AGENCY IN LEARNING

WHO CAN? YOU CAN...
GROUPING STRATEGIES

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to use the same concept to focus their inquiry as you do.
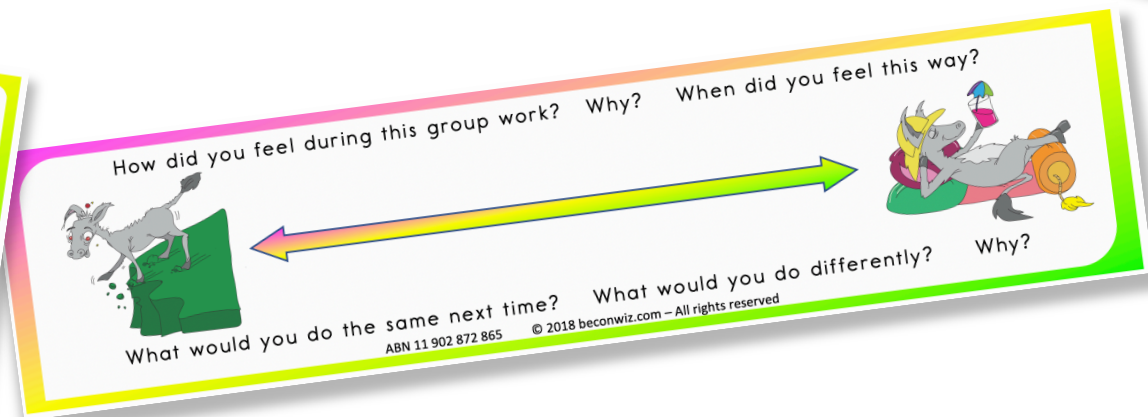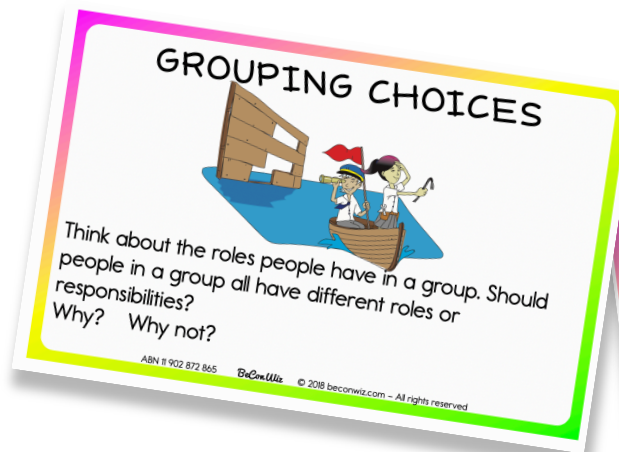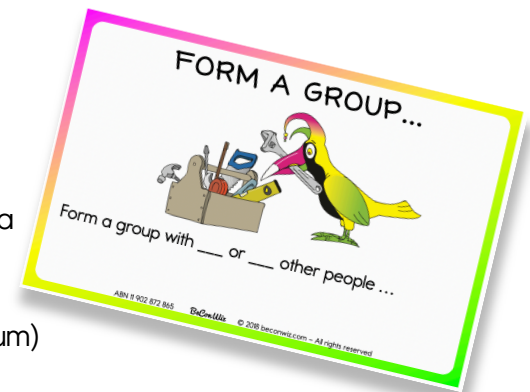
Aim: To provide scaffolded learner choices and sites of agency in any tasks that involves grouping

Subject links: Any subject that involves group work

Included in the resource:

- Background information on grouping, grouping choices and some ways of supporting learners to develop grouping criteria
- Eight teacher/parent grouping reflection cards
- Thirty-two grouping choice cards (including 8 open-ended cards ready for classes to develop their own criteria)
- Three reflection spectrum cards (including 1 open spectrum card ready for classes to develop their own reflection spectrum)

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people ...

GROUPING CHOICES

Think about the roles people have in a group. Should people in a group all have different roles or responsibilities? Why?   Why not?

How did you feel during this group work?   Why?   When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time?   What would you do differently?   Why?

Teaching resources that move Beyond Conventional Wisdom.

Our resources are designed to support learner choice, voice and agency. The resources are ideal for all teaching styles, but particularly suited to inquiry *(constructivist)* teaching.

Our aim is to move beyond conventional teaching tools, consultancy and training by creating tailored resources, strategies and training opportunities that enable teacher/parents to implement supportive, differentiated, challenging and innovative learning experiences.

There are many forms of grouping in learning engagements and many purposes for grouping learners. Traditionally the teacher/parent has overseen grouping choices, however as we explore and reflect on the learning process, there are greater opportunities to let the learners determine the grouping's size, purpose and defining features.

Grouping can also be about the amount of choice and movement involved in where learners sit in the classroom. Grouping should be revisited and the criteria for group formation re-defined every time there is a new purpose or learning engagement. Within a learning community there should be purposeful use of flexible grouping with sites of agency for learners. Grouping should address the emotional, social, intellectual and general wellbeing of each learner in the learning community.

Before any grouping is undertaken, teacher/parents should be clear about the purpose of the grouping and if there is any room for alternative choices such as paired or solo work in order to support differentiated learning. Some people work well in group situation, others work better in paired or solo situations. There are multiple ways to support learners to develop collaboration skills while valuing their preferred solo ways of working.

ABOUT GROUPING

Often collaborative learning is considered learning that occurs predominantly in grouped, paired or teams but this doesn't always have to be the case. To work collaboratively means to work towards a common goal, so learners can work towards a common goal while they work solo and then share in a variety of ways to contribute towards a collaborative outcome.

It is important at the end of any major group work task that there is an opportunity for everyone in the learning community to debrief, reflect and revisit ideas, expectations, hopes and realities of the process, so that choices and ideas for the next group task can be refined and revised, each time developing and improving the constructive nature of group work. It is also critical that learners who feel negatively impacted on by a lot of group work are given the chance to work alone and perhaps just regroup to summarise or synthesise ideas. Digital technology can also be used to richly support those learners who prefer to work in solo ways as they contribute to group work without the pressure of having to deal with all the face to face dynamics and politics that are at play during group work.

Grouping where learners have a genuine say, often reduces the need for micromanagement and supports constructive learning opportunities to become a reality. Here are some pointers when thinking about grouping opportunities in a learning process:

WHO- Opportunities for genuine agency exist in group formation, when learners are encouraged and allowed to participate and guide the decisions connected to who they work with.
    Who is going to be impacted on by the grouping?
    Who will have a say in how the group is formed?
    Who will have a say in how the group works together?

HOW- learners who are encouraged to reflect on their current skill or strategy preferences and then use these to guide criteria to form groups, could form groups that work cohesively because of a balance or shared preferred learning style. Opportunities for agency are added when learners can negotiate their preferred learning processes or strategies used to inquire into ideas or a topic, or when they have a shared vision or goal about what skills they want/need to develop
    How will the skills, ideas be developed, explored or reflected on?
    How will the groups work together?
    How will different strategies be used by different groups?

WHAT – Grouping choices can be connected to the inquiry content. Opportunities for learner agency exist when learners can choose a mini topic or focus within a larger inquiry that interests them, then form groups based on this shared interest.

What content needs to be inquired into?

What content interests you?

What tools, resources, information need to used or accessed?

WHY– Grouping choices can be connected to a key concept or understanding that learners are interested in pursuing or inquiring into further. Learner agency can be supported when learners collaborate, or form groups based on a given conceptual lens or a connection to learning in the world outside the classroom.

Why are we learning this? What relevance does it have to our life outside the classroom?

Which conceptual focus most interests or challenges you?

Learners can be involved in determining and setting the criteria to form a group and can generate an essential agreement to guide how the group works together.

Below is a table that can help teacher/parents decided on purpose and reflect on where the sites of agency are possible for learners.

Level of agency in the formation of a group	Interest *Is the purpose of the task(s) to develop areas of personal interest in the inquiry or to connect learners to prior knowledge relevant to the inquiry?*	Attitude/Disposition *Is the purpose of the task(s) to reflect on given attitudes or dispositions? Is the purpose of the task(s) one that supports leaners who have a shared disposition or attitude in relation to an inquiry topic to work together?*	Skill *Is the purpose of the task(s) to introduce, explore, develop, refine or revise given skills, strategies or processes?*	Knowledge *Is the purpose of the task(s) to inquire into, research or reflect on a given topic or subject related to the inquiry?*	Conceptual understanding *Is the purpose of the task(s) to explore, focus, or reflect on a given conceptual understanding?*
Learners decide on the grouping criteria and group formation					
Learners and teacher/parents collaborate on the grouping criteria and learners form groups based on these criteria					
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In this situation there was going to be a mix of criteria to form a group on. Both attitude and knowledge were going to be used.

learners had been doing a great deal of reflecting and research into who they were as learners so they developed the criteria for the attitudes and working dispositions and the teacher/parent who had a bigger overview of the subject knowledge constructed and made visible the decisions behind the knowledge criteria.

The learners then used these criteria to form groups. The criteria that was developed looked like this

- The group can have between 2 and 4 people (*learner*)
- Each person in the group should want to be in the group (*learner*)
- Each person in the group should know how they can help their group (*learner*)
- There is no boss in a group (*learner*)
- People can work on their own but must share their ideas with someone at the end (*learner*)
- Think about how well you know each of the problem-solving strategies (I know a lot; I know some but need help; I don't know a lot) (*teacher/parent*)
- Each group should have a mix of people with different understandings so we can learn from each other (*teacher/parent*)
- Groups can work together to pick the tools they want or need to use (*teacher/parent*)
- Form a group with people who want to use the same strategy as you (*teacher/parent*)

Below is a table that can help teacher/parents decided on purpose and reflect on where the sites of agency are possible for learners.

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learners and teacher/parents collaborated on the criteria due to the content being limited to children's rights.

The learners then used this criteria to form groups. The criteria that was developed looked like this

- The group can have 2 or 3 people
- Each person in the group can do individual, paired or group research, but must work together to finalise report
- Each person in the group should have a particular skill that can help the group (Strong reader, good, writer, good at organising, time management skills, etc)
- The group must write an essential agreement to be used to stop or solve problems
- Each group must be formed based on one topic of interest (Right to life, Right to education, Right to be healthy and Right to Freedom)
- Groups can work together to pick the tools they want or need to use

GROUPING CHOICES

GROUPING CHOICES

Think about the roles people have in a group. Do people in a group all have different responsibilities?
Why? Why not?

GROUPING CHOICES

Who should decide who goes in what group?
Why?
Are there alternative options available?

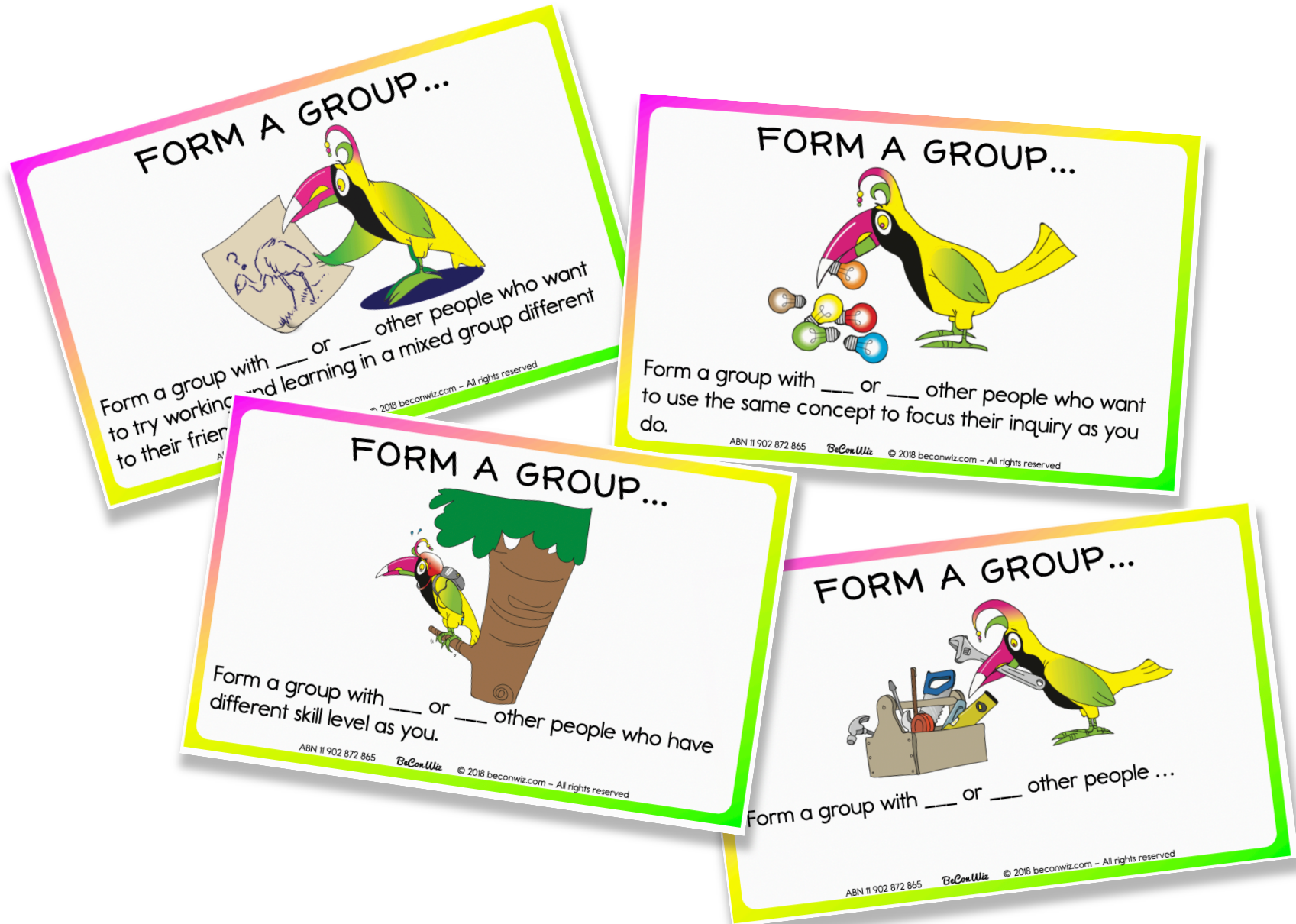On the next two pages are eight grouping reflection cards that might help teacher/parents and learners think about the purpose and forms that grouping can take.
These cards could be used to generate interesting discussions in staff meetings as a provocation about grouping, re-grouping and learner agency.

GROUPING CHOICES
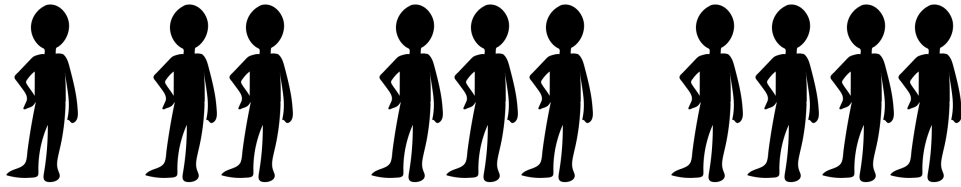
How many people will be in the group?

Why?

Does every group have to have the same number?
Why?   Why not?

GROUPING CHOICES

Will the groups be made up with people who have the same needs ? Why?

GROUPING CHOICES

Will the groups be made up with people who have different needs? Why?

GROUPING CHOICES

Will the groups be made up with people who have the same interests ? Why?

GROUPING CHOICES

Will the groups be made up with people who have different interests ? Why?

GROUPING CHOICES

Think about the roles people have in a group. Should all the people in the group have the same role or responsibility?   Why?   Why not?

GROUPING CHOICES
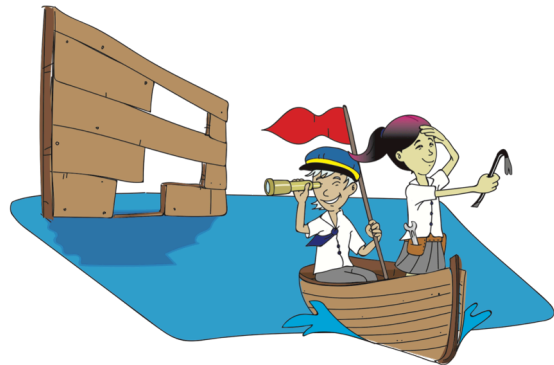
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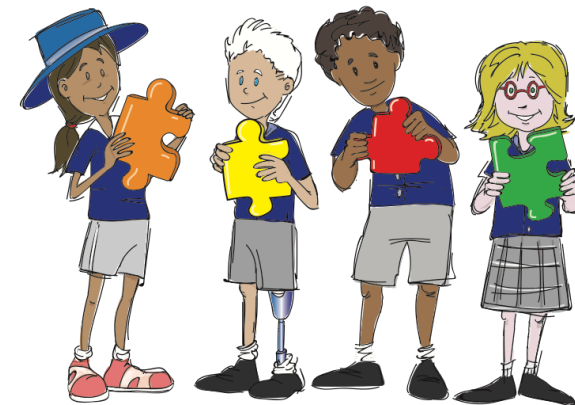
GROUPING CHOICES

Who should decide who goes in what group?

Why?   Are there alternative options available?

FORMING GROUPS

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to try working and learning in a mixed group different to their frien...

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to use the same concept to focus their inquiry as you do.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who have different skill level as you.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people ...

On the next eight pages are thirty-two grouping choice cards that teacher/parents might use to begin discussions and make sites of agency visible for learners in learning engagements that call for or support group inquiries.

There are eight blank cards that can be adapted or co-created with individual classes.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to use the same concept to focus their inquiry as you do.

As a learning community, collaborate and decide on the minimum and maximum number of participants in each group, then add these numbers to the card

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to research the same thing you do.
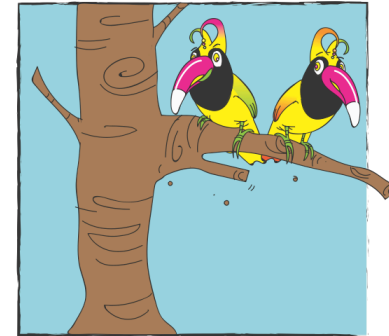
FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to research a different part of the same topic.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who work and learn the same way you do.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people with a different style of learning.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who feel the same way or share the same perspective as you on the inquiry topic.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who have a different perspective or feelings about the inquiry topic.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who have a similar skill level as you.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who have a different skill level to you.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who know different things about the inquiry topic than you do and who want to peer teach one another their ideas.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who know different things about the inquiry topic than you do and who want research new ideas with others.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who know similar things about the inquiry topic as you do and who want to find out something new about the topic.

FORM A GROUP...

Fruits of the World

STUFF

More fruit
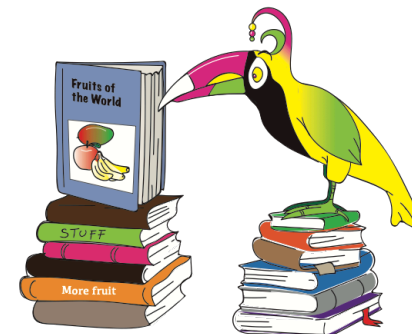
Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who know similar things about the inquiry topic as you do and want to deepen their understanding about the topic.
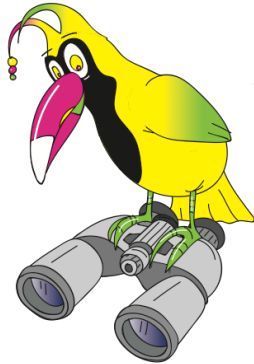
FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to put into action the same learner profile as you in their learning.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to put into action a different learner profile than you in their learning.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to try and develop new or unknown skills as part of this inquiry.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who have a skill you would like to learn and who can act as a mentor for you. What could you mentor them in?

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to use the same concept to focus their inquiry as you do.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to use different concept to focus the inquiry than you do.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who want to try working and learning in a mixed group different to their friends.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people with your friends whom you trust to be good learning buddies.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who like to work in a similar way to yourself.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who work in ways that are different to you.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people who share a similar learning goal as you do.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people you have never worked with before but are curious to see what happens.

FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people ...

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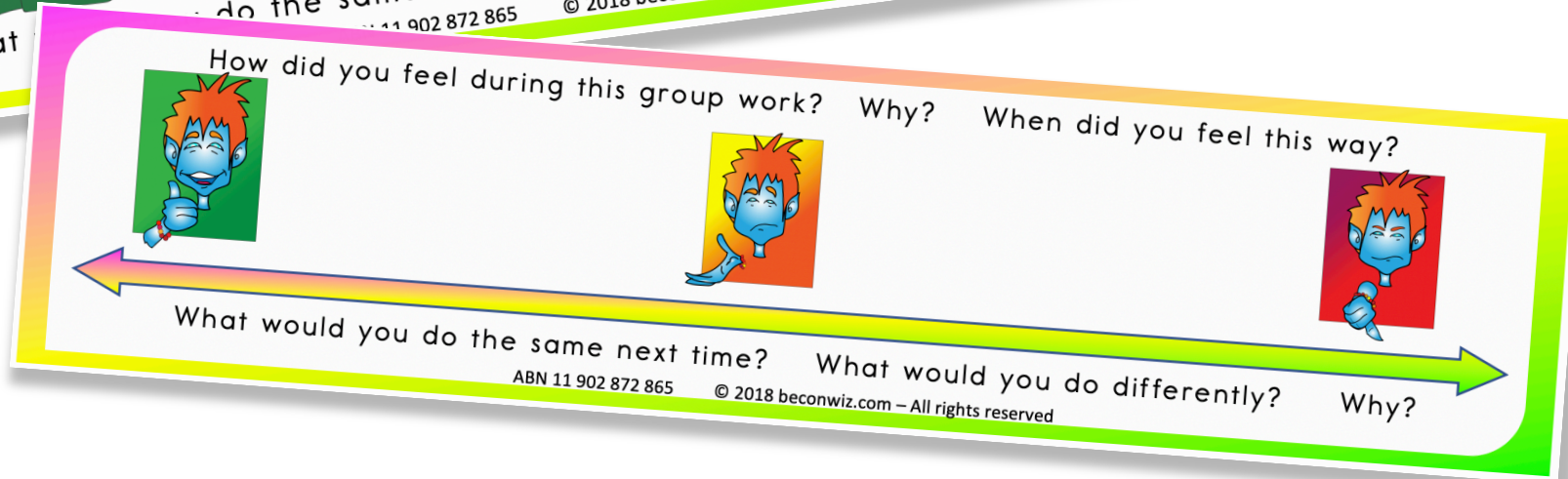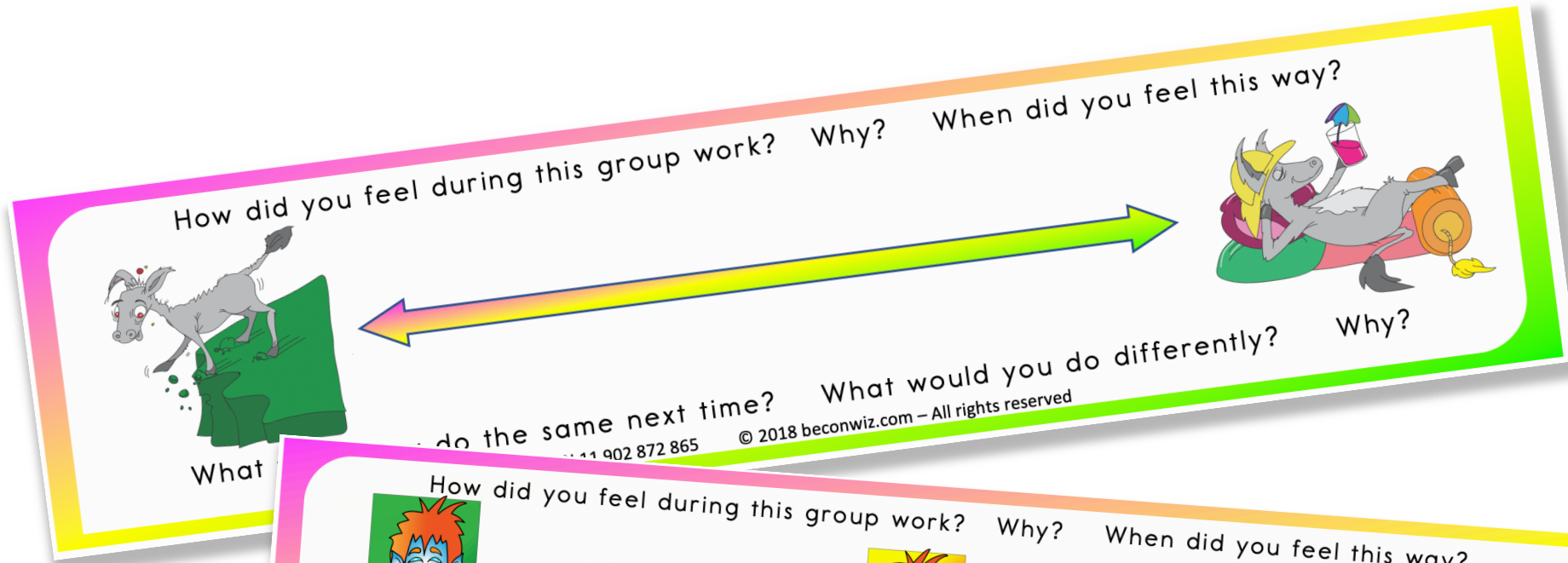# FORM A GROUP...

Form a group with ___ or ___ other people ...

FORM A GROUP...

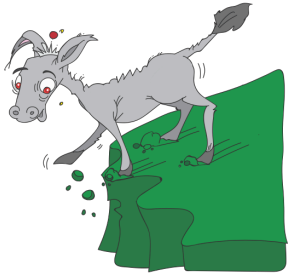Form a group with ___ or ___ other people ...

REFLECTION SPECTRUM

How did you feel during this group work? Why? When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time? What would you do differently? Why?

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How did you feel during this group work? Why? When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time? What would you do differently? Why?

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This is a quick and easy tool to aid learners and teacher/parents reflect about the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN and HOW of learning that occurred in group learning situations.

There is an open-ended spectrum for teacher/parents and learners to co-create their own reflection spectrum.

How did you feel during this group work?   Why?   When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time?   What would you do differently?   Why?

How did you feel during this group work?   Why?   When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time?   What would you do differently?   Why?

How did you feel during this group work?   Why?   When did you feel this way?

What would you do the same next time?   What would you do differently?   Why?

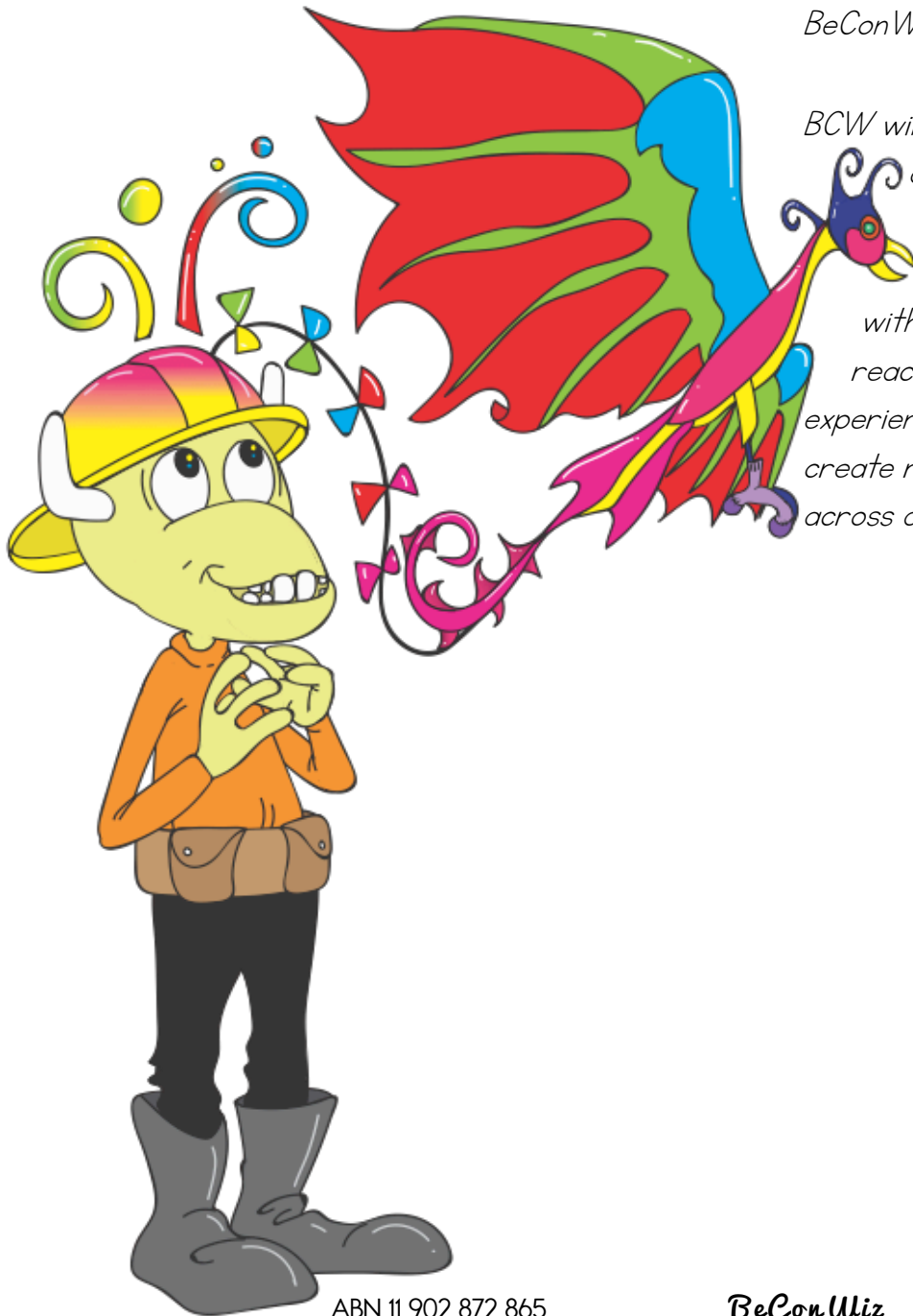# BeConWiz's commitment to equitable and ethical practices

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BCW will now use 'they – themself' as a singular, gender-neutral pronoun in all material and resources generated. Just as the use of 'he – man' disappeared women's voice and identity, use of the binary 'she – he' and related pronouns has disappeared and rendered voiceless marginalised groups that do not identify with the 'he –she' pronouns. Until some wider grammatical agreement has been reached about what pronouns will be used to embrace the diversity of gender experience, in text we will use 'they – themself' in our materials. Given that words/language create reality, using language that is acknowledging and inclusive of all people who identify across a wide gender spectrum is an issue of power, politics, respect and visibility. "

BeConWiz   Creating Thinkers

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