

## GROUP WORKING AS AN IMPORTANT MEANS IN TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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**Annotation:** *The article gives a brief information about group work and its nature, the importance in teaching a foreign language and the utilizing of it in schools, colleges or higher education. This paper provides detailed suggestions with illustrations, background of previous researches, foundations, results of them and so on. The authors and researchers with all level may use in practical and theoretical researches with the help of data in the article.*

**Keywords:** *language functions, method, group work, benefits of group work, chances of effectiveness, improvements, factors, problems, technique.*

Teaching a foreign language is developing and widespread all over the world. Teachers try to organize various effective lessons for the students to instruct a foreign language. In this case government gives opportunities to improve teaching skills of teachers. There are lots of approaches, methods and techniques in teaching. In addition, we can see different innovative pedagogical technologies in all levels of educational organizations.

There are three methods of teaching that come to mind when dealing with this matter. They are individual work, group work, and class work. The individual work deals with the students own ability to complete things without the help of others. The group work is a whole different concept that deals with two or three students working together hand in hand to achieve goals. The class work is like a group discussion where the whole class comes to a suitable solution. They are all effective teaching methods, but the most effective one is group work. There are so many reasons why this is the most effective method.

An important aim of group work (GW) is to encourage fluency in language. In language classes, GW is a strategy that enables students to discuss issues or to engage in joint activities with other students in a less threatening environment [3]. Particularly in EFL classrooms, grouping is said to be an effective

method of teaching for several reasons; for instance, it maximizes the time that students can speak the target language. In addition, it minimizes the time that students spend listening to other students interacting with the teacher; furthermore, it avoids the anxiety that hinders some language learners from speaking and interacting with the teacher in front of the whole class; and it gives the teacher more opportunities to discuss with students the structure of the task [2].

Groups may allow students to be more independent, because they are encouraged to teach others and also to learn from others. In contrast, in teacher-fronted situations, students may be more dependent because the teacher is doing most of the talking. Several researchers [7] have claimed that GW is efficient in language classrooms because it gives learners the opportunity to practice English with their group members. Furthermore, group work maximizes the benefits for students in the classroom. Specifically, it can be used to improve

oral activities for language learners, to complete tasks that need discussion among learners, to share reading and listening activities, and to write cooperatively with other learners. It also has the great advantage of allowing different groups of students to perform different tasks and activities according to their ability [3]. McDonough [5] explored instructors' and learners' perceptions of the use of pair and small-group activities in a Thai EFL context, and examined whether the learning opportunities theoretically attributed to these activities occurred in an intact classroom. He also investigated whether learners who actively participated during the pair and small-group activities showed improved production of the target forms. The results indicated that learners who engaged in more participation during the pair and small-group activities demonstrated improved production of the target forms, although they did not perceive the activities as useful for their learning. Cohen [1] defines group work as "students working together in a group small enough so that everyone can participate on a task that has been clearly assigned". The fact that the different members of a group bring different knowledge to the gathering indicates that the more members there are in a group the more knowledge they have available. Another scholar Пармонова [8] points out that as the group gains more members the difficulties in communicating also grow.

According to Long [4] there are different kinds of groups. People standing in line waiting for something are a group of people, this type of group they define as a non-social group. This is not the type of group meant when discussing group work they define this type of group as a social group. An example of their definition of what a social group is: "A group consists of two or more people who have a mutual influence on each other and are mutually dependant on another in the sense that that they have to trust each other to get their needs satisfied and achieve their goals." After giving this definition Long goes on to state the three criteria that make a social group. The first one being, a group consists of two or more people. The second one being, mutual influence, the members of a group need to be engaged in some form of social interaction. The third criteria, mutual dependence, what one member does have meaning to the other members. "Group work is an effective technique for achieving certain kinds of intellectual and social learning goals. It is a superior technique for conceptual learning, for creative problem solving, and for increasing oral language proficiency". Cohen [1] states that group work at some times can be more effective than traditional teaching methods. Cohen goes on to state that group work is good when two conditions are met; the task should make use of conceptual thinking instead of memorization or applying a rule. Also the group needs to have the knowledge to correctly complete the task. Another good assignment is when a question has no clear answer, the students then need to think and discuss different answers.

Through a combination of the three factors in deciding a group's achievement different problems can be devised for group work. Harmer [3] explains the five distinctive problem types that Steiner has found.

□ Additive problem - this problem adds all members' individual achievements together, no singular contribution is more important than another. This problem type is always unitary and maximizing. An example of this type of problem could be rope pulling, all members of the group work together to be strong enough to beat the other group.

□ Disjunctive problem - one singular answer is the representation of the group's achievement. One group member's answer will be the group's answer; all other answers will be discarded. This problem type is unitary and either maximizing or optimizing. An example of this type of problem could be individual problem solving. The group is given a problem that has one correct answer and the first person to get it right answers for the group as a whole.

□ Conjunctive problem - all group members are needed to solve the problem. The group is therefore dependant on its weakest member. This problem type is usually unitary and optimizing but can be devisable and maximizing. An example of this type of problem could be mountain climbing, the group only succeeds if all the group members get to the top they therefore have to work together and help each other.

□ Compensating problem - each members individual answer is important, all answers are then averaged together to find the answer wanted by most. This problem type is usually unitary and optimizing. An example of this type of problem could be deciding who is going to be class president, all member get a say and the person that most want is then chosen.

□ Complementary problem - each individual in the group does what s/he is best at, the sum of each individual part is the group's end product. This problem type is devisable and optimizing. An example of this type of problem could be writing an anthology, each member does his or her part these are then added together to for the end product.

Long [4] proposes four different deciding factors when discussing group productivity; group size, group constellation, group norm and problem type. Where problem type refers to the same five different problem types that Harmar [3] describe. When discussing group size Long refers to Steiners model of group productivity, where the actual productivity is the process loss subtracted from the potential productivity. When the size of the group grows the process loss also grows as a result from coordination difficulties [6]. He does, however, also point out that very few studies have been made on larger groups as that requires more students to study. Long[4] describes group constellation as the way a group is put together, where the different members of a group represent different resources. In a heterogeneous group these differences can be very obvious, while in a homogeneous group the

In conclusion, the benefit of a group work is that it helps the student to break complex problems into smaller parts which make it easier on the student to get the job done. This very efficient method also reduces the time that a student has to spend when working on a project, in other words it saves the student time and makes it stress free on the students part. This method also helps when it comes to thinking, the other students can give ideas that are not thought of and fill the missing gaps that have been missed, like they say two minds are better than one. This useful process serves as a key source when students do not understand things. It gives them a chance to understand things through group discussions which make it easier on the student's part to get the task done. The student also develops strong communication skills and gets rid of any shyness, hesitation or fear he may have which prevent him from speaking. The student also develops a sense of identity and belonging when joining a group. The student also deepens his knowledge about things and learns more things he was unaware of in the past. In groups, a student can find help and support when he needs it the most.



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