

**IMPLEMENTING THE COOPERATIVE LEARNING
APPROACH IN A SECONDARY EFL CLASSROOM:
STUDENTS' LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT
PERCEPTIONS ON COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into the students' perceptions on learning and engagement as a result of the implementation of cooperative learning in the EFL secondary classroom. Furthermore, it aims to examine learners' overall attitudes towards this learning method. This research employed a case study approach using a mixed-methods research design to gather both quantitative and qualitative data in order to answer the guiding research questions. The sample for this study consisted of 24 students of 2nd grade of ESO who were taught under the cooperative learning approach throughout a didactic unit. Beginning with the collection of quantitative data by means of a questionnaire and a formative assessment on group work performed at two different stages of the study, the research was expanded upon by further collection of qualitative data from a students' focus group. Using the qualitative data gathered from the focus group to explain and extend the findings from the quantitative data, the study effectively answered the proposed research questions. The results revealed that students, overall, agreed that cooperative learning enhanced their learning and engagement in the EFL classroom. Findings also provided evidence supporting that cooperative learning experiences contributed to improve positive relationships among students. Nevertheless, some drawbacks related to the implementation of cooperative learning are also reported in the results.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, students' perceptions, attitudes, EFL, secondary classroom.

RESUM

L'objectiu d'aquest estudi és conèixer les percepcions dels estudiants pel que fa al seu aprenentatge i implicació a l'aula d'anglès com a llengua estrangera, com a resultat de la implementació de l'aprenentatge cooperatiu. D'altra banda, pretén examinar les actituds dels estudiants envers aquest mètode d'aprenentatge. Per tal de dur a terme aquest estudi, s'ha utilitzat una metodologia mixta per recopilar dades quantitatives i qualitatives amb la finalitat de respondre a les preguntes d'investigació. Els participants d'aquest estudi van ser 24 estudiants de 2n d'ESO, amb els quals es va dur a terme una unitat didàctica utilitzant tècniques d'aprenentatge cooperatiu. Es va començar per la recopilació de dades quantitatives mitjançant un qüestionari i una avaluació formativa sobre el treball en equip, realitzada en dos moments diferents de l'estudi. Posteriorment, es va ampliar la investigació mitjançant la recopilació de dades qualitatives a través d'un grup focal d'estudiants. Les dades qualitatives recollides es van utilitzar per explicar i ampliar els resultats de les dades quantitatives, per poder, així, respondre de manera efectiva a les preguntes proposades. Els resultats indiquen que els estudiants, en general, tenen una visió positiva sobre l'aprenentatge cooperatiu pel que fa a la millora del seu aprenentatge i implicació a l'aula d'anglès. D'altra banda, demostren que el treball cooperatiu contribueix a millorar les relacions entre els estudiants. No obstant això, els resultats també contemplen alguns aspectes negatius relacionat amb la implementació del treball cooperatiu.

Paraules clau: Aprenentatge cooperatiu, percepcions dels estudiants, actituds, anglès com a llengua estrangera, aula de secundària.

1. Introduction

Although there is extensive literature on cooperative learning and its implications for L2 learning, there has been little discussion to my knowledge about the effects of cooperative learning in the EFL secondary classroom. Accordingly, my interest in this topic does not only respond to the need of feeling this gap in knowledge, but also to the fact that challenges in EFL teaching and learning need to be approached from a different perspective than the teacher-fronted one, in order to meet the demands of the current century. As a matter of fact, in an UNESCO publication in the frame of education for the 21st century, where the four pillars are *Learning to know*, *Learning to do*, *Learning to live together* and *Learning to be*, cooperation is a crucial component of each of the four strands (Delors, 1996).

Mendoza & Cantero (2003) highlight that language teaching is currently based on students, rather than on contents; on communicative processes in which students must take part of, rather than on linguistic and literary knowledge. The cooperative learning approach is clearly a student-centered teaching method that focuses on the communicative competence. Therefore, it meets one of the principles of the new approach on language teaching: “it is about teaching to talk, not about teaching the language” (Mendoza & Cantero, 2003, p. 16).

In terms of teaching innovation, “any innovation produces a significant qualitative change, not a simple improvement or adjustment of the existing system” (Blanco & Messina 2000, as cited in Gómez 2019, p. 168). This approach entails a significant and profound transformation of the teaching practice, moving from a teacher-fronted classroom —still deeply rooted in many of our educational institutions—, to a student-centered one with the aim of changing the traditional classroom structures, considering not only the way that teachers should interact with students, but more importantly, how students should interact with one another as a means of promoting exchange of ideas and construction of knowledge.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to inquire into students’ perceptions towards cooperative learning in order to determine to what extent it is perceived as an effective language teaching method, considering not only its implications for the learning process itself, but also for students’ engagement in the classroom. Furthermore, it aims to examine learners’ overall attitudes and behaviours towards cooperative learning. To this end, the cooperative learning approach has been explored in detail in order to implement cooperative structures in an EFL secondary classroom. In this vein, the following research questions are raised: Which factors must be considered to ensure success when implementing cooperative learning? How does cooperative learning affect EFL students’ learning and engagement perceptions? What is the impact on students’ attitudes in the classroom when they are exposed to cooperative learning? This study is, therefore, aimed at effectively answering the proposed research questions at the end of this paper.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Cooperative learning

Several review studies on cooperative learning by Roseth, Johnson & Johnson (2008) confirmed that cooperative group work benefits learning performance and outcomes. In addition, hundreds of research studies confirmed that cooperative learning had unprecedented positive outcomes to achieve a broad range of desired educational objectives (Kagan & Kagan, 2017).

The Cooperative Learning theory sustains that “students learn best when they can encourage and tutor each other, when they are held individually accountable, when they all participate about equally, and when there is a great deal of active, interactive engagement” (Kagan, 2001, para. 2).

As a result of this definition, the cooperative learning approach is clearly a student-centered teaching method that differs from the traditional teacher-fronted one. In this latter case, little, if any, importance is given to symmetrical interaction that can be established among learners within the educational action, and teamwork is practically considered a waste of time (Pujolás *et al.*, 2011). On the contrary, emphasis is placed on independent work and competition.

Although this traditional approach is still deeply rooted in many educational institutions, there is a wealth of literature supporting that peer interaction is as important as teacher-student interaction, as a means of promoting exchange of ideas and construction of knowledge.

As stated by Johnson & Johnson (2013), there are three basic ways students can interact with each other as they learn: individualistic, competitive and cooperative. According to Pujolás *et al.* (2011), the learning structure of a session, in addition to teacher-student interaction, should contain a high percentage of student-student interactions, the more the better, in a cooperative way. This is not only because they encourage the active participation of students in building their own knowledge, but also because they take advantage of the positive effects of peer interaction on learning. On the contrary, competitive and individualistic work may promote negative goal interdependence where, when one student wins, the others lose; or any interdependence at all. Research performed by Roseth, Johnson & Johnson (2008) has shown that when cooperative learning is compared to individual or lecture-directed learning, students who learn cooperatively obtain better academic results.

2.1.1 Background supporting cooperative learning

Cooperative learning has been researched for over 50 years and has been connected positively to student performance (Adams, 2013). There is a wealth of literature that recognises the implications of the constructivist approach in education and its relevance to understand how learning takes place in peer collaboration.

As suggested by Kivinen & Ristela (2003), constructivism is built upon various philosophical positions that can be rooted in the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, among others, and it refers to the

idea that knowledge is constructed by learners themselves, individually or socially (Hein, 1991: in Yassin *et al.*, 2018). Although both authors, Piaget and Vygotsky, placed the learner at the center of his or her own learning, while the former tended to focus on the construction of knowledge in relation to what is occurring with the individual, the latter emphasised the role of culture and social interaction in the process of learning (Yassin *et al.*, 2018). Hence, Vygotsky (1978) believed that human development was a process by which children gained proficiency over cultural tools and signs when interacting with more competent others, in their environment.

Even though Vygotsky's sociocultural theory did not specifically address peer collaboration but focused on the learning benefits of adult-child interaction, his contributions are relevant to understand the basis of cooperative learning since it can be deduced that interaction among students in cooperative learning helps them to construct their own knowledge (Yassin *et al.* 2018).

Furthermore, Vygotsky provides a very interesting way to conceptualize the learning process. His sociocultural theory claims that successful learning occurs within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86), who can be teachers or other peers. Therefore, the following conclusion can be drawn: collaboration with peers can lead to new construction of knowledge; knowledge that may have not been constructed without working with peers.

Teaching below the ZPD is useless because the student can already perform alone on this level of difficulty; teaching above this zone is also worthless because students cannot accomplish such difficult tasks, even with support. After mediation of teachers or high-skilled peers occurs within the ZPD, students are able to solve problems that previously they could do only with help, thanks to a process of scaffolding.

Scaffolding can be defined as any kind of support provided by the instructor or a more competent peer to help students in performing a task or an activity successfully. Hence, it facilitates their learning progress. Support is provided at different levels according to the students' current capabilities and it is progressively removed as they acquire higher thinking skills that the learner would not have been able to achieve without it. In other words, scaffolding provides the help needed for a student to move through the zone of proximal development described by Vygotsky (1978), until he or she is ready to perform the task individually, without any support.

According to Kagan & Kagan (2017), Vygotsky's contribution provides a very strong theoretical foundation for cooperative learning since most cooperative learning structures are designed to provide the kind of mediation that advances the Zone of Proximal Development.

2.1.2 Features of cooperative learning

Definition of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning has been widely studied by scholars and several definitions can be found in the literature. Olsen and Kagan (1992) defined it as a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the social interaction and sharing of information between learners in groups and in which each member is accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to maximise the learning of others. Slavin (2015) defines it as a learning model where the students work together in small groups and help each other's learning. Therefore, as a result of both definitions, the final purpose of students' cooperation is to achieve a learning target (Turgut & Gülşen, 2018).

Principles of cooperative learning

It is worth stressing that not any kind of group work is conducive of learning; cooperative learning is different from group work. Four basic principles (under the acronym PIES) should be met, as stated by Kagan & Kagan (2017), so that cooperative group work is effective: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation and Simultaneous Interaction. The first two principles (Positive Interdependence and Individual Accountability) are also identified by Johnson & Johnson's (2013), as two of the five conditions of productive cooperative learning, in addition to promotive interaction, interpersonal skills and group processing.

Focusing on the Kagans' (2017) model, *Positive Interdependence* stands for learning what is expected and making sure other group members learn it as well because the success of one student is linked to the success of the others; students "sink or swim together" (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). As a result, students are expected to help each other. In regards to *Individual Accountability*, it is defined by Slavin (2012) as being present when "the team's success depends on the individual learning of all team members" (p. 10) and it occurs when individual performance is assessed, feedback on the results is provided to the individual and the group and the individual is held responsible by their group mates for contributing to the group's attainments. As far as *Equal Participation* is concerned, it is the most important point of divergence from the Johnsons' brothers model, since this latter one does not particularly address interaction among members so that participation is equal. In contrast, the Kagan model emphasises equal participation through the use of structures which promote equal opportunities for contributions among group members. To finish with, *Simultaneous Interaction* is defined by Kagan (2001) as the percentage of active participants engaged at any one moment.

Considering these four principles, and placing special emphasis on the "E" for Equal Participation and the "S" for Simultaneous Interaction, Pujolàs *et al.* (2011) define cooperative learning as the didactic use of small teams, generally of heterogeneous composition in both performance and ability, who work together using structures that enable equal participation and foster simultaneous interaction among all team members with the aim of learning the target content. Hence, according to Kagan & Kagan (2017), the difference between group work and cooperative learning lies in the fact that, in group work, students are allowed to interact in an unstructured way. On the contrary, effective cooperative learning carefully structures the interaction to ensure students work together to get the expected learning outcomes.

In addition to PIES, there are other key factors which must be considered for successful cooperative learning, such as teams' size and formation.

Team size and formation

Teams are a defining characteristic of cooperative learning; in fact, it is first noticed in the seating arrangement of the classroom. Regarding team size, groups are generally formed by 4 or 5 students. However, according to Jacob (2006: in Al-Yaseen, 2014) and Kagan & Kagan (2017), there is broad consensus that, to the extent possible, teams should be formed by four members for optimal results, not only from the perspective of a greater chance for active participation, but also because it allows pair work within the team and avoids the "odd man out", promoting, therefore, the "Equal Participation" principle of cooperative learning.

Another important research-based feature of teams is that they should be heterogeneous in order to cope with diversity in mixed-ability classes, not only in terms of academic achievement but also regarding other variables such as gender and race. With the aim of maximizing the potential for peer tutoring and support, the team's composition should be of one low-ability student, two medium-ability students, and one high-achieving student (Kagan & Kagan, 2017). In a similar vein, Khan & Akhtar (2017) also agreed that heterogeneous teams provide a great opportunity for peer tutoring.

Even though Pujolàs *et al.* (2011) emphasize the benefits of heterogeneous grouping in order to learn new content, they also assert that homogeneous groups should be occasionally implemented to review and reinforce the content already learned. Indeed, a recent study by Wyman & Watson (2020) aimed at answering whether students should be grouped homogeneously or heterogeneously while participating in cooperative learning, showed no significant difference between the homogeneous and heterogeneous groups, making both groups significant gains.

Another consideration that should be taken into account with regard to team formation is considering student's preferences and possible incompatibilities to prevent future team problems (Pujolàs *et al.*, 2011). However, in compliance with Felder & Brent's (2007) words, teachers should form the groups instead of letting students choose their teammates since "when students self-select into teams, the best students tend to cluster, leaving the weak ones to shift for themselves, and friends cluster, leaving some students out of groups and excluding other from cliques within groups" (p.43).

To finish with, assigning roles to every team member is also a factor of paramount importance. It promotes the equal participation of the learners and enhances their sense of obligation and responsibility, making students subject to their own learning, that is, becoming autonomous learners (Zhang, 2010).

2.1.3 Cooperative learning structures

One of the key ideas that are included in the reflections and experiences towards cooperative learning suggested by Pujolàs (2008) is specifically addressed to state that the simple fact of telling students that they have to work together is not enough; they should be taught how to work in teams. There are several methods in which cooperative learning can be applied to encourage students to work together and help each other to learn (Slavin, 2012).

Cooperative learning structures are the cornerstone of the Kagan approach on cooperative learning and they are one of the main distinguishing features between this model and other cooperative learning strategies, which are based on planning activities. Whereas activities are related to a specific content of a teaching unit, structures are just the skeleton. Therefore, they can be defined as “content-free, repeatable instruction sequences that organize the interaction of students to implement the basic principles of cooperative learning” (Kagan & Kagan, 2017, p. 5.3). Therefore, structures are conceived as a cooperative learning strategy that describe and guide how the teacher and students interact among them and the content. They can be applied to any content and, thus, to any subject. As a result, a teacher successful in the Kagan model has to become skillful in a range of structures, instead of planning cooperative learning lessons (Kagan, 2001). Furthermore, structures are carefully designed to meet the principles of cooperative learning, with special regard to *Equal Participation* and *Simultaneous Interaction*.

However, according to Pujolàs (2008), some considerations should be taken into account in order to successfully implement cooperative learning and its structures. On the one hand, group cohesion is of paramount importance in order to create a proper classroom environment which promotes positive interactions and, thus, helps peers to learn. On the other hand, since conducting effective cooperative learning is challenging and requires a whole process of implementation, this method should be applied on a regular basis rather than occasionally. In other words, it should not be implemented in an isolated or spontaneous way to make the most of it, but should have continuity throughout the course as well as in other subjects. In this regard, Pujolàs (2008) makes an interesting point which is worth mentioning: cooperative learning, understood as a teaching methodology, should not be overused since some students could rely too much on their peers' work. However, a cooperative structure of learning is not necessarily inconsistent with individual work; it implies doing your own work helping each other and, therefore, it can provide significant outcomes when duly implemented on a regular basis.

Structures are, therefore, what basically differentiates cooperative learning from traditional group work, which can be unstructured, and results in what Kagan calls the “structural approach” of cooperative learning. Besides, this approach is known for fostering language acquisition and mastering the four developmental skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Zannan, 2012).

2.2 Cooperative Learning in EFL classes

Although cooperative learning has not been specially intended for foreign language teaching, its advantages and benefits can serve all educational fields. Olsen and Kagan (1992) strongly

believe that Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) offers a chance for interaction among students and helps integrate content learning into language learning.

In the EFL context, some studies revealed the effectiveness of cooperative learning to develop students' English learning skills (Mahmoud, 2014; Zhang, 2010). However, most studies related to CLL have been focused on ESL classrooms. Therefore, despite empirical evidence advocating the effectiveness of cooperative learning in many subject areas, there is still relatively little evidence of this approach with regard to EFL learners (Ghufron & Ermawati, 2018).

One of the reasons why this method is relevant for foreign language learning is because of its implications on the gain of communicative competence. In fact, it shares some characteristics with communicative language teaching, such as considering that healthy relationships with other classmates are more conducive of learning, as well as respecting the integrity of learners (Zhang, 2010). In this context, an important feature is how many chances of input and output the individual student is given the opportunity of producing, since it is here where a very important part of language acquisition and communicative competences take place. According to Zhang (2010), "cooperative language learning provides much more opportunities for learners to comprehensible input and output and the processes of negotiation" (p. 82). That means that when students are divided into groups, they get more opportunities to talk and co-construct knowledge within the group, rather than in a teacher-fronted class organization. Besides, when interacting with peers, students need to make themselves understood, so they adjust their speech to ensure that others can understand, which, in turn, provides input for other students.

Regarding language output, cooperative language learning allows more opportunities for communicating in a functional manner since it creates real-life social settings, as described by Zhang (2010) and Al-Yaseen (2014), where students find themselves involved in various situations characteristic from group work: requesting information, asking for clarification, agreeing, disagreeing, exchanging opinions, among others.

Another variable that happens to be of paramount importance in language acquisition is the context in which it occurs. According to Kagan (1995), context should be supportive, motivating, developmentally appropriate and feedback rich. All these variables are also considered by Zhang (2010). The cooperative learning environment offers a relaxed climate in the EFL classroom and increases motivation (Brown, 1994; Crandall, 1999: in Zhang, 2010). As a result, anxiety is reduced, providing a non-threatening learning environment which encourages EFL learners to overcome their apprehension in communicating in a foreign language (Al-Yaseen, 2014), promoting, hence, higher results on language proficiency. Al-Yassen's (2014) study concludes that cooperative learning is an effective strategy in foreign language teaching, creating a positive and motivational learning environment for EFL learners to interact and, thus, to practice their English and to develop communication skills. Results showed that it also has positive effects on student achievement and increases student relationships and self-esteem.

In the same vein, Suwantarathip and Wichadee (2010) investigated the effectiveness of cooperative learning in reducing foreign language anxiety and its impact on language proficiency. Findings showed that the students' language classroom anxiety was significantly lowered. Additionally, they improved their language proficiency results in the post-test and the students also showed an overall positive attitude towards cooperative learning.

However, it is not only the communicative competence that is fostered through cooperative learning. As Wichadee (2005) reported in his corresponding study, cooperative learning was used to improve English as a Second Language reading skills and post-test showed a significant increase in the results. In addition, most of the participants demonstrated a good attitude towards cooperating in their tasks. As far as writing skills are concerned, findings of Mahmoud's (2014) study revealed significant gains as well.

The effectiveness of cooperative learning in developing English grammar skills in the EFL context has also been researched by Khan & Akhtar (2017). The results of the study, which was carried out comparing control and experimental groups, revealed that cooperative learning had significant effects on the achievement of students in learning English grammar.

As a result of the aforementioned studies, it can be asserted that cooperative language learning is overall beneficial in foreign language learning and teaching and, therefore, it should be worthwhile introducing this method in the EFL/ESL classroom. Research by Ghufroon & Ermawati (2018) aimed at evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of cooperative learning in EFL classes, reported that cooperative learning benefits are not only related to students' academic achievement but also to personal growth because it reduces learning anxiety, raises students' motivation and self-confidence, makes the students actively participate in the learning process and easily express and share their ideas, and helps them to better understand the lesson. An even more recent study by Alghamdy (2019) concluded that cooperative learning improves students' English skills, self-confidence, motivation, responsibility, sharing and respecting others' views, and develops good relationships among classmates.

On the other hand, benefits of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom can be limited as a result of not being able to implement it properly and, hence, not fostering the cooperative learning principles (Ghufroon & Ermawati, 2018). In the same vein, Azizinezhad, Hashemi & Darvishi (2013) asserted that if teachers just put the students into groups without structuring the positive interdependence and individual accountability, then it will be usual to find groups where one person does most (or all) the work and the others take advantage of it. Drawbacks and obstacles of using the cooperative learning method include some students doing a greater share of work than others and low ability students participating less in the learning process and relying on the high ability students (Alghamdy, 2019; Johnson & Johnson, 1994).

2.2.1 Peer scaffolding and interaction in L2 learning

Since the cornerstone of cooperative learning lies in group-based work, it is worth mentioning how collective scaffolding —understood from the vygotskian point of view as the active role that learners have as support for the learning process of their peers—, affects L2 language learning.

Donato's (1994) study on collective scaffolding in second/foreign language learning has provided evidence that peer scaffolding, through dialogue during interaction in group work, fosters individual development and L2 learning of all learners involved. Scaffolding has been observed to appear naturally and regularly as students work together on tasks that promote language learning. This study highlighted that mutual help appears in social interaction, not only between a more capable partner and a less capable other, but also among similar L2 proficiency level language learners, which is often the case in a classroom-based environment. Similar claims were made by Samana (2013) in a study on teacher's and student's scaffolding in the EFL classroom, where she asserts that students with low English proficiency can also successfully scaffold their peers.

The findings of this study (Samana, 2013) were indeed revealing in this context. Results showed that students who requested scaffold assistance from either the teacher or their peers, consulted first with their classmates before turning to their teacher. All students viewed the teacher as a reliable source but they wanted to try by themselves before asking for the teacher's support.

There is further evidence suggesting that learners feel more comfortable during peer-interaction than with teacher-student interaction (Sato & Ballinger, 2016). Furthermore, a higher comfort level increases the amount of language production, which leads to more opportunities to practice the language. The results of a study conducted by Sato (2013: in Sato & Ballinger, 2016) showed a clear preference for peer interaction and qualitative insight revealed that it was because learners did not have to worry about making mistakes while talking to peers.

All in all, group work in the second/foreign language class fosters collective scaffolding during interaction which, in turn, promotes L2 development. Some of the benefits of peer scaffolding in the EFL classroom gathered in Memari Hanjani's (2018) study are the following: fostering student autonomy, enhancing critical thinking, generating more positive attitude towards learning, improving confidence and language skills and forming a supportive and friendly atmosphere in the classroom, among others. On the other hand, the same study reported some drawbacks such as learners' lack of knowledge of the target language, which may result in incomplete or incorrect forms of the L2 arising in interaction. However, "interlanguage [intermediate forms of the L2] does a great deal more good than harm, as long as it is not the only input that students are exposed to" (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006, p. 19).

2.3 Students' perceptions on cooperative learning

Students' perceptions are an important factor of students' behaviour and understanding these perceptions help teachers to set a proper classroom environment according to the students' needs and characteristics (Yanti, 2020).

As Tudor (1996: in Yanti, 2020) points out, students' perceptions about effective language learning influence their positive reaction or reluctance to particular teaching methods or activities, and seem to guide, consciously or unconsciously, student's actions which promote their own learning. Therefore, identifying these perceptions is of paramount importance to understand student's needs and expectations in order to get them involved in a successful learning process and, in turn, it helps to evaluate the appropriate teaching methods to be used in the classroom (Hidayati et al., 2018; Yanti, 2020).

According to Duckworth (2010), several studies have explored students' attitudes and perceptions in order to measure the success of an instructional method. When using attitudes and perceptions as a measurement tool regarding cooperative learning, we have to consider several factors (Duckworth, 2010), such as (1) whether it is a new teaching method to the students (students can be apprehensive about it when it is first introduced in the classroom); (2) whether students have been involved in unsuccessful group activities prior to the study (students who have participated in unstructured group activities have often experienced a feeling of "freeloading" which may result in a negative attitude towards cooperative learning that can be carried over into the new experience); and (3) whether this learning method is expected by the students or not (students might have a preconceived notion of what teaching is supposed to be and usually expect a teacher-centered approach because that is what they are used to).

These variables may have implications in the findings of the studies. "Implementing effective cooperative learning that results in improved teaching evaluations is a very complex, dynamic process requiring a constant "temperature reading" of the students' perceptions" (Phipps, Phipps, Kask, & Higgins, 2001, p. 15 as cited in Duckworth, 2010). As a result, instructors must continuously monitor and adapt the instruction to meet changing attitudes of students.

Research regarding student's attitudes and perceptions on cooperative learning usually uses a mixed-method approach through performing a classroom-based case study where data is first collected through students' questionnaires and, usually, a second phase is conducted within a qualitative approach using focus groups or interviews, aimed at explaining, interpreting and adding information to the quantitative findings (Er & Aksu Ataç, 2014). However, some studies on EFL learners' perceptions on cooperative learning only use questionnaires (Hidayati et al., 2018; Yanti, 2020). On the contrary, Alghamdy's (2019) study on EFL learner's reflections on cooperative learning only used a qualitative method conducting interviews to 10 randomly selected students at the end of the study because it was conducted under a different scope.

Findings resulting from the aforementioned studies (Alghamdy, 2019; Er & Aksu Ataç, 2014; Hidayati et al., 2018; Yanti, 2020) about students' perceptions on cooperative learning, revealed an overall positive attitude towards the implementation of this method, emphasizing not only the gains regarding their English learning but also in regards to social relationships as well as motivation, among others. Despite the positive results, some drawbacks were also reported by Alghamdy (2019) and Er & Aksu Ataç (2014), who included a qualitative approach in their research and, therefore, obtained more insight on students' perceptions. Among the negative

outputs, students reported the lack of involvement of some members of the group (Er & Aksu Ataç, 2014), low achiever EFL learners depending on high achiever learners, classmates not giving group mates a chance to state their opinions, and poor group member distribution (Alghamdy, 2019).

3. Methodology

This research was conducted as a classroom-based case study in a public high school located in central Catalonia. Data was collected from a single classroom taught under a cooperative learning approach throughout a didactic unit of 12 hours.

In order to carry out the study, a mixed-method research approach to data collection and analysis was followed. By using both qualitative and quantitative methods at some point of the study, each approach can complement each other in order to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the results. The predominance of the quantitative approach was aimed at validating the theoretical framework previously exposed, through data collected by means of questionnaires. The study is, therefore, intended to explain the theory through a deductive process.

On the other hand, considering the qualitative approach, according to the research objectives, the study is both oriented to results and the process itself. A didactic unit was designed and implemented under a cooperative learning approach, using concrete structures and strategies. Thus, emphasis is not only placed on results, but also on the implementation process itself. Furthermore, since it is a social research, there is a need for analyzing the perception of students in depth and this cannot only be made through quantitative data. Therefore, qualitative data was gathered through focus groups to be duly triangulated in order to validate results.

3.1 Setting and participants

Institut Sant Ramon is the only public secondary school in Cardona (Bages). The school is located in a prevailing middle-class area and family involvement with the school and their children's academic progress is quite acceptable. Regarding the number of students, this school year 2020/2021 there are 150 students ranging from 1st of ESO to 2nd of Batxillerat, with only one single class per grade. Thus, the average ratio is about 25 students per class.

One of the main focuses of the school is the promotion of the English communicative competence of students. Thus, several actions are being put in place to accomplish this goal. For instance, students' English language exposure has been increased adding one extra hour a week of English (4 hours a week in total) at the expense of reducing hours of optional subjects. In addition, split classes have been promoted, when possible, in order to lower even more the ratio. According to the high school's educational project, the institute has the objective of providing an inclusive education that will strengthen social cohesion. Cooperative learning seems, thus, an appropriate teaching method to boost students' English communicative competence within an inclusive learning context. Although the high school had arranged a "cooperative room" before the

COVID-19 pandemic, where tables were displayed in groups, just one or two teachers (who were not from the English department) were familiar with the implementation of cooperative learning methods. Besides, after the pandemic, the room became obsolete due to the arrangement of “bubble groups”. Therefore, although an interest has been shown in cooperative learning, yet it has not been consolidated as part of the educational project of the school.

This study was framed in the EFL classroom and the participants were 24 2nd of ESO students (11 boys and 13 girls) at *Institut Sant Ramon* in Cardona (Catalonia, Spain). Six of these students (a volunteer of each cooperative group) also participated in the focus group discussion.

The ages of the students ranged from thirteen to fourteen, so they have established appropriate social relationships and developed the ability to organize and regulate their own behavior in situations that are familiar to them. We must also acknowledge the fact that at this age students are going through puberty, a stage where they undergo a series of physical and psychological changes that can directly affect their mood, behavior, motivation or predisposition in class.

The majority of the students were local natives, with the exception of two students from South America; one of them was somehow considered a newly arrived student since she had been here for about two years and she required some adaptations within the ordinary classroom. Apart from this, there was one student with ADHD, another with Asperger’s Syndrome and one student with mild intellectual disability (low IQ). Additionally, within the group of students there were different learning capacities, motivation and cognitive abilities, ranging from limited to rather advanced linguistic competences in English. Thus, we can state it was a mixed-ability classroom. Although the students counted on some previous English knowledge acquired throughout their first year of high school and primary education, the English level of the group was overall medium-low and the pace of the class was quite slow. It is worth mentioning that about 50% of the students attended after school English lessons, either to reinforce or extend their English knowledge.

Learners were mostly used to teacher-fronted lessons and although they sat in pairs or threes facing the whiteboard, they were mainly used to work individually. Besides, they did not have previous relevant experience with cooperative learning. Although they had worked in groups before, students did not quite follow the expected dynamics of cooperative work.

3.2 Instruments

The purpose of this case study is to examine the effects of cooperative learning on students’ engagement in the EFL classroom, as well as to explore students’ perceptions of their own English learning process when they are exposed to cooperative learning. To that end, a whole didactic unit was designed using cooperative learning structures and a students’ questionnaire, a students’ focus group and a formative self and peer assessment on group work were conducted.

The students’ questionnaire was used to determine students’ perceptions on the impact of implementing cooperative learning structures in the classroom and provided us with quantitative

data. The qualitative data gathered from the student's focus groups was used to validate, clarify and supplement quantitative data. To finish with, the quantitative data arising from the formative self and peer assessment at the half and at the end of the didactic unit was used to keep track of students' attitudes and performance when working in groups throughout the unit. The aim of this study is, therefore, to give a voice to students, mainly by means of questionnaires and a focus group.

3.2.1 Didactic Unit

A didactic unit was specifically planned for the participants of the study (a group of 2nd of ESO), and, for that purpose, the cognitive, affective and social needs of these particular students were taken into account, as well as their unexperience with cooperative learning.

The case study was conducted over a month period, during my school placement in March 2021, and this unit lasted 12 hours spread across four hours a week. During this period, in order to achieve the research objectives, a project-based unit was designed (see Appendix 7) to be performed under a cooperative learning approach. The final objective of the unit was to design an environmental awareness campaign to improve our day-to-day actions to help save the planet. To that end, students were first introduced to the problems that our planet is facing, then they learned what they could do to help save the planet and the last step was taking action by creating the awareness campaign. Throughout the whole process, students worked in cooperative groups on a daily basis and different cooperative learning structures were used to guide students towards effective group work.

Learners of different levels were chosen by the instructor to create heterogeneous groups; the classroom was organized into six groups of four students each, including in each team one high-performing student, two medium-performing students and one low-performing student, as suggested by Kagan & Kagan (2017). The teacher was not aware of relations of friendship among learners and therefore, in this sense, groups were created randomly. However, information regarding possible severe disagreement among learners was considered when grouping the students to avoid serious conflicts. Each student had a specific role within the team (coordinator, supervisor, secretary or speaker), in order to organize work and distribute tasks.

In order to implement the cooperative learning approach, some cooperative learning structures were used, most of them created by Kagan & Kagan (2017) and some others adapted by Pujolàs *et al.* (2011). Structures consist of clear and concise steps that tell students how to cooperate with each other. In this section I will briefly explain the most used strategies in my Didactic Unit.

i. Think, Pair, Share (or “1-2-4”)

In *Think, Pair, Share* students first think on their own about a question or problem posed by the teacher. After giving some time to think, the teacher asks students to pair up and discuss their thoughts. Finally students share their thoughts with their group and reach an agreement.

ii. Stand up, hand up, pair up

In this strategy, students stand up, put their hand up and quickly find a partner with whom to share or discuss. This structure is perfect for classbuilding, processing and reviewing information, energizing the class, forming random pairs or teams, lesson starts or wraps.

iii. Teammates consult (or “Pencils in the middle”).

During a *Teammates Consult*, the teacher poses a question and students, in teams, discuss the answer. While orally discussing, all the pencils must be in the middle of the table. Once they have agreed on the answer, students can get their pencils back and write the answer on their worksheets.

iv. Round Table

In *Round Table*, the teacher provides a task and time to think. In teams, students take turns solving the problems, each writing one answer or making a contribution. It can be used to do exercises in groups.

Besides cooperative learning structures, other concepts discussed in the literature review were taken into account. The first day of the implementation of the unit, the methodology was explained to the participants, as well as the objectives and final outcomes to be completed, so that learners knew in advance the procedures to be used. It was also briefly explained to them the reasons why they were requested to work in groups and they completed a teams' handout in order to assign roles within the team and get introduced to effective group work. Students were also provided with a dossier which contained all the tasks structured, to be completed one after the other. Most tasks were to be performed in groups although students were held individually accountable for their work and were also individually assessed, with the exception of the final task (environmental awareness campaign), where the Group Investigation strategy was used, in which each group was assigned a subtopic to investigate about and present it to the class.

Group work was taught, practised and assessed throughout the unit, including a formative assessment in the middle of the process in order to raise learners' awareness and allow them to improve their weaknesses and reinforce their strengths, and a final assessment aimed at evaluating individual and peer performance.

3.2.2 Students' questionnaire

A questionnaire previously piloted in Hinson (2015) was adapted to measure students' perceptions on cooperative learning. The questionnaire (available in Appendix 1) was conducted in Catalan to make sure the participants of the study did not have any difficulties in understanding the statements. It was performed in the classroom at the end of the unit, using Google forms to collect the data from every student in a quick and convenient manner.

The questionnaire consisted of 21 statements divided in three sections: students' learning perceptions, students' engagement perceptions and students' overall learning perceptions on

cooperative learning. Both positive and negative oriented questions were included in the questionnaire in order to break with any systematic response pattern (Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2014). Besides, since questions were clear and straight, they could not lead to any misunderstanding. It also included an open field for comments and/or suggestions at the end of the survey in order to identify topics and concerns to address during the focus group. Although obtaining qualitative data was not the main objective of the survey, it allowed us to gain a better understanding of students' insights.

Overall, through these three sections' questionnaire, organized data was collected in order to assess students' perceptions on the implementation of cooperative learning, and their perceived effect on engagement and learning in the EFL classroom, which, in turn, allowed us to explore students' attitudes towards cooperative learning.

The questionnaire items were measured on a Likert scale anchored at four points. As shown in Appendix 1, for the purpose of analyzing the data, each answer was coded with a number depending on the orientation of the statements (positive or negative). Within positive statements, the least favorable response item was labeled as "strongly disagree" (1), the two central responses were "disagree" (2) and "agree" (3), and the most favored was labeled as "strongly agree" (4). On the other hand, when it came to negative statements, answers were coded the other way around, where "strongly disagree" was "4" and "strongly agree" was "1".

The collected data from close-ended questions was analyzed in a quantitative way; a percentage distribution was extracted on every single item. At the same time, the Likert scale allowed us to extract an overall mean of each item, each subsection of the survey as well as an overall score to determine the general perception of the student towards cooperative learning, which could be overall positive or negative. The higher the mean was with regard to the maximum score that could be obtained (4), the more favorable the learner's attitude was, and vice versa. All answers were analyzed through Excel, which allows dealing with numerical information easily.

As far as the open field that was included at the end of the survey is concerned, answers were dealt in a different way since the information collected was not numerical. All comments were analyzed and grouped if any similarities were found. Even if comments were very diverse, they allowed us to group them in overall positive or negative towards their experience in cooperative learning. Nevertheless, the main aim of this open-ended part of the questionnaire was to find out some specific ideas to look into when carrying out the students' focus groups.

3.2.3 Students' focus group

Once the questionnaire had been performed, the second phase of the study was conducted within a qualitative approach to triangulate data. A students' focus group was arranged aimed at explaining, interpreting and possibly adding information to the quantitative findings. It gathered information about the EFL learners' opinions and perceptions on cooperative learning as a learning method, and the extent to which they believed they had benefited from it to learn English

and other skills. The focus group was composed of 6 students (one representative from each cooperative group) who volunteered to participate, and was conducted in the students' first language.

Focus group questions (available in Appendix 4) were focused on the themes emerging from the open comments of the students' questionnaire and other aspects related to the research questions. Although the discussion was conducted within a semi-structured approach to provide more opportunities for each student to address any relevant topics that could emerge, 10 open-ended questions were prepared by the researcher.

As mentioned in Hernández-Sampieri *et al.* (2014), focus groups seek to foster and analyze interaction among participants as well as the construction of collective meanings, instead of individual perceptions. Therefore, qualitative data collected from the focus groups was voice-recorded for later transcription and analysis. This analysis initially consisted of developing a general sense of the data, and then, for the purpose of analyzing the information in detail, coding schemes were used in order to identify common themes that emerged from the data, including positive effects in the classroom after the implementation of cooperative learning structures as well as any negative sides.

3.2.4 Formative assessment

A self and peer formative assessment on group work performance was conducted in the classroom using Co-Rubrics from Google Sheets. A first formative assessment was performed in the middle of the didactic unit, in order to raise learners' awareness and allow them to improve their weaknesses and reinforce their strengths when working in teams, and a final assessment was also conducted aimed at evaluating individual and peer performance at the end of the unit.

The assessment consisted of 8 statements (Appendix 5) which assessed and monitored students' performance and behaviours when working in groups at different stages where cooperative learning was implemented. Students had to assess themselves as well as their three other teammates and were asked to rate each item on a scale of options which were coded as 1 (novice: never); 2 (learner: seldom); 3 (advanced: sometimes); and 4 (expert: often).

Data resulting from the assessment was aimed at triangulating students' perceptions with students' actual behaviours, which were assessed not only by themselves but also by their teammates. It also provided insight about the effectiveness of the implementation of the cooperative learning approach and its impact on students' attitudes in the EFL classroom. Numerical data was automatically processed through Co-Rubrics, which provided both the self-assessment score and the average score resulting from peer assessments on each statement. This data was broken down to get the mean of each item from 1 to 4, which allowed getting an overall view and comparing results from both assessments performed at different stages of the unit in order to check students' performance and behaviours progress.

4. Results

4.1 Students' questionnaire

Table 1 (see Appendix 2) summarizes the results regarding students' perceptions on engagement and learning in the EFL classroom as a result of the implementation of cooperative learning structures as a teaching strategy. Although there were 24 learners in the class, only 23 answered this questionnaire as one of them was absent on the day the questionnaire was performed.

As previously noted, the questionnaire was divided into three subsections (students' learning perceptions, students' engagement perceptions and students' overall learning perceptions), and the Likert scale was anchored at four points, from "strongly disagree" (coded as 1) to "strongly agree" (coded as 4), inverting the scale in negative oriented statements.

Regarding the first subsection (*Students' Learning Perceptions*), consisted of questionnaire items 1 to 6, and assessed perceptions on working on a team or individually. Five out of the six means were towards the positive end of the continuum (conceptualizing "2,5" as the "neutral point" between 1 and 4), being "3,1" the overall mean of this section. It is worth highlighting that 52,2% of the students strongly agreed with the fact that they "learned more from direct teacher instruction and individual work". In fact, it is the only mean (1,9) that falls below the "neutral" mark. However, 65,2% strongly disagreed with "learning less English when working in teams". The highest mean was for "learning English in teams can be fun" (3,5), followed by "working in teams helps me to successfully accomplish a task" (3,4) —in this latter case, 100% of the students were on the agreement side of the continuum—.

Continuing with the breakdown of data for the *Students' Engagement Perceptions* (second subsection), it consisted of 8 items which were questions 7 through 14, aimed at assessing perceptions on the performance of the team and the contribution of each team member. The eight means are towards the agreement end of cooperative learning enhancing students' engagement —being "3,3" the overall mean of this section, on a scale from 1 to 4—. There was a slight leaning towards agreement with "I do more work than some members of my team" (negative oriented question), which scored the lowest punctuation (2,7 out of 4), meaning that 43,4% of the students thought they were doing more work than their group mates. This is in contrast with Question 8, where the most agreement was noted as students acknowledged "doing their fair share of work during a team assigned task" (78,3% strongly agreed). It is also remarkable that 65,2% of the students strongly agreed with the fact that "working in teams had increased their motivation towards the English class" and 56,5% felt that they had more confidence to try problems when working in teams, as well as to ask questions to other teams members.

As far as the *Students' Overall Learning Perceptions* are concerned, it consisted of 8 survey items, ranging from question 15 to 21, which assessed team dynamics and attitudes such as respect for all opinions, improvement of students' relationships, comfort of asking help to a

teammate or sharing ideas and materials for the team success. All of the means were towards the agreement end of the scale, with an average section score of “3,5” from 1 to 4, which is significantly above the “neutral” 2,5 mark. The most favoured statement was Question 18, where 87% of the students strongly agreed that “ideas and opinions of everyone in the team were treated with respect”. The vast majority of the students also felt more comfortable asking a teammate for help rather than the teacher (43,5% strongly agreed and 39,1% agreed) and believed that working in teams had improved their relationship with their classmates (47,8% strongly agreed and 43,5% agreed). It is also worth stressing that 91,3% of the students were on the agreement side regarding the need of everyone’s ideas for the team success and that 95,6% agreed or strongly agreed with the fact that they can learn a lot of important things from each other. To finish with, the overall mean of the survey was “3,3”, which clearly leans towards the agreement side of the continuum.

Finally, regarding the open-response section, where students could include any further comments, a total of 9 comments were submitted (see Appendix 3). Eight of them supported a positive attitude towards cooperative learning, whilst one of them asserted that the student felt more comfortable asking questions to the teacher, rather than classmates. Regarding the positive comments, the majority of them addressed the fact that working in teams had helped them to learn more English or simply that they liked working in teams. Two of the statements also emphasized the fact that working in teams had increased their motivation to learn English.

4.2 Students’ focus group

Six students were interviewed through a focus group by the researcher at the end of the study to identify their thoughts and experiences in learning English in a cooperative learning environment (transcripts available in Appendix 4). Although an overall positive attitude towards cooperative learning was perceived, some drawbacks also arose. The researcher identified different issues that emerged from the focus group data and grouped them into four main themes: benefits of cooperative learning, positive students’ relationships, implementation, and drawbacks of cooperative learning.

Benefits of cooperative learning

All of the students stated the benefits of cooperative work and its gains for their learning process. They thought they learned better in groups because they could help each other and share knowledge and ideas and, therefore, it was easier for them to learn English. So, they asserted as follows: “We have learned more English this way”; “I think cooperative learning is better because we help each other and we can learn a lot more from each other”; “In groups, I learn more and things are much clearer; it eases my learning process”. Some students specifically mentioned that their teammates had helped them with vocabulary since they asked each other the meaning of new words. Furthermore, students highlighted the role of peer interaction, making the point that they could more easily understand their classmates than their teacher. One of them said that “learning from other classmates helped a lot because the teacher talks in English and explains in

a different way and, this way, when a partner explains something to you, you can better assimilate the content”.

Positive student's relationships

Besides gains in academic achievement, students stated that the cooperative learning environment increased positive students' relationships with their peers. In general, students indicated that working in groups had improved their relationship with the students with whom they did not used to have much contact with. For instance, a student admitted that “there was a teammate with whom I did not get along but we have learned to work together and our relationship has improved”. Cooperative learning also helped them somehow to build skills that enabled them to develop friendship with their classmates and, therefore, words such as respect, trust and companionship came out.

Implementation of cooperative learning

The third theme that emerged from the data was related to the implementation of cooperative learning in the class. The majority of the students pointed out that the use of cooperative learning structures (such as “pencils in the middle” or “think, pair, share”) had been useful to get everyone involved in the task. In this vein, one student stated that “shy students have participated more because of these structures”. On the other hand, students found that assigning roles to each teammate was also helpful to split the work. Only one student admitted that his group did not really follow neither the structures nor the roles when doing a task. To finish with, students agreed on the fact that it was useful to have a high-achieving student in the group.

Drawbacks of cooperative learning

The final theme to emerge from the data has to do with drawbacks of cooperative learning. Some students pointed out that low achieving students depended on high achieving students to carry out different tasks and produced the bulk of the work. For instance, one student commented that “if there is a person who knows a lot of English in the group, then there are people who rely too much on her/him”. A second student also asserted that “not everybody does the same amount of work”. The thought that they might need more training to perform group work well also came up, since they were not familiar with it. Another major concern about cooperative learning was that students worked a lot in the class but when it came to homework, some students were off task and did not contribute as much as others. Some students highlighted that it was not fair and that they preferred to be individually assessed.

4.3 Formative assessment

A formative assessment on group work was carried out twice in order to keep track of students' performance and behaviours. At the same time, it was useful to make them aware of their weaknesses and strengths when working in teams. Students had to assess themselves and their group peers in the middle of the didactic unit and at the end of it.

Looking into the results of the 8 statements that were addressed (available in Appendix 5), when it came to peer assessment, students' overall progress on group work performance became worse when comparing the first and the final formative assessment (as shows Table 4 in Appendix 6). However, regarding the self assessment, results indicate exactly the opposite (their performance improved when comparing the final and the first assessment).

The most significant difference lies in the statement about "doing their fair share of the work". Whereas in the first formative assessment peers rated their group mates higher than themselves, in the final assessment the results were exchanged. Therefore, this item was positively rated by peers in the first formative assessment and poorly scored in the final assessment. The lowest score in both assessments referred to "doing useful contributions to the group". On the other hand, the highest rated item in both assessments was "respecting the agreements reached within the group", followed by "listening and respecting others opinions". To finish with, it is worth mentioning that all the means (except one) were 3 or above, which means that students considered both themselves and their peers as advanced or expert group workers, according to the scale used.

5. Discussion

In this section the findings are discussed according to the objectives stated in section 1. This research proposal attempted to explore the implementation of the cooperative learning approach in order to be successful and to analyze to what extent it could benefit students' learning process and engagement in the EFL classroom, according to their perceptions and behaviours. The results of the study show that students have an overall positive attitude towards cooperative learning, if implemented considering some of the cornerstones discussed in section 2. Therefore, since students' perceptions can be used to evaluate the appropriateness of a teaching method (Hidayati et al., 2018; Yanti, 2020), it can be asserted that cooperative learning can be a convenient methodology to help and engage students in the EFL learning process.

In order to validate the results of the study, this method was carefully implemented in order to foster Kagan's principles of cooperative learning (Kagan & Kagan, 2017), which need to be assured during peer cooperation, such as simultaneous interaction and equal participation. To achieve these high stakes guidelines, heterogeneous groups in regards to academic achievement and gender were formed—as suggested in the literature reviewed (Al-Yaseen, 2014; Kagan & Kagan, 2017; Pujolàs *et al.*, 2011)—, and Kagan's cooperative learning structures were taught, practiced and performed throughout the unit. Furthermore, roles were assigned within team members to promote their active participation and personal accountability. Students' perceptions were rather aligned with these guiding principles since findings resulting from the focus groups concerning the implementation of cooperative learning, showed a broad agreement on the usefulness of cooperative learning structures used in the classroom and roles to get everyone on the team involved—only one student admitted that his group did not quite follow them—. As a result, students in the focus group pointed out that everyone in the team had

worked very hard in the classroom. In fact, this statement is supported by the results obtained from the first self and peer assessment on group work performed in the middle of the didactic unit, where students rated their peers with a mean of 3,8 over 4 in regards to “doing their fair share of work” (see Appendix 6, Table 2). These results account for the correct use of cooperative learning structures in the classroom, which fostered the four Kagan’s basic principles of cooperative learning (Kagan & Kagan, 2017) in order to ensure proper learning. Nevertheless, some students asserted that problems arose when it came to dealing with homework when all team members were involved and they depended on one another to complete the task successfully. They reported the lack of involvement of some members of the group, relying too much on more responsible or capable peers. These concerns have been also shared by other studies discussed in the literature review (Alghamdy, 2019; Er & Aksu Ataç, 2014).

With regard to the aforementioned, it is worth highlighting that results obtained during the first peer formative assessment were better than the ones obtained in the final assessment. Qualitative findings resulting from the focus group suggested that this difference was due to the fact that, by the half of the unit, they had only performed group activities in the classroom and, despite the cooperative approach, students were individually assessed. However, at the end of the unit they had to carry out a group project which was also part of the evaluation of the unit and a tiny portion of the mark was a group grade. Although the majority of the work was done in the classroom, they had to finish it for homework and this is when problems arose with some students that did not do their fair share of work. This fact was also clearly reflected on the results of the students’ questionnaire, performed at the end of the unit, where almost 50% of the students (43,4%) thought that they had done more work than some of their peers. This was supported and further complemented with the focus groups comments regarding the unfairness of group grades when some students work harder than others. In this vein, Kagan & Kagan (2017) states that group grades are a misconceived practice in cooperative learning since they do not represent individual achievement and, therefore, they oppose the basic principles of cooperative learning. Hence, results suggest a possible scope for improvement in the assessment approach used during the implementation, which definitely affected students’ perceptions on cooperative learning.

As far as heterogeneous group formation is concerned, it was somehow positively perceived by the students. During the focus group, they acknowledged team formation as a determinant item to succeed and they noticed having a high-achieving student in their group. They thought that this latter aspect was a *conditio sine qua non* in the event that they would work cooperatively in future academic years since having a high-achieving peer helped them to learn. This perception is in line with the vygotskian theory of the *Zone of Proximal Development* which supports that learning occurs in collaboration with a more capable peer (Yassin *et al.*, 2018) through a process of scaffolding. However, the results from the questionnaire —as it was also acknowledged during the focus group— suggest that mutual help and scaffolding appear in social interaction, not only between a more capable partner and a less capable other, but also among similar L2 proficiency level language learners (Donato, 1994; Samana, 2013). In this vein, students claimed to ask

questions to other team members (56,5% strongly agreed with this statement and 39,1% simply agreed) almost as much as they were asked by others (39,1% strongly agreed and 56,5% agreed). This mutual peer scaffolding resulted in a clear positive perception of cooperative work as a means of successfully accomplishing a task, since 100% of the students were on the agreement side of the statement “working in teams helps me to successfully accomplish a task”. This idea is in accordance with Er & Aksu Ataç’s (2014) results, where 88,6 % of the students reported that while studying in cooperation students guide each other.

Looking deeper into peer interaction, results showed that most students felt more comfortable asking a teammate for help rather than asking the teacher (this item got a mean of 3,3 over 4). Therefore, results suggest that learners feel more comfortable during peer-interaction than in teacher-student interaction (Sato & Ballinger, 2016) and are aligned with Samana’s (2013) study, where all the students who needed scaffolding asked a peer before turning to their teacher. This preference for peer interaction was also brought up in the focus group interview where students addressed another variable besides peer interaction comfort; they asserted that they could more easily understand a peer than the teacher, who always speaks in English. This is directly linked to the comprehensible input and output notions described by Zhang (2010), which are enhanced during peer interaction, where learners adjust their speech to ensure others can understand.

All the aforementioned discussions have an impact on students’ learning perceptions, which were directly addressed in the first section of the questionnaire, where students were asked whether they learned more English working in teams or from direct teacher instruction and individual work. 34,8% of students strongly agreed with “learning more English when working in teams” and 52,2% simply agreed with this statement, being 3,2 the mean for this item. However, 52,2% strongly agreed with “learning more from direct teacher instruction and individual learning”, which resulted in a mean of 1,9 for this particular item, mostly opposing the cooperative learning approach. What seems a discrepancy might be explained because even though most learners acknowledged that cooperative learning fosters individual achievements, a lot of them may think they can obtain better results individually because they have the control of all the process and they do not depend on the work of others, as suggested by students in the focus group. Besides, schools have been traditionally rooted to individual and competitive learning and, therefore, students might be more predisposed to compete for better marks rather than to celebrate each other’s successes (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). As pointed out by Johnson & Johnson (1994), despite the fact that the three patterns of interaction (cooperative, competitive and individualistic) are not equally conducive of learning, students should learn to interact effectively in each of these ways. In the same vein, Pujolàs *et al.* (2011) advocate that neither peer interaction nor cooperative work should replace teacher-student interaction and individual work; instead, they should complement one another. Therefore, not replacing but regularly introducing the cooperative approach in the classroom seems to meet students’ learning preferences.

Notwithstanding the foregoing divergence, when the focus group’s students were asked whether they learned more English in groups or individually, all of them asserted to learn better when

working in groups since they could learn from each other. This general perception is in line with the results of several studies performed in the EFL classroom and mentioned in section 2.2, which confirmed the benefits of cooperative learning for EFL learners and its gains in terms of academic achievement with special regard to communication skills (Al-Yaseen, 2014; Zhan, 2010), but also in grammar (Khan & Akhtar, 2017), reading (Wichadee, 2005) and writing skills (Mahmoud, 2014).

Beyond the scope of academic gains, the results of the study shed light on other variables which enables effective EFL learning. The findings suggest that cooperative learning provides the proper environment to develop positive social relationships in the classroom and respect for each other's ideas, to develop trust towards peers and to motivate the group members. In the light of the questionnaire results, 92,3% of the students were on the agreement side of the statement "working in teams improves my relationship with my classmates". In fact, this is a theme that emerged from the focus group when students were asked about the benefits of cooperative learning. These results further support the study conducted by Er & Aksu Ataç (2014), where 92,2% said that cooperative learning environments developed positive relationships in class. This was also one of the most relevant findings of other studies conducted on students' perceptions (Alghamdy, 2019; Yanti, 2020). Indeed, as suggested by the students, not only new relationships were built, but also they learned to work with other students with whom they did not used to get along. Students learn, therefore, to support each other and to deal with heterogeneity in a group (Al-Yaseen, 2014). Also respect and trust attitudes were developed as a result of the implementation of cooperative learning. Actually, the highest scoring item of the questionnaire, which obtained a mean of 3,9 over 4, was that "ideas and opinions of everyone in the team are treated with respect". This perception matched the actual behaviours of students, gathered in the formative self and peer assessment, where respecting both, group agreements and others' ideas, were also the highest scoring items.

These aspects are closely related to EFL teaching and learning. Thus, affective factors such as motivation and the reduction of anxiety to use the foreign language as a means of communication are especially relevant for language learning (Al-Yaseen, 2014). In this vein, 65,2% of students "strongly agreed" with the fact that working in teams had increased their motivation towards the English class and 21,7%, agreed. Similar results were obtained when they were asked about being more confident to try problems when working on a team (56,5% strongly agreed and 26,1% agreed). These results confirm what Al-Yassen (2014) suggested about personality development as one of the benefits of cooperative learning, since it strengthens the students' confidence in their abilities and motivates them to engage themselves more in the learning process. In the same vein, findings from Ghufroon & Ermawati (2018) point out raising students' self-confidence and motivation, and reducing students' nervousness, as strengths of cooperative learning.

As a result, this supportive comfortable environment which gives students more confidence to try themselves should lead to a higher class participation. However, results from the questionnaire moderately support this theory: although 56,5% of the students agreed with the statement

“teamwork encourages me to participate more in class”, only 26,1% of them strongly agreed. Thus, this item obtained a mean of 3 on a scale from 1 to 4, considering 2,5 as the “neutral” point. Despite the results assessing class participation in particular, results rating students’ overall engagement perceptions —considering other items such as participation and engagement within the group— obtained higher results, being 3,3 the mean of this questionnaire section. Therefore, it proves that the cooperative learning approach is a student-centered teaching method, where most interaction occurs between peers, within the groups, rather than in front of the whole class (Pujolàs *et al.*, 2011).

To finish with, considering the overall results on students’ perceptions, it is worth stressing that although findings from the questionnaire suggested that students were strongly at the side of cooperative learning, they asserted more about the negative sides of that approach in the focus group interview. Therefore, even though more compelling evidence supporting the benefits of cooperative learning was gained from the focus group discussion, it also provided more insight about the weaknesses of this teaching method and helped to explain and give coherence to the overall results of the study. All things considered, the importance of the qualitative approach when conducting a social study is highlighted. The same approach was shared by Er & Aksu Ataç (2014), who also followed a mixed-method research study on students’ attitudes towards cooperative learning.

6. Conclusions

The aim of the current paper is to examine, by means of classroom-based research, the learning and engagement perceptions of students within the frame of a cooperative learning approach in a secondary school EFL classroom, as well as their attitudes and behaviours towards this method.

The findings obtained from this study revealed an overall positive view of students’ learning and engagement perceptions when the cooperative learning approach was implemented in the EFL secondary classroom, being the overall mean resulting from the students’ questionnaire a “3,3” on a scale from 1 to 4. Findings suggest that when students work in groups they feel that they can rely on one another for help and this gives them confidence to solve problems and enjoy learning, showing a clear preference for working in teams rather than individually. However, students also recognize the importance of direct teacher instruction and individual work. Therefore, both approaches are considered necessary for a successful learning process since they complement each other.

Besides academic learning benefits, this study provides even more compelling evidence supporting that cooperative learning experiences contribute to social skills growth, where positive interpersonal and social relationships among classmates become noticeable and more diverse. In addition, respect and trust attitudes are developed as a result of the implementation of cooperative learning. This supportive environment raises students’ confidence in their abilities and motivates them to engage themselves more in the learning process, with a clear preference for peer interaction instead of teacher-student interaction. Nonetheless, despite the positive

implications on students' engagement, some drawbacks need to be taken into account, such as some students doing a greater share of work than others (specially when it comes to homework) and low ability students participating less in the learning process and relying on the high ability students.

Regarding the implementation of cooperative learning, it is worth stressing that the success of the implementation will have an impact on students' perceptions (Yanti, 2020). Therefore, the positive outcomes of the study confirms and strengthens the points of view of the authors included in the theoretical framework, who discussed the factors that ought to be considered when implementing a cooperative learning approach. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this case study was limited to the implementation of the cooperative method during twelve lessons. Since implementing effective cooperative learning is challenging and requires a whole process of implementation and a continuity throughout the course as well as in other subjects (Pujolàs, 2008), it should not be implemented in an isolated or spontaneous way to make the most of it. In this regard, time constraints as well as the lack of experience and training of the instructor, must be considered within the results. A clear consequence of the latter was the negative impact of group grades, which resulted in a lower engagement of some students when they had to work at home, generating feelings of unfairness in those students who ended up working more than others. Another limitation to the research worth underlining is the already mentioned students' inexperience with cooperative learning structures. Since this paper supports Pujolàs *et al.*'s (2011) view that learning to cooperate is something that needs to be taught, perhaps students would overcome some of the negative sides of cooperative learning as they would become more proficient in implementing these cooperative learning techniques.

All in all, in the light of these results based on the students' perceptions, we can conclude that cooperative learning has a positive impact on EFL secondary students, not only to reach the goals of language learning but specially to enhance positive relationships, motivation and engagement in the classroom. Therefore, it can be a convenient methodology for the EFL learning and teaching. However, the benefits of cooperative learning are not automatically earned; it must be appropriately implemented. Therefore, it is recommended to provide both EFL teachers and learners with training sessions on how to teach and learn through cooperative learning for optimum results.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1. Students' questionnaire

ENQUESTA SOBRE L'APRENTATGE COOPERATIU A L'AULA D'ANGLÈS

Soc l'Elena Ramírez, estudiant del Màster de Formació de Professorat en l'especialitat de llengua anglesa de la Universitat de Vic.

El motiu d'aquest qüestionari és recollir dades per a l'elaboració del meu Treball de Final de Màster, el qual estudia la percepció i actituds dels alumnes envers l'aprenentatge de forma cooperativa (en grups), a l'aula d'anglès.

El qüestionari està dividit en 3 seccions: percepcions sobre l'aprenentatge, percepcions sobre la implicació/motivació i percepcions generals. Per tal que la informació sigui el més acurada possible, si us plau, respon honestament a cada pregunta.

Moltes gràcies per formar part d'aquest estudi; la teva participació serà de gran ajuda!

1. PERCEPCIONS DE L'ESTUDIANT SOBRE EL SEU PROPI APRENTATGE DE L'ANGLÈS

Si us plau, selecciona la resposta que millor es correspongui amb el teu posicionament respecte a cada afirmació.

1. Aprenc més anglès quan treballo en equip.

- Totalment en desacord (1)¹ En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

2. Aprenc més anglès quan la professora m'explica la teoria i posteriorment faig exercicis individualment.

- Totalment en desacord (4) En desacord (3) D'acord (2) Totalment d'acord (1)

3. Aprendre anglès pot ser divertit.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

4. El fet de treballar en equip dificulta el meu aprenentatge de l'anglès.

- Totalment en desacord (4) En desacord (3) D'acord (2) Totalment d'acord (1)

5. El treball en equip m'ajuda a completar una tasca o exercici de manera satisfactòria.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

6. Quan treballem en equip intentem assegurar-nos que tots els membres del grup aprenguin el material assignat.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

¹The answers' codes (numbers) were not included in the final version that was delivered to students. It is just mentioned to help explain how the quantitative analysis of the results was conducted.

2. PERCEPCIONS DE L'ESTUDIANT SOBRE LA SEVA IMPLICACIÓ I MOTIVACIÓ

7. El treball en equip m'ajuda a participar més a classe.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

8. Quan treballo en equip realitzo la part corresponent de la feina que m'ha estat assignada.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

9. Quan treballo en equip realitzo més feina que altres companys/es del grup.

- Totalment en desacord (4) En desacord (3) D'acord (2) Totalment d'acord (1)

10. Prefereixo treballar individualment.

- Totalment en desacord (4) En desacord (3) D'acord (2) Totalment d'acord (1)

11. Faig preguntes als demés membres del grup quan treballo en equip.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

12. Els altres membres de l'equip em fan preguntes quan treballem junts en una tasca determinada.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

13. Em sento més segur/a per solucionar problemes quan treballo en equip.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

14. Treballar en equip ha augmentat la meva motivació envers la classe d'anglès.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

3. PERCEPCIONS GENERALS DELS ESTUDIANTS ENVERS L'APRENTATGE COOPERATIU A L'AULA D'ANGLÈS

15. M'agrada aprendre anglès treballant en equip.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

16. Em sento còmode demanant ajuda a un company/a del grup, enlloc de a la professora.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

17. Treballar en equip millora la meva relació amb els companys i companyes.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

18. Quan treballa en equip les idees i opinions de tots els membres del grup són tractades amb respecte.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

19. Quan treballem en equips hem de compartir materials per tal de completar la tasca.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

20. Quan treballem en equips necessitem la col·laboració de tots els membres del grup per completar la tasca satisfactòriament.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

21. A classe, els estudiants aprenem moltes coses importants els uns dels altres.

- Totalment en desacord (1) En desacord (2) D'acord (3) Totalment d'acord (4)

Aquí pots escriure qualsevol comentari o suggeriment que consideris rellevant sobre la teva experiència treballant en equip durant aquesta unitat.

Moltes gràcies!

Note. Questions from 1 to 21 (with the exception of question 5 and 14) have been adapted from "Perceptions on cooperative learning: a case study of Kagan cooperative learning structures in the classroom", 2015, pp. 224-227. East Carolina University. Copyright 2015 Tina Hinson.

Appendix 2. Table 1: Students' questionnaire results

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Agree (3)	Strongly agree (4)	Mean
	%	%	%	%	M
STUDENTS' LEARNING PERCEPTIONS					
1. I learn more English when I work on a team.	0,0%	13,0%	52,2%	34,8%	3,2
2. I learn more from direct teacher instruction and individual work. ¹	13,0%	17,4%	17,4%	52,2%	1,9
3. Learning English in teams can be fun.	0,0%	4,3%	43,5%	52,2%	3,5
4. I learn less English when working in teams in my class. ¹	65,2%	13,0%	8,7%	13,0%	3,3
5. Working in teams helps me to successfully accomplish a task.	0,0%	0,0%	56,5%	43,5%	3,4
6. When we work in teams, we try to make sure that everyone on the team learns the assigned material.	8,7%	4,3%	30,4%	56,5%	3,3
					3,1
STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS					
7. Teamwork encourages me to participate more in class.	4,3%	13,0%	56,5%	26,1%	3,0
8. I do my fair share of work during a team assigned task.	0,0%	4,3%	17,4%	78,3%	3,7
9. I do more work than some members of my team. ¹	17,4%	39,1%	39,1%	4,3%	2,7
10. I prefer to work alone. ¹	52,2%	26,1%	13,0%	8,7%	3,2
11. I ask questions to other team members when we work as a team.	4,3%	0,0%	39,1%	56,5%	3,5
12. Others on the team ask me questions when we work together on an assigned task.	4,3%	0,0%	56,5%	39,1%	3,3
13. I have more confidence to try problems when I work on a team.	0,0%	17,4%	26,1%	56,5%	3,4
14. Working in teams has increased my motivation towards the English class.	4,3%	8,7%	21,7%	65,2%	3,5
					3,3
STUDENTS' OVERALL PERCEPTIONS ON COOPERATIVE LEARNING					
15. I like learning English when I work on a team.	0,0%	13,0%	30,4%	56,5%	3,4
16. I feel comfortable asking a teammate in my team for help rather than asking the teacher.	0,0%	17,4%	39,1%	43,5%	3,3
17. Working in teams improves my relationships with my classmates.	4,3%	4,3%	43,5%	47,8%	3,3
18. When I work on a team, ideas and opinions of everyone on the team are treated with respect.	0,0%	0,0%	13,0%	87,0%	3,9
19. When we work in teams, we have to share materials in order to complete the assignment.	8,7%	8,7%	13,0%	69,6%	3,4
20. When we work in teams, everyone's ideas are needed if we are going to be successful.	0,0%	8,7%	34,8%	56,5%	3,5
21. In this classroom, students learn a lot of important things from each other.	0,0%	4,3%	47,8%	47,8%	3,4
					3,5
OVERALL MEAN					3,3

¹Note: These items were reverse coded in order to keep consistency with the positive wording of the other survey questions.

Appendix 3. Open-ended responses from the students' questionnaire

Alumne 1. *Les classes amb l'Elena m'han servit molt més per aprendre anglès. La manera que té de fer les classes és molt més efectiva. La manera de fer el dossier és més còmode i fàcil i a l'hora d'estudiar és molt més fàcil aprendre-te'l. El treball en grup és molt efectiu, jo prefereixo preguntar-li a un company i treballar amb els meus companys. Fer la feina en grup és molt més efectiva per aprendre. Les classes d'anglès ja no se'm feien pesades perquè m'ho pasaba bé i aprenia anglès. La meva opinió és que les classes de l'Elena és molt més interessant i divertida.*

Alumne 2. *Yo siempre tengo motivación en aprender, con o sin grupo. Y prefiero preguntarle a la profesora, me siento más cómoda.*

Alumne 3. *M'agrada molt la teva manera de fer la classe i el dossier és una forma divertida de fer anglès.*

Alumne 4. *M'ha ajudat una mica més en l'assignatura d'anglès, en grup me'n surto millor que no pas sola.*

Alumne 5. *M'ha agradat molt aquest projecte, ja que me sentit molt còmode treballant amb el meu grup.*

Alumne 6. *A mi m'agrada molt treballar en grup, i en aquest treball he après molt.*

Alumne 7. *M'ha agradat molt i també m'ha agradat molt com es puntua els apartats.*

Alumne 8. *Treballar en equip ens dona més motivació en aprendre anglès.*

Alumne 9. *M'ha agradat molt perquè així podem fer més coses.*

Appendix 4. Students' focus group transcripts

Bon dia! Moltes gràcies per estar aquí!

Com ja sabeu, ara parlarem sobre la vostra experiència treballant en equip durant aquesta unitat que, com heu vist, l'hem organitzat una mica diferent al que feu normalment; us heu assegut en grups, cadascú tenia el seu rol, heu utilitzat estructures per organitzar el treball en equip (com la de "Llàpissos al centre" o "Think, Pair, Share")...

No hi ha respostes correctes o incorrectes, simplement la vostra opinió. Per no parlar tots alhora, a cada pregunta començarem per un de vosaltres i, seguint el mateix ordre en el que esteu asseguts, anireu donant la vostra opinió.

1. Com valoreu l'experiència de treballar cooperativament (en grups o en parelles) per a l'aprenentatge de l'anglès?

Alumne 1: Trobo que, *o sigui...*, que és millor perquè s'ajuden mútuament, la gent, i una cosa que un no sap i l'altre *pues* ho sap, es poden ajudar mútuament i crec que es pot aprendre molt més dels altres.

Alumne 2: I comparteixes idees i així tens més formes d'estudiar o més formes d'aprendre les coses i va millor.

Alumne 3: Sí, aviam va millor si és en grup perquè si tens un dubte li preguntes a l'altre i si l'altre té un dubte t'ho pregunta tu, o a un altre del grup, i així si tenim feina també ens la podem repartir i va millor.

Alumne 4: Sí jo penso que és millor treballar en grup perquè, no sé, tothom entén millor una cosa, l'altre una altra i així tots ens podem ajudar mútuament; és més fàcil.

Alumne 5: Jo... a veure, sí que és veritat que et pots ajudar amb els companys i tot això, però també després, a l'hora de fer la feina, pot ser que dos la facin i dos no, saps? Llavors els altres dos han de fer la feina dels altres.

Alumne 6: Joestic d'acord amb el Marc que, de vegades, només en alguns casos... Però jo quan treballo en equip em sento millor, no sé. I repartir la feina entre tot el grup més més fàcil.

Investigadora: D'acord. Algú vol afegir alguna cosa més?

Alumne 1: Bueno, el que ha dit el Marc, també és veritat que de vegades potser hi ha algú que no fa tant, però això també des del principi potser s'han de deixar més les coses clares. *O sigui*, això ho fas tu, això faig jo i això ho fas tu.

Alumne 5: Però si quedés així i després arriba el dia i no està fet...

Alumne 3: Ja... també depèn de la persona; si et toca amb una persona que sap molt d'anglès i tal, pues hi ha gent que es confia i diu doncs ja ho farà ella o coses així.

Investigadora: Aquí, però, hi ha una diferència entre, per exemple, l'activitat del pòster (on havíeu de fer un producte final entre tots) i les activitats que hem anat fent a classe, on cadascú tenia el seu paper i la seva feina. Tothom ho havia de fer però sí que podíeu ajudar-vos els uns als altres. Hi ha com dos tipus de treball en equip: cadascú fa el seu exercici, la seva feina individual però amb ajuda del grup, i l'altra és que hi hagi una finalitat (en aquest cas era el pòster) i cadascú ha de fer una part d'aquest treball. Veieu una mica la diferència?

Alumnes: Sí, sí (tots).

2. Com consideres que aprens més anglès, treballant en grup o de forma individual?

Alumne 2: *O sigui*, jo, aprendre anglès, en grup perquè, *o sigui*, també depèn de amb qui et toqui, però si et toca amb algú que sí sap anglès o que sap explicar-te les coses et pot dir nous mètodes per estudiar que pots ser et serveixin millor per aprendre les coses. I a mi em va millor treballar en grup perquè ho aprenc millor i és menys... *o sigui*, que no has de pensar tu sola i pots demanar els dubtes, per això em va millor.

Alumne 3: Sí, *o sigui*, si et toca amb una persona que entén bastant d'anglès o encara que n'entengui tant, és igual..., si hi ha paraules que no saps perquè no en tens ni idea, ho pots preguntar. Jo crec que aprens més, perquè individual si no entens *algo* doncs ho has de buscar i coses d'aquestes.

Alumne 4: Sí, jo penso el mateix perquè en grup sempre hi ha una persona que sap una mica més d'anglès i sempre et pot ajudar i... no sé, crec que és millor.

Alumne 5: *Lo mateix*.

Alumne 6: Jo també penso igual perquè tot i que la persona no sàpiga tant anglès com tu, doncs sempre aprens alguna cosa nova, alguna paraula que no sàpigues o alguna cosa.

Alumne 1: Jo penso igual que tots.

Investigadora: D'acord. També, per a què ho sapigueu, si vosaltres, per exemple sou la persona del grup que més en sabeu, el fet d'explicar una cosa a un company...

Alumne 1: També et fa aprendre més.

Investigadora: Correcte, et fa aprendre més. És un procés d'aprenentatge; a l'explicar-ho, tu aprens, ho interioritzes. Explicant també s'aprèn.

3. Què creus que has après dels teus companys i companyes?

Alumne 3: *Pues...* el vocabulari, hi havia coses que no entenia i m'ho explicaven. I també persones que entre elles no tenien molta relació i això..., doncs fa que sapiguem que ens podem portar bé entre nosaltres i que podem estar sense cap problema i treballar més en grup.

Alumne 4: Sí, jo penso el mateix.

Alumne 5: Sí sí, jo també, el mateix.

Alumne 6: Jo penso igual que la *alumna* 3, *o sigui* que a part de la part teòrica o pràctica que sigui d'anglès, doncs també aprens a treballar més en grup i, no sé, noves coses...

Alumne 4: A relacionar-te més amb els companys...

Alumne 1: Sí, *o sigui*, hem après tot el temari millor perquè amb l'ajuda... i també hem tingut més... el companyerisme ha pujat, ara podem... *o sigui*, ens ha fet que hem après també com portar-nos millor amb algú, saps...?

Investigadora: Diguéssim que ha ajudat potser a millorar les relacions socials, no? Entre els companys.

Alumnes: Sí, sí (tots).

4. Dins del teu grup com us heu ajudat els uns als altres per tal que tots els membres del grup aprenguin el contingut?

Alumne 4: *Bueno...*, *pues*, per exemple, si algú no sabia *algo* doncs el que ho sabia ho deia i llavors tot ja apreníem i doncs això, ens anàvem ajudant mútuament.

Alumne 5: Si algú ho sabia doncs li deia a l'altre i si no doncs no ho sabíem.

Alumne 6: Al nostre grup ens ajudàvem mútuament i a l'hora de triar una resposta ens posàvem d'acord i ja està.

Alumne 1: Bueno, més o menys el nostre grup igual, o *sigui*, però primer ho intentàvem fer una mica sols per veure si ho enteníem i després si algú no ho entenia, ho demanava i entre tots ens posàvem d'acord i després ho revisàvem tot a veure si tots ho teníem bé.

Investigadora: Val, d'acord. Aquesta aquesta era una de les estructures que feiem servir, per exemple "llàpissos al centre", "Think, Pair, Share"... són les estructures que es fan servir per: primer, pensar individualment; després, compartir amb el company i, per últim, posar-se d'acord amb el grup. Això creieu que us va servir, aquestes estructures?

Alumnes: Sí, sí (tots).

Investigadora: Per exemple, quan no s'organitza el treball en equip el que pot passar, què és? Que un estigui mirant les musaranyes i qui és més responsable o fa més la feina, ho faci i després els demés ho copien, no? I aquesta no és la idea; la idea és que tothom participi i per això hi ha aquestes estructures que ho marquen una mica. Voleu afegir alguna cosa més?

Alumne 3: Nosaltres el que feiem era, com ens ho explicàveu tot en anglès tal i qual, primer ho traduïem entre nosaltres, si algú deia "bueno i això què era?" o "què s'havia de fer?" i coses així, traduïem la fitxa o el que sigués i després ja fèiem una mica individual i després conjunt.

Alumne 2: Nosaltres el que fèiem era que quan les dues persones havíem acabat, tornàvem a fer l'exercici en grup i després veiem qui ho tenia bé i qui no i ho ficàvem en comú.

5. Què creus que t'ha aportat el treball en equip?

Alumne 5: Pues..., hi ha coses bones com que hem après més anglès, que a classe treballàvem tots molt, i doncs a classe tots treballàvem igual, i això. Però que a fora de classe la gent no feia res; quedàvem i no es connectaven. I això malament.

Investigadora: D'acord, aleshores diríem que a classe funciona molt bé però a l'hora de fer treball autònom a casa, costava més?

Alumne 5: Sí.

Alumne 6: Nosaltres el nostre grup tot bé; aquí a classe molt bé i després a fora vam quedar tots per fer el pòster i tot bé.

Investigadora: I alguna cosa que diries que t'ha aportat el treball en equip?

Alumne 6: Confiança, amistat... De companys que no coneixia tant, doncs ara em porto millor.

Alumne 1: Jo m'enduc una millor relació amb els companys, amb els que no en tenia potser tanta i que hem après més anglès així.

Alumne 2: Jo també comparteixo el que ha dit el Marc, que aquí es pot treballar molt però després a fora hi havia gent que no es connectava a les videotrucades o ens repartíem malament les coses perquè potser un havia de fer una cosa que era molt i després els altres feien menys. Així que...

Alumne 5: Sí, perquè potser ens repartíem la feina i després no es connectaven a les videotrucades o arribàvem i no ho tenien fet... i després ho hem de fer tot dues persones.

Alumne 3: O et diuen que no ho saben fer...

Alumne 1: Bueno, si és perquè no ho saps fer encara té una mica d'excusa però si és perquè no et dóna la gana de fer-ho... Si no ho saps fer pots trucar i dir "com es fa això?".

Alumne 2: Nosaltres vam quedar que jo feia el disseny del pòster sencer i una altra persona només va haver d'enganxar una foto i ja està, i jo vaig fer el pòster sencer.

Alumne 1, Alumne 3: A mi em va passar també.

Alumne 3: Nosaltres vam dir quatre feines per fer perquè som quatre al grup i llavors també et dic que jo vaig decidir fer el pòster perquè si no, no sé qui no sabia com funcionava el Canva.

Alumne 5: La *meva companya* va fer la feina que li tocava a ella i a sobre la dels altres que no l'havien fet...

Investigadora: D'acord, això de vegades és un dels desavantatges del treball en grup.

Alumne 1: El problema és que la gent va desconnectar per les vacances de Setmana Santa i l'últim dia tothom es va posar a fer-ho tot ràpid.

Alumne 3: Nosaltres ens vam repartir la feina divendres i el diumenge a les 7 de la tarda em truca una persona, no sé què, que no sap com ha de fer una cosa, que com ho pot fer... i s'havia d'entregar com a molt tard el dilluns o el dimarts i vaig haver de fer jo unes coses que no em tocaven. Una persona em va demanar que com s'entra a la web, que ens ho vam explicar mil vegades.

Investigadora: Clar, per treballar en equip i que funcioni bé, cadascú ha de ser responsable i assumir la feina que li toca. És a dir, teniu molt clars els desavantatges de fer una tasca grupal, que és diferent al treball en equip que heu fet a classe.

Alumnes: Sí (tots).

Investigadora: I el fet de tenir rols assignats dins de l'equip, creieu que us va ajudar?

Alumnes: Sí (tots).

Alumne 1: Aviam, ens va ajudar perquè, per exemple, coses que havíem de fer doncs miràvem el paper i dèiem doncs tu pots fer això i tu això perquè és el que et toca i doncs les feines ja les teníem una mica més repartides de com les havíem de fer i ja ens ajudava més a seguir treballant.

Alumnes: Sí (tots).

Alumne 3: També el que passa és que, jo què sé, a la classe, de vegades segons quines persones com són més tímides o no tenen tanta relació perquè s'han tancat més en un grup, no participen tant, i això els hi ha ajudat.

Alumne 4: O, per exemple, al meu grup som 4 persones i dos persones no van fer la feina que havien de fer per lo del pòster i tot i això i els hi vam dir i una persona va dir "ah és que pensava que ho feia tot la Sheila", i clar, se'n fien.

Investigadora: Clar, això ho hem intentat pautar el màxim possible però després es tracta d'entre vosaltres donar responsabilitats als demés.

Alumne 5: Clar, però si ho fa tot la Sheila li posaran la mateixa nota a la Sheila que als altres 3 i això és molt injust.

Alumne 6: Si un no fa una cosa et perjudica a tu també perquè el treball és en grup.

Investigadora: La nota ja sabeu que la part grupal és un percentatge molt petit, perquè per exemple a l'exposició oral cadascú tindrà la seva nota individual, i el pòster el va fer tots a classe, només faltava (als que no us va donar temps a classe) passar-lo a net amb el Canva.

Alumne 1: Nosaltres ho hem repartit i cadascú ha fet la seva part o sigui que al nostre grup en aquest sentit bé.

Alumne 6: Sí, sí, nosaltres també.

Alumne 2: Però si tu fas una cosa i està malament després és com que tu tens la culpa, perquè jo per exemple he fet el pòster i no sé si estarà bé i si ho fas per compte de tothom és molta responsabilitat.

Alumne 6: I després hi ha algunes persones que encara et diran que ho has fet malament.

Alumne 1: Nosaltres ho vam fer diferent. Pel grup vam passar una llista del que havia de fer cadascú, sense videollamada per si algú no podia en aquell moment que ho poguéu fer més tard. Ho escrivíem i dèiem cadascú ha de fer això.

Alumne 3: Nosaltres, *un company* va dir com ens ho repartíem i cadascú es fa oferir per fer una cosa.

Alumne 5: Sí, el paper aquell que ens vas donar va servir molt per repartir-ho.

6. Com t'has sentit dins del teu grup a l'hora d'expressar les teves idees?

Alumne 6: Molt bé perquè ens hem posat tots d'acord i ho hem fet tot entre tots, *o sigui* molt bé.

Alumne 1: Jo a l'hora d'expressar i això m'he sentit còmode perquè no sé, *o sigui*, tenia confiança amb els que m'ha tocat i no em sentia incòmode.

Alumne 2: Jo igual que ella. Si no sabia dir *algo* o no sabia com expressar-ho, t'ajudaven i doncs era més fàcil.

Alumne 3: Jo també bastant bé perquè tothom ens posàvem d'acord i no hi havia cap problema, tu podies expressar el que volguessis.

Alumne 4: Jo bé, però bueno, amb alguna persona del grup no em parlo tant, però bé.

Alumne 5: Jo bé.

7. Com creus que l'organització del treball en equip ha afavorit la participació de tots els companys i companyes? És una mica el que hem comentat abans, si les estructures, els rols... tot això us ha ajudat a participar més.

Alumne 1: Sí, perquè potser en un moment no hauria participat alguna persona però com que als papers posava que a ella li tocava fer això s'ha sentit com més o menys obligada a participar i ha pogut participar i aportar una mica la seva opinió i ha ajudat.

Investigadora: També les persones que deiem abans que potser són més tímides i els hi costa més participar, creieu que tot això ha ajudat una mica?

Alumnes: Sí (tots).

Alumne 1: Sí, ha ajudat a què participin més.

Alumne 2: I si hi tens confiança és més fàcil.

Alumne 3: Sí, jo penso el mateix.

Alumne 4: Jo també.

Alumne 5: Bueno, que... en el meu equip no s'han fet servir gaire. Estava bé, però no s'han fet servir gaire.

Investigadora: En general, diríeu que heu tingut més oportunitats de parlar, debatre (sobre coses relacionades amb l'assignatura) amb aquesta estructura de classe o quan treballem més individualment?

Alumne 3: En grup.

Alumne 2: També parles més en general, però a l'hora de fer la feina la fem.

Alumne 3: I quan més abans ho fas, més ràpid t'ho treus de sobre i llavors potser parles d'altres coses.

8. Com creus que ha afectat l'organització del treball en equip en la relació amb els companys i companyes?

Alumne 2: Jo sempre tinc relació amb tothom, a mi no em costa expressar-me quan hi ha *algo*.

Investigadora: I la relació en sí amb els companys en general, creus que ho ha afavorit?

Alumne 2: Sí.

Alumne 3: Jo també bastant bé perquè hi ha gent que tampoc ens parlem però hem pogut treballar junts.

Alumne 4: Jo també; *o sigui*, bé, però ja he dit abans que hi ha algú amb qui no m'hi parlo tant però cap problema.

Alumne 5: Jo depèn. Depèn amb la persona. Sí, és que no sé què dir...

Alumne 6: Sí, ha millorat la relació amb els companys perquè hi havia gent que no és que em caïessin malament però no xerràvem, per exemple, no tenia relació... i ara, doncs, en tinc més.

Alumne 1: *Bueno*, jo hi havia una persona que, o sigui, que no em queia bé, per començar, i doncs he après a treballar amb gent que no em cau tant bé i això, i crec que és una cosa que s'ha d'aprendre també.

9. Ha sorgit algun conflicte entre els membres del grup? (Bé, això ja ho hem anat comentant...).

Alumne 3: Conflicte, conflicte no. Que hi hagin queixes sí perquè tothom no ha fet el mateix.

Alumne 1: Jo estic contenta perquè el meu grup ha anat força bé.

Alumne 5: Aquí a classe super bé, a fora...

10. Si poguessis escollir de cara als següents cursos, preferires treballar de forma cooperativa o individual?

Alumne 4: *Pues...* diria que en grup. Sí perquè aprenc més i em queden les coses més clares. No sé, em facilita més l'aprenentatge.

Alumne 5: Jo individual, perquè la nota depèn de mi només.

Alumne 6: A mi m'agradaria treballar en grup en cursos següents però si et toca un grup doncs que no és treballador i ho has de fer tu doncs prefereixo fer-ho sol que no pas en grup.

Investigadora: Si l'avaluació és 100% individual i el treball a classe s'organitza de forma cooperativa, aleshores què preferiu?

Alumne 1: Jo crec que és millor en grup. Jo penso que hi ha coses dolentes però que de les coses dolentes sempre se'n treuen coses bones perquè ara potser hem començat a treballar en grup i potser si ho féssim l'any que ve o així també aniríem aprenent tots i mica en mica. Crec que ho faríem millor i aniríem aprenent tots de tots més o menys.

Alumne 2: Sí, jo crec que aniria millor.

Alumne 5: Jo crec que depèn del grup que et toqui. Si et toca amb algú que sap molt anglès i et pot ajudar millor, però si et toca amb gent que no...

Alumne 3: Exacte, gent que no en sap tant doncs...

Alumne 1: Però també has d'aprendre a treballar amb tothom perquè això també és una gran part de l'aprenentatge del grup.

Investigadora: El que ha dit abans l'*alumne 1* és molt interessant perquè per treballar bé en grup és molt important l'experiència. Quan més experiència tingueu, més bé treballareu, en principi, perquè aprendríeu ja totes les estructures. Ara n'hem fet servir poquetes perquè teníem poc temps però si les féssiu servir durant tot un curs les interioritzaríeu molt més i seria més fàcil treballar.

Alumne 3: Tothom hauria d'estar disposat a posar de la seva part. Que un no posi la part de 3 persones.

Alumne 2: Jo crec que si la nota depèn de tu però treballes en grup, et poses més les piles.

Alumne 6: Pot ser en grup, però et poses pressió a tu mateix.

Alumne 3: Sí perquè si ho fas en grup i és nota grupal és com dir bueno que ho faci ella i tinc la mateixa nota.

Alumne 1: Clar és que encara no estem del tot habituats a treballar en grup, estem més habituats a treballar individual i jo crec que si seguíssim aniríem millorant mica en mica.

Alumne 5: Sí, però s'haurien d'anar canviant els grups.

Alumne 1: però o sigui fent-ho en grups és com que aprens més dels altres, sent un tema difícil entre tots, si t'ajudes, acabes aprenent més i tu si ajudes a un altre, és el que ha dit, que també aprens tu i entre tot podeu acabar assolint més ràpid que si ho fas tu sol.

Investigadora: Com a conclusió, què diríem, preferiu treball cooperatiu o individual?

Alumne 5 i Alumne 3: Depèn del tema i del grup.

Alumne 1: Jo prefereixo cooperatiu, perquè també s'ha d'aprendre a treballar amb tothom.

Alumne 4: Jo també.

Alumne 6: Jo també.

Alumne 1: per la gent que li va pitjor ajuda molt a aprendre dels altres company perquè potser la professora, com parla tant en anglès i així, amb els companys potser ho interioritza millor.

Alumne 2: Sí, jo treballant en grup també he après nous mètodes per aprendre més les coses, per exemple si jo m'ho aprenia llegint-ho tot per exemple si ho faig part per parts, doncs potser se't queda més.

Investigadora: Voleu afegir alguna cosa més? Sobretot, ha de quedar clar que el treball en grup no és incompatible amb l'avaluació individual.

Alumne 1: Sí, sí, bueno en aquest hem fet una mica de barreja no? Perquè hem fet l'examen sols, després hem fet el writing sols...

Alumne 3: L'exposició es fa en grup però la nota serà individual...

Alumne 6: També si hi ha diferents notes...(examen....) és més fàcil aprovar i jo penso que és millor.

Investigadora: Doncs moltes gràcies a tots i totes!

Appendix 5. Formative self and peer assessment grid on group work

	EXPERT	AVANÇAT	APRENT	NOVELL
	4	3	2	1
1. Escolta i respecta les idees de tots els membres del grup?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
2. Es comunica efectivament amb tots els membres del grup?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
3. Expressa les seves idees lliurement?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
4. Fa aportacions útils pel grup?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
5. Participa en la presa de decisions del grup?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
6. Respecta els acords presos dins del grup?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
7. Fa la feina encomanada?	Sí sempre: 4	Gairebé sempre: 3	De vegades: 2	Gairebé mai: 1
8. Estic satisfet/a amb el treball que fa dins del grup?	Sí, molt satisfet/a: 4	Bastant satisfet/a: 3	Una mica satisfet/a: 2	No gaire satisfet/a: 1

Appendix 6. Formative assessment results on group work performance

Table 2: First formative assessment results on group work performance

First formative assessment (mid-unit)	Mean	
	Peer assessment	Self-assessment
1. Escolta i respecta les idees de tots els membres del grup?	3,8	3,3
2. Es comunica efectivament amb tots els membres del grup?	3,5	3,2
3. Expressa les seves idees lliurement?	3,4	3,1
4. Fa aportacions útils pel grup?	3,3	2,8
5. Participa en la presa de decisions del grup?	3,7	3,3
6. Respecta els acords presos dins del grup?	3,9	3,5
7. Fa la feina encomanada?	3,8	3,0
8. Estic satisfet/a amb el treball que fa dins del grup?	3,7	3,1

Table 3: Final formative assessment results on group work performance

Final formative assessment (end of the unit)	Mean	
	Peer assessment	Self-assessment
1. Ha escoltat i respectat les idees de tots els membres del grup?	3,6	3,7
2. S'ha comunicat efectivament amb tots els membres del grup?	3,5	3,4
3. Ha expressat les seves idees lliurement?	3,4	3,3
4. Ha fet aportacions útils pel grup?	3,2	2,9
5. Ha participat en la presa de decisions del grup?	3,5	3,4
6. Ha respectat els acords presos dins del grup?	3,8	3,7
7. Ha fet la feina encomanada?	3,2	3,7
8. Estic satisfet/a amb el treball que ha fet dins del grup?	3,2	3,2

Table 4. Students' progress from the first to the final formative assessment

Progress from the first to the final formative assessment	Mean difference	
	Peer assessment	Self assessment
1. Escolta i respecta les idees de tots els membres del grup?	-0,2	0,4
2. Es comunica efectivament amb tots els membres del grup?	0,0	0,2
3. Expressa les seves idees lliurement?	0,0	0,2
4. Fa aportacions útils pel grup?	-0,1	0,1
5. Participa en la presa de decisions del grup?	-0,2	0,1
6. Respecta els acords presos dins del grup?	-0,1	0,2
7. Fa la feina encomanada?	-0,6	0,7
8. Estic satisfet/a amb el treball que fa dins del grup?	-0,5	0,1

Appendix 7. Didactic Unit grid

Project title	Grade	Term	Number of sessions
There is no planet B	2 nd ESO	3 rd term	12
Context	How much do you care about our planet? The future lies in our hands. It is time to assume our responsibilities and contribute our grain of sand to keep our perfect planet. This unit will help students to develop awareness of the serious problems that our planet is facing and to find some feasible solutions to those problems through changing personal actions and patterns of behaviour. To that purpose, and as a final product, students will prepare arising-awareness materials to campaign for the environment. Students will create a website to post all the information and will disseminate the campaign to their relatives, friends and school classmates through the use of QR codes which will be posted on the school's Social Networks.		
Driving question	What can we do to help improve our planet?		
Foreign Language Core Competences (EFL)		Cross-Curricular Competences	
<p><i>Oral communication dimension</i></p> <p>C2. Planning and producing diverse oral texts appropriate to the communicative situation.</p> <p>C3. Using oral interaction strategies appropriate to the communicative situation to begin, maintain and finish a discourse.</p> <p><i>Reading comprehension dimension</i></p> <p>C4. Applying comprehension strategies to obtain information and interpreting the contents of the written texts, with a clear structure, and about daily life, mass media and school.</p> <p>C6. Selecting and using inquiry tools to gain insight into texts and acquire knowledge.</p> <p><i>Written expression dimension</i></p> <p>C7. Planning written texts of varied types using the elements of the communicative situation.</p> <p>C8. Producing written texts of different types and formats, applying writing strategies.</p>		<p><i>Digital domain competences</i></p> <p>CD2. Using text editing, multimedia presentation, and digital data processing applications for digital documents production.</p> <p>CD8. Carrying out group activities using virtual tools and collaborative work environments.</p> <p>CD9. Carrying out actions of citizenship and personal development, using the digital resources of today's society.</p> <p><i>Personal and Social domain competences</i></p> <p>CPiS4. Participate in the classroom, the center and the environment thoughtfully and responsibly.</p>	
		Key Competences	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicative, linguistic and audiovisual competence. - Interaction with the physical world competence. - Digital competence. - Learning to learn competence. - Personal initiative and autonomy competence. 	
Learning objectives		Assessment	
		Assessment criteria (learning outcomes)	Assessment tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To express an opinion. (C2) - To provide positive and negative feedback to other classmates. (C2) - To make an oral presentation about a topic in front of students, the teacher and other public. (C2) - To interact with other students. (C3) 		<p><i>By the end of this project, students should be able to...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write an essay in future tense using appropriate vocabulary, grammar and including the information expected. - Identify key ideas from written texts on paper and the Internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Writing essay (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Checklist and rubric - Grammar & vocabulary test (25%) - Campaign project (40%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Website rubric - 10%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To mobilize previous and context knowledge to understand a written text. (C4) - To read and analyze pieces of texts. (C4) - To elicit grammar rules from texts. (C6) - To plan and design materials to campaign in a cooperative way (poster and website). (C7) - To elaborate an oral presentation script. (C7) - To write an essay in future tense. (C8) - To develop environmental awareness (CPIs4). - To work in groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use technology and digital resources properly to accomplish the different activities and the final task. - Create a poster with scaffold and digital support to post it on the campaign website. - Make an oral presentation with fluency and language accuracy. - Work cooperatively in groups and do so showing respect and listening to others, asking questions politely, respecting others' turn to speak, communicating properly and participating equally. - Express an opinion using proper expressions and respectfully provide other classmates with positive and negative feedback. <p><i>Students have not been assessed in a competencial way according to the curriculum because the institute does not use this method yet, as stated in the "programació de l'àrea" section. Therefore, I have adjusted the assessment criteria as much as possible according to the English Department program.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poster rubric - 10% ● Oral Presentation rubric - 20% <p>- Group work (5%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Self assessment rubric - 1% ● Peer assessment rubric - 4% <p>- Attitude (10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing assessment (student observation and informal assessment activities). <p><i>Students have been explained the assessment criteria from the first day and have been given rubrics and checklists to prepare all the assessed activities. In addition, I have used the Additio App to assess students with the rubrics and to collect the marks.</i></p>
Key and Curricular contents	Methodology & Attention to diversity	
<p><i>Oral communication dimension</i></p> <p>CC1. Oral comprehension</p> <p>CC3. Oral production strategies</p> <p>CC4. Oral interaction strategies</p> <p><i>Reading comprehension dimension</i></p> <p>CC8. Written comprehension strategies</p> <p>CC10. Planning, search and management of information</p> <p><i>Written expression dimension</i></p> <p>CC11. Strategies for planning written texts.</p> <p>CC12. Strategies for producing written texts.</p> <p>CC15. Creative production.</p>	<p>This didactic unit is designed under a cooperative learning approach in order to encourage participation and increase motivation in the classroom. Therefore, lots of group and pair activities will be promoted and cooperative learning structures will be introduced to ensure students have the tools to work cooperatively either in pairs or in groups. Students are gathered in heterogeneous groups to balance their English levels and capacities, which helps managing attention to diversity.</p> <p>The classroom will be organized in six groups of 4 students each, with a strategic grouping, combining high performing student, medium performing student and low performing students, as well as when working together in twos or threes within the group. This strategic grouping, together with the use of guided cooperative structures, will be considered as a strategy to cope with a mixed-ability class. Groups will work cooperatively on a daily basis. However, there will be a balance within group, peer and individual work.</p> <p>Attention to diversity will be mostly addressed to low performing students. However, some extension materials will be also designed for advanced students.</p>	
Materials ¹	WS (worksheets), authentic videos, authentic and adapted texts, support worksheets, flashcards, computers, assessment rubrics, computer with speakers and IWB.	

Sess.	Didactic Objective	Activities	Structure	Time
1. Project introduction: There is no planet B				
1	To introduce the project + assess SS' prior knowledge and expectations.	1a Guess what! Think, pair & share your guesses SS watch a video to get introduced to the topic. T asks some activating questions. SS think, make notes and gather in pairs to share their guesses. Finally, students share guesses with the whole class through Mentimeter .	Think, Pair & Share	15'
		1b Project introduction T introduces the project "There is no planet B": missions and final task, schedule, teams and collaborative work, learning portfolio, website & assessment.	Teacher-led	15'
		1c Listening + vocabulary Listening activity to get introduced to the topic and related vocabulary (Taking action on climate change). SS answer some questions.	1-2-4	20'
2. Do you know how to work in groups?				
2	To introduce effective group work to SS and assign roles and responsibilities	2a Time to make groups T decides on the groups and introduces the cooperative approach of the project.	Teacher-led	10'
		2b How to work in groups (team's handout) T introduces some slides on how to work in effective groups and SS follow the steps to complete their Teams' Handouts (roles, ground rules, contract...)	Groups	35'
		2c Setting the tables SS rehearse how to arrange the tables in groups of four in a quick and organized way.	Whole class	5'
3. How environmentally conscious are you?				
3	To get to know some keywords and read about the topic of the unit	3a Vocabulary quiz In teams, SS participate in a vocabulary quiz through Quizlet, which includes the vocabulary learned during the previous session.	Teammates consult ("Lápices al centro")	10'
		3b Quiz: How environmentally conscious are you? SS answer the questions individually and add their points. The more points they get, the more environmentally conscious they are. SS compare results with their group.	Quiz Quiz Trade	10'
		3c Running & Jigsaw reading The reading is divided into paragraphs and SS meet in expert groups (A, B, C, D) to complete the assigned comprehension task about their paragraph. Once completed, they return to their root groups and share answers.	Jigsaw reading	10'
		3d Exit ticket: How much did you enjoy the lesson? SS answer the question raising their hands with 1, 2 or 3 fingers up.	Individual	20'
4. Life in 50 years from now				
4	To introduce future tense (will / be going to)	4a Running dictation (quotes on climate change) Each group is assigned a quote by Greta Thunberg. When SS complete the running dictation they have to explain the meaning of the quote with their own words and identify if it is written in future tense.	Groups (running dictation)	10'

		4b Read the text and elicit future tense structures (will). SS read a short text which contains future tense (will). After that, they have to complete a chart with the structure and examples.	1-2-4	15'
		4c Teacher explanation (will / going to)	Teacher-led	10'
		4d Let's practice! SS do some exercises to practice the future tense.	Round Table	15'
5. Find out how big is your impact on nature				
5	To raise self-awareness of students' impact on nature and to prepare the writing task	5a SUHUPU to the sound of music "Stand Up, Hands Up, Pair Up" to ask questions about the future. T projects the questions on the board.	Stand Up, Hands Up, Pair Up	10'
		5b Explain writing task & connectors + rubric and checklist Explain scaffolded writing (Future predictions: Life in 2100) and connectors of result + practice activities	Teacher-led	15'
		5c What is the carbon footprint? SS watch a video about the carbon footprint and answer 2 comprehension questions	1-2-4	10'
		5d How big is your carbon footprint? SS answer a questionnaire to calculate their environmental footprint through this website . First, T goes through the questions to introduce any new vocabulary and to make sure SS understand the questions.	Teacher-led Individual	15'
6. Half unit checkpoint! Help beating the carbon virus				
6	To introduce the campaign project and assign a topic to each group through a breakout reading	6a Formative assessment on group work SS fill out a self and peer assessment form on group work. They are shown the overall results and write what they are doing well and what should be improved within the group.	Individual	15'
		6b Breakout: Let's beat the carbon dioxide virus! SS do a breakout in root groups to find out the topic of their awareness campaign. At the end of the breakout, each group will find out the topic assigned, in order to take action and start the campaign. Topics: energy, water, transportation, food, waste and wildlife.	Groups	20'
		6c Campaign project introduction T introduces the task very briefly and the assessment rubric. It consists of creating a poster, each group on a different topic, to make people conscious about everyday actions that affect the environment.	Teacher-led	10'
7. Introduction to the topic & research				
7	To start the research about the topic and select the	7a Topic introduction Each group is given a text with blank spaces. SS have to complete the text, which is an introduction of the topic, stating why it is important to save our planet.	1-2-4	10'

	important information	7b Experts group research Each group starts doing research on the topic to find out what they can do to improve and take action in order to include 8 tips in their posters. T provides some resources (websites).	Group Investigation	40'
8. Exam review: vocabulary and grammar				
8	To review the contents of the exam	8a Review exam content and important dates T reviews the content of the exam and types of exercises.	Teacher-led	5'
		8b Quizlet quiz on vocabulary In teams, SS participate in a vocabulary quiz through Quizlet, which includes the vocabulary learned during the unit. The group who writes the right answer, gets a point.	Teammates consult ("Lápices al centro")	15'
		8c Grammar quiz with Genially In teams, S participate in a vocabulary quiz to review the future tense and the kind of exercises that will appear in the test. The pair who writes the right answer, gets a point.	Teammates consult ("Lápices al centro")	30'
9. Writing task				
9	To write an essay in future tense	9 Writing task: predictions about life in the future + peer correction SS write their essay individually but they can use the checklist provided. When they finish, they do a rally coach with a partner to make peer corrections and give feedback.	Individually + Rally coach	50'
10. Vocabulary and grammar test				
10	To assess students knowledge on grammar and vocabulary	10a Vocabulary and grammar exam	Individual	50'
11. Create your poster				
11	To prepare the poster	11a Creativity mode on! SS prepare their posters according to the guidelines stated on the assessment rubric. <i>T provides support and suggests some digital tools to prepare the poster (Canva & Easel.ly). However, SS can use other tools.</i>	Group Investigation	30'
		11b Final mission: website post Each group has to post the poster on the collaborative website.	Groups	10'
		12b Presentation tips T provides some tips as well as a handout of useful expressions to use when presenting a poster.	Teacher-led	10'
12. Present your campaign!				

12	To present their part of the campaign	12a Time to present SS present their posters in groups, in front of the class. <i>T records to upload videos on Google classroom.</i>	Group presentation	30'
		12b Time for a final formative assessment on group work. SS do a peer and self assessment on group work to assess their overall performance and their peers'.	Individual	10'
		12c Unit exit ticket (Socrative) SS answer 3 questions to give feedback about the unit and what they have learned.	Individual	10'