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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



GRADUATION WORK

“TECHNIQUES TO FOSTER COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN ENGLISH AS
FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS. BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS”

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INTRODUCTION

The learning of languages is nowadays necessary not only in developed countries but also in underdeveloped countries like El Salvador because it has been extended around the world. These times even the farthest or poorest countries are in contact with English. Countries around the world get to be known by other people, races and cultures. Languages, especially English, have become a very important tool for countries to communicate with one another. English as one of the most spoken languages on Earth becomes a universal language each day. Universities around the world include languages learning, particularly English, in undergraduate and posgraduate programs; and the University of El Salvador (UES) is not the exception.

Nowadays, studying a foreign language, especially English has become a necessity in El Salvador, since English is the language being used around the world regarding technology, medicine, commerce and the like. Many students at the University of El Salvador (UES) choose English as their major with the hope of being more competitive and prepared when looking for a job. For this reason the School of Arts and Sciences by means of the Foreign Language Department (FLD) which has the major in English Teaching whose demand increases every year, has the compromise of giving its students the best education in the teaching and learning of the English language. To accomplish this, the Foreign Language Department has to make use of different teaching techniques which help students to learn English in the best possible way. Something that has to be remarked is that students of all levels learn a foreign language in a better way when they are provided ample opportunities in the classroom to attain a foreign language.

Cooperative Learning is considered by many teachers and researchers as a successful strategy in the teaching of the English as a Foreign Language in which small and even large groups, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. These teaching techniques have an important impact on the opportunities for success for every student at the Department.

This research is focused on those techniques that foster cooperative learning in English as foreign language classrooms. Based on the readings of many professionals

that have written concerning this topic and the different researches that have taken place all along history proving its effectiveness, these, together with the personal experience as students, we can assure that cooperative learning techniques are important tools for teachers and students who want to get the best out of their English lessons. Also, knowing the typical environment of the English classrooms at the FLD (crowded classrooms), again, it is highly recommended to pay attention to this research.

Through this work the reader will find the objectives who led the research and the justification which clarifies why the topic and the research were chosen. Also, the essay which contrasts the benefits and drawbacks of the cooperative learning and the techniques to be applied in the classroom. On the other hand the reader will find the methodology followed to accomplish the research. Besides, the surveys and the interviews administered to students and professors of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador to enrich the research will be found out.

OBJECTIVES:

GENERAL:

To present techniques that, in a way, can help teachers to foster Cooperative Learning in English Foreign Language classrooms by means of group work techniques.

SPECIFIC:

To identify cooperative techniques which contribute to the teaching learning process of the students of foreign language classrooms.

To find out how to contrast group versus individual work outcomes in the learning of English as foreign language in order to demonstrate the efficiency of cooperative learning.

JUSTIFICATION

Throughout the years different researchers have shown that everyone learns individually. One of them is *Howard Gardner (1999)*, among others. Our interests and genetic make-up determine what we can learn and how well we may learn. They also determine how well we can apply what has been learned. Accepting that people learn individually is an important step toward improving instruction (*Gardner, 1999*). Either we must devote time to each learner individually or rely on other means to assist each learner to progress. Individualized instruction requires more human resources than are available to schools. This research has its origins in the simple fact that our English classrooms are everyday more crowded.

When teaching English to speakers of other languages, many aspects are considered key to be taken into account. The Foreign Language Department has experienced different changes in the last years. Some of the aspects are students' population, students' academic needs, and marketing requirements. For these and many other aspects cooperative learning becomes an important teaching tool in the teaching learning process. In most institutions, likewise the University of El Salvador, the number of students in each classroom is over 30 making it difficult or impossible for the teacher to provide their students with individual assistance. Consequently, many teachers rely on large group instruction. Most students are capable of learning in large groups, but each may experience problems with particular methods of presentation, e.g., individual readings, questions and answers, experiments or projects (*Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991*). It is there where cooperative learning results in a very useful tool to improve students' learning and becomes the topic of this research.

In many work and social activities, teams of individuals must work together to get tasks accomplished. Working together means cooperation. It also means taking the talents of individuals and putting these together to get the job done. Cooperation is a life skill; nearly every job or social relationship involves cooperating with another individual to accomplish a shared goal. In cooperative learning, students are organized into groups (*Kagan, 1994*). Each group is given a goal and the achievement of that goal often requires group members to support each other. Cooperative learning tends to be student- (group) centered, whereas individual and competitive learning tend to be teacher-centered (*Nunan, 1992*). In a cooperative learning environment, students help

each other learn to the subject matter, but they also learn how to be a contributing member to a group. This research looks to show those benefits that the correct application of cooperative learning techniques has in the students and teachers in the English classrooms. Also to prove the applicability of this to our reality to the benefit of teacher and students at the FLD.

This research shows the importance of cooperative learning in English as Foreign Language classrooms and demonstrate that there is more cooperative learning than "just having students working in groups." Cooperative learning strategies differ based on: group size and logistics, task specialization, inter-group competition, group rewards, method of student evaluation, and appropriateness to a given learning objective or situation (*Kagan, 1994*). Most of the classroom environments are well suited to cooperative rather than individualistic learning. Sadly, some teachers do not implement cooperative techniques as a key ingredient for improving students learning or they are not getting the best of them. In cases like when students are asked to work in discussions, they would participate more if they first discuss in small groups because that makes them feel comfortable to give opinions and allow those students to be confident for a later whole classroom discussion.

Problem solving can likewise be very effective if students work together toward a common goal, building on each other's ideas, expertise, and efforts. Certain tasks are just too large for a single individual and absolutely require cooperative efforts. Society requires its members to exhibit cooperative behaviour. Success on a job often depends on one's ability to work well with others. By fostering social skills, cooperative learning aims to fill this social need. Furthermore, this research will show how cooperative learning techniques have numerous benefits to both the teacher and the learner. Authors like *Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991)* synthesized over 375 studies on the effects of cooperative, competitive and individualistic efforts on student achievement and productivity. They found that students in cooperative learning settings performed better than students in either competitive or individualistic settings. They also noted that cooperative learning resulted in more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions, and greater transfer of what is learned within one situation to another like group to individual transfer than did individualistic learning.

Based on experimentation, *Hamm and Adams (1992)* drew the following conclusions about the benefits of cooperative learning to the student: Cooperative learning improves academic performance among high- and low- achieving students. Minority students have made consistently favourable achievement in cooperative classes. Disadvantaged students significantly benefit from collaborative learning techniques. Working in mixed-ability groups doesn't stifle individual initiative, and finally, cooperative learning has positive effects on students' self-esteem, social relations, attitudes toward mainstreamed students, and race relations. By teaching others, all of the students actually come to understand the material better. Many different cooperative learning techniques have been developed; some of these have advantages over others, depending on the circumstances in which they are applied. Cooperative learning should be viewed in terms of its ability to both foster social skills and enhance academic learning.

Cooperative learning can also benefit the teacher. *Hamm and Adams (1992)* noted that teachers who began using collaborative learning "became more cooperative in their own professional interactions and more willing to collaborate with their peers" (p. 8). Teachers who use cooperative learning may feel that their time is spent more effectively. Dividing the class into groups means the teacher has five, six or seven groups instead of 25 to 35 individuals to make good contact with each day. In addition there are 25 to 35 aides in the classroom. Pupils monitor each other while creating a spirit of cooperation and helpfulness. In addition, teachers who try cooperative learning techniques often adopt a fresh, new attitude toward their jobs. It can be exciting for a teacher when a group has the freedom to generate their own ideas and to make their own decisions. Some teachers who experiment with cooperative learning techniques are pleasantly surprised at how well their students perform in collaborative group settings.

While cooperative learning requires a lot from the teacher, the teacher may begin to feel that teaching and classroom management become easier. Cooperative learning can help teachers spend less time being the owner of the class as students learn that they are capable of validating their own values and ideas. Teachers are freer to move about, work with small groups and interact in a more personal manner with students. Cooperative group learning can also be arranged so there is less paperwork for the teacher. For instance, evaluating six or eight group papers is less work for the teacher than 24 or 32 individual ones. (*Hamm & Adams, 1992, pp. 15-16*). As a result of

implementing cooperative learning techniques, the teacher might feel less stress. Although the teacher is still responsible for the learning in the classroom, some of the authority is delegated to the students. Even if a teacher uses cooperative learning on only a few occasions, it might give a welcomed relief to both the teacher and the students from the traditional instructional format.

Slavin (1995) points out that the history of cooperative learning can be traced back as far as the seventeenth century. He cites such educational theorists as Comenius in the seventeenth century, Rousseau in the eighteenth century, Pestalozzi in the nineteenth century and Dewey in the early twentieth century, who held some form of cooperation among students as essential to learning. Cooperative learning, therefore, is not new to education. Although the term may not have been used, cooperative learning in some form has been happening for decades, this work seeks to point out how important it is to implement it in our classrooms today.

“TECHNIQUES TO FOSTER COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN ENGLISH AS FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOMS . BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS”

A. BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

The use of cooperative learning techniques in the EFL classrooms fosters the learning among students by increasing their participation, the use of the target language, encouragement of positive student attitude toward learning, enhancement of students' social skills, and the deeper understanding of the material studied. There have been a great deal of researches to determine how much cooperative learning benefits students' learning in the English classrooms, and the findings have shown it provides numerous benefits to both the teacher and the learner. Researchers have found that students in cooperative learning settings perform better than students in either competitive or individualistic settings. Consequently, it is important to generate the required opportunities in the EFL classrooms so that cooperative learning benefits to students and teachers in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language like English.

Cooperative learning or student-centered instruction is not a new concept. It has been utilized in nearly all academic settings and grade levels for the past decade (Kagan, 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1999). This group approach to learning promotes improved academic achievement, better attendance, higher motivation, and an increased interest for the subject and classmates. Some authors like *Weingarten (2003)* state that teaching foreign languages to small groups is a key ingredient in language students' success. However, if teachers have to be in charge of large groups, it requires perspectives in methodologies of what and how the teaching learning process is to be achieved. Industry specialists have deemed the ability to work well with others one of the most important skills necessary for success. Research and studies have proven its effectiveness; however the process is not without its critics. Students often resist the responsibility for learning that is placed upon their shoulders. They may resent the active role that they are expected to take on.

Throughout the years different researches have shown that everyone learns individually (Howard Gardner 1999, among others). Our interests and genetic make-up determine what we can learn and how well we may learn. They also determine how well we can apply what has been learned. Personality conflicts within the group may also

contribute to a general feeling of malcontent. It is the role of the instructor to initially guide the groups, and then monitor their progress in order to ensure maximum learning. The cooperative approach to learning is not intended to replace direct instruction from the teacher. It should be used to complement the direct instruction by affording the students the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions, role-play, and brainstorm. When several students tackle the same problem, they may use a variety of methods.

Watching someone arrive at a solution in a differing manner is beneficial as a learner. When students explain the process that they used to arrive at a solution, they not only teach the other members of the group, but they reinforce their own knowledge. Studies have proven that the best way to retain information is to teach it to others (Weingarten, 2003). Not only is the direct instruction received, but it is practiced, processed and further understood. Students often question the concept of being forced to work with others to achieve a goal that they feel they could easily achieve alone. Those who are academically gifted or are extremely shy are difficult to convince. The facts however state that most employers require team work to resolve issues.

Many occupations revolve their practices around working together. If a student has never been guided through this method, he/she may fall short of being competent enough to do the job well. Intelligence is simply not enough in real world occupations. There are a limited number of university courses that solely instruct students on the etiquette of working cooperatively. The Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador is responsible for its students' learning of English as foreign language. It is important to overview what *cooperative learning* is to develop the cooperative techniques provide to the students when learning English. Cooperative learning is one of the most remarkable and fertile areas of theory, research, and practice in education. Cooperative learning exists when students work together to accomplish shared learning goals (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). It is necessary therefore, to teach these skills within the framework of all content areas. High achieving and shy students will also find that their grades may improve by being involved in a cooperative process. There are many road blocks that may occur throughout the journey to cooperative learning.

Not all students take their responsibilities seriously enough. Many feel that their slack will be picked up by the others in the group. Some students may be too strong of leaders and stifle the contributions of the other members of the team. Conflict is a

natural by-product of cooperation. When students are asked to work together, it is with the intent that they will each provide a differing view and /or opinion. When differing opinions are joined together to create one product, conflict is sure to arise. Conflict can be a very healthy springboard to learning. Kenneth E. Eble (1981) argues that to get students to learn a language requires a set of activities, strategies etc. It requires implementing cooperative techniques in which these things will be taken into account during the teaching learning process of students. Cooperative learning has to provide learners with authentic opportunities to use and develop their knowledge and capabilities and teachers are responsible for the students' engagement with the learning process within the classroom groups.

When students dialogue and debate their opinions they might reinforce their ideas or dismiss them. The ability to listen and be flexible to new views is absolutely essential to the success of a group. Cooperation is a life skill; nearly every job or social relationship involves cooperating with another individual to accomplish a shared goal. In cooperative learning, students are organized into groups (Kagan, 1994). Each group is given a goal and the achievement of that goal often requires group members to support each other. Cooperative learning tends to be student- (group-) centered, whereas individual and competitive learning tend to be teacher-centred. In a cooperative learning environment, students help each other learn to the subject matter, but they also learn how to be a contributing member to a group (Nunan, 1992). Assigning roles may also help to ease the imbalance of effort. The students who do not contribute enough effort should first be encouraged by their groups. If this proves unsuccessful, the instructor should step in and mediate

The instructor cannot assume that all group conflicts should be resolved alone (Kagan, 1994). Classroom modeling of effective group work and role-playing of conflict situations should be directed by the instructor. It is absolutely unfair to punish a group for the ineffectiveness of one member. Students should do everything possible to remain a cooperative and cohesive unit, but if all attempts fail they should be allowed a chance to rebuild a new unit. It should also never be the responsibility of the strongest member of the team to carry the others. Therefore, instructors' role is always important in the classroom. Many years of research and numerous studies cannot be denied. *Kagan (1994) states that Cooperative learning is an effective method for understanding and retaining information. Also, Cooperative learning is not a replacement for the*

classroom teacher. It is intended to complement the direct instruction by causing students to be confident thinkers and active learners.

Different authors such as Nunan (1992) and Kagan (1994) affirm the importance of implementing cooperative learning in the English classroom, and the benefits they think it provides are the following: Cooperative learning techniques: *Increase student retention, promote student learning and academic achievement, 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, etc* (Kagan, 1994). Therefore, implementing cooperative learning in the English classroom promotes not only students' learning but also different skills that help them to succeed in their teaching learning process of English (Nunan, 1992). What makes a class of students into a cooperative learning group is their ability to work together toward a shared goal, and teachers must provide the students an environment where they can work as a group striving for the same objectives in the classroom. Implementing cooperative learning doesn't mean a teacher must delegate the whole responsibility to the students for completing tasks.

Cooperative Learning can be widely used in different contexts by teachers no matter the English level students have. For instance, cooperative learning groups can be effectively used for the following: *To support questions or student concerns, to summarize and review, providing closure to other activities, to allow a class to discuss, debate, and make decisions, to elicit a wide range of ideas and opinions, to accomplish major tasks.* Throughout cooperative learning, students benefit from a wide variety of ideas, opinions, values, and abilities that help them achieve better results in the learning of a foreign language. Some authors like Kagan (1994) state that it is only under certain conditions that cooperative efforts may be expected to be more productive than competitive and individualistic efforts. Those conditions are: *positive interdependence* in which each group member's efforts are required and indispensable for group success. *Face-to-face interaction* in which students promote each other's success in the class is another condition to accomplish cooperative learning among learners.

Another condition for cooperative learning to be successful is *individual and group accountability*. Students must be kept if possible in small groups. The smaller the size of the group, the greater the individual accountability may be. 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, observing each group and recording the frequency with which each member contributes to the group's work etc. There are some other conditions like: *interpersonal and small group skills*, here social skills must be taught for instance: leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, conflict-management skills. Moreover, *group processing* is also important because through it group members discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships (Carter & Nunan, 2001). Also, describe what member actions are helpful and not helpful, and finally make decisions about what behaviors to continue or change when working together.

Teachers and learners must know that in a cooperative learning classroom, there are different roles to accomplish by the two of them. Authors like *James C. Flowers and John M. Ritz, (1994)* state that a teacher can delegate authority to groups of students. Cooperative learners, therefore, have responsibilities that may be new to them. They also state that *some of the responsibilities each member of a cooperative learning group has are:*

a) Each group member should make constructive contributions to the group's efforts. Group members should encourage their fellow group members to contribute.

b) Group members should keep each other on task, working toward their shared goal.

c) Compromise is required from all cooperative learners.

d) Those in a cooperative learning group should treat each other with care and respect.

e) They should do their best to teach and learn from each other.

f) They should adopt the axioms: "All for one and one for all," and "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

As to the teachers' role, their responsibilities are not left aside in the cooperative classroom. For instance: Among the teacher's commitments include the following:

a) Planning lessons

b) Activities

c) Evaluation

d) Grouping students

e) Physical placement of students

f) Presenting and explaining the task to the students

g) Monitoring group activities and intervening when necessary

h) Helping students with social skills, and evaluating students.

Different researches about cooperative learning advise that teachers use a wide variety of cooperative learning groupings, in addition to individual and competitive learning. It would probably be a mistake to have students work in the same self-selected group for a number of activities. Instead, a teacher should place students in a wide variety of groups of 2, 3, 4, and more students. By grouping together students with different capabilities, it might be possible to significantly improve the performance of under-achievers. It is the teacher responsibility to have students engaged with the development of activities or tasks to be carried out in the classroom.

In order to support this work a brief research was carried out in the second semester in 2009 with students taking Advanced Intensive English I and teachers in charge of this level at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador; Researchers found that 100% of professors think cooperative learning is important. This is according with what the students stand up for. Also, the 70 percent of the students prefer it; nonetheless, there are a 30% of students who do not prefer to use the approach in the classroom. Professors agreed that having students working in group everyday is necessary because of the number of students in each classroom. That is why

they assure that implementing cooperative learning in the classroom becomes in a way easy yet difficult if the class is large. Even though most of the students are eager to work in groups, teachers affirm that monitoring their work gets troublesome due to the number of students in each group. However, professors state that cooperative learning plays an important role when teaching to large groups because they can monitor the students' work in a better way than doing it individually.

According to the professors interviewed, the benefits observed in their students are mainly the increase of the students' participation, and the use of the target language in the different skills. Also, group work promotes positive student attitude toward learning a foreign language. Moreover, it enhances students' social skills and the deeper understanding of the material studied. Nevertheless, 68% of students believe that working in groups holds the bright students back because they wait for low students to finish tasks. So, they state that sometimes working in groups is difficult for them. On the other hand, students agreed that working in groups is an efficient tool carried out to the level they are. Adding to this, professors do not refuse that cooperative learning is a key ingredient in the students' success to learn a foreign language like English. In a nutshell, both teachers and students agree how cooperative learning benefits them in the English classroom throughout different techniques that can be implemented when learning a foreign language.

B. TECHNIQUES OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Several cooperative learning techniques have been developed over the last few decades. These techniques differ considerably from one another, theoretically and operationally. Some of the cooperative learning techniques overlap but are not equivalent in terms of theory, procedures, and goals (Sharan, 2002). A brief description of the main characteristics of, and differences among, the various cooperative learning techniques is presented below. The techniques described below have been used by different professors in the teaching learning process of languages, and they state the importance those techniques have in the English classroom. However, teachers, instructors, or professors must provide a suitable environment to students where they can really benefit from all these techniques. A description of the most used cooperative learning techniques by different language instructors is described below.

JIGSAW

In groups of four, students are assigned a "chunk" of material or a multi-faceted problem. Each member of the group then selects or is assigned a particular aspect of the problem on which to focus. Next, students move into expert groups, again four students, which consist of students who are responsible for mastering the same material. Students may be given the necessary material at this point or may have been responsible for learning it beforehand. In these expert groups, the students ensure that they all understand their portion of the material and also know how they will teach it to their original group of four. Students then regroup into their original foursomes, and each student teaches his or her material to the others. Individual mastery of the entire topic can be evaluated through quizzes. This technique mirrors clearly the characteristics of cooperative learning - structured groupings, clear purpose and instructions, the balance of group interdependence with individual responsibility, and the development of communication skills (*Aronson 2000*).

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

This technique is a "multi-mode" discussion strategy that incorporates wait time and aspects of cooperative learning. Students (and teachers) learn to LISTEN while a question is being posed, THINK (without raising hands) of a response, PAIR with a neighbor, discuss their responses, and SHARE their responses with the whole class. Time limits and transition cues help discussions move smoothly. Students are able to rehearse responses mentally and verbally, and all students have an opportunity to talk. Both students and teachers have opportunity to think. (*Lyman, 1981*).

T.A.P.P.S. (Talking Aloud Pair Problem-Solving)

This technique requires a pair. One student responds to the problem by continually talking and verbalizing each step. The other student (listener) does not offer help and speaks only to remind the problem-solver to continue verbalizing or to ask a question if a step is not fully explained. The listener does not offer help in solving nor does he/she indicate agreement or disagreement with an answer. The listener reports what the problem-solver stated. (*Lochhead and Whimbey, 1987*).

CHECKMATES

In this technique, teams compare homework answers or class worksheet answers. They should discuss answers, which differ and come to agreement on the best answers and change them. Each pair submits one paper with both names. (*Lundgren, 1994*).

THREE STEP INTERVIEW

This technique is similar to Think-Pair-Share-Square, but more structured. Students form pairs. Using interview/listening techniques that have been modeled, one student interviews another about an announced topic. When time is up, students switch roles as interviewer and interviewee. Pairs then join to form groups of four. Students take turns introducing their pair partners and sharing what the pair partner had to say. The three step interview is used as a team builder, and also for opinion questions, predicting, evaluation, sharing book reports, etc. (*Kagan, 1994*).

ROUNDTABLE

This technique is used for brainstorming, reviewing or practicing while also serving as a team-builder. Roundtable consists of two forms, sequential and simultaneous. Sequential form: Students sit in teams of three or more, with one piece of paper and a pencil. The teacher asks a question which has multiple answers. Students take turns writing one answer on the paper, then passing the paper and pencil clockwise to the next person. When time is called, teams with the most correct answers are recognized. Teams reflect on strategies and consider ways they could improve. Simultaneous form: Each student starts a piece of paper, writes one answer and passes it, so several papers are moving at once. (*Kagan, 1994*).

CIRCLE OF KNOWLEDGE

This technique is like a roundtable. It is useful for brainstorming, reviewing or practicing while also serving as a team-builder. Students sit in teams with one recorder. The teachers ask a single question with multiple answers. Students take turns giving answers, which the recorder writes down. When time is called, teams take turns reporting answers, which the teacher records. Teams may challenge other teams. The team that does not run out of answers wins. (*Dunn and Dunn, 1993*).

NUMBERED HEADS TOGETHER

This technique is useful for quickly reviewing objective material in a fun way. Students in each team are numbered (each team might have 4 students, numbered 1-4). Students coach each other on the material to be mastered. Teachers pose a question and call a number. Only students with that number are allowed to answer and earn points for their team. This builds both individual accountability and positive interdependence. The activity may be done with only one student in the class responding (sequential form) or with all the number 3's for instance, responding by hand signals (simultaneous form). (*Kagan, 1994*).

PAIRS CHECK

This technique is a way to structure pair work on mastery oriented worksheets. Students work in teams of four with two sets of partners. The worksheet is set up with problems presented in pairs. The first person in each partnership does the first problem with the pair partner serving as coach, and offering exaggerated praise. After the first problem is done, partners change roles. After each pair of problems, teams of four checks each work and, if they agree, give a team cheer or handshake. In this way students stay on task, working together towards mastery. (*Kagan, 1994*).

SEND A PROBLEM

This technique permits each student on a team to write a review problem on a flash card (index card). Teams reach consensus on answers and write them on the backs of the card. Each group's stack of questions is passed to another group, which attempts to answer them and see if they agree with the sending group. If not, they write their own answer as an alternative. Stacks of cards can be sent to a third and fourth group. Stacks of cards are finally returned to senders, who may discuss the alternative answers. (*Kagan, 1994*).

STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions)

This technique lets teachers present material in the same way they always have, and quizzes are used to assess individual performance. STAD is used to replace drill and practice on objective material with team tutoring and encouragement. During team practice time, students work on exercises and worksheets that help them to prepare for

the quiz. Students earn team points based on how well they scored on the quiz compared to past performance. (*Slavin, 1995*).

TGT (Teams-Games-Tournaments)

This technique has team practice like STAD. Unlike STAD, in TGT quizzes are replaced by tournaments. Students compete at tournament tables against students from other teams who are equal to them in terms of past performance. Students earn team points based on how well they do at their tournament tables. The competition is kept fair by a bumping system (*DeVries & Slavin1978*).

JIGSAW II

Unlike STAD and TGT, have students responsible for teaching each other the material. A unit of work, often a reading, is divided into 4 expert areas, and each student is assigned one area. Experts from different teams meet together at tables and discuss their expert areas. Students then return to their teams and take turns teaching. A quiz is given. *Jigsawing materials* refers to any strategy in which each student on a team receives only a piece of the material that is to be learned, so that students must rely on other members of their team to learn all of the material. (*Slavin, 1995*).

BRAINSTORM BUILDING

Use this strategy to generate a large number of alternative ideas for discussion. Each pair makes a list of ideas on the topic. They are instructed not to evaluate any ideas. Encourage them to build on each other's ideas, go on sidetracks and into "weird and silly places." All ideas are acceptable for inclusion. Each pair joins another pair to build an even larger list. The same rules apply. Evaluation begins when no one has further ideas or the time is up. (*Lundgren,1994*).

Many studies have been undertaken to measure the success of cooperative learning as an instructional method regarding social skills, student learning, and achievement across all levels of study. The general consensus is that cooperative learning can and usually does result in positive student outcomes in all domains (*Johnson & Johnson, 1999*). For decades cooperative learning has been implemented in classrooms with diverse populations primarily as a means of fostering positive student interactions. By means of cooperative learning, students encourage and support each

other, assume responsibility for their own and each other's learning, employ group related social skills, and evaluate the group's progress. The basic elements are positive interdependence, equal opportunities, and individual accountability (Kagan, 1994). Human beings are social creatures by nature and cooperation has been used throughout history in all aspects of humans' lives. Therefore, researchers state that cooperative learning strengthens students' success when learning a language. In this matter, professors of the Foreign Language Department said that they applied some of the techniques previously mentioned in their classes and the outcomes are totally different if their students were working individually.

C. DRAWBACKS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

On the other hand, there are some drawbacks that have to be taken into account when talking about cooperative learning. Instructors who are unfamiliar with cooperative learning may not initially accept this style of learning because they may feel they will lose control of their classroom, or they may be unsure of the techniques used or possibly even think that it is too time consuming. In this next section, we will discuss some of the possible drawbacks to cooperative learning.

LOSS OF CONTROL

Cooperative learning is a structured approach that requires instructor support and guidance. In order for cooperative learning to be utilized in the classroom, instructors must receive training to be proficient in implementing the techniques. Maximum learning will only emerge if proper training is received by the instructor and then transferred to the student. Instructors may resist using cooperative learning techniques in their classroom because they are afraid they may lose control of their teaching routine. Cooperative learning takes time to implement; therefore, initial lessons may take longer. Once students and the instructor are comfortable with the process, then the amount of time for each lesson decreases. Instructors may have a difficult time giving up their control of the content that is being covered (*Panitz, 1996*).

GROUP WORK

Depending on the age level, students may resist using cooperative learning in their classrooms. Lecture does not require much interaction and participation from the

students; therefore, they can get as much or as little from the class as they like. Being required to work in a group may ruffle a few feathers with the students because now they are being asked to participate and contribute to their learning. In addition, they are also asked to learn new concepts and taught how to work in a group (*Dunn & Dunn, 1993*). They may not be accustomed to working in a group, and therefore, may be unsure of the dynamics involved in group work. Since cooperative learning is centered on group work, students may be concerned that other members of their group are going to bring their grades down. This is especially true if students are grouped by mixed ability, requiring higher ability students to guide lower ability students.

Deciding how groups should be formed is an important part of the cooperative learning planning process. There has been some debate as to how groups should be formed in order for students to effectively work together and reach their maximum potential. Mixed ability grouping allows for all group members to be involved, though the type of involvement differs. Advanced students can teach struggling students, but concerns arise about advanced students doing all the work and struggling students not being motivated to be involved at all. There are also concerns that gifted students are held back by the lower ability students in their group. If students are grouped with others of the same ability level, then the lower ability group may feel frustrated and unmotivated to try. This is also true of those who are grouped by gender or race because it may support stereotypes that certain subject areas are dominated by certain groups.

There are also varying opinions about the optimal number of people for small group formation. The consensus seems to agree that no more than 4 people in a group produces higher achievement (*Slavin, 1987*). Fixed seating and large class sizes may make group arrangement difficult though. Still, even if the room is easily arranged into small groups, instructors may have a difficult time accessing all of the numerous small groups. Most students are not accustomed to group work, especially in high school classrooms. Students will have to be taught to work effectively in a group setting. Resolving group conflict can be a major challenge for instructors. Groups will need to make sure that every member listens to and appreciates each group member's contribution. Identifying responsibilities within the group and encouraging each to do their best work needs to be addressed before group work begins. Also, students that work better alone may struggle to succeed in a group atmosphere. Since the classroom

will be made up of several small groups, the noise level will escalate. This can be very uncomfortable for some instructors, especially if they are accustomed to a lecture and seatwork classroom. This can also cause problems for those students who have attention difficulties.

Cooperative learning is based on social interaction; thus, grouping students together to work independently even for a short period of time may encourage behavior that is off task. While the instructor is circling the room to observe and interact with the groups, it is difficult to make sure every group is productively working on their assignment. Self-management skills will have to be introduced before students break out into groups and be reinforced as they progress through their work.

TIME REQUIREMENTS

With cooperative learning, the textbook is used only as an instructional supplement, so it is necessary for instructors to create additional materials for the students. Usually these materials are made from scratch because many instructors' manuals offer limited suggestions for group activities. Creating these new materials can be very time consuming. So, not only are instructors spending a large amount of time implementing this new way of learning, but they also have to create the materials to go along with it. Since students have to generate an answer or information within their group, work time may take longer than the traditional lecture. Because of this additional time, instructors may be unable to cover the same amount of curriculum as before when they used teacher directed class discussions (*Kagan, 1994*). Many times, in a traditional classroom, the quality of the work is compromised in order to teach the entire curriculum.

As conclusion, Cooperative learning provides a sense of belonging, the opportunity to explain and summarize what is being learned, social models, respect and approval for efforts to achieve, encouragement of divergent thinking, and interpersonal feedback on academic learning. Learning in cooperative groups using cooperative techniques can occur in all levels and subject areas. So, when students work with designed tasks that require cooperation, they will make learning successful. However, teachers must help students to create and maintain a positive class atmosphere by supporting the groups. Research indicates there are academic, social, and even

psychological benefits of using cooperative learning in the classroom. Cooperative learning is effective even with “difficult students” because through it, students meet many of their basic needs like social interaction, the need for attention, the need to belong and the like. For instance, some researches report discipline problems are reduced with cooperative classes. (*Kagan, 1994*).

Cooperative learning is considered as a method where teachers place students in small teams with students of different learning levels. The object is for the higher-level students to help lower-level students improve their understanding of concepts being taught. In essence, each member is responsible for learning, as well as helping teammates learn, too. Students are to keep practicing concepts until the entire team understands and completes the assignment given. However, as it has been said before the instructors must monitor behavior, intervene when needed; assist students in the whole process, evaluate students’ progress and the like. Cooperative learning provides a great deal of benefits in the class, but teachers must make sure students accomplish all those benefits improving their learning because this is not a matter of taking for granted that cooperative learning will guide students by itself; teachers’ will and engagement will always be required to get students’ success when learning a language.

METHODOLOGY

This research project was designed in order to find out cooperative techniques which contribute to the teaching learning process of the students of English as a foreign language. This research was looking for some ways to foster cooperative learning in the English as Foreign Language to benefit students learning. The reason that makes the researchers select this topic relies in the widespread and valid researches that have been made through out the years on cooperative learning. As teachers, we will be always looking for those strategies that best benefit students learning and today a little more than in the past the use of cooperative learning strategies is giving great benefits to students and teachers. To those small and even large groups, students of different levels of ability, in all cooperative learning techniques use a variety of learning activities that have an important impact on the opportunities for success for every student.

The methodology applied to run this research was based on the literature review stages previously revised. The first literature review stage was the selection of a topic which was not an easy task due to the number of different possibilities to focus the research on. Also, the task was especially difficult because of the lack of knowledge in the content area. So the first step was to select, among several, one topic, that besides being developed, could help students and also professors of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador by means of showing the importance of using the cooperative learning techniques in the classrooms. Several meetings with the advisor were set to discuss what the topic would be; that at the end was attained. The second step was looking for the bibliography to read and the websites to sustain the research. This was the second thing done to be able to execute the research. This was done to set the literature in order to lead or conduct the research.

Developing the argument became necessary to find a position in which the research would be oriented. It was essential to analyze the assignment task carefully to determine exactly what was being asked. After finding the position, the literature survey arose. This was the documentation of a comprehensive review of the published and unpublished work from data in the areas of specific interest to the group of research. Here the library and internet were rich storage basis data and researchers spent several weeks going through books, journals, and websites to find information on the research topic. After the literature survey, the literature review steps required the critique of the

literature which was more than a simple summary. The discrimination of the literature to use and the one that did not support the research were processes that demanded attention because a critique analyzes, interprets, and evaluates the text. Nevertheless almost all the stages were complete, to write a review of the literature analyzed turned out to be another important stage to take into account. So, bibliographical files were designed to order the resources to use during the research.

Added to the previous stages mentioned, with the objective of gathering students' and teachers' opinions about the use of cooperative learning in the English classrooms and enriching the bibliographical research, a data collection was carried out during the second term of the year 2009 at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The subjects of study selected belonged to the third year of their major, specifically the students taking Advanced Intensive English I, and the teachers in charge of that course were interviewed by the researchers. In the first time, the researchers asked for permission to carry out the study with students and teachers. Then, when the permission was given the investigators ran a survey to students. The researchers passed a questionnaire to the 30 percent of students in the different groups of Advanced Intensive English I. It is important to mention that all the subjects being studied were selected at random in which the students were distributed among researchers with the objective to cover the entire sample.

Besides applying questionnaires, it was necessary to interview the teachers in charge of the subject in order to know their opinions to find the role of cooperative learning in English as a Foreign Language in the English teaching of the intensive courses. This was done to contrast students' and professors' opinions with the information found in written sources. The researchers started the data collection with students to whom they passed a questionnaire. At the end, it was possible to collect the data, despite some difficulties like time, and lack of teachers' availability at the time of interviewing them and also lack of students' cooperation. The researchers invested 20 days to gather the whole information from students and teachers. As soon as the data were completed, data analysis was carried out by the researchers. To do this, it was necessary to number each questionnaire and the interview sheet for teachers. The 30% of students in the Advanced Intensive English I answered the questionnaire, and 4 teachers in charge of the course were interviewed by the researchers. When each instrument was ordered with numbers, the researchers started to save the data in a

computer program with the aim of obtaining frequencies and real percentages to do the written data analysis.

After having all the information gathered, the writing process began. It was necessary to brainstorm in order to arrange the ideas to edit the research profile that led to the first draft that later was checked out by the advisor. The role of the advisor was fundamental to arrive to the first draft which had some misstatements that needed corrections. Later on, the second draft was handed in containing the corrections and suggestions made in the first draft. At the end three drafts were presented. Also, the coordinator of the graduation process collaborated by orienting the group. The prompt advisor's and coordinator's assistance led to the final work which at the end achieved the expectancies and requirements.

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APPENDICES

INTERVIEW

RESULTS

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW

Licda. Claudia Vides de Guzmán

1-Do you implement cooperative learning in your classes of Advanced Intensive English? If so, can you mention some specific skills students have improved by means of cooperative learning?

Yes, most of the time I do it... Why? Well first of all because of the large groups that we have, a good way of taking advantage of that let's say strategy is maximize the time they speak the second language... so, yes... that is how most of the time I work specially nowadays.

2-Do you think it is difficult to implement cooperative learning in the English classroom as a foreign language?

It depends! It depends on the students attitude... it depends...also how well you give instructions in a way the students get use to work in groups. Why is it hard? Well I have had some problems in which there were some students that had different abilities, different abilities like first those students that have higher level of proficiency in the language and those who... that are probably at the level that they should be and so the students, the difference between performances in the language make them feel embarrassed, shy. So they did not participate in the groups that they have being assigned. So I have had problems like that. An advantage could be that there are some students that since the very beginning they have more time to talk in the foreign language, and I guess they can learn from each other. I guess in most of the time they can learn from each other. But some times it can be used in a negative way but it depends.

3-If you were asked to mention some specific benefits students got in your classes throughout cooperative learning, what would they be?

As I was telling you they participate more... they talk more in the in the language... using the language... they get use to the dynamic of sharing, or explaining.. and that is the way they are going to... or those are things they are going to take when they start in there own jobs as teachers because they are supposed to be studying for being teachers.. so in every school you work at.. or the institution you have to have the ability or the

patience or...skill... I don't know how to call it... to work with others and to share with others, sometimes to teach and sometimes to receive information. So I guess is one of the best techniques we can implement in the classroom.

4-According to your experience, do students get more motivated when you make them work individually or in groups?

I guess in groups... but I guess teachers we have to look for.. what?... that activities which engage students in conversation and that would be good use of the language because if not the activities can become basic activities, timid activities... so you have to have a plan activities... everything must be well organize.

5-What kind of cooperative teaching techniques (group, peer work etc.) you use in your classes in the intensive courses? Can you mention some of them?

I Assigning roles, when each student get a role and he knows what to do between the groups...I think they work better because they know what they are supposed to do.

6-How often do you assign group work in classes?

Everyday... I need to... and one of the reasons is because of the large groups that we have... I wouldn't say that is the only way but having individual work in these cases, it doesn't work specially because of the large groups...

7-From your own experience in the classroom when groups are large, do you think cooperative learning can become a key ingredient in students' success to learn English?

Yes, definitely... it is a key

8. Do you think implementing cooperative learning makes students veer off tasks?

Yeah! that was what I was telling you that some students think that group work is a time to fool around and to talk about everything except that what they are supposed to be talking... and if you are not monitoring the groups, the activities can get miscarried.

9. Do you think teacher's willingness can be an important factor to succeed when using cooperative learning?

Yeah! First at all you need to let students know the importance of group work and sharing between the members and the teacher also must be enthusiastic. But you have to choose the right activities or the right tasks for each of the group works activities that we have include and you have to have great hopes because the aim is to get students to talk as much as they can.

10. Do you think using cooperative learning enhances students' engagement towards English learning?

Yes, definitely if we correct tem with right tasks, the appropriate tasks, they will reach the proficiency language they need.

11. According to your experiences, do you think cooperative learning is a valuable teaching strategy to make students attain a target language?

Yes.....

12. According to your experience, what are some disadvantages you can mention about using cooperative learning?

I have already mentioned some... but I will mention again because of the question... what was telling that if you have students with different abilities... the ones that have disadvantages over the ones who know more than they do, they feel shy, feel embarrassed of making mistakes and then the others that have advantage, they will feel that they learn no more,, that can be a disadvantage. and also can be an advantage because the ones who know less can learn from the ones who know more.. that's why I will say that 70% of the responsibility lies on the students attitude and teachers' role is just to monitor, organize.. Etc... Another disadvantage can be that students might use that time to do other things. That is a disadvantage I have seen when working with cooperative learning or group work, that's why teaches must be monitoring all the time... even when you are telling English English... one of the things I do is to leave one of the students of the group monitoring the rest of the group and not allow them to speak in Spanish. But that depends on how seriously students take their role. If not it does not work.

Licda. Carolina Ramos

1-Do you implement cooperative learning in your classes of Advanced Intensive English? If so, can you mention some specific skills students have improved by means of cooperative learning?

Yes, definitely... all the time is necessary to implement it...

2-Do you think it is difficult to implement cooperative learning in the English classroom as a foreign language?

No, it's not difficult... students are willing to do that... well most of them not all of them...

3-If you were asked to mention some specific benefits students got in your classes throughout cooperative learning, what would they be?

Remember that in the courses we focus in the four macro skills, right... and mainly what I try do is to focus on the oral ability for them to improve in that specific area.

Well, some benefits are that the ones that already know things learn ones again... and the ones who don't know learn too...

4-According to your experience, do students get more motivated when you make them work individually or in groups?

I can say that they prefer to work in groups....

5-What kind of cooperative teaching techniques (group, peer work etc.) you use in your classes in the intensive courses? Can you mention some of them?

I work with trios, work of four or five people depending on the activity or the necessity I have that's the number I consider...

6-How often do you assign group work in classes?

Every day...

7-From your own experience in the classroom when groups are large, do you think cooperative learning can become a key ingredient in students' success to learn English?

I have seen as huge difference when working with... individual work and group work...

8. Do you think implementing cooperative learning makes students veer off tasks?

The thing is that we as teachers, we have to monitor... all the time... it is not just to say do this and this and them leave the classroom...

9. Do you think teacher's willingness can be an important factor to succeed when using cooperative learning?

Yes, it depends on the energy you project... on how the students react.

10. Do you think using cooperative learning enhances students' engagement towards English learning?

In my case in my personal case... I have seen that some students like working in groups and some other that don't because they are tired or they work and they have to continue classes in here, but not because they don't like it.

11. According to your experiences, do you think cooperative learning is a valuable teaching strategy to make students attain a target language?

I'm going to tell you about one of the experiences that I had during this semester. I had two groups in the same classroom, and it happens that at the time of having them to work together they didn't want to mix, and I had to do a big effort to make them work together as a whole group. I could do it but at the very beginning it was difficult.

12. According to your experience, what are some disadvantages you can mention about using cooperative learning?

Sometimes you can have troubles when monitoring because you're paying attention to this group and the other ones are doing something else.

Lic. Grace Gomez

1-Do you implement cooperative learning in your classes of Advanced Intensive English? If so, can you mention some specific skills students have improved by means of cooperative learning?

These are some activities I implement in the classroom specially because we use to have large classes, also because students have different abilities and there are some of them who can learn from their classmates. Teachers must take advantage of that tool because is also a good way of encouraging learning among students.

2-Do you think it is difficult to implement cooperative learning in the English classroom as a foreign language?

No, I don't think so. Because if students are motivated about learning and the teacher organizes everything well... I think is not going be difficult.

3-If you were asked to mention some specific benefits students got in your classes throughout cooperative learning, what would they be?

Well, definitely one of them is that students work in the task that the teacher has assigned them, of course with the help of the teachers guidance. Another one is that students work together into small groups and they have more opportunities to participate to speak in the class. Another advantage is that as everyone knows that two heads are better than one, students have the opportunity to hear their classmates' opinions, they share there abilities and complement there learning.

4-According to your experience, do students get more motivated when you make them work individually or in groups?

It depends on the students because not all students like to work in groups, some of them are very individual students, students that are shy, passive and they don't feel comfortable in groups. There are others that think that what they think is the best and are not willing to share opinions but it depends on the students.

5-What kind of cooperative teaching techniques (group, peer work etc.) you use in your classes in the intensive courses? Can you mention some of them?

I organize students in groups to work in a specific task or specific contents, so especially when we are working in the production. Some other time I make peer work it depends on the different type of task.

6-How often do you assign group work in classes?

I will say that very often especially because we have very large groups and more when you want to work with the production part. You can not make them work individually it is better to have them organized in groups. So I can say I use it very often.

7-From your own experience in the classroom when groups are large, do you think cooperative learning can become a key ingredient in students' success to learn English?

Some groups are more difficult to monitor, and I would say that maybe those basic students. Teachers mostly implement this when they want their students to practice something in the classroom, students are arranged in groups and of course the teacher has to monitor each group. That is one disadvantage because while you're monitoring one group and you identify which group needs to be monitored more than the others. It is supposed that when you are monitoring one group the others must be working, but sometimes when they finish they start taking about other things, when you have teacher assistance (TA) they can be monitoring other groups too.

8. Do you think implementing cooperative learning makes students veer off tasks?

Something students don't do is to follow instructions, some times you put them to work but they start to do something different, but that is why the language that the teacher uses in the classroom must be clear in order to have students working. Teachers must be sure that all of the students understand the task they have to do, and in this way they can also work more dependent from the teacher.

9. Do you think teacher's willingness can be an important factor to succeed when using cooperative learning?

I think so because students pay attention to the teacher's attitude so if the teacher makes students work in groups you need to organize those students in a way that they must be working. There are some students that are not working so you have to assign them specific roles. A way you are going to motivate students is to organize the groups well.

10. Do you think using cooperative learning enhances students' engagement towards English learning?

I think so because they have more opportunities because into the groups they feel more comfortable to participate than when they are in front of all the classroom, there they have the chance to ask their partners, so I think yes.

11. according to your experiences, do you think cooperative learning is a valuable teaching strategy to make students attain a target language?

Yes, it is very useful.

12. according to your experience, what are some disadvantages you can mention about using cooperative learning?

One of them is that there are very individual people, and there are some of them that tell you "teacher I don't want to work in group". When you make them work in groups, some students even into the groups they don't participate because of their skills or just because they want to talk about other things.

M.A. Mauricio Contreras

1-Do you implement cooperative learning in your classes of Advanced Intensive English? If so, can you mention some specific skills students have improved by means of cooperative learning?

I think most of the intensive courses apply cooperative learning in the classes. In advanced I, we apply different techniques of cooperative learning like working in groups, pair work activities, activities that maybe don't have a name exactly with cooperative learning but students help each other. In reality techniques, pair techniques

of cooperative learning are not really taught by names in the Intensive courses. Since I know a little bit about cooperative learning; I know the names of some of them like “jigsaw”. I tried to modify jigsaw, it’s not exactly the jigsaw that cooperative learning talks about, but for example if we work in groups I have students work with different roles sometimes. I studied this like twenty years ago; I know that I can modify some things but in a way when students are working in groups I have them take roles. For example, one can be the secretary, another the spoken person, or the narrator, an encourager too because if one person is not talking, the encourager can ask her/him to talk. You can assign as many roles as you wish to the members of the group. Pair work activities are carried out almost every day by me in the class because I consider that’s a way of having the students correct themselves. Also, they can have the opportunity to come to the front, express ideas because I have students that really if they memorize something that is good for mechanization and internalization practices, but for communication I think is better when they do the practices spontaneously. Students improve all the micro skills throughout cooperative learning.

2-Do you think it is difficult to implement cooperative learning in the English classroom as a foreign language?

When you have large groups, it is easier to implement cooperative learning; the only thing that is difficult is to monitor the whole group because suppose you have forty students so you can have 5 groups of eight each and it’s difficult to monitor all of them.

3-If you were asked to mention some specific benefits students got in your classes throughout cooperative learning, what would they be?

Students encourage, correct, monitor themselves, they take different roles in the class.

4-According to your experience, do students get more motivated when you make them work individually or in groups?

It depends on the students’ language style I think. When I was a student I preferred to work individually but now that I am a teacher I realize that it’s better for them to work in groups because they can work together, they can do some peer correction which is very important.

5-What kind of cooperative teaching techniques (group, peer work etc.) you use in your classes in the intensive courses? Can you mention some of them?

As I told you group works with different roles each, pair work.

6-How often do you assign group work in classes?

I usually have students work in groups every day.

7-From your own experience in the classroom when groups are large, do you think cooperative learning can become a key ingredient in students' success to learn English?

I guess so because as I told you before, they have the opportunity to work in groups, they can work in pairs, they can express their ideas. I think a large class wouldn't be a difficult problem to implement cooperative learning.

8. Do you think implementing cooperative learning makes students veer off tasks?

That might be a drawback because almost always when we make groups if the groups are too big there are some students who don't work or if they are talking too much they don't follow instruction well because they distract.

9. Do you think teacher's willingness can be an important factor to succeed when using cooperative learning?

I think so because sometimes teachers don't like to work in groups, make pairs but if you see an enthusiastic teacher you will see a different class with a lot of talking, a lot of writing and speaking.

10. Do you think using cooperative learning enhances students' engagement towards English learning?

Yes, I think that really helps. I think we shouldn't stop using some extras like the direct method. I think in many ways they help a lot.

11. According to your experiences, do you think cooperative learning is a valuable teaching strategy to make students attain a target language?

Definitely, it is a valuable teaching technique.

12. According to your experience, what are some disadvantages you can mention about using cooperative learning?

Yes, for instance there are always students who don't like to participate; they don't like to work together in the class, so in that way you feel like if it is not very good to use that. I was telling one of my colleagues that my Teacher Assistant was developing an activity that was really good. It has to do with cooperative learning too, and everybody was working in a big circle, everybody was talking so they were doing a nice job, but there was a student sitting next to me and when the activity finished he told me "teacher ten minutes wasted", and I told him "excuse me". I would say ten minutes of a lot of activities, and he told me I don't like it.

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey

Objective:

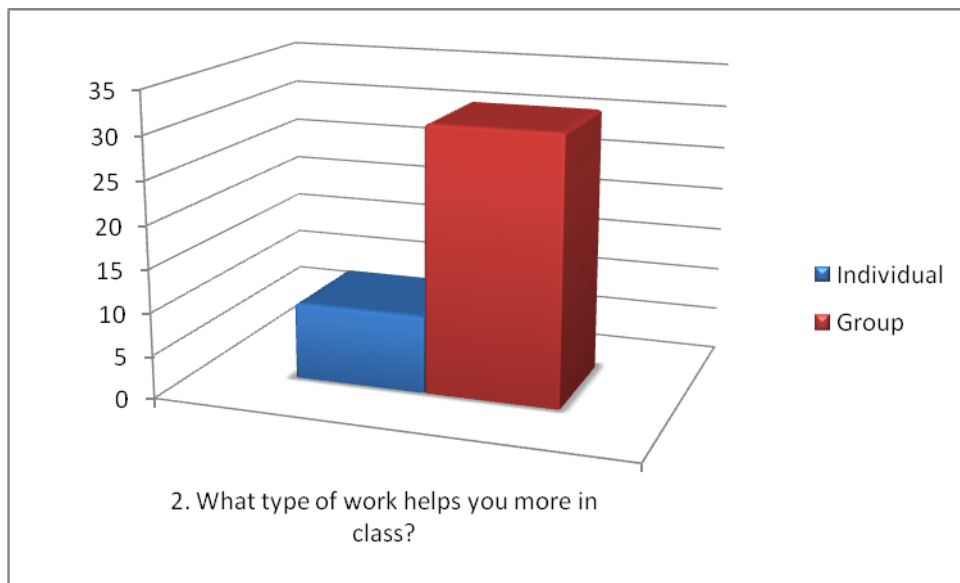
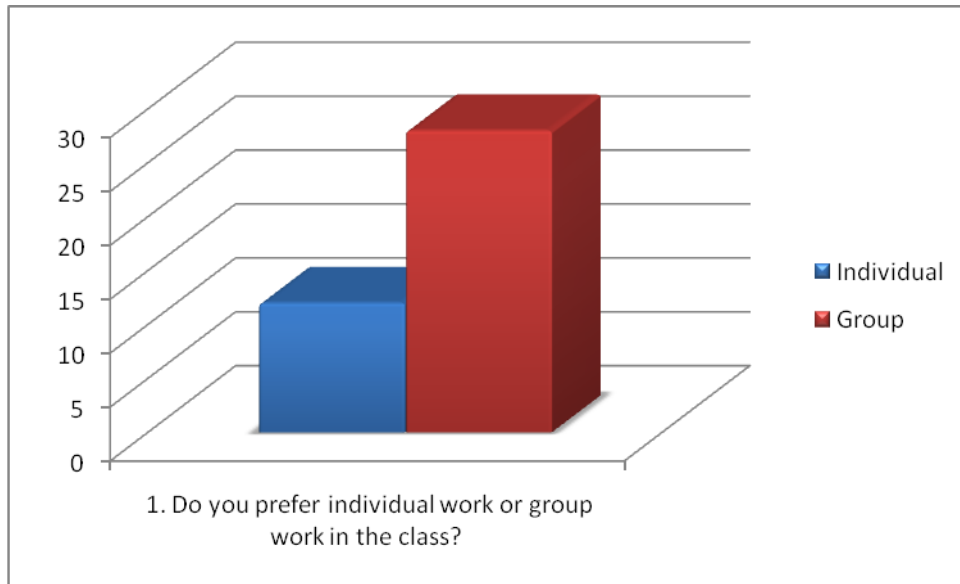
This survey has been designed to determine if the Cooperative Learning (group work) is whether or not implemented in the Advanced Intensive English I classrooms of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador in the semester 02-09.

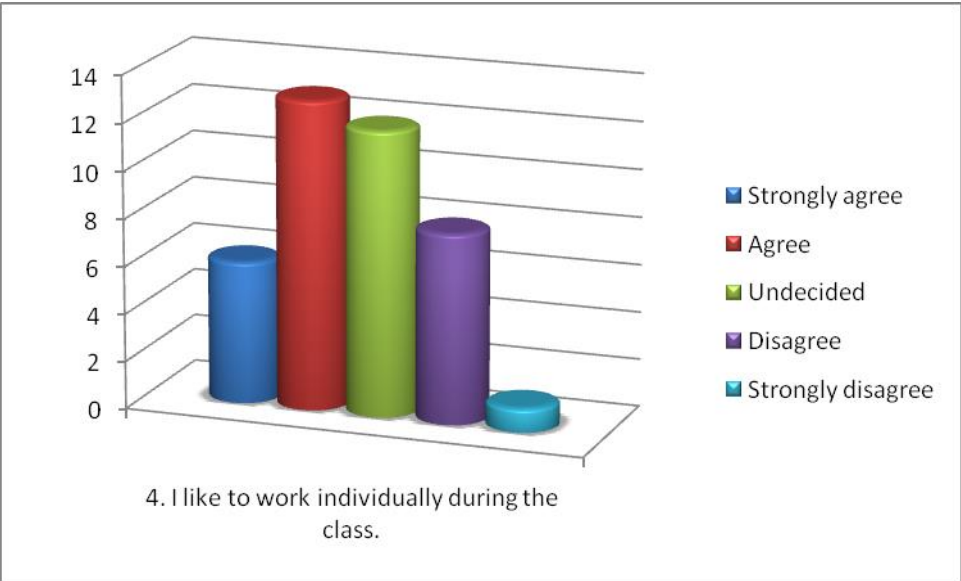
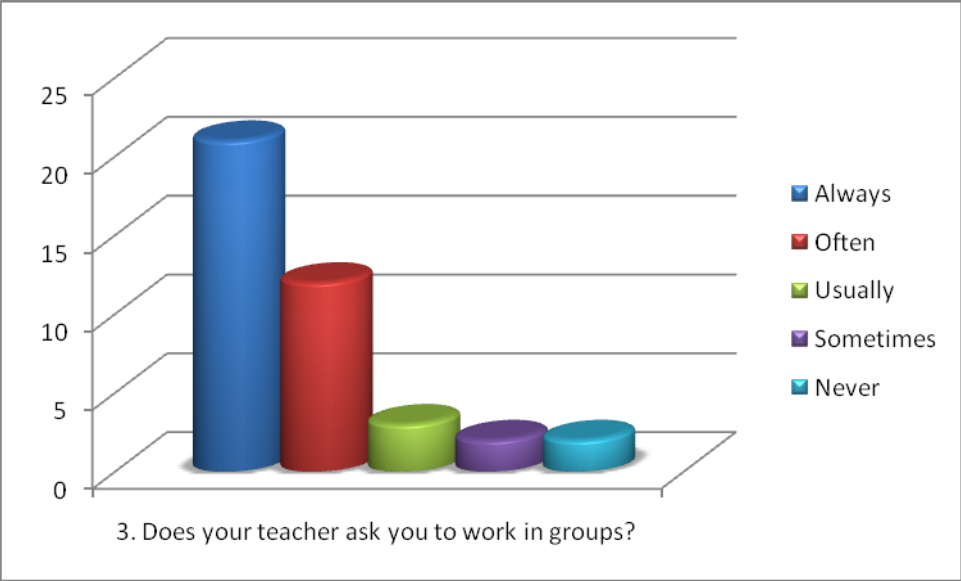
Directions

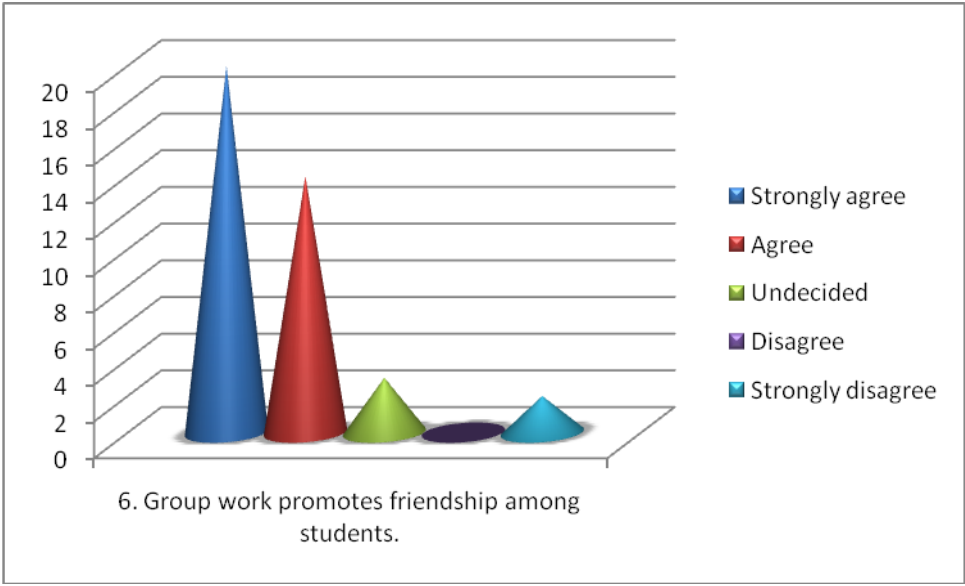
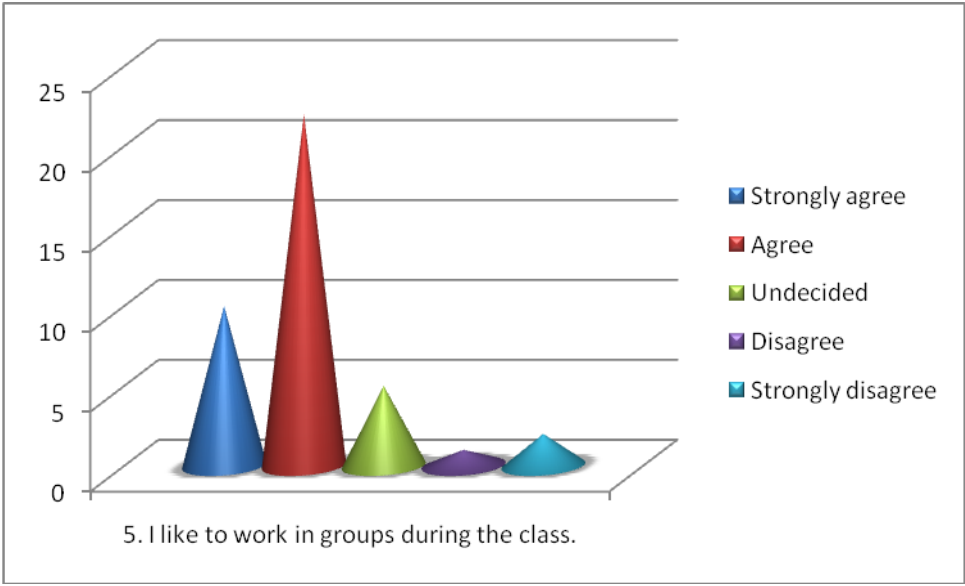
Please circle the appropriate response on the answer sheet according to the response alternatives given under each item.

1. Do you prefer individual work or group work in the class?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Group
2. What type of work helps you more in class?
 - a. Individual
 - b. Group
3. Does your teacher ask you to work in groups?
 - a. Always
 - b. Often
 - c. Usually
 - d. Sometimes
 - e. Never
4. I like to work individually during the class.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
5. I like to work in groups during the class.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
6. Group work promotes friendship among students.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
7. Group work enhances students' social skills.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
8. Using group work promotes positive student attitudes towards learning.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
9. Working in groups is difficult.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

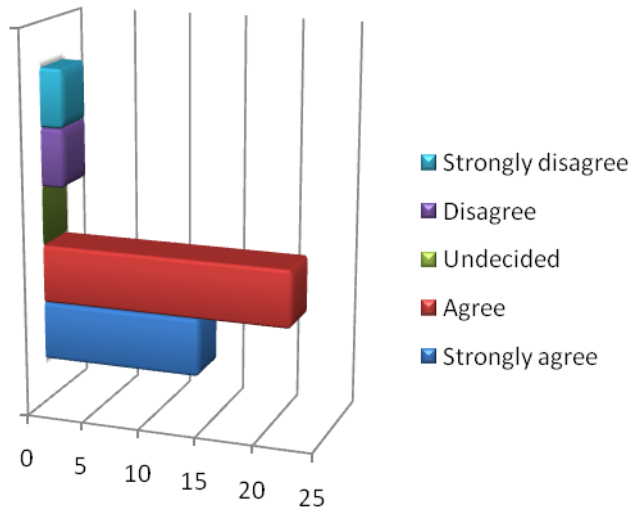
- 10.** Working in groups helps me to obtain a deeper understanding of the material.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 11.** Group work holds bright students back.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 12.** Group work is appropriate for the level I am.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 13.** Group work enhances the learning of low-ability students.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 14.** Group work is an efficient classroom strategy.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 15.** Group work makes students lose attention of the class task.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Undecided
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree



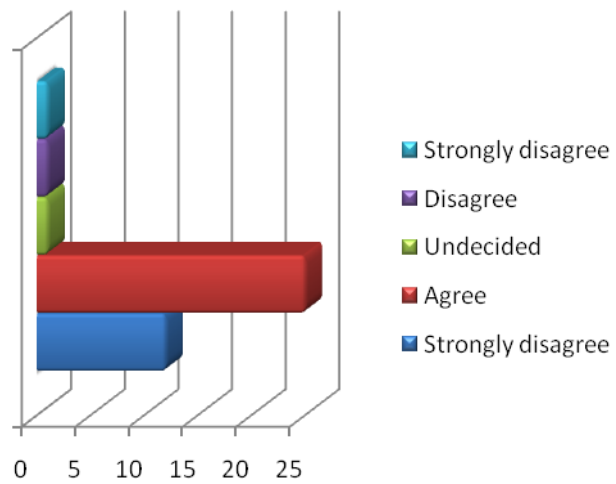


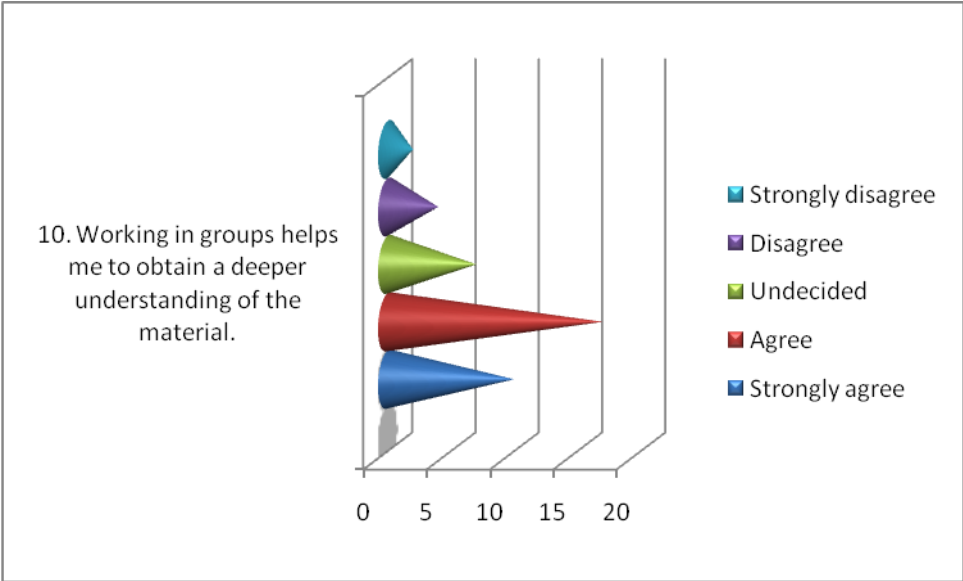
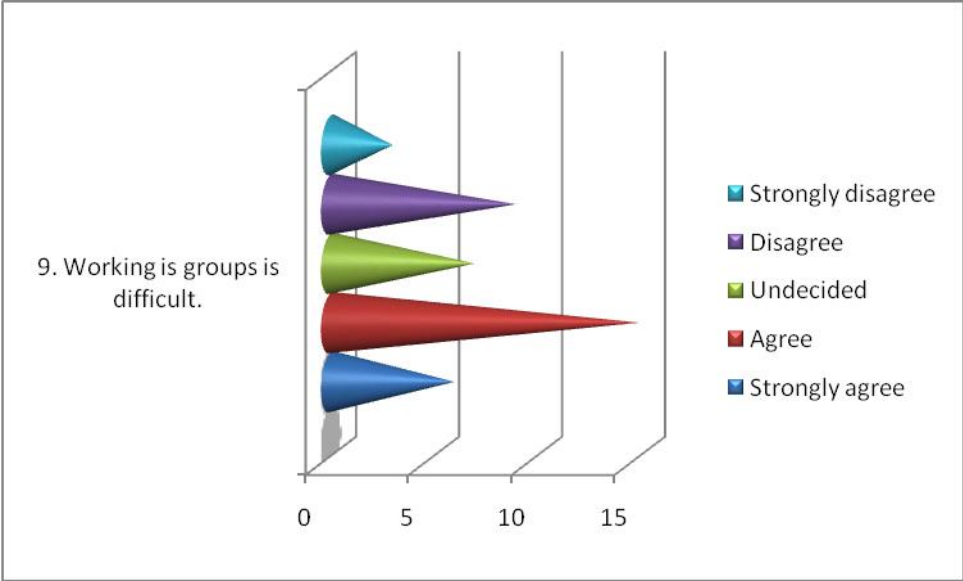


7. Group work enhances students' social skills.

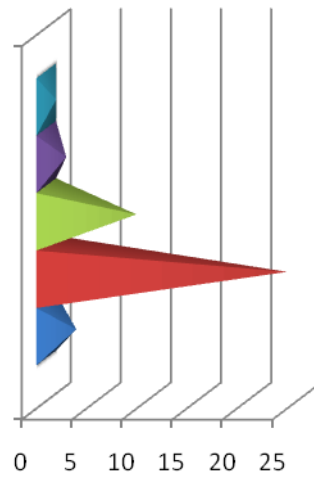


8. Using group work promotes positive student attitudes toward learning.



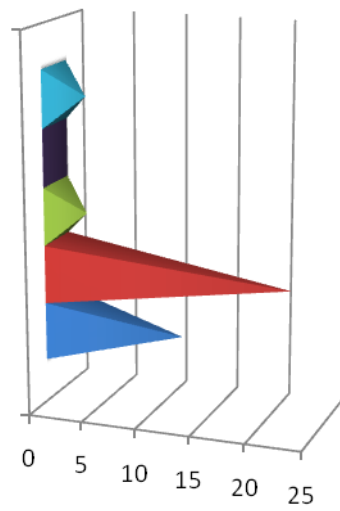


11. Group work holds bright students back.



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly agree

12. Group work is appropriate for the level I am



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Undecided
- Agree
- Strongly agree

