



THE ROLE OF GROUP WORK IN EFL CLASSES

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***Abstract.** This article deals with the significance of the benefits and the difficulties of group work (GW) in EFL (English as a foreign language) classes. The aim of this paper is to investigate the possible effects of GW and explaining its use in the classes. According to some research studies, GW is regarded as superior compared to traditional language learning. This paper gives reasons and examples to prove this principle and provides with detailed explanation.*

***Key words:** Group work, teamwork, cooperative learning, traditional classroom, interactive learning.*

ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ ЯЗЫКУ

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***Аннотация.** В данной статье рассматривается значение преимуществ и трудностей групповой работы (ГР) на занятиях EFL (английский язык как иностранный). Целью данной статьи является исследование возможных эффектов ГР и объяснение его использования на занятиях. Согласно некоторым исследованиям, ГР считается более эффективным по сравнению с традиционным изучением языка. В этой статье приводятся причины и примеры, подтверждающие этот принцип, а также дается подробное объяснение.*

***Ключевые слова:** Групповая работа, командная работа, совместное обучение, традиционный класс, интерактивное обучение.*

INTRODUCTION

It is believed that learning English language is having more significance all around the world, which is required in many spheres. Due to this reason, the progress of English language teaching is based on a more communicative classroom rather than traditional teaching approaches. One of the forms of the interactive classroom is called group work which maximizes learning process in different ways. It can be employed in various forms such as pair works or group works. This paper investigates the traditional look of the classroom, and compares it with the group work's benefits and drawbacks.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this article, the data from several methodological books and sources is given to explain the effectiveness of the group work. The main one is the "Teaching by Principles", An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy by Brown, H. Douglas (2001). According to this source, group work makes two or more students to form collaboration in order to complete the language-related tasks. Another essential one has been "The Practice of English Language Teaching" by Harmer, Jeremy (1991). According to it, this type of teaching requires students to dedicate themselves into



learning which might take nearly a couple weeks of an intermediate time of learning. Other ones are “Group Activities for Language Learning” by Rogers, John (1981). “Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom” by Dörnyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2003). “The study of second language acquisition” by Ellis, R. (1994).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

On a traditional level, in the classroom students passively receive grammatical, vocabulary, and pronunciation explanation in a passive way. To make it more specific, the students listen and write anything written on the board by their teacher. Teaching materials are provided through textbooks and are graded focusing on the degree of grammar features significance.

In a sharp contrast, it is a new type towards an educational system in ESL that is dynamic, and able to meet the necessities of individual learners. It is mainly based on the idea that the learning is held in group situations, when learners take part in dialogue and debate with others rather than listening to only listening explanations. With this style of classroom, the role of the instructor is to implement group works with proper activities. Clear instructions and guidance should be provided to challenge learners. Teacher’s role in guiding learners is significant.

Group Work. This way of teaching foreign language avoids grammatical explanation, and repetition. Group learning is regarded as a natural part of growth and it is held without teaching in a formal way. In some cases, learning could be made to suit individual students’ needs and teacher-centered approach is avoided. According to Brown (2001) group work makes two or more students to work in collaboration and teamwork. Furthermore, Harris and Sherblom (2008) identifies it as an interactive communication in the class. Therefore, it could be said that group work includes students working together to perform an educational task. According to Johnson (2008), Group work might be grouped into three common types: informal, formal and cooperative.



Benefits of Group Work.

1. Interactive language could be generated through group work. In a traditional classroom, teacher talk plays a main role which is more passive. Only few learners could practice the language. However, with group work, it is more active. Face-to-face discussions and collaboration make learning more productive.
2. The friendly atmosphere is created where learners feel more secured. Self-confidence and motivations to investigate further possibilities could be fostered.
3. Autonomy is promoted. Learners feel more responsibility for action and development. Group work enables them to demonstrate their strengths and weaknesses.
4. Improved Communication. Communicational skills could be significantly improved due to regular interaction in a group, enabling them to gain confidence and fluency.
5. Vocabulary Expansion. A broader range of vocabulary could be through active set of words and phrases, developing linguistic skills.

Drawbacks of group work.

Some weaknesses of the employment of group work are regarded in the classroom. The first issue is controlling matters, as giving instructions to a large class size could be overwhelming. Secondly, correcting students' mistakes in the classroom could cause some troubles. The next one is associated with learning styles: some students are into working alone, while some of them are into group work.

Some group work activities in the classroom.

Game	Various groups are organized. Each one is assigned to work together to produce a text. Different ideas from students must be ordered in sequence.
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Role Play	The practice of speaking skill could be promoted by role plays. According to class size, teacher divides students into groups and assigns roles.
Debate	Students are provided a controversial topic related to current problems, for example, early marriage and relatable divorce rates. Students must work on causes and solutions for them.
Project	Class is divided into two and they are given two countries to represent by making fliers and postcards. It fosters creativeness and teamwork.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, teachers of English should maximize communication and interaction in the classrooms by integrating more group works into lessons. The reason why is that group work could make students to work or learn together that promotes different language abilities. There are some basic reasons for group work to be the main: interactive language learning, friendly environment, independent learning. Although there are some problems. They could be addressed through careful approaches by language teachers. Therefore, it could be said that group work can be employed in the classroom through a variety of activities which improves learning efficiency and fosters language progress.

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