Miss

| | | PROFESSIONAL STUDIES | | | | ORGANISING PUPILS FOR LEARNING | | | | Objectives | | | | By the end of this topic, you should have achieved an understanding of the following issues relating to pupil grouping. You should: | | | | be familiar with the most common ways pupils are organised and grouped for learning in secondary schools; | | | | know the general trends illustrating the way grouping methods are used in secondary schools; | | | | understand the rationales of and influences on the choice of different grouping methods; | | | | have evaluated the evidence for the effectiveness of different grouping methods on academic achievement, attitudes to school and | | learning and on pupils' opportunities; | | | | have understood the implications of different grouping strategies for the classroom teacher; | | | | have clarified your own perspectives on different pupil grouping methods. | ORGANISATION OF PUPILS FOR LEARNING OUTLINE OF LECTURE 1. Introduction - what is all the fuss about? - methods of organising and grouping pupils 2. The current pattern of pupil grouping - analysis of grouping methods currently used in schools - a mixture of methods - clarity or confusion? - the shift in grouping from Y7 to Y10 - subject preferences in organising pupils 3. Influences on the pattern of pupil grouping - political pressures - raising standards and ' accountability' - emphasis on academic curriculum - the impact of the National Curriculum - cognitive development theory - ' common sense' - perpetuation by the powerful 4. The debate - Key issues: - in search of academic excellence - pupil entitlement and equal opportunities - class management - motivation and class control - Homogeneous grouping methods the arguments for: - advantages for the pupils - working with peers - a suitable (relevant) curriculum - advantages for

the teachers the arguments against: - inequality and the social divide - inflexibility - inappropriate teaching for pupils at the ends of the ability spectrum - development of low self-esteem and poor motivation - Heterogeneous grouping methods the arguments for: - equality of opportunity - high expectations for all - increased motivation - meeting the needs of modern society - developing skills for flexibility and change the arguments against: - management of classes with diverse abilities - reduced achievement for high ability pupils - inevitable intra-class grouping, by teachers and pupils - incompatible with a competitive society 5. What research evidence says: - achievement - is there a real difference through different grouping methods? - challenging ' common sense' assumptions - does the rhetoric match up to the reality? - pupil grouping creating winners and losers 6. Implications - for schools - creating appropriate groups - alternative strategies for organising pupils - for class teacher - differentiation - teaching expectations - targeting challenge as an alternative to labelling ability - adjustment of pace and level of teaching - within-class grouping — matching teaching to learners KEY QUESTIONS - CLARIFICATION 1. What sort of grouping system do you believe is most effective - what influences your choice? 2. Consider the statement on target setting in the White Paper " Excellence in Schools" - is the government right to state a preferred grouping strategy? - what are the implications of such a statement - for schools? - for pupils? - for teachers in the classroom? 3. Why you think a majority of schools still opt for ability grouping by setting with many classes? In 1990 Robert Slavin compiled a ' best-evidence synthesis' on the achievement effects of ability grouping methods in secondary schools, collating evidence

from 28 research studies. In his conclusions (p. 474) he states: " Arguments in favour of ability grouping (i. e. setting or banding) focus on effectiveness, saying that as distasteful as this may be, it so enhances the learning of the students (particularly but not only high achievers) that its use is necessary. In contrast, arguments opposed to ability grouping focus at least as much on equity as on effectiveness and on democratic values as much as on outcomes (i. e. on pupils' self-concepts). In one sense, then, the burden of proof is on those who favour ability grouping, for if this grouping is not found to be more clearly effective than mixed ability placement, none of the pro-ability grouping arguments apply. The same is not true for the anti-ability grouping arguments, which provide a rationale for abolishing ability grouping that would be plausible even if ability grouping were found to have no adverse effect on achievement. " Recent research in the U. K. (chiefly from Hallam and Ireson) confirms Slavin's findings, showing an overall neutral effect on attainment, but a significant effect on pupils' self-concepts and attitudes to learning. - Debate why you think a majority of schools still opt for ability grouping by setting with many classes. - What do you think might be appropriate solutions for the future? KEY QUESTIONS - IMPLEMENTATION 1. What is the rationale for the grouping policy in school and in particular departments? 2. What is the impact of attempts to raise standards in KS3 and to improve GCSE results in KS4 on grouping practices? 3. How are pupils assigned to classes? - what information is used? - what opportunities exist for pupils to change groups? - how much movement between groups occurs? 4. What do pupils think about they way they are organised into classes? - what is the effect on their self-concept? - what is the effect on their attitudes

to learning? - do pupils believe they learn more effectively and achieve better results? 5. Do teachers differentiate and adapt their teaching to pupils of different ability groups? - How does this vary for different for different subjects, topics and teachers? - What are the implications of different styles and levels of teaching? 6. Is there any evidence that the grouping policies have impact on learning outcomes? CORE READING | | | Reading 1: HODGEN, J. (2007) ' Setting, streaming and mixed ability teaching' in: Dillon, J. & Maguire, M. (eds.), Becoming a Teacher :| | Issues in Secondary Teaching (Third edition). Chapter 16, pp. 201-212 Maidenhead : Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education | | | | Moodle Reading 2: IRESON , J. & HALLAM, S. (1999) ' Raising Standards: is ability grouping the answer?' Oxford Review of Education , | | 25(3), pp 343-358 | | | | Moodle Reading 3: IRESON, J., HALLAM, S., & HURLEY, C. (2005) ' What are the effects of ability grouping on GCSE attainment?' British | | Educational Research Journal 31 (4), pp. 443—458. | | | | Moodle Reading 4: KUTNICK, P., BLATCHFORD, B., CLARK, H., MACINTYRE, H. AND BAINES, E. (2005) ' Teachers' understandings of the | | relationship between within-class (pupil) grouping and learning in secondary schools.' Educational Research, 47 (1), pp. 1 — 24. | | A digest of this paper can be downloaded from | | http://media. education. gov. uk/assets/files/doc/s/secondary_student_grouping. doc | KEY DOCUMENTS, ARTICLES & WEBSITES BOALER, J., WILIAM, D. & BROWN, M. (2000) ' Students' experience of ability grouping disaffection, polarisation and the construction of failure'. British Educational Research Journal, 26 (5), 631-48. An online summary and discussion of this paper can be downloaded from: http://media. education. gov. uk/assets/files/doc/b/boaler. doc GILLARD, D.

(2009) ' Us and Them: a history of pupil grouping policies in England's schools' FORUM, 51(1), 49-72 A very readable article, outlining the forerunners of policies and giving valuable context to current day policies and debates. Available online at: http://www. educationengland. org. uk/articles/27grouping. html HALLAM, S. & IRESON, J. (2007) ' Secondary school pupils' satisfaction with their ability grouping placements.', British Educational Research Journal, 33 (1), 27-45. HALLAM, S. & IRESON, J. (2005) ' Secondary school teachers' pedagogic practices when teaching mixed and structured ability classes.' Research Papers in Education 20 (1), 3—24. HALLAM, S. & IRESON, J. (2003) ' Secondary school teachers' attitudes towards and beliefs about ability grouping', British Journal of Educational Psychology, 73, pp. 343—356. HALLAM, S. & TOUTOUNJI, I. (1999) ' What do we know about grouping pupils by ability'. Education Review, 10 (2), 62-70 IRESON, J., CLARK, H. & HALLAM, S. (2002) ' Constructing ability groups in secondary schools', School Leadership and Management, 22(2), pp. 163—176. IRESON, J., HALLAM, S., & HURLEY, C. (2005) ' What are the effects of ability grouping on GCSE attainment?', British Educational Research Journal 31 (4), pp. 443—458. KUTNICK, P., SEBBA, J., BLATCHFORD, B., GALTON, M. & THORP, J. (2005). ' The Effects of Pupil Grouping: Literature Review.' Research Report RR688. Nottingham: Department for Education and Skills. Available online at: https://www. education. gov. uk/publications/RSG/publicationDetail/Page1/RR688 WELLINGTON (2007) ' Differentiation' In : Secondary Education : The Key Concepts. pp. 76- 79 London: Routledge KEY TEXTS HARLEN, W. & MALCOLM, H. (1997) Setting and Streaming: a research review. Edinburgh: The Scottish Council for

Research in Education. IRESON, J, & HALLAM, S. (2001) Ability Grouping in

Education. London: Paul Chapman Publishing REID, M., CLUSNIES-ROSS, L.,

GOACHER, B. & VILE, C. (1984) Mixed Ability Problems and Possibilities.

Windsor: NFER — Nelson. SUKHNANDAN, L. & LEE, B. (1998) Streaming,

Setting and Grouping by Ability: a review of the literature. Slough: NFER