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# Cooperative Learning as an Alternative Methodology to Take Into Account within the ESL Classroom

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## INTRODUCTION

The present dissertation will be based on the different competences and knowledge acquired during the *Master in Teacher Training for Obligatory Secondary Education, Sixth Form, Professional Training and Language, Arts and Sports Teaching*. The whole dissertation will aim at reflecting on the different aspects of the Master's Degree through the lens of Cooperative Learning, but before focusing on the subject it is important to comment on the different changes that the teaching profession has experienced up to these days, as well as on the different changes that the teaching of foreign languages, in this case English, has undergone during the last decades.

### **The Teaching Profession Today**

“Teaching is both, an art and a science. It is basically a subjective activity carried out in an organised way” (Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 5). Like all kinds of science, teaching has also undergone a series of changes that influence the way in which we approach the teaching profession nowadays. However, it is not possible to talk about the teaching profession without taking into account what happens outside the classrooms (Imbernón, 2006). All the changes that affect education and the teaching profession also affect the society we live in. According to many researchers, (Imbernón, 2006; Torrego, 2008 and Fernández, 2009), we are heading towards the information and knowledge society. Society has a clear influence upon its members: as society changes, people change, which involves different transformations regarding the different spheres of life, education being one of them. Several changes can be appreciated among the students' behaviour and way of being too, and big differences can arise between students who are apparently attending school in similar conditions and are close in age, so it is important for teachers to get to know the learners and be able to include everyone within the teaching and learning process. Thus, the context is gathering more and more importance, and teachers need to know how to adapt to it (Imbernón, 2001).

In this kind of society the teacher has an important role as regards social life. Being a teacher means having responsibilities towards the future of the coming generations, which will be in charge of ruling society in the following years. According

to several authors, in this new society of knowledge and information the teacher is considered to be a guide (Imbernón, 2006). The teacher is no longer regarded as a simple transmitter of knowledge, but as an agent who guides the learners throughout the teaching and learning process (Torrego, 2008). According to Torrego, the good teacher is the one who guides the students' process of learning and redirects students in case they get lost along the way, and this not only at a group level, but also individually. This view of the teacher as a guide is also shared by different authors, such as Berasaluce, Peiró and Ramos (2014), who think that the aim of the teacher is to direct the learner towards the process of learning how to learn and think. Fernández (2009) also shares this idea, and goes as far as to affirm that the teacher must know how to develop the capacity to learn in his or her learners so that they can succeed in a society which is always changing and evolving.

Education has an important role in life for it contributes to the creation of fairer societies. In order to achieve this, a change in the role of the teacher is necessary (Imbernón, 2006). "Teachers are the ones who can shape and reshape the learning outcomes inside a classroom" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003: 7), that is, they are the individuals who can carry out this transformation of the teaching and learning process, giving more importance to the competences that society expects to find in learners today, because they are the ones who can form and transform students into what society requires and will require.

The traditional view that Fernández (2009) explains is obsolete now. The teacher is no longer isolated, nor is s/he a mere information transmitter. The teacher-centered approach to teaching is no longer regarded as efficient, and lessons should no longer follow one single direction, that is, the teacher is no longer the only one who plays an active role inside the classroom, since this role is now shared with the students too. Learners are no longer supposed to play a passive role within their educational context. "In the actual society this teaching model based on excellent lectures is obsolete" (Fernández, 2009), which implies that it is not enough for teachers to be experts on their subjects. As this author goes on to explain, nowadays teachers are also supposed to act like information agents. Teachers need to take some steps further and make their learners develop different skills, such as learner's autonomy and knowing how to work cooperatively by putting the emphasis on the learning process. "It is not enough for teachers to be informed" (Fernández, 2009), they also need to know how to manage the

class by promoting cooperation, participation and self-criticism in their learners. This only corroborates the aforementioned idea that the learners need to learn how to learn, so that they can build up their own knowledge and learn on their own.

The teacher is therefore seen now as an active agent (Imbernón, 2006), who develops a series of competences on the learners that will be useful for them to achieve success at the end of the teaching and learning process. The teacher is no longer an isolated agent, as s/he was considered to be throughout the last decades. Teachers need to share their opinions and points of view now. They must share their knowledge with their colleagues so that they can all become better teachers. As Imbernón (2006) argues, among other things, teachers must communicate with other teachers, promoting and establishing group work among them, at the same time as they guide their learners through the whole teaching and learning process.

This new teacher role has also affected second language teachers. According to Richards and Nunan (1990), “a certain degree of professionalization has taken place” regarding the profession. The old ways of teaching are obsolete, and now the second language teaching profession is heading towards what these authors regard as the holistic approach. This view “involves generalizations and inferences that go beyond what can be observed directly during classroom processes” (Richards and Nunan, 1990: 4). Nowadays fronted lessons are not enough to achieve effective teaching and, as the previously mentioned authors argue, teachers need to take into account all that surrounds the classroom in order to see how all these matters affect the teaching and learning process. They need to know the learners, and the relations among them, as well as the relations they have with the teacher. Learners must be oriented towards the learning process, so the idea of the teacher as a guide is shared by these authors too. In order for teachers to be effective, all the changes explained by Richards and Nunan (1990: 11) need to be applied and taken into account when teaching English as a second language. By using what they call “active teaching” the teaching process will result in the effective learning of the students.

## **Changes in the Teaching of English as a Second Language**

The teaching profession has changed during the last years and the same is true of the way in which English as a foreign language has been taught. There are several authors who have carried out some research on this historical change of the teaching of English as a second language, such as Nunan (1991), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Brown (2000) and Kumaravadivelu (2006). According to Nunan (1991:228), “language teaching has been obsessed with the search for the right method.” This search has taken place during the last decades, and different methods have appeared as past ones are discarded (Brown, 2000).

The changes in the language teaching methods that occurred throughout the history of second language teaching have, according to Richards and Rodgers (1986), clearly shown the changes in the kind of proficiency that the learners need. Thus, the changes that have recently come up give priority to learners, and try to adjust to what the learners need.

Nowadays bilingualism is clearly extended in our society, and there are many people who speak more than one language. English is today one of the most important languages in the world, and it is a language that everyone wants to learn and improve. For that reason, Richards and Rodgers (1986:1) argue that “foreign language teaching is an important practical concern.”

Although English is considered to be one of the most important languages nowadays, this idea was not predominant in the past. Many years ago Latin was the most widely studied foreign language (Richards and Rodgers, 1986), and English was taught in the same way as Latin, following what Brown (2000:18) calls the Classical Method. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this Classical Method was known as the Grammar Translation Method. English textbooks were organized around different grammatical points, and there was no room for speaking. Lessons were taught in the first language and all the students did was to translate from the foreign language into the L1 (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). According to Brown (2000: 19), this method has been really popular until very recently, although “it does nothing to enhance students’ communicative ability in the foreign language.” One of the main reasons why this method was, and still is, so popular is that it is an easy method to teach, and it requires no effort on the part of the teacher.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Grammar Translation Method was discarded and, as many authors claim, the Reform Movement began (Richards and Rodgers, 1986:5). This movement claimed for “new ways of teaching” and, as a consequence, the Direct Method appeared. The basic premise of this method was that second language learning should be similar to L1 learning, that is, more importance should be given to enhancing students’ interaction, spontaneous use of language and reducing the use of translation and grammar analysis (Brown, 2000).

Despite this change, this method did not have many followers, and around the 1950s and 1960s the Audiolingual Method emerged, considered by Nunan (1991: 229) as the method which “probably had greater impact on the second and foreign language teaching.” According to different authors like the ones mentioned before, in the Audiolingual Method there was no interference from L1. Language was understood as a structure and learning was achieved by habit formation, so rules were acquired through practice. In spite of the fact that this method had great impact at the beginning, “practitioners found that the practical results of Audiolingualism fell short of expectations” (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 59), and it was proved that learning was not achieved through drilling or repetition.

In the 1970s, “research on second language learning grew to a discipline in its own right” (Brown, 2000: 24). Humanist Approaches appeared, based on particular theories. Some of these approaches were: Suggestopedia, which consisted in developing the teaching and learning process in a “relaxed state of consciousness” and encouraging students to be as “childlike as possible” (Brown, 2000: 29); and The Silent Way, which, according to this same author, rests “on more cognitive than affective arguments” and is based on the learners discovering learning on their own, while the teacher “remains silent as much as possible” (Richards and Rodgers, 1986: 99). The Total Physical Response was another Humanist Approach. It encouraged physical activity and developed kinaesthetic abilities in children (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

In the 1980s Krashen’s Natural Approach appeared, claiming that children should be “as relaxed as possible in the classroom” (Brown, 2000: 31) so that they can acquire language by understanding and receiving comprehensible input (Krashen and Terrel, 1995).

A big shift took place in the 1980s, when the Communicative Approach to Language Teaching emerged. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 69), this approach “starts from the theory of language as a tool for communication.” According to these authors, the goal of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is “to develop Hyme’s Communicative Competence.” CLT claims that the grammatical structures that were taken into account in previous methods might be better replaced now by functional categories (Brown, 2000). According to Brown, CLT pays less attention to grammar rules and more to what he refers to as authentic language. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) argues, CLT was a response to the Audiolingual Method failure. The aim of this approach, according to Kumaravadivelu, was “to move the classroom away from the structural orientation.” In contrast, innovative activities were included in the classrooms aiming at “sustaining the learner’s motivation.”

Nevertheless, Kumaravadivelu (2006) also pointed out that some researchers observed that “CLT does not represent any radical departure in language teaching,” while adding that “it is not supported by evidence [...] and that it adhered to the same fundamental concepts of language teaching as the Audiolingual Method.” Taking this critique into account, Kumaravadivelu took a further step and claimed that it was an alternative method, and not a new method, that was actually needed. He moved from method-based pedagogy to postmethod pedagogy. A movement from “communicative” to “tasks” was perceived, and Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) emerged. TBLT is based on Ellis’s definition of what a task is:

A work plan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed. To this end, it requires them to give primary attention to meaning and to make use of their own linguistic resources, although the design of the task may predispose them to choose particular forms. A task is intended to result in language use that bears a resemblance direct or indirect to the way language is used in the real world. Like other language activities, a task can engage productive or receptive, and oral or written skills and also various cognitive processes.

(Ellis, 2003: 16)



This approach uses tasks as the core of the teaching and learning process, and it criticizes Communicative Language Teaching in terms of its authenticity, acceptability and adaptability (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). According to this same author, TBLT is not linked to any method, since different methods can be employed to carry out language learning tasks that seek different outcomes. Nowadays, this student-centered approach is the most commonly used in the teaching of English as a second language.

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE MASTER'S DEGREE

### Theoretical framework

*“United we stand, divided we fall”*  
Aesop – The Four Oxen and the Lion

Nowadays, society seems to give more importance to individual success than group achievements. This attitude can be observed in different spheres of social life, where individual recognitions are taken into consideration while group recognition is mainly left behind. We live in a competitive society, and this fact has shown in the education system all along history. According to Kagan (1994), traditional classroom organization is characterized by competitive or individualized social organization. However, according to different researchers, this is a matter of the past, since they agree that a change in trends aiming at a cooperative approach has taken place. As Slavin (1999: 9) explains, Cooperative Learning is being more and more used today as methodology inside the classroom. Richards and Renandya (2002) argue that in the last decade there has been “a growing interest among teachers in using Cooperative Learning activities.” Nowadays schools are creating different educational programmes that are aimed at educating a wide range of learners, with the intention of maximizing the learning capacity of all children (Putnam, 1993: 11). The objective of these cooperative techniques is to reach what Putnam names as “islands in the mainstream,” which means that the intention of introducing Cooperative Learning into the classrooms is to involve all the learners in the educational system. According to Johnson and Johnson (2009), “from being ignored, Cooperative Learning has progressed to being one of the dominant instructional practices throughout the world.” Many psychologists advocate the use of cooperative methodology among students. Vygotsky (1978) claimed that students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually.

Several authors support the use of Cooperative methodology within the foreign language classroom, as it “promotes higher achievement than competitive and individualist structures (Kagan, 1994). But what does Cooperative Learning mean? Many are the authors and researchers (Kagan, 1994; Ellis, 2003; Brown, 2000; Johnson

and Johnson, 2009; or Slavin, 1999) who have given a definition of Cooperative Learning. According to Kagan (1994), Cooperative Learning refers to “a set of instructional strategies which include cooperative student-student interaction over subject matter as an integral part of the learning process.” Ellis (2003: 341) argues that Cooperative Learning is the learning that results from group work, in which the participants engage in a collaborative dialogue that enables them to produce final outcomes collaboratively while performing a task. For Brown (2000: 47), Cooperative Learning occurs when the students work together in pairs and groups, sharing information and coming to one another’s aid and becoming a team whose players must work together in order to achieve goals successfully. Slavin (1999: 9) defines Cooperative Learning as the methodology in which students work in small groups contributing to one another’s learning. This author adds that students are expected to help each other, to discuss ideas with the rest of the group’s members and to evaluate what the others know so that comprehension problems can be solved in the end. Johnson and Johnson (2009) took a step further by considering three different types of Cooperative Learning: formal, informal and cooperative base groups. According to these authors, formal Cooperative Learning “consists of students working together, for one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments”; informal Cooperative Learning means “having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period”; and Cooperative base groups are “long-term, heterogeneous groups with stable membership.” Thus, Johnson and Johnson (2009) proposed different types of Cooperative Learning depending on the amount of time the learners spend working together in the same group, and concluded that the three of them can be used together.

What can be drawn from these definitions of Cooperative Learning is that some aspects are to take place so that this methodology can be possible. Grouping students and giving them a task to perform does not necessarily mean that Cooperative Learning is going to take place. If there is no interaction, collaboration, sharing of information, contribution to the others’ learning and discussion among the students, cooperative work will take place, but not Cooperative Learning. As Ellis (2003: 269) argues, it is not enough to put students into groups to complete a task. What actually counts is the quality of the interaction established among the students, and whether this interaction

enables them to engage in the task proposed while supporting each other's learning. Moreover, Richards and Renandya (2002: 52) claim that "teachers must encourage mutual helpfulness in the groups and the active participation of all members." The important point to take into account is that Cooperative Learning does not consist of doing something like a team, but of learning something as a team (Slavin, 1999: 12): learners are responsible for both, their own learning and their group members' learning. It was Kagan (1994) who established the four basic principles of Cooperative Learning: Positive Interdependence (learners work together for their benefit); Individual Accountability (students must perform on their own); Equal Participation (all the members in the group must participate in the same way); and finally Simultaneous Interaction (many students interact at the same time). These four principles, known as PIES (Kagan, 1994) define Cooperative Learning and, according to Kagan, when any of them is not implemented it is not Cooperative Learning that is taking place, but group work instead.

In the cooperative classrooms that follow the student-centered approach the teacher has a role different from the one he or she has in teacher-fronted lessons. Some of the characteristics of these student-centered classrooms are those proposed by Brown (2000: 47), who claims that lessons should focus on the learners' needs; some sort of control must be given to the students in order that their sense of creativity and innovation are enhanced, together with their sense of competence and self-work. Teachers have to play a different role in the cooperative lessons. According to Kagan (1994), "teachers in Cooperative Learning classrooms are freed from the responsibility of always lecturing and directing [...] teachers circulate monitoring students' progress." In other words, teachers do not need to keep students quiet, as talking and interacting is precisely what students need to do, they are there to help students and solve possible doubts.

However, implementing Cooperative Learning inside the classroom is not an easy task. The transition towards a cooperative classroom in which Cooperative Learning is implemented requires several modifications in the way teachers organize and manage the class (Putnam, 1993: 15). Although this transition may be difficult, different authors agree that Cooperative Learning, once implemented, offers several benefits and advantages. Richards and Renandya (2002: 49) stated that "when carefully planned and executed, Cooperative Learning can lead to a more dynamic classroom

interaction that promotes more learning.” Among the benefits of Cooperative Learning, these authors argue, it is possible to find a higher wish to talk on the part of the students, a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, and greater motivation for learning. Furthermore, Kagan (1994) argued that Cooperative Learning brings about beneficial outcomes, such as academic improvement, enhancement of the students’ relations, and a positive impact on the classroom climate and the students’ self-esteem. Additionally, Slavin (1991) also shared these views when pointing out that “the use of Cooperative Learning strategies results in improvements both in the achievement of students and in the quality of their interpersonal relations.” As all of these authors claim, Cooperative Learning, when introduced in the classroom, has a lot of advantages, and can be regarded as a useful methodology to implement in the ESL classroom.

### **Contribution of the Different Modules of the Master Degree towards my Reflection on Cooperative Learning**

Cooperative Learning has played an important role in the Master’s Degree, both in the contents of the modules and in the methodology applied in the different lectures and seminars. Different subjects provided ample knowledge about useful Cooperative Learning techniques that can be developed in the Secondary Education classroom. This way of teaching has not always been taken into consideration when teaching foreign languages, and can be considered to be a new teaching style. In the past decades the students’ individual work was encouraged at the expense of collaborative learning. Nowadays this has changed, and cooperative work among the students plays, or should play, an important role within the Secondary Education classroom. The methodology applied in the different lectures and seminars of the Master’s Degree also encouraged the use of Cooperative Learning. Discussions and debates were held in groups, and most of the essays, projects and research were carried out cooperatively in small groups. Consequently, it has been possible to get first-hand knowledge of the importance of Cooperative Learning when teaching any subject, and specially a foreign language like English.

The first term subjects were aimed at showing how a Secondary School is organized and works, and also at teaching different psychological techniques to apply and develop in the classroom, cooperative work being one of them. Two subjects in

particular gave more importance to Cooperative Learning: *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula* and *Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos*. Both subjects were closely related, and both of them enforced the use of cooperative techniques inside the Secondary Education classroom.

The first one, *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula*, was divided into two different sections, and it was the Social Psychology part that was devoted to the importance of the group and its impact on the teaching and learning process. The concept of group was studied, as well as group structure and group developmental processes, cooperation and Cooperative Learning. In this subject it was possible to understand how important it is to teach our students the values and advantages of working cooperatively, so that the final outcomes when working in groups can be better than the ones obtained when working individually. The subject also presented Cooperative Learning as a useful tool to reach all the possible diversity that teachers might find inside a Secondary Education classroom. Echeita (2011) was one of the authors studied during this module and, as he stated, “cooperative learning is not only a different type of methodology, but also a tool to enhance those values of our democratic society that want to respect human diversity.” With the help of Cooperative Learning it is possible for teachers to include all the learners within the teaching and learning process. By means of interacting in homogeneous groups, students will be able to know one another, and at the same time they will be meeting, recognizing and discovering the society that surrounds them.

Echeita (2011) also argues that “cooperation should be a transverse social value within an education center.” The author states that the introduction of Cooperative Learning will only have advantages if the whole school’s educational system works in the same direction, that is, implementing collaborative work uniformly. This affirmation makes sense, as Cooperative Learning is not an easy technique to teach; students should be trained throughout the whole academic year so that they can produce effective learning outcomes. Pujolàs (2012), another author considered during this course, pitted a cooperative structure of the class against individualist and competitive structures, claiming that in a cooperative structure “students are divided in small and heterogeneous groups of work so that they can help each other in their learning process,” and adding that students, in order to form a team, “need to have a common objective shared by all the members of the group.” Achieving this objective will be the

final outcome of the group's performance. Understanding the fact that Cooperative Learning only works when there is a positive interdependence among the group's members was one of the key aspects of *Interacción y Convivencia en el Aula*.

Another important aim of this subject was to show the necessary steps to organize the groups that are going to work together when implementing Cooperative Learning, an issue also tackled by one of the second term subjects, *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*. Pujolàs (2012) describes those steps: to choose a name and logo as an identity symbol, so that a feeling of belonging arises within the group; to remind continually the group what their objectives are, so that the final outcome is clear during the whole process; to establish some rules of behaviour beforehand; to divide the different tasks among the members of the group, so that each member knows his or her role inside it; and finally to make sure the group's members always work together in order to improve the working conditions of the group. This procedure was implemented in the two aforementioned subjects, whenever a group activity took place during the lectures or seminars, and also during the teaching placement period, when Cooperative Learning was introduced in the EFL classroom.

*Prevención y Resolución de Conflictos* is another first term subject which dealt with the topic of cooperation. One of the objectives of this module was to show how to use cooperative negotiation in order to solve conflicts, and different techniques towards cooperative negotiation were studied. In this kind of negotiation what Farré (2004) suggests is that it is important to identify the positive connections between the members of the group, so that, by reminding each group member of what connected him/her positively with the others in the past, the feeling of belonging to the group increases and the group is thus able to solve the conflict, not only for the benefit of the group, but also for the benefit of each of its members, since all members are interested in achieving the same objective.

In this subject Cooperative Learning was introduced as a useful tool to favour coexistence within the group and to develop teaching practices. With the help of Cooperative Learning the atmosphere of the groups and the relationships between the students who make up the groups improve, and fewer conflicts appear when the learners are working cooperatively. Although our *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés* project proved that the atmosphere of the class and

the groups is better when cooperative learning is introduced in the teaching lessons, it is also true that sometimes some problems within the groups may arise, especially when some students are reluctant to work with other classmates. In these situations it is important to know how to apply cooperative negotiation, so that the group's members are able to put their differences aside and focus on their mutual objective, that is, on the final outcome to achieve.

During the first term module *Procesos de Enseñanza-Aprendizaje* Cooperative Learning was also analysed and studied. This subject understands the use of collaborative work as a tool to enhance the students' interaction so that they can develop their own learning. Like the other two modules previously discussed, this subject also understands the use of Cooperative Learning as a way to face diversity and as a vehicle for the inclusion of all different learners inside the classroom. The importance of positive interdependence is once again brought to the fore: the group will only achieve its outcomes if all the members work in the same direction. One of the strengths of the subject was to offer the possibility to observe the sequencing of Cooperative Learning. Although it is similar to the one presented in the subjects analysed, *Procesos de Enseñanza Aprendizaje* presents a new idea, the fact that the groups should be working with a 'team notebook' in which all that happens within the group is registered and monitored. This subject, like *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*, also sets forth different points to take into account when working collaboratively: the importance of the teacher when the groups are formed and the development of warm-up activities so that the learners get to know one another to get better learning outcomes. Another strength was the possibility it offered to know and discover different techniques that can be applied during cooperative lessons, such as the Jigsaw technique or the three-minute list. These techniques were further discussed in *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*, and will be tackled again in the analysis of the projects chosen, as they were implemented in the design of the Learning Unit.

The modules taken during the second term were mainly aimed at designing activities for the EFL classroom and understanding the importance that innovation has within the foreign language class. Cooperative Learning was introduced in some of the activities of the Learning Unit elaborated for the *Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés* module, aimed at the development of



different skills in English, as will be shown in the analysis of the projects chosen, in which Cooperative Learning had a strong presence. One of the objectives of this subject was to teach how to apply cooperative methodologies when there is diversity of students. Apart from cooperative work, some differentiation was also introduced in the Learning Unit, so that the different necessities of the learners for whom the unit had been designed could be met.

It was in the *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés* module that Cooperative Learning was further elaborated. Collaborative work was included in the contents of the subject, and some of the learning outcomes, such as being able to theoretically and practically apply Cooperative Learning techniques, and being able to plan and design innovation and research projects in group, were finally achieved. Cooperative Learning, as in most of the other subjects, was not only mentioned as a useful theoretical methodology to know and apply in the Secondary Education classroom, but was actually implemented vis-à-vis the teaching process of the subject. *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés* presented Collaborative Learning as an effective methodology for the EFL classroom, and the course followed the principles for Cooperative Learning mentioned by Kagan (1994): positive interdependence, individual responsibility, equal participation and simultaneous interaction.

Attending this subject's lectures and seminars allowed for the understanding of the things that the teacher should take into account when planning the introduction of Cooperative Learning into the EFL classroom. It is not only important for the teacher to get to know the learners, but it is also important for the learners to get to know one another. Consequently, helpful ice-breaker and warm-up techniques to help students feel comfortable with the other members of the group were presented, such as *Fact of Fiction?*, or *Silent Line-Ups*. The implementation of these techniques makes it possible to lower what Krashen (1982) called the "affective filter." Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis states that "affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process": it will be easier for the learners to acquire the second language if their affective relations are enhanced, and this will only occur if collaborative work is implemented throughout the teaching and learning process.

Another idea tackled in this module in relation to Cooperative Learning was that students are able to produce better output with the same input, as interaction is favoured when the learners work in groups. By interacting with one another the students know how to listen to and respect their group mates' opinions and ideas, and by reflecting on these different ideas it is possible for the learners to select and develop the best ones. It is also important to know how to create a feeling of belonging to the group, while a positive group identity is also formed. In keeping with the idea of positive interdependence, all the members of the group should be aiming at the same objectives, and they should support each other in order to achieve the final group's goals. When the group's results at the end of a task are seen as satisfactory, its members will feel rewarded, and this feeling of belonging will in turn show.

In addition, the subject also pointed to the use of different techniques and activities proposed by Kagan (1994) when students work in groups, such as *Round Robin*, *Rally Coach* or *Rally Robin*; together with different ways to organize the groups, such as *Stand-Up*, *Hand-Up*, *Pair-Up*. It was possible to put into practice some of these techniques during the teaching sessions, and some of them were included in the design of the Learning Unit as well, as will be explained later.

In this module it was also possible to learn how to manage the cooperative class. The teacher must be in control of the situation, otherwise Cooperative Learning can result in a non-effective methodology, especially when problems among the groups or among the group's members appear. This fact was clearly observed during the second and third teaching periods. It was during these teaching periods that it was possible to observe how all the things learnt about Cooperative Learning in this and the other modules were put into practice. Only by means of implementing collaborative work into the ESL classroom was I able to acknowledge the importance of classroom management to make the teaching and learning process effective, and also the importance of solving the problems that may appear within the groups, so that all the members stay focused on the group's goals. Creating a positive atmosphere, not only among the group's members, but also among the different groups, is one of the key aspects when implementing Cooperative Learning. If the teacher manages to achieve this, and the learners contribute to the implementation of collaborative learning, the outcomes produced by the groups will be better than the ones the learners produce individually.

## JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROJECTS CHOSEN

In addition to analysing the different modules of the Master's Degree and putting forward my comments on Cooperative Learning, this Dissertation will also focus on two different projects elaborated along the year, in particular during the second term. The first project chosen is the Learning Unit made for the module *Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*, and the second one is the Innovation and Research Project made for the module *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*, entitled "The Implementation of Cooperative Learning in the Teaching of Writing." These two projects are the ones which clearly rely on most of the knowledge acquired during the whole Master's Degree, especially as regards the use of Cooperative Learning methodology and the design of activities aimed at the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the ESL classroom. One of the main reasons why both projects deal with Cooperative Learning methodology is that, during the first period, some lack of cooperation was appreciated inside the ESL classroom, where lessons were mainly teacher-fronted and students did not work in groups at all. Both projects were difficult to elaborate, as they required the integration of all the contents learnt in the different modules of the Master's Degree.

The two assignments were elaborated in accordance with the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR, 2001), and the guidelines proposed for the teaching of foreign languages in *Aragón* as shown in the *Aragonese Curriculum* (AC, 2007) developed by the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (LOE, 2006). In these documents there are clear references to cooperation, both as one of the main objectives to reach in foreign language teaching and as possible methodology to use in the ESL classroom.

According to the CEFR (2001), the document that provides the basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses across Europe and describes what the learners need to learn and the abilities they need to acquire, cooperation appears as one of those skills that the students should be able to acquire so that they can "cooperate effectively in pair and group work" (CEFR, 2001: 107). This same document also points out that "work arrangements involving small group work settings offer possibilities for learner cooperation and mutual assistance" (CEFR, 2001: 165). As for this arrangement in

small groups, the CEFR argues that working cooperatively can have several advantages for the learners, because when Cooperative Learning is applied in the classroom by means of making small group formations, the tasks proposed are more likely to obtain better results than individual work, as the students are able to share their ideas and opinions, and give and receive feedback from each member of the group in order to improve their final result (CEFR, 2001: 165).

As far as the *Aragonese Curriculum* developed by the LOE is concerned, one of the general objectives of the Secondary Education stage is to develop the sense of cooperation, that is, cooperative work as a methodology should be implemented during this stage in order to fulfill the tasks proposed and improve self-development (AC, 2007: 7). Moreover, when it comes to the key competences that the learners should acquire and develop throughout this stage, the importance of learning how to cooperate is also mentioned. The following key competences make reference to the importance of Cooperative Learning as a vehicle to acquire them: Competence in social skills and citizenship, Learning to Learn Competence, Cultural and Artistic Competence, and Autonomy and Personal Initiative Competence.

As regards the section of the *Aragonese Curriculum* dedicated to foreign languages, it is also stated that learners will have to know how to establish cooperative relations among them. One of the objectives of the teaching of foreign languages in *Aragón* is to develop in the learners the sense of cooperation so that they can achieve the learning objectives requested (AC, 2007: 204). According to this same document, cooperative work will play an important role in the development of the objectives proposed within the foreign language curriculum, since it will allow students to learn from their classmates and to cooperate with others in order to produce better learning outcomes (AC, 2001: 227). The *Aragonese Curriculum* also adds that interaction and collaboration among the different group members contributes to enhancing the development of the learner's personality, and encouraging positive attitudes, such as solidarity and respect for the others (AC, 2001: 227).

As can be concluded after reading these documents, cooperative work plays a prominent role in the teaching of foreign languages in the Secondary Education classroom. Finally, as was explained before, these two projects, the Learning Unit and the Innovation and Research Project, have been chosen because they favour this kind of

methodology. Both of them use Cooperative Learning as a most important technique to implement in the teaching and learning process.

## **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROJECTS CHOSEN**

This section will provide a critical analysis of the two projects chosen: the Innovation and Research Project on the one hand, and the Learning Unit on the other. Both projects were designed according to the conventions set by the legal documents previously mentioned, and they both make use of the cooperative methodology as an alternative method to take into account and to implement in the ESL classroom. As has been said in the present Dissertation, Cooperative Learning can be considered to be a useful methodology to boost and improve the students' learning, and to enhance the classroom atmosphere and the relations among the learners.

### **Critical Analysis of the Innovation and Research Project**

The Innovation and Research Project, "The Implementation of Cooperative Learning in the Teaching of Writing," was carried out for the module *Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés*, and was prompted by certain circumstances that were observed during the first placement period of the Master's Degree, mainly the lack of cooperative lessons in the foreign language classroom. Most of the lessons were imparted following a teacher-centered approach. It was only during one lesson devoted to writing skills that the teacher introduced group work, but not Cooperative Learning. As the title of the project clearly states, its main aim is the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the teaching of writing. Writing has traditionally been an activity developed out of the foreign language class. However, as different researchers have remarked, since writing is a difficult skill to learn, it should be taught, even in the first language, otherwise learners will never improve their writing skills (Morley, 2011).

During most of the lessons devoted to the teaching of writing in the ESL classroom the emphasis was put on the product, not on the process, and this could also be observed during the second and third placement periods. This is what encouraged me to carry out a project to introduce Cooperative Learning in the teaching of writing as a

process. Several authors, such as Storch (2005) and Hedge (1988), argued that the combination of both techniques has advantages for both the teacher and the learners, and also claimed that the learners who work cooperatively when writing a text produce better texts than the ones produced by learners who work individually. Thus, the main goal of the project was to introduce innovative Cooperative Learning techniques in the lessons dedicated to the teaching of writing in the foreign language classroom.

The project was implemented during the third placement period in two different schools: *Sagrado Corazón de Jesús* on the one hand and *IES Miguel de Molinos* on the other, so that it was possible to have a general view of the benefits of introducing Cooperative Learning in the teaching of writing as a process. Furthermore, it was possible to realize that our two main project's hypotheses had been met: on the one hand, when the students worked in groups they produced better texts than the ones they produced when working individually at home; on the other hand, the classroom's atmosphere was better, according to the students' opinion.

As far as group formation is concerned, Kagan's principles were followed. He claimed that groups should be made up of four students, as smaller groups require less classroom management than bigger ones. Mixed-ability groups were formed by my personal tutor during this placement period, as I had not been able to get to know all the learners in the few weeks I worked with them. In general terms, students reacted quite well when they were told that they were going to work in groups. As was stated before, most of the ESL lessons were centered on the figure of the teacher, and the students did not have any opportunities to work cooperatively in order to develop their own learning. Consequently, working in cooperative groups was something different for them. As could be observed during the students' performance of the tasks proposed, Cooperative Learning had a very positive impact on their motivation to fully accomplish those tasks. All the groups were committed to the tasks carried out in class and they all worked effectively to produce better outcomes. What this project clearly demonstrated, therefore, was that Cooperative Learning, when applied to the writing class, has a most positive impact on the students' relations and the classroom atmosphere, as well as on the students' final product.

In order to prove these arguments, several data were collected and analysed. The students produced an individual text at home, and were then asked to write a

similar text in class, but this time introducing Cooperative Learning in the writing session process. As could be seen, all the learners improved their final grade in the cooperative text (see Annexes). According to Kagan (1994), not only do low-profile students benefit from Cooperative Learning, but high-profile students also generally perform just as well, if not better, in cooperative classrooms than they usually do in traditional classrooms. This argument was clearly stated in the final results of the project. Although high profile students performed well during their individual assignment, when Cooperative Learning was introduced in their second assignment their marks were considerably better, which proved that even high-profile learners benefited from this, as they obtained outstanding better grades (See Annexes with the data collected and analysed).

The implementation of this project was a great opportunity for the students to learn how to work in groups. They all shared ideas and gave and received feedback from their groupmates, and learners consequently had the opportunity to develop their own learning skills. Teacher-centered lessons were replaced by student-centered lessons and, as could also be observed, this had a very positive influence upon the classroom's atmosphere. Students were rather more motivated to carry out cooperative work than individual work. This can be clearly seen in the questionnaire that the students were asked to fill in at the end of the cooperative sessions: most of them stated that they would like to do writing assignments cooperatively in groups all the time, as this was a great opportunity for them to learn from their classmates and to help one another.

Apart from the data extracted from both written assignments, the individual one and the cooperative one, the questionnaire helped to prove that both hypotheses were right: the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the writing class allows learners to obtain better results, and the atmosphere of the class becomes rather more cheerful and enjoyable.

As far as the projects' limitations are concerned, the lack of time to develop a significant number of cooperative writing sessions should be mentioned. Only two lessons could be dedicated to the cooperative writing process. Students were organized into their teams and carried out different activities following the principles stated by Tribble (1996): pre-writing, composing and writing and revising and editing. Although the process proved on the whole to be effective, it is not possible to forcefully affirm



that it helped to improve the students' relations, as more cooperative lessons would have been needed to achieve this goal. Since the learners were working in groups only for two lessons, it was not possible for them to create the strong team feeling that Cooperative Learning methodology propitiates. In my opinion, this objective can only be achieved if the learners work in the same groups for longer periods of time. This being said, it is also true that the atmosphere was quite friendly, much better than that of teacher-fronted lessons, according to the students' opinions and the observations made by the teachers. The fact that the learners were not used to working in cooperative works was a limitation too. At the beginning of the first sessions students felt rather confused as to the task they were asked to perform, but once they understood what the whole process was about they could work quite efficiently.

The fact that the students did not work with the evaluation rubrics (see Annexes) from the very beginning could also be seen as a disadvantage. The students were not given the rubrics to produce the first individual written assignment at home, but were given them right before the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the writing process lesson. If they had been given all of this from the very beginning, this could have definitely contributed to the improvement of the students' final marks. Since the learners did not know how their individual assignments were going to be assessed, they were not given the same conditions and guidelines to follow as in the cooperative activity. This might have been the main reason why they obtained such low marks in their individual written assignments. All in all, the general impression was that the students worked effectively within their cooperative groups, and that the implementation of Cooperative Learning in the ESL writing classroom clearly contributed to the improvement of the final text and the classroom's atmosphere.

## Critical Analysis of the Learning Unit

The Learning Unit, elaborated for the module *Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés*, was probably one of the hardest tasks to carry out in this Master's Degree. All the contents learnt during the first term and the second term modules were put into practice in order to elaborate this project. Although the Learning Unit was intended for a particular context, the students of 4<sup>th</sup> year of ESO from the *Sagrado Corazón de Jesús*, it could not be finally implemented because it was elaborated after placement period. Entitled “*Save Money when Travelling*,” it might have undoubtedly fit the students' interests (one of the Unit's assets), as students are to deal with the topic of travelling and how to save money when planning their holidays. The Learning Unit has a clear purpose: the students are requested to write a guide with different tips to take into account when travelling cheap. Once this is done, a big wall can be covered up with the different tips suggested so that all students can see the final complete guide and make the most of the tips written by their other classmates.

In terms of methodology, the Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Approaches have been used, together with Cooperative Learning. In order to develop the communicative competence, the Learning Unit makes use of authentic materials, in some cases adapted to the level of the students, which will force learners to establish communication in the foreign language in situations similar to those they may find in real life. Additionally, to maintain the learners' motivation and interest throughout the whole Learning Unit, different tasks were sequenced with the intention of creating a path towards the final task itself (TBLT). All the tasks carried out during the different sessions are aimed at the fulfilment of the final task, and students are expected to get engaged in the activities proposed, as they will all be useful for them to achieve their goals. Thus, lessons are designed following a student-centered approach, giving learners chances to develop their own learning process.

Furthermore, the implementation of Cooperative Learning is the core feature of this Learning Unit. According to Ellis (2003: 269), “a key using Cooperative Learning in Task-Based language pedagogy lies in ensuring that students are able to work together effectively,” so teachers must make sure that effective learning is going to take place. In order to achieve this, students are gathered together in their cooperative groups

from the first session of the Learning Unit, and are told that they will be working together throughout the different sessions because, as Kagan (1994) argues, there is no better way to learn how to work effectively with others than working with others. Consequently, this first contact with their group will allow students to get to know one another so that they can achieve effective outcomes.

As regards the objectives of the Learning Unit, one stating the importance of reaching effective Cooperative Learning interaction is missing. The learners will be working in cooperative groups during most of the Learning Unit's sessions, but achieving effective Cooperative Learning is not explicitly marked as an objective to reach. The sense of belonging to a team should have been emphasized among the different groups in a clearer way, following the steps proposed by the different authors who have studied group formation, such as naming the group, including a way to celebrate success, etc. According to Slavin (1999: 46), Cooperative Learning provides the learners with a feeling of belonging to their group, as they work cooperatively in order to reach shared objectives, but this feeling should have been emphasized by the teacher in the first sessions of the Learning Unit in order to create a positive atmosphere within the groups from the very beginning. This would have enhanced even more the learners' motivation towards the fulfilment of the different tasks proposed, including the final one.

When it comes to considering group formation, authors like Kagan (1994) support the idea that students should work in small groups of four students, as they require less class management and tasks are done more quickly than in bigger groups (Richards and Renandya, 2002). Bearing in mind all of these ideas, mixed-ability groups of four students will be formed, and the learners will be working in their group for the whole Learning Unit. Even though the learners will be working in mixed-ability groups, some sort of differentiation is needed, and the Learning Unit provides this in the different activities proposed and adapted to the different levels of the groups (i.e. Lesson Plan 1, Annexes), as there are always groups stronger than others, even when the students are mixed up according to their different abilities. The fact that they will be working together for a long period of time may be a way to develop that feeling of belonging to the group commented above.

Following Richards and Renandya's statement that "no one suggests that the class should be organized into groups all the time" (2002: 55), student-centered lessons will be combined with teacher-centered lessons. In this way, Cooperative Learning activities within the groups will combine with individual activities, as can be seen in Lesson Plan 3 (Annexes); students will work, both in groups and individually, during that session. Richards and Renandya also argue that, in order to catch the students' attention when they are working in groups, the teacher must make a signal (i.e. ringing a bell or blowing a whistle) that will call the students' attention and stop their cooperative work to prepare them to work individually. Moreover, working in the same group during the whole Learning Unit may bring about feelings of tiredness and boredom, as the learners will only be interacting with the same three classmates all the time, so some techniques are necessary to avoid those negative feelings. During Lesson Plan 4 (Annexes), in addition to working cooperatively, students will be working with a random pair in order to perform a Role-Play. Kagan's Whole Brain Teaching technique *Stand-Up, Hand-Up, Pair-Up* will be used to form the random pairs. With this activity, students will 'abandon' their groups for a short period of time, which will allow them to 'forget' about their final task for a while, so that they can come back to their groups with renovated motivation once this activity is over.

Motivation is one of the main values that the Learning Unit aims to improve, together with solidarity, respect for the others and self-esteem. Authors like Slavin (1999) and Kagan (1994) agree that Cooperative Learning has an impact on the learners' intrinsic motivation and self-esteem. The different activities and tasks proposed along the Learning Unit have the objective of boosting, not only the learners' motivation, but also their personal relationships. To give but one example, grammar, one of the skills that learners may find more boring and heavy-going, will be taught with the help of a Jigsaw, a group technique that will keep the learners' motivation during the whole session (Lesson Plan 3, Annexes). In order to prove these arguments, a means to measure the students' opinions, like a questionnaire, should have been included. It would have been a good idea to pass the students a questionnaire right at the end of the Learning Unit in order to check if their motivation, self-esteem and relationships with the rest of the groups' members had improved or not. Otherwise Kagan and Slavin's ideas cannot be proved.

As for the assessment tools used in the Learning Unit, giving the same mark to all the group's members may not be fair, as there may be some students who are better than others or who have worked more than others, in spite of the fact that participation should have been the same in all cases (Kagan's Cooperative Learning principles have been applied in the Unit, and Equal Participation figures among them). Individual work within the cooperative groups should be taken into account by the teacher, and those students who showed higher involvement in the project should be rewarded. The fact that peer-assessment is introduced in the Learning Unit can also be regarded as an asset. Students will be evaluating their classmates' presentations, which means that they will have to pay attention to them, develop some critical attitude, and ponder on their peers' performances. As regards the assessment tools, since the students will be working in groups during most of the sessions, the tools included to collect evidence of the teaching and individual learning process may not give enough information to the teacher, all the more so if they are aimed at checking understanding among peers only, as is the case of this Learning Unit. More tools for the teacher to check if the teaching and learning process is effective are needed, like more one-minute papers. I think that this can be a useful way to observe if the teaching and learning process is effective, both at an individual and a group level.

## CONCLUSIONS

From my experience as a student, Cooperative Learning has not been a methodology commonly used within the Secondary Education classroom. Although it is gaining more and more importance and followers, and seems to be an easy methodology to apply in the Secondary Education classroom, Cooperative Learning is not a widely spread methodology among the teaching profession yet. In the past decades, even today, lessons were mainly organized around the figure of the teacher, not around the figure of the student. Cooperative Learning was a new methodology to me, and it was during this Master's Degree that I learned what it actually means. Before doing this Master's Degree I thought that Cooperative Learning meant the same as cooperative group work. However, as different authors such as Kagan have explained and I could eventually realize, it is clearly not the same. Cooperative work does not necessarily involve Cooperative Learning, and there are some requirements that must be met for Cooperative Learning to occur (Kagan's PIES, 1994).

During my teaching placement period I could observe that the ESL lessons were mainly organized following a teacher-centered approach, while Cooperative Learning was either left behind or simply not taken into consideration. Consequently, in this kind of classroom organization, learners do not have any opportunity to interact with their classmates, and the teacher is ultimately responsible for their learning. In other words, they have no chance to develop their own learning process, as this is only possible in a classroom organized around the interests of the learners.

As this Dissertation has tried to show in its analysis of the different projects and the way in which this methodology has been used in this Master's Degree, introducing Cooperative Learning in the ESL classroom has a lot of advantages, and proves to be an effective teaching technique. This methodology, then, must be taken into account and implemented, not only in the foreign language classroom, but also in all the different subject areas taught in our schools. Not only does this methodology definitely help to boost the students' learning process by enhancing their motivation towards the tasks proposed within the classroom, but it also helps all sorts of students, low-profile and high-profile alike, to obtain better learning outcomes in their grades. Moreover, Cooperative Learning also has a direct impact on the students' relationships and the

classroom's atmosphere, which helps to establish a cheerful environment in which it will be much easier to develop an effective teaching and learning process.

It is true that the transition from the traditional teaching methodology to Cooperative Learning can be difficult to achieve, and it will surely take time. However, what this Dissertation has tried to demonstrate is that, in spite of all difficulties, it is necessary to teach learners how to work cooperatively, no matter how much longer this process may take. It will be necessary to implement Cooperative Learning in the ESL classroom during a long period of time in order to find out whether the results obtained from the projects analysed (especially those obtained during the implementation of the Innovation and Research Project) are accurate or not. Despite this time limitation, the research carried out during placement period has proved that Cooperative Learning can undoubtedly contribute to improving the academic performance of the learners, as well as the classroom's atmosphere, at the same time as it allows for rather more dynamic lessons whose main focus is always the students themselves. In this way, learners can become fully responsible for their own learning process. This is, many different researchers conclude, the right way, not only to accomplish the teaching and learning process today, but also to obtain effective and improved learning outcomes.

## FUTURE PROPOSALS

As regards future proposals, it is important to comment on the upcoming legislation for the Secondary Education stage. In *Aragón*, this new legislation is regulated by the new Aragonese Curriculum (AC, 2015) developed by the *Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa* (LOMCE, 2013). This new legislation also deals and makes reference to the presence of diversity in *Aragón*, and advocates the use of Cooperative Learning as an alternative to guarantee the development and learning of every single student. One of the general objectives of the Secondary Education stage in LOMCE will be to practice cooperation for the sake of a plural society. As can be seen in its methodology principles, this law supports heterogeneous group formation as a way to promote effective learning. Therefore, LOMCE is in favour of the use of Cooperative Learning in class, according to which it is up to the teacher to teach students how to work cooperatively. In relation to the specific section dedicated to the English language, LOMCE claims that the effective use of a language is based on cooperation, which means that Cooperative Learning will play a very important role within the foreign language classroom in the coming years.

As I see it, this methodology is acquiring more and more importance. Furthermore, as is stated in the legal documents that will regulate education in the following years, Cooperative Learning in the ESL classroom will have to be implemented from the early stages of education onwards. Since Cooperative Learning will be eventually used by a great number of ESL teachers, it is important for learners to learn how to work in groups. In order to achieve this aim, students must start working cooperatively as early as possible. I think that the Cooperative Learning methodology is a useful technique to develop effective foreign language learning. Given the importance of noticing both the mistakes one makes when learning a new foreign language and the mistakes others make during the same process of learning, Cooperative Learning can prove to be the best way for students to interact with their classmates so that they can help one another to avoid making any of those mistakes.

I am in favour of the use of Cooperative Learning methodology within the ESL classroom during the whole academic year, following a base-group approach. Learning a foreign language can be an exciting task for learners, especially if they work



cooperatively with the same people for a full academic year. In this way learners are not isolated, can develop effective learning by interacting with one another, and can finally reach positive learning outcomes. In my opinion, introducing Cooperative Learning in the ESL classroom for long periods of time could be a useful tool for shy learners who do not want to speak in the foreign language in front of the whole class. Working with the same small group of students during the whole academic year will develop a strong feeling of belonging to the group. This will help, not only to better the students' relationships in it but, more importantly, it will also contribute to removing negative feelings such as shyness and embarrassment among the learners, who will finally become able to communicate in the foreign language without difficulty. Although some problems may arise within the groups, the teacher should be able to solve them, always reminding learners that they are all on the same boat and must consequently help one another in order to obtain self and group benefits.

Cooperative Learning could be the perfect methodology to tackle the task of learning a new language, as it clearly boosts the learners' motivation. As I have tried to demonstrate in this Dissertation and many researchers have concluded, Cooperative Learning should be implemented in all the educational stages. Learners should be working together in small cooperative groups for longer periods of time, not only during specific lessons. This base-group approach will certainly prove that Cooperative Learning is a most effective methodology for the teaching of foreign languages.

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## ANNEXES

1-Innovation and Research Project. Evaluación e Innovación Docente e Investigación Educativa en Inglés: *The Implementation of Cooperative Learning in the Teaching of Writing.*

2-Learning Unit. Diseño, Organización y Desarrollo de Actividades para el Aprendizaje de Inglés: *Save Money when Travelling!*