Top Tips

- Clear expectations of behaviour need to be established at the beginning of all collaborative activities
- Ensure activities are suitably challenging and require a need for purposeful communication
- The use of resources could dictate the roles of participants in activities. An example of this could be to pick lollipop sticks to assign roles.
- Word mats and sentence starters could be provided for EAL pupils to structure and support responses.
- Research has shown that Exploratory Talk can provide pupils with the opportunity to develop their cognition. It is important that educators plan for this.
- Collaborate activities build on prior learning and skills and is an important aspect of cognitive development. It is recommended that this approach is frequently incorporated into planning.

Access to Education/PSS: for further guidance and support: accesstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/index.php/PSS/eal.html

Collaborative Learning for EAL Learners

Remember...

Collaborate learning is good practise for all, including EAL. It encourages speaking and listening and exploratory talk for a specific purpose.

It is important to have knowledge about the language(s) the pupil speaks when organising groups. It is imperative within groups, where EAL pupils are participating, there are good speaking role models of English.

Roles need to be defined within the group. These could include: reporter, reader, encourager and timekeeper. The use of English or first languages can be applied. This could be based on the teaching point of the activity. Is it language development or cognition development?

Strategies to support collaborative learning in the classroom.

Game Activities are a good way to motivate pupils to learn. The purpose of using games is multifaceted. This can involve academic revision, consolidation and development of social skills and language. Such games could include bingo, noughts and crosses, track games and dominoes.
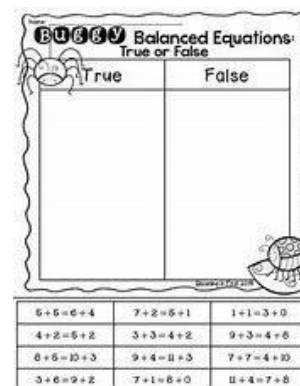

Group work involves working collaboratively on a task with others. Throughout the task the pupils will use vocabulary linked to the curriculum as well as practising the language of suggestion, justification, agreement and disagreement. It also practises listening skills. Examples of this type of task could include sorting, ranking and matching.

Drama and Role Play can be an enjoyable activity. Pupils can explore topics and learn in a practical way that they are more likely to relate to, enhancing their ability to cooperate and develop empathy. Drama and Role Play also offer the opportunity for pupils to hear language and use it in a meaningful way.

The difference between group discussions and **information exchange activities** is that learners have different pieces of information that they must verbally communicate to each other. Barrier games are an example of an information exchange activity, which involves learners following instructions, listening and taking turns. Another suggestion is jigsaw activities where pupils become experts in elements of a subject area and can distribute this knowledge to others. The organisation for this could be in the form of 'rainbowing' or 'envoys.'

Discussion can take place in English or a first language. Speaking frames can be a supportive tool for EAL learners to fully engage in discussions. Some examples of how to organise discussions include: listening triangles, talk partners, think–pair-share and snowballing.