

USING COOPERATIVE LEARNING TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AND ACHIEVEMENT IN STUDENTS

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Abstract:

Cooperative learning is a cognitive, socio-constructivist methodology that promotes the development of academic and social competences in students provided it is properly implemented and assessed. This article aims at showing how the continuous exposure to cooperative tasks has a favorable impact on students' achievement as they have "to discuss, argue, present and hear one another's viewpoints" (Slavin, 1995). Additionally, it has an effect on their motivation as "cooperative incentive structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their personal goals is if the group is successful" (Slavin, 1995). This research refers to the experiences, pedagogical decisions and outcomes of a twelve-hour intervention in a private school in Santiago, where CL was implemented in a ninth grade, in a unit of work. Even though, the experience was positive, there were problems such as excessive students' socializing in the groups, time management problems, class organization issues and furthermore, the request of the subject teacher to redirect the intervention. The results were the need of training students into team skills before implementing CL, adapting the roles suggested in literature to an EFL context, shortening tasks and using the Think-Pair-Share technique to introduce role interdependence and individual accountability to students.

Keywords: cooperative learning, teacher's practice, accountability, interaction, training teamwork

Introduction:

The term cooperative learning has been used recently to refer to an educational teaching methodology which is characterized by students working together to accomplish shared goals as stated in Johnson; Johnson; Holubec. (1994). Additionally, Apple (2006) sheds light into this issue and states that this methodology has been used in classrooms and has been researched for more than thirty years. Slavin (1995) expresses that even though there was some research on this topic at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a boost in the amount and quality of the research in the early 1970s that continues until now. As a matter of fact, the success of the educational methodology was demonstrated by Slavin (1995) in his book titled "Cooperative learning: theory, research and practice" through 90 experimental studies in which "cooperative learning succeeds to fulfill convergent tasks" as stated in Apple, M. (2006). There have also been numerous studies on the effects of cooperative learning on students' achievement "in every major subject, at all grade levels, in all types of schools, in many countries" (Slavin, 1995, p.1).

Cooperative learning is a methodology of a cognitive (Piaget, 1926; Vygotsky, 1978) constructivist (O'Donnel & O'Kelly, 1994; O'Donnel, 2000) and socio-cognitive (Bandura, 1977) nature in Dat-Tran (2013, pp. 106-108) that uses a variety of techniques in the classroom to increase academic and behavioral skills in learners. It consists of five main components as stated in Johnson et al. (1994) i.e.,

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positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills; and, group processing. There are no “free riders” in this methodology as each member is accountable for the group’s success and for his own. Research has evidenced gains in achievement through cooperative work according to Gillies (2006); Webb & Farivar, (1999); as the level of discourse becomes more sophisticated, students interrupt less when others are speaking; and, provide more intellectually valuable contributions (p.2). Additionally, Barnes, (1969) and Mercer, (1996) have stated that this method also promotes cognitive growth in students, “as they share experiences, realities and feelings”(p.2). Moreover, students by working and supporting each other’s learning to accomplish a task, also improve their social skills. Notwithstanding the benefits of cooperative learning, this approach has been challenged due to the teacher’s need of fulfilling preliminary conditions for implementing, enforcing and assessing this methodology to achieve instructional effectiveness as referred to in Johnson, et al. (1984, p. 78).

In this learning institution in particular, students are exposed to a variety of authentic input and sources; nevertheless, not much oral interaction is promoted and the teacher controls the class most of the time. Students are encouraged to construct meaning only through guided reading comprehension exercises and weaker students are not likely to openly participate or take risks; normally, they are disengaged and, remain unable to fulfill the required tasks. A survey revealed that most of them enjoy speaking and listening activities, working in teams and playing games. They consider that they learn better by interacting, doing charts, solving problems, participating in contests, among others. Therefore, my challenge will be to improve students’ achievement and motivation through cooperative learning which will require students to work in groups and be committed to each other’s learning processes by interacting and supporting one another to achieve a learning goal. It will also help them improve behavioral needs that are less developed such as autonomy, self control and empathy for their classmates.

This article aims at showing how the continuous exposure to cooperative tasks can have a favorable impact on students’ achievement as they will have “to discuss, argue, present and hear one another’s viewpoints” (Slavin, 1995, p.5). Additionally, it will also have an effect on their motivation as “cooperative incentive structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their personal goals is if the group is successful”. (Slavin, 1995)

This research includes the lesson plans that were implemented in the intervention, but which vary somehow from the original planning due to problems at the learning institution. Additionally, it refers to the students’ learning outcomes, intervention problems, and suggestions for the implementation of cooperative learning in an EFL context.

There are three appendixes: Appendix N° 1 includes the diagnosis survey graphs, appendix N°2, assessment tools, and appendix 3, the seating chart.

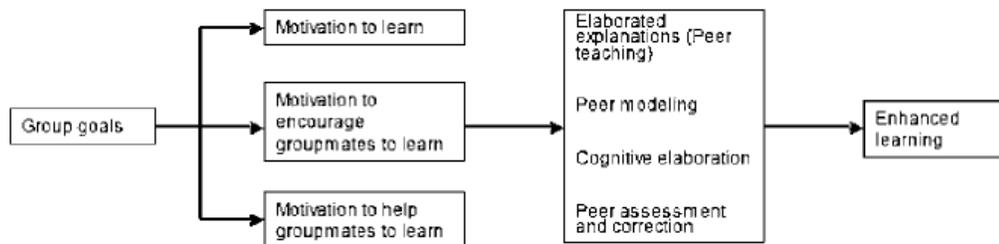
Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework will be structured according to two pillars: (a) an overview of what cooperative learning is and of the authors who sustain it; and (b) the supporting and critical views on the impact of this methodology on students achievement and motivation.

a) What is Cooperative Learning?: definition. According to Johnson and Johnson (1990) in Dat-Tran (2013) “Cooperative Learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and one another’s learning”(p.101). Nevertheless, Johnson and Johnson (1984) in Dat-Tran (2013, p.101) state that “sitting them together, telling them they are a cooperative group and advising them to cooperate does not make them one.” According to Ballantine & Larres (2007) in Dat-Tran (2013) “groups must be structured in such a way that members coordinate activities to promote each other’s learning”(p.101). Slavin (1995) in Apple, M. (2006) states that “this educational methodology, used to accomplish convergent tasks, is only successful if the individual responsibility of all group members leads to learning achievement regardless the subject or level of proficiency of the students”(p.278). Notwithstanding that, Kagan (1989) states that “convergent and divergent thinking can be fostered through the implementation of different structures, each chosen for the goals it best accomplishes”. (p.15)

Also Slavin (1995) in Apple (2006) mentions “it is possible to create conditions leading to positive achievement outcomes by teaching students structured methods of working together or learning strategies closely related to the instructional objectives”. (p.278) This is illustrated in his model of “Factors influencing learning gains” (Slavin, 1995) hereinafter.

(Based on Slavin, 1995, p. 45)



It can be seen how in Slavin’s model motivation constitutes a pivotal issue. And, as a matter of fact, from a motivational perspective, Johnson & Johnson (1992); Slavin, (1983a,b; 1995); in Slavin (1995) state that “cooperative incentive structures create a situation in which the only way group members can attain their personal goals is if the group is successful”. This is because, unlike other methodologies based on group work, cooperative learning is based on group mates performing roles which are interdependent. Furthermore, to meet their personal goals, group members must help and “encourage their group members to exert maximum efforts” (Slavin, 1995). Thus, an interpersonal reward structure is created “in which group members will give or withhold social reinforcers e.g., praise or encouragement, in response to group members’ task related efforts” (Slavin, 1995, p.2). In Johnson &

Johnson (1984, p.29), it is also mentioned that the teacher has an active role in monitoring, assessing, and providing rewards for learning and group work achievement. In terms of assessment, the use of group goals or rewards based on the individual learning of group members means that “team scores are computed-based on average scores on quizzes which all team mates take individually, without team mate help” (Slavin, 1995, p.2). This dynamic has an impact on the motivation of students to successfully accomplish their task and learning goal. Additionally, this model also illustrates the constituent elements of cooperative learning stated by Jonson and Johnson (2008). Firstly, each member realizes that his (or her) effort benefits himself (or herself) as well as the group; secondly, the group is accountable for achieving its goal and each member for contributing to it. Thirdly, more advanced students in each group provide support and “model ” (Bandura, 1977) the desired outcome. Fourthly, each student acquires interpersonal skills through negotiation of meaning; and lastly, group members discuss and assess how well they are achieving their goals and keeping a good learning environment. Cooperative learning has also proven to promote cognitive growth as according to Slavin (2011) in Dat-Tran (2013) “reciprocal interaction among children around suitable academic tasks creates growth in knowledge of concepts and critical thinking skills” (p.106). Additionally, Vygotsky (1978) in Dat-Tran (2013) emphasizes the importance of cooperative activities “because children of the same age work in one another’s Zone of Proximal Development, (ZPD), and model behavior which is more effective than working individually”(p.106). As defined by Vygotsky (1978) in Dat-Tran (2013) the ZPD is “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p.106). This premise of gains through active learning is in agreement with Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (1926) in Dat-Tran (2013) in which he states that “an active discovery learning environment should be emphasized to provide students with opportunities for assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge” (p.106). Additionally, Piaget (1971) claims that “If the new knowledge is not consistent with the existing one, learners will assimilate and accommodate it to create equilibrium. If equilibrium is maintained and knowledge is constructed and reconstructed, cognitive growth will be created”(p.106). Finally, as referred to by Damon, (1984) in Dat-Tran (2013) “through peer communication, a child can master social processes such as participation, argumentation” (p.107) and conflict management, among others.

b) Supporting and critical views on the success of this method on the following areas:

- **students’ achievement:**

Slavin (1989a) concluded that “cooperative learning can be an effective means of increasing students’ achievement, but only if group goals and individual accountability are incorporated in the cooperative methods”(p.53) . Newmann & Thompson (1987) in Slavin (1989a) drew similar conclusions. (p.53)

According to Newmann & Thompson (1987) there have been some controversies on whether cooperative learning is effective in senior high school due to the few studies that examine grades 10 to 12. (p. 53) Another similar situation is at the college level. There are few studies and the results are not as conclusive as those from elementary and junior high/middle schools. (Slavin, 1989).

Another issue being raised is the effectiveness of cooperative learning for the development of higher order learning skills such as creative writing and identification of main idea and inference in reading according to Stevens et al. (1987; 1988) in Slavin (1989a).

Davidson (1985) in Slavin (1989a, p.55) has evaluated the necessity of group goals and individual accountability at a college level. In this regard, studies of pair learning of text comprehension strategies carried out by Dansereau (1988) together with some studies referred to by Davidson (1985) provide examples of successful use of cooperative learning at a college level without the previously mentioned elements.

In regards to high-achieving students working on heterogeneous groups, Johnson et al. (1984) stated “high achievers working in heterogeneous learning groups score higher on retention tests than do high-achievers who participate in competitive or individualistic learning situations.” The cognitive processes involved in having to talk through and explain the material to another classmate seems to increase retention and promote high-level reasoning skills. Along with these outcomes, friendship, collaborative skills, conflict management and communication skills are also developed.

- **Students’ social skills**

One of the most important gains was in intergroup relations regarding liking and respect for one another, towards students of different racial or ethnic backgrounds (Slavin 1985; Johnson et al., 1983) in Kagan, S. (1989 p.54). There have also been positive results towards other factors such as social acceptance of academically handicapped classmates (Madden & Slavin, 1983; Johnson et al., 1983), and friendship (Slavin in press) in Kagan (1989). Other findings seen in many studies include gains in self – esteem, liking of the school, of the subject being studied, and of the time spent on task, and attendance (Slavin in press). Finally, studies by Sharan et al. (1984) in Kagan (1989) have shown that extensive experiences with cooperative learning develop the ability of working in teams.

Moreover, the reward based system, creates a group incentive that directs the group behavior towards expressing norms that favor academic achievement, encouragement and joint cooperation. Therefore, as supported by Hayes, (1976); Litow & Pummoy, (1975) in Slavin (1995) there is substantial literature in the behavior modification tradition which has evidenced that group contingencies can be very effective at improving students’ behavior and achievement by having students work together towards a common goal.

On the other hand, social cohesion theorists are likely to “downplay or reject the group incentives and individual accountability held by motivational researchers to be essential” (Slavin, 1995). In fact, Cohen (1986) in Slavin (1995, p.3) mentions that if the task is challenging and interesting, and if students are sufficiently prepared for performing skills within a group process, students will experience the process of group work itself as highly rewarding. Furthermore, Cohen (1986) in Slavin (1995) suggests to never grade or evaluate students on their individual contributions to the group’s product.

Johnson (1989); Johnson (1994) in Slavin (1995) transit the social and motivationalist perspectives as their model adheres to group goals and incentives; nevertheless, they emphasize the development of group cohesion in their writings through team building, the taking on of interdependent roles; the practice of group self-evaluation and other means more typical of social cohesion theorists. (p.3)

- **Implementation issues**

Gillies & Boyle (2010) refer to the results of a study carried out to report on the perceptions of 10 middle year teachers who implemented cooperative learning in a unit of work across two school terms, in Australia. The results showed that even though there had been gains in the children regarding their management and structuring of the lesson; there had been difficulties while implementing it in classrooms. These had to do with students socializing, time management and curriculum organization (Kohn, 1992) group composition (Lou et al., 1996) task construction (Cohen, 1994; Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, & Arellano, 1999), assessment (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2004, p. 8), and teachers' reflections on CL (Lopata, Miller, & Miller, 2003).

Another issue raised is that students are not used to working as a group, (Blatchford, Baines, Rubie-Davies, Bassett, & Chowne, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 1990), in terms of being accountable for their work and assuring that all members in the group learn, for example. Blatchford, Kutnick, Baines, and Galton (2003) argue that if cooperative learning is to be used successfully in classrooms, the context in which it is to be introduced needs to be prepared, students need to be taught the necessary social and academic skills to negotiate their new learning environments and teachers need to be taught how to work with groups (Gillies, 2010 p.934). Similarly, Hertz-Lazarowitz (2008) states the importance of preparing the physical space for learning and teaching, of having challenging tasks to engage students in higher order thinking, of helping teachers to produce new curricula and programs and be committed to sustain their efforts (p. 934). As a matter of fact, a study performed by Gillies (2008) showed junior high school students performed better in those institutions where teachers had been trained how to establish cooperative learning activities in their curricula and students had had the opportunity to participate in these activities on a regular basis.

Blatchford & Hertz-Lazarowitz (2008) refer to the “complexity and multidimensionality of small group learning and the importance of preparing the environment and individuals” (Gillies, 2010, p. 934) for students to benefit from this way of learning.

SCHOOL AND 9TH GRADE CLASS DIAGNOSIS

This institution, which is part of the Jesuit educational network (PE, 2016, p.3), is a co-educational private school as of March 2014; nevertheless, it was traditionally known as a school for boys. It was regarded as a wealthy school and one of the most important educational institutions during mid 19th and early 20th century as it raised the future catholic ruling class. Notwithstanding that, as it adheres to the principles of the Jesuit church, this institution aims at addressing the challenges of today’s world by raising people of discernment, capable of enriching and transforming the world according to God’s will. As part of its mission, it believes education is an essential tool to overcome poverty and also that it is a means to bring people together in their wish for a fairer, more integrated and caring society (PE, 2016, p.6) And in this sense, the school adhered in 1972 to a differed tuition system, “to contribute to

improving national education” (PE, 2016, p.24) by giving access to quality comprehensive schooling to people with fewer resources and to “cooperate with the evangelization mission of the church”. (PE. 2016:24). The price of the tuition is determined according to the family’s income and the number of siblings applying to the school. The average tuition is \$ 345.000 per student to finance school running expenses; although, the tuition can vary from \$607.200 to \$262.200 for one child. Moreover, and to illustrate the effort of the school to educate people in the love and service to others, secondary students have the chance of participating in a voluntary work program called “Trabajos de fábrica” in which they can spend some time working and living with workers in real settings.

Educational (philosophical/theoretical) orientation. The pedagogical orientation of the school aims at providing a “liberating education” to students oriented to achieving a “whole and harmonic development of men and women who contribute to Chilean society by being committed to life and to Jesus Christ as a source of inspiration (MAFI, 2016, p.1). Therefore, the pedagogy used is active, i.e. learning by doing and reflecting. Learning in this model appeals to experience, directly or indirectly. The same as “spiritual exercises are not said but done”, (P.E., 2016, p.35) learners are motivated to appropriate truth, goodness and beauty through doing activities which are meaningful to them in their personal contexts. The institution wishes to form free and committed individuals, capable of working and learning in teams, of living in a community, and being responsible for their acts. (PE., 2016, p.35).

Therefore, to promote a syllabus that resembles the comprehensive education this institution seeks, it has conceived the “Mapa de Aprendizajes para la Formación Integral”, (MAFI) (Learning map for a comprehensive education) which is a progress map of the learning expected from students throughout their schooling years. It is composed of three main dimensions: socio-affective, cognitive, and spiritual-religious. Each of them is divided into three axes and these into components and levels of achievement. This map, therefore, serves as a reference for curricular design and assessment along this network of schools. Additionally, it is stated in the PEI that they have a humanistic and flexible curriculum (PEI., 2016, pp.32-33). Therefore, the curricular offer considers the official regulations of the Ministry of Education for the level plus the proposal of the educational network which is referred to as “complementary curriculum”. (PEI., 2016, p.33).

Evaluation: According to the PEI the goal of pedagogical practice is learning, therefore, “the focus is set on the curriculum that is really learnt” (PEI., 2016, p.44) by the student. As a result, evaluation is carried out according to criteria and standards previously set by the team of teachers working at the level, and; on the other hand, considering how much learners have progressed in relation to themselves, according to their reality, learning styles and starting point. Therefore, the evaluations used are both formative and summative. Finally, there are 3 students in this class group with lower levels of achievement, of which two have a weaker basis of English and one is a ADHD student. These students are assessed through specially adapted material.

Student profile: There is a total of 1.738 students registered in the school. The average class size is 32. The total number of hours dedicated to teaching English at secondary level is 4 pedagogical hours weekly from 7th to 10th grade; and 3 pedagogical hours weekly from 11th to 12th grade. The class is divided into halves being each of them assigned to two different teachers on a permanent basis during the school year. Regarding the levels of achievement on the English Simce (2014) test at www.mime.mineduc.cl, 92,2% of the students achieved levels A2-B1 and received the corresponding certificate. They sit for the PET, CEA and FCE on a voluntary basis as the school cannot guarantee high levels of achievement on

these examinations as they have several students with special needs. In spite of this, many of the students who take the FCE for example, pass it with an A.

The 9th Grade Class. This is a small class with 17 students. They are well-behaved and prone to working and following classroom rules. They are attentive and caring to the teacher even though they can be disruptive when they are not engaged in an activity. As mentioned previously, students are instructed taking into account a communicative approach in which “the organizational aspects of language are intertwined with the pragmatic” (Brown 2001: 43). Nevertheless, grammar correctness is pursued. Additionally, even though students are exposed to a variety of authentic input and sources, not much oral interaction is emphasized and the teacher controls the class all the time. Students are encouraged to construct meaning only through reading comprehension guided exercises. Errors are frequently corrected by the teacher. This might explain the fact that weaker students are not likely to openly participate or take risks. Normally they are disengaged and remain unable to fulfill the required tasks.

Teaching practice: The PEI states that the pedagogy used is active and as a result requires that teachers “learn to teach” and “teach to learn”(PEI., 2016, p.34). Moreover, it is proclaimed that active participation of learners is promoted and expected over their sole exposure to the teacher’s lecturing. Besides, it is stated that “English is taught not only for work purposes but also for citizenship development.” (PEI., 2016, p.32). In spite of this, I have not evidenced the liberating nor constructivist approach stated in the PEI. On the contrary, lessons are very teacher-centered and strict regarding students’ behavior. There is not much room for student centered activities, team work, debates, critical analysis or presentations. Students’ desks are arranged in a classical manner, facing the board and the teacher-lecturer. The teacher teaches in the target language mainly, even though, she tells them off in L1. A mix between the communicative (Brown, 2001) and grammar approach is used; and emphasis is put on “learning” rather than on “acquisition” in Krashen and Terrell’s terms (1983). The syllabus implemented is text and content based; nevertheless, it is complemented with the reading of short novels (B1 level) and supplementary listening material (CDs and youtube videos). Grammar is taught both, inductive and deductively.

Pedagogical Unit description

Pedagogical considerations:

Previous considerations before implementing this unit were getting acquainted with the institutions syllabus for ninth grade and its pedagogical approach. Additionally, it was necessary to know about the student’s needs, challenges, characteristics and motivations to make the teaching-learning process more appealing to them and to the variety of intelligences present in the classroom.

The syllabus implemented is text-and-content based. The framework used is the English Language Arts Standards in terms of competences and performance indicators for ninth grade along with the “Mapa de Aprendizajes para la Formación Integral”, (MAFI) (Learning map for a comprehensive education). The aim of each unit is the development of receptive and productive skills and the teaching efforts are oriented towards helping students reach PET standards.

A survey revealed that most students enjoy speaking and listening activities, working in teams and playing games. They consider that they learn better by interacting, doing charts, solving problems, participating in contests, among others. Therefore, my challenge will be to improve students' achievement and motivation through cooperative learning methodologies. These will require students to work in groups and be committed with each other's learning processes by interacting and supporting one another to achieve a learning goal. It will also help them address behavioral needs that are less developed such as autonomy, self control and empathy for their classmates.

The lessons:

The unit consists of four weeks of instruction composed of four pedagogical hours each. The lessons, which have been designed under the cooperative learning approach, aim to "raise the achievement of all students, build positive relationships among them, and give students the experiences they need for healthy social, psychological, and cognitive development". (Johnson et al., 1994. p.v)

Therefore, according to the requirements of cooperative learning, students will be organized into groups. Group members will have to perform a role which can be of an academic or social nature. Each lesson will have a measurable objective which all students are responsible for achieving at the end of the session. Therefore, each student must build positive relationships, effort himself and make psychological and social adjustments to learn and ensure that the other members of the group learn, and can give evidence of their learning, as well. Group members will be assessed orally, individually, after having reached the objective of the lesson. The sum of their scores will be the grade of the group as a means to assess individual accountability and group processing. Reviewers of cooperative learning literature (Slavin 1083a, 1983b, 1992); (Ellis & fouts, 1993); (Newmann & Thompson et al., 1987) in Slavin (1995, p.8) have stated that this methodology has best effects on students' learning when groups are recognized or rewarded based on the individual learning of group members.

Cooperative learning pre-instructional decisions:

- Group size: 3 groups of 4 and 1 group of 5 students as the total number of students is 17.
- Method of assigning students: multilevel groups selected by the teacher in Epperson & Rossman (2014,p.41)
- The group composition: Advanced –less advanced students facing each other in Epperson et al., (2014, p.41). (See appendix 3)
- On this point, students have been grouped considering their performance on the last "Prueba integradora" given before winter vacation.
- Room arrangement: desks facing each other in diagonals so that nobody has his back to the board. Students according to Johnson & Johnson (1994) should be "knee to knee and eye to eye."

Students' roles:

- MANAGER- Explainer of ideas or procedures: shares his (or her) ideas and opinions
 Encourager of participation: ensures that all members contribute, take turns, use low voices, and use each other's names.
- CAPTAIN: Summarizer: restates the group's main conclusions. He can also be the accuracy coach who corrects any mistakes in another member's explanation or summary and adds information if necessary.

VICE CAPTAIN: Checker of understanding: ensures all group members can explain how to arrive at an answer or conclusion.

SECRETARY: Recorder: writes down the groups' decisions and edits the group work.

-Assigned roles: The students holding the roles of captain, vice captain, manager and secretary will remain the same for the first 2 weeks (8 lessons) even though their function may vary according to the nature of the activities assigned. Students who have the captain and vice captain roles are students with more developed language skills. Nevertheless, roles are reassigned later on to empower weaker students and to engage them in the activities performed. Also one student can be in charge of a role that helps the group work together (a social role) along with a role that helps students formulate what they know (an academic role).

Materials: They will vary according to the activity.

Classroom setting: Roles and their characteristics are displayed on one side of the board on craft paper.

The sitting chart is posted on the board.

Teacher writes class objective and menu on the board and sets a time for each activity. All lessons start after greeting students.

ONLY FOR FIRST CLASS: For rapport building each team gets together and gives itself a name and creates a sign to put on the desk. The teacher explains how students will "Sink or swim together" (Johnson & Johnson, 1994) and that they will produce a measurable product at the end of the class.

The teacher checks students understand by using CCQs.

Each team will have a predefined work area.

Assessment is criterion-referenced within each cooperative learning session. Students are explained the "Criteria for success" (Johnson et al., 1994, p. 3). The rubric is shown to them. They are told that they will have to assess their team mates' and their own work. This is regarded as beneficial by Yager, Johnson, Johnson & Snider (1986) "as group processing activities such as the reflection at the end of each class period on the group's activities can enhance the achievement effects of cooperative learning."

They are also told the teacher will assess their work but that she will support the effectiveness of individual and team work and provide assistance during the class period.

The teacher also has a checklist on teamwork skills, a list of phrases to monitor and intervene, and a rubric to assess oral performance. (See appendix 2).

<p>Class N°1's OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson you will be able to write a sentence on what you liked the most about Charles Dickens.</p> <p>Learning outcome²: Connect, compare and contrast ideas and information. Express opinions and support them through references in the text to engage in a variety of collaborative conversations , such as peer-led discussions, paired reading and responding, and cooperative group discussions to construct meaning. Respect turns, share ideas and procedures, encourage, ensure that everybody can explain how to arrive at an answer.</p> <p>Warming up: Students are told how they are going to work, sit and the roles they are going to have. There will be a sitting chart on the board.</p> <p>Pre ;BRAINSTORMING ON FAMOUS WRITERS AND THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS (15 min)</p> <p>WHILE: Jigsaw activity: -Each student asks his partner a question he has to answer and vice versa. Then all the group shares the information to come up with a complete idea of Charles Dickens life. -Supported by each other's roles, group members discuss to clarify doubts and justify their answers. (10 min) -Sts. watch and listen to a video on Dickens' life. -Teacher introduces new vocabulary by showing them pictures or referring to situations.-Sts listen to a video and match different characters to specific life events. (8 min) -T asks at random (Numbered-heads together) (2 min) / (35m)</p> <p>Post: T asks each group to write a sentence about what they liked the most about Dickens' life and why. The group shares ideas . -The manager checks that everyone is heard.-The summarizer puts the information into words and the recorder writes it down.-The checker of understanding sees that all members understand the same.(5 min)</p> <p>Closure:-T asks the group members at random for their statements (3 min) -Students fill in self evaluation sheet (2 min)</p> <p>Teaching resources: Cutting Edge. Third edition. Charles Dickens' Bio Jigsaw paper slips. Popsicle sticks with the team names, a plastic glass and 4 soda lids numbered 1 to 4, for calling out teams and members at random.</p> <p>Assessment: Formative. T monitors teamwork and diagnoses specific problems students might have when working together. Teacher asks sts questions using the number heads together method to check task work -Team work and self assessment evaluation forms (see appendix 2).</p>
<p>CLASS N°2's OBJECTIVE: By the end of this lesson, you will write about a famous person you would like to meet for his achievements</p> <p>Learning outcome: Use knowledge of structure, content and vocabulary to understand informational text, Offer verbal feedback to others in a respectful and responsive manner. Use courtesy, Avoid sarcasm, ridicule, dominating the conversation and interrupting. Take turns to present your topic to the team, write and edit relevant information.</p> <p>Warm up: T tells them they are going to work in groups of experts to research about a famous person they select from a list.</p> <p>Pre: T shows sts pictures of people who have been famous for their achievements. She asks sts who (from a list) they would like to meet and why.(3 min) -They listen and watch a video and take notes to identify the artists, leaders or writers mentioned. (5 min)-They share and compare their notes and answers within the group. (3 min). If there is a different answer, they have to support why. They have to reach an agreement. -T confirms information at random. (Numbered-heads together) (3 min)</p> <p>While: T assigns each group an artist, writer or leader to find out about. T gives them a grid with cues to fill in . Students have to organize as group of experts. They are numbered from one to 4. Then all the ones get together, the twos, etc. They are assigned a person to research on from the grid. They meet with their group of experts, organize themselves, and gather the necessary information. After they have done it, they return to their groups and share the information. The recorder fills in the grid, the manager sees the group works using a low voice, and take turns, the accuracy checker/summarizer sees that the information is correct, and the checker of understanding, that all members can refer to the 4 campaigners researched on equally. (15 min) =25 T checks at random 5min= 30</p> <p>Post: Each group agrees on one person they would like to meet and why. They write it down and turn it in (5 min)</p> <p>Closure: T asks a couple of groups at random (3min)=40 Self and group assessment (5min)</p> <p>Teaching resources: Cell phones with internet connection³. Answer grid handout (one sample per team) for the teams to record the information gathered and report it afterwards</p> <p>Assessment: Formative. T monitors group work. Teacher's rubric for assessing each student's performance. Teamwork and self assessment forms</p>

² The learning outcomes were taken from the English Language Arts Standards. They have been complemented with cooperative learning skills.

³ Subdimensión "Información como fuente". Matriz de habilidades TIC para el aprendizaje. (MINEDUC,2013)

<p>Class N°3's objective : By the end of this lesson, you will explain your classmates a mind map on Frankenstein. Ch. 7</p> <p>Learning outcome: Work collaboratively with peers to comprehend and respond to texts. Discuss reading experiences with peers to reformulate or confirm hypothesis. Organize writing effectively to communicate ideas to an intended audience. Revise and edit written work. Respect turns, stay with the group, learn to listen.</p> <p>Pre: T elicits previous chapters' main ideas and events. (8 min). T sets the mood for the class activity. (2 min)=10 min</p> <p>While: Sts read one scene silently. Once they finish reading the scene, the Captain-summarizer refers to the main ideas without referring to the text. The Vice-captain (checker of understanding) corrects or adds information as necessary, he can use the text. The Secretary-recorder and Manager start making the concept map with the ideas retrieved. The manager asks the captain and vice captain to contribute with ideas. The group follows the same methodology to work with the other scenes of the chapter.(20min) =35</p> <p>Post: Sts finish their posters and get ready (review main issues and clarify doubts) to present their posters next class.</p> <p>Teacher's resources: Frankenstein Ch.7 Craft paper + color markers. Masking tape. Assessment: Checklist for assessing the group's performance. Rubric for assessing each student's performance. phrases for monitoring and intervening</p>
<p>Class N°4. Objective: By the end of this lesson you will be able to talk about achievements you are proud of. (two-block class)</p> <p>Learning outcome: Use text structure to aid comprehension and response. Make, confirm or revise predictions by distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information. Adjust the reading rate according to the purpose for reading. Work collaboratively with peers to comprehend and respond to text. Offer verbal feedback to others in a respectful and responsive manner.</p> <p>Pre: T tells sts that today they will talk about famous people and the achievements they have done. (5') T tells sts to look at the pictures of celebrities in the book and asks them to tell her who they are. Sts predict and T confirms (2MIN). Then she tells them to guess what achievement they are famous for and refers them to the statements in Ex. 2b. p. 36) (3 min) = 10 T plays the listening to confirm (2b. p.36) (3m) =13min</p> <p>While: T TELLS THEM THEY WILL WORK IN PAIRS, BUT NOT IN THEIR TEAMS BECAUSE THAT SYSTEM OF ORGANIZING THE CLASS WAS NOT WORKING WELL.; AND THAT THEY WOULD ANSWER A SURVEY AFTERWARDS TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED. T gives a piece of the script with different people's achievements to each pair. T asks sts to read and underline those actions that are finished and those that are general (which started in the past but continue until the present). She also tells them to pay attention to time expressions: for-since- for ages, this month, yesterday, etc. T shows an example of what they have to do on the board. T tells them how they are going to work and models the Think-Pair-Share⁵ way of interacting. (7min)=20 T checks sts work at random (5m)=25 T asks them to do Ex 3. (p.36) and then compare results with their pair. (5min)=30 T checks and asks them to support their answers. (2min)=32 Then T asks: Which tense is this? She shows a sentence with the simple past and another one with present perfect. How do we form the present perfect? If an action started in the past but continues into the present we use..... If we want to show that an action in the past is still relevant now we use... If an action happened in a specific time period we use... (5min) 37min What about time expressions? T asks them to work in groups and classify the time phrases into the correct columns. Then they compare with the whole group. Sts continue working using TPS. (5min) =(42min) T checks at random (3 min) 45min</p> <p>Post: T asks: And you, what achievements are you proud of? T shows some stems on the board sts can use to make their sentences. Well, I have..... Well, my family and I have.... My father has..... Sts share their sentences with the class. (55min)</p> <p>Teacher's resources: Data, course book + audio. Assessment: formative</p>
<p>Class 5's Objective: Present Frankenstein's concept map and read chapter 8 (Two-block session)</p> <p>Learning outcome: Summarize the plot, describe the motivation of characters, and explain the importance of setting. Take turns, listen to each other respectfully, ask and respond to questions to clarify information, contribute to group discussions by offering comments, ideas and information.</p>

⁴ As of session 4, the lessons and class-work had to be adapted and redirected at the head teacher's request .(See conclusions)

⁵ Think –Pair-Share is used as a means to build team cohesion.

<p>Pre: T tells groups to present the concept maps they worked on last week. Sts post all the groups posters on the board. (3). All students are standing and they start touring around the posters. Each group presents their posters, each student says something about it and after they finish T asks questions to the group members. T tells them they will read Frankenstein, ch. 8. T. asks them to open the book on page 108, "Journey to the north". T asks them to predict what will happen. (5min)=60</p>
<p>While: The reading is combined between the audio and the students' reading. The teacher asks reading comprehension questions or refers to some vocabulary issues after sts listen or read part of the book. (20 min)</p>
<p>Post and closure: T checks using ccqs and asks sts how they think Frankenstein will finish. (Ch. 9 is the last chapter). (5min) T tells sts to find out about a lead signer of their choice. They will work in pairs and each member will be in charge of researching about certain aspects of the signer's life. This is previously agreed among students.(5min)</p>
<p>Teacher's resources: Eli Readers Frankenstein + CD. Assessment: Formative</p>
<p>Class 6's objective: by the end of this lesson, you will make a lifeline of a (lead) signer of your choice</p>
<p>Learning outcome: Analyze data and facts to communicate information. Use a range of organizational strategies to present information. Connect, compare and synthesize ideas and information. Revise and edit the information Speak to include details and examples relevant to the audience and purpose. Take turns.</p>
<p>Pre: T tells sts they are going to draw and present a lifeline of a (lead) signer of their choice. T shows them a slide with different life events and asks them what they are and if they consider those events to be important and why. (5min)</p>
<p>While: T explains sts will classify life events into a diagram working in pairs. Ex.1a. p.40. (5 min) = 10min. T checks and asks follow up questions to review structures, e.g., Which of these life events have you done? Which of these life events haven't you done yet? Which of these events are you hoping to do in the future? (5min) =15 T tells them they will listen to an example of a life line by listening to Meltem talking. They have to fill in the blanks. (3 min) T tells them to compare answers with their partner and then T checks: (2min)=20 min After that, T tells them to start drawing the lifeline from the artist they researched about for homework. They work in pairs. Each member of the pair refers to the information he was in charge of. They put all the artist's facts together.(15 min)=35</p>
<p>Post: the students present their lifeline to another pair. The teacher chooses some of them at random to present their music group lifeline to the class.</p>
<p>Teacher's resources: Data, course book + CD Assessment: Formative</p>
<p>Class N°7's objective: By the end of this lesson, you will make a story from a picture using the tenses studied during unit 4</p>
<p>Learning outcomes: Combine multiple strategies e.g. predict/confirm, question, monitor, self-correct, to enhance comprehension. Contribute to group discussion by offering comments, ideas and information. Work collaboratively with peers to comprehend and respond to texts. Support points of view with relevant details.</p>
<p>Pre: T reviews the verb tenses studied through pictures in which two types of actions are contrasted. A situation that started in the past and continues to the present compared to a situation that started in the past, continues into the present and may continue into the future. She asks sts. to tell her which picture emphasizes the result of the action and which one a situation that is in progress or ongoing. Sts compare the situations presented in the slides. The aim is teaching grammar inductively. (10min)</p>
<p>While: T asks them what they remember about Meltem. T displays three sample sentences from Meltem's script: "Yedi Kizler started in 2010"; "We have played about 20 gigs"; and, " It's really crowded in my parents' flat. I have been looking for ages for something I like and something I can afford." T asks them to pay attention to which sentence refers to a specific situation in the past, which one to a connection between the past and present, and which one to an action that started in the past but continues into the future. Sts answer. Then she tells them to pay attention to two different issues, action vs result, or "how long" vs "how many", eg., "Meltem has been looking for a flat" vs "Meltem has found a flat." Then she shows them different examples with "for" and "since" to infer the correct use of these time expressions. "She has been living in Istanbul since she was 12" vs. "She has been playing the guitar for a long time". T asks sts to give her examples using the tenses taught. After a st. gives an example, she asks the class for feedback. T shows a slide with the structure of the present perfect continuous, and draws sts attention on state verbs, and gives examples. T asks sts to do "practice exercise, 1, p.41 and then compare with his partner. (20). T checks (3') =33min</p>
<p>Post: T shows them a picture they have to make a story from in pairs. (7')= 40'. T checks at random (5'). Teacher's resources: Data/pictures. Assessment: Formative</p>
<p>Class N°s 8 and 9: objectives (2 blocks)You will review what you have learnt about Frankenstein and you will write a different ending for the book</p>
<p>Learning outcomes: interpret characters, plot, setting, theme, and dialogue using evidence from the text. Recognize how the author's use of language creates images, expresses feelings, and points of view. Share reading experiences with peers (or adults) for example, read together silently or aloud with a partner or in small groups.</p>
<p>Pre: T writes some key words of the reading on the board and asks them how they can relate them to what they have read. Sts come up with some ideas. T uses those ideas to</p>

connect them to the plot and challenge the students with questions: How did Victor survive? What gave him hope? What would you do if you were Victor? T starts by asking questions about the book at random (10')
While: T gives some quotes taken from the book to groups of 2 first using the TPS technique. They have to identify who said it, when and why. Each group discusses and reaches an agreement. Then they refer to the quote they got and share their conclusions with the class (10') T shows them a map of Switzerland and asks them to work in pairs to identify the places where Victor was when he was after the monster.(8') T checks (5')=33'
T tells sts they will read the last chapter of the book: "Journey's end". T asks them to predict the ending. (7')=40' T tells sts that they will play roles, e.g. Manolo is "Walton", Rafa is "Victor", Joaquín, "Narrator"... They start reading. After a while T stops to ask questions or comment on new vocabulary and asks them to picture the scene. T gives the chance to other sts to participate as well (25')
Post: T asks them if they liked the ending and tells them to think and write down a better one in pairs Each one writes one possible ending and then they do peer editing.(12'). T monitors. T asks some sts to share their endings with the rest of the class. (5') Closure: T asks them what they liked the most and the least from the book.(3') Teacher's resources: slips of paper with quotes from the book. Assessment: Formative
Students spend a couple of sessions watching the movie "Frankenstein"
Class N°10's objective: By the end of this session we will make a comparison between the movie and the book Learning outcomes: Express a point of view, providing supporting facts. Use a range of organizational strategies to present information, check understanding, ask for clarification, summarize, and record. Pre: Students watch the last part of the movie. (20'). T asks them which did they like best, the book or the movie.
While: T tells them to get into groups of four and make a chart illustrating two differences between the book and the movie. T tells them to organize their ideas first, through identifying the main issues on which the movie and book differ and how they are supported by facts and examples. T writes an example on the board. T tells them they will use the TPS technique . Sts start working and T monitors and clarifies doubts. (15') Post: T asks some team members at random what differences they found (10')
Class N°11's objective: Finding who the liar is Learning outcomes: Speak using grammatical structures appropriate to the level. Use nonverbal communication techniques to help disclose the message. Ask and respond to questions to clarify information. Use quiet voices, take turns, use each other's names. Pre: T tells students they are going to play a game though asking each other questions with "Have you ever....". T models the activity on the board. Then she asks two secretaries to distribute the question sheets and liar cards to the students. She tells them they have to ask "Have you ever..." questions using the information on the question sheet. T goes over the vocabulary and the structure with them.. When a st. is asked a question, he can either lie or tell the truth. The student asking the question is allowed three follow up questions, in the simple past, to decide if the other st. Is telling the truth or not. If the student asking the question, student A, thinks the other one, student B, is lying, he can challenge him with a "Liar" card. If st. B is lying, he has to accept the card. If he is not, he can give one of his "liar" cards to st. A. If st. B is lying but st. A does not challenge him, st. A gives a liar card to st B. Sts move around the class asking one another "Have you ever..." questions trying to get rid of their liar cards. The winner is the one who has the least "liar" cards. T tells them to address each other by their names, to respect turns, and use quiet voices. (12')
While The game starts. T monitors that students go beyond student's B initial answer and inquire further information to find out if he. Is lying or not. T uses the st's mistakes as an opportunity to make him aware of his mistake and give him the chance to self correct or be helped by his peers. (20') Post: After sts have gone through all the questions, T asks who has the least (or no) "liar" cards and announces who the winner is. He is congratulated by the teacher and the class. (3') Closure: The teacher asks them if they made any surprising discovery about their classmates. (5') Teacher's resources: One liar question sheet and four liar cards per student. Assessment: Formative
Class N°12's objective Review class Learning outcomes: Contribute to group discussions by offering comments, ideas and information. Combine strategies (predict, confirm, question, self correct) to enhance comprehension and response. Work collaboratively with peers to comprehend and respond to texts. Pre: T tells sts they will review for the test next class and that they will answer a survey at the end of the class to find out how their experience was when they were working cooperatively. T shows them a picture of two owls. One of them resembles a teacher at the beginning of the year; the other one, a teacher in bad conditions at the end of the year. T tells them the owl represents her and asks them why she is in this condition. Sts answer. She asks them what she did the day before, etc. Then the T asks what they have

been doing, if they feel the same. Sts refer to the tests they have taken and the ones to come.

While: T shows them a chart they have to fill in with the characteristics of the verb tenses they have studied during the unit. T assigns a different verb tense to each of the rows. T tells them that they have 5' to think of the characteristics of the tenses. T monitors students' work. After that she asks the class for three secretaries, each representing a row. The secretaries write on the board what students in the corresponding rows say. After a while (3') T checks students' work and asks the class for feedback. (5') Then T gives some assorted "For" and "Since" cards to the sts. She models how students have to raise the card that goes with the corresponding time expression she will call out. Then they classify some time expressions into a chart.

Post: Sts do an exercise from the course book in which they have to decide what verb tense to use. T tells them to pay attention to time references and other distinctive characteristics of those tenses. T checks.

Closure: T asks sts to make a sentence using any of the tenses studied. The secretary gives out the survey.

Teacher's resources: Data, coursebook, "For"/"Since" cards. **Assessment:** survey,

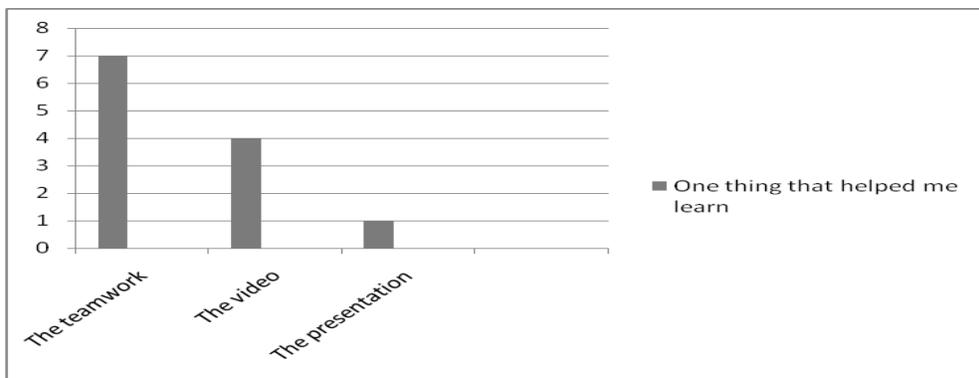
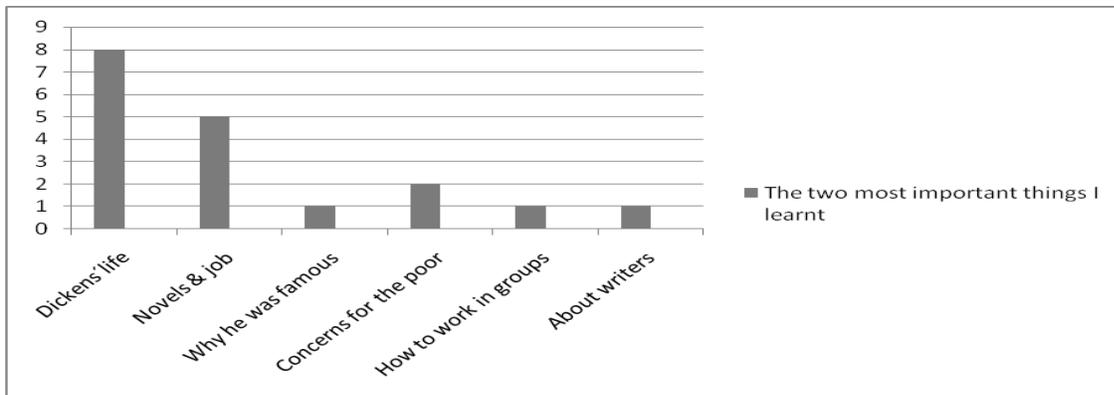
Learning results

The learning results gathered are both qualitative and quantitative. Nevertheless, the number of quantitative results is limited due to implementation problems and the request of the subject teacher to redirect the methodology used in the lessons.

Therefore, the quantitative results presented hereinafter refer to three pedagogical hours or two sessions (45' the first and 90' the second) during which this methodology was implemented as stated in the literature.

The first activity which was a jigsaw activity on Charles Dickens' life drew the following results:

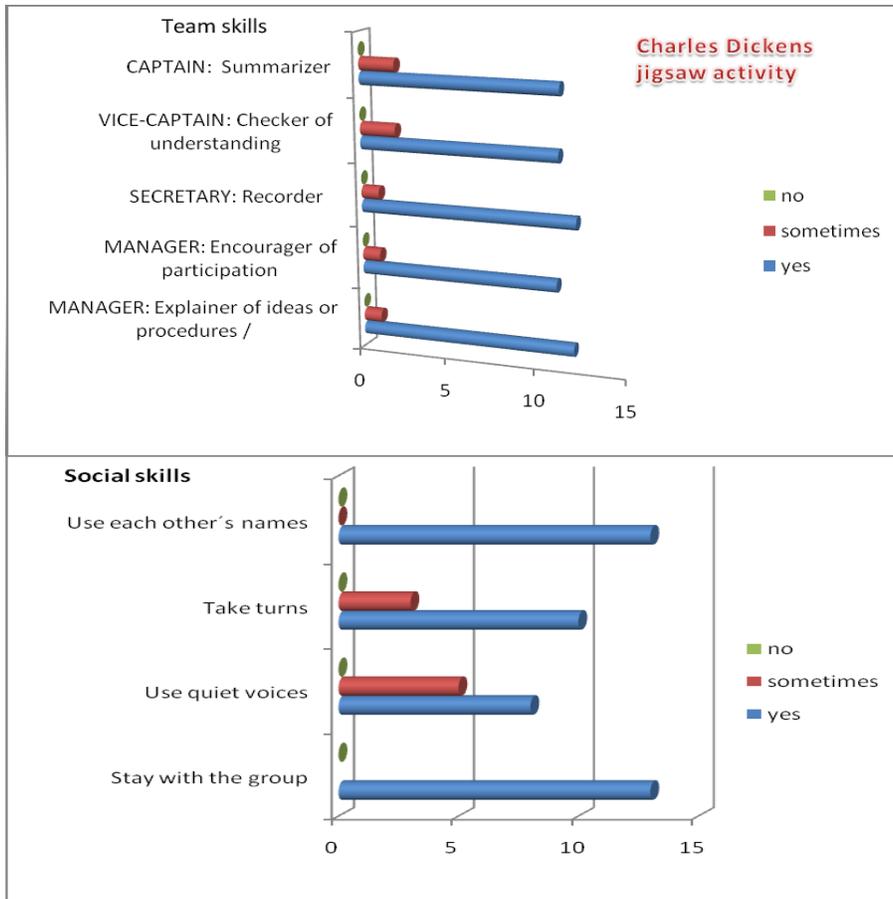
Self assessment.

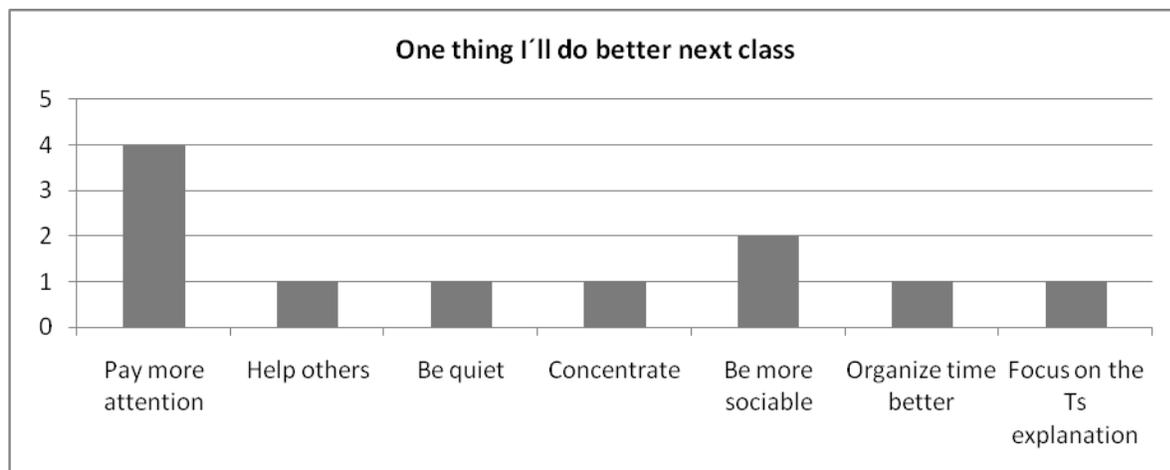




It can be concluded from the results that the activity was successful in terms of learning and that the students had a positive attitude towards it.

HOW WELL DID MY TEAM MEMBERS AND I DO OUR JOBS?

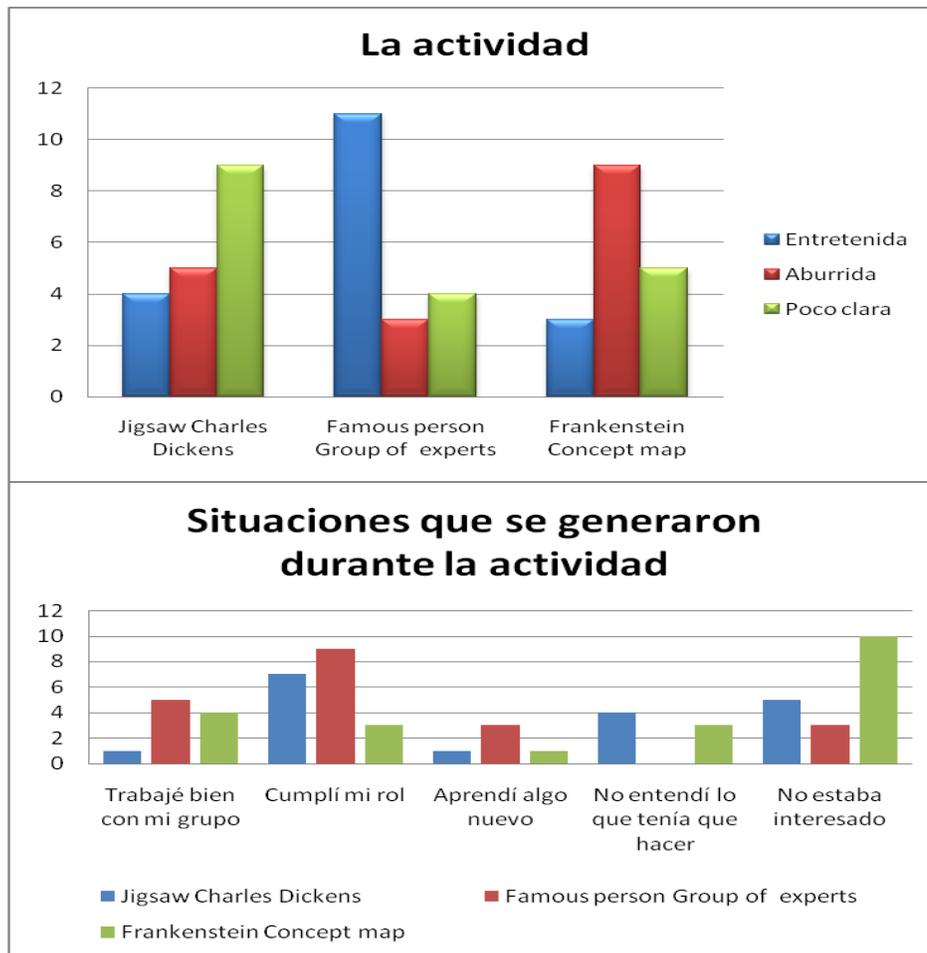




In terms of how well they performed their roles, the captain and vice captain had more difficulty in performing their jobs. This could be explained by complexity of the task. Summarizing belongs to high order thinking, Bloom (1956) Anderson (2001) and, checking understanding also requires selecting information, reorganizing and illustrating information to assure all members arrive at the same answer or conclusion. The results also show that it was not easy to respect turns, to work using a low voice, to pay attention or to be more social (or do one's share). This could be due to the lack of rapport and group cohesion among them. Nevertheless, the fact that there were limited resources, forced them to understand that roles were interdependent and that they had to work together as a team to achieve the desired objective. In this sense Slavin (1995) mentions that "one of the main purposes of task specialization used in Jigsaw is to create interdependence among group members." (p.3).

The next two activities done through cooperative learning were "Writing about a famous person you would like to meet for his (or her) achievements" and "Drawing a concept map on Frankenstein, chapter 7". The former could not be formally assessed due to time constraints and the latter was started in class but finished later as it was given to the students as a project to present the week after that. A survey was given to them during the last session of the intervention to find out their perceptions about the sessions during which they had to work cooperatively. The results are as follows:

End of the intervention survey results



It is important to point out that the information retrieved from activity 1, “Jigsaw Charles Dickens” in the graph above, is not consistent with the information gathered previously on this same activity (see page 16-17-18). As the intervention under the cooperative learning paradigm was interrupted, it was necessary to survey students to gather information about their impressions on the activities they had done and also to give them a sense of closure. Nevertheless, this survey was not run the session immediately after the interruption, it was done at the end of the intervention, instead.

Activity 2, illustrated in the chart, “Writing about a famous person” in which they had to work with a group of experts, proved to be the most preferred of the three activities. This is supported by the fact that it was a kinesthetic activity as groups had to move around the classroom to look for their expert peers; they had to use technology, as they had to look the information up on the internet using their phones, and they could choose who to look for (even though they had to choose a person from a list). The people were e.g., Mother Teresa, Florence Nightingale, Desmond Tutu, George Orwell, Federico García Lorca and Tom Hanks.

Activity 3, "Concept map building on Frankenstein, chapter 7", on the other hand, was the least liked. Students state they were not interested and that the activity was not clear. These results could be accounted for the nature of the activity which was new to them and was not properly explained by the teacher. This activity resembles the one known as "cooperative scripts" which proved to be successful in learning gains by Dansereau, (1988); O'Donnel, (in press); Newbern, Dansereau, Patterson, & Wallace, (1994) in Slavin (1995, p.6). In this regard, Noreen Webb (1989, 1992) mentioned the activity is similar to peer tutoring "through which students who gained the most from cooperative activities were those who provided elaborated explanations to others." Additionally, Dansereau et al. (1992) reported that "students who received elaborated explanations learned more than those that worked alone, but not as much as those who served as explainers" in Slavin (1995, p.9). In the case of the activity of the concept map, everybody's learning was favored as everybody had the chance to elaborate and contribute. This idea is supported by Vygotsky (1978) in Slavin (1995, p.5) when he comments that "(...) research shows that reflection is spawned from argument."

Unfortunately, the activity could not be finished in class, therefore, it could not be assured that students continued working in the same way.

An interesting discovery, that is also supported by Okebukola (1986) and Wheeler and Ryan (1973) in Slavin (1985, p.11) is that students who prefer cooperative learning learn more in cooperative methods than those who prefer competition. This fact was supported through my observation and it was revealed in the last survey which showed that three students out of sixteen believed cooperative learning had worked. (See appendix 1).

Besides that, it was also evidenced that the "think-pair-share" technique which was implemented during later lessons contributed to the acquisition of team skills as students worked more focused and quieter and less competitively. This is consistent with Slavin (1995, p.2) when he says that "by having students work together towards a common goal, they may be motivated to express norms favoring academic achievement and to reinforce one another for academic efforts."

Reflexive analysis of the intervention

The experience was positive in general as it was possible to understand three important factors of a learning institution: the school's philosophy and culture; the structure of power in the school; and the teaching and learning practice. The outcomes of this intervention reflected that a teacher's professional practice is determined and influenced by the factors previously mentioned. This is so because the teacher has to adhere to the philosophy and culture of the learning institution, act and take pedagogical decisions accordingly, and; follow the administrative procedures established by the school. Moreover, the teaching and learning practice, which is strongly influenced by the institutional culture, determines the teaching-learning paradigm the teacher holds and influences students' approach to knowledge and learning; and, their expectations from the teaching and learning process, as well. As a consequence, the tensions I encountered at the school dealt with: a) a clash between the pedagogical paradigm adhered to by the subject teacher and the one enforced by the university which was worsened by her lack openness to assimilate and incorporate new approaches to teaching; and, b) the lack of training of the students to work in a cooperative way.

a) Firstly, the class planning and the approach to teaching of the subject teacher was content-and-grammar based and the teaching method was teacher-centered. This contrasted with a more student-centered approach taught at the career, which is oriented to fostering students' control of the class and having the teacher act as a facilitator of learning instead of a controller. This was a contentious issue as cooperative learning was completely new to the students and to the subject teacher and; as a result, it generated confusion and conflict. Confusion among the students because they had not been previously trained for interacting cooperatively; and, conflict with the teacher because of the socializing that occurred in the groups, time management issues and the organization required to implement this methodology. As a result, the intervention was interrupted and forced to be redirected. This was done adapting the tasks, doing shorter drills in which students had to use TPR, and, even though, the lessons had a grammar focus (suggested by the teacher) the instruction was oriented to promoting inductive and constructivist thinking processes in students. Nevertheless, this also generated a problem with the subject teacher as she insisted that I cover every activity proposed in the course book, as it had been discussed between her and the other two teachers that taught in ninth grade classes.

In this sense, I would like to mention Dewey (1938:27) in Marcelo; Vaillant (2009) in reference to the value of experience in teaching and in teacher training, as well. Dewey stated that "experience" and "training" are not synonymous as it all depends on "the quality of the experience one has". This concept has to do with how pleasant or not this experience is for the pre-service teacher; and, on the other hand, with how he (or she) is likely to transfer the acquired knowledge to other learning situations in the future. As a result and elaborating on Dewey, the quality of the experience is worthwhile when the pre-service teacher reflects upon and is able to share her teaching, judgments and decisions with the subject teacher and then readjust and transfer in the best possible way teaching knowledge to class situations and challenges. This rarely happened even though I joined the weekly meetings the teachers teaching ninth grade had as they met to discuss school chronological or disciplinary issues, and I felt I wasn't entitled to contribute to any of those affairs.

b) Addressing the lack of training that students had to work cooperatively, it is important to mention that cooperative learning is a challenging methodology for both students and teachers. For students because it requires that they become responsible for their own learning process and results. For teachers because they lose their position of control and become in turn promoters of active learning in students, and encouragers of the essential social skills to work and live with others in society. On the other hand, implementing this methodology is far from simple for the teacher and cannot be successfully done from one day to the next. Apart from the logistic considerations that have been mentioned throughout this article, students must first be trained to work in teams through different preparation activities to learn the importance and need of becoming interdependent with all group members, and accountable for their learning. They must also be trained into interpersonal skills and be motivated to use them (Johnson et al., 1994). This is one of the fundamental requirements for cooperative learning to succeed and which I neither considered nor was aware of before the implementation. I did consider that the students worked well in group activities -as stated in my diagnosis of the class. Nevertheless, teamwork requires specific abilities that are not necessarily present in group work.

Along with this, developing team-building skills takes time. Therefore, the subject program should consider the necessary activities and timing for developing these skills in students. In the case of the

school where this methodology was implemented, the program is the course book and the focus of the class is content. Therefore, there were always time constraints that clashed with the long term, humanistic and socio-constructivist view of cooperative learning. In addition, this methodology did not follow the disciplinary principles of the school.

Another important factor for the success of this methodology is that the students clearly understand what the objective of the activity is and how to achieve it. For this to happen, the teacher has to explain and model what he (or she) wants from the students and how they have to interact in their teams to fulfill the task. In my situation, I believe this was not sufficiently done. In addition, I believe the roles proposed by Johnson and Johnson (1994) are more applicable in an ESL context. As for instance, the summarizer, checker of understanding and accuracy coach roles were difficult to follow by the students because they required more command of the language and in some cases, more developed higher thinking skills. Consequently, all these factors contributed to confusion, uneasiness and perhaps, to lack of motivation in students.

All these unforeseen problems and moreover, the blatant truth that cooperative learning was being neither cooperative nor conducive to learning, made me feel very discouraged and frustrated. I felt I had put too much energy and time into an intervention that was not feasible as it had been planned and therefore had to be adjusted and rethought.

All things considered, I think I should have instilled this methodology gradually into students. At the time I planned my intervention, I didn't realize what it really entailed and demanded students cognitively and linguistically. Therefore, it would have been useful to have done some preparatory activities during the first semester.

As for other issues, it is important to be aware of and follow school (administrative) regulations such as turning in a print copy of the intervention planning to the teacher, doing the required paper work for class recording, following school's homework policy or (discussing it with the teacher if necessary), informing the university about problems with the people at the internship center, at due time.

In view of the above, it is important to suggest there be more communication between the subject teacher/mentor and the pre-service teaching tutor as it would have been very valuable if they had met and discussed my performance and needs along the semester and therefore, remedial actions could have been taken. In this sense, it would have also been beneficial if I had turned in the "Bitácora" to the tutor so that he had had first-hand information about the situations arising at the school.

Improvement plan

In the light of information presented, I would recommend that teachers make efforts to “model the curriculum” and therefore, include cooperative learning activities in their class planning to develop the necessary skills in children at an early age and across the curriculum. Despite the existence of projects in other subjects which require students perform a role and be accountable for the success of the task, cooperative learning is not enhanced by the school.

It is vital that teachers who implement this methodology be properly trained and supported through follow up sessions by Teacher of Teachers (TOT) who know about cooperative learning and/or have implemented this method in schools before.

Additionally, to enrich the teaching-learning process, teachers should share teaching knowledge, experiences and activities with other teachers, to get feedback, to make the necessary adjustments to their class plans and to sustain their efforts. For example, in my case, besides the working dynamics imposed on the groups being too complex and even overwhelming for students, the tasks were too long. Shorter tasks to prepare students for cooperative learning, as I did afterwards, worked better.

In this sense, it is essential to consider that when implementing pedagogical innovations, as stated by Tickoo (1996) in Kumaravadivellu (2001) local-linguistic, socio-cultural and political particularities be taken into consideration. In other words, pedagogical practices and tasks should be sensitive to the school's context and culture, and to teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals. Furthermore, Elliot (1993) in Kumaravadivellu (2001) says that “a meaningful pedagogy cannot be constructed without a holistic interpretation of particular situations and that pedagogy cannot be improved without a general improvement of those particular situations (...)” (p.538) Therefore, before implementing a new pedagogical approach, it is necessary for practicing teachers to first experience and practice the pedagogy of particularity or how students usually learn. According to Kumaravadivellu (2001) teachers should observe their own teaching acts, evaluate the outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out, over and over again to see what works or does not. (p.539) As a matter of fact, it is through this process of continuous observation, reflection and action that a context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge is developed.

Moreover, together with being sensitive to institutional context issues when doing a pedagogical intervention, it is also essential to keep in mind the existence of a dichotomy between theory and practice. This fact can have a strong impact on the practice of classroom teaching as what is suggested by experts is not necessarily adjusted to the students' reality in schools. In this sense, as the objective of action research as stated by Elliot (1991) in Kumaravadivellu (2001) is “to improve practice, rather than produce knowledge” (p.540) is that the cooperative learning roles suggested by Johnson and Johnson should be simplified to an EFL context. This, on the understanding that teachers should “construct their own personal theories by testing, interpreting, and judging the usefulness of professional theories (...)” (Kumaravadivellu, 1994, p.540).

Furthermore, learning objectives and how to achieve them should be clear to students. As stated by Epperson et al. (2014) “Every successful activity begins with clear instructions” (p.14). As a result, students can complete the task as they know what they are expected to do, and moreover, “students are less likely to misbehave and they feel self-sufficient and proud they understood something in

English.” (Epperson et al., 2014, p. 14). Additionally, instructions should be modeled before the activity starts, by providing the students with visual samples of the task and what they have to do and by asking them comprehension questions about how to carry the activity out by using CCQs (concept check questions).

Finally, but not less important, it is vital that learning objectives and activities be challenging but down-to-earth.

Conclusion

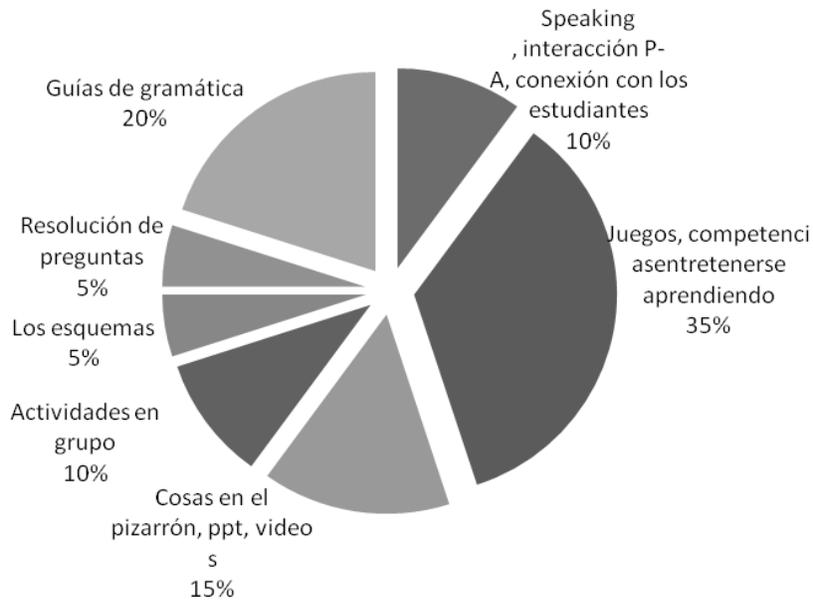
My personal challenge ahead is to continue on the path of cooperative learning for language teaching as I think the skills students have to internalize are very beneficial to deal with future life and work situations as they foster academic achievement and socialization. I also believe the cognitive-social - constructivist perspective of this methodology suits the needs of how students should learn at present and adheres to the premise of lifelong learning.

Finally, and in the view of the values and attitudes promoted in the curricular reform, teaching can no longer be a solitary activity. In this learning society we are inserted in, there are no experts. Therefore, teachers are urged to work cooperatively, communicate, reflect upon and be open to other teaching views and possibilities that could lead to better teaching and learning practices.

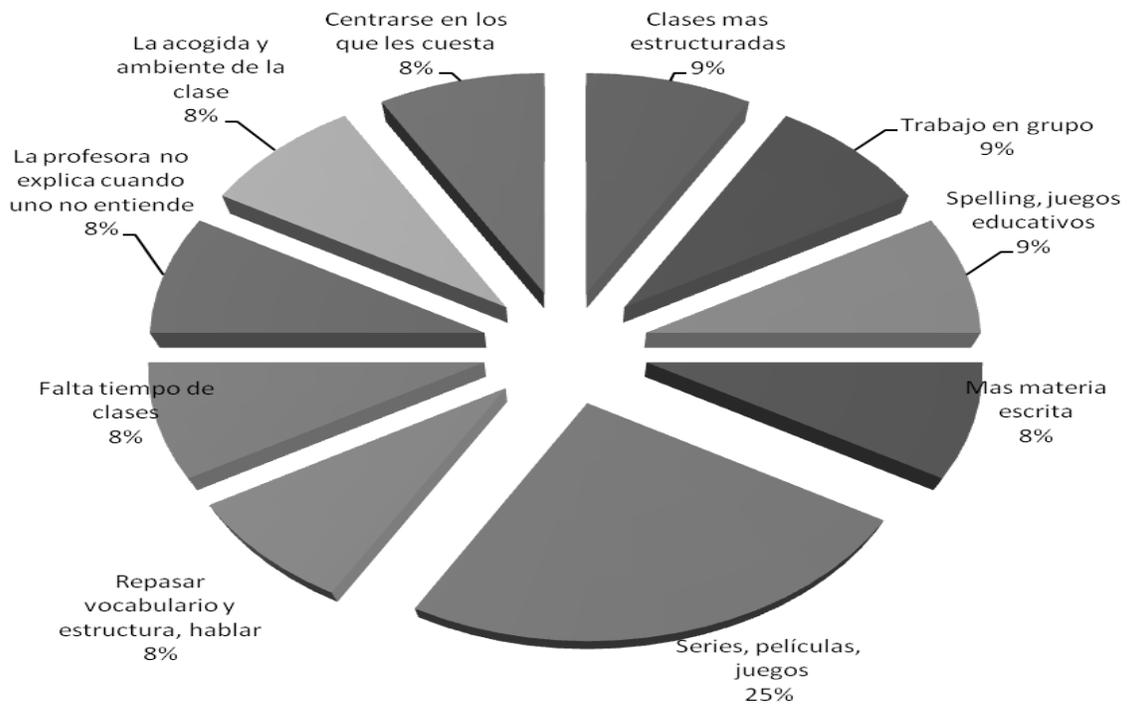
Appendix 1: Diagnosis survey results



¿QUÉ ACTIVIDADES TE AYUDAN A APRENDER?

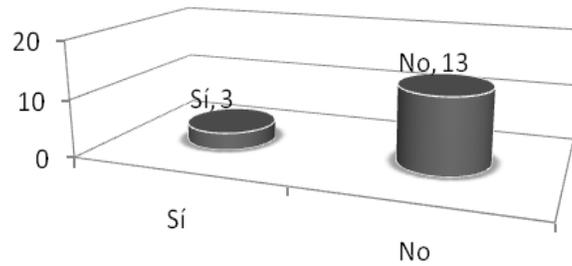


¿CÓMO MEJORARIAS LAS CLASES?



Cooperative learning survey results

¿Crees que funcionaron las actividades grupales en equipos que se hicieron durante las primeras dos clases?



Appendix 2: Assessment tools

Student's name: _____ Team: _____ Role: _____ Date: _____

HOW WELL DID MY TEAM MEMBERS AND I DO OUR JOBS? (SELF AND TEAM EVALUATION)

TEAM SKILLS RUBRIC	Yes (5pts)	Sometimes (3 pts)	No (1pt)
MANAGER: Explainer of ideas or procedures / (shares ones ideas and opinions)			
MANAGER: Encourager of participation (ensures that all members contribute; take turns and use low voices)			
SECRETARY: Recorder (writes down the groups decisions and edits the group's work)			
VICE-CAPTAIN: Checker of understanding (ensures that all group members can explain how to arrive at an answer or conclusion)			
CAPTAIN: Summarizer (Restates the group's major conclusions without referring to notes or original material)			
SOCIAL SKILLS. Did the group members			
	Yes (5pts)	Sometimes (3 pts)	No (1 pt)
Stay with the group			
Use quiet voices			
Take turns			
Use each other's names			

Comments.....
.....

TOTAL SCORE OUT OF 45 PTS.
SELF EVALUATION FORM
1. The two most important things I learnt were:
2. One thing that helped me learn was:
3. One thing I will do better next class is:

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

		Task & Timing	Language	Fluency & Clarity
EX	5	Skillfully executed task	Skillfully conveys message despite slips in language usage. Good use of lexical resources. Demonstrates ability to use a variety of grammar items, generally appropriately.	Minor hesitation Message is clearly understood
VGood	4	All <u>aspects</u> of the task are very well handled.	Conveys message well. Appropriate language. Demonstrates some flexibility with grammar range.	Some minor lapses but fairly fluent delivery. Minor problems with clarity due to occasional mispronunciation
Good	3	Minor problem with the task	Gets message across although often with some difficulty. Some problems with word formation and usage. Limited grammar range hinders comprehension.	Despite occasional lapses , message is delivered without undue hesitation. Some problems with clarity as a result of mispronunciation.
Weak	2	Noticeable problem with the task	Incorrect or erroneous lexis usage and an abundance of grammatical errors hinder communication of message.	Numerous hesitations interrupt flow. Some sections may be unclear.
VPoor	1	Major problems with task	Too many grammar errors to convey message	Fluency & clarity hindered by inability to produce coherent language.
Insuf	0	Absent	Absent	Absent

Team's name: _____ Member names: _____

Comments:

TEACHER'S CHECKLIST ON TEAMWORK

Team's name: _____ Date: _____

Behavior	Yes 2pts	No 1 pt	Comments
1. Do students understand the task?			
2. Have students accepted the positive interdependence and the individual accountability?			
3. Are students working toward the criteria, and are those criteria for success appropriate?			
4. Are students practicing the specified behaviors?			

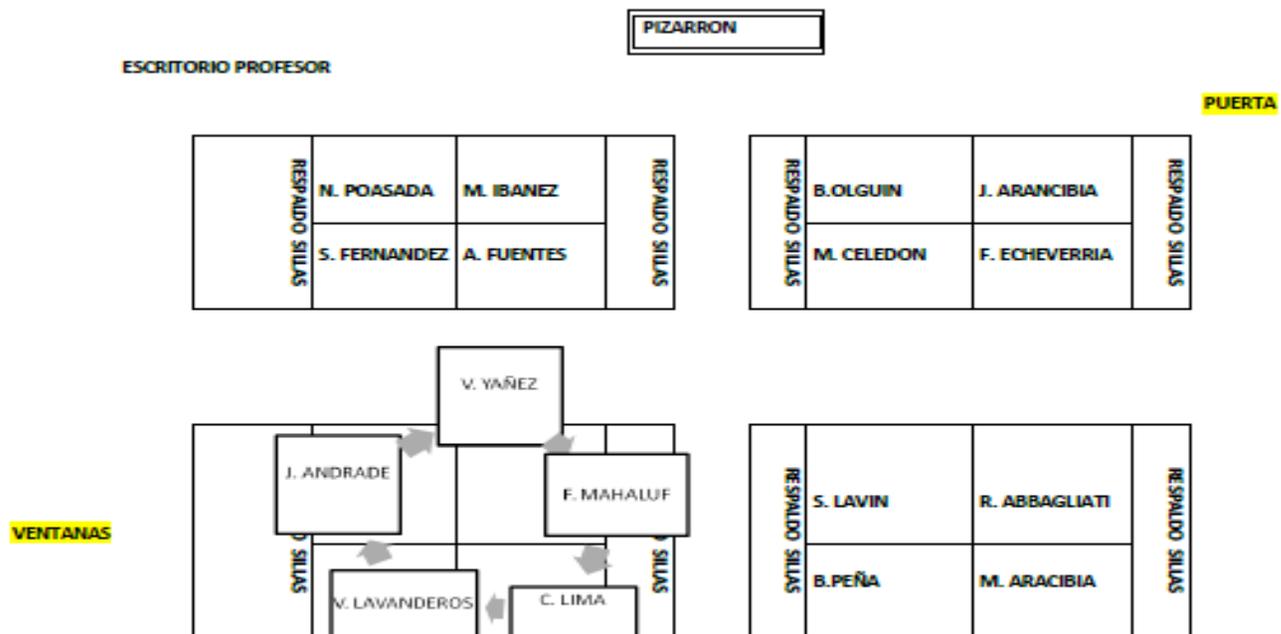
Adapted from Johnson & Johnson (1994, p.77)

Ideas to monitor and intervene

Check for	If present	If absent
Students who are assigned roles are doing them	Great job, you are doing your jobs	What is your role? What are you supposed to do? Do you have any doubts?
Groups have started the task	Good, you've started	Let me see you get started. Do you need any help?
Cooperative skills being used in general	Keep up the good work!	What skills would help here? What should you be doing?
Academic work being done well	You are following the procedure for the assignment. Great job!	You need more extensive answers. Let me explain you how to do this again
Members ensuring individual accountability	You are making sure everyone understands. Good!	Nico, what is the answer for N°1? Fco, why did the group get to this answer?
Reluctant students involved	I'm glad to see everyone participating	Agustín, can you explain N°4? Ok. Help him and I'll get back to you in 5 minutes.

Adapted from Johnson & Johnson (1994, p.81)

Appendix 3: Seating chart



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