didn't do anything.

Using materials flexibly



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- 8 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Read the headline below and think about possible explanations. Use the words below to help you or your own ideas.

drug-dealers in hiding kidnapped murdered
on the run robbers stolen

**25-YEAR-OLD
BUSINESSMAN
DISAPPEARS FROM
HOTEL IN MEXICO,
LEAVING \$100,000 IN
CASH IN SUITCASE**



What do you think happened?

Differentiation

A. What do you think happened?

He might have ...

He could have ...

B. What do you think happened to the
businessman?

...

C. Choose the best explanation:

- *He might have left it there to collect later.*
- *He could have been kidnapped by somebody.*

A Police interview

- Student A: The Businessman
- Student B: The Police Officer
- Student C: The interpreter

**25-YEAR-OLD
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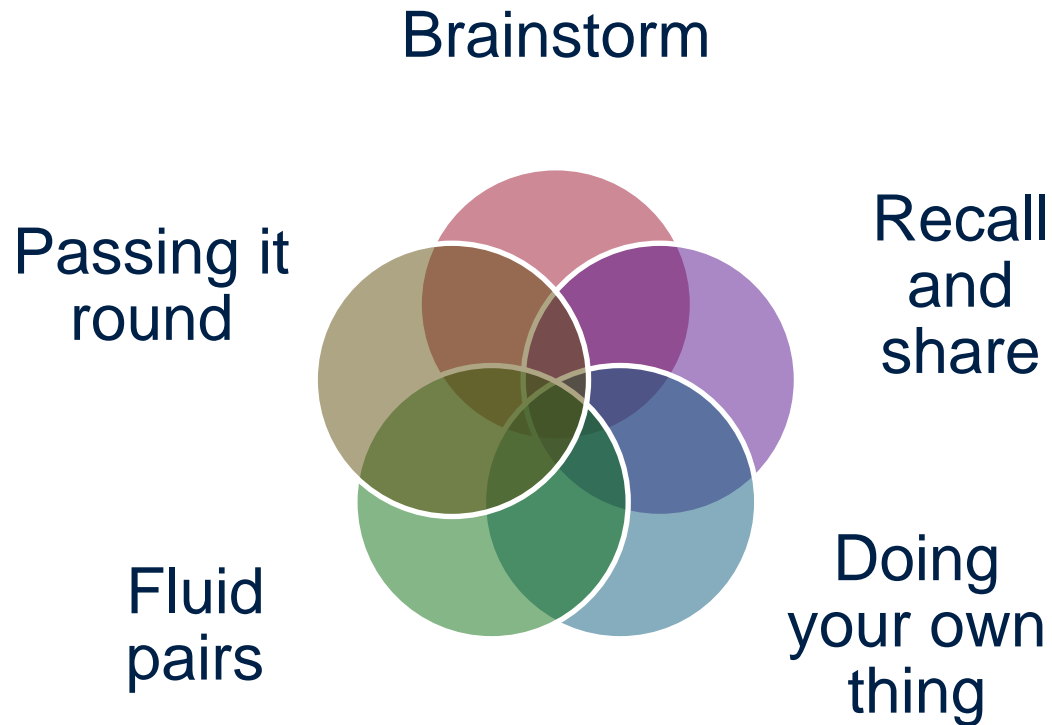
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- **Designing your own activities**



Designing your own activities

Five activity types – Penny Ur



Brainstorm

Using pictures



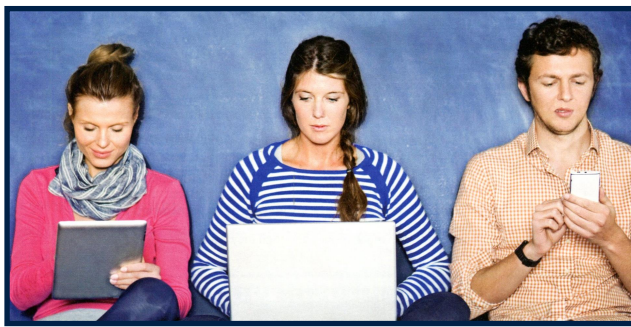
Free association

What are they doing?



Show your answers to a partner. Were they the same?

Decide which answers you like best



V Gadgets

1 Study the list of gadgets below. Discuss the questions.

- camera ■ DVD player ■ e-reader ■ games console ■ laptop ■ MP3 player ■ smartphone ■ tablet
- Which of these gadgets do you own?
- Which of these gadgets would you like to own?
- Which one is the most important for you?
- Which one is the least important?

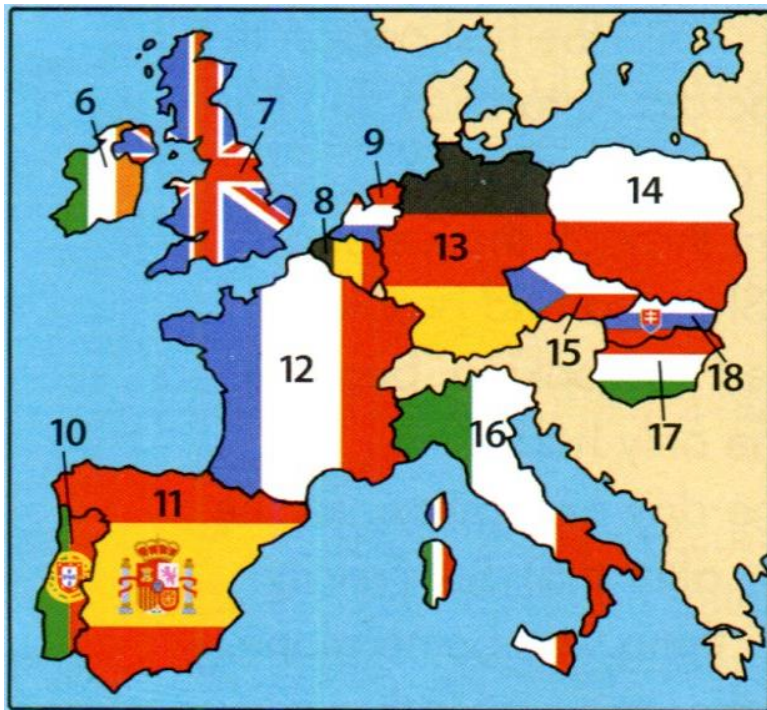
Recall and share



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Doing your own thing

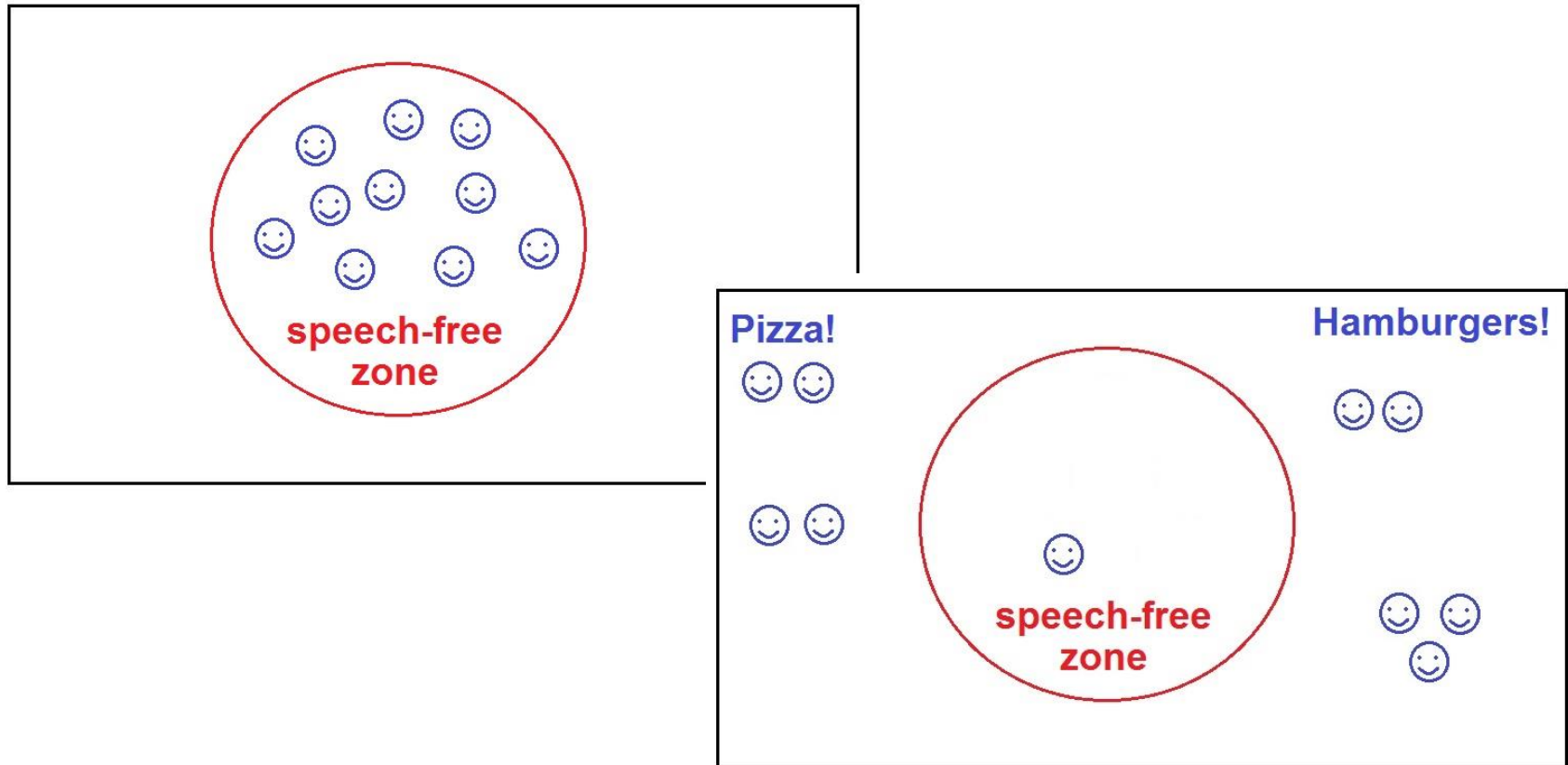
Writing storms



Choose a country. Write
as much as you can
about it in two minutes!

Fluid pairs

Speech-free zone



Passing it round



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WRITING GUIDE

■ **Task** Write a narrative about a memorable day.

■ **Ideas** Think of a memorable day and make notes about it. Think about what happened and look up any irregular past simple verb forms that you need.

■ **Plan** Organize your ideas into paragraphs.

Paragraph 1: Introduction: what happened?

Paragraph 2: The start of the day

Paragraph 3: Later in the day

Paragraph 4: How you feel about the day

■ **Write** Write your narrative. Use the strategy, your ideas and plan to help you. Remember to use the past simple and narrative adverbs.

■ **Check** Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Passing it round

Fortunately, unfortunately



Writing

- 6 Write a description of a terrible weekend. Imagine you went camping last weekend and a lot of things went wrong. You can use the situation in the listening or in exercise 4. Think about the following ideas and say what happened and how you felt.

transport the weather activities
food equipment

Begin like this:

Last weekend, I went camping with ... and ...

It was terrible! We met on Saturday morning at ...

We travelled to ...

It started to rain.

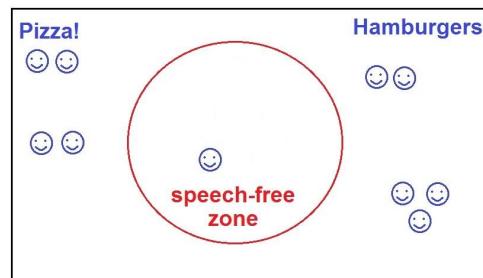
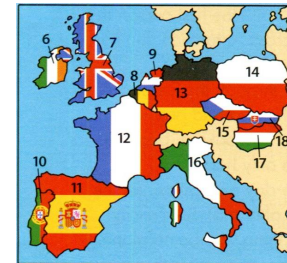
Fortunately, we had an
umbrella.

Unfortunately, it broke.

Fortunately...

Can you remember?

- Brainstorm
- Recall and share
- Doing your own thing
- Fluid pairs
- Passing it round



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- **Write** Write your narrative. Use the strategy, your ideas and plan to help you. Remember to use the past simple and narrative adverbs.
- **Check** Check your spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Over to you

Design your own activity for a mixed group

Can you think of a teaching idea using this photo?

You might want to use one of these techniques:

- Brainstorm
- Recall and share
- Doing your own thing
- Fluid pairs
- Passing it round



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