COOPERATIVE LEARNING: A MEANINGFUL WAY TO LEARN ENGLISH

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I dedicate this thesis to my husband and my daughter, Juanita and Diego, for existing, for being my inspiration, for encouraging, for supporting me, and being the reason of all my life.....

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Maritza Reyes, Nataly Sánchez, Liliana Sánchez and Indira Soto
Abstract

In this research project, we analyze the influence of cooperative learning in English learning process through communicative approach among different populations: children, teenagers and adults.

In this project, participants from three different sites were involved: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center. Some important variables such as the difference of ages, populations, and contexts in the project, allowed us to compare numerous strategies and activities used in English classes in order to create a meaningful learning process acquiring knowledge through group activities.

In addition, we have documented students’ behaviors and perceptions about advantages and disadvantages of working in groups and the differences between group work and individual work in the classroom. Furthermore, the impact of using ethnography method in this project is helpful due to the fact that we as researchers share experiences with student-English teacher relation inside the classroom. Consequently, we could analyze how teachers apply cooperative learning most of the time for improving students’ knowledge level.

At the beginning of this project, we collected data through teacher and student interviews, and field diaries used by the different observers in the three sites. Moreover, through the process of collecting data, we established several categories involved in the project which summarize four main chapters that describe a specific feature. Furthermore, each chapter has some theories such as communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, cognitive developmental and
social interdependence theories, and the socio cultural approach that support our original hypotheses.

Once we had done the study of the information, we had made our conclusions focus on four different aspects: group activities, advantages and disadvantages of working in groups, student – student interaction and group work versus individual work.
Resumen

En este proyecto analizamos la influencia que tiene el trabajo cooperativo en el proceso de aprendizaje de inglés a través del enfoque comunicativo en diferentes contextos: niños, adolescentes y adultos.

Por lo tanto, los participantes en este proyecto fueron de tres contextos diferentes: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano y Centro de Lenguas. Algunas variables importantes como: la diferencia de edades, la población y los contextos nos permitieron comparar varias y actividades usadas en las clases de Inglés para crear un proceso de aprendizaje significativo, facilitando la adquisición del conocimiento a través de las actividades en grupo.

De igual manera, fueron documentados algunos comportamientos y percepciones de los estudiantes acerca de las ventajas y desventajas de trabajar en grupo y las diferencias entre trabajo grupal e individual en el salón de clase. Además, en este proyecto utilizamos la etnografía como método para nuestra investigación, debido a que nos permitió compartir experiencias con los estudiantes y profesores de la clase de Inglés en cada contexto. De esta forma, analizamos la forma en que los profesores usan el trabajo cooperativo, en la mayoría de los casos, para mejorar el nivel de conocimiento de los estudiantes.

Entonces, Al comienzo de este proyecto, recolectamos la información a través de entrevistas aplicadas a estudiantes y profesores y utilizamos paralelamente diarios de campo, escritos por cada una de nosotras como investigadoras en el contexto que cada una desarrolló su práctica. Posteriormente, gracias a la información obtenida pudimos establecer algunas categorías importantes en este proyecto, las cuales después llegaron a ser los cuatro capítulos
principales del análisis de este proyecto, pues describen características y hallazgos específicos en nuestro campo de interés. Así, cada capítulo contiene algunas teorías, entre ellas: la enseñanza comunicativa de la lengua, aprendizaje cooperativo, el desarrollo cognitivo y teorías de interdependencia social y el enfoque socio cultural que soporta el desarrollo de este proyecto.

Cuando analizamos la información obtenida, llegamos a las conclusiones de esta investigación, enfocándonos en cuatro aspectos: actividades de grupo, ventajas y desventajas del trabajo en grupos, la interacción estudiante – estudiante y trabajo en grupo versus trabajo individual.
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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to know and to examine cooperative learning in the English learning process inside the classroom. As future teachers it is important for us to focus on our reality, taking into account students’ context, interests and needs in order to create a rich environment in which students can express their ideas to others and can be autonomous and conscious about their own learning process.

At the same time, we want to know the ways in which group work influences language learning in order to provide important and significant data that enhance our professional labor. Through this project we want to note the real effects that students have in their English learning process when they do interactive work. Besides that, another purpose is to complete a meaningful project that helps teachers to understand the influence of the real context and students’ interactions on classroom dynamics.
Significance

Identify the influence of cooperative learning inside the classroom helps us to understand the different dynamics that emerge through interactions during English classes in three particular contexts. We are interested in analyzing the application of cooperative learning because this is a commonly used strategy during specific moments in the class that has proved to facilitate students’ English learning.

Considering the amount of activities that teachers carry out in classes, we notice there are different variables in students’ social and educational levels that influence the application of those activities inside the classroom; for that reason, we want to analyze the main characteristics and features that cooperative learning has when teachers use group activities in class in the three different contexts: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center. On the other hand, we think that cooperative learning is commonly used by English teachers, that is why we want to analyze student-student interaction influence in order to do our best to teach and to increase the attention and interest of our students; because all of us can provide important data not only in our country but in others too.

Consequently, we will explore cooperative learning as a method to enhance students’ learning in the different contexts in which we are doing this project.
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Research question: How does cooperative learning is implemented in EFL classes in three different educational contexts: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center?

General Objective:

To explore how cooperative learning influences students’ interactions within the classroom, focusing on specific interactional events in the class.

Specific Objectives:

- To explore the different activities that teachers carry out in English classes, based on cooperative learning.

- To compare the perspectives that students have about advantages and disadvantages of working in groups.

- To analyze student-student interaction and behaviors through group work activities.

- To determine the main differences between individual and group work, taking into account students and teachers perceptions.
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**Background**

We decided to develop a research project on this topic of cooperative learning, because from our practices sites and contexts, we have noticed that when students have received the correct structure of some grammatical topics and have the opportunity to share with others and to practice, most of the time they feel comfortable and can put the rules and structures into context, which helps them to remember the topic and its target language.

In this way, students are responsible for actively constructing their own understanding, which is in contrast to the more traditional model where students listen passively while teachers attempt to transmit knowledge by telling students what to think.

Moreover, we want to analyze the environments, in which the classroom interaction adopts the principles of collaborative learning, where the teacher designs specific moments to make students interact to address the activity collaboratively. There are also spontaneous moments in which students interact without any specific direction or instruction from the teacher.

In summary, we would like to go deeper into this topic, having the opportunity of our practices, to see the real effect of enhancing learning and achievement by encouraging cooperative learning interaction.

During the last years, education has been trying to adapt Cooperative Learning as a strategy to teach English. Then, some studies based on this topic have been carried out, providing new tools for the implementation of this strategy. Therefore, this part reports on different studies that aimed at analyzing group work in English language teaching incorporating diverse perspectives on the social construction of cooperation.
In the last decade there has been a growing interest among ESL/EFL teachers in using cooperative learning activities. The Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD), developed by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, is perhaps the simplest and most consistent application of the cooperative learning approaches (Arends, 1997). In STAD, students within a given class are assigned to four- or five member learning teams, each of which has representatives of both genders, various racial or ethnic groups, and high, average, and low achievers.

In the previous research study we mentioned it is seen that after the teacher has introduced the academic material, team members use worksheets to master the academic materials and then help each other learn the material through tutoring, quizzing one another, or carrying on team discussions. The students also receive worksheet answer sheets, emphasizing the importance of learning the concepts rather than simply filling out the worksheets. Following team practices, students individually take quizzes on the material they have been studying. These quizzes are scored, and each individual is given an improvement score. This improvement score is based on the degree to which the score exceeds a student’s past averages, rather than on a student’s absolute score. Weekly newsletters announce teams with the highest scores and students who have exceeded their own past records by the largest amounts or who have perfect scores on the quizzes.

The success of cooperative learning strategies is not automatically guaranteed. Group composition and group interaction processes have been found to impact the success or failure of cooperative learning groups. Teachers should provide the groups with initial training on cooperative learning procedures as well as group social skills. Teachers should continue to provide on-going monitoring and reinforcement to the students for implementing the procedures.
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Teachers can also unobtrusively monitor group activities so as to provide the appropriate level of help at the appropriate time and to prevent the problems of group domination, status effects, and “social loafing.” When including students with disabilities in cooperative learning groups, it is important to consider the age of the students as well as accommodations by peers and the type and severity of the disability. Where these groups have not been used in the past, it may take some time for students to learn how to interact within these groups successfully.

After noticing how cooperative learning is not just about asking students to work in groups but also how it helps students to contribute with their own abilities for a better performance, there is another study which supports that Cooperative Learning has frequently been used in English classrooms (Chou, 2011). This research suggests that Cooperative Learning provides mutual support, as well as successful and effective learning outcomes of tasks.

Chou’s project addressed a number of problems discovered in group oral presentations in a context where cooperative learning is the core of the course. As learning is strongly related to strategies or approaches adopted to facilitate one's comprehension and production of the target language, the purposes of the present study were to investigate the use and influence of learner strategies in cooperative and individual learning, and the benefits of cooperative learning in improving students’ English speaking ability.

The findings of this project showed that certain learner strategies had positive impacts on the students’ language performance in the two types of presentation and that group oral presentation had the greatest influence on improving students' speaking ability, while other forms of cooperative learning activities enhanced their motivation for learning.
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Additionally, there is a third study based on Cooperative learning applications in multicultural university classrooms. The purpose of the study was to compare selected cooperative learning methods (cooperative response techniques, and group grading incentives) with traditional learning methods. For 18 weeks, 61 students in undergraduate educational psychology classes participated in one of the two conditions. On three of four measures of achievement, the cooperative group showed significantly stronger performance than the non-cooperative group.

In addition, students exposed to the cooperative instructional methods reported significantly more favorable attitudes toward classroom instruction. The findings of this third study support the hypothesis that employing cooperative learning strategies in college classrooms improves students’ achievement and attitude toward instruction. Using a structured peer tutoring method, a cooperative response strategy, and group grading incentives with the experimental group seemed to promote its superior performance. These findings might be summarized by the old adage that the best way to learn something well is to teach it to someone else.

The fourth project reports the use of feedback (or response) in a Cooperative Learning basis in English writing instruction at a university in Japan. In this feedback, students receive advice about their writing from their peers.

This study aimed to explore how Japanese university students with no prior peer feedback experience interacted with each other using this kind of feedback in a semester-long English writing course. The study also aimed to explore what the students focused on with each other in peer feedback activities.
The students’ written and spoken feedback data showed not only the dynamic interactions between peers but also variations in such interactions. The students’ feedback covered multiple functions such as asking questions, giving additional related information, making suggestions, and reacting (responding) to numerous aspects of their peers’ compositions. The results also suggest that peer feedback is a promising activity for students to work cooperatively, benefit from each other, and improve their writing or, more broadly, communication skills in English. From pedagogical viewpoints, many other methods of cooperative feedback ought to be devised to facilitate student-student interactions that will increasingly aid students in becoming more skillful peer reviewers.

The last research was developed in Armenia in the major educational reforms in which teacher professional development is a key component. Much of the energy devoted to developing education in Armenia is targeted towards enhancing student-centered teaching, especially cooperative learning. This has become a significant challenge for many schools and teachers as they cope with understanding, learning and adapting these approaches in their current work. This paper explores teachers' views and understanding of cooperative learning and then discusses how national education policies should address further implementation of cooperative learning in Armenian schools. Data were collected through a large-scale nationwide survey and focus-group interviews. Observations in training workshops on cooperative learning also constitute part of the data used in this study. The main finding is that most teachers believe that they have adequate knowledge and understanding of cooperative learning after attending the training workshops, but that only a few are able to integrate it as an active part of their pedagogical repertoire. This final
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paper is important for us because it contributes to a currently weak research base on implementing cooperative learning in fragile educational contexts.

As a conclusion of this background, it is evident that cooperative learning is a common strategy used in different contexts; that is why we can find diverse results depending on those sites and the objective which wants to be achieved. Furthermore, each study represents a specific situation with particular objectives different from ours, which could result in some suitable findings to our project in comparison with others.
**Theoretical framework**

We are going to focus on “cooperative learning” as a teaching approach to make students work together to accomplish shared goals (Johnson & Holubec, 1998). We take into account three topics related to the main one: first, the Communicative Language Teaching, “which initially prioritizes communicative competence over accurate grammar and has proven one of the most successful in providing confident learners who are able to make themselves effectively understood in the shortest possible time” (Johnson, 1998 p.28). The second aspect of interest is about strategies teacher could use in order to create a cooperative environment in the classroom, since we as teachers have the responsibility to create situations which are likely to promote communication, and provide an authentic background for language learning. The final feature explores theoretical perspectives on student – student interaction, to encourage the use of language and maximize the percentage of talking time, rather than just teacher - student interaction and vice versa.

Human beings are in a social environment in which they can develop several activities for their benefit; cooperation is an important concept that we develop during this theoretical framework. When we are talking about cooperative learning its meaning and difference are relevant to another similar word: collaborative learning.

**Cooperative and Collaborative Learning:**

When we refer to cooperative learning, we mean the development of activities that two or more people could create with an intentional goal of learning in an academic field, or as Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1998, p. 15) mention: “collaborative learning is a teaching strategy
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where teams of two or more work together on learning tasks. On the other hand when we use the expression collaborative learning, it is about the spontaneous learning which people can acquire without planning this action or a specific learning goal.”

There are different interpretations of the terms “collaborative” and cooperative learning but the most relevant for our theoretical framework was the opinion found on “cooperative vs. collaborative learning” created by Richards and Rodgers, and John Myers, who says that cooperative learning is part of a more general instructional approach also known as collaborative learning.

Taking into account that difference between “cooperative” and “collaborative work”, we are going to focus our theoretical framework on the cooperative learning idea given by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 192), since cooperative learning is one of the most common and useful approaches that teachers can use nowadays. According to Slavi (1996, p. 43) the education theory has even proposed a teaching approach called (cooperative learning) which is entirely built on the concept of peer collaboration, and this approach is one of the greatest success stories in the history of education research.

There are some studies that say that the successful use of cooperative learning depends not just on what happens within the four walls of the classroom (McCafferty: 2006), but also what goes on outside in the rest of the school, as well as beyond the school grounds, powerfully affects our ability to facilitate student-student interaction. Furthermore, cooperation provides benefits not only for students but for teachers as well. Teacher-teacher collaboration offers psychological support and enhances motivation. When students know that teachers are working together, students are supplied with a model of collaboration in action.
Although models of collaboration in action are useful, it is also important to note that the study of cooperative learning comes from the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as an approach that expands on the goal of creating communicative competence compared to earlier methods that professed the same objective, teaching students how to use the language is considered to be at least as important as learning the language itself. Brown (1994) aptly describes the "march" towards CLT:

Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for 'real-life' communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. We are equipping our students with tools for generating unrehearsed language performance 'out there' when they leave the womb of our classrooms. We are concerned with how to facilitate incident language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential (p.77)

**Cognitive Developmental and Social Interdependence Theories:**

The cognitive - developmental theory originated from the work of Jean Piaget (1965) and Lev Vygotsky (1962), who stress the central role of social interaction in learning. Thus, Piagetian perspectives suggest that when individuals work together, socio–cognitive conflict occurs and creates cognitive disequilibrium that stimulates perspective–taking ability and reasoning. Besides that, Vygotsky’s theories argue that knowledge is social, constructed from cooperative efforts to learn, understand and solve problems (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998).

Social Interdependence Theory refers to students’ efforts to achieve, develop positive relationships, adjust psychologically, and show social competence. The premise of this theory is
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that the way in which social interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact with each other and determine outcomes (Kurt Lewin).

In addition, in cooperative learning, teacher strategies play an important role and it is well known that the success of the learning process depends more on the different ways of teaching and learning used in class by the teacher and the students. We can say that the teacher strategies are the basis of the learning process because they involve aspects such as motivation, creativity and well-structured activities which improve cooperative learning.

In order to relate the teacher process with cooperative learning, the teacher has to take into account some useful factors: “first, the amount of time spent together and the shared group history. Second, learn about each other. Third, proximity, contact and interaction. Fourth, cooperation. Fifth, the rewarding nature of group experiences. Sixth, intra-group competition. Seventh, group legends. Eighth, common threat. Ninth, investing in the group. Tenth, successful competition of whole group task. (Zoltan).”

Cohesiveness is often manifested by members seeking each other out, providing mutual support and making each other welcome in the group (Ehrman and Dornyei, 1998). Whether or not a class becomes a cohesive community is not simply a question of lack. There are a number of specific factors that can positively contribute to the process, and many of these are within the teacher’s control.

**Student – Student Interaction:**

Student – student interaction plays a crucial role in learning, and even at an early age interaction is crucial, keeping in mind that successful interaction depends a good deal on skill of the participants. This framework focuses on the role of the student's experience in small group
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interaction in learning. Research bearing on three aspects of small group learning is examined: (1) the relationship between interaction and achievement, (2) cognitive process and social-emotional mechanisms bridging interaction and achievement, and (3) characteristics of the individual, group, and reward structure that predict interaction in small groups. Methodological and substantive issues are discussed to evaluate and integrate research findings, and as guidelines for further research. The conclusion is that an individual's role in group interaction has an important influence on learning, and that interaction can best be predicted from multiple characteristics of the individual, group, and setting.

From those three main aspects, we have also found two other topics very useful, which have also helped us to narrow down our study: socio-cultural approach and communicative competences.

**Socio-Cultural Approach:**

The socio-cultural approach is based on the idea that society and culture shape cognition. Then, social customs, beliefs, values, and language are all part of what shapes a person's identity and reality (Edwards, 2009). According to this approach, what a person thinks is based on his or her socio-cultural background, thus, this takes into account more than the individual in attempting to understand cognitive processes.

Sociocultural approaches emphasize the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge, so our project is an analysis on the interactions between children and their partners, through repeated and varied experiences in supported routines and challenging situations. Thus, learners participate in a wide variety of activities which provide the opportunity for synthesizing several influences into the learner's modes of
understanding and participation, to determine if by internalizing the effects of working together, students acquire useful strategies and crucial knowledge.

Therefore, we have also taken into account the social interdependence theory, which can be positive when the actions of individuals promote the achievement of joint goals, and negative when the actions of individuals obstruct the achievement of each other's goals (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

**Communicative Competences and Communicative Language Teaching**

In English language teaching, it is common to find differences between some concepts such as communication, communicative competences and communicative language teaching and sometimes it is really hard to connect and apply all of them within our practicum and real life. Accordingly, Hymes offers a theoretical perspective to have a better performance in classes:

First of all, communicative competence is a shared knowledge between speaker-listener in a complete homogeneous speech community (Hymes, 1972). Being aware of that, it is important to say that the linguistic theory plays a special role in order that it is the way to get a right significance in a conversation or message but taking into account that behaviors and social rules also affect students’ performance in class.

Moreover, Communicative Language Teaching provides students opportunities to face their own realities, as Widdowson says (1972), “communicative language teaching requires not only a perfect use of grammar but also the ability to talk in real context”. In addition, Hymes says, “children develop a general theory of speaking appropriately in their community from an infinity experience of speech in their socio-cultural features” (p. 25) and we as teachers have to know how our students are learning. In one of the practicum sites, we work with children and it
is a challenge to teach a foreign language to them. It has to be in first place in the first place, we must teach through the didactic method and, in as second place, topics need to be interesting and useful for them.

Furthermore, It is not enough to teach them how to use some grammatical rule but also we have to deal with their experiences and their knowledge in order to know how to connect their lives with the use of English; it does not mean that one is more important than the other, is just that students need to deal with both of them, the use of grammar and their real context and connect them correctly. Here it is important to evidence the value of their performance; while students are learning new communicative competences, they learn to value the meaning that sentences take on when they are used to communicate.

Canale and Swain (1980) strongly believe that the study of grammatical competence is as essential to the study of communicative competence as is the study of sociolinguistic competence. They give us some criteria in order to use semantic, grammatical forms and social behaviors correctly, such as transparency with respect to the communicative function of the sentence, acceptability in terms of social geographical dialects, grammatical complexity and the role of given form in facilitating acquisition of another form (Canale and Swain, 1980).

What we have seen in our classes, and according Canale and Swain, is that there are three main competences that must be included in English language teaching and learning: the first one is grammatical competence used to teach just grammar semantics, the second one is sociolinguistic based in social rules for interpreting real context, and the last one is strategic competence that is verbal and non verbal communication strategies.

Getting deeper into how we can help our students to use communicative language learning, it is important to identify two moments in the teaching process. The first one is Skill-getting, which
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is related with the acquisition of cognitive abilities and production, it means that in this stage students learn how to articulate and construct their knowledge; and the second one is skill-using and it is when students learn to interact each other, in that way, they become aware about the importance of communicate their ideas. These stages or moments are really important for us because daily we have to deal with and think about our students’ needs. In our practicum and classes, it is important to apply and recognize student’s weaknesses and work on these to get better results.
Methodological Design

Sites description

This project was carried out in three different contexts: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center, where we did our practice.

**Liceo Hermano Miguel De La Salle**

Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle is an educational, fraternal and associate community organized through a model of integral management of quality processes, which from the academy, the investigation and the Human and Christian formation.

In addition, the school contributes to the critical, innovate and creative thought in order to form communicative, scientific, technological and managerial competitions depending on the human development. The school has a PEI and it is related to the human and christian values of the school. It says: “human development and social conviviality looking for excellence”

The **mission** statement has to do with the values and fundaments that make “La Congregación de las escuelas Cristianas Del Distrito La Sallista de Bogota” a community which attempts to give human, Christian and academic education to all children, as well as foster a whole, integral development.

The **vision** statement establishes that in the year 2015 our school will continue being a leading institution in giving educational services and which fosters and lives a quality culture through an integral education.
General objective:

To form integrally the children, girls, boys, young women and young boys of the Lyceum in the light of the orientations and philosophy of the educational style Lasallistaso that, they develop humanly, spiritually and scientifically in search of excellence.

Specific objectives:

To develop educational environments that stimulates the experience of the ethical dimension and coherence of the ideology with the attitudes; to be aware of and look for real life in all its manifestations and ecological sustainability. To generate processes that create consciousness about the situations of the victims of injustice, violence, abuse and exploitation, especially of the childhood and the youth.

Academic axe objective:

To give an excellent education that allows the members of the Lyceum to be of the same mind to the knowledge and related to the current needs, which answer in a pertinent way the most important questions of the included world, through the institution. It seeks the construction of academic and scientific development inside the communities of the school, generating an investigative culture looking for the human and the social aspect.

Organized axe objective:

To construct progressively until 2015 an organized environment focused on the students’ needs, the family and the institution; able to learning, teaching and transform in order to develop in the members their integral competitions to know, to interpret, to analyze and to apply
procedures and strategies of intervention in the human and cultural conflicts in order to develop integrally the person through the active and effective participation of his members.

The school works with the PHVA Cycle, it is an acronym which stands for planning, doing, verifying and acting (PHVA) and we put it in practice when the school structure Subject Planners, Exams and Projects

Population

Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle is a private school and it is on the way to being bilingual; there are four courses per grade; right now there are only two courses with only girls and in the other grades there are just boys.

I work there as a teacher and I’m in charge of first and fourth graders. In first grade, I work with 34 boys, and in fourth grade with 40 boys. In first grade the students are between 6 and 7 years old and in fourth from 10 to 11; the students are only boys and they are in many English courses in order to improve their level, including English courses given by teachers at the school on all Saturday mornings.

We worked and observed cooperative learning in fourth grade because it is more interesting due to their ages and because they have to work together on many activities. For us, it is easier to observe this group in terms of their knowledge, their behaviors.

Hermano Miguel de la Salle has 5 first grades and one of us did the practicum with four of them:
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- **Grade 101:** In this grade there are 31 students between 6 and 7 years old. This is the only grade that has girls; they are middle-class. The girls are really hard working and this is the most collaborative course and the most organized and responsible.

- **Grade 102:** There are 31 students from 6 years old to 7 years old. All of them are boys and they are middle-class. This is the youngest male grade.

- **Grade 103:** In this classroom, there are 29 students from 7 years old to 8 years old. All of them are boys and they are middle-class. These children are hard-working.

- **Grade 104:** There are 30 students between 8 and 9 years old. All of them are boys and they are middle-class. This is the oldest male grade.

Students learn English every day, and each grade has seven hours of English per week. All of them are working with the same textbook *Moving into English 1* by Harcourt School Publishers students are working on the same project that is related to topics that they have learned such as:

- They have to draw in a creative way the plant’s parts and explain them.

- They see present simple, so they have to write and draw a story, using third person in singular.

- They have to create a dictionary with the words that they don’t know. The dictionary has to have vocabulary, and a picture that represent the words and coherent sentences about it.
**Centro Colombo Americano**

The Educational Advising Center (EAC) binational Centro Colombo Americano Bogotá (CCA), is a certified Education USA Center affiliated with the United States Department of State, and is part of a global network with more than 450 information centers in 170 countries. Moreover, At the EAC, prospective students find unbiased and up-to-date information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions, academic programs, standardized exams, admissions requirements, financial aid, and exchange opportunities in the United States.

As a cultural foundation, the Colombo sees language learning as not only an educational, but also a cultural endeavor. Learning a language gives students a window to the world and invites reflection about themselves as well. The Colombo’s English programs are particularly designed to encourage students to get to know themselves, their learning, their world, and culture much more deeply. A central part of the learning experience in the Colombo is the construction of the student’s own identity and growth as a person in English. This necessarily opens students up to a number of reflections about existing perceptions of themselves, the world, learning and English, and allows students to develop new tools, knowledge and beliefs in the process of acquiring a second language.

In terms of target culture, students are not only acquiring a new linguistic or communicative code, but also the cultural code of that language. In addition, the learning experience at the Colombo stresses an innovative and informed approach to learning itself, with significant emphasis placed on training in language learning strategies, as well as development of the competences and skills needed to learn in today’s changing world.
The English Program’s philosophy of language does not see English or any other language as purely an instrument to be acquired in a technical fashion. Most individuals do not need only to know the correct vocabulary and structure, but need to be considered as complete individuals with a series of needs and interests. As such, the Center does not simply offer language services, but comprehensive learning programs. The Center, in designing English language programs, considers the needs and interests of all clients, also taking into account the context and setting of the instruction, the needs of the students, and the expectations of the parent client or other stakeholders, if applicable.

Mission

The Educational Advising Center (EAC) at the Centro Colombo Americano Bogotá provides impartial and up to date information on education and exchange opportunities in the U.S., professional academic advising services and administers reliable exams to facilitate educational understanding between Colombia and the United States.

Saturday Program Program Description:

The Saturday Program offers all levels of English courses in all three of our branches for children 7 and up, as well as adults from 18 to 35. Classes are two hours each Saturday, in two semesters with two vacations scheduled per year. Courses are divided by ages:

A-Courses for children ages 7 through 10

B-Courses for children 11-13

C-Courses for teens 14-16
D-Courses for adults 17 and up

**Adult English Program**

The **Adult English Program** offers all levels of English courses in all three of our branches. Classes are two hours daily, Monday through Friday, for 19 days per cycle. Each course has a total of 38 hours of instruction. Schedules range from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. New courses open each month.

**Population**

At CCA (Centro Colombo Americano), one of us has three different courses: one B8 and two B2: In the B8, there are 12 students between the 12 and 14 ages, five girls and seven boys. In one B2, there are 21 students between the 9 and 12 ages, ten girls and eleven boys. In the other B2, there are 16 students between the 9 and 12 ages, eight girls and eight boys.

It is important to take into account that these courses change each semester, which means that they are not all the semesters together and either with the same teacher.

The observations will be focused on the B2 group, which has 16 students.

**Languages Center**

**Mission**

The mission is to provide tools that facilitate communication in foreign languages as essential elements in the overall development of students, alumni, professors, internal helpers and external users framed high quality standards in the philosophy and values of La Salle University.
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Vision

The Language Center of La Salle University is the best option to meet the communication needs and cultural and academic exchange of students and serve as a channel to strengthen the relationship between knowledge communities and organizations, allowing professional advancement, intellectual development and the improvement of quality of life for their students.

Population

The Languages Center of La Salle University offers its programs to different kind of people. People who decide to study and learn a second language (English, French, Italian, Chinese and others) have the opportunity to go and study with an excellent quality of language at the Languages Center. Some of the students are from La Salle University since the study of a second language is a requirement for finishing their majors, others are internal workers (teachers and people who work in the general service area), and at the same time we can find external users. The range of age, or most of the students are teenagers (95% of the population) and the rest of population are adults (5%).

The learning process in the Languages center is divided into 7 levels. The idea is that, when learners finish their studies, they must have a B1 level of the language that they are studying. During the process of observation that I have had in the Languages Center, I have had contact with many kinds of groups from level 1 to level 7 who are studying English, due to the fact that I do not have a specific group for developing my observations, my tutorials, and my teaching process. For each observation and each teaching-process, my supervisor, Miss Angela Quintero, assigns a group to me and I must do my labor.
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In terms of the tutorials, students who want to go to this space and clarify their doubts can go, in other words, tutorial is an open space. .

This is a general vision of what people can find in the languages center of La Salle University.

Research Approach

To study how cooperative learning influences the learning process of the students in different educational contexts (Liceo Hermano Miguel de La Salle, Colombo Americano, Languages Center), we are using a qualitative approach. More specifically, ethnography, which is described by Genzuk (2003) as:

It relies heavily on up-close, personal experience and possible participation, not just observation, by researchers trained in the art of ethnography. These ethnographers often work in multidisciplinary teams. The ethnographic focal point may include intensive language and culture learning, intensive study of a single field or domain, and a blend of historical, observational, and interview methods. (p. 45)

Furthermore, ethnographic research employs different strategies for data collection: interviews, observation, and documents. This in turn produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, which result in one product: narrative description. This narrative often includes charts, diagrams and additional artifacts that help to tell "the story." As Hammersley stated: “Ethnographic methods can give shape to new constructs or paradigms, and new variables, for further empirical testing in the field or through traditional, quantitative social science methods” (2000, p.39).
Data Gathering Methods

Since we applied ethnography for this research project, we collected data through observations, field notes and semi-structured interviews with teachers and students from three different sites.

Observation – Field Notes

We have used observation and field diaries as two basic methods to develop our research since the beginning of this process. We observed naturally occurring events within three different classrooms: students’ behavior, teacher’s class management, and, thanks to observations and notes, we could decide to work on the influence cooperative has on language learning: then, our observations were focused on this topic.

For this reason, we did participant observation, since each one of us is not just observing, but also teaching in the different contexts. We are interested in this kind of observation because it involves participating in the social world, in whatever role, and reflecting on the products of that participation. We realized that participant observation takes time and commitment; however, it offers the chance to generate new understandings and to build theories.

Interviews

We decided to use and apply semi-structured interviews because it is a trustworthy technique to find and analyze what is happening inside the classroom through different experiences. In this case, interviews played an important role, taking into account that teachers
could talk to us face-to-face and communicate their familiarity with our topic making of them a significant mode to complement and relate our classes, our students and our practice with them.

The interviews we conducted were semi-structured interviews because we wanted to know students’ and teachers’ points of view, and the idea is to get as much information as we can about how their students are learning in class through cooperative interaction. In this way, their opinions and answers are going to be an essential tool for us in our thesis.

For our thesis, we want to collect data with structured interviews that consist of a list of pre-planned questions in a fixed order (sequenced). We planned to conduct these interviews in all the sites with different kind of teachers in order to find reasons, causes and effects of cooperative interaction.

Subsequently, during the two previous semesters we collected data for our thesis project, from three different contexts. Then, we conducted some interviews with teachers and students, taking into account a common aim: to know about students’ interaction from teachers’ experiences and to get students’ opinions and perceptions about working together in class.

**Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle:** There, we applied a semi structured interview with two of the English teachers who work there. In addition, we interviewed two focal groups of students, each group of about six and seven students.

**Centro Colombo Americano:** In this institute, we conducted two teachers’ interviews and we have also interviewed students within two focal groups.
**Languages Center:** From the Languages Center we have two teachers’ interviews and two interviews from students, which were individual interviews and not focal as in the other two sites, since the two students were from two different levels: 3rd and 4th.
Data Analysis

Once we conducted the interviews in the three different contexts, Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center, we transcribed them and analyzed the common answers from the different teachers and students to identify some categories in order to find common aspects seen in English classes.

Taking into account that teachers and students have similarities in their teaching and learning processes, we found similar topics in those interviews that helped us to understand why working in groups is important for them.

Then, to facilitate the selection of the most important categories in our interviews, we created conventions that specified the three contexts and the selected teachers and students. These conventions helped us to understand several symbols that we then used in the analysis.

Conventions

Contexts:

LHEMI : C1
COLOMBO AMERICANO: C2
LANGUAGES CENTER: C3

Population:

Student from LHEMI School: S1
Student from Colombo Americano: S2
Student from languages center: S3
Teacher from LHEMI School: Pedro Ramírez: T1
Cooperative Learning:  A meaningful way to learn English

Teachers from ColomboAmericano: Leidy Becerra: T2, Antonio Toro: T3
Teachers from languages center: Norma Betancourt: T4, Edgar Luque: T5

After establishing these conventions, we designed a chart in which we organized general categories found in our interviews. These categories are made specifically to summarize the most important aspects based on cooperative learning, each one with some codes or observations taken from the transcriptions.

The following is a sample of the chart we used for students’ and teachers’ interview transcriptions:

**STUDENT INTERVIEWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>CODES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferences when working in group</td>
<td>S3C3-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages of working in groups</td>
<td>S3C3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3CE-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TEACHER INTERVIEWS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-Student relation</th>
<th>T4C3-4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3C2-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3C2-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T2C2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1C1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1C1-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1C1-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this research project, we analyzed our field diaries as well, which helped us to find some aspects seen during our observations in English classes that are going to be part of our data analysis.

Similar to our analysis of the interviews, we made a specific chart in which we wrote the most important general findings about cooperative learning in class in the three contexts.

FIELD NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group activities in class</th>
<th>FD1A-2: At the beginning teacher showed a big book about family members making girls repeat the vocabulary.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD2-8: In pairs, Ss guess in which place their classmates are: one student think in a place in which he or she is and the other has to guess. T exemplifies: A: Maritza, are you at the Colombo? B: No, I’m not. A: Are you near the Colombo? B: No, I’m not. A: Are you near the park? B: Yes, I am. T gives Ss for evaluating their partners: Correct (happy face) Incorrect (sad face). The winner is the person with more happy faces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD3-8: students had to create a conversation in which, firstly, one of them formulated the questions and the other one answered them, and 5 minutes later, they changed their rolls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First, we created the above tables from our common findings in our interviews and field notes and then, we created four main categories taken from the previous ones based on the most important, in order to establish the specific categories, which are going to be our four final subchapters.

When several categories were created, we as researchers decided to establish four different macro categories which show the main ideas that have guided the project:

- Group activities in class
- Advantages and disadvantages of working in groups
- Student –student interaction through group work activities
- Group work versus individual work

Those categories were considered the most relevant due to represent the summary of the project and its main points. Thus, the observations or codes were grouped depending on the importance and support that could give to each one of the four categories.

**Group Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>S3C3-1: “Prefiero trabajar en grupos pequeños”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-2: “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-3: “Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profe porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-5: “Deberías dejarnos trabajar siempre con nuestros amigos porque ya nos conocemos y podemos hacer las cosas más fáciles. Digamos yo ya sé que Lucia es mejor escribiendo y Juan Ca dibujando”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-9: “si es verdad. Nos gusta trabajar en equipo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-16: “Además nunca trabajamos en grupo”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th><strong>T4C3-5:</strong> “I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T3C2-19:</strong> “The ones in groups ABSOLUTELY, they love it, doesn’t matter the activity, they love to be with their partners and work together”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>T1C1-6:</strong> “I really like making students to make presentations, oral presentations ehh it can be relate to interviews or creating by themselves or dialogues”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Diaries</td>
<td><strong>FD1A-1:</strong> At the end of the class, Beata said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so, Beata separate the class in groups of 5 people and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. Beat asked to me (Natalie Sanchez) if I could translate what she was going to say and in this way students could understand everything. Teacher Beata gave a photocopy about present continuous to the students. The students did it for 30 minutes and after they finished doing it very quietly, they filled out a song using -ing. The teacher made some hand gestures to explain the verbs and she said some words in Spanish to make them understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she said to the students that she was very sad because of their behavior. Teacher Natalie showed some picture cards about the solar system and the big book page 12 to students. After that, teacher Natalie gave some vocabulary cards to each boy and the idea was that they had to find the correct meaning in the dictionary and paste the cards in their notebook. In this class the topic was”” artist”. This activity was made in the backyard of the school. Teacher Natalie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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thought that being outside could be a good idea to relax them and work in a different way. Some boys did not work because they are lazy but the rest of the class was working and focused on the activity.

FD2-3: When Ss finish, T asks them to compare their answers with their classmates, by following the model:
A: What do you have in number 1?
B: I have _______, and you?
A: I have _______.
T, plays the CD again and Ss in groups, check their answers.

FD3-8: Students had to create a conversation in which, firstly, one of them formulated the questions and the other one answered them, and 5 minutes later, they changed their roles.

Student - student interaction through group activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>S3C3-2: “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S2C2-3: “Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profé porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S1C1-12: “entonces si trabajo con mi amigo nos divertimos mas”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>T3C2-30: “But, well, in conclusion, it’s very important to allow students interact between them in different moments of the class, and you will see how learning and communication become more natural every single time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T4C3-6: “Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and group activities they can interact with other students”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1C1-13: “they think that the teacher is the one who speaks in English but when they work in groups or in peers, they see and they realize that the other student”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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In addition, each evidence was classified depending on the topic that was being developed, and not just on the kind of tool that researchers used for collecting the data. Evidently, not all the data was used because of the fact that some we used the most important categories, but not all.

The two tools for collecting data (field diaries and interviews) were used for giving support to the established information due to the fact that each one shows a different point of view of the multiple participants who were involved in the research.

Considering the age, the role of each interviewee (students or teacher), and the context of the research (Liceo Hermano Miguel de La Salle, Centro Colombo Americano, and Languages Center), the perspective varied but at the end, all of them converge to the same topic: the established categories.

The four macro categories evidence the numerous tools of every context and the population who participated in it, giving as a result a triangulation of the viewpoints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field Diaries</th>
<th>FD1B-29: During the peer work activity, students checked their own mistakes and they had the opportunity to learn from it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD3B-62: In pairs students had to do a speaking activity, it was a dialogue; they had to help each other with pronunciation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD2-13: Ss were really interested in the activity about creating a house, but they felt bad because they couldn’t work with their friends; but after 3 minutes working together, they were encouraged to show their designs to the others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Languages Center

Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle

Centro Colombo Americano
Results

In this chapter we describe the analysis of the data collected from the three different contexts in which we developed our project and which will be recognized in this analysis as: C1: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle LHEMI, C2: Centro Colombo Americano and C3: La Salle Languages Center, considering data collection instruments such as: students and teachers semi-structured interviews and field notes in order to know different points of view, looking at the perspectives that teachers and students have in common: student – student interaction.

From the data collected, we found four main categories to analyze: First, group activities in class; second, advantages and disadvantages of working in groups; third, student – student relation and finally, group activities versus individual activities in class.

Group Activities in Class

Cooperative learning has been seen during the last decade as a successful teaching strategy in which small teams with different English language learning levels use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. As Johnson & Holubec (1998) state: “cooperative learning is a teaching approach to make students work together to accomplish shared goals.” Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping their classmates to learn. It is possible to create an opportunity of achievement in the classroom through cooperative learning techniques that can be seen as a way to promote student learning and academic accomplishment, increase student retention, enhance student motivation with their learning experience, help students develop skills in oral communication, and promote student self-esteem.
Cooperative Learning: A meaningful way to learn English

If we think of class activities to improve student’s English level, it is not enough to think about student’s attitudes and behaviors, but also about teacher strategies and group activities in class that help students comprehend better. Sometimes it is not easy for teachers to create suitable strategies or activities to make students participate actively in groups, but it is necessary to think of a wide range of group activities in which the main goal is to interact with each other. Johnson and Johnson (1989) mention that:

Educators are now expected to prepare students for a world where social and interpersonal skills are emphasized; bright students who have difficulty relating to other students need special help as do disadvantaged students who fail to learn social skills at home. To succeed, students must learn to communicate and work toward common goals within diverse social strategies and class group activities. (p. 90)

In our research project, group activities in class represent the way in which teachers guide students to work in groups, even if sometimes the results are negative. In this section, we will present how group activities are developed in the three different contexts: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center. We could determine that teachers use some common group activities in class to improve the students’ English level.

At the beginning of this project, we had the opportunity to make some observations of a teacher from Polonia who worked at Liceo Hermano Miguel La Salle. Her classes were dedicated to teaching third grade children new vocabulary and pronunciation. In our field diaries, we found some activities that enabled interaction between students through some English projects.

At the end of the class, teacher said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so she separated the class into groups of 5 students and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. The teacher asked me if I could translate what she was going to say and, in this way, students could understand
Cooperative Learning: 
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everything. In another class observed by us, the teacher gave a photocopy about present continuous to students. The students completed it during a 30 minute time period and, after they finished doing it very quietly, they filled out a song using -ing. The teacher made some hand gestures to explain the verbs and she said some words in Spanish to make them understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she said to students she was very sad because of their bad behavior. 

It is important to mention that, for this teacher, it was not easy to deal with her students in the classes because they did not pay attention since she spoke in English all the time and teacher-student interaction was not easy. Even when this teacher tried to be as clear as possible, in many classes we saw her worried, and that is why we have to analyze how effective an English class can be with a native teacher, especially for children. According to Nunan (2009):

the employment of native teachers of English where English is a foreign language, coupled with a growing concern over teaching effectiveness, had led to collecting data about teachers’ performance through students feedback. Non native teachers fulfill in class teaching and in class management roles better than native teachers do. This is the case of this teacher keeping in mind that students did not worked well and she needed all the time help from colleagues to translate in Spanish what she was trying to express. (p.5)

Following this chapter, we have some group activities made by teachers at Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, and the most important activity involves working with books and materials from the school. Before giving some examples about activities, it is important to contextualize the material used in English classes in that school. For elementary, teachers use a text book called “Moving into English,” which includes daily activities for students; at the same time, each student had a practice book useful to do activities and to be used as a guide. In this school, the use of this material is obligatory for students and teachers. Nevertheless, for some teachers, “Moving into English is quite difficult” because the book has a very advanced vocabulary. This means that a textbook for third grade could also be used for tenth grade. Therefore students find
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it really hard to use and to understand the book, but we as teachers try to manage the book in an appropriate way explaining the topic with a basic vocabulary.

Some activities from LHEMI found in our field diaries are:

Teacher showed some picture cards about solar system and the big book page to students 12. **FD1A-2: 18th, 10/2010**

At the beginning, the teacher showed a big book about family members, making the girls repeat the vocabulary in groups of 3 students. After explaining the topic for an hour, the teacher told the students to read a lecture about life cycles in their book” Moving into English.” They were in groups of three boys and the teacher gave a copy with some cycles to them. **FD1A-10, 18th, 10/2010**

When teachers plan group activities in English class, it is important to improve the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, to apply the communicative approach. According to Nunan (2009), “a communicative task is a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language whole their attention is principally focus on meaning rather than form” (p.2). In this project, the most significant finding was that almost all group activities in English classes in the three contexts (C1, C2, and C3) were carried out to improve the speaking part, if teachers did any activity. Everything was based on communication and the goal was to practice the oral part.

Some interesting activities were found in our research project throughout implementation of oral presentations and class projects in C1 and C2.

In this excerpt, we can see that class projects are not just useful for fostering student interaction but also speaking skills:
Students had to present in an oral way their projects to their partners; they had between 5 and 7 minutes to do it. The rest of the class had to ask questions about the project. In that way, every single student has to develop speaking skills. That day, was the presentation of the projects and they had to present and perform a song in groups of 4 students. That day, some moms came to class to watch their sons and in this calls teacher could realized two important aspects. The first one is that students have excellent behavior in front of their moms and, second, they were really happy and interested in this activity because it was different and funny for them. **FD1B-12, 10/2010**

Similar to the student’s opinion, we can evidence the importance that those projects have for teachers:

**T4C2-5:** I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.

Furthermore, students know how meaningful those kinds of activities are for improving their own learning process.

**S3CE-5:** Pues que aparte de lo de uno, está mirando lo de otras personas al tiempo y también se está ayudando con las dificultades o errores de los demás pues aprende uno también.

Thus, activities in pairs and in groups were common at C1, C2 and C3 when students had to ask questions about the vocabulary seen in class, prepare a conversation using correct intonation and pronunciation, read a story in groups, or do summary through pictures about a text. One common aspect in these three contexts is the implementation of group activities, which promotes cooperative learning in English classes.

In Centro Colombo Americano, we noted that group activities were specifically made for answering questions and facilitating interaction between students. Here, these kinds of activities were easier because students know that they want to learn English and the teacher is just a guide
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to reach this goal. In Centro Colombo Americano, the classes were more efficient not only due to the teacher’s strategies, but also because students have a higher English knowledge.

Here we have two examples of speaking activities in class at Centro Colombo Americano:

Teacher asks Ss to make a circle and she has some pictures pasted on the board and the words. Then, Ss play tingo tingo tango and the person who gets the ball, goes in front and matches the word with the correct object. FD2-1:12, 02/2011

The next example is related to the kind of activity done at Centro Colombo:

When Ss finish, T asks them to compare their answers with their classmates by following the following model:

A: What do you have in number 1?
B: I have ______, and you?
A: I have ______.
T. plays the CD again and Ss check their answers in groups.

Thus, with the institutional project at Centro Colombo, the idea is to improve students’

English levels through communicative activities, which are done as games to make English classes funnier and more interesting for students. According to Macedonia (2005):

Clearly, playful handling of grammar is more entertainment than written exercises. If learners play during instructions, have fun at competition and success and yet experience neither negative evaluation nor frustration due to their errors, then there seems to be no argument against the use of games. (p.3)

If we notice the development of these activities at Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center, it is evident that, at school, it is very difficult to have group activities most of the time because there are many students and control over them is almost impossible. On the other hand, in C2 and C3, students are aware of what they are doing and they show interest in learning English.
Consequently, the activities done in LHEMI showed how difficult it could be to work in groups, as we can see in this sample:

After the teacher explained the topic, she made a group activity in groups of 5 people in which the students had to write on the blackboard the word that corresponded to the picture the teacher was showing. Nevertheless, she had to stop the game because students weren’t paying attention to her and, at some point, they started to run, play and talk and the teacher was getting angry with them. **FD2-10, 04, 07/2010**

Here, we can see that students don’t know how to be very cooperative.

**S1C1-13:** “yo prefiero trabajar en grupo porque yo soy el más inteligente de todos y yo siempre soy el que les ayuda porque ellos solos no pueden hacer nada”

Other activities and games made in C1 were about organizing the classroom in groups of four boys and writing the most important sentences of the text on sheets of paper. We observed that, when the work is with more than two students, they waste time doing different things and they do not get interested in the activities. However, when students worked in competition, they got motivated just for getting points and high grades. If we compare this behavior with C2, it is easy to see how different the classes are in C1 and C2 based on students behaviors when working in groups.

In the third context (C3), group activities are evident but in a different way, given that the activities are more focused on feedback between students and the idea is to correct their mistakes by sharing ideas and experiences. Giving feedback to students is an opportunity to learn from mistakes, and this is an evident strength in C3 and C2 but not in C1.

In this excerpt from a student’s interview, we can see that students take advantage of group work activities to co-evaluate.
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**S1C2-10:** si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos.

And in this part of teacher’s interview, it is noticeable that teachers at CCA assign group exercises in order to make students assess their partners.

**T3C2-28:** They complement their ideas and feel supported almost all the time, because they are in the same “level”, that’s different with teacher - student because they feel in disadvantage, because naturally they know we as teachers know more than they

Being aware of the number of students at C1, it is impossible to give useful feedback to students since there is not enough time. Also, students are children and most of them are not aware of or interested in improving their mistakes. Here in C3 teachers, conduct some group activities to develop the students’ language skills,

In the same way, as in context 2, there is also an opportunity of co-evaluation in context 3:

Students must read their exercises aloud, and the rest of their classmates must correct them.  
**FD3-2, 21st, 09/2011**

They correct themselves and sometimes they correct others. **FD3-2, 21st, 09/2011**

To conclude this category, group activities can differ depending on each context and each teacher’s methodology. Keeping in mind the previous experiences and findings, the hardest context for working in groups is C1 because the students are children and they are playing in class. On the other hand, in C2 and C3 there is a focus on learning English as well as acquiring new knowledge. That is why the teacher should apply different strategies and activities to motivate students and control a large group class.
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Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Group

In educational contexts, teachers use different tools for developing activities in class. Activities in groups or individual tasks are implemented in class on a daily basis. These components of the class need special attention and deep analysis due to the fact that, most of the time, working in groups and individual work affects the learning process.

In this section, we present the advantages and disadvantages when student work in groups taking into account the three different contexts of our research project: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center to discover common aspects presented among the sites and the points of view of learners and teachers.

Most of the teachers in the three contexts agreed with Houldsworth and Mathews (2000) who find that, “students from groups composed of a diverse mix of individuals in terms of gender, age, work experience, and entry qualifications performed better on assessments than students from groups in which members had been allocated alphabetically.”

That idea helped us conclude that teams composed of members with different abilities and personalities are more effective at decision-making than homogenous groups. As Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) also mention, “In studies of cooperative-learning groups in classroom contexts, learning is enhanced when groups are formed of students with different levels of ability and personal characteristics.”

The data collection evidences the preferences that students have for group work because they think that it has an effect on them individually. It had helped them to better understand the unique ways in which others work and learn in their group.
The following samples show that students thought that their greater understanding or awareness of others’ styles led them to be more tolerant, collaborative, and effective at resolving potential misunderstandings:

**S3C3-5:** Pues que aparte de lo de uno, está mirando lo de otras personas al tiempo y también se está ayudando con las dificultades o errores de los demás pues aprende uno también.

**S1C1-10:** si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos.

Another relevant aspect for this research project is the students’ perception of group work, which is based on different ways, such as: competition, collaboration, and in others cases, demonstration of their own abilities in front of others. Those perceptions are evidenced by teachers:

**T3C2-15:** It also depends on the population you have, because I have noticed that there are activities that make adults interact, while the same activities don’t allow children to have a lot of opportunities to interact and communicate their ideas and maybe not because they don’t have enough fluency or vocabulary, but just because they are not interested about the topic.

**T2C2-5:** I assign both kinds of activities. First exercises from the book as a way to confirm the use of structures and then, interaction and cooperation to practice with the target language and the expressions.

Most of the time, in Context 1 and 2 (Liceo Hermano Miguel de La Salle and Centro Colombo Americano), group work fosters competition among learners and it helps students demonstrate their own abilities since they are children they enjoy to develop activities in class through struggle.

The next excerpt taken from a research field note indicates how students are encouraged to work in groups through competition:
Students worked by lines and the first group who finished had 5 point for the final grade. However, there were some students who didn’t do anything, they just played and their partners did the activity. **FD1B-48, 15th, 09/2010**

Similarly, students are motivated to develop group work activities to make competitions. And it evidence through the students’ opinion:

**S1C1-23**: es chévere esas competencias porque nos toca colaborarnos entre todos y es muy rico.

**S2C2-3**: Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profe porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.

Contrary to this idea of group work, in Context 3 (Languages Center), the ages of the students and adults, are similar, but different than the ages in contexts 1 and 2. In C3, the idea of group work, most of the time, is focused on collaboration as it is demonstrated in a field note and from students opinions:

Students must read their exercises aloud, and the rest of their classmates must correct them. **FD3-20, 12th, 03/2011.**

**S3C3-7**: el trabajo en grupo es favorable por el apoyo entre los integrantes.

**S3C3-2**: Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas.

Furthermore, we found that teachers from the three different contexts agree with the idea that working in groups is an interesting and useful mechanism for developing the four skills that the communicative approach focuses on: speaking, writing, listening and reading. Since, this approach is the method that institutions use for teaching and learning English as a second language. We note that teachers use most of the time group work activities to develop speaking skill.

For example, in C3 the teacher mentioned:

**T4C3-6**: Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and in group activities they can interact with other students. Group work is good
because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too.

Similarly, another teacher from the same context said:

**T4C3-7:** English group work influences English learning because they can learn from each other.

In the second and first contexts teachers affirm:

**T3C2-27:** I think the most pertinent theory about it is the one form Vygotsky about “the zone of proximal development,” because he supports that children need each one from the other to have a complete process.

**T1C1-13:** they think that the teacher is the one who speaks in English but when they work in groups or in peers, they see and they realize that the other student also speaks in English.

As is evident from the field notes, the preferences of teachers and students concerning developing activities in groups is meaningful, but there is another relevant aspect that must be taken into account: the disadvantages of working in groups.

Group activities face several weaknesses, such as: disagreements between the members of the group, different levels (high – low achievers) in the same group, lack of student comfort when working with the other members, and lack of participation when some team members do not participate as much as others. According to Lapp (1993):

The disadvantages of group work are equally the problems inherent in social relationships. When people do not like each other, they are more likely to experience conflict. Just as any factor that creates positive bond between people can increase group’s cohesion, so any factor that creates disaffection can increase conflict (p. 238)

First, as is seen in the following extract, students find it difficult to agree in some specific activities during the class:
Second, students show their discomfort when they have to work with people who do not understand or who do not accomplish the activities’ goals easily:

**S2C2-2:** Es que a veces nos pones a trabajar con los más bruticos y siempre perdemos.

**S3C3-3:** Es preferible trabajar con personas que sepan más Inglés.

Also, teachers notice how the environment turns annoying when students are assigned to work with people who do not find it easy to finish the activities on time or comprehend the instructions:

**T3C2-22:** Sometimes, they are really nice, one to the other, but sometimes they are really annoying: high achievers work by their own and ask the others to be silent and don’t disturb their thoughts

The fact that students feel better working with students who understand is also noticeable in a field note:

Sometimes students asked to another student about the doubts that they had and it was an interesting cooperative learning because they corrected themselves and felt more comfortable with a person who had the same English level as them. **FD3-33,** 16th,04/2010.

Third, students do not work in the same way when they are with their close friends as when they are with different people:

**S1C1-12:** entonces si trabajo con mi amigo nos divertimos más

**S2C2-5:** Deberías dejarnos trabajar siempre con nuestros amigos porque ya nos conocemos y podemos hacer las cosas más fáciles. Digamos yo ya sé que Lucia es mejor escribiendo y Juan Ca dibujando
Fourth, these excerpts of student and teacher interviews and field notes indicate the most noticeable disadvantage: in the same group, one or two students work while the others just copy:

S1C1-15: Sí me acuerdo pero también es aburrido trabajar todo el tiempo en grupo yo prefiero a veces trabajar solo porque a mí no me gusta que se copien de lo que yo hago porque mi mamá siempre me dice que no me deje copiar de nadie.

T2C2-4: I prefer individual activities because when students work in group it is more difficult to know their own weakness because most of the time one student does the activity and the other members of the group just copy it.

In each group, there were some students that worked so hard in order to have extra points. However, there were others that didn’t want to do anything they just were playing and talking about different things that were not related to the subject. FD1B-11, 09th, 05/2011.

However, according to Lapp (1993):

Successful group work can be designed and presented to the students, following three principles. The first, and most obvious, characteristic of successful group work is to design tasks that cause students to talk with one another, to hear how their peers approach the content and then to be able to compare this with their own approach. Second, the task must provide a stimulus question or problem that causes students to cooperate as they formulate, share, and compare ideas with one another. Finally, all tasks should be broad enough to involve both individual and group accountability.” (p.45)

In conclusion, group work activities have advantages, evident in the classroom and mentioned by students and teachers from C1, C2 and C3: group work allows students to learn by cooperating with each other and by challenging them through competitions. In contrast, the fact that students do not like to work with all their classmates and that not all the students participate in the activities were the most visible disadvantages at this stage of the analysis.
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Student –Student Interaction through Group Work Activities

Students’ interaction plays an important role in the educational field since learning occurs within a social context. For that reason, it is important to consider that people learn from one another to develop their learning process in a meaningful way.

This means that, to build knowledge, student interaction with others is significant due to the fact that it provides more opportunities to share common goals and, at the same time, through interactions, students help and support each other to achieve their aims. Moreover, it is important to take into account students’ behaviors and attitudes towards group work activities because those affect the students’ learning process.

In this section, we will present how student’s interactions take place, taking into account the three different contexts of our research project: C1: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, C2: Centro Colombo Americano and C3: Languages Center. Moreover, based on the data collection of our project, we can say that students who have the opportunity to interact become more active and responsible in their own learning due to the fact that they are developing and sharing the same goals, needs, and interests and it allows them to learn from one another; and through that interaction, students not only have control over learning what is taught but also over helping classmates to learn because each individual brings strength to the group.

The next excerpt shows students’ interest when they work in groups:

In each group, students worked in a respectful way, they helped each other, and they did their best to have a good result. FD1B-17, 27th, 04/2010.

Also, students prefer group activities because they feel more comfortable correcting their own mistakes:
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S1C1-10: sí teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos.

As in the teacher’s interview we note that teachers greatly prefer student interaction since that can improve their skills:

T4C3-6: Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too.

These three samples show that the success of the group work depends on members’ support and reliance on each other to achieve an agreed-upon goal.

In addition, teachers support students’ interaction using pertinent theories to show the importance of developing group work activities.

T3C2-27: I think the most pertinent theory about it is the one from Vygotsky about the zone of proximal development, because he supports that children need each one from the other to have a complete process.

In addition, the Social Interdependence Theory, as Johnson & Johnson stated (1989), “refers to students’ efforts to achieve, develop positive relationships, adjust psychologically, and show social competence, and it exists when individuals share common goals and each person’s success is affected by the actions of the others.” There are two types of social interdependence: positive social interdependence and negative social interdependence.

On the one hand, positive social interdependence occurs when the actions of individuals promote the achievement of joint goals. According to Deutsch (2011): “positive interdependence results in promote interaction, i.e. individuals encouraging and facilitating each other’s effort to complete tasks in order to reach the group’s goals.” This means that every single member of the
group needs to focus their attention on the development of the activity to facilitate the achievement of the proposed aims.

In this excerpt of a field diary, we can see the meaningful and positive influence of social interdependence in a real example:

In the groups, students worked so hard, they helped each other, and they focused their attention on the activity. One person drew, another colored, another student wrote the title. Everybody is working in order to develop the activity in a meaningful way. FD1B-54, 21st, 08/2010

The same positive aspects are evident in a student’s interview:

S2C2-3: Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profeso porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.

According to teacher perception, group work provides opportunities to learn:

T4C3-6: “Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too”

On the other hand, negative social interdependence occurs when the actions of individuals obstruct the achievement of each other’s goals. According to Deutsch (2011): “negative interdependence exists when there is a negative correlation among individuals’ goals achievements; individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals” (2011, p.42).

This means that in the groups, some students block each other’s efforts to complete tasks:

This negative aspect, when students are working in groups, is described in a field note:

Students are doing an activity by groups. In each one of the groups there is a student that does the exercise and the others just copy it. FD1B-17, 7th, 11/2009

Problems when asking students to work in groups are visible when students have different levels – high or low achievers - and teachers prefer to avoid this kind of activity:
S2C2-2: Es que a veces nos pones a trabajar con los más bruticos y siempre perdemos.

T1C1-14: Sometimes it’s better for students to work by themselves because I notice that there is a student that works hard and the others just copy the activity.

Considering the Social Interdependence Theory and the data collection evidence, it is important to recognize that students’ behaviors and attitudes are important when they interact in groups, since those attitudes can contribute to or disturb the students’ own learning processes.

Bearing in mind the three contexts, it is appropriate to say that students from the Languages Center behave better when they work in groups than students from Liceo Hemano Miguel de la Salle and Centro Colombo Americano. This is due to the fact that students at the Languages Center are young adults and adults, they are more responsible, and they take advantage of this student-student interaction to learn and share knowledge because they demonstrate more interest in the development of group work activities and creating a rich environment in which students become autonomous and conscious of their learning process.

One field note observes that, as a result of student and teacher opinion from C3: Languages Center, group work allows students to develop not just social relations, but also construct knowledge:

In these groups, there were some students that helped others in the different doubts that they had about the theme. FD3-13: 27\textsuperscript{th}, 05/2011

All the students are working hard and in a respectful way, they are helping each other in order to accomplish the objectives. FD3-14, 27\textsuperscript{th}, 05/2011

S3C3-2: “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”

T4C3-7: “English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.”
Students from C1, C2 and C3 show more confidence when they interact with their close friends, rather than when they are asked to do it with a different person. However, it is evident that in C3: Languages Center, students do not complain when they have to work with different classmates who are not their friends and they do their best to carry out the activity in a good way:

Students were really interested in the activity about creating a house, but they felt bad because they couldn’t work with their friends; but after 3 minutes working together, they were encouraged to show their designs to the others. FD3-13, 21st, 05/2011

In contrast to context 3, students from Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle and Centro Colombo Americano prefer to work just with their friends and they show positive attitudes when they have the opportunity to interact with their close classmates.

In this sample, we can see this preference expressed by a student from C1 and another from C2:

S1C1-12: entonces si trabajo con mi amigo nos divertimos más

S2C2-5: Deberíamos dejarnos trabajar siempre con nuestros amigos porque ya nos conocemos y podemos hacer las cosas más fáciles. Digamos yo ya sé que Lucia es mejor escribiendo y Juan Ca dibujando

Consequently, when these children interact with their close partners, they show interest in the development of the activities. At the same time, they support each other and they resolve doubts to achieve the proposed goals, as was stated by Brown (1994):

We are concerned with how to facilitate indent language learning among our students, not just with the immediate classroom task. We are looking at learners as partners in a cooperative venture. And our classroom practices seek to draw on whatever intrinsically sparks learners to reach their fullest potential. (p.121)

In this way, students feel a part of the group; they participate and demonstrate their points of view to learn effectively:
In each group, students worked in a respectful way, they helped each other, and they did their best to have a good result. They not just did the activity but also they enjoy it. FDIB-17, 9th, 09/2011

Moreover, a teacher from C1: Hermano Miguel de la Salle asked her students to work in groups, and they could choose their partners. Through this activity, we noticed that children were happy and they enjoyed the activity. In the groups, they felt free to ask questions and everybody worked. The teacher was really surprised because she did not have to encourage her students to do the activity, they did it by themselves. A clear sample is:

Inside of each group, students worked in a respectful way, they helped each other, and they did their best to have a good result. They not just did the activity but also they enjoy it. FDIB-17, 9th, 09/2011

On the contrary, there is not meaningful interaction when the activities are assigned between those students who do not have a good relation or do not feel comfortable when they work together, because this environment does not provide learners enough opportunities to develop successful group activities.

Another aspect that interferes with students’ interaction is fear, embarrassment and shyness, which causes certain students to take on a passive role in the group, affecting the relationship between them and their learning process.

There are some evidences from C1 and C2 that shows students’ disagreements and reactions when they are asked to work with different classmates who do not have a close relationship such as:

S2C2-2: Es que a veces nos pones a trabajar con los más bruticos y siempre perdemos.
In one of the groups, there was a student that did not do anything and his partners said: “you must do the activity because if you don’t do it, you cannot play with us in the break. FD1B-12, 4th, 04/2011

T3C2-22: Sometimes, they are really nice, one to the other, but sometimes they are really annoying: high achievers work by their own and ask the others to be silent and don’t disturb their thoughts.

Furthermore, there is another important theory which supports that students’ interaction helps to develop social skills, as Vygotsky (2006) has stated: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people and then inside the child" (2006, p. 45). In other words, learning is a social process because students learn each one from the other, and for that reason when students interact, they are building their own learning process.

In these samples, there are some evidences that show students’ interaction as a tool to promote social relations, to learn, to clarify and to apply lesson and activities in class:

When someone in the group didn’t understand anything about the topic their classmates helped and explained it. FD3-14, 28th, 05/2011

In these groups, there were some students that helped others in the different doubts that they had about the theme. FD3-13: 28th, 05/2011

T4C3-6: Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and group activities they can interact with other students. Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too.

S3C3-5: Pues que aparte de lo de uno, está mirando lo de otras personas al tiempo y también se está ayudando con las dificultades o errores de los demás pues aprende uno también.

As is evident, through interaction students have the opportunity to help each other overcome their troubles because students do not have to ask the teacher questions about their
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weaknesses. Instead of, they are able to contribute to their classmates’ learning process, using the interaction as a means of solving problems.

Moreover, thanks to the interaction, students learn to express themselves and represent their ideas, feelings and knowledge about their reality. This is important for the development of their learning due to the fact that they are able to accomplish a shared or common goal through cooperative group work that allows students to improve their weaknesses, which is noticed in our three contexts:

In C1, students have the opportunity to help each other to overcome their doubts:

Students were interacting in small groups, when students didn’t know the answer, their partners helped to resolve doubts or in some case they corrected their partners’ mistakes. **FD1B-43, 29th, 05/2011**

**T1C1-12**: “I prefer group activities or peer activities because they can interact and help each other”

**S1C1-10**: “si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos”

Similarly, in C2, students help each other correct mistakes:

While students are interacting in groups, they correct pronunciation mistakes by themselves in order to learn from those errors. **FD2B-14, 9th, 08/2010**

**S2C2-4**: “A mí me gusta hartísimo trabajar en grupo, porque entiendo más y me siento un poquito más segura”

**T3C2-28**: They complement their ideas and feel supported almost all the time, because they are in the same “level”, that’s different with teacher - student because they feel in disadvantage, because naturally they know we as teachers know more than they.

In C3, students also resolve doubts and they check mistakes with each other.

Sometimes students asked another student about the doubts that they had and it was an interesting cooperative learning because they corrected themselves and felt more comfortable with a person who had the same English level as them. **FD3-33, 3rd, 08/2010**.
T4C3-7: English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.

S3C3-2: Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas.

Furthermore, social skills promote students’ learning since they provide the ability to think and reason in order to overcome problems. As Kumpulainen and Wray (2002) support:

> It is seen as helping the individuals to understand and become aware of thinking, since the explication and organization of thought in speech assists the reorganization of knowledge. On the other hand, while listening to others the learner is able to compare different interpretations and points of view. (p.45)

This means that, through the development of social skills and interaction, students do not become egocentric because they learn to respect other points of view. Also, they have to face the fact that not everyone has the same perspective on a particular situation, contributing to the development of learning since students work with classmates who have different learning skills, cultural backgrounds, attitudes, and personalities.

This field note proves that, through interaction, students are trained to be more respectful of others: Students respect different points of view in small groups. They are interacting in a respectful way, supporting their opinions, using English as a tool for developing their ideas. **FD1A-3, 25th, 11/2010**

In conclusion, interaction provides students a chance not only to learn but also to help others. Group work facilitates students’ roles because they are not just acquiring knowledge that is transmitted by their teacher, but they are also building their knowledge in a meaningful way since they are active and responsible for their classmates’ and their own learning, and they have the opportunity to support each other to achieve the objective proposed by their teacher.

At the same time, we noticed that students’ interaction through group work activities takes place in different ways, taking into consideration the contexts, because in C1 and C2 children prefer to interact with friends and it is really difficult for them to share ideas with others. In
contrast, in C3, young adults and adults take advantage of the opportunity to learn not just from their close friends, but also from their classmates. However, in the three contexts students use interaction as a tool for developing social skills and learning too.

**Group Work versus Individual Work**

Taking into account the different activities in an English class and considering the three different contexts in which this study took place (C1: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, C2: Centro Colombo Americano and C3: Languages Center), it is important to note students and teachers continually experience teaching and learning processes in which they change from individual to group activities and vice versa.

First, lessons tend to be carried out on a teacher-class interaction basis with children working individually with a final feedback session; then, teachers generate moments in which all children are encouraged to contribute, which unconsciously fosters collaboration and sharing of ideas so that, at the end, students better understand the lesson.

Moreover, even when group and individual activities occur in just one class, there are different teacher and student perceptions about them. Thus, students think they are useful for different purposes and believe group activities are useful for practicing listening and developing oral skills.

**S3C3-2:** Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas de escucha.

**S3C3-4:** Actividades de “listening” en grupos pueden ser provechosas para resolver dudas.

In contrast, for writing activities in which learners find it difficult to agree with their partners, they prefer to work by themselves:
S3C3-5: Pues composiciones o cuando hay que redactar cosas largas y pues que es difícil que las personas se pongan de acuerdo entonces preferiría individual.

Furthermore, teachers also have different perceptions about assigning group or individual work, since there are different aspects to take into account when asking students to work by themselves or not. One shared opinion between students and teachers from the three contexts is that interaction when working in groups helps students develop the ability to express themselves and to communicate their ideas, as Brown (1994) aptly stated:

Beyond grammatical discourse elements in communication, we are probing the nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language. We are exploring pedagogical means for 'real-life' communication in the classroom. We are trying to get our learners to develop linguistic fluency, not just the accuracy that has so consumed our historical journey. (p. 77)

In contexts 1, 2 and 3, the teachers’ opinions indicate that they prefer to use group work to foster not just interaction, but also oral skills:

T1C1-3: I try to do as much speaking activities as I can, when Ss can interact and improve their speaking skill.

T3C2-30: But, well, in conclusion, it is very important to allow students interact between them in different moments of the class, and you will see how learning and communication become more natural every single time.

T4C3-5: I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.

While students in C3 prefer individual activities for developing writing skills, teachers from C1, C2 and C3 agree that these kinds of activities are better when students misbehave in a group or when not all of them are working:

T1C1-14: Sometimes it’s better for students to work by themselves because I notice that there is a student that works hard and the others just copy the activity.
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**T2C2-4**: I prefer individual activities because when students work in group it is more difficult to know their own weakness because most of the time one student does the activity and the other members of the group just copy it.

**T4C3-6**: Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know.

As previously mentioned, there are some individual activities that enrich English teaching–learning processes. However, students’ points of view about these activities are different depending on the context in which they are studying and their age. As is seen in context 3:

Languages center:

**S3C3-6**: En general, es mejor que el profesor haga énfasis en lo individual.

Students, young adults and adults, prefer to work most of the time individually because they feel embarrassed if they have to speak in front of the others:

**S3C3-8**: Además hay ocasiones en las que es incómodo, porque nos ponen a hablar con un compañero y cometemos errores.

In C1 and C2, since students are children, they do not care about making mistakes or not. They just see those group moments as an opportunity to learn and share knowledge, as they subconsciously say:

**S1C1-7**: …porque uno aprende mucho porque ella nos deja trabajar juntos y yo aprendo mejor así que cuando trabajo.

**S1C1-10**: …si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos.

**S2C2-4**: A mí me gusta hartísimo trabajar en grupo, porque entiendo más y me siento un poquito más segura.

**S2C2-3**: Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profe porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.
Interestingly, we found a commonality between the way in which group and individual activities were applied in classes in the three contexts because, even when teachers have different schedules and different materials they are required to use, all of them make decisions about doing individual activities first and then group activities. We can see this in the following researchers’ field notes extracts:

Students, individually, did an activity about new vocabulary that they had to study. Then, the teacher asked them to work with a partner and student A made questions about the vocabulary and student B had to answer and vice versa. **FD1B-42**, 08th, 11/2010

T gives each student a piece of paper and tip pens and explains the activity: “first draw three objects on the paper and second, Ss select four objects from their bag.” When they finish drawing and pull out the objects, T divides Ss into As and Bs, and Ss have to follow the conversation given during the practice part; then, their real objects are to practice THIS IS and the objects on their posters are to use THAT IS. **FD2-6**, 14th, 08/2010.

After all the students drew their families, they had to work in groups. The objective was that they must talk about their families and ask one by one about what the relationship was between the members of the family who were drawn in their homework. **FD3-24**, 15th, 05/2010.

Thus, we can see that group and individual activities are mixed during a normal English class because, even when the activities are different, depending on the context, both are applicable in all situations to achieve specific goals or to teach a specific topic, to practice specific skills or to develop a project.

In general, as with everything in life, there is a need to balance between individual and group work because, if there is a class just centered one individual work, some abilities will not be developed at all. Similarly, if there is a focus just on group work, teachers will not have the ability to see if their students are really comprehending and applying the content by themselves or if they are just sitting and copying their partners’ answers and ideas.
Conclusions

The conclusions of our project are divided into four aspects which were involved in the three sites where the research was developed. Each conclusion is focused on the collected data from the contexts and the analysis that we have done based on the objective of our project.

Group Activities in Class

Throughout this entire project, we have seen how effective cooperative learning is in English classes based on what we have found in the gathered information. However, here it is important to mention that when teachers develop some group activities in class, group work does not always have the same positive impact on students’ learning as individual work or teacher-student interaction.

One of the most important group work finding is that almost all the time we tend to understand group activities as a simple activity in which students just interact with each other without keeping in mind the context and the institution policies. In the three contexts, we found that teachers frequently apply different activities in groups but the emphasis is completely different in each one of the contexts.

At Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle, teachers are focus on making students interact with each other through their textbooks. These kinds of activities derive from the requirement of the school in which teachers have to work frequently with these books; also, if they have a text guide to group work teachers can avoid the misbehavior of students. The lack of interest of children during group work occurs because they are not attracted to learning a foreign language, which affects their learning process. In the school, it is quite difficult to carry out a successful group
activity due to the students’ bad behavior in class as well as giving to students a proper feedback from teachers.

On the other hand, we deal with the opposite aspect at Centro Colombo Americano and Languages Center because the students are engaged in learning English as a personal choice. At Centro Colombo Americano, teachers develop group activities specifically to create student interaction and in their classes the most important is to speak as fluently as possible to improve students’ level. The focus at Languages Center is similar because students receive specific lessons in order to interact with each other. Once students from Languages Center have done a methodological activity in groups, they are aware of their mistakes and their interest is evident in their request for suitable feedback.

If we consider these main characteristics in the three contexts, we can see that at Liceo Hermano Miguel, it is more difficult to work in groups that at Centro Colombo Americano or Languages Center. This is due to the amount of students at Liceo Hermano Miguel and their educational background. In the last two contexts, working in groups represents a useful way to learn and acquire new knowledge.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Working in Groups**

The application of cooperative learning as the best method for learning English in the three different contexts of our project (Hermano Miguel de La Salle, Centro Colombo Americano, Languages Center), showed variables as: the ages and the educational backgrounds of the students. It is evident that Cooperative Learning is useful in the three contexts, but with some
changeable aspects in each setting that must be taken into account due to the results of the classes are meaningful but vary at the end of the students’ learning process.

Based on our analysis of the data collected, the meaning of Cooperative Learning and the idea of working in groups are taken from different points of view: children from Liceo Hermano Miguel de La Salle consider working in groups similar to competition inside their own groups and among the others groups. On the other hand, students (teenagers and adults) from Languages Center and Centro Colombo Americano consider group work to be collaboration instead of competition.

**Student –Student Interaction through Group Work Activities**

Student interaction plays an important role in the educational field since learning occurs within a social context and provides students the opportunity not only to learn but also to help others learn. This is meaningful because students support each other to achieve common goals and improve their English learning process.

At the same time, we noted that student interaction through group work activities took place in different ways depending on the context. Since students from C1: Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle and C2: Centro Colombo Americano are children, they prefer just to interact with their close friends. When these students have the opportunity to work with their close friend, they feel like a part of the group and children support each other to carry out the activity in a meaningful way.

On the contrary, when these students are asked to interact with students with whom they do not have a good relationship or do not feel comfortable with, they express feelings such as fear and shyness, having passive role in the group which affects the relationship between them and
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their learning process. In contrast to contexts 1 and 2, in Languages Center, students take advantage of group interaction to facilitate their learning because they not just develop group activities with their close friends, but also from their classmates. As a result, they create a meaningful environment in which students are aware of their own learning process.

Moreover, we observed two common aspects in the three contexts. The first similarity is that students use interaction as a tool for developing social skills because learners express their opinions and they learn to respect other points of view. The second similarity is that student’ interaction provides opportunities to learn and solve problems because learners help and support each other in the development of the activities.

**Group Work versus Individual Work**

Considering the three different contexts, we note that group and individual work are used in all of them, but there are some differences between these two kinds of activities depending on the site. Since in Liceo Hermano Miguel de la Salle and Centro Colombo Americano the students are children, they like to work more in groups to share their ideas and have fun, but in Languages Center, the students are young adults and adults who prefer to work individually because they feel ashamed when practicing English with each other.

First, we found that it is necessary to have well-designed individual and group activities, which means that each one of these activities needs a specific objective, clear instructions and specific roles for each student. Even when there is a need for balance between individual and group work, cooperative learning is the best way to make students learn English in a more meaningful and long-lasting manner, since children enjoy cooperating with each other and adults feel challenged to do their best.
Furthermore, there is another similarity between the three contexts: students prefer to work in groups when working on oral activities to develop speaking skills, and teachers also opt to ask students to work in groups for dialogues and spoken exercises.
Implications

Considering the results of the project, there are three main implications that teachers of the three sites (Liceo Hermano Miguel de La Salle, Languages Center and Centro Colombo Americano) should take into account to improve the application of Cooperative Learning as the best tool for learning English. These implications are related to many theories such as communicative language teaching, cooperative learning, cognitive developmental and social interdependence theories, along with the socio cultural approach.

These theories were used during the project but theories were taken to analyze different aspects, since the application was done in different sites, with students who have diverse ages and knowledge background.

The first implication concludes that teachers should continue with the use of cooperative learning in their contexts, but it would be better if they defined the objective of the interactive activity at the beginning of the class or the working group. The importance of this aspect is based on students’ need for clarity in terms of the activity that they are developing; consequently, they can focus their actions and minds on a specific aim.

The second implication for improving the management of the working group activity is to establish specific roles for each student in the groups. Thus, every student works with the same level of dedication and with the same interest in reaching the goal that the teacher set at the beginning of the activity. In this way, everybody works with the same intensity and frequency, and the knowledge is going to be the result of the cooperative work of students with each other, so that they find a real meaning to what they are learning, since they can apply it in real life.

The third implication is to carry out a wrap-up after finishing the group work activity so that students will become familiar with the rubric and will evaluate their job. A complement of
the wrap up is feedback from the teacher, which helps students become aware of the mistakes that they made during the interactive activity and how recognition of those mistakes can improve their English.
Future study

Colombia is one of several countries in the world that is implementing and applying an advanced program in English teaching-learning processes as a way to make students interact each other and improve their language level. Cooperative learning in English classes has become one of the most important strategies implemented by teachers, in which the main aim is to make English an opportunity to learn a second language.

In this way, in addition to explaining the importance of cooperative learning in different contexts and its influence on students, we want to show how cooperative learning can be a useful tool in the future for students from different parts of the world. As we already know, dealing with students from different contexts makes teachers think about methods of working in class and makes students engaged with the language.

With this project, we aim to determine how cooperative learning affects specific populations in English classes to encourage teachers to create appropriate activities according to the students’ age, level and context. This study not only informs future teachers of our findings, but it is also a way to make them think about methods that they sometimes do not use in class because of lack of time, interest or even because institution policies.

For us, it is important that future teachers will be able to develop a proper English class using cooperative learning especially for Colombian students. We want to promote future studies in which teachers figure out useful activities in class based on what readers found in our research project. Activities implemented for students’ motivation and for the comprehension of contents
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are our principal interest keeping in mind that if teachers apply these strategies in class they can stimulate the students to focus their attention for what they are going to learn.

We as researchers want to let the readers the opportunity to generate new ways to teach English as a foreign language depending on the process of education and learning to stimulate the investigation in this educational field and the discovery of new experiences.
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References

(June 2011)


Cooperative Learning:
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Cambridge university press. (Section 3 chapter 5)


Appendixes

Students’ Interviews (Focal Groups)

1. ¿Qué clase te gusta más? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué clase no te gusta? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Cuál es la mejor parte del día en el colegio? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Qué cambiarías del colegio/clases? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Cómo sería la clase perfecta para ti? ¿Me puedes dar un ejemplo?
6. ¿Qué actividades de clase disfrutas más? ¿Por qué?
7. ¿Prefieres trabajar solo o en grupo? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Con quién prefieres trabajar? ¿Por qué?

Teachers’ Interviews

Good morning, my name is ________________________ I am in 9th semester of a Bachelor Program in Modern Languages: Spanish, English and French at La Salle University. Now, I’m working on my thesis project, in which I want to see (together with my partners) what is the best way to make Ss understand English and enjoy it. Then, this interview is because we are really interested in knowing experimented teachers’ perceptions about how does group work influences English learning. This is going to be an interview which academically purposes, and at any moment we will evaluate what you say or know, we are just interested about your experience and perceptions.

1. How long have you been working as a teacher?
2. How do you like your work?
3. How would you describe your work?
4. How do you conduct your English teaching?
5. What routines do you usually have in your class?
5.1 Which do you like the most?
5.2 Which do not like you too much?
6. How would you describe your kids?
7. How would you describe your relation with them?
8. What kind of activities do you prefer to assign your Ss to do?
9. From your experience / perceptions, what kind of activities do your students enjoy the most?
10. Do you prefer to assign individual or group activities? Why?
11. How is their (your Ss) relation in class?
12. How is their (your Ss) relation in group activities?
13. What do you think about group work?
14. For you, does it influence English learning? How?

**CONVENTIONS**

**CONTEXTS:**

LHEMI: C1

COLOMBO AMERICANO: C2

CENTRO DE LENGUAS: C3

**POPULATION:**

Student from LHEMI School: S1

Student from Colombo Americano: S2

Student from Centro de Lenguas: S3

Teacher from LHEMI School: T1

Teachers from Colombo Americano: T2, T3

Teachers from Centro de Lenguas: T4, T5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT</th>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>CONTEXT</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td></td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Students’ interest about English class</td>
<td>“Me gusta el warm up porque siempre nos haces competencias y juegos divertidos en Inglés.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| T4 | C3 | (1) | “Me gusta la actividad del final, cuando nos toca dibujar o actuar en grupos y escoger el mejor.”

| T4 | C3 | Teacher’s teaching preferences (3) | “I don’t like to teach grammar because I think grammar it’s quite hard for students and for us too” So, I prefer to introduce this topic in different way, not in the traditional way, subject + verb.

“I like to teach all skills, I think all are very important, in that way try to do different kinds of activities in order to catch student’s’ interests.

| T4 | C3 | Teacher’s perception about T-S interaction (4) | “I have good relation with my students and I enjoy my classes, I learn from them, I teach them but I learn from them too”

|   |   | Teacher’s preferences about | “I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal
### T4 | C3
---|---
**class work activities**<br>(5) | situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.””

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**Teacher’s perception about individual activities and group work activities. (6)** | “Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and group activities they can interact with other students”

“Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too”

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**English influences learning according to teacher’s experience.**<br>(7) | “English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T4</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>Teacher’s perception about individual activities and group work activities. (6)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>“Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and group activities they can interact with other students”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>English influences learning according to teacher’s experience. (7)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
At the end of the class, beata said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so, beata separate the class in groups of 5 people and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. Beata asked to me (nataly Sanchez) if I could translate what she was going to say and in this way students could understand everything.

Teacher beata gave to students a photocopy about present continuous. Kids did it during 30 minutes and after they finished doing it very quiet, they fill a song using ing. Teacher made some mimics to explain the verbs and she said some words in spanish to
make her understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she didn’t tell students she was very happy because their behavior.

Teacher Nataly showed students some picture cards about solar system and the big book page 12.

After that, teacher Nataly gave to each boy some vocabulary cards and the idea was that they had to find in the dictionary the correct meaning and paste the cards in their notebook.

In this class the topic was “artist”. This activity was made in the back yard of the school. Teacher Nataly thought that being outside could be a good idea to relax them and work in a different way. Some boys did not work because they are lazy but the rest of the class
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were working and focused in the activity.

Categories In Common

Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences when working in group</th>
<th>S3C3-1: “Prefiero trabajar en grupos pequeños”</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S2C2-3: “Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profe porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>S1C1-9: “si es verdad. Nos gusta trabajar en equipo”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Advantages of working in groups

S3C3-2: “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”

S2C2-4: “A mí me gusta hartísimo trabajar en grupo, porque entiendo más y me siento un poquito más segura”

S1C1-10: “si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos”

Individual work

S3C3-3: “Pues composiciones o cuando hay que redactar cosas largas y pues que es difícil que las personas se pongan de acuerdo entonces preferiría individual”
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions about group work</th>
<th>S1C1-15</th>
<th>&quot;si me acuerdo pero también es aburridor trabajar todo el tiempo en grupo yo prefiero avece trabajar solo porque a mí no me gusta que se copien de lo que yo hago porque mi mama siempre me dice que no me deje copiar de nadie&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S3C3-2</td>
<td>&quot;Trabajan en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                             | S2C2-1  |  "Me gusta el warm up porque siempre nos haces competencias y juegos divertidos en Inglés."  
  "Me gusta la actividad del final, cuando nos toca dibujar o actuar en grupos y escoger el mejor." |
|                             | S1C1-5  |  "Ahhhh y como dice mi amiguito podemos trabajar en grupo y competimos entre nosotros" |

### Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher-Student relation</th>
<th>T4C3-4</th>
<th>&quot;I have good relation with my students and I enjoy my classes, I learn from them, I teach them but I learn from them too&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3C2-18</td>
<td>&quot;if I give them the best of me, I hope to have the best results and attitude from them too&quot;</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher aim for Ss</th>
<th>T1C1-9: “the problem is that... the way that English was shown to them ehh in previous years ehh it was a little bit different because they see English like a mandatory subject”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3C2-17: “I’m not just worried about their English learning process, but also about their lives and their perceptions about English and specially about my class”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T1C1-7: “I really I don’t like writing exams because I think that students feel like --scared”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group and individual work for teaching</td>
<td>T4C3-5: “I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3C2-15: “it also depends on the population you have, because I have noticed that there are activities that make adults interact, while the same activities don’t allow children to have a lot of opportunities to interact and communicate their ideas and maybe not because they don’t have enough fluency or vocabulary, but just because they are not interested about the topic”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T1C1-12: “I prefer group activities or peer activities because they can interact Preferences towards S-S interaction activities with their partners,”</td>
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### Teacher strategies

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<th>T4C3-3:</th>
<th>“I don’t like to teach grammar because I think grammar it’s quite hard for students and for us too” So, I prefer to introduce this topic in different way, not in the traditional way, subject + verb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T3C2-3:</td>
<td>“it’s been a must for me to create new ways to do the same things every day. For example, I don’t follow the same rubrics for evaluating students exercises or reports, and I don’t do the same activities even if I have to teach two or more classes from the same level and with the same topics”</td>
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<tr>
<td>T1C1-5:</td>
<td>“…most of the exercises they have to do at home are relate to grammar. ”</td>
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### FIELD DIARIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group activities in class</th>
<th>FD1A-1: At the end of the class, Beata said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so, Beat separate the class in groups of 5 people and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. Beat asked to me (Natalie Sanchez) if I could translate what she was going to say and in this way students could understand everything.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher Beat gave to students a photocopy about</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Present continuous. Kids did it during 30 minutes and after they finished doing it very quiet, they fill a song using ing. Teacher made some mimics to explain the verbs and she said some words in Spanish to make her understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she dais to sts she was very happy because their behavior.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Natalie showed to students some picture cards about solar system and the big book page 12.</td>
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<td>After that, teacher Natalie gave to each boy some vocabulary cards and the idea was that they had to find in the dictionary the correct meaning and paste the cards in their notebook.</td>
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<td>In this class the topic was” artist”. This activity was made in the back yard of the school. Teacher Natalie thought that be outside could be a good idea to relax them and work in a different way. Some boys did not work because they are lazy but the rest of the class were working and focused in the activity.</td>
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**FD2-1:** Teacher asks Ss t make a circle and she has some pictures pasted on the board and the words, then, Ss play tingo tingo tango and the person who gets the ball, goes in front and matches the word with the correct object.

**FD3-20:** Students must read their exercises in a high voice, and the rest of their classmates must correct themselves.

**Students behavior and attitude in class**

**FD1A-3:** The group 403 is very difficult because they have change many teachers in few time. They are 28 boys and most of them are really noise in class.
Sometimes the teacher nataly has to speak aloud and wait 15 or 20 minutes to make them calm.

This day, the participation was so good because the teacher was explaining animal’s life cycles but then students and teacher made some agreements because students do not raise their hand when they want to talk.

in a class with 403, teacher nataly was happy because while she was reading the lecture, students wrote and underlined some important ideas about it, nevertheless, in the middle of the lecture the teacher had to divide two groups because some of them weren’t working. Some boys are really selfish and do not like to work with others, just to play. Anyway they worked together and helped each other.

After teacher nataly recollect their work in class, students assumed that the class had finished and they started to talk and run inside the classroom. The teacher had to calm students and write the homework on the board.

When the teacher nataly wrote the homework, they complained and said they had a lot of homework. The teacher said that the homework was in pairs and funny and they got motivated to do it.

They idea of working outside was a success because they worked extremely good, they were relax and quiet outside the classroom, they asked to the teacher nataly many questions about grammar and they
seemed to be happy doing that.

The activity of reading some sentences about verb did that was given as a homework was good but not at all because teacher nataly could realize that they had done a very good homework but students attitude was not good because when they heard their classmates, they started to talk and maybe they got bored with this activity.

**FD2-13:** Ss were really interested in the activity about creating a house, but they felt bad because they couldn’t work with the their friends; but after 3 minutes working together, they were encouraged to show their designs to the others.

**FD3-9:** The students spoke in Spanish all the time about different things apart from the class, and sometimes teacher too, but there was a student that was really interested in the class, and he tried to encourage the rest of his partners for studying the topic that the teacher tried to explain.

**Teacher-students relation**

**FD1A-4:** The fact that teacher did not speak Spanish is a great wall between both because kids from 7 to 9 years do not understand anything.

Some students wrote the questions given by teacher Nataly for the homework but other students didn’t. Lack of cooperation is evident because Celis asked to Ardila if he could give him his notebook to write the homework and Ardila did not wanted.

The class started at 10:50 and when the teacher Nataly arrived to class, students immediately got quiet. They respect the teacher.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-student relation</th>
<th>FD3-7: The teacher talked to each pair with kindness, and the students were so confident with the attitude that Ms. León expressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD1A-4: The fact that Beata did not speak Spanish is a great wall between both because kids from 7 to 9 years do not understand anything.</td>
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<td>Some students wrote the questions given by teacher Nataly for the homework but other students didn’t. Lack of cooperation is evident because Ceils asked to Ardila if he could give him his notebook to write the homework and Ardila did not wanted.</td>
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<td>The class started at 10:50 and when the teacher Nataly arrived to class, students immediately got quiet. They respect the teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class organization</td>
<td>FD2-13: Ss were really interested in the activity about creating a house, but they felt bad because they couldn’t work with the their friends; but after 3 minutes working together, they were encouraged to show their designs to the others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FD1B-2: Teacher checked the activity on the board in order to know students weaknesses and strengths.</td>
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</table>
|                          | FD2-12: Ss arrive to the classroom and T asks them to compare their homework by following the model given. Then, T asks for doubts or questions about the homework and check Ss doubts with the whole class. Once everything is clear, T says: “what did you
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<td></td>
<td>practice in homework?&quot;Ss answer: adjectives and family members. Thus, T introduces next topic: talk about our houses, by describing them with IT HAS__.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For introducing the vocabulary, T asks Ss to work in pairs and she gives each pair a paper, in which they have to unscramble the names of rooms at home, by following:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A: I think the word is ______. And you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: I think the word is ______.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As soon as Ss finish, T asks them to open their books…</td>
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<tr>
<td>FD3-1:</td>
<td>the time was specified on the blackboard and in that way, the students could realize how long the exam was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work to practice speaking</td>
<td>FD1B-3: Teacher did a speaking activity based on verb to be and professions. She showed some flashcard relative to the topic and in groups, students had to speak about it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FD2-3: When Ss finish, T asks them to compare their answers with their classmates, by following the model:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: What do you have in number 1?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: I have ______, and you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A: I have ______.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>T, plays the CD again and Ss in groups, check their answers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FD3-36:</td>
<td>After they finished their process of check the</td>
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<tr>
<th>Book, they had pair up and practice their oral skill</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FD3-43:</strong> The first activity, students worked by pairs and they had to do a conversation for asking information about a languages institute.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FD1B-1:</strong> Students are doing an activity by groups. In each one of the groups there is a student that does the exercise and the others just copy it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FD3-11:</strong> The students were working in groups but this produced lack of discipline</td>
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**Final Categories**

**Group activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Students</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>S3C3-1:</strong> “Prefiero trabajar en grupos pequeños”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S3C3-2:</strong> “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S3C3-3:</strong> “Es preferible trabajar con personas que sepan más Inglés”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S3C3-4:</strong> “Actividades de “listening” en grupos pueden ser provechosas para resolver dudas”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S2C2-3:</strong> “Yo prefiero en grupo que individual profe porque nos ayudamos más y nos sentimos más seguros cuando nos toca pasar a todos.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S2C2-5:</strong> “Deberías dejarnos trabajar siempre con nuestros amigos porque ya nos conocemos y podemos hacer las cosas más fáciles. Digamos yo ya sé que Lucia es mejor escribiendo y Juan Cadibujando”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S1C1-9:</strong> “si es verdad. Nos gusta trabajar en equipo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-16: “Además nunca trabajamos en grupo siempre nos toca solos y eso aburre mucho”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3C3-2: “Trabajar en grupos ayuda a entender más fácil los temas”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3C3-3: “Es preferible trabajar con personas que sepan más Inglés”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3CE-5: “Pues que aparte de lo de uno, está mirando lo de otras personas al tiempo y también se está ayudando con las dificultades o errores de los demás pues aprende uno también.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2C2-4: “A mí me gusta hartísimo trabajar en grupo, porque entiendo más y me siento un poquito más segura”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-10: “sí teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-19: “ahhh y también trabajando en grupo como te dije antes es más chévere y así aprendemos más y nos colaboramos mas.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-22: “yo también prefiero las actividades grupales porque nos ayudamos entre nosotros”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-6: “me encanta competir con los demás porque yo siempre soy el mejor para todo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-7: “porque uno aprende mucho porque ella nos deja trabajar juntos y yo aprendo mejor así que cuando trabajo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1C1-12: “entonces si trabajo con mi amigo nos divertimos mas”</td>
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<tr>
<td>S1C1-13: “yo prefiero trabajar en grupo porque yo”</td>
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| S1C1-14: “en grupo porque yo aprendo más así y nos colaboramos todos” |
| S1C1-15: “si me acuerdo pero también es aburrido trabajar todo el tiempo en grupo yo prefiero avece trabajar solo porque a mí no me gusta que se copien de lo que yo hago porque mi mama siempre me dice que no me deje copiar de nadie” |
| S1C1-23: “es chévere esas competencias porque nos toca colaborarnos entre todos y es muy rico” |

**Teachers**

| T4C3-5: “I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.” |
| T4C3-6: “Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates to” |
| T4C3-7: “English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.” |
| T3C2-15: “it also depends on the population you have, because I have noticed that there are activities that make adults interact, while the same activities don’t allow children to have a lot of opportunities to interact and communicate their ideas and maybe not because they don’t have enough fluency or vocabulary, but just because they are not interested about the topic” |
| T3C2-19: “The ones in groups ABSOLUTELY, they love it, doesn’t matter the activity, they love to be...” |

sob el más inteligente de todos y yo siempre soy el que les ayuda porque ellos solos no pueden hacer nada”
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T3C2-27: “I think the most pertinent theory about it is the one form Vygotsky about “the zone of proximal development”, because he supports that children need each one from the other to have a complete process”

T3C2-28: “They complement their ideas and feel supported almost all the time, because they are in the same “level”, that’s different with teacher - student because they feel in disadvantage, because naturally they know we as teachers know more than they”

T1C1-12: “I prefer group activities or peer activities because they can interact Preferences towards S-S interaction activities with their partners,”

T1C1-15: “and actually English is a communicative language ehh English is for communicating, so if we don’t make students to communicate in English it is going to be difficult for them to acquire the language.”

T1C1-6: “I really like making students to make presentations, oral presentations ehh it can be relate to interviews or creating by themselves or dialogues

Field Diaries

FD1A-1: At the end of the class, Beata said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so, Beat separate the class in groups of 5 people and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. Beat asked to me (Natalie Sanchez) if I could translate what she was going to say and in this way students could understand everything.

Teacher Beat gave to students a photocopy about present continuous. Kids did it during 30 minutes and after they finished doing it very quiet, they fill a song using ing. Teacher made some mimics to explain the verbs and she said some words in Spanish to make
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<th>FD1A-2</th>
<th>At the beginning teacher showed a big book about family members making girls repeat the vocabulary.</th>
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<td>FD1A-5</td>
<td>Teacher gave back the quiz she had already made the last class and then she corrected the quiz on the blackboard. The students copied the corrections on their notebook and finally she asked them to repeat the words she was saying in English.</td>
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After the teacher explained the topic, she made a group activity in groups of 5 people in the blackboard in which the students had to write in the blackboard the word that correspond to the picture the teacher Pamela showing, nevertheless, she had to stop the game because students weren’t paying attention to her and in some point they started to run, play and

her understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she dais to sts she was very happy because their behavior.

Teacher Natalie showed to students some picture cards about solar system and the big book page 12.

After that, teacher Natalie gave to each boy some vocabulary cards and the idea was that they had to find in the dictionary the correct meaning and paste the cards in their notebook.

In this class the topic was” artist”. This activity was made in the back yard of the school. Teacher Natalie thought that be outside could be a good idea to relax them and work in a different way. Some boys did not work because they are lazy but the rest of the class were working and focused in the activity.
talk and the teacher Pamela was getting angry with them.

After an hour to explain the topic, the students started to read a lecture about life cycles in their book “moving into English”. They were in groups of three boys and the teacher Nataly had given to them a copy with some cycles.

When they were working in their dictionaries in individual way they worked very well because each one had a dictionary and even that it was an individual work, they helped each other to find the meaning.

After 10 minutes they organized the classroom in groups of four boys and the idea was that each group had to write in some charts of paper the most important sentences of the text. Here teacher Nataly realized that when the work is with more than two students, they spend the time doing different things and they do not get interested in the activities.

Teacher Nataly draw on the board a chart with three columns and in each one student had to write what was the name of the baby animal written in the column. When students came to the board, they had to select one boy to represent the file. If the answer was good they got points. In this activity teacher could see that when they work in competitions they got motivated just for getting points and high grades.

After the explanation about possessives teacher Nataly gave to them a copy with some exercises. They worked individually but even that teacher
nataly saw some students that were looking classmate’s papers.

That day, was the presentation of the projects and they had to present and perform a song in groups of 4 students. That day some moms came to class to watch their sons and in this calls teacher nataly could realized two important aspects. The fist one is that students have an excellent behavior on front of their moms and second that were really happy and interested in this activity because it was different and funny for them.

**FD1B-7:** Students had to present in an oral way their projects to their partners; they had between 5 and 7 minutes for did it. And the rest of the class had to make questions about the project. In that way every single student has to develop speaking skill.

**FD1B-20:** In groups, Students had to prepare a small role play taking into account the topics that they were working during the week. They had to use vocabulary and expressions that they already know.

**FD1B-28:** In groups, students worked on the four skills. First they listened a song about family members, Later, they had to answer some questions on their notebooks about the song and finally they had to tell what the song was about.

**FD1B-29:** During the peer work activity, students checked their own mistakes and they had the opportunity to learn from it.

**FD1B-31:** Teacher asked students to group by pairs and she decided who was going to work with. In that way they had to help each other in order to had success in the development in the activity and they had to learn to respect others point of views.
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<td><strong>FD1B-32:</strong></td>
<td>She did a lot of speaking activities in groups during the whole class such as: find the person who, read a dialogue, organize a small story and in that way students interacted between them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FD1B-33:</strong></td>
<td>Students were working in groups; they had to make a small presentation about present progressive. And teacher was passing for every single group in order to know if students were working in appropriate way and she helped to solve some doubts.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FD1B-42:</strong></td>
<td>Students did an activity by pairs about new vocabulary that they had to study. Student A made questions about the vocabulary and student B had to answer and viceversa.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FD1B-51:</strong></td>
<td>Students by groups had to prepare a conversation, teacher explained the new vocabulary and then students had to reap the conversation many time, using correct intonation and pronunciation.</td>
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<td><strong>FD1B-53:</strong></td>
<td>Students had to read a story in the same group, later; Students had to make a summary through pictures and every single member of each group had to say something about the reading, and the next group had to continue the story.</td>
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<td><strong>FD1B-55:</strong></td>
<td>Teacher introduced a new topic: what is it? to her students, she asked them to take their own school equipment such as rulers, pencils, books. In small groups one student had to make the questions: What is it? And other students showed his object and said it is a ruler.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FDB-62:</strong></td>
<td>In pairs students had to do a speaking activity, it was a dialogue; they had to help each other with pronunciation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FD1B-65:</td>
<td>Students had to make groups and they had to read a story, and they had to look for some words that they didn’t know in the dictionary, one students look for the word, another said how the word spell. And everybody participate inside the groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FD1B-66:</td>
<td>In groups, students had to tell to their partners which words they looked for: and the whole class share the new words and in that way they learned new vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FD2-1:</td>
<td>Teacher asks Ss t make a circle and she has some pictures pasted on the board and the words, then, Ss play tingo tingo tango and the person who gets the ball, goes in front and matches the word with the correct object.</td>
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<td>FD2-3:</td>
<td>When Ss finish, T asks them to compare their answers with their classmates, by following the model: A: What do you have in number 1? B: I have ______, and you? A: I have _______. T, plays the CD again and Ss in groups, check their answers.</td>
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<td>FD2-4:</td>
<td>Ss work in pairs, asking questions about the previous exercise and partners have to answer true or false, according to the picture and the listening.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FD2-5:</td>
<td>T gives Ss one image and Ss have to write their names on it, after that they have to present their objects to their classmates following: A: Hi/hello B: How are you? A: Fine</td>
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<tr>
<td>B: Ok, look! This is my ______</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: That is my ______</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: That’s nice!</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: :) Bye</td>
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Ss spend eight minutes doing this activity, then, during which they were really exciting for presenting their favorite objects.

Then, T asks them to sit and tell her the name of the person and the object, for example: This is Federico’s eraser…

**FD2-6:** T gives each student a piece of paper and tip pens and explains the activity: “first, draw three objects on the paper and second, Ss select four objects from their bag”. When they finish drawing and put out the objects, T divides Ss into As and Bs and Ss have to follow the conversation given during the practice part; then, their real objects are to practice THIS IS and the objects on their posters are to use THAT IS.

**FD2-8:** In pairs, Ss guess in which place are their classmates: one student think in a place in which he or she is and the other has to guess. T exemplifies:

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<tr>
<td>A: Maritza, are you at the Colombo?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: No, I’m not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Are you near the Colombo?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: No, I’m not.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Are you near the park?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B: Yes, I am.</td>
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T gives Ss for evaluating their partners:

Correct (happy face) Incorrect (sad face). The winner
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| FD2-10: T says: “In groups you are going to play hangman, in order to guess the object you classmates have in the bag”. |
| FD2-11: T, organizes Ss I to two groups: one group is Alexis and the other is Mr. Park, then they read the conversation. |
| FD3-5: The students went out of the classroom and began to compare their answers |
| FD3-8: Students had to create a conversation in which, firstly, one of them formulated the questions and the other one answered them, and 5 minutes later, they changed their roles |
| FD3-20: Students must read their exercises in a high voice, and the rest of their classmates must correct themselves. |
| FD3-21: The activity was based on peer interaction due to students must recognize their own mistakes |
| FD3-23: They correct themselves and sometimes they corrected to the others. |
| FD3-25: During the activity, the students corrected themselves and through the mistakes that they made, they were learning. |
| FD3-41: At the end of the class, students played a drawing game in which by groups they must discover the draws that their pairs were creating on the blackboard |
| FD3-43: The first activity, students worked by pairs and they had to do a conversation for asking information about a languages institute |
| FD1A-3: The group 403 is very difficult because they have change many teachers in few time. They |

is the person with more happy faces.
are 28 boys and most of them are really noise in class. Sometimes the teacher nataly has to speak aloud and wait 15 or 20 minutes to make them calm.

This day, the participation was so good because the teacher was explaining animal’s life cycles but then students and teacher made some agreements because students do not raise their hand when they want to talk.

in a class with 403, teacher nataly was happy because while she was reading the lecture, students wrote and underlined some important ideas about it, nevertheless, in the middle of the lecture the teacher had to divide two groups because some of them weren’t working. Some boys are really selfish and do not like to work with others, just to play. Anyway they worked together and helped each other.

After teacher nataly recollect their work in class, students assumed that the class had finished and they started to talk and run inside the classroom. The teacher had to calm students and write the homework on the board.

When the teacher nataly wrote the homework, they complained and said they had a lot of homework. The teacher said that the homework was in pairs and funny and they got motivated to do it.

They idea of working outside was a success because they worked extremely good, they were relax and quiet outside the classroom, they asked to the teacher nataly many questions about grammar and they seemed to be happy doing that.

The activity of reading some sentences about verb did that was given as a homework was good but not
at all because teacher Nataly could realize that they had done a very good homework but students attitude was not good because when they heard their classmates, they started to talk and maybe they got bored with this activity.

| FD1B-1: | Students are doing an activity by groups. In each one of the groups there is a student that does the exercise and the others just copy it. |
| FD1B-12: | Students are doing an activity by groups. In each one of the groups there is a student that does the exercise and the others just copy it. |
| FD1B-17: | Inside of each group, students worked in respectful way, they helped each other, and they did their best to have a good grade. |
| FD1B-38: | Students were playing around the classroom and they were shouting, they didn’t follow instructions and they didn’t pay attention to their teacher. She spent the first hour trying to start the class. |
| FD1B-44: | Students didn’t pay attention to their teacher and they didn’t respect her class because she doesn’t speak Spanish, so it is really difficult the communication between them. |
| FD1B-45: | Students didn’t behave in the better way; they were jumping and running around the class. While teacher was trying to explain the topic. |
| FD2-13: | Ss were really interested in the activity about creating a house, but they felt bad because they couldn’t work with the their friends; but after 3 minutes working together, they were encouraged to show their designs to the others. |
| FD3-9: | The students spoke in Spanish all the time about different things apart from the class, and sometimes teacher too, but there was a student that |
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was really interested in the class, and he tried to encourage the rest of his partners for studying the topic that the teacher tried to explain

FD3-19: Some students used dictionaries for writing the letter, and there were others who asked to Mr. Rozo about the vocabulary that they wanted to use in their written

FD3-22: Students were really interested in the exercise

FD3-26: The students were not really excited at the beginning of the class,

FD3-27: After some minutes, students began to present their recipes, teacher said that who wanted to pass first, but nobody wanted, until one of them decided to pass and began with the presentation. After him, most of the students were encouraged for presenting their homework

FD3-32: Teacher checked some groups of students who were analyzing their books for asking questions

FD3-33: Sometimes students asked to another student about the doubts that they had and it was an interesting cooperative learning because they corrected themselves and felt more comfortable with a person who had the same English level than them

FD3-34: There was just one student who spoke in English all the time and it was uncourageous for the rest of the class because they tried to do the same with effort.

FD3-35: Some students were really interested in the development and preparation of their oral exam, due to they were asking vocabulary and the grammatical structures that they needed for expressing the ideas that they considered valuable
# Advantages and disadvantages of working in groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td><strong>S3CE-5</strong>: “Pues que aparte de lo de uno, está mirando lo de otras personas al tiempo y también se está ayudando con las dificultades o errores de los demás pues aprende uno también.”</td>
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<td><strong>S2C2-4</strong>: “A mí me gusta hartísimo trabajar en grupo, porque entiendo más y me siento un poquito más segura”</td>
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<td><strong>S1C1-10</strong>: “si teacher, a mí me gusta trabajar en equipo porque cuando yo no entiendo algo mi compañero me ayuda o al contrario si él no entiende algo yo le ayudo y así aprendemos los dos”</td>
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<td><strong>S1C1-19</strong>: “ahhh y también trabajando en grupo como te dije antes es más chévere y así aprendemos más y nos colaboramos más”</td>
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<td><strong>S1C1-22</strong>: “yo también prefiero las actividades grupales porque nos ayudamos entre nosotros”</td>
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<td><strong>S3C3-7</strong>: “el trabajo en grupo es favorable por el apoyo entre los integrantes.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>S1C1-7</strong>: “porque uno aprende mucho porque ella nos deja trabajar juntos y yo”</td>
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| S1C1-14: “en grupo porque yo aprendo más así y nos colaboramos todos” | aprendo mejor así que cuando trabajo” |
| S3C3-3: “Pues composiciones o cuando hay que redactar cosas largas y pues que es difícil que las personas se pongan de acuerdo entonces preferiría individual” | |
| S3C3-5: “Actividades de “writing” es mejor individual, para no tener que gastar tiempo en llegar a acuerdos.” | |
| S2C2-2: “Es que a veces nos pones a trabajar con los más bruticos y siempre perdemos.” | |
| S1C1-15: “si me acuerdo pero también es aburrido trabajar todo el tiempo en grupo yo prefiero a veces trabajar solo porque a mí no me gusta que se copien de lo que yo hago porque mi mama siempre me dice que no me deje copiar de nadie” | |
| **Teachers** | **T3C2-30: “But, well, in conclusion, it’s very important to allow students interact between them in different moments of the class, and you will see how learning and communication become more natural every single time”** |
| T4C3-5:  | “I prefer to assign them sometimes games, listening, I like to assign speaking activities when they talk about personal situations and about personal information and we can have different discussions, and talk about topics that are related to their own lives.” |
| T4C3-6:  | “Individual activities are good because students can show how much they know and group activities they can interact with other students”  
“Group work is good because they can interact with the other students and they can learn from the classmates too” |
| T4C3-7:  | “English group work influence English learning because they can learn from each other.” |
| T3C2-15: | “it also depends on the population you have, because I have noticed that there are activities that make adults interact, while the same activities don’t allow children to have a lot of opportunities to interact and communicate their ideas and maybe not because they don’t have enough fluency or vocabulary, but just because they are not interested about the topic” |
| T3C2-19: | “The ones in groups ABSOLUTELY, they love it, doesn’t” |
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<td>matter the activity, they love to be with their partners and work together”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T3C2-27:</strong> “I think the most pertinent theory about it is the one form Vygotsky about “the zone of proximal development”, because he supports that children need each one from the other to have a complete process”</td>
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<td><strong>T3C2-28:</strong> “They complement their ideas and feel supported almost all the time, because they are in the same “level”, that’s different with teacher - student because they feel in disadvantage, because naturally they know we as teachers know more than they”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>T1C1-12:</strong> “I prefer group activities or peer activities because they can interact Preferences towards S-S interaction activities with their partners,”</td>
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<td><strong>T1C1-13:</strong> “they think that the teacher is the one who speaks in English but when they work in groups or in peers, they see and they realize that the other student also speaks in English.”</td>
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<td><strong>T3C2-22:</strong> “Sometimes, they are really nice, one to the other, but sometimes they are really annoying: high achievers work by their own and ask the others to”</td>
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be silent and don’t disturb their thoughts”

T2C2-5: “I assign both kinds of activities. First exercises from the book as a way to confirm the use of structures and then, interaction and cooperation to practice with the target language and the expressions.”

T1C1-6: “I really like making students to make presentations, oral presentations ehh it can be relate to interviews or creating by themselves or dialogues

T1C1-14: Sometimes it’s better for students to work by themselves because I notice that there is a student that works hard and the others just copy the activity.

T2C2-4: I prefer individual activities because when students work in group it is more difficult to know their own weakness because most of the time one student does the activity and the other members of the group just copy it.

Field Diaries

FD1A-1: At the end of the class, Beata said that they had to do a project in groups about celebrations around the world, so, Beat separate the class in groups of 5 people and they started to talk about what country they were going to choose. Beat asked to me (Natalie Sanchez) if I could translate what she was going to say and in this way
students could understand everything.

Teacher Beat gave to students a photocopy about present continuous. Kids did it during 30 minutes and after they finished doing it very quiet, they fill a song using ing. Teacher made some mimics to explain the verbs and she said some words in Spanish to make her understand. At the end of the class she did not write any homework and she dais to sts she was very happy because their behavior.

Teacher Natalie showed to students some picture cards about solar system and the big book page 12.

After that, teacher Natalie gave to each boy some vocabulary cards and the idea was that they had to find in the dictionary the correct meaning and paste the cards in their notebook.

In this class the topic was “artist”. This activity was made in the back yard of the school. Teacher Natalie thought that be outside could be a good idea to relax them and work in a different way. Some boys did not work because they are lazy but the rest of the class were working and focused in the activity.

FD1A-5: Teacher gave back the quiz
she had already made the last class and then she corrected the quiz on the blackboard. The students copied the corrections on their notebook and finally she asked them to repeat the words she was saying in English.

After the teacher explained the topic, she made a group activity in groups of 5 people in the blackboard in which the students had to write in the blackboard the word that correspond to the picture the teacher Pamela showing, nevertheless, she had to stop the game because students weren’t paying attention to her and in some point they started to run, play and talk and the teacher Pamela was getting angry with them.

After an hour to explain the topic, the students started to read a lecture about life cycles in their book” moving into English”. They were in groups of three boys and the teacher nataly had given to them a copy with some cycles.

When they were working in their dictionaries in individual way they worked very well because each one had a dictionary and even that it was an individual work, they helped each other to find the meaning.
After 10 minutes they organized the classroom in groups of four boys and the idea was that each group had to write in some charts of paper the most important sentences of the text. Here teacher nataly realized that when the work is with more than two students, they spend the time doing different things and they do not get interested in the activities.

Teacher nataly draw on the board a chart with three columns and in each one student had to write what was the name of the baby animal written in the column. When students came to the board, they had to select one boy to represent the file. If the answer was good they got points. In this activity teacher could see that when they work in competitions they got motivated just for getting points and high grades.

After the explanation about possessives teacher nataly gave to them a copy with some exercises. They worked individually but even that teacher nataly saw some students that were looking classmate’s papers.

That day, was the presentation of the projects and they had to present and perform a song in groups of 4 students. That day some moms came to class to watch their sons and in this calls teacher nataly could realized two important aspects. The fist one is that students have an excellent behavior on front of
their moms and second that were really happy and interested in this activity because it was different and funny for them.

### Student - student interaction through group activities

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<th>FD1B-29: During the peer work activity, students checked their own mistakes and they had the opportunity to learn from it.</th>
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<td>FD1B-31: Teacher asked students to group by pairs and she decided who was going to work with. In that way they had to help each other in order to have success in the development in the activity and they had to learn to respect others point of views.</td>
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<td>FDB-62: In pairs students had to do a speaking activity, it was a dialogue; they had to help each other with pronunciation.</td>
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<td>FD1B-65: Students had to make groups and they had to read a story, and they had to look for some words that they didn't know in the dictionary. One student looked for the word, another said how the word spelled. And everybody participate inside the groups.</td>
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<td>FD1B-66: In groups, students had to tell to their partners which words they looked for: and the whole class share the new words and in that way they learned new vocabulary.</td>
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<td>FD3-21: the activity was based on peer interaction due to students must recognize their own mistakes</td>
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<td>FD3-23: They correct themselves and sometimes they corrected to the others.</td>
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<td>FD3-25: During the activity, the students corrected themselves and through the mistakes</td>
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that they made, they were learning.

### Group work versus individual work

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<td>S1C1-24:</td>
<td>“a mí me gustan actividades individuales y grupales, es interesante trabajar en grupo pero también individual y también me gusta actividades diferentes”</td>
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<td>T4C3-5:</td>
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<td><strong>FD2-1:</strong> Teacher asks Ss to make a circle and she has some pictures pasted on the board and the words, then, Ss play tingo tingo tango and the person who gets the ball, goes in front and matches the word with the correct object.</td>
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| **FD2-3:** When Ss finish, T asks them to compare their answers with their classmates, by following the model:  
A: What do you have in number 1?  
B: I have ______ and you?  
A: I have ______.  
T, plays the CD again and Ss in groups, check their answers. |  |
| **FD2-6:** T gives each student a piece of paper and tip pens and explains the activity: “First, draw three objects on the paper and second, Ss select four objects from their bag”. When they finish drawing and put out the objects, T divides Ss into As and Bs and Ss have to follow the conversation given during the practice part; then, their real objects are to practice THIS IS and the objects on their posters are to use THAT IS. |  |
| **FD2-7:** Once they understood the vocabulary, T asks them to practice the conversation I pairs and underline the expressions AT / ARE YOU AT _? |  |
| **FD3-34:** There was just one student who spoke in English all the time and it was uncourageous for the rest of the class because they tried to do the same with effort. |  |
FD2-8: In pairs, Ss guess in which place are their classmates: one student think in a place in which he or she is and the other has to guess. T exemplifies:

A: Maritza, are you at the Colombo?
B: No, I’m not.
A: Are you near the Colombo?
B: No, I’m not.
A: Are you near the park?
B: Yes, I am.

T gives Ss for evaluating their partners:
Correct (happy face) Incorrect (sad face). The winner is the person with more happy faces.