

**PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS IN ESL CLASSROOMS
WITH COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

A QUALITATIVE STUDY

By

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Abstract

This qualitative research is focused on six ESL classrooms in an Ecuadorian university in a major city in this country. The data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, direct observations, and official documents. This study includes renowned experts' point of views in Cooperative learning (CL). Dr. George Jacobs, Dr. Kenneth A. Bruffee, and Faith Brown were very helpful throughout the development of this research.

Based on the teachers' interviews and the students' observations and questionnaires at this Ecuadorian university, this research study surveyed students' and teachers' perceptions of Cooperative Learning. The research was aimed at providing depth and detail on students' perceptions of what they have gained. In chapter four the data reveals that most students claim to have derived academic benefits such as better comprehension and improved performance, and acquired generic skills. Students realized also the cooperative learning make them feel more comfortable when communicating and problem-solving skills. Students indicate CL enjoyable and made new friends. These students and teachers agree that CL practices should be encouraged and continued. It was concluded that students' perception of CL at this institution is similar to findings in the stated literature.

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Chapter 1

Introduction - Background and Context

I have been teaching English as a foreign language in several Ecuadorian schools for more than ten years in an elementary school for two years, in a secondary school for other three years and in two different universities (one private and the other one public) for six years. I have used group work for the last five years in my English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

At one of the universities where I received the guidance and training on how to apply group work activities, collaborative and cooperative language learning were emphasized through workshops and the TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) course (Cambridge University Press Spratt, Pulverness, Williams 2005). This methodology has been an institutional policy for the English Language Center throughout these years. The former coordinators of the English program where I teach encouraged their faculty to use these cooperative tasks. In fact, these coordinators, insisted on using group work, and included it the criteria for teacher observations. I remember having conversations about this among the faculty members before we had our announced observations.

It is also important to mention that the general objective of this institution is to create good professionals who can contribute within their community and society in general and if we come to think, making students work in groups is a good idea because they become to be better people and also productive not just in school but at their workplace.

Overall, these interactive learning activities have helped me as a teacher and also seemed to help my students gain greater academic achievement, better behaviour, attitudes and social interdependence in their learning with group work.

When I started going to professional development sessions on collaborative and cooperative techniques for teaching languages, I became interested in this teaching methodology. Consequently, I began to use cooperative tasks in my English teaching. When I saw my students working through these group activities, I noticed that they were livelier and more engaged in what they were doing in the classroom. So, when the opportunity arose to do a research study for my thesis, I decided to study this topic.

The Purpose of the Research Study

The intent of this research is to study the theory of cooperative learning as it relates to the practice of teaching and learning through group work in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom. Additionally, in order to gain deeper understanding of how group work is used in the EFL classroom, and to describe and to explore the practice of cooperative language learning in Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the university level. I explored the perceptions of students and teachers through feedback collected from interviews, questionnaires, observations, and official school documents,

Statement of the Problem

Cooperative learning is an accepted construct in the EFL language learning classroom. Teachers and students practice a wide variety of group work activities which are found in English language learning texts, or acquired by the teachers at professional development workshops. The connection between the research and the practice of using group work in the classroom is largely unknown by the EFL teachers, and so are the theoretical principles and recommended teaching and learning practices that would optimize their use. This descriptive research study explored how group work is used in a specific English Language Center, and how the teachers and students perceive the use of group work for language learning,

Research Questions

The research questions that were explored in this qualitative study were:

1. What is the difference between Collaborative and Cooperative Learning?
2. How are teachers implementing group work in EFL classrooms?
3. What are the students' perceptions about group work in language learning?
4. What are the teachers' perceptions about incorporating group work in their language classes?
5. What does educational research recommend as the best CL practices for learning a language?

Operational Terms and Concepts:

I use the operational terms and concepts that are included here as the definitions for the research study.

CELTA – Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults by Cambridge University.

EFL- English Foreign Language

TKT- Teaching Knowledge Test by Cambridge University.

Generic skills- are academic skills such as written communication, oral communication, critical, and analytical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, independent learning information literacy which could also include thinking and logical reasoning, as well as openness, to new ideas and possibilities. (Harris 2007)

Minimally Invasive Education- is defined as a pedagogical method that uses the learning environment to generate an adequate level of motivation to induce learning in groups of children, with minimal, or no, intervention by a teacher. (Mitra. 2009)

Scaffolding- refers to the idea that specialized instructional support needs to be in place in order to best facilitate learning when students are first introduced to a new subject.

Cognitive Learning- refers to conceptualizing and intellectual functioning (i.e., the understanding and retention of subject matter knowledge and related skills such as how to read and do math problems. ((Johnson and Johnson 2009)

Social-emotional learning – refers to everything that is not cognitive, such as feelings, attitudes, values, interpersonal skills, work habits, and moral character. (Johnson and Johnson 2009)

Constructivist Theory- that existing knowledge is used to build new knowledge. Teacher should never tell students anything directly but instead, should always allow them to construct knowledge for themselves (Bransford, Brown, and Cocking 2003)

Group Dynamics- The relationships between the students and how students will behave toward each other. (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams 2005)

Experts in Cooperative Learning

When I decided to use cooperative learning as the organizing theme for my research studies, I contacted several of the renowned experts in this area, to learn about their perspectives on cooperative learning, directly. In fact, several of the leaders in this area of education were very cooperative. They were helpful and friendly in sharing their ideas and materials. There were exchanges of e-mails with three specialists on cooperative learning.

The first expert was Dr. George Jacobs, one of the most important writers and researchers in cooperative learning. Jacobs has a doctorate in Educational Psychology and a master's degree in Linguistics. He is also editor of the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education. He is an education consultant in Singapore where he works with several schools and universities. He has written several articles and books on cooperative learning. In one of his e-mails, he wrote about how much more interested he is in what people do in classrooms than in academic discussions of what terms mean. He also stated that

in his experience, few teachers implement either cooperative or collaborative teaching. To him these terms mean the same. (Personal E-mail received on Oct. 4, 2009)

Jacobs's message to teachers.

Cooperative learning is one of the most researched methods in all of education, with thousands of studies done in many countries, in many subject areas, and with many different ages of students. These studies suggest that cooperative learning can lead to gains in both cognitive and affective variables. Furthermore, cooperative learning links with important theories in Education, such as Social Constructivism and Social Interdependence Theory. Last but not least, cooperative learning can play a role in creating schools and societies in which people work together for the common good. (Personal E-mail received on March. 21, 2010)

The second expert was Faith Brown, MA, who works in the Centre for Academy Development Communication and Study Skills Unit at the University of Botswana. She has written many articles on collaborative learning. When I asked her, "What is the difference between collaborative and cooperative learning?", she said that she believes there is no difference; although some writers have attempted to make a distinction between the two. For her, it is essentially a matter of terminology. (E-mail received on Oct 6, 2009)

The third expert to exchange e-mails with me is Kenneth Bruffee one of the foremost experts on the cooperative and collaborative learning. Dr. Kenneth A. Bruffee. A professor of English and Director of the Scholars Program and the Honors Academy at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. He directed a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education)-funded Institute in Peer Tutoring and Collaborative Learning in 1979-1982.

Bruffee answered my questions by saying:

Cooperative learning and collaborative learning are two versions of roughly the same educational point of view, one takes place on much the same principles, although at different times and under different conditions. They have a common goal that is to help people learn by working together in constructive conversation. By doing this people can learn to think differently and more productively than they can learn from a routine or lecture. When people work together they help each other mature by “acculturating” one another, this means by learning more about the world and themselves. The teacher’s task is to create contexts where those things can happen in a classroom environment. (personal E-mail received on Oct. 15, 2009).

Bruffee posits that there are three stages in a child’s educational development. The first stage begins at birth, when mothers, fathers, relatives and others begin to acculturate their babies, which means they continue to “mature” through all the experiences in their first three or four years of life within the family group. In the second stage, the child begins primary school where teachers continue acculturating the child by teaching them “the basics”. This process continues through high school. This second stage is very important, because it builds on the first stage with what follows in the next ten years of their lives. Bruffee believes it is essential that every parent, grade-school teacher, and high school teacher know the importance of children knowing how to work cooperatively .

Bruffee mentions how important it is to keep in mind that Cooperative learning and Collaborative learning are two versions of roughly the same educational point of view, it is all about what a child learns during his childhood years and through his teenage years at home and school. This shows how cooperative learning involves in the child’s life by working with others.

Bruffee wrote in the e-mail that the third stage of educational maturation is “a university” Bruffee calls it collaborative learning because he emphasized what John Dewey calls “breaking the crust of conventional thinking”. This means the goals are different, university education helps young people and often, older people re-describe themselves by working together to explore the world and themselves over and over again more closely, understand the world and to make the world a little better.

Here is a quote from Bruffee’s email:

[It] may still seem odd that the goal of university education is to re-acculturate ourselves by questioning the practical wisdom we were taught when we were young. Parents and teachers seem mostly to be building, while professors seem mostly to be taking things apart. Yet, they are equally essential in value and importance to children’s future and the future of education. Fortunately, they have all been there themselves. They watch their children grow up with tears and celebration. Most parents, grade-teachers, high-school teachers, and their friends know, sooner or later, that collaborative learning is likely to result in people, young and old, re-describing themselves. And thank goodness for that! As for teachers, we who set out to “do” (teach with) cooperative and or collaborative learning, we have to learn pretty much the same thing whatever the stage of maturation we face. Working mostly behind the scenes in innumerable ways, how do we make it happen in the playpen, the schoolroom, or the lab? (E-mail received on Oct. 15, 2009).

In this chapter, I have covered how I started using cooperative learning and how my interests increased throughout the years. In addition, I have included definitions from the experts in the cooperative learning field on the importance and the usage of cooperative learning. I included a list of cooperative learning terms to facilitate the understanding of this

interactive approach. A section of three cooperative learning specialists, George Jacobs, Faith Brown and Kenneth Bruffee, who kindly shared their ideas, opinions and their materials through personal E-mails. The next chapter presents a review of the literature on the themes that are related to the concepts of collaborative and cooperative learning.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

This review of the literature discusses research on the cooperative and collaborative language learning. In the chapter, I cover its history, the philosophical underpinnings of cooperative and collaborative learning, and cooperative language learning tasks. Specifically I include the following categories in the review: The Jigsaw Classroom; Building a Climate of Cooperation; Five Important Elements In Cooperative Learning; Benefits of Cooperative Language Learning; Errors Teachers make Applying Cooperative Learning; Different Factors to be Considered when Grouping; Types of Groups; Students' Roles for Cooperative Learning Activities; Community Language Learning; Tribes Learning Community; Hole in the Wall Research; Collaborative or Cooperative Learning; Cooperative Learning Structures and Techniques; The cooperative Learning Center; National and International Association for CL; Constructivist Curriculum; Cooperative Versus Competitive and Individualistic Learning; Competitive individualistic and Cooperative Results; Cooperation and Competition; Skills that Companies are Looking for in an Employee.

The History of Cooperative Learning.

According to the Johnson brothers question and answer page on their website, cooperative learning groups started 3000 years ago. Jewish scholars studied the Talmud (commentary on Jewish law) in pairs. Romans and Greeks also used cooperative learning and the Lancaster Schools movement of the 1700's used cooperative learning in Colonial America for the newly envisioned democratic system in new public schools. Then in the 1800's, Colonel Francis Parker in the United States experimented with cooperative learning in American schools.

Colonel Frances Parker, one of the most important American educators in the 19th century promoted the idea that schools should be in charge of teaching students an intense devotion to freedom, democracy, and individuality. He viewed mutual responsibility as the main principle of democracy. He always thought that the two most important motivations for learning were the inherent joy in gaining competence and discovering the “truth” and also using what one learnt to help others. Therefore, two questions that he would ask students were: “What have you learned?” and “How have you used it to help your classmates?”(p.15). This clearly shows how Parker strongly believed that students would fully develop their capacities only if cooperative learning was encouraged and competition and individualistic efforts were eliminated as motives in school tasks. John Dewey following Parker’s footsteps in the first half of the 20th century used his project method of instruction to stress the social and emotional aspects of learning and prepare students for problem solving and democratic living. (Johnson & Johnson 2009)

When efforts are structured cooperatively, there is considerable evidence that students will exert more effort to achieve - learn more, use higher-level reasoning strategies more frequently, build more complete and complex conceptual structures, and retain information learned more accurately (Johnson and Johnson, 1999 p.15)

John Dewey was an American philosopher and psychologist. He believed in how important was for students to do critical thinking in a classroom setting. Critical thinking is composed of, intellectual and emotional components. Students need to be taught to examine, question, and reflect on what they learned. Dewey said that scepticism, questioning, and reflection were essential. Teachers need to involve students to do critical thinking in the

classroom in finding solutions, examining a problem, thinking about why the students were or were not successful, and how they learn from their failures and successes especially when they are working in groups. (Dewey cited in Brightman (p.17)

The next wave in the history of cooperative learning can be traced to a group of philosophers, writers and cognitive psychologists: Kurt Lewin (American), Jean Piaget (Swiss) and Lev Vygotsky (Russian)

Kurt Lewin was a German-American who was best known as “The practical theorist”. He was a social psychologist who carried out research that is essential to the study of the dynamics and the manipulation of human behaviour. He is the originator of the Field Theory. His work in this area has been judged as the single most influential element in modern social psychology, leading opportunities for more research and opening new fields of investigations. Lewin’s field theory was based on behaviour that was determined by totality of an individual’s situation. Lewin defined a “field” in his field theory as “the totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent. Lewin said, about Group dynamics: (Marrow 1977)

[Group dynamics] is the discipline that concerns itself with the positive and negative forces at work in human groups. The group modifies the behaviour of its individual members. A person’s role and rank in it, for example may determine how others behave toward him: Groups exert on members influence which may be harmful or beneficial. A better understanding of the principles of collective behaviour, therefore, might show how groups could be made to serve more socially desirable end.

(Marrow, 1977 p.4)

This quote demonstrates how interested Lewin was as a social psychology promoting group dynamics with teachers and many other groups. Learning-by-doing was Lewin’s approach in

the education environment. Marrow recommends how important it is to continue with Lewin's approach of group dynamics and as teachers- we need to keep more up to date by reading or doing research on group dynamics issues to improve group support, fostering active participation, and promoting collective goal setting (Marrow 1977).

Jean Piaget was a Swiss psychologist who was the first to make a systematic study of the acquisition of understanding in children. He continued with his discovering how the mind of the child evolves through a series of set stages to adulthood (Boeree 1999, 2006).

Piaget's theory has had a major impact in psychology, in sociology and in education. Piaget wrote many books and articles on Child Cognitive Development and Genetic Epistemology.

Piaget believed in child-center approach where the environment should be structured in a way to encourage active learning from discovery. Piaget mentioned on the importance of the teachers to guide and stimulate children while learning through exploration and experimenting instead of reprimanding them. Piaget's theories also get credit on the new interactive technologies- like multimedia, virtual reality and the Internet. Working in groups on projects that manipulate and change environments is also encouraged. (Mark, 2002)

Lev Vygotsky was born the same year as Piaget in 1896. Vygotsky introduced the notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is similar to scaffolding. ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner can do without help and what a learner can do with the help of others. It was a very important development where he describes the potential of human cognitive development. For this reason Vygotsky emphasized that for the curriculum to be developed appropriately, the teacher must plan activities not just what children are capable of doing on their own but also activities they can learn to do with the help of others. (Karpov & Haywood cited in Institucion Educativa Federico Angel webpage 2009)

History of Theory and Research

The Johnson brothers and Holubec (1998) wrote about the history of theory and research. The three theoretical perspectives in which have helped other research to be developed on cooperative learning are: Social Interdependence Theory, Cognitive-Developmental Theory, and Behavioral Learning Theory.

The perspective of social interdependence in cooperative learning assumes that social interdependence is how people interact with each other. In addition to this the results are the consequence of people's interactions. As a result, one of the most important cooperative elements that have to be structured in the classroom is a positive interdependence or cooperation among the students. When this happens, the outcomes of cooperation can promote interaction in the group as they support and ease each learner's effort to learn.

The cognitive-developmental perspective is based on Piaget's and Vygotsky's theories. As Piaget's perspectives suggest that when students work together their socio-cognitive conflict takes place and creates cognitive disequilibrium that activates perspective-taking ability and reasoning.

The behavioural-social perspective presupposes that cooperative efforts are fueled by extrinsic motivation to achieve group reward (academic and or non-academic) (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998).

The Jigsaw Strategy

In the early 70's, Aronson and his graduate students from the University of Texas and University of California invented the jigsaw strategy, as a matter of absolute necessity to help resolve a difficult situation that was happening in Austin, Texas. The city's schools had recently been desegregated; Youngsters of different ethnic backgrounds (European Americans, African Americans and Hispanics) were put together in the same classrooms.

Aronson was called in to help. Within a few weeks the situation deteriorated due to long-standing suspicious, fear, and distrust between groups producing a nasty atmosphere of turmoil and hostility. There were many fights in corridors and schoolyards across the city of Austin. Aronson and his colleagues observed classrooms and concluded that inter-group hostility was being fuelled by the competitive environment of the classroom. (Aronson 2000-2010)

A teacher just needs to follow very easy steps to do a jigsaw classroom activity. First, put 5 or 6 students in a group. Each group should be diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and ability. The second step is to appoint one student from each group to be the leader. The third step is to divide the day's lesson into 5-6 segments. Then, assign each student to learn one segment, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment. Another important thing to do is to give students time to read over their segment and become familiar with it. After reviewing the segment they form a temporary group "expert groups" by having one student from each jigsaw group join assigned to the same segment. While they are in their "expert group" they work and rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group. Next, they join their jigsaw groups and each student is ready to present her or his segment to the group. The teacher should encourage students to ask questions for clarification, float from group to group, observing the process. If there is any type of disruption, the leader eventually is best to handle this task. Leaders can be trained by whispering an instruction on how to intervene, until they get the hang of it. And finally, at the end of the session, the teacher gives the students a quiz on the material learned. Students need to realize that these sessions are not just for fun but also for grades. (Aronson 2000-2010)

Building a Climate of Cooperation

As Jacobs, Power and Loh, (2002) mention classroom atmosphere forms a key ingredient in the success of cooperative learning. For instance, students need to feel comfortable working with classmates and be willing to share ideas, ask questions, and take risks. In the cooperative learning classroom the teacher must work with students to develop a set of behaviours, policies, or norms, while offering them to consider cooperation as a value.

As Dickinson Chan, a primary school English teacher in Hong Kong, put it “The development of cooperation starts in the classroom (a small river), but students take this spirit of cooperation with them as they go out into the wide world (the ocean)” (Jacobs, Power, & Loh, 2002, p.4)

A cooperative context happens when individuals share common goals (i.e., positive goal interdependence) have a common fate (i.e., what happens to one member will happen to all the members in the group), and share a common culture. It is often described as a Learning Community that is made up of the faculty and staff, the students, the parents, members of the neighbourhood, and other stakeholders in the school. It seems that the key to establishing a cooperative context is cooperative learning. It helps increase effort to achieve positive relationships and psychological health. Cooperative learning experiences result in more accurate perspective taking and empathy, higher levels of cognitive and moral reasoning, an identity as a moral person, the inclusion of all schoolmates in one’s moral community, and seeing all schoolmates as deserving of justice. (Johnson & Johnson 2009).

Five important elements in Cooperative Learning

Kagan (1994) mentions the 5 elements of Cooperative Learning in his webpage which shows that it is only under certain conditions that cooperative efforts may be expected to be more productive than competitive and individualist efforts. The first condition is- Positive

Interdependence (sink or swim together), this is where each group member's efforts are required and indispensable for group success and each group member has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort because of his or her resources and/or role and task responsibilities. The second condition is Face-to-Face Interaction (promote each other's success), orally explaining how to solve problems, teaching one's knowledge to other; checking for understanding; discussing concepts being learned and connecting present with past learning. The third condition is Individual and Group Accountability (no hitchhiking and no social loafing), keeping the size of the group small. The smaller the size of the group; the greater the individual accountability may be; giving an individual test to each student; randomly examining students orally by calling on one student to present his or her group's work to the teacher (in the presence of the group) or to the entire class and observing each group and recording the frequency with which each member contributes to the group's work; assigning one student in each group the role checker (the checker asks other group members to explain the reasoning and rationale underlying group answers), having students teach what they learned to someone else. The fourth condition is Interpersonal and Small-Group Skills. Social skills must be taught: These are Leadership; Decision-making; Trust-building; Communication and Conflict-management skills. And the fifth and last condition is Group Processing; group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships; describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful (Kagan, 1994, p.2)

Benefits of Cooperative Language Learning

Studies have shown the Collaborative Learning helps promote moral character. Moral character depends on internalizing moral characteristics such as frequent prosocial actions, accurate perspective taking, and moral identity. Prosocial children tend to build positive

relationships with peers, enjoy positive wellbeing, and influences how a person thinks of himself or herself (moral identity). Accurate perspective taking enhances individuals' ability to respond to others' needs with empathy, compassion, and support. Moral identity involves seeing oneself as a moral person, with character, who acts with integrity. (Johnson and Johnson 2009)

The Johnsons brothers stated in their newsletter about the misleading dichotomy between cognitive and social and emotional learning. Teachers need to teach students to read, for example, but they also need to teach students how to enjoy, appreciate and value reading. Teachers should not see cognitive and social –emotional learning as a dichotomy. When teachers wish to appropriately integrate cognitive and social emotional learning they need to apply these four steps:

The first step is to create a cooperative context. Second, promote a positive relationship with peers and faculty. Third, teach students essential interpersonal and small group skills, especially the skills for resolving conflicts constructively. The fourth step is to promote the development of moral character. .

(Johnson & Johnson 2009)

Johnson reminds us on how most educators have grossly underestimated the power that relationships have in teaching; for example in student and teacher, student and student, teacher and parents. There is a positive effect found in research on how cooperative relationships benefits on students' outcomes in achievement, acceptance of differences, self esteem, and social skills. It is also proven that students work harder for the teacher they like even in a university level. Sometimes teachers believe it is better not to smile until the end of the course but this tough approach it is not considerate to be appropriate. Something that it is great in cooperative learning is that students are concerned about each other and work for

appropriate behaviour and each other's achievement. This permits the teacher to step out of the role of "expert on all" and "enforcer" to be more of an "arranger" of learning settings including direct teaching when it necessary or individual work when is most appropriate and when the teacher wants to have an active and friendly students doing lots of cooperative work (Johnson & Johnson Q & A p 11)

In Kagan's webpage we can see research has shown that cooperative leaning techniques are the following: Promote student learning and academic achievement; increases student retention; enhance student satisfaction with their learning experience; help students develop skills in oral communication; develop students' social skills; promote student self-esteem and help to promote positive race relations. (Kagan, p.1 (1994)

Errors teachers make applying Cooperative Learning.

On the Q & A webpage of the Johnson brothers, they state that most teachers make a big mistake by allowing students to choose their own groups. They mention that this always ends up with homogeneous groups by looks and status rather than on variables relevant to doing the work. In a more difficult task mixing up the characteristics needed for accomplishing that task, requires taking into consideration, different interests, talents, skills, maybe even ability level. Groups with diverse characteristics make a cooperative relationship powerful.

For simpler activities as for skill review, vocabulary can be a reason to put same ability people together, but always try to vary the perspective and talents of the group members. By putting different students to work together we are building a larger learning community in a classroom in order to build an umbrella over the whole class where the students may begin to feel more comfortable working with anybody in the classroom. (Johnson & Johnson Q&A 2009).

In another section of the Johnson's brothers Q & A website, the negatives of using cooperative learning are discussed. For example, cooperative learning can be abused when teachers just tell students to get into groups, and call it cooperative learning; or when teachers make large groups of 5 or 6 and expect it to work without carefully structured instructions. Another negative is when the teacher is not proper the monitoring and not determining if the students understand the tasks or are skillful with one another; or use it for every activity even when individual work might be more efficient or competitive would be more enjoyable. (Johnson & Johnson. Q & A 2009)

Different Factors to be Consider when Grouping.

According to Spratt, Pulverness and Williams, there are some important factors to consider when deciding how to group students. It is important to know the teaching aim; this means the aim of the lesson and the aim of the activity. Teachers also need to take into consideration different learning styles because there are students with different personalities and there are students that like to work as individual, while others prefer groups. Knowledge of the ability and level of the students are essential. Most classes are made up of mixed students with different abilities and levels.

This article specifies that teachers can group students for some activities, so that students of the same ability work together, and for other activities so that students of different abilities work together. In addition, the class size is another of the factors. With a class of less than 30 students, teachers can manage pair and group work quite easily. But, when there are more than 30 students, pair and group work are possible, it just requires more careful planning. Another important feature these researchers mention in this article is when students are not accustomed to pair and group work; teachers need to learn how to plan how to introduce this way of working. Teachers can start by doing short pair work activities, and

gradually introduce longer and more varied groupings. The teachers need to learn to balance the interaction patterns in a lesson. It is not recommendable for students to work in pairs for the whole lesson, because they will become bored. The lesson will not be successful and the teacher might end up with discipline problems in the classroom. Similarly, this will happen if a teacher conducts a wholly teacher-led lessons, that teacher is unlikely to be successful: learners need to have a balance of different interaction patterns within one lesson.

(Spratt, Pulverness, Williams 2005)

Types of Groups

There are three types of groups: Informal groups, Formal groups and Base groups. The informal groups relates to all the activities that have a short life time ranging from a few minutes to the class period, are generally created quickly or to a particular thing, (e.g., the instructor may say “discuss this question with your neighbours”. The informal groups have little structure or format, have new group members with each new class day, and are especially useful during lectures because they group activities can break the lecture in mini-lectures, and may provide a quick check on student comprehension.

Formal groups may last one class session, or several days to several weeks. They require more planning as to the size and composition of the group,, have greater structure, have a specific purpose (e.g., a particular task to accomplish), and have the same group members throughout its existence.

Base groups serve a broader purpose. They last the entire semester (or even several semesters), meet regularly, require planning as to the size and composition of the group, personalize the task at hand by providing support, encouragement, and assistance among group members, have a specific purpose (e.g., a particular task to complete), and have constant membership. (NICE p 6. 1997)

Table 1: Cooperative Learning types of Groups Adapted from Johnson, D., Johnson, R & Holubec, E. (1998)

Types of Groups

	Duration	Activities	Structure	Group Members	Purpose
Informal Groups	a few minutes-class period	Created quickly – discussion, pair work.	Little structure	May change each time	Provide quick check on Ss comprehension Break up lectures.
Formal Groups	One class period, to several days or weeks	Requires careful planning	More structured	Specific structure like completion of a task	Same group members over time
Base Group	Entire semester or even several semester Meet regularly	Personalization of the tasks	Require careful planning Each Group member has a specific purpose or task	Constant Membership.	Particular task to complete.

Students' Roles for Cooperative Learning Activities

By assigning roles to students while working in CL activities may encourage and motivate them to interact even more. Roles are important in developing a project for example. These roles can facilitate responsibilities and prevent difficulties that may hinder successful completion of the project.

Teachers can assign them or give a list of suggested roles for the students within the group to decide which role they prefer doing during the project Roles may also be randomly decided, and this will help avoid rigid group structures and expectation effects. Random selection of roles may also permit different students to use and expand diverse abilities.

Random measurements are very helpful and create a non-threatening means for students to become better classmates and to develop good friendships. Two suggested students' role types are: Potential Project Roles and Possible Discussion Roles. (Carleton University 2010)

The Potential Project Roles are to include a Leader/Editor- this student is in charge of organizing the final product of the project, be it a paper, or a group presentation. The leader/editor needs to make sure that the project meets the standards set out by the instructor, plus any extras stipulated by the group. These standards generally include punctuality and completeness, the person in the Recorder/Secretary role takes notes whenever the group meets and keeps track of group data/sources. This person distributes these notes to the rest of the group highlighting sections relevant for their parts of the project. Checker- this student is in charge to double-check data, bibliographic sources, or graphics for accuracy and correctness.

The student in the Spokesperson/Press Secretary/Webmaster-role would be responsible for the technical details of the final product and would be ready to summarize the groups' progress and findings to the instructor and to other groups. (Carleton. p.1. 2010)

Possible Discussion Roles

The student in the Facilitator/Encourager: gets the discussion moving and keeps it moving, often by asking the other group members questions, sometimes about what they have just been saying, The Timekeeper is-someone who makes sure that the group stays on track and gets through a reasonable amount of material in the given time period, The Summarizer-provides a summary of the discussion for other students to approve or amend, The Reflector-listens to what others say and explains it back in his or her own words, asking the original speaker if the interpretation is correct, The Elaborator- seeks connections between the current discussion and past topics or overall course themes. (Carleton. p.1. 2010)

Community Language Learning

Community Language Learning is also known as Counseling Language Learning. This approach was developed by Charles A. Curran, professor of psychology. It was created especially for Adult Learners to remove the anxiety from learning a new language. The teacher is seen as the “knower” of the language and the student is “the learner”. This situation is seen as being in the same relationship as a counselor with a client. The client (the learner) has “the problem” with the language and the counselor is there to help the client decide what to do. The counselor is not there to tell the client what to do, but to help the client explore and resolve the problem while maintaining personal autonomy. (ELT Notebook, 2007)

There are three stages to do in a CLL. They are Investment; Analysis and Reflection. In the Investment stage, the students sit in a circle with a tape recorder in the middle. The knower is outside the circle ready to act as a counselor and a paraphraser. The first student who want to say something calls the knower over, and quietly says what she wants to say in this or her own language. The knower repeats this in English, using a non-threatening and encourages the student to proceed. This process continues until a full conversation is recorded.

In the Analysis stage, the knower transcribes the whole conversation on the board, and the students listen again to the tape while following the transcript. Students then have the opportunity to ask for any explanation they want.

The third stage is Reflection. During this stage students reflect on the whole experience, and decide how useful it was, and see whatever changes are necessary to do for the next session. Once again it is important to keep in mind that the knower’s job is not to “tell the students where they went wrong” the purpose is help the students realize and discover for themselves how they could have made the session worked much better.

Keep also in mind that this cooperative activity also requires preparation and practice from the students and teacher. It might not work successfully the first or second time you do it. This method involves students in making their own choices about how to learn, evaluating their success, trying out something different, reflecting on that... and so on. Students will become familiar and it will start to work after several sessions.

Another new type of Community Learning Languages is the new technology, the Internet. These online CLLs are social network services that take advantage of the Web concept of information sharing collaboration tools, by doing this users can help other people to learn languages by direct communication or mutual correction of proposed exercises.

(ELT Notebook 2007)

Tribes Learning Community

Jeanne Gibbs created this program which is a new way of learning together. Tribes Learning Community encourages schools, families, and the community to work together to offer students a healthy and safety environment in school. This program is becoming very popular in Canada, Australia and the United States. There are four agreements among the students, teachers, and administration. The agreements are attentive listening, appreciation, mutual respect, and participate (the right to pass). Tribes Learning Community is an innovative program that focuses in on using cooperative learning strategies.

This program makes students feel safe and requires them to be active members while learning. The teacher must create a friendly and fun environment where the students will feel safe and good being in school. Gibbs (2006) says this program serves as a tool for students, teachers and administrators to work together as a team to help solve problems inside and outside the classroom. Gibbs also says it is necessary to make our students feel welcomed, because it will make a positive learning environment, and they will progress in their learning.

Parents in the United States, Canada and Australia have agreed that offering a safe and caring environment to the students reduces many conflicts. This Tribes program makes students feel included and welcome by respected and successful. (De Spirt 2006)

Hole in the Wall Research

Sugata Mitra is a Chief Scientist of NIIT (National Institute Information in Technology) as Minimally Invasive Education (MIE), This study is called the “Hole in the Wall Experiment” which Mitra first developed in a remote area of New Delhi and later expanded to other cities in India from 1999 to 2003. The main idea of this research was to investigate if groups of children could learn to use computers without direct teaching from a teacher. Mitra called it, the hole in the wall experiment because he built a PC monitor with a touch pad and keyboard into the wall outside his office, where children in the streets could be able to use it . Mitra observed every move that children made through the camera connected to his office. Mitra said that children in this project learned on their own by the process of discovering, exploring and peer guidance while using the PC on the wall. Mitra continued with this study in different remote towns and villages in India .Through these four years of research that children taught and helped each other without the help of a teacher or a command of “English” to browse in a computer. This shows that children are born with the natural instinct of curiosity and can learn by discovering things by themselves and can contribute with others by transmitting their knowledge when they work together, when no teacher was available. (Mitra, 2009)

The second city he did this experiment was in Chitpuri in the center of India. He noticed that a 13 year-old boy who was a school dropout started playing with the touch pad in which later on when he was asked by Mitra, the boy had told him “He had never seen a TV do something” (p.9) This boy learned right away how to browse by doing accidental clicks. The

13 year old boy started calling his friends from his neighborhood to come over and see what was going on. Then in the evening of that day there were 70 children who learned how to browse a computer. They just needed eight minutes and a computer to learn how to do this process in groups.

Mitra continued with this experiment in northeastern India, a village called Madantusi. In this village there were no English teachers, so for this reason Mitra took this experiment there because he knew that there were children with any knowledge of English. He left CD's and a PC (with no internet). After three months when Mitra came back he was surprised when children asked him for "a faster processor and a better mouse" (p. 10)and he was also amazed to see children had learned at least 200 words like, mouse, stop, save, exit, copy, etc...not just to use the computer but also in their everyday conversations. Mitra also noticed that more girls in this village were interested in the computer than in the slum areas. Mitra continued this experiment in the Himalayas and then in the center part of India.

Mitra's opinions is the this experiment shows that children are born with a natural instinctive of curiosity and can learn by discovering things by themselves and can contribute with others by teaching other their knowledge when they work together and not necessarily need to be taught by a teacher. They also do not need to speak the language to manage a computer.

(Mitra, 2009)

Collaborative or Cooperative Learning

Panitz (1996) believes that among people there is a confusion that arises when they look at processes associated with the concepts and see a certain amount of overlap or inter-concept usage.

Collaborative studies of the design and evaluation of learning environments, among cognitive and developmental psychologists and educators, are yielding new knowledge about

the nature of learning and teaching as it takes place in a variety of settings. In addition, researchers are discovering ways to learn from the “wisdom of practice” that comes from successful teachers who can share their expertise. Bransford (2000)

According to Bruffee (1996) Collaborative Learning is a personal philosophy, not just a classroom technique. In all situations where people come together in groups it suggests a way of dealing with people which respects and highlights individual group members’ abilities and contributions. There is a sharing of responsibility among group members for the groups’ actions. (Cited in Panitz p. 10)

There seems to be an increasing consensus in pedagogy worldwide about the need to shift from traditional, teacher-centred method of teaching (when the teacher is the only one talking and students remain passive); to a more student-centred approach (when students actively involved in the learning process). Cooperative learning is one instructional method aimed at achieving it. (Brown p. 2)

The Johnson brothers say that the terms collaborative and cooperative are used interchangeably much of the time. Some like to think of **collaborative** as a broader term including all kinds of “group work” some which is not structured cooperatively. **Cooperative** implies that students have a group goal, are individually accountable to contribute and learn, are working as skilfully with each other as they can, are working Knee to Knee (usually in a group of two or three), and take time to process how well they functioned as a team and what they can do to be even better. Much different than some unstructured “group work”.

(Johnson & Johnson. Q & A p 15) :

According to Smith and MacGregor (1992), Collaborative learning is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more,

mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product.

Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most center on students' exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher's presentation or explication of it. (p.1)

Collaborative Learning is a technique designed to make learning a lively and successful process. It is also called cooperative learning or small group learning. Some linguists suggest that cooperative learning is a face-to-face, highly structured learning whereas collaborative learning assigns responsibility primarily to the students. Be that as it may, the terms are often used interchangeably. (Nagata and Ronkowski (1998) cited in Brown (2008), p. 2)

To Jacobs Cooperative or Collaboration are group activities are becoming more and more popular in the teaching of second/foreign languages and other subjects all over the world. Since about 1970, a great deal of work has gone into research and methodology in order to develop ways that teachers can help their students learn more effectively and happily in groups. Many people working in this area the term "Cooperative Learning" (also known as "Collaborative Learning") to describe these ways of enhancing group learning. Jacobs, G. (1998, p. 5)

Cooperative activities are those activities where students work together to finish a task or solve a problem. These techniques have been found to increase the self-confidence of students, including weaker ones, because every participant in a cooperative task has an important role to play. Knowing that their classmates are counting on them can increase students' motivation.(Lightbown and Spada 1999)

Kagan identifies cooperative learning by looking at general structures which can be applied to any situation. His definition provides an umbrella for the work cooperative learning specialists including the Johnsons, Slavin, Cooper, Graves, Millis, etc. It follows: “The structural approach to cooperative learning is based on the creation, analysis and systematic application of structures, or content-free ways of organizing social interaction in the step. An important cornerstone of the approach is the distinction between “structures” and “activities”. To illustrate, teachers can design many excellent cooperative activities, such as making a team mural or a quilt. Such activities almost always have a specific content-bound objective and thus cannot be used to deliver a range of academic content. Structures may be used repeatedly with almost any subject matter, at a wide range of grade levels and at various points in a lesson plan” (Kagan cited in Panitz p.13)

Slavin’s (1989-1990) opinion on Cooperative learning is when students work together in small groups on a structured activity. They are individually accountable for their work, and the work of the group as a whole is also assessed. Cooperative groups work face-to-face and learn to work as a team. (Slavin p.1)

According to the Johnsons brothers’ cooperative learning is working together to accomplish shared goals. Within cooperative activities individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning. (Johnson and Johnson, 2009)

The TKT book course does not mention the word “collaborative” or “cooperative”, for group work activities instead they just refer to them as Group Dynamics. According to the articles there are two different ways in which the teacher can put the students together to work in the classroom. The first way is called the Interaction Patterns, when the teacher

includes open class, group work, pair work and individual work, and the teacher to student(s) and student(s) to teacher. The second way is when the teachers chooses the students who will work together according to their levels, learning styles, learner needs, personalities and relationships with others in the class before asking students to work together. The teacher needs to plan ahead which students will work together best in order to learn best. (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams 2005)

Cooperative Learning Structures and Techniques

According to Kagan, cooperative learning structures have been carefully designed to generate positive results in the most important educational fields. Here are some these positive outcomes: Academic Achievement, Development of the Range of Intelligences, Enhancement of thinking Skills, Development of Character Virtues, Development of Social Skills, Improvement of Race Relations, Development of Emotional Intelligence and Liking for School, Class, Self, Others, and Learning. (Kagan p. 3)

Kagan and his associates developed these nine structures for cooperative activities (Kagan, 1994). They are Jigsaw, Think-Pair-Share, Three Step Interview, Round Robin Brainstorming, Three-minute review, Numbered Head Together, Team Pair Solo, Circle the Sage, Partners. These structures are defined in the following section.

The Jigsaw structure is formed with groups of five students. Each group member is assigned some unique material to learn in an “expert group” and then they go back to their original group to teach the others members. Tests or assessment follow.

The Think-Pair-Share structure requires of three steps. In the first step, the students think silently about a question posed by the teacher. The students pair up during the second step and exchange views and opinions. In the third step, the pairs share their answers with other pair group, other teams, or the whole class.

The third structure is called Three-Step Interview. Each member of a team chooses another member to be a partner. During the first step students interview their partners by asking clarifying questions. In the second step partners reverse the roles. For the final step, members share their partner's response with the team.

The fourth structure is Round Robin Brainstorming which requires the class to be divided into small groups of four to six. One student is appointed as the recorder. A question is posed with many answers and students are given time to think about answers. After the "think time," members share their responses with one another in a round robin style. The recorder is in charge to write down the answers of each group member. The student next to the recorder starts and each student in the group in order give an answer until time is up.

The fifth structure is the three-minute review- Teachers stop any time during a lecture or discussion and give teams three minutes to review what has been said, Students ask clarifying questions or answer questions among themselves.

Structure number six is Numbered Heads Together. This is by forming groups of four members. Each member is given numbers of 1, 2, 3, and 4. Questions are asked to the group. Groups work together to answer the question and making sure they can verbally be able to answer the question orally. The teacher then calls out a number "three" and each three is need to respond to the question.

Team Pair Solo is another interesting structure develop by Kagan. First, students work in teams, then with a partner, and finally on their own. This structure is designed to help and motivate students to engage and succeed at problems which initially are beyond their ability. By allowing students to work in team and work on problems they could not do alone, and then making them easier until they can do it by themselves.

Circle the Sage is form of four members in each group. These are the steps to follow: First, the teacher polls the class to see which students have a special knowledge to share (example: who has visited Mexico? who solved a difficult math homework question?) Those students “the sage” stands and spreads out in the classroom. The teacher then has the rest of the students each surround a sage, with no two members of the same team going to the same sage. “The sage” gives explanation what they know while the students listen, ask questions and take notes. Then all the students return to their teams and each one explain what they learned. Because each one has gone to a different sage, they compare notes. When there is a disagreement, they stand up as a team. And finally, the disagreements are aired and resolved. The last structure to be mentioned in this paper is Partners. The class is divided into groups of four. Partners move to one side of the classroom. Half of each team is given an assignment to master to be able to teach the other half. Partners work to learn and can consult with other partners working on the same material. Teams returned to work together with each set of partners teaching the other set. Partners quiz and tutor teammates. Team reviews how well they learned and taught and how they might improve the process.

Kagan states that if the teacher learns to master well a variety of structures can be able to create exciting classes which will motivate students to learn in groups. (Kagan 1989 p.1). Here are also eight other structures described by Kagan in his article. They are: Corners, Match Mine, Color-Coded Co-op Cards, Pairs Checks, Team Word-Webbing, Roundtable, Inside-Outside Circle, and Co-op Co-op.

Corners are the structures where each student moves to a corner of the room representing a teacher-determined alternative. Students discuss within corners, then listen to and paraphrase ideas.

Another structure explained by Kagan is Match Mine where students attempt to match the arrangement of objects on a grid of another student using oral communication only.

Color Coded Co-op Cards is a structure where students memorize facts using a flash card game. The game is structured so that there is a maximum probability of success at each step, moving from short – term to long-term memory. Scoring is based on improvement.

Pairs check is when students work in pairs within groups of four. Within pairs students alternate –one solves a problem while the other coaches. After every two problems the pair checks to see if they have the same answers as the other pair.

The fifth structure is called Team Word-Webbing is when students write simultaneously on a piece of chart paper, drawing main concepts, supporting elements, and bridges representing the relation of ideas in a concept.

He includes another structure called Roundtable is when each student in turn writes one answer as a paper and a pencil are passed around the group. With simultaneous Roundtable more than one pencil and paper are used at once.

Inside –Outside Circle is when students stand in pairs in two concentric circles. The inside circle faces out; the outside circle faces in. Students use flash cards or respond to teacher questions as they rotate to each new partner.

The last one mentioned in Kagan’s article is Co-op Co-op is when students work in groups to produce a particular group product to share with the whole class; each student makes a particular contribution to the group. (Kagan 1989 p.3)

The Cooperative Learning Center

The Cooperative Learning Center in Minnesota is a Research and Training Center where the researchers Roger and David Johnson are the director and co-director of this institution. This institution has been in existence for more than twenty years and the Johnson

brothers and their staff have focused on how students should interact with each other as they learn. They have worked to determine the skills needed to interact effectively. They have reviewed more than 800 studies dating back to the late 1800's and have contributed more than 80 research studies of their own to clarify the issue of student to student interaction and learning. The staff at this center has trained teachers from pre-school through college in all subject areas and psychologists from Canada, Hong Kong, Spain, Germany, and Poland. At first, the training was concentrated only in the United States, but now it's becoming popular all over the world. This center has courses on cooperative skills as in leadership, communication, decision making, trust building, and conflict resolution. In addition to thousands of teachers/administrators, who have received Cooperative Learning Training have come about five hundred people who have had received Leadership Training and are teaching Cooperative Learning in their own areas. These carefully selected people in this network allow the Johnson brothers and his committee refer people who are looking for help with cooperative learning to Leaders in their own community or near by.

(Johnson and Johnson p.1)

The Johnson brothers' intention is to keep promoting Cooperative Learning, not just in classrooms, but also in schools and systems. Leading the Cooperative School is aimed at school administrators and teacher leaders. The staff at this center is being focused on these aspects. First, on cooperation in the college classroom, this examines the use of cooperative learning in adult settings. Second, teaching students to be Peacemakers to prevent and deal with violence in the schools. Third, is in the Creative Controversy material which focuses on stirring up more intellectual conflict in classrooms. Johnson and Johnson also plan to assist schools in Eastern Europe to promote cooperative learning as one way to help prepare a next generation for democracy and the free enterprise system. (Johnson and Johnson, 1997).

National and International Associations for Cooperative Learning

There are several associations all over the world which promote cooperative learning among students, teachers and administrators. A few of these associations are:

The International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (IASCE). This was established in 1979 in order to promote student academic improvement and democratic social processes. It promotes cooperative learning by supporting research and diffusing it all over the world. This international organization develops structures that will improve education in a cooperative way. This association works with local, national and international organization to expand the importance of cooperative learning. This association holds an annual conference in different part of the world. (IASCE 2010)

The Japan Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (JASCE), promotes research and the training of cooperative and collaborative learning and associated activities, making educators become aware of the importance of cooperation and for increasing the use of important networks among teachers, administrators, educational policy-makers and researchers. (jasce 2010)

The British Columbia Cooperative Learning Association (BCCLA). Their objectives are to provide leadership in professional development and to provide the British Columbia Teacher's Federation Executive Committee and other committees of the federation with everything that is necessary to know to implement cooperative learning in schools in British Columbia. (BCCLA 2010)

The Great Lakes Association for Cooperative Learning in Education (GLACIE) is also located in Canada. Their members investigate and research the methods of organizing small groups in which students work together to learn. Members meet for annual conference this year the is "Achievement through Active Engagement". One of the speakers at this

conference will be Dr. Spencer Kagan, known worldwide as an author, researcher and presenter on cooperative learning. (Glacie, 2010)

Constructivist Curriculum

Constructivism is basically a theory that is based on observation and scientific study on how people learn. It is believed that people construct their own knowledge and understanding of the world, through experiences and reflecting on those experiences. And when we come across to something new, we have to reconcile it with our prior knowledge, perhaps by changing what we believe, or perhaps erasing the information as inappropriate. Anyway, we are our own knowledge creator and we do this when we ask questions, explore, and evaluate what we know. Constructivist view of learning is through many different teaching practices. In the most general sense, it usually means to promote students to use active techniques (experiments, real-world problem solving) to create more knowledge and then to reproduce and talk about what they are doing and how their understanding is changing. A constructivist teacher makes sure she understands the students' pre-existing conceptions, and guides the activity to address them and then build on them.

Cooperative versus Competitive and Individualistic Learning..

Many educators who have done research and practiced cooperative learning group promotes a sense of positive interdependence and mutual support. Competition is practiced in many countries, advocate competition as the favoured lifestyle for students. In some countries from which ESL students come, suicides and mental illness arise directly from the severe stress of academic competition. Although occasionally competition can have positive results in terms of the desire to improve performance, it often results in anxiety inadequacy, guilt, hostility, withdrawal, and fear of failure. (Bailey, 1983)

To Lightbown and Spada it is up to the teacher to use the most appropriate way to motivate students according to their age and culture differences. There might be in some classrooms students thriving on competitive interaction, while in others, cooperative activities will be more successful. (Lightbown and Spada 1999)

As Johnson and Johnson also stated in one of their articles on how competitive and individual learning situations are not as recommendable or beneficial as cooperative learning. In competitive activities, there is a negative interdependence among goal achievements; students feel that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other learners in the class fail to obtain their goal. In individualistic learning situations students work alone to obtain their goals which are not the same as those of their classmates. Individualistic assessment is often carried out on a criterion-referenced basis. Students' achievement of their learning goals is not related to what other students do. The result is to focus on self-interest and personal achievements and ignore as not relevant the achievements and failures of others (Johnson and Johnson p.2).

There are value systems that are inherently taught just by being in a cooperative, competitive, or individualistic situation. Cooperation promotes a commitment to others' success as well as one's own and to the common good as well as prosocial behaviour and a concern for the well being of others. Competition tends to promote striving to get more of something than others and that the natural way of life involves depriving others from the fruits of winning and opposing and obstructing the success of others. An individualistic situation in the moral orientation is based on strict self-interest. (Johnson & Johnson 2009)

In the Johnsons' blog, they respond to the usages of all three goal structures, cooperative, competitive and individualistic. They discuss how important it is to set up these three goal structures experiences properly, but, they emphasize that they are not equally

powerful as cooperative learning that is, if we primarily care for the student achievement, academic self esteem psychological health, and positive attitudes- it is best to use cooperative as the primary goal structure. Cooperative learning has been shown to be effective in many research studies. David Johnson with his background in Social Psychology maintains that

It is important to keep in mind that life is predominantly a cooperative enterprise in a family, neighbourhood, society and especially the work place. It is not the people you work with that you want to compete with in a free enterprise setting but the other companies. As within a company as within a “team” people want as much cooperation as possible among the colleagues. When an interpersonal competition happens it can be very uncomfortable in a competitive context. We need to learn how handle these situations if they happen by being low-key, homogeneous group in seeing a chance to win for everyone at the workplace. Cooperative learning teaches students to recognize when it is not a good idea to compete so they can learn to use cooperative or individualistic instead of competitive. The Johnson brothers point out on how effective cooperative learning is and how it would help everyone to live in more caring, sharing world if we all be more cooperative. (Johnson & Johnson Q & A)

Competitive, Individualistic and Cooperative Results

Johnson and Johnson (1994) did a meta-analysis of over 875 studies comparing “how successful competitive, individualistic, and cooperative efforts are in promoting productivity and achievement” They found:

When all of the studies were included in the analysis, the average co-operator performed at about two thirds a standard deviation above average student learning within a competitive (effect size=0.66) or individualistic situation (effect size 0.63).

When only the high-quality studies were included in the analysis, the effect sizes are 0.86 and 0.59 respectively. Cooperative learning, furthermore, resulted in more higher level reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions (i.e., process gain), and greater transfer of what is learned within one situation to another (i.e., group-to-individual transfer) than did competitive or individualistic learning”.

(Johnson and Johnson, 1994, p.1)

Cooperation and Competition

Teaching cooperation in the classroom by helping students among themselves is a good example of cooperation. Cooperation can take place either in a cooperative task or in a cooperative reward structure, in which each member of the group receives a common reward for their effort in achieving the task. According to Slavin (1983), Kagan (1986) and Kohn (1987) .cooperative learning groups promote a positive interdependence among peers and also promotes mutual support.

Many studies have demonstrated that cooperative learning helps students develop self-esteem; become more confident and find enjoyment while learning. In research there is evidence of students showing more respect for the teacher, subject and for the school. Cooperative learning shows greater and more rapid achievement, use of higher level of cognitive strategies, reduction of prejudice; and caring and mutual concern.

Many countries all over the world advocate competition in school systems as the preferable educational approach for students. Competition makes students go against each other and hatred can occur. In a competitive system there are always some losers and some winners. These competitive situations can cause severe stress of academic competition on students. However, occasionally, competitiveness can be used in a positive way, with more if there is a need to improve performance in a task. (Scarcella and Oxford 1992).

Skills that Companies are looking for in an Employee

In today's business world it is important to have leadership skills to be able to contribute with innovative ideas when working in team groups for an enterprise. Jeff M. Thomas and Dan Bobinski have investigated what skills are necessary to have when working for an enterprise.

According to the accountant, Jeff M. Thomas (2010) who has been researching employees' skills in business companies by checking up on different company websites, such as Prudential (Financial Services Associate), First Investors Corporation and Northwestern Mutual Financial Network. These are the seven qualifications:

The first one is that these companies are looking for their employees to have good business communication skills. The second skill employers also want to see in their employees is to have excellent interpersonal skills and to interact well with other people throughout the corporation. The third one is critical thinking, another important skill that these corporations are looking for. The employee needs to get involved in, contribute and participate in the group projects given to them. The fourth skill set involves strong organizational and time management skills. These skills require the employee to know how to manage the time to complete a task well. The fifth skill is a strong work ethic and ability to work in a team environment. The employee needs to get along with others while working as a team and working hard to successfully complete the project. The sixth skill is a problem solving skills. The boss might ask you to solve a problem at anytime. The last skill is to have self-confidence and ability to work and motivate yourself to work effectively. (Thomas, 2010) All of these skills can be developed as students and become more and more skilled at practicing cooperative learning projects and activities.

Dan Bobinski is a training specialist, author and a speaker in management issues. He has been president of Leadership Development, Inc, providing workforce and management training to Fortune 500 companies for more than 18 years.

In one of his articles he mentions that according to employer surveys carried out a few years ago by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) these are the most important skills that employee must have to be promoted in a company: “The first skills are communication skills, motivation/initiative, teamwork skills, leadership skills, academic achievement, interpersonal skills, flexibility/adaptability, technical skills, and honesty/integrity.”(p.1)

In this chapter I have covered the review of literature on the themes that are related to concepts of cooperative and collaborative learning. For example: Community Language Learning; Kagan’s cooperative learning structures; the types of cooperative leaning. Jigsaw Strategy; The cooperative Language Center; The different cooperative associations; The difference about cooperation, individualist, and competition learning; Constructivist Curriculum.

In the next chapter I describe the process of the methodology that took place in different ESL classrooms.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Qualitative and some quantitative data collection methods are used in this study. A twenty-item questionnaire-adapted from Ingleton (2000) was given to 140 students to explore students' perceptions of cooperative learning. Six teachers of the high-intermediate level courses were interviewed. Five teachers are non-natives and one teacher is a native speaker. Each teacher was asked 14 questions. Each teacher was observed teaching twice. While students worked in pairs or groups in their EFL course(s). Data obtained from the questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations were purposely designed to obtain students' and teachers' perceptions of cooperative learning. The design and procedures used were modelled on cooperative learning expert, Faith Brown's, research with students in a university Botswana in 2008.

A rating scale was used in all the questionnaire's items responses using a four-interval scale of "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", "strongly disagree". The teacher and the researcher were in the classroom while the questionnaires were completed by the students. Their availability seemed to make the students feel more reassured and comfortable while completing the questionnaires. The questionnaire was chosen, then adapted with the aim of getting an overall opinion on how they viewed cooperative learning in their language classes, since the use of cooperative learning is included as institutional policy

Participants

There were 140 university men and women between 20 and 30 years old. These students were in a high intermediate English semester course when this research took place. They were chosen to be part of the research because they have for the most part learned

beyond a beginning proficiency level of the English language. These participants were taking their last English course next semester. All the students need to complete all the six levels of English to be able to graduate from any of the faculties.

Out of the 203 students that were observed only 140 completed the questionnaires. The reasons for the other students not participating were due to their absences or for their doubtfulness about participating in the research. The data from students were obtained from the questionnaires. The data from teachers were obtained through interviews. The results are presented in tables, charts and histograms.

Six teachers were interviewed in order to explore and describe their perceptions of using group work activities in their English as a Foreign Language classes. They answered 14 questions related to general procedures of cooperative learning. Data obtained from the interviews are shown in below.

Data Collection Sources

First, the teachers of intermediate EFL courses were observed twice during their group work activities with the intent of describing first-hand how teachers make use of cooperative learning techniques in their intermediate English courses. Then, after the second observation, students participating in this research completed a questionnaire and answered some questions related to their personal opinions of group work activities. Finally, teachers were interviewed and recorded after their second observation. The interview was intended to provide information on how and why they practice cooperative/collaborative learning in their EFL classes. A complete set of the protocols for the interviews and questionnaires can be read in the appendixes of this study.

The Process of Collecting the Questionnaires

Each teacher was observed twice for an-hour within a six-month period. After the second observation the students completed the questionnaires. All together there were 140 students that participated during this semester. During this research I met many cooperative students that were willing to participate in this study. But, at times I came across some students that were reluctant and puzzled about participating in this research. I saw this happening mostly in Jorge's class where only three students participated out of 21. In the other courses there were probably only two or three students with these same insecurities. My personal opinion is the students at this centre are not familiarized with research. They need to be conscious and informed by their teacher in advance about the importance of their cooperation in EFL research.

Chapter 4

Findings

In this section the interviews and the findings from the study are presented. The data are from a twenty-item questionnaire administered to 140 students, audio taped responses from teacher interviews, and classroom observation notes.

The results obtained from the questionnaires revealed that although students acknowledge the academic, social and generic benefits of group work, they also perceive some negative aspects. Teachers' responses obtained from the interviews and observations are shown in the interviews questions and observations that were categorized and adapted from Ingleton (2000) obtained from Faith Brown's article.

Through the observations and interviews I learned the teachers' and students' cooperation and friendliness while working in groups is really important. There were four classes out of the six with excellent rapport between teachers and students. Their student-centred instruction gave the students the opportunity to learn in a more pleasant and welcoming environment when learning a new language. The students learned with the support of the other\ members in the group and enjoyed developing their tasks. Even though, teachers need to do a few modifications when applying CL in their EFL classrooms.

ESL Teachers' Interviews

In this section there are six interviews from teachers of high-intermediate level courses. Five teachers are non-native speakers and Jorge is the only native speaker in this interview. It was really important to find out their opinions on group work activities.

The teachers' interview questions were adapted from Ingleton, (2000) obtained from Brown, F. (2008). These teachers' opinions gave a broader idea of their perceptions in this method. Questions were selected to obtain the teachers' perceptions on cooperative learning.

Jorge's Interview

The first teacher to be interviewed was Jorge. His objectives as a teacher for using group work activities is the use of the language for communication, as well as to increase the time the students themselves are speaking and listening to students and to the language as much as possible. He thinks that the benefits of the group work for language learning are to foster cooperation and to learn to work as a team. Jorge usually groups students with 4 or 5 members, but he prefers 4 most of the time. When selecting students to work in a group he balances them out, which grouping weak and strong students, according to the capacities of the students.

Jorge received some training in group work activities while he was doing "The Teacher Training Certificate" in Ireland and in the CELTA program in 1991 in Rome.

Jorge says something he would change about his approach in the future in group activities will be giving feedback more individually. He says it is sometimes hard to control in a group because there could a student not working as hard as the rest. He assesses learning by monitoring, though he said it is not easy but crucial. He says he always walks around the classroom to monitor students while they work in groups. Jorge believes in this method for all levels but he stated that is not supposed to be used all the time. He hesitated at first when he was asked if these group work activities were an institutional policy for EFL teachers at this centre, his final answered was "yes". He also said that he has looked for group work procedures in several books that he brought from Ireland. Moreover, he searches the Internet

Occasionally. He has not recently read any research on using group work since he was doing his CELTA and getting his Teacher Training Certificate.

Patricia's Interview

Patricia's objective for group work activities is to share information in a communicative way, therefore student-to-student interaction is the most important element of cooperative learning for her.. She thinks the benefits of group work for language learning gives students the opportunity to practice communicating in the language.. She also thinks it is important for us, teachers, to create an English speaking environment where students can use the language. She says she usually groups students with four or five members but, it really depends on what they are going to do. Normally, she selects the students for the group randomly or gives them a number or a color for them to get into groups.

Patricia received training for group work during her preparation programs for the CELTA and the TKT. One thing she would like to change about her approach in future group work is to use more structured activities and to plan them better. She also assesses learning by asking questions and opinions from her students' groups to see if all of them participated in the task. Her management techniques in the classroom for group work activities are on how to group students, how to motivate them and to model the task for them.

Patricia tries to have an even coverage of all the students while they work in groups, 2-3 min. to overlook the students on what they are supposed to do, 5-6 min. to listen and to participate in their discussions, and 2-3 min. to make sure they are finishing with the activity. She is convinced that this method can be used for all levels. She has become more conscious of using group work through all the training she has received. She affirms that it is an institutional policy due to the inclusion of teachers' observations and also on the Quality evaluations where students are asked if the teachers have used group work activities during

the English course. The Internet, the course book, and the resource book are the resources where she looks for group work procedures. Patricia has not read any research on group work activities.

Mariela's Interview

Mariela's objectives as a teacher for using group work activities is to decrease her talking time while teaching, and for students to become independent in terms of their learning, interdependent by relying on each other for learning and overall to enjoy working with each other. According to Mariela the benefits of group work for language learning is for more active learning because the students are the ones talking instead of the teacher doing most of the talking. Moreover, she believes that it is necessary to balance out strong and weak students in a group. She groups students with 3, 4, 5 or 6 in a group while doing these activities. She states that she lets her students choose their own group members because she thinks it makes a bigger impact on them and they perform much better.

Mariela has received training for group work at other EFL educational institutions. She admits that she would like to change her approach in the future group activities by doing better monitoring and controlling the time because there are students who finish ahead of time and start talking. In her classes, Mariela assesses learning by having students do a presentation like a role play or by just integrating herself in their conversations to see if they are doing the right thing. It seems to her that her students really enjoy doing these activities in groups and they look forward to coming to her English classes. She says that a classroom management technique that works well for her is to make sure students understand the procedures of the activity before they start to work in groups. She said, "I usually ask questions on what I had said". When students are working in group she walks around the room for about 2 – 3 minutes to see if they are working properly. She was not certain if

cooperative learning is was applicable to all levels. Her perception was the students in basic levels do not have enough vocabulary to work effectively. “If anything it can work later on during the course”, she said. Mariela says she uses group work in her classes for variety and to boost up the imagination of the students.

She was a bit uncertain if group work was included in institutional policy for EFL teachers at this center. She came up with the conclusion that it must be, because the main objective of this center is to create professionals who can contribute and be productive. She believes cooperation is needed because wherever these students go they will need to work in groups. Mariela also maintained that she tries to be creative in her classes and she looks for group work procedures in the teacher’s guide and for worksheets that are available in the back of the teacher’s book. She concluded by saying that she has not read any research on using group work but, she knows it works for her.

Juan’s Interview

Juan’s objectives, as a teacher for using group work activities, are to reduce his speaking time in class and for the students to help each other by reaffirming the grammar points or any other questions they might have. The benefits of group work for language learning is that students feel safer asking their friends. Juan says his groups are usually composed of 2, 3 or 4 students in a group. He selects the students for the group by giving them a number or a letter.

Juan obtained some training in the CELTA program for group work. Due to this training experience, he would like to change his approach in the future by applying the CELTA’s criteria. He said, “Weak students working with weak students and strong students working with strong students, this way good students will not feel handicapped working with weaker ones”.

Even though, he believes it will be very difficult to implement all these activities in these large classes. The way he assesses learning from his students is by asking them questions on the activities they have done together. He makes it clear that he does not ask all of the students for feedback because there is not enough time. Juan's management technique that works well for him is monitoring each group by walking around the classroom while they work. He is not sure if he can recommend this method for all levels, because he has not taught a basic level yet. Juan says the group work helps him see the capacity of these adults students when they develop their tasks. He was uncertain about group work being an explicit part of institutional policy for EFL teachers at this center but, he finally came to the conclusion that it must be. When he was asked where he looked for group work procedures he said, "I don't do it. I apply what I learned in CELTA". Juan ended up saying that he read a book on group work activities when he was doing his CELTA.

Teresa's Interview

Teresa's objectives as a teacher for using group work activities are for students to produce the language orally and for students to interact among themselves. Teresa said in the interview that the benefits of group work for language learning is to give students the opportunity to practice the language and while monitoring the teacher can check how well they are doing with the task. She also said that she likes to put students to work in pairs. She prefers to have pair groups than bigger groups because sometimes there are students who do not like to participate or work. Teresa selects students for groups by dividing the class into two teams (A and B) and then students get up and look for a partner from the opposite team to work together.

Teresa says that all the English teachers at this English center were taught and encouraged to use group work activities at different seminars. Nevertheless, she would like to

change some procedures in the future group activities as to put students to work in groups of threes and let students choose their own partners because she finds it difficult to arrange them. She says that she does not give students a grade for working in pairs but she takes into consideration their work and their participation. Another thing Teresa mentioned in her interview was the one of her classroom management techniques that works well in small group activities. She gives instructions very quickly, and if the students do not understand she explains it again in a more detailed manner. In addition, she writes the instructions and gives examples on the worksheet which she gives to the students to work on. When students work in groups she monitors by walking around the room and while they work she tries to listen, gets involved, or just ask questions as if she were one of them.

She recommends this method for all levels because she says students feel more relaxed. Teresa uses group work basically because it breaks the routine in her classes and it gives students the opportunity to move around, stand up, stretch their legs or just having something to say to someone else. Teresa replies that group activities are strongly recommended and all teachers must use them at this institution. Furthermore, she looks for group work procedures in the teacher's resource book, sees what other colleagues are doing or from what she learned at the TKT program. Finally, she says she has never read a research paper on cooperative learning.

Carolina's Interview

She begins by saying that her objectives as a teacher for using group work activities are to encourage students to practice the language and to make them feel more comfortable while they collaborate with each other. Carolina also says that the benefits of group work for language learning are the students tend to talk a bit more because they feel more confident without restrictions. The maximum numbers of students in a group in her classes are four

members. She says that sometimes she lets her students choose their own groups or whenever she has more time she puts two weak students with two strong students to work together.

Carolina agrees that she learned to use group work at the Academy where she learned English, not in her school because they had a different methodology. Something she would change about her approach in the future group activities is to supervise her students more closely because there are students that do not like English so, they try to avoid participation. Carolina assesses learning with this methodology through compositions, discussions or presentations in an oral or written form. The classroom management technique that works well for Carolina is for students to understand that all of them need to participate, help each other, and they all have the right to express their opinions. She monitors her students by walking around the room and at times she would just stand by to listen or at certain occasions she participates in their discussions too. She definitely recommends this method for all levels and she emphasizes that we, teachers, need to take advantage of those students with a higher proficiency in English to help others because not only do they feel good, but they also like cooperating with others.

She believes in cooperation and collaboration and this is the reason for using group work in every class for 5 or 10 minutes. She continues by saying, "I think it is good that our administration is always encouraging us to use group work". Carolina stated that she looks for group work procedures in the teacher's book and in the Internet for specific topics. And she ended up the interview by saying that she has some group based activities but, she is not sure if she has read any research.

These interviews indicate that the teachers' objectives are for students to learn to become more independent in their learning and to take the opportunity to communicate with others in the classroom. Teachers see benefits when the learners feel more comfortable

talking to others in group instead of doing in it in front of the whole class. Some teachers randomly make up their groups or they let their students say a letter or a number to be part of a group. For the most part their groups were made up of three, four or five members.

Most of these teachers got some group work training in the TKT or CELTA program offered by their institution. These teachers believe they need to explore and put into practice better approaches for future activities in groups. Teachers assess learning of their students by asking them for feedback, a written composition or doing a role play at the end of the task. Four out of six teachers agreed that group work can be used for all levels.

Teachers said “using group work is an alternative way of making their classes more excited and energetic, it boosts their imagination”, reduces their time spent on explaining the lesson and the students learn to cooperate with one another. These educators were not sure if this method was an institutional policy. There were only two teachers who said that they had read a research article on cooperative learning but that was a while ago.

Observation on teacher’s procedures

Table 1 gives an overview from the classroom observations of the six teachers of high-intermediate courses during group activities. The table shows the teachers procedures they used for the group. It also shows the number of students in the group. In addition it demonstrates if the teachers were clear or not when giving instructions. How the teachers supervised and what types of activities were done.

Graphic and tables

Table 1. Observation on teacher's procedures

Class Observation Data Overview						
	<u>Mariela's course</u>	<u>Patricia's course</u>	<u>Teresa's course</u>	<u>Carolina's course</u>	<u>Jorge's course</u>	<u>Juan's course</u>
TEACHERS' PROCEDURES FOR GROUP						
Number of students in the groups	3,4,5,6	2,3 & whole class	2	2,3,4,5	3,4,5,6	2 & 3
Clear instructions	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Teachers assign roles	no	no	no	no	no	no
Ways of supervising the group	walked around & participated	walked around & participated	no supervision	walked around & participated	at times walked around	walked around
ways teachers grouped the students	Students chose their groups	work with his/her neighbors	work with his/her neighbor	work with his/her neighbor	pointed them out	gave a number or letter
Type of activity	role play/peer checking	discussion/peer checking/game	discussion & peer checking	discussion & peer checking	written & oral work	discussion & peer checking

During the class observation process I saw a wide range of activities, but there were two interactive classes that stood out from the rest. They were Mariela's and Patricia's classes. The teachers and the students were energetic, creative, positive, happy, yet respectful; in short they were engaged in learning. These students did role-playing and a whole class activity where everyone had fun and got involved everyone in the classroom.

Overall in the teachers' procedures in most of the classes that I observed, students worked with students sitting next to them, there was one teacher who let students choose their own groups. Since there was not much time available most of the teachers alternated the groups in different activities as a whole class, discussing, in pairs and groups of four, five, even six students in one course.

The data also shows that the most of the groups were very small consisting of two and four members in a group. The teachers seemed very competent at giving clear instructions because students would put themselves to work right away on the task. Students were happy and helpful with the other group members.

There were four teachers that walked around at all times to monitor and provide help whenever it was needed. The other two teachers did not move around the room effectively to check what their students were doing. At times these two teachers stayed in the front of the room doing something else.

During the observation process though I saw a wide range of activities and other procedures did not follow the recommended guidelines from the research on cooperative learning. One was that the teachers did not assign any roles while students were working in groups. Table 2 describes the observations made in the classes of the students of high intermediate courses during their group work activities.

Table 2: Students' attitude in observations

Class Observation Data Overview						
	<u>Mariela's course</u>	<u>Patricia's course</u>	<u>Teresa's course</u>	<u>Carolina's course</u>	<u>Jorge's course</u>	<u>Juan's course</u>
students enjoyed working together	yes	yes	pretty much	yes	some did not participate	yes
attitude of the students toward the activities	positive/enthusiastic	attentive and interested	they seemed alright	very interested	some Ss distracted	really concentrated and positive
were members participating	yes	yes	most of them	yes	some students	yes
weaker students approach	a bit shy	timid at first	kind of quiet	shy at first	reticent/shy	challenging
strong students approach	more eager to participate	helpful/friendly/eager to participate	more talkative	very expressive and supportive	most involved	more communicative
were students communicative	yes	yes	yes	yes	some students	yes
Relaxed atmosphere	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

Table 2 shows an overview of the students' behaviors towards their classmates while working in groups. During the process of observation the students were observably enthusiastic and active and cooperative while working in groups. The students seemed talkative, friendly and very communicate with each other.

Some of the students seemed to be more eager to participate in the role plays, in the games and discussions. They quickly moved to the front of the room and set their desks to do their task. I was able to see a lot of cooperation and interest in helping each other. This motivated the students who were more reticent and reserved in their participation but they still made the effort to participate and meet the team's goal.

In Jorge's class the learning activities did not seem really interesting to the students. Most of the students did not really talk to each other and were distracted doing something else. The strong students did most of the talking and when it was necessary they got up from their seats to ask the teacher questions. For this reason I did not see much team work among the students in this specific course. The tempo of the class was monotonous, and the students seemed bored.

There were only three students in Jorge's class that participated in this study. The other 24 students were reluctant to sign the participant form. The students in this course were uncommunicative and reserved at all times. I do not have a specific reason why these students did not want to be part of this study.

Table 2 also indicates some important and encouraging points from students' behaviors when working with CL activities in the EFL classroom. These students seemed to be working in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere while they enjoyed learning a new language with others by doing peer-checking, role- playing and a game where all the students got involved.

Table 3: Interview responses from the six teachers of high intermediate courses

	TEACHERS' INTERVIEWS DATA OVERVIEW					
	<u>Mariela</u>	<u>Patricia</u>	<u>Teresa</u>	<u>Carolina</u>	<u>Jorge</u>	<u>Juan</u>
TEACHERS' RESPONSES ON CL						
Benefits	Active learning & communication	share information/interaction	exchange ideas	Team work/cooperation	To expose Ss to the language	Reducing my talking time
His/her Management Techniques	feedbacks on instructions	checking instructions & motivate Ss	different ways of instructions	checking instructions & respect their ideas	monitoring	monitor each group
Recommend for all levels	maybe	yes	yes	yes	I think so...	yes
Training	At a different institution	CELTA & TKT	TKT	An English Academy	CELTA	CELTA
Future approach	do better monitoring	better structuring the activities	more groups of 3's	structuring activities & supervision	do better monitoring	Only strong Ss within a group
Assessing Learning	role plays/listening while Ss work	Q & A with groups/feedbacks	listen to Ss while monitoring	oral or a written work	listen to Ss while monitoring	Q & A with groups
Reasons for using CL	variety & boost their imagination	to create an English environment	For variety & keeps Ss active	Ss learn to cooperate with each other	Ss adapt to new language	To see their capacity
Awareness of Institutional Policy	I think so...	yes	I'm not sure	I'm not sure	No... I'm not sure	No
Look for procedures	Teacher's guide book	Resource book & Internet	Teacher's resource book	In the Teacher's book & Internet	books & Internet	What I learned at CELTA
Knowledge of research	No, not really	No	No, I haven't	No, I haven't	Not recently	Yes, I read one once
Number in groups	3,4,5 or 6	4 or 5	2	maximum 4	4 or 5	2,3 or 4

Table 3 shows an overview, of the teachers' approaches, personal development and opinions on group work activities.

The six teachers agreed that benefits of group work are for communicative and teamwork purposes where students participate and become familiar with the new language practicing with others in a classroom. Teachers also said that these CL activities also help students to be more creative and active.

Four out of these six teachers also expressed the belief that group work can be used for all levels (from Basic to Advanced levels) for learning another language. All the six teachers agreed that walking around is the best way to monitor the students while they work in the activity.

Even though these teachers looked for procedures in the teachers' guide book and on the Internet, they also showed their concern for effective management techniques, and on how important it is to give clear instructions to the students before they start working on the activity. According to their responses, they realized the importance of monitoring, and they know they need to improve and make positive changes in their course planning, design and supervision.

The group of teachers assessed their students' learning by asking the students for feedback on the activity, and doing role plays or written/oral work to be handed in. Most of these teachers also used very small groups of 4 or fewer to carry out activities

Two of these teachers mentioned that they received group work training in the TKT program and two other teachers in the CELTA program offered by this Ecuadorian institution. However, five of these teachers were not aware that group work is an institutional policy. Another thing I wish to point out is that these teachers do not have knowledge of research in CL. There were four teachers that stated that they had never read anything on CL research.

The teachers' points of view on cooperative learning are stated in this section, which was obtained through the interviews.

Teachers' perceptions of cooperative learning

Most of these teachers believe that cooperative learning is good for variety. Students do not come to a classroom where the instruction is only teacher-centered. Jorge's response is representative of the points of his colleagues. He stated: "Cooperative learning gives the students the opportunity to practice the language and adapt to the new language with others in teamwork."

These teachers also see the necessity at improving their monitoring-assessment. The teachers said that they need to do more monitoring in their EFL classrooms. Monitoring is important, because it can help teachers to get to know their students better. Teachers can listen to the students while they work and see how they think or feel. Carolina commented: When they work in groups I walk around to make sure they are working and if there are any questions they might have. There are students that sometimes exclude themselves automatically”.

Most teachers agreed with and recommended cooperative learning activities with basic levels in EFL classrooms. Studies have shown that cooperative learning can be used to teach beginning to advanced learners. Teachers need to introduce simple activities at first. Students will familiarize themselves with procedures little by little. One of the teachers stated, what the majority of the teacher-participants had indicated in their interviews,

“Cooperative learning is good. There are usually students that have a higher level of English than others in every group and they feel good cooperating with others so, why not take advantage of this”. Students feel good helping others and these students get a deeper understanding when they need to teach others”.

Five of the teachers were not sure if cooperative learning groups were an institutional policy at this center. It is an obligation for the staff to use group work activities during the teachers’ observations. The director and the coordinator take this into consideration when observations take place. There is also an end of course evaluation called Quality Evaluation where students evaluate teachers; students are asked if the teacher has used group work activities during the course. When I asked Mariela, if she thought group work activities were an institutional policy for EFL at this center -she replied, “I think so! I have read the objectives of this center. In general, they want to create professionals who can contribute and

be productive anywhere they go they will need to work in groups whether they like it or not. If that is a policy most people need to apply it. It would be easier”.

Four of the teachers said that their task-based product assessment is through feedback. When students have finished with the task, teachers proceed to ask students questions related to the assignment. Patricia answered by saying, “After the activity I ask the students questions on the activity they did. Teachers ask for some feedback to see what their partners said or what their opinions were”. Feedback is a quick and a good way to pick out a few students randomly to check their point of views on their activity. Juan, Carolina, Patricia, and Teresa had similar views on teacher feedback.

Five teachers commented on how innovative they are when it comes to look for group work procedures when they use cooperative learning activities in class. Most of them said they get worksheet activities and ideas that are available in the teacher’s guidebook, the teacher’s book and the Internet. Mariela’s responded with the following opinion:” I look in the teacher’s guide and the extra worksheets at the end of the book. I try to be creative when telling them to do role plays”

Class Observations

There were two observations for each teacher. The activities that took place during observation are described in this section. I describe the observations in-depth.

Mariela’s Course (27 students)

In the first observation in Mariela’s class, the students and teachers reviewed vocabulary words for about 10 minutes. Students’ worked individually completing an exercise from the textbook and then students’ checked the answers among themselves. After the answers were checked the teacher made sure to check them aloud with the participation of the students. After this, students and teachers talked about the “do’s and don’ts in our

country's culture". Students gave oral examples as –“no talking to strangers”, “Do not talk about politics and religion in formal meetings”. Finally, students got into groups of three and four members and continued working on giving more examples on this topic. The teacher told students to work for 10 minutes and to be ready to do a role-play.

In my second observation of Marielas's class, the students and teachers talked about “good and bad manners”. Students completed an exercise from the book and then students compared their answers with other classmates sitting closed to them. The teachers continued by introducing new adjectives on how to describe people (easy-going, open-minded, and laid-back), she emphasized pronunciation too. Students practiced the new adjectives by doing an exercise from the book and did a listening exercise. When all the students finished the exercises they checked the answers aloud among themselves.. Finally, the teacher told the students to get into groups of 3's and 4's (there was a group of 5 and another group of 6 members). All students had the same status, no roles were assigned. Students had 10 minutes to discuss and choose famous people to be described or talk about good and bad manners through a role-play. Each student had to do his/her own part to be presented in front of the class.

In both of Mariela's class observations I was able to see informal cooperative learning activities. Each of the activities was of a few minutes while students checked for comprehension by comparing answers of the new vocabulary and on the topic of the lesson. The students quickly created discussions in groups to be able to present a role-play. Students worked cooperatively by helping each other out and motivating the weak students to integrate in the activity. These students knew that their classmates were counting on them. Students seemed to enjoy working together and were all eager to participate when it came time to do the role-plays.

Some important pedagogical elements of cooperative learning were lacking in Mariela's practice, it is recommended that cooperative learning groups need to be very small. Time for CL activities should be calculated more carefully. Students took longer than 10 minutes to prepare themselves for the role-plays. The Johnson brothers also (2003) recommend that CL teachers should make-up homogenous groups and not letting students choose their friends to work most of the time in the group activity. Another suggestion can be assigning roles to students so things can run more smoothly.

Patricia's Course – (33 students)

When I observed Patricia's class for the first time, she introduced the topic to the class "A healthy diet". Students and teacher talked about healthy and unhealthy food. The teacher had written five questions on the board for students to discuss in pairs (What are you going to eat today, is it a balanced diet? Do you think food is related to your mood? why?). Students had 10 minutes to do this activity. The teacher walked around as the students worked. She just listened or joined in their conversation. After that, the teacher quickly asked for feedback to find out what were his/her partner's responses.

The teacher kept alternating the procedures to catch their attention at all times. When there were 15 minutes left remaining for the class, the teacher told the students to stand-up and to make a circle. They played a game, "tenants and apartment" where everyone had to participate. The teacher modeled and explained the instructions. After checking for instructions, she proceeded with the activity. This activity involved listening and speaking. They needed to move around quickly after listening to the teacher's questions or if they did not keep up they were out of the game. This activity kept students attentive and active in a fun way.

In my 2nd observation of Patricia's class, the students and teacher discussed and checked the homework orally from the day before. The days' lesson was about "Identity theft". Students completed an activity from the book and compared the answers with a partner who was sitting with him or her. Then, students were told to write six questions to ask his/her partner related to this topic. Once they finished writing the questions they initiated the discussion with follow-up questions. The teacher supervised every group by listening or just by joining in the conversation. After the dialogue they had to share with another partner the most interesting fact from his/her previous partner. The teacher asked for feedback at the end of the activity.

Most of the participants for this study were from Patricia's class. Students showed a lot of organization and interest while learning the new language points in groups. Patricia's presentation encouraged her students to be participative in the activities as well as to be attentive. These students seemed comfortable working with other classmates; they were willing to share ideas, ask questions, and take risks without feeling embarrassed. She used really small groups and she always made sure her students understood the instructions before putting them to work. She had designed a whole class activity, which had a specific content-bound objective.

Cooperative learning activities requires a carefully planning for courses that have more than 30 students. Therefore, I would say Patricia needs to assign roles because this may encourage and motivate students to interact even more. To mix-up students while working in groups is another important procedure in CL.

Teresa's Course – 23 students

The teacher gave an introduction on the topic "Perfume". She asked several questions to students to find out their preferences for perfumes. Students got into pairs to talk about their favorite perfume. The teacher continued with the book's exercises and presented the new vocabulary before doing a listening activity. Students got together with a partner sitting next to him/her and completed a vocabulary matching exercise. Then, the teacher asked students check answers among themselves, and then she checked the answers aloud with the participation of the students. The teacher conducted a listening exercise three times; it was about how perfume became popular in the world. After that, students worked with another partner and talked about the listening. Students were supposed to tell each other what they understood from the listening.

In the second observation, of Teresa's class, students and teacher talked about ecological footprints and introduced the new vocabulary (moral, ethical, sustainable etc...). Then, students completed an exercise from the textbook on the new vocabulary in pairs. The teacher checked the answers orally too. Later, students received a handout where they needed to use the new vocabulary words. Students checked the answers in pairs. Afterwards, the teacher told the students to sit with another partner and to make a list on how people can reduce the ecological footprint. When students were finished the teacher asked them about what they wrote. A student responded, "Fidelity or planning a family can reduce the ecological footprint"

Even though the teacher and the students had a good relationship and they seemed to be working in a relaxed environment. The teacher needs to plan the cooperative learning

activities more carefully. Merely checking answers and making lists is a minimal use of cooperative learning pedagogy..

At first, students seemed to enjoy working in pairs and to have discussions on these topics. As the lesson progressed the teacher kept assigning groups with two members. I think students were losing interest and became distracted. Spratt, Pulverness, William (2005) said, “it is not recommendable for students to work in pairs for the whole lesson because they will become bored. The lesson will not be successful and the teacher might end-up with discipline problems in the classroom”.

Carolina’s Course – 29 students

When I observed Carolina’s course for the first time, the teacher introduced the lesson on “Identity Theft” and presented the new vocabulary (ID cards, police record, and license etc...). Teachers and students talked about how this happens in the real world. Then, students were told to get in groups of 4 and 5 members to talk about their experiences on theft. It was interesting to hear the students expressed their partners’ experiences when the teacher asked for feedbacks. Students continued with another written exercise from the book on identity theft. After they finished, they compared answers among themselves.

During my second observation of Carolina’s class, the teacher started reviewing relative clauses by checking the homework from the day before. Students compared their answers with other classmates. Then, the teacher asked for volunteers to say the answers aloud and she would write them on the board for everyone to see them. After that, students were told to get into groups of two or three members to develop a story from the book using relative clauses. Then, students switched partners and added information to the story using non-defining relative clauses. Finally, the students finished the story by adding some of their own words. Some students volunteered to read the story aloud.

All these students worked very well in groups. It seemed these students consider cooperation as a value. All of them seemed helpful with one another. The students showed concern for each other and work for appropriate behavior and each other's achievement. The teacher monitored at all times and got involved in their discussions. There was excellent rapport among teacher and students. I was able to see a relaxed, happy and friendly atmosphere. I think the stronger students helped the weaker students complete the task by making them understand the material better. The stronger students were gaining at the same time greater retention of information due to "cognitive rehearsal" as Jacobs (1998) mentioned

Carolina needs to be concerned about assigning heterogeneous groups. Groups with diverse characteristics make cooperative relationships powerful. There are different ways she can select students to be in a group. For example, Carolina can choose students from a class list. Assigning roles to students is another important thing to do when students to are working in groups..

Jorge's Course – (27)

In my first observation of Jorge's class, he handed-out a sheet with a song "Down by the Sally Gardens". He explained that it is an Irish song from the 19th century. First, students needed to complete the song by choosing the correct words in groups. The teacher did not say an specific number of members in the group, he said' "get into groups". Students got into groups of 4 and 6 members. When students finished completing the song by choosing the correct words- the teacher went over the answers orally with the whole class. The teacher sang the song at his desk first and then, he told the students to repeat after him. The students repeated the lyrics after the teacher. Not many of the male students were participative in this activity.

When I observed Jorge's class for the second time, the teacher gave a quick introduction of the Amazon. He drew a map of South America on the board and asked questions as what things are important to take on journey to the rainforest. Students gave answers aloud and the teacher wrote the things mentioned on the board. Then, each student received a worksheet where they needed to get in groups of 3 or 5 members to complete a story about four British students going on a holiday trip to the Amazon rainforest. The students needed to complete the story by using the correct tenses. They practiced the following tenses: Past Simple, Past Continuous, and Past Perfect. After everyone was finished, someone from the group had to read the story to the whole class. Despite the fact that there were only three participants signed their consent form, from this course I included the whole class for the observations

In the first observation "the song" was not only kind of slow, but it seemed confusing at first. I did not see the purpose of this activity. Although, students demonstrated kindness and respect while the activities took place. The students followed the teacher's instructions without complaining. But, I think these students became bored in both activities.

I think Jorge needs to plan his classes more carefully. Cooperative learning activities require students to participate equally in very small groups and to interact with one another. Jorge needs to make sure to do monitoring when they are working in groups, because some of the students had to get up from their seats to ask him questions related to the task. The strong students were the ones to do all the effort to complete the task

Juan's course – 26 students

The teacher introduced the theme on "animals". The teacher asked general questions on animals from the book's illustrations. Then, students needed to do a matching exercise

from the book. Juan followed the book's cooperative learning activities. Students were put in heterogeneous pair groups to compare the answers. Teachers wrote the answers on the board to be checked by all the students. Later on, students were supposed to answer some questions on animals from their book. They had 7 minutes to think and answer these questions. Once again the teacher mixed the pairs up and put them to discuss on their responses.

During the second observation Juan explained the topic on plants. He did a whole-class discussion on plants. Students also worked on learning the new vocabulary by doing a matching exercise from the book. Students once again did another cooperative assessment to compare answers in pairs. The teacher also emphasized the meaning and pronunciation of the new vocabulary. The teacher wrote answers on the board to be seen by all the students. Students did another exercise by completing some questions after reading. All students checked the responses with another partner. After that, the teacher put them in groups of 3 members to make a list with words related to plants. They had 45 seconds to do this in groups. (This motivated everyone to participate and cooperate quickly). Then students alternated by saying a definition to another member of the group to be guessed correctly. Students had to be fast to complete the task among themselves. (The teacher walked around the classroom checking on each group)

These students showed concerned for their learning. These young adults were cooperative and friendly with other classmates that were put together to work. The teacher used very small groups of 2 and 3 members. Cooperative learning activities require using small groups for students to have better interaction when they listen to their opinions and ideas. Juan made sure to assign the groups himself and always checked for instructions. Juan kept students motivated and excited throughout the different approaches he used in his

classes. I was able to see that Juan integrates cognitive, social and emotional learning in his classes.

I suggest that Juan should do more of Kagan's structured activities to keep his students active. He should also work on ways of assigning roles when students work in groups. In the section below I explain the patterns found in the teachers' observations on cooperative learning procedures. .

In both of Mariela's observations, I was able to see similar patterns in the practice of cooperative learning. Students did individual textbook completions first and afterwards the teacher emphasized to students to check each other's answers as an assessment procedure. Another assessment procedure was when the teacher and the students check answers aloud to make sure everyone had the correct answers. The teacher had either group discussions or whole class discussion to practice the new vocabulary of the unit. In both observations students were put into groups after they had practiced among themselves and were responsible for doing role-plays in front of the class too. Each individual's performance was important to the teacher to see if the new lesson was learned

In Patricia's classes I saw whole class discussions as well as pair work discussions. It seemed that during these discussions and through student feedback the teacher was able to realize how much the students knew about the topic and how they interacted among themselves. Students were supposed to be attentive at all times when teachers asked for feedback after each activity done in class. Another assessment this teacher applied with her students was when students worked individually by doing written activities from the book or copying from the board and then students check each other's answers.

In both of Teresa's classes I was able to observe all class discussions. Students and teacher participated by giving their opinions and ideas on the topic of the lesson. In both

observations the type of lessons included new vocabulary. There was also individual completion from textbook exercise. Teresa also had her students do written pair work activities and had two members in each group to do discussions. Another of Teresa's assessment was peer checking and to check the answers orally with the participation of the students. Teresa also asked students for general feedbacks after they had completed their activities in pairs.

In Carolina's classes I was able to see students working individually by completing textbook exercises in matching and filling in the gaps and then getting into pairs to check answers. There were also students working in groups of 2, 3, 4 and 5 members and afterwards the activity was completed there were individual performances from students, they participated by either reading the work or by giving their opinions on the work they had done together.

In Jorge's classes the types of lessons were on vocabulary and verb tenses. Students had to complete a song from Ireland and a story about the Amazon. The students were responsible for finishing up the story and the song by completing them correctly. Teacher and students sang and read the story. The teacher had groups working together to practice. The answers were given orally by the students and teachers.

In both observations Juan and his students had a class discussion to introduce the topics of the lessons. The types of lessons were vocabulary and matching. Students did individual written exercises from textbook. When finished students were put in pairs to do a peer assessment to check each other's work and to discuss it among themselves. Teachers made sure to write the answers on the board for all students to have the correct answers. Students were frequently put in pairs or in threes by choosing a number or a letter orally.

In general, these teachers performed informal cooperative learning in their EFL classes. In these observations I was able to see most of the teachers putting students to work in pairs and having all class discussions. These teachers showed enthusiasm and professionalism while teaching EFL courses. These professors motivated the students to be responsible for their individual performance by doing their written or oral exercises. Students did a variety of exercises as matching, filling in the gaps, choosing the right answers and listening. Students checked their written work in pairs and the students had the opportunity to discuss and help each other if it was needed. Most of the time teachers checked the groups by walking around and checking answers orally. The teachers also confirmed the answers by repeating them or writing them on the board. When working in bigger groups the students had the chance to share ideas and give suggestions to complete the task. These tasks required more of a communicative approach to finish the task with success. A few of these groups' performances where I was able to observe cooperative learning were the role-play, completing a story, and participating in a game.

Student perceptions of Cooperative Learning

Table 4: To get the students' views on CL, a twenty-item questionnaire was given to the students to be completed. This student questionnaire were obtained from Brown's article (2008)- Ingleton, (2000).

<u>Working in Pairs and Groups</u>	
A	Helped understanding/comprehension
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge,information and experiences
F	Received useful/helpful feedback
G	Got fresh insight
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group
L	Improved performance
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process
E	More relaxed atmosphere
N	It was fun
O	Made new friends
C	Made problem-solving easier
D	Stimulated critical thinking
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group
K	Enhanced communication skills
P	Fostered team spirit
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued
T	Maximum group size should be four

Academic Benefits	Yellow
Social Benefits	Pink
Generic Skills	Purple
Negative Aspects	Orange

Four categories regarding cooperative learning

For a better understanding of the analysis, the items in the questionnaire in Table 4 (color block) represents four different categories: 1.Academic Benefits (A, B,F,G,J,L,M), 2. Social Benefits (E, N,O), 3. Generic/ life long learning skills (C, D,H,I,K,P) and the ones for

Negative Aspects are (Q,R)... Items S and T were not included. Students' responses by categories are displayed below.

Table 5: Mariela's course with 27 students' responses in numbers.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Working in Pairs and Groups					
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	14	13		
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	15	12		
C	Made problem-solving easier	5	19	3	
D	Stimulated critical thinking	9	15	3	
E	More relaxed atmosphere	13	9	5	
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	7	19	1	
G	Got fresh insight	6	21		
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	3	24		
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group	9	14	3	1
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	11	14	2	
K	Enhanced communication skills	10	16	1	
L	Improved performance	7	19	1	
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	9	15	2	1
N	It was fun	17	9		1
O	Made new friends	17	7	2	1
P	Fostered team spirit	12	11	4	
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	1	3	17	6
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	1	8	16	2
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	9	18		
T	Maximum group size should be four	10	7	10	
		<i>Mariela's -course #30</i>			<i>27 students</i>

In Mariela's course 27 students checked off their answers in the questionnaires. The results are in numbers to find out their views on group work; the following twenty items were analyzed as shown in table 5. The responses were strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 6: Mariela's course with 27 students' responses percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES			
Working in Pairs and Groups		Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	100%	
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	100%	
C	Made problem-solving easier	89%	11%
D	Stimulated critical thinking	89%	11%
E	More relaxed atmosphere	81%	19%
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	96%	4%
G	Got fresh insight	100%	
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	100%	
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group	85%	15%
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	93%	7%
K	Enhanced communication skills	96%	4%
L	Improved performance	96%	4%
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	89%	11%
N	It was fun	96%	4%
O	Made new friends	89%	11%
P	Fostered team spirit	85%	15%
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	15%	85%
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	33%	67%
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	100%	
T	Maximum group size should be four	63%	37%
		Mariela's course # 30 27 students	

Table 6: Mairela's students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 7: Mariela's course with 27 students' responses by categories

Mariela's Course #30 27 students			
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE	
Academic Benefits	96.30%	3.70%	
Social Benefits	89%	11%	
Generic Skills	91%	9%	
Negative Aspects	24%	76%	

In Mariela's class 96.30% of the students recognized that group work helps them in their academics. 91% is another high percentage where students indicated to help them in their generic skills. In the negative aspects 24 % agree that they waste time explaining to others

and it is difficult to get them to participate in tasks. Students are highly aware of their benefits acquiring in academic, social and generic.

Table 8: Patricia's course with 33 students' responses in figures.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Working in Pairs and Groups				
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	7	25	1	
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	15	17	1	
C	Made problem-solving easier	10	19	4	
D	Stimulated critical thinking	7	20	4	2
E	More relaxed atmosphere	15	14	3	1
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	7	20	6	
G	Got fresh insight	2	28	3	
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	10	20	3	
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group	12	17	3	1
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	11	18	4	
K	Enhanced communication skills	6	23	3	1
L	Improved performance	5	23	5	
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	10	22	1	
N	It was fun	13	19	1	
O	Made new friends	23	9	1	
P	Fostered team spirit	13	19	1	
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	1	1	29	2
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	1	4	27	1
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	12	17	4	
T	Maximum group size should be four	14	10	7	2
			<i>Patricia's Course # 33 students</i>		

Table 8: In Patricia's course 33 students checked off their answers in the twenty-item questionnaire. The results are in figures and give a view on the students' opinions on group work activities. The results were analyzed in strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 9: Patricia's course with 33 students' responses in percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES			Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A	Helped understanding/comprehension		97%	3%
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences		97%	3%
C	Made problem-solving easier		88%	12%
D	Stimulated critical thinking		82%	18%
E	More relaxed atmosphere		88%	12%
F	Received useful/helpful feedback		82%	18%
G	Got fresh insight		91%	9%
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort		91%	9%
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group		88%	12%
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		88%	12%
K	Enhanced communication skills		88%	12%
L	Improved performance		85%	15%
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process		97%	3%
N	It was fun		97%	3%
O	Made new friends		97%	3%
P	Fostered team spirit		97%	3%
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others		6%	94%
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		15%	85%
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued		88%	12%
T	Maximum group size should be four		73%	27%
			Patricia's course #10	33 students

Table 9. Patricia's students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 10: Patricia's Group students' responses in Categories

Patricia's Course #10 33 students			
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE	
Academic Benefits	91%	9%	
Social Benefits	94%	6%	
Generic Skills	89%	11%	
Negative Aspects	10.50%	89.50%	

In Patricia's class 91% of the students determined that they received academic benefits with cooperative learning. 94% indicated social benefits and 89% in generic skills. In Patricia's class a very small percentage of students 10.50% agree in the negative aspects. Students find difficulties getting other classmates to participate in tasks and they waste time explaining to others.

Table 11: Teresa's course with 22 students' responses in figures. .

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Working in Pairs and Groups				
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	9	10	2	1
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge,information and experiences	9	11	1	1
C	Made problem-solving easier	4	16	2	
D	Stimulated critical thinking	8	13	1	
E	More relaxed atmosphere	10	9	3	
F	Receivved useful/helpful feedback	7	12	3	
G	Got fresh insight	4	15	3	
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	7	13	2	
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group	7	13	2	
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	8	13	1	
K	Enhanced communication skills	9	11	1	
L	Improved performance	7	12	3	
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	10	10	1	1
N	It was fun	9	12	1	
O	Made new friends	14	7	1	
P	Fostered team spirit	11	10	1	
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	3	3	13	3
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	1	9	11	1
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	4	15	2	1
T	Maximum group size should be four	4	9	5	4
			<i>Teresa's- course # 41</i>	<i>22 students</i>	

Table 11. In Teresa's course, 22 students checked off their answers in the twenty-item questionnaire. The results are in numbers and give a view on the students' opinions on group work activities. The results were analyzed in strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 12: Teresa's course with 22 students' responses in percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES			Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A	Helped understanding/comprehension		86%	14%
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences		90%	10%
C	Made problem-solving easier		90%	10%
D	Stimulated critical thinking		95%	5%
E	More relaxed atmosphere		86%	14%
F	Received useful/helpful feedback		86%	14%
G	Got fresh insight		86%	14%
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort		90%	10%
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group		90%	10%
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		95%	5%
K	Enhanced communication skills		95%	5%
L	Improved performance		86%	14%
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process		90%	10%
N	It was fun		95%	5%
O	Made new friends		95%	5%
P	Fostered team spirit		95%	5%
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others		27%	73%
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		45%	55%
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued		86%	14%
T	Maximum group size should be four		59%	41%
			Teresa's course #41	22 students

Table 12. Teresa's students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 13: Teresa's course with 22 students' responses in categories.

Teresa's Course # 41 22 students		
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE
Academic Benefits	88%	12%
Social Benefits	92%	8%
Generic Skills	92.50%	7.50%
Negative Aspects	36%	64%

In Teresa's class with 22 students 92% of them indicated that they received social benefits. 92.50% agreed on receiving generic skills. In Teresa's course there is a higher percentage in agreeing with the negative aspects 36%. Students find a problem with students participating and wasting time explaining to others during the tasks.

Table 14: Carolina's course with 29 students' responses in figures..

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Working in Pairs and Groups				
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	8	17	4	
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	10	18	1	
C	Made problem-solving easier	9	15	5	
D	Stimulated critical thinking	8	18	3	
E	More relaxed atmosphere	11	17	1	
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	8	18	2	1
G	Got fresh insight	5	24		
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	7	20	2	
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group	11	13	5	
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	12	15	2	
K	Enhanced communication skills	13	16		
L	Improved performance	7	21		1
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	5	22	2	
N	It was fun	16	12		1
O	Made new friends	17	12		
P	Fostered team spirit	13	14	2	
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	4	7	16	2
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	3	10	16	
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	5	22	2	
T	Maximum group size should be four	11	13	5	
		<i>Carolina's-course # 20 29 students</i>			

Table 14. In Carolina's course, 29 students checked off their answers in the twenty-item questionnaire. The results are in numbers and give a view on the students' opinions on group work activities. The results were analyzed in strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 15: Carolina's course with 29 students' responses in percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES			Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A	Helped understanding/comprehension		86%	14%
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences		97%	3%
C	Made problem-solving easier		83%	17%
D	Stimulated critical thinking		90%	10%
E	More relaxed atmosphere		97%	3%
F	Receivved useful/helpful feedback		90%	10%
G	Got fresh insight		100%	
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort		93%	7%
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group		83%	17%
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		93%	7%
K	Enhanced communication skills		100%	
L	Improved performance		97%	3%
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process		93%	7%
N	It was fun		97%	3%
O	Made new friends		100%	
P	Fostered team spirit		93%	7%
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others		38%	62%
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		45%	55%
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued		93%	7%
T	Maximum group size should be four		83%	17%
			Calorina's course #20	29 students

Table 15. Teresa's students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 16: Carolina's course with 29 students' responses in categories

Carolina's Course #20 29 students		
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE
Academic Benefits	94%	6%
Social Benefits	98%	2%
Generic Skills	90%	10%
Negative Aspects	41.50%	58.50%

In Carolina's class there were three categories that received high percentage in the agreeing responses. 94% in academic benefits, 98% in social benefits and 90% in generic skills. A high percentage in agreeing with the negative aspects was checked off by the students 41.50%.of Students waste time and some students do not participate in the activities.

Table 17: Jorge's group with 3 students' responses in figures.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Working in Pairs and Groups					
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	1	2		
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	2	1		
C	Made problem-solving easier	1	2		
D	Stimulated critical thinking	3			
E	More relaxed atmosphere	2			1
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	2		1	
G	Got fresh insight	1	2		
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	2	1		
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group	1	2		
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		3		
K	Enhanced communication skills	2	1		
L	Improved performance	1	2		
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	1	2		
N	It was fun	2	1		
O	Made new friends	2	1		
P	Fostered team spirit	2	1		
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others				3
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		1	2	
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	1	1	1	
T	Maximum group size should be four	2	1		
				<i>Jorge's -Course #11</i>	<i>3 students</i>

Table 17. In Jorge's course with only 3 students marked off their answers in the twenty-item questionnaire. The results are in numbers and give a view on the students' opinions on group work activities. The results were analyzed in strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 18: Jorge's course with 3 students' responses in percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES					
			Agree Responses	Disagree Responses	
A	Helped understanding/comprehension		100%		
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences		100%		
C	Made problem-solving easier		100%		
D	Stimulated critical thinking		100%		
E	More relaxed atmosphere		70%	30%	
F	Received useful/helpful feedback		70%	30%	
G	Got fresh insight		100%		
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort		100%		
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group		100%		
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		100%		
K	Enhanced communication skills		100%		
L	Improved performance		100%		
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process		100%		
N	It was fun		100%		
O	Made new friends		100%		
P	Fostered team spirit		100%		
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others			100%	
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		30%	70%	
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued		70%	30%	
T	Maximum group size should be four		100%		
				<i>Jorge's course #11</i>	<i>3 students</i>

Table 18. In Jorge's class the three students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 19: Jorge's course with 3 students' responses in categories

Jorge's Course # 11 3 students			
CATEGORY	AGREE		DISAGREE
Academic Benefits	96%		4%
Social Benefits	90%		10%
Generic Skills	100%		
Negative Aspects	15%		85%

In Jorge's class with only three participants indicated 96% in academic benefits. 90% in Social Benefits and 100% agreed in receiving generic skills. 15% of the three students in Jorge class indicated waste of time explaining to others and difficult to get others to work..

Table 20: Juan's course with 26 students' responses in figures.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Working in Pairs and Groups					
A	Helped understanding/comprehension	4	21	1	
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	7	18	1	
C	Made problem-solving easier	5	18	3	
D	Stimulated critical thinking	7	18	1	
E	More relaxed atmosphere	7	19		
F	Received useful/helpful feedback	5	18	3	
G	Got fresh insight	2	22	2	
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	9	16	1	
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group	8	16	2	
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	7	17	2	
K	Enhanced communication skills	6	18	2	
L	Improved performance	4	21	1	
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	10	13	3	
N	It was fun	13	12	1	
O	Made new friends	13	13		
P	Fostered team spirit	8	18		
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others	2	6	14	4
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		7	18	1
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	5	19	2	
T	Maximum group size should be four	10	11	5	
Juan's Course #704 26 students					

Table 20. In Juan's course with 26 students marked off their answers in the twenty-item questionnaire. The results are in numbers and give a view on the students' opinions on group work activities. The results were analyzed according to a Likert Scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

Table 21: Juan's course with 26 students' responses in percentages

INDIVIDUAL COURSES WITH STUDENTS' RESPONSES			Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A	Helped understanding/comprehension		96%	4%
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences		96%	4%
C	Made problem-solving easier		88%	12%
D	Stimulated critical thinking		96%	4%
E	More relaxed atmosphere		100%	
F	Received useful/helpful feedback		88%	12%
G	Got fresh insight		92%	8%
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort		96%	4%
I	Greater responsibility for myself and the group		92%	8%
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group		92%	8%
K	Enhanced communication skills		92%	8%
L	Improved performance		96%	4%
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process		88%	12%
N	It was fun		96%	4%
O	Made new friends		100%	
P	Fostered team spirit		100%	
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others		31%	69%
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks		27%	73%
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued		92%	8%
T	Maximum group size should be four		81%	19%
			Juan's Course #704	26 students

Table 21. In Juan's course students' responses are shown in percentages and the responses were merged into two: strongly agree and agree for agree responses, and disagree and strongly disagree for disagree responses.

Table 22: Juan's course with 26 students' responses in categories

Juan's Course # 704 26 students		
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE
Academic Benefits	93%	7%
Social Benefits	97%	3%
Generic Skills	94%	6%
Negative Aspects	29%	71%

In Juan's class three of the categories received high percentages in the agreeing responses. 93% in academic benefits, 97% in social benefits and 94% in generic skills. In the negative aspects 29% indicating that students agree it is a waste a time explaining to others and getting them to participate in task.

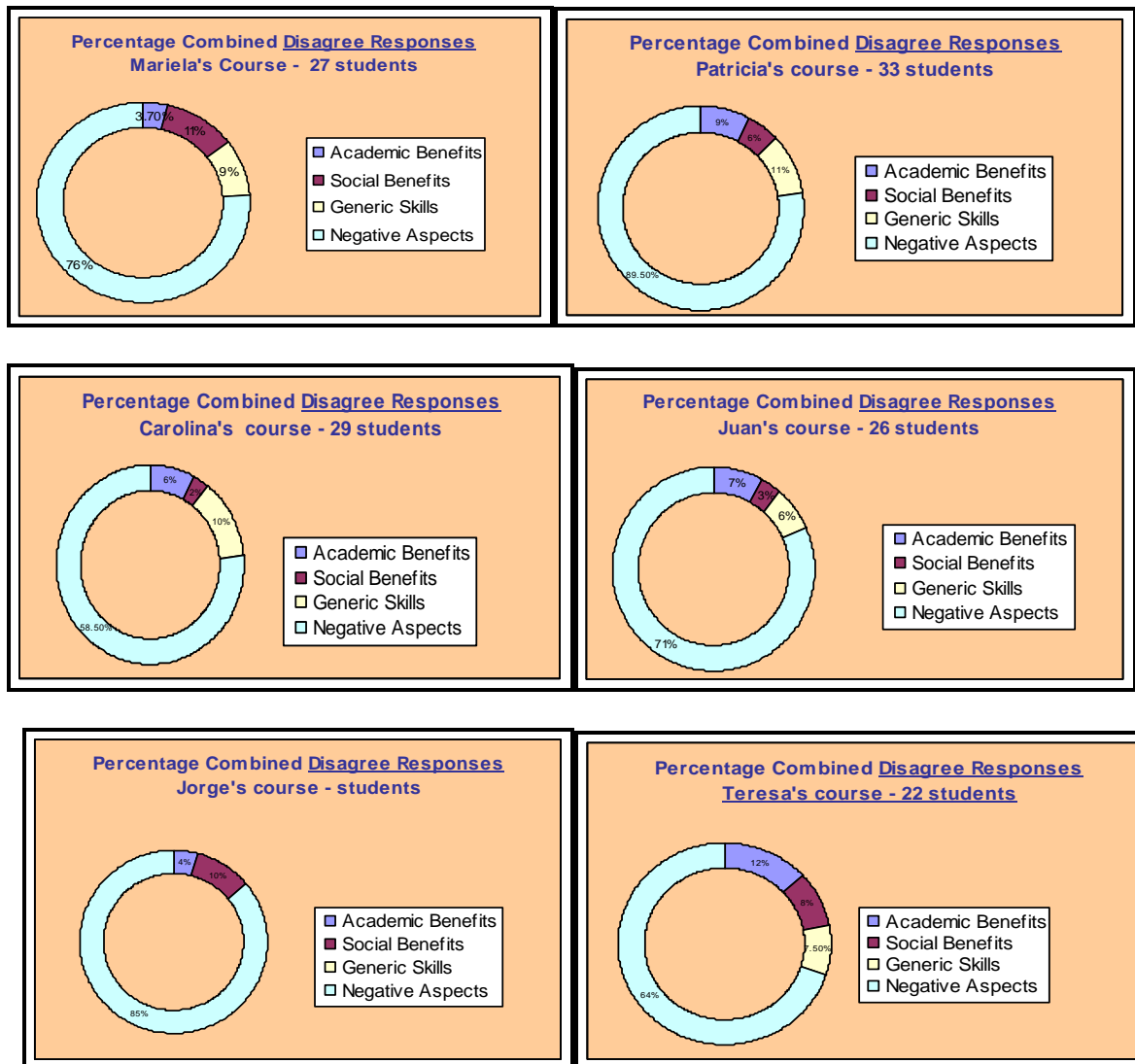
Figure 1: Agree Responses in Individual Courses.



In these doughnut graphs are the students' agreeing responses for each course indicating high percentages in the three categories of academic benefits, social benefits and generic skills which results are similar in percentages. It can be seen that more students agree that group work helps in the acquisition of social benefits and has academic benefits than

they do in generic skills (helps in the acquisition of life long learning skills). In the negative aspects are also closed percentages for each course. The least number of respondents agree about the negative aspects of group work.

Figure 2: Disagree Responses in Individual Courses.



In these doughnuts graphs the students' responses disagreed in the negative aspects.

Mariela's class disagreed with 76%. Patricia's class disagreed with 89.50%. In Teresa's class with 64%. In Carolina's class with 58.50%. Jorge's class with 85% and Juan's class with

71%. These results show that there a similar opinion in every course on disagreeing with the negative aspects: mainly that some students leave all the work for other group members to do.

Table 23: Description of Students' Responses regarding Cooperative Learning

Working in Pairs and Groups	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A Helped understanding/comprehension	43	88	8	1
B Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	58	77	4	1
C Made problem-solving easier	34	89	17	
D Stimulated critical thinking	42	84	12	2
E More relaxed atmosphere	58	68	13	1
F Received useful/helpful feedback	36	87	16	1
G Got fresh insight	20	112	8	
H Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	38	94	8	
I Greater responsibility-for myself and the group	48	75	15	2
J Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	49	80	11	
K Enhanced communication skills	46	86	7	1
L Improved performance	31	98	10	1
M Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	45	84	9	2
N It was fun	70	65	3	2
O Made new friends	86	49	4	1
P Fostered team spirit	59	73	8	
Q Waste of time explaining things to others	11	20	92	17
R Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	6	39	90	5
S (pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	36	92	11	1
T Maximum group size should be four	51	51	32	6

140 Students in Advanced A Courses

Table 24: Description of Students' Responses regarding Cooperative Learning in numbers and percentage.

Working in Pairs and Groups	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A Helped understanding/comprehension	43 (30.7%)	88 (62.9%)	8 (5.7%)	1 (.7%)
B Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	58 (41.4%)	77 (55%)	4 (2.9%)	1 (.7%)
C Made problem-solving easier	34 (24.3%)	89 (63.6%)	17 (12.1%)	
D Stimulated critical thinking	42 (30%)	84 (60%)	12 (8.6%)	2 (1.4%)
E More relaxed atmosphere	58 (41.4%)	68 (48.6%)	13 (9.3%)	1 (.7%)
F Received useful/helpful feedback	36 (25.7%)	87 (62.2%)	16 (11.4%)	1 (.7%)
G Got fresh insight	20 (14.3%)	112 (80%)	8 (5.7%)	
H Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	38 (27.1%)	94 (67.2%)	8 (5.7%)	
I Greater responsibility-for myself and the group	48 (34.3%)	75 (53.6%)	15 (10.7%)	2 (1.4%)
J Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	49 (35%)	80 (57.1%)	11 (7.9%)	
K Enhanced communication skills	46 (32.9%)	86 (61.4%)	7 (5%)	1 (.7%)
L Improved performance	31 (22.2%)	98 (70%)	10 (7.1%)	1 (.7%)
M Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	45 (32.1%)	84 (60%)	9 (6.5%)	2 (1.4%)
N It was fun	70 (50%)	65 (46.5%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)
O Made new friends	86 (61.4%)	49 (35%)	4 (2.9%)	1 (.7%)
P Fostered team spirit	59 (42.15%)	73 (52.15%)	8 (5.7%)	
Q Waste of time explaining things to others	11 (7.9%)	20 (14.3%)	92 (65.7%)	17 (12.1%)
R Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	6 (4.3%)	39 (27.9%)	90 (64.3%)	5 (3.5%)
S (pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	36 (25.7%)	92 (65.7%)	11 (7.9%)	1 (.7%)
T Maximum group size should be four	51 (36.4%)	51 (36.4%)	32 (22.9%)	6 (4.3%)

140 Students in Advanced A Courses

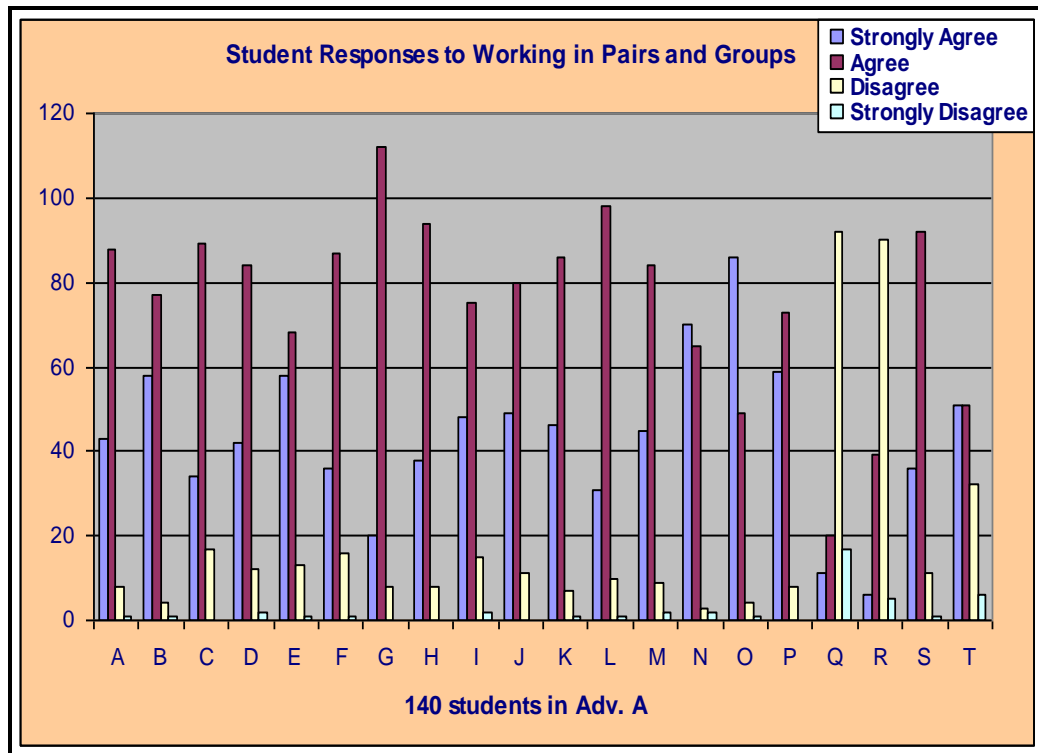
In Table 25 combined responses of 140 students are presented. The results are indicated in numbers and percentages of all the six Advanced A courses. The four columns here indicated:” Strongly Agree”,” Agree”, “Disagree” and Strongly Disagree”.

Table 25: Combined Students’ Responses.

COMBINED STUDENTS’ RESPONSES		
Working in Pairs and Groups	Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A Helped understanding/comprehension	131 (93.6%)	9 (6.4%)
B Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences	135 (96.4%)	5 (3.6%)
C Made problem-solving easier	123 (88%)	17 (12%)
D Stimulated critical thinking	126 (90%)	14 (10%)
E More relaxed atmosphere	126 (90%)	14 (10%)
F Received useful/helpful feedback	123 (88%)	17 (12%)
G Got fresh insight	132 (94.3%)	8 (5.7%)
H Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort	132 (94.3%)	8 (5.7%)
I Greater responsibility-for myself and the group	123 (88%)	17 (12%)
J Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group	129 (92.1%)	11 (7.9%)
K Enhanced communication skills	132 (94.3%)	8 (5.7%)
L Improved performance	129 (92.1%)	11 (7.9%)
M Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process	129 (92.1%)	11 (7.9%)
N It was fun	135 (96.4%)	5 (3.6%)
O Made new friends	135 (96.4%)	5 (3.6%)
P Fostered team spirit	132 (94.3%)	8 (5.7%)
Q Waste of time explaining things to others	31 (22.1%)	109 (77.9%)
R Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks	45 (32.1%)	95 (67.9%)
S (pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued	128 (91.4%)	12 (8.6%)
T Maximum group size should be four	102 (72.9%)	38 (27.1%)

In table 25 combined results of 140 students are shown in figures and percentages. “Agree Responses” and “Disagree Responses” are presented in this table

Figure 3: 140 Students' Responses by Categories.



The categories are: Academic Benefits (blue), Social Benefits (red), Generic Skills (beige), and Negative Aspects (green).

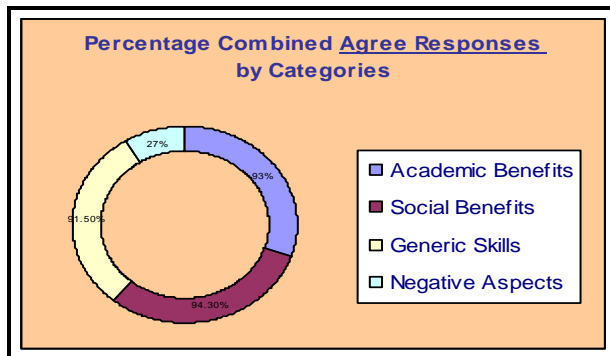
Table 26. Percentages Combined Students Responses by Categories.

PERCENTAGES COMBINED STUDENTS' RESPONSES BY CATEGORIES			
CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE	
Academic Benefits	93%	7%	
Social Benefits	94.30%	5.70%	
Generic Skills	91.50%	8.50%	
Negative Aspects	27%	73%	

As in Table 26 from the percentages in the agree and disagree responses the data analysis shows that most students (94.30 %) agree that CL enables students to enjoy a more relaxed and fun environment. It can be concluded that many students believe cooperative learning helps them in academics (93%) and for generic skills in a great percentage too (91.50%). In addition, more than a quarter (27%) agreed in terms of the

negative aspects (22.1%) agree that it was a waste of time explaining things to others (32.1%) who also agree that it was difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks.

Figure 4: Percentage Combined Agree Responses by Categories



From figure 4 above, it can be seen that more students agree that CL helps in the acquisition on Social benefits and has academic skills a little more than they do generic skills. The least number of respondents agree about the negative aspects of CL.

Figure 5: Percentage Combined Disagree Responses by Categories

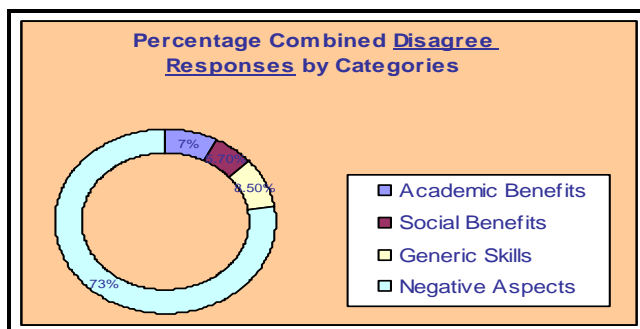


Figure 5 shows that the highest number of students disagree that there are negative aspects to CL (light blue). This is followed by some students disagreeing that CL (beige) helped them acquire generic skills and social benefits. The least number of students disagree that CL helped them in academic benefits.

Table 26 shows that students recognize academic, social and generic benefits, in cooperative learning, but the results also show that there are some negative aspects: especially, when some students leave all the work for other group members to do.

More than a quarter (27%) of the students not only felt that it is a waste of time explaining things to others, but they also indicated that they had experienced difficulties getting other group members to actively participate in tasks.

In contrast, 93% of the students agree that learning in groups has academic benefits that help them understand and comprehend the content of lessons better. Cooperative learning fosters the exchange of knowledge, information and experiences. Students in the courses agreed that they had new insights while working in groups. These students also indicated in the questionnaires that they received useful and helpful feedback from their classmates and teachers. The questionnaires also indicated that group work enables stronger students to help weaker students in the group. The data also suggests that cooperative learning improves performance when the students actively participate in the teaching/learning process.

According to the data collected, the category of social benefits is the most beneficial. 94.30% of the students agreed to a more relaxed atmosphere, that it also fun and made new friends during the cooperative learning activities.

91.50% of the students gained generic skills with cooperative learning. These skills were making problem-solving easier, stimulating critical thinking, focusing on collective efforts rather than individual effort, having greater individual and group responsibility for among the students enhancing communication skills, and fostering team spirit.

Table 26 indicates that 91.4% of the students would like to continue working in groups and 72.9% of the students pointed out that they like working in groups of four. And 27.1% show that the students prefer working in groups with five or six members.

Chapter 5

Discussions, Recommendations, Implications, and conclusion

This chapter discusses the five research questions in this study. These findings were from the analysis of data obtained through questionnaires, interviews and observations. The data shows that the students and teachers have generally positive perceptions at this institution when using cooperative learning activities. However, there is a need to make some modifications to improve certain aspects of CL practice to motivate more students to participate more fully in the tasks.

The first research question was: What is the difference between Collaborative and Cooperative Learning? After review definitions, and eliciting opinions of several experts, I came to the conclusion that there is no difference between collaborative and cooperative learning. To me, collaborative and cooperative learning entail working in groups and helping each other to achieve a common goal. I agree with Brown (E-mail received on Oct. 6, 2009), Jacobs (E-mail received on Oct. 4, 2009), and other researchers that believe there are no distinctions between the two. Although, there are writers who think collaborative as a broader term as using it for all kinds of “group work” some which are not structured cooperatively. The term cooperative is used for a more structured learning, which generally includes a group goal individual accountability for contributing to the group tasks and learning, working in small group of two, three or four. In cooperative learning, the teacher chooses the groups to reflect a diversity of viewpoints, abilities, gender, race, and other characteristics to make sure students learn to interact with everyone in the classroom. In cooperative learning, everyone in the group is responsible to all the other members in the group for learning the content of the lesson or else the work can not be considered completely successful. Cooperative learning is a sustained approach because it last longer than a 15-20 minute small group discussion and it

can also be used for an entire course or module where students experience greater continuity and support with each other. This method is considered good for developing communication skills. Students paraphrase other's words to ensure and verify comprehension, by giving and receiving feedback, allowing everyone to contribute.

Bruffee (E-mail received on March. 21, 2010) has attempted to make a distinction between collaborative and cooperative in a more philosophical way. Bruffee's opinion is that there are three stages in a child's educational development. The first and second stages are what a child learns at home and school, and the stage is when the adult has to re-acclurate, when he or she at a university and has different goals.

I have come to the conclusion that the difference in collaborative and cooperative learning is essentially a matter of terms which people use interchangeably. .

In the second research question: How do the teachers implement group work in an Ecuadorian University ESL classroom? Through the observations and the interviews I have come to believe that teachers at this language center are implementing informal cooperative activities where the group work was not fully structured. The informal groups have little structure or format, have new group members with each new class day.

Nearly all the teachers grouped the students in small groups of two, three and four members while doing group activities but it is necessary to point out that there were two teachers who had groups of five and even six members at times. Every teacher needs to be aware that the research recommends that the CL activities be carried out by groups. with 4 or fewer members. As the Johnsons brothers say in their Q & A website, students need to be working knee to knee which means groups of two, three and the most will be of four members. When working in very small groups, students also have more time and the opportunity to share their opinions and ideas. For some assignments individual work may be

the most efficient, while for others cooperative groups work better. The teachers' choices should be determined by their objectives.

Teachers need to use more structured activities to make sure all students are working. It is difficult to manage a class of 35 students and assure that everyone is participating in the task with the other members. I was able to see that a few students that were easily distracted at times, or tried to finish the activity immediately.

None of these teachers assigned roles to the members in the group during the observations. Teachers need to assign roles to the members on a team. Some possible roles can include a language monitor (whose job is to promote appropriate L2 use while working in groups) reporter, recorder, time keeper, and materials manager. The teacher might want to rotate roles each week or by activity. Assigning roles can facilitate the progress of the task by helping the members to work in a more interdependently way and more productively.

Some of these teachers allow students to choose their group members or the teacher pointed out students who were sitting near each other to work in the activity. This tendency resulted in the same students working together most of the time because students usually sit near their friends. A teacher would do well to randomly group students, not according to proximity of seats.

It is necessary to have heterogeneous groups and not homogenous groups. Therefore, there is the need to mix up groups according to their gender, ability and ethnicity. If we have students working in homogenous groups, this might affect learning as a whole, which in turn may cause students to avoid working with others in subsequent activities. It is better for the teacher to find different ways to organize groups to motivate the learning. Teachers can choose groups from class lists, organize groups randomly during class, and mixed ability

Self-selection, is occasionally recommendable. Mixing up groups can facilitate making new friendships.

Another implication of how teachers are implementing group work is that students can not only be asked to do role plays or to present an oral/written work when assessing the students' learning. Teachers need to ask for formal and informal feedback from students. Feedback from students is really important in cooperative learning activities.

These teachers were really competent in giving clear instructions because students put themselves ready to work in groups. Although, they replied to the interviews questions that they still need to improve in their management techniques for future CL activities as doing better supervising. .It is important for these teachers to keep up- to -date with CL research, doing better planning and knowing that group work should be carried out when being observed by the director or coordinator because it is an institutional policy at this institution.

The third research question in this study is: What are the students' perceptions of group work in learning a language. Most of these students indicated in their questionnaires that CL activities were gratifying for them.

Students agreed that cooperative learning activities help them use the language more, in academic, social and generic situations. Although, some students indicated that there are some difficulties engaging some students in the task while working in groups.

The responses to negative aspects can be successfully dealt with by better monitoring and using more structured activities. As we all know, in education there is no perfect methodology but cooperative learning facilitates the acquisition of academic, social and generic skills. Therefore, the perceptions of the students are positive and I think that teachers and administration at this center should be really pleased with the acceptance of the implementation of cooperative learning for language learning in this institution.

Students indicated in the questionnaires that they wanted to continue working in pairs, threes or fours. I think they enjoy working in groups and they develop a feeling of liking their school, their classmates, their teacher and learning. It is important to know what their preferences are. I think they realized that cooperative learning is an effective methodology where different learning styles are integrated. I see that 91.4% said that group work should be encouraged and continued in their English classes. Therefore, I think teachers should continue doing these informal group work activities as well as doing some formal group activities. Some formal projects can prepare these students to become familiarized with team projects for their future professional life.

I think most of the teachers need to organize formal cooperative activities well and with patience students will become familiarized with the process. It is not going to be easy to get adapted to it at first but, it will work. I know it is difficult because there is not enough time to do these activities and to cover the whole curriculum. Especially with classes of more than 30 students it needs to be planned ahead of time. Teachers also need to develop a set of behaviours and norms to establish cooperative learning activities in their classrooms. A friendly and comfortable atmosphere is important to make students for more efficient and faster way. Teachers need to adapt the curriculum to use appropriate activities that can be used for the benefit of the students. For example: In Mariela's class the role-plays were really fun and interesting. Everybody enjoyed them, and seemed to be learning about manners and describing people in a fun, organized and quick way.

I think that if the 96.4% of the students indicated that they enjoy the activity and they liked making new friends. And 94.3% agreed that they focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort. . These results support what Kagan, Kohn and Slavin (1992) reported

that cooperative learning groups promote a positive interdependence among peers and also promote mutual support.

My fourth question in this research study was: What are the teachers' perceptions of incorporating group work in their language classes. The teachers' perceptions of incorporating group work in their language classes were very positive. In their interviews and observations, I noticed that they consider cooperative learning activities to be valuable and effective for their students' improvement in academic and in social aspects. Most of the teachers in the study recognized that they need to put more time into their planning. They also were aware of the need to make improvements in their classroom management when implementing cooperative learning activities

These teachers emphasized their activities from their textbooks which offer pair-work discussions and other group activities of three or four members. Most teachers were dynamic and made the activities really interesting for the students to motivate them. Marrow (1977) commented on how important for teachers to continue to develop their repertoire of cooperative learning structures, and to manage group dynamics. It is important for language teachers to keep themselves informed on group dynamic issues to improve group support, to promote active participation and to practice collective goal setting. Teachers need to become aware of how to improve a bit on the negative aspects of cooperative learning by modelling and checking for instructions before activities are presented especially with these large classes.

The teacher's role is to act as an instructor, guide and facilitator. Lectures need to be appropriate to distribute information correctly to a large number of students in a short period of time, to use a variety of sources to introduce the lesson to arouse interest in the subject. Teachers need to explain the purpose and usefulness of a task before students carry out the

task. These alternatives can make students become more motivated and this can prevent the negative aspects which the students pointed out in the questionnaires.

As the Johnson brothers say in their Q & A website page (p. 31), it is important to monitor the class wisely. Students are working in an active way and teachers are monitoring by walking around the classroom. Teachers were able to hear and see what students are saying to each other, and what they were doing to accomplish the assignment. It is interesting to know that learning is taking place in a communicative way where teachers can hear students express how they think, how they learn and how they are as people. All monitoring should be purposeful and often it is not. Through my observations this aspect was evident with two teachers who stayed in front of the room at times. All the six teachers that were interviewed recognized and commented on how they see the need to become more skilled at monitoring and gauging time when implementing cooperative learning activities.

The last question in this study was: What does educational research recommend as the best CL practices for learning a language. Educational research as Jacobs (2002); Bruffee (1995); Brown (2008) recommends cooperative learning as the best instruction for learning a language. Studies have demonstrated the cooperative learning is more powerful than competitive and individualistic ways of working in the classroom. Cooperative learning helps students to equally participate. There are students that can be timid and do not want to speak in front of other classmates. While doing the observations the more reticent students seemed to be positively influenced by the stronger students to participate in the task given by the teacher. I think these students were embarrassed at first, but later on they became more confident, active and interested on the activity.

I observed that these reticent students become more confident and build up their confidence. These students overcame their insecurities and made the effort to participate with the help of the other members. As the Johnson brothers (2009) say, it is important to put different people to work in a group as we want to build a larger learning community in a classroom where students learn and feel good working with others in the classroom. It is important to know that working cooperatively gives students practice working in groups, but also prepares them for team work in their future places of employment.

There was Jorge class where students became bored and sleepy while working in groups. I think this was due to the inappropriate activities which the students found to be repetitive and boring. The students in this class were inactive and I did not see any teamwork happening during the observations. The teacher was doing most of the talking and did not explain the purpose and the usefulness of the task before the students carried it out.

Another implication with Jorge's group was that only three students participated in this study. I think students were not familiar with this kind of research taking place in their EFL classes. I think the teacher needs to prepare the students and for them to become aware of the importance of their participation in these types of investigations for their own benefit.

Something I would like to mention in this last section is not having enough time to interview some of the students or for them to answer some open-ended written questions in their questionnaires, it would have been better to get more of their responses and opinions, this would have provided me with a broader and better analysis.

Conclusion:

Finally, this research study seems to confirm that teachers and students perceive cooperative language learning as having many benefits, such as improving learning skills, as well as some negative aspects, such as getting some students to participate and teachers need

to do more structured and well planned activities. The negative aspects can be successfully dealt with. Although there is no perfect methodology in education but cooperative learning activities can significantly facilitate the acquisition of academic, social and generic skills.

I think teachers at this institution have acquired a basic level of training in group activities and in classroom management. They already have enough confidence implementing cooperative learning activities in their classrooms and students at this level are familiar working in groups. Therefore, teachers can incorporate more formal activities because students are ready to take over more responsibilities. From “Informal” cooperative learning, which is often incorporated into direct teaching, and then grows to “Formal” cooperative learning with carefully structured and planning

I would finish off by saying that cooperative activities are not just to be used in a classroom setting; they can also be used among teachers and administration. Teachers teaching the same levels can often meet to share ideas and material. It is important for the administration, teachers and students to work together in a healthy environment and to enjoy a good relationship.

Chapter 6

My Reflections

It has been a memorable experience having to do this research study in cooperative learning. I have worked on this research for about two years, and I can say that this research study has been a great experience for me. I have not just gained more knowledge on cooperative learning but, I have also gotten to know exceptional people.

The cooperation I received from this group of people is really appreciated and I will treasure it forever. I was fortunate to have their understanding and willingness to help out whenever I needed the guidance or the class observations to be done which motivated me to continue with my objective.

Gratitude to the experts

Dr. George Jacobs and Dr. Bruffee each communicated with me via E-mail several times. I was always surprised to receive immediate responses to my questions or doubts that I might have in cooperative learning. I will always treasure this experience interchanging knowledge with others. Their cooperation will always be appreciated and valued enormously.

At first, when I decided to write about this Cooperative Learning, I began to think from my own experience as a student, when I was twelve years old trying to learn a second language. Learning a second language was not easy because I considered myself to be a reticent child. I struggled throughout my last year in elementary school. In those years the teaching was teacher-centered and I did not receive either support or understanding from my teacher or from my classmates. I had to convince myself to overcome the fear of speaking the language somehow. Every time we had to do a task in class it was done individually. We had to work on our own, and we never had the opportunity to get to know other students in class

or to interchange our points of view with one another. I felt really embarrassed at times, and I thought school was boring and monotonous.

Now after having being a reticent child and working for many years as a teacher in school, I have become more interested in cooperative learning. I began to read articles and learn about cooperative learning. I also received professional development training in cooperative learning in my present position as an EFL teacher. This research and the experience has helped me a lot to improve my teaching. Expanding my knowledge in cooperative learning through this research has given me many advantages and incentive to continue in my teaching career. Actually, I have come to the conclusion that cooperative learning is essential for a child's learning. I think teachers and administrators need to be more aware of how our students feel, and how well they get along in our classes. These positive relationships are beneficial for them because they learn to work collectively and care for others as they grow up in a cooperative environment. Students learn to develop a sense of caring and students learn to make good choices in different situations they might come to in their future lives.

There were several class observations that took place during this research study. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the six teachers and my supervisors at this center who made this research feasible to go through its process. I do not think it would have been possible to finish it without their assistance and support. These exceptional people will always be cherished and remembered in my heart. Throughout these observations I realized how important it is for the students to have fun while they learn in groups. Their emotional intelligence was nurtured while working in groups. I think it gives students greater capacity to relate to others, find solutions, accept rules, to be active learners, accept challenges, overcome fears, learn to lose, wait for their turn, to make decisions, and maintain

concentration. In one of the articles I read by the Johnson brothers, they stated that cooperative learning activities can lead to gains in both cognitive and affective variables.

The process of doing this research and attending workshops has also helped me greatly to improve my tactics and creativity as an ESL teacher. I think I understand and communicate with my students better now. They enjoy learning a second language and they love to help other classmates whenever it is necessary. I also have become more conscious and aware of the way I teach. I can say that it is fundamental for me to have students learn in a communicative and cooperative way. It has been my experience that students working in a positive and friendly environment will feel free to express their opinions and ideas.

Nowadays, I put into practice what I have learned through this research study. Well, sometimes it is not easy when you work with a large group of students but as researchers say it is possible. It just takes more time to plan and make sure every student participates. Cooperative learning strategies have been a fantastic tool for me.. My students have more self-esteem and assurances in learning the language more now than before. When giving a task they look excited because they equally participate trying to obtain the purpose of the task given.

Another fact that I would like to mention is that my students while learning in cooperative activities are more respectful with their classmates and with me, as their teacher. I think their learning and their well-being makes my teaching more rewarding too. I feel that students like to come to class. Their attendances have gotten better. Therefore, students come to class with a positive attitude, willing to learn without been criticized.

I used to think cooperative learning activities were easy and quick. They are not. Cooperative learning takes a lot of planning to be successful. At first, it is very difficult for students and for teachers to get used to it. It will take some time until students and teachers

learn it well. I became more aware through this research that teachers need be patient and plan well. A teachers needs to give clear instructions and easy tasks at first. There might be times when things do not come out the way that was expected, but teachers should never give up. Teachers need to plan it well ahead of time and to be perseverant. After some practices teachers will increase their expertise. The adventure of cooperative language learning will become an unforgettable and gratifying experience of learning for all.

Teachers at this center are doing informal group activities where the activities are short and with little structure. They can be done with new members each new class day. The classes that I observed were big classes with least 30-35 students. Every teacher at this center uses cooperative learning with good acceptance from the students. I was able to see the effort that these teachers put into every activity to make the task enjoyable and meaningful. I hope we all continue enlarging our knowledge with doing more readings and training on cooperative learning to enhance the success of our students' and everything that I have learned through the process of this research study was worthwhile. I never thought the process would be smooth but intensive. At times I found myself going through a few rough transitions but I tried not to get discouraged. There were times I accumulated so many articles and I did not know which one to read next. It was time-consuming in organizing the whole procedure.

It got to be critical at times, therefore, what has helped me was the interest that I had in topic I chose and the support I receive from family and friends. I think another thing that helped me was the preparation I received during the master's program. It helped me learn how to organize myself better and to save time when researching. I became more approachable to people by asking or suggesting ideas along the way for this whole process. I think all these measures assisted me in achieving my goals.

I would like to finalize my reflections by saying that I will continue doing more research on cooperative learning. There is a lot more to be learned. There are still thousands of research studies to be read. I have become a supporter of cooperative learning because it has worked for me and for many other teachers as well.

By using cooperative learning we obtain good outcomes, not just in a classroom setting but also at home and at work. We all need to live in community learning to communicate, love and respect to others. The spirit of cooperation is essential in our children's lives now and always.

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Appendix A

These questions were adapted from Faith Brown's article "Collaborative Learning in the EAP Classroom: Students' Perception".

Teacher's interview

Course number: _____

Date: _____

1. What are your objectives as a teacher for using group work activities?
2. What are the benefits of the group work for language learning?
3. How many students are usually in a group?
4. How do you select the students for the group?
5. Where and when did you learn to use group work? (Were you trained?)
6. Is there anything you would change about your approach in the future group activities?
7. How do you assess learning with this methodology?
8. What classroom management techniques work well in small group activities?
9. How do you monitor when students are working in groups?
10. Do you recommend this method for all levels?
11. Why do you use group work?
12. Is it an institutional policy for ELF teachers to use group activities?
13. Where do you go to look for group work procedures?
14. Have you read any research on using group work?

Appendix B

These questions were adapted from Faith Brown's article "Collaborative Learning in the EAP Classroom: Students' Perception".

CLASS OBSERVATION SHEET

Teacher's Name: _____

Course number: _____

Level: Upper intermediate _____

1. What's the name of the activity? _____
2. How many students in each group? _____
3. How did the teacher group them? _____
4. What were the instructions? _____
5. Were the instructions clear to all the students?
6. Did the teacher assign roles or everybody had the same status? _____
7. Were the students enjoying working together? _____
8. Were the students engaged in a communicative manner? _____
9. Were the students focus on group efforts rather than individual efforts? _____
- 10.. How did the teacher supervise the students during this group work activity?

11. Did the atmosphere seem relaxed? _____
12. Did every member in the group participate?

13. What was the response of the stronger students?

14. What was the response of the weaker ones?
15. Did this activity encourage students to exchange knowledge, information and experience?

16. What was the attitude of the students toward the group activity?

Appendix C

Table 1: Description of Students' Responses regarding Collaborative Learning.

	WORKING IN PAIRS AND GROUPS	1 Strongly Agree	2 Agree	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree
A	Helped understanding/comprehention				
B	Fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experiences				
C	Made problem-solving easier				
D	Stimulated critical thinking				
E	More relaxed atmosphere				
F	Received useful/helpful feedback				
G	Got fresh insight				
H	Focused on collective efforts rather than individual effort				
I	Greater responsibility-for myself and the group				
J	Enabled learners to help weaker learners in the group				
K	Enhanced communication skills				
L	Improved performance				
M	Learners actively participated in the teaching/learning process				
N	It was fun				
O	Made new friends				
P	Fostered team spirit				
Q	Waste of time explaining things to others				
R	Difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks				
S	(pair/group work) should be encouraged/continued				
T	Maximum group size should be four				

Appendix D.

Table 2: Combined Responses to the students' Questionnaire .

	Agree Responses	Disagree Responses
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
F		
G		
H		
I		
J		
K		
L		
M		
N		
O		
P		
Q		
R		
S		
T		

- Percentages are indicated in brackets

Appendix E

Table 3: Percentage Combined Students' Responses by Categories

CATEGORY	AGREE	DISAGREE
Academic benefits		
Social benefits		
Generic skills		
Negative aspects		

Appendix F

valuado: **Profesor, Autoevaluacion**

Grupo: **AUTOEVALUACION DOCENTE ESPOL 2009 2S**

Señor Evaluador

Nota

A continuación se plantean un conjunto de proposiciones a las cuales usted deberá responder marcando entre un valor de CERO a DIEZ, donde CERO significa COMPLETO DESACUERDO con lo planteado y DIEZ significa COMPLETO ACUERDO. SI usted asigna un valor entre CUATRO y SEIS se le considera q es diferente a la propuesta. La zona de DESACUERDO va desde UNO hasta TRES y la de ACUERDO va desde SIETE hasta NUEVE.

Para responder, refierase a los cursos, que tienen a su cargo este termino academico. En caso de no tener mas de un curso, considere un criterio para responder.

INFORMACION GENERAL DEL PROFESOR

1. **¿Que tipo de vinculación como profesor tiene con la ESPOL?**

- Titular
- Invitado
- Asociado
- Accidental
- Honorario

2. **¿Cuál es el tiempo de dedicación por el cual está nombrado(a) en ESPOL durante este término académico?**

- Tiempo parcial
- Medio tiempo
- Tiempo completo

3. **¿Cuál es el nivel académico o profesional más alto obtenido?**

- Tecnología

EVALUACIÓN

- Realiza evaluaciones (tareas, lecciones, exposiciones, demostraciones, reportes, otros) periódicamente durante el curso.
- 26 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Los temas que plantea en las evaluaciones son representativos del contenido del curso.
- 27 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Califica procedimientos y resultados en los temas del examen.
- 28 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Da a conocer de manera oportuna el resultado de las evaluaciones a los estudiantes, tomando en consideración sus fallas y aclarando las mismas.
- 29 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

CUMPLIMIENTO

- Cumple con el programa de estudios.
- 30 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Asiste puntualmente a clases.
- 31 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Asiste regularmente a clases de acuerdo al horario aprobado en su unidad académica.
- 32 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- Cumple con el horario establecido para la atención al estudiante
- 33 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(horas consulta)

Calificación a su Labor Académica

En resumen, utilizando una escala de 0 al 10, ¿Qué calificación le pondría a la labor que ha desarrollado como docente en el (los) curso(s) que imparte este término académico?

34		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix G

LESSON OBSERVATION SHEET

Lesson Observation	Name of observer:				
Name of teacher observed:	Date:				
A: Teaching: General	<small>n/a</small>	1	2	3	4
A1. Teach the class and individuals within it, with sensitivity to the learners' needs, level and context: Relevant/real language for these learners? Appropriate for this level?					
A2. Make effective use of learning materials and resources, including aids and equipment: Effective use of photocopies, OHT, whiteboard, CD player etc?					
A3. Monitor learning and manage relevant feedback: Even coverage of students? Unobtrusive? Quick and varied feedback on activities?					
A4. Take account of learners' cognitive and affective needs: Clear, concise, checked instructions? Checking understanding - concept questions? Variety of activities? Balance of student and teacher talking time?					
A5. Include a clear focus on an area of either the language systems or the skills of English: Organisation, planning and objectives?					
B: Teaching: Language					
B1. Adapting their own use of language to the level of the group: Level of English appropriate for this level?					
B2. Providing accurate and appropriate models of language use: Is the language presented correct?					
B3. Giving accurate and appropriate information about language form, meaning and use: Does the teacher present information on grammatical and phonological form, meaning, and appropriacy?					
B4. Responding to and exploiting learner contributions: Praise? Interested in students? Range of correction techniques?					
C: Teaching: Procedures /Techniques					
C1. Focusing on learners' control of the language systems: Controlled (restricted) practice of grammar, lexis, phonology and discourse?					
C2. Developing learners' fluency and confidence in using the language for communication: Freer (authentic) practice?					
C3. Developing learners' language and literacy skills and sub-skills: Listening, speaking, reading, writing: Contextualisation? Prediction? Pre-teaching vocabulary? Gist? Specific information? Detail? Follow-up work? Are skills <i>developed</i> or just tested?					
C4. Promoting learner autonomy: Self- and peer-correction? Dictionary work? Students responsible for own learning decisions?					
D: Teaching: Managing Learning					
D1. Establishing and maintaining a positive learning atmosphere for all learners: Rapport? Student involvement? Sensitivity to learners?					
D2. Managing the space, furniture and equipment: Seating layout? Gaps between students? Can everyone see the teacher and the board?					
D3. Setting up whole class and/or group and/or individual activities, as appropriate: Variety of interaction patterns? Pairing techniques?					
D4. Managing the class so that the focus of the lesson remains on the aims and objectives identified: Aims achieved? Tangents avoided?					
D5. Managing the time to ensure the pace of the lesson is appropriate: Variety of pace? Appropriate timing given to tasks?					

Appendix H

A Letter from Carlos *Autumn, 1982*

Dear Professor Aronson:

I am a senior at U.T. [University of Texas]. Today I got a letter admitting me to the Harvard Law School. This may not seem odd to you, but let me tell you something. I am the 6th of 7 children my parents had--and I am the only one who ever went to college, let alone graduate, or go to law school.

By now, you are probably wondering why this stranger is writing to you and bragging to you about his achievements. Actually, I'm not a stranger although we never met. You see, last year I was taking a course in social psychology and we were using a book you wrote, *The Social Animal*, and when I read about prejudice and jigsaw it all sounded very familiar--and then, I realized that I was in that very first class you ever did jigsaw in--when I was in the 5th grade. And as I read on, it dawned on me that I was the boy that you called Carlos. And then I remembered you when you first came to our classroom and how I was scared and how I hated school and how I was so stupid and didn't know anything. And you came in--it all came back to me when I read your book--you were very tall--about 6 1/2 feet--and you had a big black beard and you were funny and made us all laugh.

And, most important, when we started to do work in jigsaw groups, I began to realize that I wasn't really that stupid. And the kids I thought were cruel and hostile became my friends and the teacher acted friendly and nice to me and I actually began to love school, and I began to love to learn things and now I'm about to go to Harvard Law School.

You must get a lot of letters like this but I decided to write anyway because let me tell you something. My mother tells me that when I was born I almost died. I was born at home and the cord was wrapped around my neck and the midwife gave me mouth to mouth and saved my life. If she was still alive, I would write to her too, to tell her that I grew up smart and good and I'm going to law school. But she died a few years ago. I'm writing to you because, no less than her, you saved my life too.

Sincerely,

Carlos

Appendix I

Table 1. Social interdependence: Weighted findings			
	Mean	Standard deviation	<i>n</i> ^a
Achievement			
Cooperative vs. competitive	0.66	0.94	128
Cooperative vs. individualistic	0.63	0.81	182
Competitive vs. individualistic	0.30	0.76	39
Interpersonal attraction			
Cooperative vs. competitive	0.65	0.47	88
Cooperative vs. individualistic	0.62	0.59	59
Competitive vs. individualistic	0.08	0.70	15
Social support			
Cooperative vs. competitive	0.59	0.39	75
Cooperative vs. individualistic	0.71	0.45	70
Competitive vs. individualistic	-0.12	0.37	18
Self-esteem			
Cooperative vs. competitive	0.60	0.57	55
Cooperative vs. individualistic	0.44	0.40	37
Competitive vs. individualistic	-0.19	0.40	18

^a*n* = number of studies in sample

