THE POWER OF THE GROUP

FOUNDATIONS FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

DR RON BRIMBLE AND PROF DIANA DAVIS
Author profiles

Doctor Ron Brimble has had experience as a primary school teacher and principal. He has Bachelor of Arts of Education from the University of Queensland, and a post-graduate degree in Linguistics from Manchester University. He has a PhD in Arts from James Cook University.

He has a special interest in literacy and lectured in Language Arts at James Cook University.

Professor Diana Davis has extensive experience in curriculum development and research in the area of English. She has a research Masters degree in Australian Literature and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Melbourne and a PhD in the Social Psychology of Language from Monash University. She has a special interest in oracy and, in particular, in listening – the area of language most often taken for granted and hence neglected in favour of reading, writing, or even speaking.

Professor Davis was a member of the National Committee on English Teaching. She was Chair of the Curriculum Committee of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies in Queensland for nine years. She was an inaugural member of Queensland’s Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority and its Chair for two consecutive terms.
CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1.................................................................3
CREATING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING AND
TEACHING.................................................................3
1.1 Primary and Secondary Education in a Digital World.....3
1.2 The Successful School Leaver ......................................4
1.3 Perceptions of Purposes and Strategies for Learning, in the
Twenty-first Century.........................................................5
1.4 The Pursuit of Literacy.....................................................9
1.5 Communication as Literacy Fundamental ..................12

CHAPTER 2.................................................................15
WHOLE CLASS TEACHING/LEARNING: PROBLEMS
AND SOLUTIONS..............................................................15
2.1 Effective Learning Through Interaction........................15
2.2 Creating Learning Contexts: The Language Dynamic....18
2.3 Flexible Grouping for Effective Learning....................22
2.4 Group Processes..............................................................23

CHAPTER 3.................................................................28
STRUCTURING GROUP LEARNING FOR LINGUISTIC
AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT.................................28
3.1 Planning Group Learning................................................28
3.2 Group Interaction: Potential Linguistic and Cognitive
Processes..............................................................31
3.3 Curriculum And Group Emphases In The Primary School
..................................................................................35
3.4 Group Composition and Size........................................38
3.5 Knowledge Domain Focus..........................................39

CHAPTER 4.................................................................41
CREATING GROUP LEARNING CONTEXTS.........................41
4.1 Major Dimensions of Group Interaction: A Conceptual
Model............................................................................41
4.2 Role Development in Heterogeneous, Group Learning
Contexts...........................................................50
CHAPTER 5.................................................................58
IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIVE, HETEROGENEOUS
GROUP LEARNING IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT ..........58
  5.1 Implementing Collaborative, Heterogeneous Group
Learning in the Primary School ........................................58
  5.2 Planning Discipline-Specific Group Tasks: A Guide .....64
  5.3 The Model in the Teaching/Learning Context ..........67
CHAPTER 6..................................................................69
EVALUATING GROUP LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM:
A GUIDE .....................................................................69
  6.1 The Potential of Instructional Guides .........................69
  6.2 Fundamental Principles of Quality Group Learning ......73
  6.3 A Sample Evaluation Profile ..................................75
CHAPTER 7..................................................................77
DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE ..........77
  7.1 From Teaching to Learning: The Paradigm Shift for the
Twenty-First Century ....................................................77
  7.2 Perceptions of Purposes and Strategies for Learning in the
Twenty-First Century ....................................................78
  7.3 Collaborative, Heterogeneous Group Learning:
Conclusions and Directions ...........................................78
  7.4 Pathways of Learning in the Twenty-First Century .....81
BIBLIOGRAPHY ..........................................................85
CHAPTER 1

CREATING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

1.1 Primary and Secondary Education in a Digital World

The recent UNESCO report on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors 1998) indicates that education is fundamental to each individual’s personal and social development through the four pillars:

(i) learning to know,
(ii) learning to do,
(iii) learning to live together and
(iv) learning to be (p.97).

Recognition of the centrality of these pillars creates challenges for curriculum planners and teachers at all levels of education in a world which is increasingly dominated by more sophisticated technologies that require fundamental changes in teachers' roles. To a greater extent than ever before, educators are charged with creating permeable boundaries between the real world and classroom practices. These contexts require teachers to: