
Working with Mixed Groups

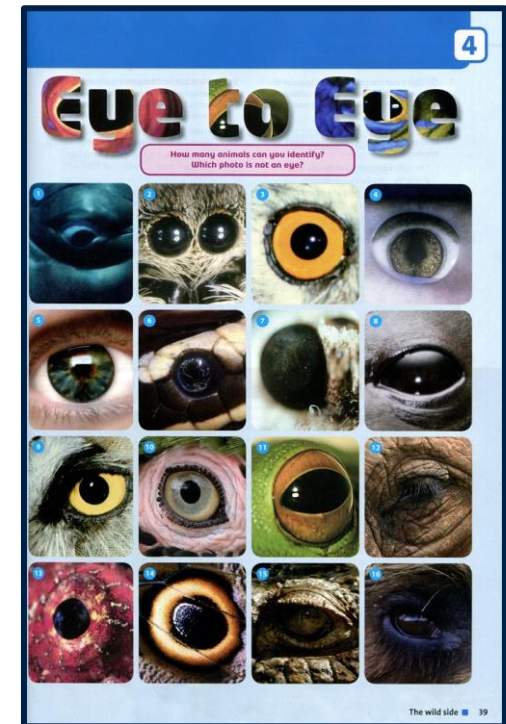
Ukraine

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

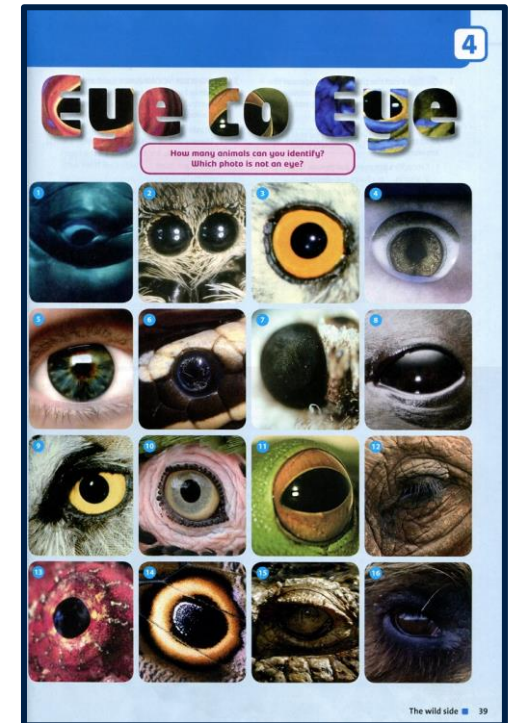
Differences between learners

- 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**
- Using materials flexibly
- Designing your own activities



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

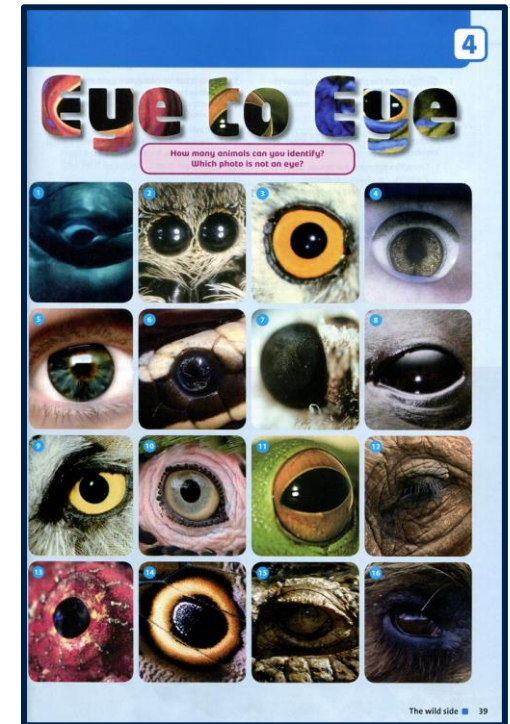
What we can do

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*?
- Challenges and opportunities
- **Using materials flexibly**
- Designing your own activities



Using materials flexibly

Compulsory and optional

- Can you think of two more words to add to each group?

STUDY STRATEGY  **Extending vocabulary**

2 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

6 ACTIVATE What do you usually eat and drink each week? Complete the sentences. Then compare with other people in the class.

- 1 I eat some ____.
- 2 I never eat any ____.
- 3 I don't eat many ____.
- 4 I drink a lot of ____.
- 5 I don't drink much ____.
- 6 I never drink any ____.

*I eat some fruit and vegetables every day.
What about you?*

*I don't eat many vegetables,
but I eat a lot of fruit.*

Finished?

What is a really horrible meal? Describe it.

Using materials flexibly

From closed to open prompts



A map of Western Europe showing a train route from Spain to Holland. The route is marked with a yellow line starting from Madrid, Spain, passing through France, Belgium, and the Netherlands to Amsterdam. The map includes labels for various countries and cities: Ireland, Dublin, Wales, London, Amsterdam, Berlin, Belgium, Brussel, Luxembourg, Luxembourg, Paris, France, Bern, Vaduz, Ljubljana, Switzerland, Monaco, Andorra, Corsica, Rome, Portugal, Lisbon, Spain, Madrid, Balearic Isl., Algiers, Tunis, and Val. The English Channel and Bay of Biscay are also labeled. A purple box with the number 7 is in the bottom left corner.

7

You're travelling by train from Spain to Holland. Which of these countries is on your route?

a France
b France and Italy
c France and Belgium

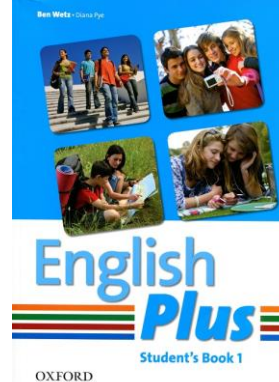
Where would you write these words on the map?

- football
- music
- love
- beauty
- food

Now explain your choices.

Using materials flexibly

Graded workbook activities



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

English
Plus
Student's Book 1

OXFORD

LANGUAGE FOCUS ■ Past simple: questions

7

- 1 ★ Complete the table with the words in the box.

Did did buy Did didn't did go didn't

Question

1 Did I / you / we / you / they win?

Short answers

Affirmative

Negative

Yes, I / you / we / you / they? No, I / you / we / you / they?

Question

4 he / she / it lose?

Short answers

Affirmative

Negative

Yes, he / she / it? No, he / she / it?

Questions

Where did I / you / we / you / they? What did he / she / it? at the shops?

- 2 ★★ Complete the past simple questions and short answers. Use *did* / *didn't* and the words in the box.

win eat break do play write watch

Did you watch a good film on TV last night?

No, I didn't.

1 she the 200m race on Saturday?

Yes, she.

2 he in the football team last week?

No, he.

3 you a lot of homework last night?

No, I.

4 they a lot of cake?

Yes, they.

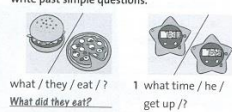
5 we a letter and say 'thank you'?

Yes, we.

6 she the world record yesterday?

No, she.

- 3 ★★ Look at the words and pictures and write past simple questions.



what / they / eat? / ?

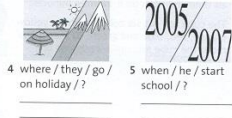
What did they eat?

1 what time / he / get up? / ?



2 who / she / visit? / ?

3 what / she / play? / ?



4 where / they / go / on holiday? / ?

5 when / he / start school? / ?

- 4 ★★★ Read the answers about Wayne Rooney's day. Write the questions.

Yes, I played football yesterday morning.

1 I had lunch at my mum's house.

2 I ate pasta for dinner.

3 I watched a film in the evening.

4 Yes, I liked the film. It was funny.

5 Yes, Coleen watched the film with me.

6 I went to bed at 11.00 p.m.

Did you play football yesterday morning?

1
2
3
4
5
6

Games ■ 59

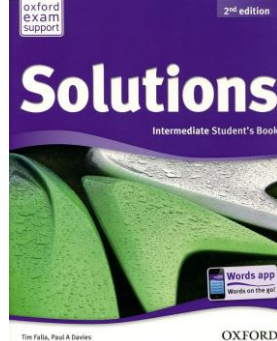
1 ★ Complete the table with the words in the box.

2 ★★ Complete the past simple questions and short answers. Use *did* / *didn't* and the words in the box.

3 ★★ Look at the words and pictures and write past simple questions.

4 ★★★ Read the answers about Wayne Rooney's day. Write the questions.

Using materials flexibly



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

- 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.*

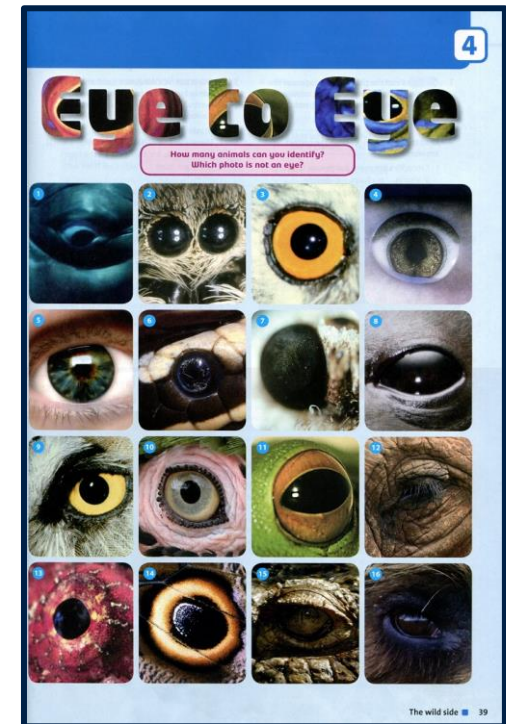
A Police interview

- Student A: The Businessman
 - *only speaks English*
- Student B: The Police Officer
 - *only speaks L1*
- Student C: The interpreter
 - *speaks both languages*



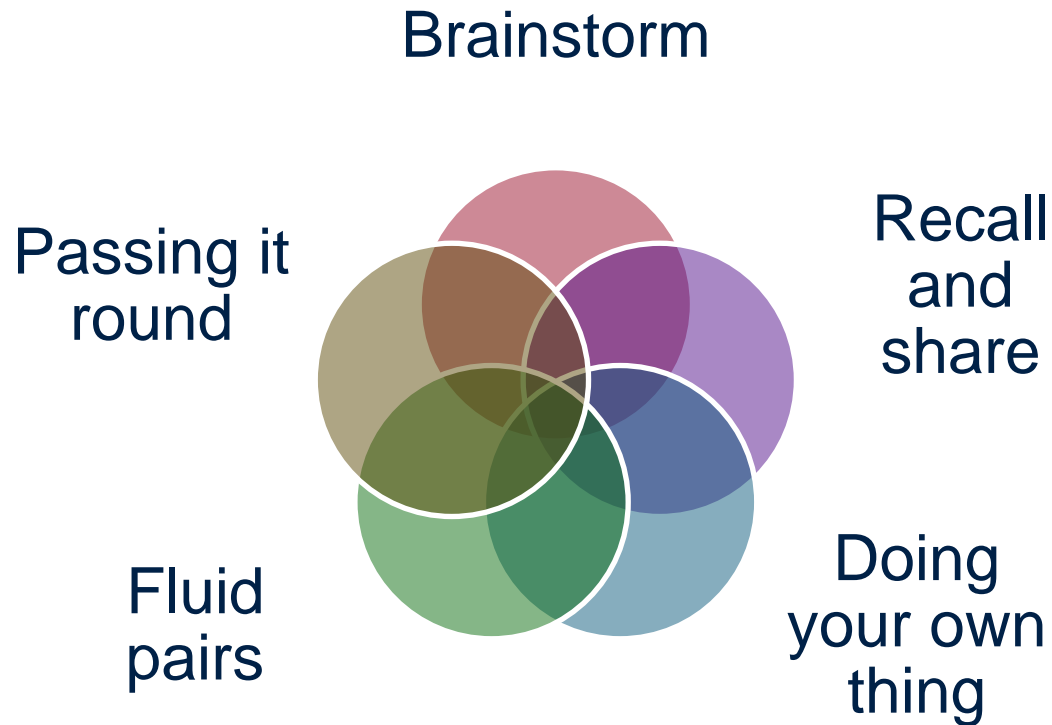
In this session

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



Designing your own activities

Five activity types – Penny Ur



Brainstorm

Using pictures

Free association

List at least seven words you associate with this picture.

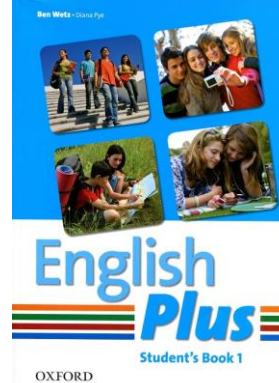


Now show your list to a partner.

Can you agree on three words?

Brainstorm

Using pictures



OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

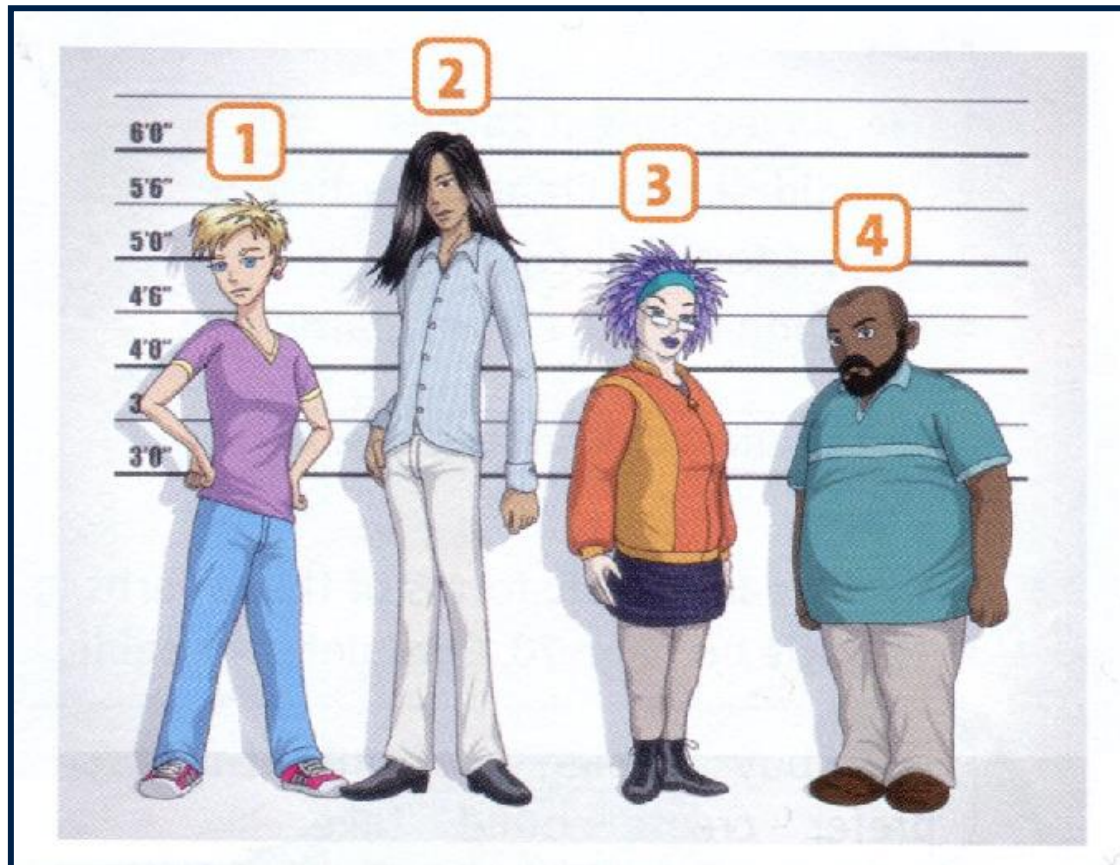
Speaking

- 4 Work in pairs and prepare a conversation. You are describing this photo to your partner. Imagine that the two people in the photo are from different countries. Answer the questions.



- Where is the place in the photo?
- Who are the people in the photo?
- What nationality are they?
- What country do they come from?
- What are the people doing in the photo?
- What is the animal?
- What is it doing?

Recall and share



Doing your own thing

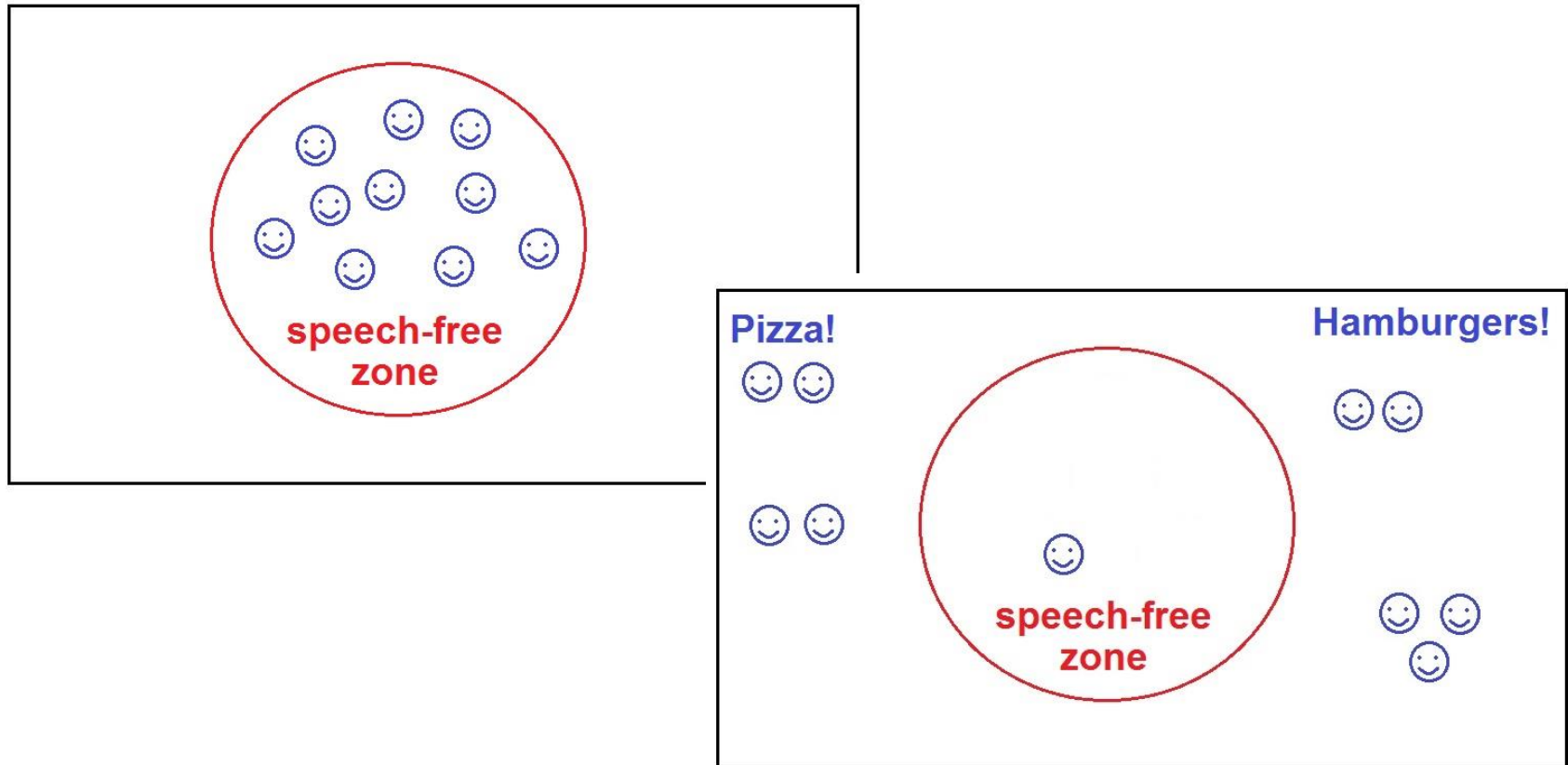
Writing storms



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

Fluid pairs

Speech-free zone



Passing it round

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.

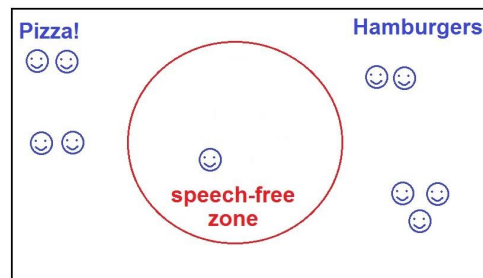
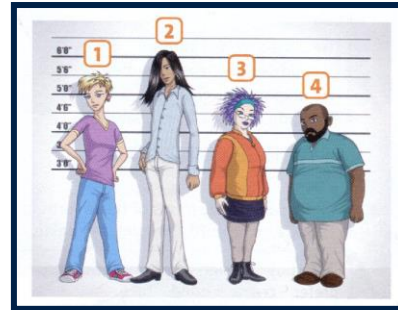
Fortunately, we had an umbrella.

Unfortunately, it broke.

Fortunately...

Can you remember?

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



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 ...

Over to you

Design your own activity for a mixed group

Can you think of a teaching idea using this photo?

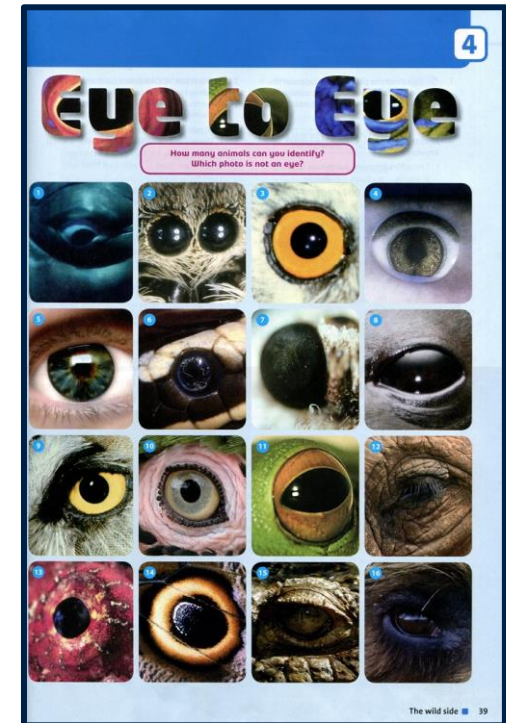
You might want to use one of these techniques:

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



In this session

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



into the **CLASSROOM**

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Mixed Ability Teaching

Edmund Dudley and
Erika Osváth

OXFORD

Working with Mixed Groups

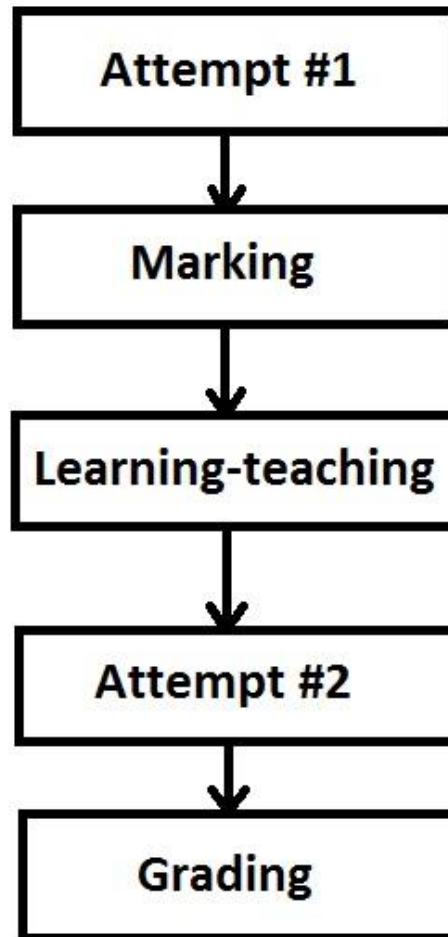
Edmund Dudley

legyened.edublogs.org



Assessment and evaluation

Two-step testing



Assessment and evaluation

Test box

