

Supported experiments

Introduction

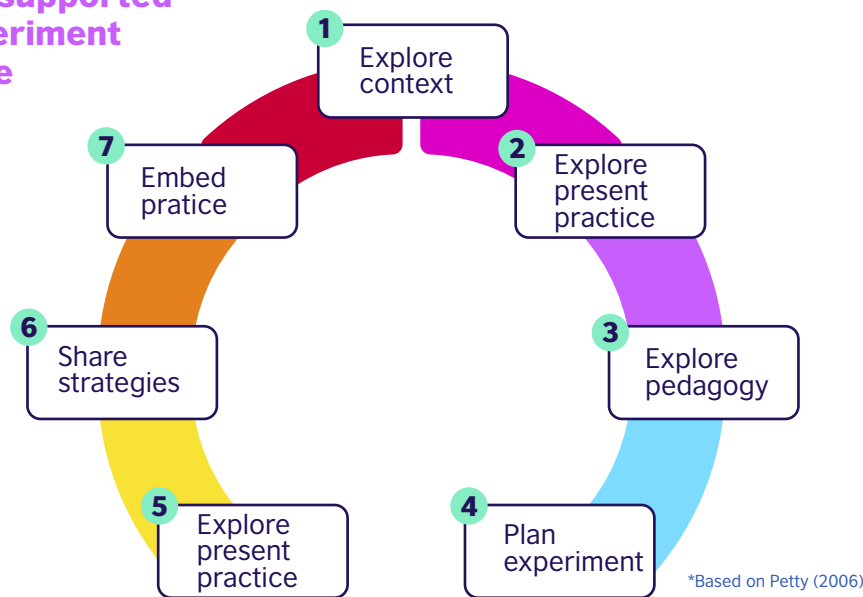
This document is designed to help you implement a series of supported experiments in your school.

The setup and implementation of these experiments will usually take place within a cycle of development sessions, with teaching practice experiments taking place in the middle of the cycle.

These developmental cycles can be repeated throughout the year as an ongoing process of teacher development within your school.

As you can see from the image below, the cycle goes through seven stages, with stage 5 being carried out by the teachers in the classroom.

The supported experiment cycle



You can find out more about how this cycle can be used in practice in **Silvana Richardson's webinar**.

Time reference: 35.56 - 42:16

Session Plan

Stage 1 - Explore context

In this stage of the session, teachers consider the key issues and problems that impact on learning with the courses and learners they teach.

Procedure

- Put the teachers into groups of 3- to 4 and ask them to brainstorm issues and problems they have with their students' learning.
- Ask them to focus on quantity of issues and ask them not to start discussing the actual issues.
- Give them a time limit of about 5 minutes to think of as many issues as possible.
- Next, ask the teachers to discuss the issues in more detail and try to put the top five issues in order of priority.
Note: Priority in this case should be the ones they most urgently need to address.
- Next regroup the teachers, so they are working with a new group and ask them to share their top five priorities and compare them to those of teachers from a different group.
- Ask them to work in their new groups and choose one of the issues each that they personally would like to address.

Stage 1 - Explore present practice

In this stage of the session, the teachers think about how they are dealing with the problem at present.

Procedure

- Working in groups of 3 - 4 ask the teachers to share and discuss the issue they chose to address.
- Ask the teachers to share how they deal with the issue at present and how they think their teaching impacts on the issue.
- They should get the opinions and views of the other teachers in their group.

Stage 3 - Explore pedagogy

In this stage of the session, teacher find out about and identify other strategies they could use that might lead to better learning. This part of the session may require reading and research, so it would be possible to do this at home, online or in the staffroom library.

Procedure

- Ask the teachers to work alone and research articles or resources that relate to the issue they want to address.
- Ask them to create a summary of the main 3 - 5 resources that they find.
- In the session, put the teachers into groups and ask them to share the summary of the resources they found and to see if any of the other teachers in their group can add to the information they've found or suggest additional resources.

Stage 4 - Plan an experiment

In this stage of the lesson, the teachers decide which new teaching strategy they will be trialling and how they will trial it.

Procedure

- Ask the teachers to decide which strategy they would like to experiment with in their classroom and to plan how they will carry out their experiment.
- This could be a specific lesson that they design or a technique that they implement over a series of lessons.
- Once they have decided, give them the template below and ask them to complete it the first part of it. (Up to I will 8.)
- Next, ask them to decide who from their group they would like to support them. This can be one person or more than one.
- Ask the teachers to work with their support buddies and plan how they will help and support the experiment. This could be through observing the class, a recording of the class, coaching or assisting with the planning and materials. This can be decided by the teachers.
- They should then complete the rest of the template.

Supported experiment:

The issue I want to address:

I will ...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

I will be supported by:

They will support me by:

This experiment will be completed by: [date]

Stage 5 - Carry out the supported experiment

The next stage of the session will be carried out by the teacher and their support buddies independently.

Procedure

- Ask the teachers to submit a deadline by which they will have finished their experiment.
- Ask them to carry out their experiment and work with their support buddy(s).
- Ask them to make notes of what happens in each lesson and of the input and response from the buddy to each lesson using the template below.

Supported experiment:

The issue I want to address:

Date of lesson:

During the lesson, I:

From the lesson, I discovered:

My support buddy gave me the following feedback:

Stage 6 - Share strategies

In this stage of the session, teachers will report back to other teachers on what they have learned from the experiment and any further steps or ongoing research they would like to try.

Procedure

- Ask the teachers to prepare a short presentation to what they have learned from their experiment.
- Ask the teachers to present and share the results of their experiment with the group.

They can either do this in small groups or working as a complete group, depending on time.

- Ask the teachers listening to the presentation to make notes about what they liked about the experiment and what they would like to take into their own teaching.

Stage 7 - Embed practice

In this part of the session, the teachers should agree together which elements from each of the experiments they would like to implement in their own teaching or across the school.

Procedure

- Put the teachers into groups to discuss what they have learned from the various experiments.
- Ask the teachers to try to decide what elements of each of the experimental strategies could be adopted in their own teaching
- Used across the whole school
- Get some feedback from the teachers and make notes of any ways to communicate and support the implementation of these new strategies

Additional resources

Putting teacher action research into action

- A short article about the implementation of action research.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/putting-teacher-action-research-action>

Teacher educator self-awareness: Cultivating openness

- In this article, Tessa Woodward explores openness as a feature of self-awareness and provides ideas on how to work on our ability to be open.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teacher-educator-self-awareness-cultivating-openness>

Teacher agency: empowering teachers through self-directed peer observations

- In this webinar recording, Ana Garcia-Stone describes a peer observation project carried out by two colleagues, done over a year, experimenting with three different types of observation. This process empowered both teachers, and the observations revealed different dimensions of agency.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teacher-agency-empowering-teachers-through-self-directed-peer-observations>

Reflective teaching for the real world

- In this webinar recording, Jeremy Phillips presents a framework for kick-starting or improving reflective teaching methods to make them practical and results-oriented for ELTs working in diverse contexts. The aim is to make reflective teaching painless and effective by getting teachers to examine their own personalities and perspectives as a first step.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/jeremy-phillips-reflective-teaching-real-world>

Becoming a better teacher: Exploring professional development

- This is a British Council course designed to help you keep up your professional. This online course, broken into simple steps, will help you develop your reflective skills and improve your practice in the classroom.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/becoming-better-teacher-exploring-professional-development>