



DEVELOPING GROUP
WORK IN ENGLISH



See Barbara Bleiman's video interview with Lucy Hinchliffe, in which she discusses her use of the 'It's Good to Talk' approach with Year 11 here:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/albums/5109581>

Find out more about EMC's 'It's Good to Talk', including Barbara's introduction to this interview on EMC's blog:

<https://www.englishandmedia.co.uk/blog/>

It's Good to Talk – In Preparation for GCSE

Barbara Bleiman, who has been leading EMC's group work project, It's Good to Talk, interviewed Lucy Hinchliffe about how she has applied some of the project's approaches to her current work with Year 10s and Year 11s on AQA's Power and Conflict collection of poems. Lucy is a practicing teacher at Mayfield School in Redbridge and an active member of the project. She is currently on secondment two days a week at EMC.

The 18 minute interview (<https://vimeo.com/manage/albums/5109581>) explores what she did and how the students responded but also raises a number of key issues about group work and what it has to offer, including:

- What the students were learning
- What it offered in terms of preparing students for the demands of the GCSE exam, including the question of memorising poems
- How the students responded to greater freedom and responsibility in the task
- What Lucy's role was in shaping the activity and pushing the students' thinking forward
- The significance of decisions about how to group pupils
- Whether it matters if students don't immediately 'get' what they need to do, and how one decides whether something is working or not
- How Lucy has adapted the activities for her Year 11s, how she intends to build on them and how she's already using them in other contexts.

In this PDF:

- the activity for you to try out is on page 3 'A Lesson Grouping Poem Snippets', with snippets included on pages 4-5
- the lesson sequence in 'Contextualising the Video Interview' (page 7) shows you Lucy's own lesson plans for using this approach early on in Year 11, as discussed in the interview.

Contributing to the Project

If you try out this approach for yourself, we would very much welcome feedback on how it went, using the survey monkey link here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/EMCTalkApril2018>

This will make a strong contribution to our project and allow us to add to our evidence of how group work is enacted in a wide range of classrooms, by a wide range of teachers.

A Lesson Grouping Poem Snippets

What do different snippets have in common with each other? Establishing 'big picture' similarities and differences

1. Put the students into small, carefully arranged mixed ability groups.
2. Give each group a collection of the poem snippets.
3. Get them to tip them out and elect a reader to read them each one.
4. Ask them to try to group them. Tell them this might be any grouping they like. Give them pieces of paper to create titles.
5. Walk around looking at potential groupings and feeding back to the class about what I have seen and whether this changes their thinking e.g. 'Okay, there's a lot of war poems, but this group have them split into sub groups about which seem negative and which have a more ambiguous meaning' or 'This group are looking at the idea of identity; does this alter your groupings?' OR 'this group have tuned in to whether the poems rhyme; what difference does this make to your groupings?'
6. Tell them to rethink. Are there any other groupings? Form, structure etc. Give them more pieces of paper if they want to change their ideas.
7. Each write a reflection on what they noticed.
 - We noticed that...
 - We came up with the following groups:
 - But then we realised that they could also be grouped by...
 - In the end, we settled on...
8. Ask them each to pick a favourite poem snippet and explain what they like about it in writing. Model with my own favourite snippet.

Poem Snippets

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said – 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert

I wander thro' each charter'd street,
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow.
And mark in every face I meet
Marks of weakness, marks of woe.

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now; Fra Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.

In his dark room he is finally alone
with spools of suffering set out in ordered rows.
The only light is red and softly glows,

On another occasion, we got sent out
to tackle looters raiding a bank.
And one of them legs it up the road,
probably armed, possibly not.

Her father embarked at sunrise
with a flask of water, a samurai sword
in the cockpit, a shaven head
full of powerful incantations
and enough fuel for a one-way
journey into history

There once was a country... I left it as a child
but my memory of it is sunlight-clear
for it seems I never saw it in that November
which, I am told, comes to the mildest city.

Paper that lets the light
shine through, this
is what could alter things.
Paper thinned by age or touching,

One summer evening (led by her) I found
A little boat tied to a willow tree
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.
Straight I unloosed her chain, and stepping in
Pushed from the shore.

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knife us...
Wearied we keep awake because the night is silent...
Low drooping flares confuse our memory of the salient...

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,
Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.

Suddenly he awoke and was running – raw
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,
Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge

Three days before Armistice Sunday
and poppies had already been placed
on individual war graves. Before you left,
I pinned one onto your lapel

Dem tell me
Dem tell me
Wha dem want to tell me
Bandage up me eye with me own history

Ozymandias	The Emigrée
London	War Photographer
Checking Out Me History	Remains
Kamikaze	Exposure
Poppies	The Prelude: Stealing the Boat
My Last Duchess	Tissue
The Charge of the Light Brigade	Bayonet Charge
Storm on the Island	

Contextualising the Video Interview

This is Lucy Hinchliffe's lessons plans for the sequence discussed in the interview. The class had studied part of their anthology at this point.

Lesson 1

1. Give them poem snippets. Tell them these are the rest of their poems.
2. Get them to tip them out and elect a reader to read them each one.
3. Ask them to try to group them. Tell them this might be any grouping they like. Give them pieces of paper to create titles.
4. Walk around looking at potential groupings and feeding back to the class about what I have seen and whether this changes their thinking e.g. 'Okay, there's a lot of war poems, but this group have them split into sub groups about which seem negative and which have a more ambiguous meaning' or 'This group are looking at the idea of identity; does this alter your groupings?' OR 'this group have tuned in to whether the poems rhyme; what difference does this make to your groupings?'
5. Introduce other poems. Ask them to see if the poems they have already studied fit into these groupings or if the addition of these poems splits the groups further. Again circulate and feedback what I can hear to the class.
6. Tell them to rethink. Are there any other groupings? Form, structure etc. Give them more pieces of paper if they want to change their ideas.
7. Each write a reflection on what they noticed.
 - We noticed that...
 - We came up with the following groups:
 - But then we realised that they could also be grouped by...
 - In the end, we settled on...
8. Ask them each to pick a favourite poem snippet and explain what they like about it in writing. Model with my own favourite snippet.

Lesson 2

1. Give the titles 'Bayonet Charge' and 'Exposure' and ask if they can come up with any predictions based on titles.
2. Listen to me read 'Bayonet Charge' twice. Write a 'big picture' summary of what it's about. Images and key words for differentiation. Tone, sound, language etc. Big picture.
3. Listen to me read 'Exposure' twice. Write a 'big picture' summary of what it's about. Images and key words for differentiation. Tone, sound, language etc.
4. Get into groups. One pair take 'Bayonet Charge', one pair take 'Exposure'. Model asking questions of the poem. They must come up with 5 questions per pair about the poem, then swap. Copies of poems to write on.
5. Feedback to class. Which can we answer? Add to annotations where interesting discussion is drawn out.

Lesson 3

1. Pupils get into groups and discuss what the poems are about. Feedback. Write down agreed ideas (even if different, still interesting) on anthologies. Encourage them to compare them against each other to come up with ideas.
2. Pupils are asked 'what's special about this poem?' and I walk around adding elements where I think they need direction. Topic cards.
3. Pupils complete comparison tables.
4. HL to annotate both poems using online research, thinking critically about how helpful a piece of information they find is to their understanding. Model this with one of the poems they already know by looking what people are saying online about it. It's okay to reject ideas if we're not convinced by them (that's the point of a personal response!).