



Teaching English Through English
Module 10
Managing Cooperative Activities

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Module 10: Start Here

"Learning another language is not only learning different words for the same things but learning another way to think about things."

– Flora Lewis

Student projects and cooperative tasks are activities that invite students to combine efforts and collaborate to share the content and skills they have learned over a period of time, such as a unit or marking period. Thus, having established routines and clear expectations for when students are working together is essential for their independence in completing projects and cooperative tasks/collaborative activities.

In the contemporary language classroom, collaborative activities can encourage all modes of language interaction, including interpersonal communication. When students are expected to work in partners and/or groups, attitudes and behaviors may change from when they participated in a whole class lecture. It is important to establish the classroom norms and expectations for when students work in groups for projects and other activities so that classroom learning time is maximized.

Setting the stage so that your students can benefit and effectively work together during these activities is an important first step for your planning and development of student project work and activities. In this module, we will explore several factors that will assist you and your students in managing project work and activities in the language classroom.

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- describe the purpose and benefits of project work and cooperative activities in the language classroom
- explore various ways to develop and present project work and cooperative activities to and for all students
- exchange ideas for project work and cooperative activities that work well for all learners
- develop project ideas and cooperative activities that can be modified for multiple units of study using checklists, rubrics, collaborative work guidelines/expectations
- reflect on ways to adapt and differentiate project work and cooperative activities for all learners

Explore

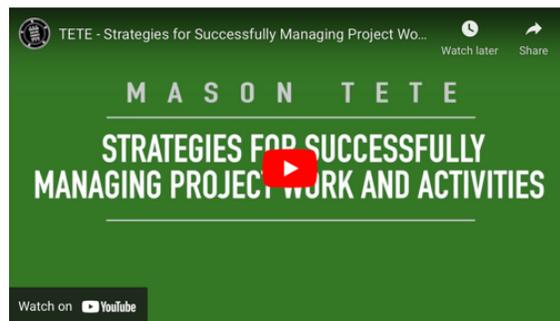
10.1. Watch

Explore ideas for managing student project work and activities by watching two videos.

- **Video 1: Grouping Students for Activities and Establishing Guidelines for Participation**
 - This video will introduce you to some ideas for grouping students, assigning tasks/roles, and establishing guidelines for class participation.
 - Click [here](#) for the PDF of the script for Video 1.
Link to YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_EPby75_bQ



- **Video 2: Strategies for Successfully Managing Projects and Activities**
 - This video will introduce you to some ideas for managing projects and activities in the language classroom, such as using visual checks, scaffolding, and anchor charts.
 - Click [here](#) for the PDF of the script for Video 2.
 - Link to YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vEMA7IBEAy4>





Teaching English Through English
Module 10 Video 1 Script
Grouping Students for Activities and Establishing Guidelines for Participation

Hello English teachers! Are you ready to power up your English class? Here are some tips for managing interactive activities. Managing classroom activities can seem overwhelming at times, but they can be done really well when students are grouped appropriately for activities and given clear guidelines for their participation. For many students, our classrooms are the only place they get to practice using the target language with others, so we want to give them time to move around and talk to one another as much as possible!

Grouping students can be an exciting way to randomize learning opportunities and create purposeful interactions. Some simple ideas for randomly grouping students are giving each student an item that they have to use to match up with the person who has that same item. For example, you could give students a colored card (like, red, blue, or yellow), a cut out shape (like triangle, square, or circle), or numbered piece of paper when they walk in the classroom. Keep it simple, and you can reuse these items throughout the year. For students who catch on to the strategy and try to trade items before the activity, you can always change it up by saying: “Match up with the person who has a color that makes “green” or “purple” with your color so that they will have to find somebody with a different color.” You also can add complexity to randomizing groups by having them solve math problems and those with the same answer group together or passing out city names and then having students group together by the country where those cities are located.

Another way to encourage all students to participate in group activities is to assign students a role or task to do throughout the group work time. You could also have students periodically choose their roles, which gives them a sense of ownership and provides accountability. Example “roles” could include: *encourager, manager, timekeeper, secretary, and reporter.*

Here are some sample descriptions of what the roles of Team Captain and Facilitator are responsible for doing in a group activity:

Team Captain:

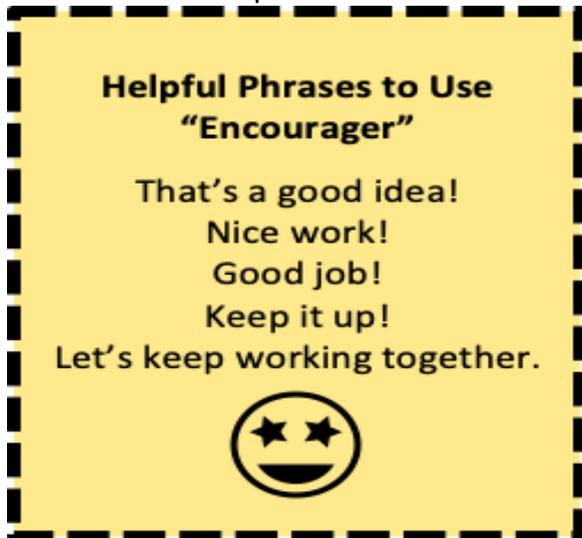
- Encourages all team members to participate
- Makes sure everyone in the team is following the group norms
- Helps team members find compromises when they disagree
- Fills in the role of any team member absent

Facilitator:

- Gets the team started right away on the task
- Makes sure everyone understands the instructions of the assignment
- Collects and distributes materials to the team
- Organizes the task so that everyone can participate

When using student roles in your classroom for projects and activities it is important to make sure that students have a bank of phrases and vocabulary to use for when in each role. This could be an engaging activity in itself for making a list of things one would say when playing each role. For example, what might the “encourager” say to the group members throughout the activity? The encourager might say phrases like, “That’s a good idea!” “Nice work.” or “Good job.” Write these phrases on an **anchor chart**, like this one, that is visible to students throughout the group work time. Another idea is to create a reference sheet of the classroom roles that students can keep and refer to for these types of activities.

Anchor Chart Example



“Encourager” by Kelley Webb is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Establishing guidelines and expectations for group work, such as noise level, transitions, and getting their attention is helpful to do right before breaking out into groups. An idea for monitoring noise level is to show a visual of a stoplight with green being an appropriate noise level, yellow being a caution for getting too loud, and red being at a noise level too loud for group work. You can use an arrow marker to indicate which level they are on throughout the activity time.



Some ideas for transitions between activities are to use a timer so students can see the countdown for when they should have finished their transition to another activity or play a part of a song from the target culture as an auditory cue to move to the next activity.

Attention getters can be used to quickly get students' attention to make an announcement or give the next set of instructions during a group activity. Using a catchy phrase is a fun way to get students' attention. For example, you could start the phrase "1-2-3" and students then respond "Eyes on Me." Or you could use a sound maker, such as a bell, a clapper, or a musical instrument. These are fun ways to prompt students' attention toward you. The louder and more interesting sounds seem to always catch students' attention!

As a final note, establishing expectations for group work is key to successful interactions in the classroom. Having these norms will allow for some "controlled chaos" and encourage more constructive communications, which is what contemporary language learning is all about!

Thanks for watching and learning. Now, let's go do it!



Teaching English Through English
Module 10 Video 2 Script
Strategies for Successfully Managing Project Work and Activities

Hello English teachers! Are you ready to power up your English class? Here are some tips for managing student project work and activities! Developing and preparing projects and activities in classes both large and small can be overwhelming for teachers. The excitement is there because it is a break from the normal routine. However, the preparation and assessment can be daunting. In this video, I will review strategies for successfully managing project work and activities in the language classroom.

Keep in mind that projects and activities should always have a clear purpose and end goal for using them in the language classroom. One way to ensure that you are designing projects with this in mind is to answer the **PLAY Analysis** questions below.

PLAY Analysis Questions for Evaluating Activities are:

P – How does the **Purpose** of the game/activity/project relate to the unit goals?

L – Are the **Language** skills being practiced the skills learners need at this point in the unit?

A – How does the activity **Advance** students' learning?

Y – Will the activity **Yield** any information about the learners' understanding and use of the target language?

(Grahn & McAlpine, 2017, p. 68)

Ok, let's begin the first strategy called **Visual Checks**. You can visually check in on your students working in cooperative projects and activity groups by doing a "**Fist to Five**" comprehension check. For example, at the end of an activity, you might ask students to hold up their hands and show you on a scale of 0 to 5 how did they understand the assignment. 5 means they totally understand and have no questions, 4 is they understand most of it or can clarify any questions they have with their group, 3 is that they understand some of it, but not all and will need help from the teacher, 2 is that they have several questions that need clarifying, 1 is that they understand very little, and a fist means they do not understand at all. Any students who show a fist, 1 or 2 should receive help first and then you can work up to those who indicated 3 or 4. Using the Fist to Five strategy during projects and activities gives you a quick way to assess students' understanding of the task so that you can see who needs more assistance. This will help you prioritize assisting students with the greatest need for help, especially if you have large class size.

Now, let's talk about another strategy for managing projects and activities called **Scaffolding**. Scaffolding can be any type of support structure that you use to introduce and allow students to use to move them toward a task they can do independently. The idea is that students will build their skills toward successfully completing a task with these structures in place and then they will

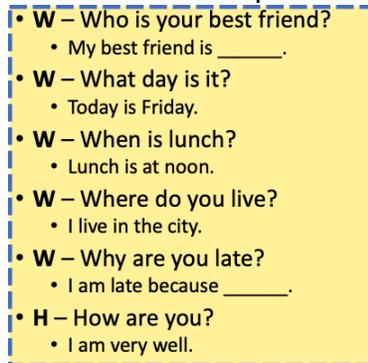
be removed as the students demonstrate success and master the task. Just like the scaffolds or supports used when constructing a large building.

Scaffolding the language your students will need in order to participate in a project, small-group, or partner activity is essential for their success and ability to continue speaking in the target language during the activity. Building the language and skills you would like them to practice during these activities requires planning and instruction. Otherwise, students are likely to revert to speaking their native language during the task and may become frustrated.

So, what does scaffolding look like in the language classroom? Scaffolding for a communicative activity may be modeling an example of the task in front of the class prior to beginning the group or partner activity. For example, if the task is for students to create a dialogue about how they would interact with a server at a restaurant when ordering a meal, then invite two students to come up to present a dialogue using the guidelines you have provided. One student would play the role as the guest and the other the server.

In the language classroom, scaffolds can also be implemented with **anchor charts** as visual aids for referencing sentence structures or grammatical sequences. These anchor charts can be used within activities for modeling questions with responses. For example, you could have an anchor chart displayed with sample questions that begin with the 5 Ws and 1 H, also known as Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How? and list types of responses to these questions.

Anchor Chart Example

- 
- **W** – Who is your best friend?
 - My best friend is _____.
 - **W** – What day is it?
 - Today is Friday.
 - **W** – When is lunch?
 - Lunch is at noon.
 - **W** – Where do you live?
 - I live in the city.
 - **W** – Why are you late?
 - I am late because _____.
 - **H** – How are you?
 - I am very well.

“5 Ws & 1H” by Kelley Webb is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

To conclude, managing projects and activities in your language class can be very successful if you use the strategies like visual check-ins and scaffolding supports.

Thanks for watching and learning. Now, let’s go do it!

References

Grahn, L., & McAlpine, D. (2017). *The keys to strategies for language instruction: Engagement, relevance, critical thinking, collaboration*. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.



10.2. Read

Explore ideas for managing student project work and activities by reading at least two articles.

- **Article 1:** [Thinking Through Collaborative Projects in the Language Classroom](#) by Kelley Webb
 - This article discusses the importance of creating a classroom community. Strategies for grouping students and managing project work and collaborative activities are shared.
 - Source: Webb, K. (2021). Thinking through collaborative projects in the language classroom. Teaching English through English: English Speaking Nation for Uzbekistan Program.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ihVhQVTFW7zfeZl1N0PN0mKzAmNll8tV/view?usp=sharing>

- **Article 2:** [Toward better group work: Seeing the difference between cooperation and collaboration](#) by Olga Kozar
 - The importance of collaboration in language learning is the topic of this article. Five step-by-step collaborative activities for the language classroom are shared.
 - Source: Kozar, O. (2010). Toward better group work: Seeing the difference between cooperation and collaboration. English Teaching Forum, 48(2), 16-23.
https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/48_2-etf-towards-better-group-work-seeing-the-difference-between-cooperation-and-collaboration.pdf

- **Article 3:** [Minimizing the chaos through cooperative classroom management](#) by Gena Rhoades
 - This article discusses techniques for preparing for cooperative learning activities in the language classroom. Ideas for forming groups, setting expectations, and tracking progress are shared.
 - Source: Rhoades, G. (2013). Minimizing the chaos through cooperative classroom management. English Teaching Forum, 51(4), 28- 34.
https://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/51_4_5_rhoades.pdf



Thinking through Collaborative Projects in the Language Classroom

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“No matter where, what, or whom one teaches, creating a learning community is essential to promoting learning at home, school, and the work place. In order to live, learn, and work together effectively, we need to be able to listen to one another, to work together to identify and solve problems, and to acknowledge and respect diverse points of view”
(Project Zero, 2016).

Creating a Classroom Community

Creating a classroom community is a priority for language classes because of the importance of developing communicative language skills with each other. For many students, there are few opportunities to speak the target language outside of class, so time in class must be maximized for practice. In order for the classroom space to be welcoming for students to communicate and work well with each other, a sense of community must be established first.

Creating a sense of community in the classroom includes demonstrating trust, equality, and respect for all. Within a communicative language class, students will be expected to work, listen, and respond to each other. Collaboration is a 21st century skill for work and life. These skills include working effectively and respectfully with diverse members of a team, showing flexibility and willingness to compromise

toward achieving a common goal, and sharing responsibility for collaborative work, all while valuing each team member’s contributions (Grahn & McAlpine, 2017).

Beginning the academic year with the expectation of developing a classroom community allows for student engagement to be optimized through a variety of group activities. Learning another language is not effectively done when in isolation or alone. Students must learn to work in groups in order to communicate ideas, practice language structures, and engage in understanding others’ perspectives. A few examples of activities that encourage the development of a classroom community are Find-Someone-Who games, QR Code Scavenger Hunts, and Hold the Baton/Stack the Tower.

Grouping Students

for many students. During group activities, students have the possibility of working alongside other students with a range of strengths, which ultimately promotes growth opportunities. Teachers may opt to strategically assign groups based on student abilities and relationships. This may be appropriate for long-term projects where students will have to work together for more than one class period. There are many engaging ways to group students for shorter activities, such as pair work. As an example, students can use a printout of a clock to schedule appointment times with other students for partner activities. The teacher assigns the activity a time on the clock and students match up with that appointment partner for the task. To get the entire class moving on their feet, students can arrange themselves in a line based on their birthdays, height, or alphabetized name and then fold the line in the middle so that students are facing the person who will be their partner. Keeping these activities in the target language also helps students practice communicating with each other.

When group work is carefully structured, students can achieve many goals and outcomes through a variety of tasks and presentations. Working with their peers can often encourage interactions and support sustained engagement. Scaffolding is a common way to structure group work by providing the support for students to successfully complete a task. Supports can include graphic organizers for outlining projects, modeling an example of a task, and providing clear criteria for completing a

task with a rubric or checklist. Providing scaffolding supports during group work maximizes efficiency in presenting the task requirements in a clear way, keeps students on task, and presents examples and sources for finding information, all of which reduce student anxiety and uncertainty so that they can focus on completing the work successfully.

Strategies for Managing Projects and Activities

There are several ways to facilitate group work so that students have the opportunity to take the lead and demonstrate their learning. Assigning student roles for project work and offering project completion checklists with detailed rubrics are some ways to encourage students to manage their time effectively and hold themselves accountable for completing the task as expected.

Providing a rubric for how a project will be evaluated is a form of scaffolding as it guides students with a clear outline of the expectations of the task for quality completion. Project checklists are also useful for students who may benefit from breaking down a large task into smaller chunks or need the details broken down into parts. This type of formative check-in may encourage them to stay on task and benefit from less feelings of anxiety when tasks take a long time to complete. Another way to keep students accountable for their work and participation in group projects is to have them keep a work log to document the date, a description of what they did on the task for that day, and the plan for what they will do next. These logs can be kept in

the classroom for the teacher to have access to review before the next class meeting time, if there are any concerns about participation efforts or confusion about the activity.

Students should also have responsibility for managing their progress and performance. Self-assessments and peer-assessments/evaluations are ways to have students reflect on their participation in a group activity and provide feedback on the input of other group members. One form of peer-assessment is the “Feedback Cheeseburger” which is highlighted in the Activity Bank. When using this strategy, students will provide both constructive compliments and criticism on the other person’s work, sandwiching the compliments on what they did well with the meat of the matter, or criticism, for what they could improve upon.

To conclude, projects are one way to assess student understanding and comprehension of a unit or larger concept. Projects can be assigned as a long-term assignment for an individual, a summative assessment for an entire class, or as an alternative form of assessment with design and choice input from student groups. See Ghiath’s (2002) article on using cooperative learning for alternative assessments if you wish to explore this further. Blaz (2016) suggests that projects have the element of

“engageability” so that all students can participate by doing, communicating their learning, identifying the next steps to complete, and engaging in application of the content through real-world tasks.

Managing projects can be challenging for both the teacher and students. Curtain and Dahlberg (2016) offer step-by-step guidelines for helping teachers plan effectively for designing and implementing group activities in the language classroom. In addition to the ideas already mentioned in this article, they suggest setting clear expectations regarding the use of the target language and preparing them with the language that they will need to use in the activity. This can be done by providing example sentence starters as a visual reference for communicative activities and modeling how to complete each component of a project step by step. Another idea is to use a system for students to work in pairs or groups to check each other’s work for correctness, which gives the teacher more time to circle the room and monitor language use and participation.

For more ideas on self-directed projects for individuals, read Malcolm and Rindfleisch’s (2003) article in American English - English Teaching Forum and check out the Activity Bank for ideas using technology with project.



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Blaz, D. (2016). *Differentiated instruction: A guide for world language teachers* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

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Towards Better Group Work: Seeing the Difference between Cooperation and Collaboration

I have a confession to make. Until several months ago, the terms *cooperation* and *collaboration* were synonymous to me—I did not think about the differences between these methods and was unaware of the gap that divides them. “Is there really a big difference?” you might ask. And, more importantly, “Why should it matter for us practitioners?”

I would argue that being unaware of these differences impedes teachers from organizing group work as effectively as possible. True collaboration is simply too valuable not to take advantage of because it provides students with a significant opportunity to learn from one another, negotiate meaning, and improve their social skills.

The purpose of this article is twofold: I would like to highlight the difference between *cooperative work* and *collaborative work* in general; I will also suggest practical activities that serve as stepping stones to promote collaboration in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms.

Definitions of key terms

Researchers such as Dillenbourg et al. (1996) and Roschelle and Teasley (1995) agree that it is important to make a distinction between cooperation and collaboration. While *cooperative learning* can be defined as “working together to accomplish shared goals” (Smith 1995), *collaborative learning* is “a method that implies working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while respecting each individual’s contribution to the whole” (McInnerney and Robert 2004, 205). Roschelle and Teasley (1995) describe cooperative work as a task that is accomplished by dividing it among participants, where “each person is responsible for a portion of the problem solving,” and they see collaborative work as “the mutual engagement of participants in a coordinated effort to solve the problem together” (70).

The key difference between these approaches to group work is that cooperation is more focused on working

together to create an end product, while successful collaboration requires participants to share in the process of knowledge creation (Dillenbourg et al. 1996; Roschelle and Teasley 1995). In other words, cooperation can be achieved if all participants do their assigned parts separately and bring their results to the table; collaboration, in contrast, implies direct interaction among individuals to produce a product and involves negotiations, discussions, and accommodating others' perspectives.

According to Nelson (2008), cooperation is "a protocol that allows you not to get in each other's way" as you work. He uses the example of an assembly line and reaches the conclusion that "a cooperative enterprise could in some way be done, as long as you had enough time or other resources, by a single person."

Strengths of collaboration

Numerous studies show that collaborative learning, as compared to working independently, results in deeper information processing and more meaningful psychological connections among the participants (Johnson, Johnson, and Smith 1998; Smith 1995). The goal of collaboration is to create new insights during discussions (Henri 1992; Kaye 1992) and to move students closer to an understanding of alternate perspectives (Cunningham 1992). While working together, students build new understanding by challenging others' ideas and defending their own. When successful, this creates a product that is different from what any individual could produce alone (Ingram and Hathorn 2004).

Kaye (1992) believes that the single most important criterion for collaboration is the synthesis of information—that is, creating a new product through the combination of different perspectives, talents, and ideas, which is quite different from what each of the participants could have created on his or her own. An indispensable element to collaboration is that all those involved in a collaborative task must contribute more or less equally (Ingram and Hathorn 2009). Important questions to assess if a classroom task is truly collaborative include:

- Were the students negotiating and accommodating one another's perspectives?

- Was everybody contributing equally?
- Have different perspectives been included in the final product?

Collaboration—a chimera or a realistic goal?

As beneficial as these strengths seem, collaboration is not always easy to achieve. Some authors point out that dividing students into groups and asking them to work collaboratively will not guarantee that they will really do so (Kreijns, Kirschner, and Jochems 2003; Johnson and Johnson 2004). This is not surprising, as collaboration places more structural, interpersonal, and cognitive demands on individuals than more passive cooperative activities do. Collaboration often does not come naturally to our students, especially in cultures that encourage individual responsibility and accountability. Think about it—we grade our students based on their individual effort and results, so when we ask learners to work in groups, it may contradict the structure they are used to and become a major challenge, both emotionally and cognitively.

A limited yet important role for teachers

The sobering news is that teachers cannot possibly have complete control over all the factors that could potentially influence collaboration; students come to our classes with their own backgrounds, personal relationships, and personality, all of which affect the way learners interact. The good news is that teachers do play an important role in shaping students' experiences. That is why I feel that we should include more collaborative tasks in our regular teaching and work towards increasing students' awareness of the numerous benefits of collaboration.

Laying the groundwork for successful collaboration

Since individual achievement is the top priority in many educational settings, collaboration is often something that our students are not used to. Therefore, it might take time for students to accept collaborative tasks and learn how to perform them successfully. However, obstacles to collaboration can be overcome by being consistent and cultivating a positive environment.

Being consistent

Being consistent in the design, application, and assessment of collaborative work ensures that students have a clear understanding of the objectives and procedures of the task they will accomplish and greatly increases the potential for success. The following general suggestions can help establish consistency in collaborative group work:

1. During a pre-collaboration period, make sure students are motivated to participate.
2. Lay clear ground rules: everybody must participate, and all ideas should be accommodated.
3. Be available as a resource for students, but do not offer any judgments on the work in progress and assure them that tensions are natural.
4. Do not get discouraged when a collaborative task results in some emotional responses from students—keep creating opportunities for learning to work collaboratively.

The following questions are critical to effective planning of collaborative tasks, which also produces consistency and increases the chance for success:

- What are the specific language objectives of the task?
- How many of the four language skills will be used?
- Will the task require pairs, triads, small groups, large groups, the whole class, or a combination of these?
- Will the task be introduced with brainstorming, discussion, or some other short activity?
- What is a reasonable time period for the task to be completed?
- Will each group make a final oral or written presentation to another group or to the whole class?
- Will there be a presentation of the final project to parents, the community, or even a larger audience?

Cultivate a positive environment

When my students are successfully collaborating, I use a lot of positive reinforcement. I often ask them if they feel that their final product is better than any of them might have

done individually (a loaded question, I admit, but it serves the purpose). The answer almost invariably is yes, it is indeed better.

Another helpful strategy is to consciously raise students' awareness of the advantages they receive while sharing resources and expertise. The result will be students who are more accepting of different opinions and increased tolerance in the classroom.

Sample collaborative activities

Following are five activities that I have used in my classroom to introduce students to collaborative work. They require different degrees of collaboration, and the point is to prepare students at the beginning and intermediate levels for more complex group work and tasks that they will eventually encounter in their ESL classes. The difficulty levels of these activities can be adjusted up or down, depending on the language level of the class. The group sizes can also be adjusted for the size of the class and the particular activity.

Collaborative Activity 1:

Vocabulary brainstorm

This simple activity makes a good warm-up or review activity. The language objective is to help students learn new words about general topics such as food, weather, and clothes, or words that are examples of structures they may be studying, such as phrasal verbs, concrete nouns, adjectives, and adverbs, to name a few.

Materials: paper

Time required: 10–15 minutes

Step 1: Students form groups and generate as many words as possible that relate to a selected topic. The main rule is that everyone must participate. To ensure that the less-advanced students participate in the activity, ask them to keep track of the words that the group has generated by writing down and numbering the words.

Step 2: Each group chooses a spokesperson to read out that group's words to the whole class.

The advantage of this activity is that it is quick and fun, and exposes students to new vocabulary. It can be turned into a game if the teacher encourages students to generate

as many words as possible and keeps track of or scores the final number of words for each group. The teacher can also collect the lists of words and create a record book or make a poster wall.

Collaborative Activity 2:

Preparing a structured survey

A survey activity works well in terms of collaboration because a variety of people are involved in asking and answering questions. The language objective is to practice relevant grammar constructions and functions that can be included in the questions and responses of the survey instrument.

Materials: survey questions, paper

Time required: 25–30 minutes

Step 1: The teacher or the students prepare different sets of survey questions beforehand, which can be purposefully designed to practice targeted grammatical structures: “Where did you use to live? What do you prefer to drink with your meals? Where are you going after school?” When constructing the survey questions, students should avoid questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” It also helps to require students to answer the survey questions in complete sentences.

Step 2: Students form groups and each group uses a set of questions to interview members of their group. If possible, and to increase the variety of responses, each group can ask different survey questions. Every student in each group must ask and answer a set of questions.

Step 3: Each group assigns a scribe who records all the answers to the group’s survey questions.

Step 4: Group members choose a representative to present their group’s survey responses to another group or to the whole class.

Collaborative Activity 3:

Drawing together

This activity, in which students create drawings using different colors, is fun and

appealing to students. The language objective includes the vocabulary of colors and adjectives, including comparatives and superlatives. Students work alone at first and then as a large group (group size is dependent on the size of the class).

Materials: crayons (or watercolors or colored markers), paper (small and large)

Time required: 20–25 minutes

Step 1: Each student chooses a different color and works alone for five minutes to draw a picture of his or her choice.

Step 2: The teacher provides a piece of paper large enough for all students to draw their pictures. Students draw together on the same piece of paper for five minutes.

Step 3: Students analyze the final product and take turns naming the different colors.

Step 4: The teacher asks students to use adjectives to compare and contrast the single one-color drawings with the large multi-color picture. This step will entail the use of comparatives and superlatives (e.g., bigger picture, most colorful, prettiest drawing).

Collaborative Activity 4:

All the ingredients matter!

In this activity students role-play by representing the different ingredients needed to cook a dish or prepare a meal. The language objective is to describe, compare, and explain using the large vocabulary of food and cooking, including the names of ingredients, flavors, cookware, and utensils.

Materials: food ingredients and cooking equipment (e.g., eggs, flour, salt, cooking oil, frying pan, utensils). Pictures of the items may be substituted for the actual item.

Time required: 35–40 minutes

Step 1: Each student selects or is assigned an ingredient or utensil (either the real object or a picture).

Step 2: The teacher asks different students questions about what their ingredient tastes like, whether it can be

eaten raw, and what their utensil is used for, etc.

- Step 3: Students take turns asking similar questions to students sitting nearby (e.g., “What is the flavor of that spice? What does an egg taste like? Why can’t you eat it raw? What kind of recipe is this ingredient used for? How do you cook with that pan?”).
- Step 4: Students form groups based on ingredients and cookware that can be used to prepare a meal; they brainstorm about the different kinds of dishes that can be made from their ingredients and discuss how to cook them. Students choose one person from their group to document the different dishes and cooking methods that were discussed.
- Step 5: Students choose a representative from their respective groups to present their menus or recipes to either a different group or to the whole class.
- Step 6: The teacher “steals” one of the ingredients or utensils and asks what is going to happen to the dish (e.g., “Is it still tasty? Can we still eat it? Is there another way to cook the dish?”).
- Step 7: The teacher returns the ingredient or utensil and reinforces the idea that all the ingredients matter.

Collaborative Activity 5:

The secret of the Internet

In this activity students discuss important components of the Internet, such as Wikipedia and social networking websites. The activity is most appropriate and interesting for teenagers and adults who are familiar with the Internet. The language objectives are the technical vocabulary and language functions associated with the Internet and social networking.

Materials: Internet access is preferable but not required

Time required: 25–35 minutes

- Step 1: As a whole class students take turns naming their favorite Internet site for homework, communication, entertainment, or social networking

(e.g., Wikipedia, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace).

- Step 2: Students form groups and brainstorm about the features of websites and procedures to access or join social networking or other websites. This generates a large amount of useful specialized English vocabulary (e.g., surf, log in, register, create a profile, invite friends, upload/download photos, share music, edit content, store information). One student from each group documents the vocabulary generated by that group.
- Step 3: Each group takes a turn presenting the results of their discussion to the whole class, and all the class members take turns giving their reactions and opinions about the features and procedures of the Internet.
- Step 4: The teacher tells students that “the rules of the Internet” have changed. Students can continue storing and accessing information on the Internet, but only their personal information will be available. Students vote for or against this idea and explain their choice. They also discuss how this would change the Internet.
- Step 5: The whole class continues to share their ideas about the nature of the Internet (e.g., “Why does it take many active users to have a great website? Why is talking to others online fun? Do students learn anything from websites or people on the Internet?”). If the class has Internet access, students can demonstrate different websites and novel features that they are familiar with.

The purpose of these activities is to introduce collaboration and prepare students for higher-level tasks they will complete as they advance in their English language learning. In fact, these activities could become task-based if they had a stronger application to the world outside the classroom. This might include (1) collaborating on the development and administration of a survey for family, friends, or neighbors about an important

issue to the community and collating the data for a final report; (2) preparing an elaborate menu and cooking a meal for a large group or special event; and (3) using the Internet to complete and present a research, art, or engineering project. These types of tasks require the synergistic contributions and feedback from all students in the group to achieve success.

Frequently Asked Questions about collaborative tasks

1. How can I be sure that all the students will participate?

As mentioned previously, a key criterion for collaboration is equal participation. However, as we all know, strong students often take the initiative in group work and drive the whole task, while weaker students contribute less. It is important to create a chance for students with less-developed language skills to express themselves and contribute to the overall success of the group. It is true that some students are not good at vocabulary or grammar; however, they might be great at drawing or be good athletes. Such students often make excellent “designers” or “messengers” for the team. Here is what I have been doing in my classes to encourage weaker learners to participate:

- I make it explicit that if somebody does not participate, the entire team or group will lose points.
- In order to provide students with enough opportunities to take part, I include a physical and a creative part in the task. I tell students they will earn more points if they add illustrations or design a logo for their reports or presentations. And, when possible, I add a physical component in the task—students need to run, or hop, or throw a dart when they finish their task.

From my observations, it is usually the less-advanced students who do the physical and the creative parts of the task. They seem to enjoy it, but what is more, being involved tends to increase their general motivation level, which in turn has a beneficial effect on language learning.

2. Should teachers assign roles—or not?

I believe that ideally the teacher should refrain from assigning students absolute roles for group work. It is important for students to learn to negotiate and work together. Students themselves should be the ones to decide who will be the scribe or the presenter, or who will do the physical and the creative parts of a task. However, if students are very young or new to collaboration, I initially support them by arranging an activity that will demonstrate different roles. For instance, during a brainstorming activity I might assign one student to keep track of the vocabulary as other students go around the classroom gathering words from their classmates.

3. How should teachers handle emotional reactions?

Be prepared for emotional reactions. If you get them, remember that the cause is not you—these reactions are a part and a parcel of the collaboration. Bruffee (1999, 326) points out that in collaborative tasks, “instructors willingly relinquish most of their classroom authority in order to entrust and empower the learners to take control of their own learning.”

Emotions, both positive and negative, seem to be inevitable in collaborative learning (Jones and Issroff 2005). This is especially true with heterogeneous groups that have not had the prior experience of working together. With collaboration, students have to deal with power issues (who controls the task?) as they accommodate different ideas and question their own point of view.

Therefore, instructors need to prepare for emotional reactions from students and consider ways to handle the situation. Here are a few suggestions:

- Stay calm and positive, and be careful about getting involved.
- Remind students that they are learning a new skill—negotiating the work—and that it is important to offer their expertise and respect the expertise of others.
- Use metaphors like learning to ride a bike, falling when trying to roller-skate, or typing slowly when first using a computer.
- Assure students that some tensions are natural and will soon go away. Students

take a lot of social referencing from their teachers, and they will most likely adopt such an attitude and continue collaborating with the group.

- Introduce micro-collaboration by having students work on smaller projects that are easier to manage. Incorporating this type of smaller task frequently enough builds up familiarity and contributes to students' positive experience.

Conclusion: Give it a chance

The reason I felt it was important to write this article is to share a lesson that I learned while trying to organize collaborative activities. And the lesson is this: even if it fails the first time, give it a second chance. I was initially frustrated trying to set up some collaborative tasks. The activities seemed messy, noisy, and chaotic; sometimes students ran to me complaining about their group mates. It was not an ideal, blissful teaching situation. What kept me from giving up on collaboration is the idea that, like a lot of other skills in life, the ability to collaborate is a learned skill and can and hopefully will be developed if students are given enough opportunities.

So I continued. I often divided students into groups, told them that everyone should participate, and rewarded students lavishly with praise and grades when they truly collaborated. I also made it clear that dividing the task and completing it separately was not acceptable. And eventually it worked—after several awkward attempts, my students started talking and sharing ideas; they now decorate the walls with great word lists and posters that they create together, and they take pride in them. What is more, they relax in group work. It is no longer a competition against one another, but a fun process of working together to build something new.

Finally, let me finish with a metaphor of a potluck dinner, where people cook and bring different dishes to the table. The dinner is more exciting than what each individual would have eaten individually—but the guests return back to their homes being able to cook only the same dish they brought to the potluck. Even though they may have gotten recipes, they still need to learn to make the new dishes themselves. On the other hand, had

they cooked together in the first place they would have observed and learned a lot more from one another; they would have taken away some practical, hands-on skills even if cooking together had meant a messier and a more chaotic process. So give collaboration a chance! It is worth the effort.

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Minimizing the Chaos through Cooperative Classroom Management

There are many reasons for students to work in small groups in any class, but when the focus is on teaching them a language, the need to do so multiplies. During my time as a teacher and teacher trainer, I have heard many reasons why teachers do not want to use group work, and it seems to boil down to a feeling of being unable to control the class. Fortunately, my first few years of teaching were in a program where small-group and whole-class interactions were expected. Small classes gave students many opportunities to practice the target language and receive feedback from their peers and instructors. Years of experience in such programs left me very confident in my teaching skills.

However, when I decided to teach abroad, during my first day as a trainer of Moroccan high school English teachers my eyes were opened to the complications of large-classroom management. When I told my Moroccan colleagues that I would be

using communicative language teaching and lots of collaborative group work, many of them declared that the approach would not work because it was not how Moroccans learn. However, since I had experience successfully teaching students from many countries, including Morocco, I did not take their warnings seriously.

As I struggled through my first week, I started to doubt myself. I was beset by the pitfalls of using group work in a large classroom: I could not be nine places at the same time, so I could not hear what all the teams were discussing; I could not control what language they were using; I could not tell if one student had been doing all the talking or if everyone had the opportunity to participate; and most importantly—the noise! Though it was “healthy noise,” as we like to say in the language classroom, it was loud, and as group members tried to hear one another over the voices of the other groups, the volume periodically increased to a deafening

level. Worse yet, with the noise at that level, how was I supposed to let them know when they should stop discussing in groups and come back to a whole-class discussion?

As you might expect, I was extremely tired and distressed after that first week. I had arrived with so much confidence and was still sure that I could train these teachers to be excellent language teachers, but something had to change. So I stepped back and thought about everything I had learned in my many years of teaching and teacher training, and I mentally slapped myself for not doing the thing that I had been telling teachers of large classrooms to do for years: give the students some responsibility for their own learning. For many teachers, this is the hardest part of cooperative learning—letting go of the reins in order to let the students have a say in how the class is run and teach learner autonomy.

As I tried to decide how best to handle the larger number of students, I thought carefully about what I was teaching them. I wanted to not only train them to be good teachers, but I also wanted them to participate in a classroom environment that they could use as a model for their own classrooms. I was sure that they could learn effectively through working collaboratively in a large classroom, but it was going to take much more organization than I was used to providing.

This article outlines a few techniques I used to organize my large classrooms and allow the learners to move fluidly from whole-class discussions to individual and group work without the customary time constraints and chaos that occur when these instructional factors are not planned out in advance.

Collaborative learning through group work

Given the evidence that active participation in learning plays such a positive role in education, I find it surprising that around the world most classrooms are still predominantly lecture based. We have learned that the act of using what we learn helps a great deal in our ability to retain information. In the 1960s, the National Training Laboratories developed the Learning Pyramid (see Abram 2010), based on research on learner retention. Though some of the findings have been disputed (Booth 2009), an obvious conclusion is that

students learn better and retain more from methods in which they are actively involved (teaching others, practicing doing, discussing) than when they are passive learners (listening to a lecture, reading, using audiovisual).

Some teachers have been taught from day one that they need to be in control at all times and have adopted the *banking* concept of education (Freire 2007)—in which the teacher's role is to deposit information into the minds of their students—and they do not deem it important for students to discover knowledge on their own or think critically about what has been read. Often teachers feel that if they are not lecturing, they are not doing their job. I even heard a teacher state that she liked being the center of attention and that when she is teaching it is her "time to shine." In contrast, experience tells us repeatedly that we learn language by using it (Eskey 1986). Simply telling our students about the language and then sending them out to practice it on their own is not the most effective way for them to retain the knowledge.

Nowhere is collaborative learning and group work more important than in the language classroom. In the majority of language learning settings, even in programs where the target language is spoken outside of class, your classroom may be the only place that your students feel confident practicing the language and trying out new vocabulary and phrases. If we want to be the best teachers we can be, we need to focus on the most efficient and effective use of our time, even in large classrooms. Following are some practical ways to introduce group work into large classrooms and support cooperative learning.

The ideal group size

For several reasons, researchers and practitioners conclude the ideal size for a group is four students (Richards and Bohlke 2011; Kagan and Kagan 2009). One is that if you want the students to do pair work, they are already seated next to or across from a partner; another reason is that with groups larger than four, it becomes harder for all students to hear and participate, and at the same time it becomes easier for a student to pull back from the group and let the others do most of the discussing. One reason I like groups of four is that if one student is absent, I still have a

“group” rather than a pair. In a previous class, I had one or two students who were frequently absent because of other responsibilities, so I made sure to put them in groups with four members so that their absence had less impact on the remaining students.

Forming groups

If possible, it is important to arrange the desks so that the teacher can move easily between groups and around the classroom to monitor groups while they are discussing or working on projects. To avoid taking up class time and disturbing other classes with the noise of moving furniture, we always move the desks or tables before the class begins. When I have the luxury of my own classroom, we arrange the desks the way we want, and they often remain that way throughout the term. However, when I do not have this luxury, I simply ask the students to help me arrange the desks at the beginning of each class and put them back at the end. My students are very good about putting the desks in groups of four. The desks and the students are often all in place before I even get to the classroom.

Another option, if it really is too troublesome to move desks, is to have teams sit in pairs with one pair directly in front of the other. In this way, the front pair only needs to swing around in their chairs to discuss with the other pair in their team. I usually try it both ways a few times and then ask the students which they prefer. Most choose to move the desks so that they are facing each other, even if it means the desks need to be moved before and after class.

Collecting student information

Most of the time, I like to create well-mixed heterogeneous groups. To do this, I place students with the same field of study, hometown, gender, likes/dislikes, etc. into different groups. One way to find out this information is to collect it from the students on the first day of class. Some instructors have information sheets that they have students fill out; however, I prefer to have students complete individual cards so I can re-arrange groups by placing the cards on my desk and dealing them out like a deck of cards. Here is the information that I like to have on the cards:

- Name and preferred name
- Study buddy
- Hometown
- Languages spoken
- Field of study
- Email/phone
- Interests
- Goals

My Chinese students write their name in Chinese, their name in pinyin (the roman alphabet version of their Chinese characters), and also the name they wish to be called in class—their preferred name. Some students like using an English name, while others prefer to be called by either their family/last name or given/first name. So I tell them on the first day that whatever they write on their card as their preferred name will be what I call them for the entire term. You may be surprised at the result—my favorite so far is “Encore.” He says that, as a budding musician, he has this name because when he is up on stage he can hear people calling his name when they want to hear more!

It can be effective for students to choose a study buddy. When students pre-select one person to work with outside class, I can quickly assign projects, get handouts to missing students, and request that the two students study together as they prepare for exams. For one project, the study buddies were assigned to go to a campus club meeting together and then individually write about it in their journals. They also did partner presentations in class, and each student had someone to prepare with. Students who initially do not know anyone on campus often end up hanging out with their study buddies, even when they do not need to.

The information collected on the cards is vital to forming heterogeneous groups and also helps the teacher make connections among students.

Keeping track of groups

I like students to have the opportunity to work with different classmates throughout the term, which makes it necessary to track who has worked together before. To do this, I mark the cards so that I know who was in the previous group; this information allows me to quickly arrange students into new groups. For example, I put an “A” at the top of four cards for the first group, a “B” at the top of the four

cards for the second group, and so on. When I want to switch groups later, I can see which students have worked together previously. By the end of the term, the top of the cards will look something like this: C/E/A/A/C. The letter itself is not what is important; what matters is how it lines up with the groups. For example, if Student 1 has C/E/A/A/C at the top of her card, I would probably not want to put her in a group with Student 2 (A/E/B/D/B) because they worked together the second time I switched groups (they were both in group E). Of course, when I have a smaller class, students may need to work together more than once, but in that case I try to make sure that they have not worked with at least two students in the group.

Rainbow learning

Some instructors advocate assigning a specific person to be the spokesperson for a group; however, I feel it is more helpful to rotate speakers to ensure that all students are participating and contributing to the class. One way to organize this is known as “Numbered Heads Together” (Kagan and Kagan 2009). In my modified version of this cooperative technique, I assign a color to each person in the group. I prefer colors instead of numbers because I think that psychologically, having a number “1” student in each group may identify that student as somehow superior, even though for these purposes it is just a number. To organize the colors, which match a rainbow, one student in each group is RED, another is ORANGE, another is YELLOW, and the fourth is GREEN.

The first couple of times I organize groups with a new class, I also make sure that RED is in the front left seat, ORANGE in the back left, YELLOW in the back right, and GREEN in the front right seat. This extra step is most helpful when I am working with lower-level students who may be confused by my instructions. When I say, “I’d like all the GREENS to stand up,” and not all the students in that position stand up, I know that they either did not understand the instructions or are afraid that I will ask them to speak, and so do not want to stand up. Eventually, however, once they realize that everyone in the class will be speaking and that making mistakes is part of the process, they readily stand up and answer the questions they are asked.

If I have only three people in a group, I select one person to be two colors. In the beginning, I usually have YELLOW take on GREEN, but later in the course, especially because some students will always choose to sit in a particular seat, such as the YELLOW seat, I will switch it around and have another color take on GREEN. As stated above, I try to avoid having groups larger than four. However, on the occasion that it becomes necessary, I assign two students to share a color, meaning that they will take turns being the spokesperson for the group when it is their color’s turn.

The use of colors works well with students who are reluctant to volunteer to speak and need encouragement. It also works well when I have a few students who like to dominate the group because they get their turn to speak, but they also realize that they need to let the other “colors” have a chance. I sometimes convey the importance of participation to these dominant students and explain that when they work with their shyer classmates and help them have more confidence, everyone in their group is learning and improving. Not long ago, I noticed one of my weaker students having a complete conversation in English with his teammates while we were working on projects that did not necessarily require any conversation. I loved observing him come out of his shell, especially when he had no idea I was even watching him.

In one of my workshops, a teacher noted that by assigning the students a color, I do not have to learn their names. While this is true, and I agree that the color designations make it much easier for me to get full participation from all my students at the beginning of the term before I have had a chance to memorize names, I have also found that organizing the students in groups makes it easier to learn their names because I can break a large class into small chunks. I make a point of memorizing the names of at least one group each day, so that, depending on how often my class meets, I will have the entire class memorized within a couple of weeks. I have found that it is much easier to memorize four names at a time than it is to memorize 40!

Although I like to start with colors, we would all get bored if we used them throughout the entire term. Therefore, when I switch the teams, I usually also switch the titles of the

roles. We have used the four directions (North, South, East, and West) and the four seasons, but it is most interesting when I let the students decide. My students this semester have chosen such things as musical instruments and countries. The more I let them have fun with the roles, the more creative they become.

Setting expectations

One of the most important elements in effective group work is to set clear expectations of how students should act while they are in groups. In my experience, it works best to take the time to discuss expectations with students and decide together on consequences if an expectation is not followed (e.g., What is the consequence if a group becomes too loud? What should we do if someone is not participating?). The more ownership I give my students, the better their buy-in is and the more likely they are to live up to my expectations.

In addition to clear expectations, I like to give each student a role to help monitor the class, as well as to encourage responsibility and leadership. As described below, these roles can be combined with student colors and are easily rotated.

RED: Topic monitor

This student has the role of keeping the group on topic. Once students get to know each other, it becomes easy for them to forget the focus of the task and begin discussing other things, such as what they did over the weekend or what they plan to do during the lunch break. Having someone in charge of the topic gives him or her the responsibility of bringing the group back to the task at hand.

ORANGE: Volume monitor

This student has the “remote control” for the group; not only does the volume monitor have the role of keeping the volume of the group low, but he or she also controls the “mute” button and is responsible for quieting the group when it is time for silence.

YELLOW: Language monitor

This person has the role of reminding the group members to practice their English. Depending on the level of the class, I may or may not use this monitoring role, but I have had great success with it even at lower levels. Two of the first phrases I teach my students are “How do you say _____ in English?”

and “What does _____ mean?” By using these phrases, even lower-level students can use the target language effectively and build confidence in their language use.

GREEN: Participation monitor

This student has the role of making sure everyone participates and no one dominates the discussion. This balance among group members is particularly important when you have students in heterogeneous groups in which half of the students are confident in their speaking and the other half are not. This job becomes easier to monitor after I have spoken to the more dominant speakers about the benefits of listening to other people’s opinions and giving everyone a chance to practice.

To keep the students from getting bored with their roles, I rotate them either daily or weekly, depending on how often the class meets. For example, the second week the role of the volume monitor moves to RED, the role of topic monitor moves to GREEN, and the other roles rotate accordingly.

Finally, I add other roles as needed, and I am sure you can think of many more that you would want to use with your students. And because the students already know what color they have been assigned, additional roles can be assigned quickly and efficiently. For example, I can say, “In this next activity, YELLOW is the writer and ORANGE is the timer.” In a different activity I can say, “I’d like for RED to collect everyone’s papers, check that everyone on their team has remembered to write their names, and bring the papers to the front.”

Establishing consequences

In addition to discussing expectations, I like to discuss what happens if one of the monitors in a group is not doing his or her job and let the students decide what the consequences will be. In one class, the students decided that if a student is not doing what he or she should in the group, the monitor should remind that student. If the student continues to not participate properly, such as by not speaking English, that student will have to stand for two minutes. If the language monitor is not doing his or her job of encouraging this student to speak English, the language monitor must also stand for two minutes. Those were the consequences the students decided upon.

Because of the lightheartedness of how I introduce these roles and consequences, my clear explanation of the importance of everyone's participation, and the fact that I have given the students the responsibility of deciding the consequences, we rarely have incidences where they need to be enforced—but the students do enjoy enforcing them on the rare occasion that someone forgets.

Several of the Moroccan teacher-trainees thanked me when I first implemented roles and consequences because it helped them overcome the discomfort of notifying their peers when one of them got off task. With the roles assigned, they had the responsibility of doing so, and the awkwardness disappeared.

Anticipating chaos

One thing that is important to remember is that if your students are not used to doing group work or do not know each other very well, doing a group activity will initially cause chaos, no matter how well organized you are. This is normal. When teachers try group work for the first time, they sometimes feel that the chaos is overwhelming and decide not to try group work again; however, as students become accustomed to using group work and get to know one another better, the unnecessary chatter subsides. Then they are able to get on task more quickly and stay engaged for longer periods of time.

Knowing that the first time will be a bit chaotic, I do not make the first group work assignment difficult. I start with a simple task:

Introduce yourself to your group. What is your name? Where are you from?
What are you studying? What do you like to do in your free time?

Starting with tasks that are easy to do helps students learn to enjoy and look forward to group work, especially if they are given time to get to know their group members well.

Rotating groups

I like to keep students together for extended periods of time and change groups at natural breaks, such as at the end of a unit. Students get to know one another better and are able to work together more easily if they have several opportunities to discuss the course topics both in and outside class. The teacher-trainees in Morocco did several group projects, and I

found that by labeling each group by its project, I could move students quickly from group to group on a day-by-day basis. For example, if the students were working on three projects outside class with three different groups of classmates, I might want to have them sit with a different group each day. On Monday, they could discuss their Cultural Workshop Projects if I wrote the following on the board: "Please sit with your CWP group." On Tuesday, they could focus on their Service Learning Projects if I asked them to sit with their SLP team, and on Wednesday they could talk about the progress of their Textbook Analysis Projects if I asked them to sit with their TAP team.

In addition, I easily schedule "reunions" with group members that they had worked with at the beginning of the year by asking them periodically to sit with group members from projects that they have finished. One reason to hold these reunions is the benefit of letting students share ideas about a new project with people from other teams (this is an adaptation of the 3 Stray Structure, Kagan and Kagan 2009). In this way, students are able to talk to classmates that they know well but have not had the opportunity to work with lately and at the same time get new ideas for their current projects.

Conclusion

One criticism I often hear from teachers is that their class is too large for group work. My response is that the larger the class is, the more important it is to use group work, especially in language classes. One of my main objectives is for students to practice English during class time. They will rarely have this opportunity if the class is mostly teacher-centered. When I am leading the class and speaking with students one at a time while the rest of the class is silent, then only those few students get any verbal practice. But if I organize the class so that they do group work some of the time, *all* students have a chance to practice the language in their groups, and usually all have the chance to speak during whole-class discussions when their color is called.

I also know that some instructors choose to do pair work only because they feel that forming groups is too much of a hassle. Although pair work may be fine for some situations, in a classroom of 40 or more students, pairs result in 20 voices at a time, and that can be

overwhelming for me, for my students, and for the classroom next door. However, with the expectations set up in advance, where the shift is from one voice at a time to organized groups where the maximum is ten voices speaking at once, noise is reduced considerably.

By organizing my classes—no matter what the age or objectives—using the techniques discussed in this article, I can effectively work with my students and they can learn from one another easily. I hope that you will try some of these techniques and minimize the chaos in your classroom.

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10.3. Search

Explore more teaching resources about managing student project work and activities by searching these websites:

- [American English Resources page](#)
- [Edutopia](#)

(Hint: Try using these keywords: cooperative learning, project-based learning, communicative activities)

Take notes here:

Do



10.4. Think

Consider the ways you already use or would like to integrate cooperative activities and projects in your class(es).

Think about the following questions and write down some thoughts in your journal.

- What are your beliefs about cooperative learning activities in the language classroom?
- What challenges and successes have you had with managing student project work and/or cooperative activities?
- What fears or uncertainties do you have about implementing project work and cooperative activities in your class(es)?

Take notes here:



10.5. Create

Create a new or adapt an existing cooperative activity or project using some of the ideas you have learned so far in this module. Use the template below when creating your activity:

Activity/Lesson Name:

Grade level / Unit (if applicable):

Activity/Project Description:

- The purpose of this activity/project is to...
- This activity/project is effective for this lesson/unit because...
- Here are some steps to help you use this activity/project in your classroom...

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Note: This will be added to your Portfolio.



10.6. Share

Share the activity you created or adapted in the group chat. Be sure you post an activity that you have not seen already in the group chat. Please post a brief message and attach a Word document, PDF, or PPT slides with your activity.

Example: *Hi, Colleagues! I have a great activity for projects/cooperative activities in the language classroom. It is called _____. The purpose of this activity is to _____. This activity is effective because _____. See the three simple steps in my PPT slide for an example on how I use this activity.*

Also consider answering these questions as you share your activity:

- What worked? Why?
- What recommendations can you give other teachers for implementing this task?
- What has worked for you to get ALL students involved in project work and/or cooperative tasks and not just a few students?
- How have you adapted a project or cooperative activity in order for all students to participate at their language proficiency level?



10.7. Apply

After you share an activity in the group chat, read through your colleagues' activities. Find at least one or two **new** activities in the group chat that you can use in your next class. Apply a new activity from this module in your next class. If it was a success, be sure to send a message and tell your colleague "Thank you!" and why it was effective.

Take notes here:



10.8. Reflect

Write 1-2 paragraphs to reflect on Module 10 (300-500 words). You may use what you have created, shared, and applied in the previous tasks.

Note: This will be added to your Portfolio.

Take notes here:



Module 10 Checklist:

- I watched two videos.
- I read three articles.
- I searched for a few new web resources to help my teaching.
- I thought about cooperative activities and projects and wrote down some reflections.
- I created a new or adapted an existing cooperative activity or project to promote meaningful language learning in my classroom.
- I shared my cooperative activity or project with my colleagues on Telegram.
- I applied at least one new cooperative activity or project from my Telegram group in my teaching context.
- I wrote 1-2 paragraphs to reflect on my learning in Module 10.