



**HOW TO HELP STUDENTS WORK MORE
EFFICIENTLY IN GROUPS**

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**Relatório de Estágio de Mestrado em
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my family - my parents who have always encouraged me to push forward and never give up, to my husband Volodymyr, without whose caring support it would not have been possible, to my brother Evgueni who inspires me to grow and my adorable sons, Max and Daniel, without whom I might never have started on this difficult but interesting and useful adventure.

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ABSTRACT

The present study focuses on the use of group work among young learners of English at a primary school in Lisbon and examines its efficiency. The research presents the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards group work, considers different group formations and studies the importance of following group rules. Moreover, it examines the effectiveness of instructions during group work. The study involved the use of questionnaires for sixteen learners and twenty teachers, observations of learners, and teachers, learners' self-assessment, observation grids and a learning journal. As the study was implemented, my approach to group work changed considerably. Results show that group work can be of great importance for young learners to achieve and obtain better results when working together, creating a friendly atmosphere in which they freely express themselves in English.

KEY WORDS: group work, group composition, group work rules, giving instructions, attitudes towards group work.

COMO AJUDAR OS ALUNOS A TRABALHAR MAIS EFICIENTEMENTE EM GRUPOS.

INGA STARTSEVA

RESUMO

O presente estudo centra-se no uso do trabalho em grupo com alunos de inglês numa escola primária de Lisboa e examina a sua eficácia. A pesquisa apresenta as atitudes dos professores e dos alunos em relação ao trabalho em grupo, considera diferentes formações grupais e estuda a necessidade de seguir as regras do trabalho em grupo. Além disso, examina a eficácia das instruções durante o trabalho em grupo. O estudo envolveu o uso de questionários para dezesseis alunos e vinte professores, observações dos mesmos, auto-avaliação dos alunos, grelhas de observação e um jornal de aprendizagem. À medida que o estudo foi implementado, a abordagem ao trabalho em grupo mudou consideravelmente. Os resultados mostram que o trabalho em grupo pode ter uma grande importância para os alunos alcançarem e obterem melhores resultados quando trabalham juntos, criando uma atmosfera amigável em que se expressam livremente em inglês.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: trabalho em grupo, composição de grupo, regras de trabalho em grupo, instruções, atitudes em relação ao trabalho em grupo.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 LITERARY REVIEW.....	3
1.1 The benefits of group work.....	3
1.2 The limitations of group work.....	4
1.3 How to help young learners overcome these difficulties.....	6
CHAPTER 2 ACTION RESEARCH.....	7
2.1 CONTEXT.....	7
2.2 METHODOLOGY.....	8
2.2.1 Group work activities used during research.....	8
2.2.2 Data collection tools. Questionnaires.....	10
2.2.2.1 The questionnaire for teachers.....	10
2.2.2.2 The questionnaire for learners.....	10
2.2.2.3 Self-assessment related to following the rules.....	11
2.2.2.4 Assessment of a group by the teacher.....	12
2.2.3 Data collection tools. Observation.....	12
2.2.3.1 Observation of learners.....	12
2.2.3.1.1 Teaching journal.....	13
2.2.3.1.2 Learners' grouping.....	13
2.2.3.2.3 Following instructions during group work.....	13
2.2.3.2 Observation of teacher.....	13
2.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS.....	14
2.3.1 The Questionnaire	14
2.3.1.1 Results of learners' questionnaire.....	14

2.3.1.2 Results of teachers' questionnaire.....	16
2.3.1.3 Results of self-assessment related to following the rules.....	19
2.3.1.4 Results of group assessment by the teacher.....	20
2.3.2 The Observation.....	21
2.3.2.1 Results of teaching journal (group formation).....	21
2.3.2.2 Results of teachers' observation.....	23
2.3.2.3 Results of teaching journal (giving instructions).....	24
2.4 DISCUSSION.....	25
2.4.1 Results	25
2.4.2 Implications of the results	26
2.4.3 Future approaches	27

REFERENCES

APPENDIXES

Appendix A Letter of consent for the school administration concerning the permission to undertake the research

Appendix B Letter of consent for learners' parents or other responsible people concerning the permission to participate in the research

Appendix C Letter of consent for the participants

Appendix D Group work activity "Weather forecast"

Appendix E Weather forecast video

Appendix F Group work activity "What is he/she doing?"

Appendix G The teacher's questionnaire

Appendix H Learner's experience and attitude to group work

Appendix I Learner's opinions about speaking and learning English in groups

Appendix J Learner's self-assessment

Appendix K Example of Power Point Presentation on group rules

Appendix L Learners' poster about "Group rules"

Appendix M Group-assessment

Appendix N Giving instructions

Appendix O Results of group work activity “What is he/she doing? “

Appendix P Results of group work activity “Weather forecast”

Appendix Q Results of group work activity “On a trip”

INTRODUCTION

Today, at a time of new achievements and inventions, a modern society needs creative and flexible young people. These people are required to solve problems, make decisions, think critically, and report their ideas effectively. Research carried out by Johnson and Johnson (1989) and Cowie and Rudduck (1988) showed that efficient and productive work in groups is an important factor in helping students to develop many useful skills such as lifelong thinking competences, as well as developing personal capabilities, curricular knowledge and understanding. Different researchers have suggested a lot of definitions of group work. The definition given by Cohen and Lotan (2014) was chosen as the basis for this research. They define group work as students working together in a group small enough so that everyone can participate in a clearly assigned learning task. The researchers state that members need one another to complete the task, so they need to communicate with one another by asking questions, listening making suggestions, listening, and making decisions. Good group work has great potential. According to Johnson and Johnson (1989) and Stevens and Slavin (1995) there are benefits for both teachers and pupils.

I teach English as a foreign language in state primary schools in Portugal. My students are between eight and nine years old. I love their energy, curiosity and cheerfulness. Teaching young learners is really enjoyable. It is exciting, pleasing and very often even surprising. As young learners are very active, have little knowledge of the English language and little experience of working together, the most difficult part of teaching is coping with problems that happen in the classroom each day. During teaching I use a lot of different activities in the classroom with my learners, trying to find the most interesting and effective way of teaching English. However, there were days when I had to cope with some unexpected moments and I found myself in difficult situations. I was faced with serious problems such as learners in groups didn't know how to start their work, what to do first and how to communicate in English during group work. Moreover, I have found out that the learners could not regulate and organize themselves. I realized that this is problem of my teaching. Hence, I found it important to start reading papers and books on research involving group work in the young learners' classroom. I discovered that group work is a great strategy for learners to learn. They feel more comfortable working together and, being able to consult or ask for help from classmates. Unfortunately, the students are not ready for this type of activity.

Teachers also have difficulties with group work in the young learners' classroom. They do not want to implement it. In addition, teachers try to treat the class as a whole group and undervalue learners' ability to work in small groups. Furthermore, they have many challenges in organizing learners for group work and organizing the group work itself. Good group work has great potential. However without careful preparation, group work can frustrate students and teachers and feel like a waste of time.

I am interested in helping my students learn more efficiently. So, I read a lot about different ways how to do it and found group work the most effective kind of activity. Therefore, I chose group work as a topic for my research in order to study it in the classroom and improve my skills concerning group work. Of course, I understand that good teacher-learner relationships and a warm working atmosphere are important to promote successful learning, but it is not enough for young learners. I intended to investigate different groups and students in these groups. The purpose of this study is to examine the efficiency of group work in the young learners' classroom. My research questions are the following:

- a) What ways are there to organize young learners for group work?
- b) How do learners and teachers feel about working in groups?
- c) Are my instructions really effective during group work and they help young learners during group work?
- d) Does teaching students the rules for group work make it more effective?

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A considerable number of researchers work on studying group work. This literature review considers the references used in the research. Much research has been carried out to explain how to make group work successful at school. Although the literature covers a wide variety of such research, this review will focus on three major topics which are the benefits of group work, limitations of group work in the classroom and how to overcome these disadvantages with young learners.

Therefore, this section presents benefits and limitations of group work in order to understand this kind of activity and how to help young learners overcome the difficulties connected with it.

1.1 The benefits of group work

Findings made by Cohen and Lotan (2014) show that group work improves relationships between members by increasing trust and friendliness and can be more effective for gaining a proper understanding of abstract concepts. Students in a group share positive features such as mutual learning, provision of assistance and improvement of their speaking skills. They are responsible not only for their own learning but for those in the group (Yu, 2015; Brown, 2008). That is why the success of one member is the success of all members.

Group work enhances students' satisfaction with the learning experience, helps students learn better and improves their achievements. It teaches learners to respect the learning pace of other learners in the group (Brown, 2008). Moreover it makes a stress-free environment where learners feel at ease. Findings made by Naughton (2006) suggest that such interaction with peers is an effective way of developing skills and strategies. The willingness of students to request and provide help may be a key factor in the success of small group oral interaction and in the students' ability of to aid each other's interlanguage development (Naughton, 2006). Keeping students engaged with their work promotes better understanding of the learning tasks and affects other students in the classroom.

Working in groups has possibilities for the early language classroom. Learners are more interested in activities when they can interact with one another and participate actively (Harijaz, 2015). Moreover, students learn important communicative and collaborative skills through group work. In groups the learners' opportunities for language use are multiplied many times over (Curtain & Dalhberg, 2010; Brown, 2008). Small-group activities are very effective for practising language that has already been learned and for using that language to achieve important goals. Children acquire

language by using it in a natural and meaningful environment (Cohen & Lotan, 2014). And group work gives more active and relevant experience than students usually have speaking to the whole class. The more learners speak English in the classroom, the more confident and independent they will become (Lewis, 2011). By working together, learners have the opportunity to communicate with each other and try to help in case of misunderstanding. The members of a group will ask questions and urge the speaker to communicate more clearly, in order for the group to understand what each member has to say to accomplish the purpose at hand. Group work activities keep students interaction to maximum (Harjaz, 2015). Learners improve their speaking skills, gain fluency and develop a positive attitude to group members. Due to cooperation, students develop their social communicative skills and use them to achieve success inside classroom. Teachers can use groups for other tasks such as reading, performing a writing exercise, listening tasks, etc. The influence of group work on students' learning was further discussed by Attamimi and Al-Tamimi (2014). They studied English language learners in Yemeni schools in order to find out the effect of cooperative learning on developing students' speaking skills and to identify the effect of cooperative learning on students' attitudes. Their research suggests that group work plays a major role in language learning. It increases the social interaction among students and as a result leads to improving communication skills. So group work has a lot of opportunities for language use and a chance for natural language practice. In addition more students talk in real communicative activities.

Small group oral interaction in the second language and foreign language classroom has been regarded as useful to students who make progress toward target language competence. Naughton (2006) has done research to establish a relationship between cooperative strategy training, and posttest interaction patterns of experimental group participants. 45 Spanish students of English as a foreign language participated in this study. Naughton suggests that through communicative interaction the learners can be involved by asking for clarification and the speaker can explain his / her point of view. Moreover the nature of this interaction allows students to give help to peers. So the learner must be able and willing to understand and learn in collaboration with his/her peers. That is why oral interaction in the foreign language classroom can be a powerful source of L2 development.

1.2 The limitations of the group work

Although working in groups has its advantages, there are also times when problems arise. Many children do not like working in groups (Cowie & Rudduck,

1988). Galton (1990) noted that children often are unconfident and feel threatened when told to work in groups. They do not want to participate in group work. Furthermore, very often not enough time is spent in the classroom allowing students to talk and work together. Cohen and Lotan (2014) argue that low achievers, less-motivated and less engaged students are often reluctant to do tasks and cannot complete them.

The research of three EFL classes in Hong Kong primary schools was made by Carless (2002). It analyzed different topics relevant to the classroom implementation of group work using a task based learning approach with young learners, such as indiscipline, the use of the mother tongue, the extent of student involvement, and the role of drawing or colouring activities. During one academic year, fifteen lessons of three teachers were observed. Carless (2002) stated that there was sometimes a variety of student involvement in group work for task-based learning, whereby some pupils had roles which made them speak a lot, while others had more limited roles. As one of the aims of task-based learning for young learners is the production of English language, the extent of pupil use of English is a factor in the implementation of task-based learning. Collected data proved that English language production was restricted to certain individuals during group work. For example, young learners in groups asked their peers a question 'What can you see?' Peers had to look out of the window and answer using the structure 'I can see a ...' It was noted that the group leaders of small groups were active in language production, and explained what they could see. But, there were other group members, who were restricted to repeating the question 'What can you see?' and in practice some of them did not contribute with this utterance. Another example described by Carless (2002) was a group work activity connected with colouring. It was difficult for every group member to participate in the activity, since essentially only one or two students of the group did the activity. The extent of student involvement in such tasks raised the issue of the extent to which learning was taking place successfully.

Some members of the group may rely too heavily on others to do the work. This is one of the most important problems that groups face. Some members do not help and do not contribute enough to the group (Freeman & Greenacre, 2011). Burke (2011) found that very often an individual could dominate the discussion. This led to members not getting satisfaction from the group because they felt too alienated in the decision making process. Besides, it took more time to work in a group than to work alone. Research conducted by Stewart (2014) showed that many teachers felt reluctant to use group work either because of lack of confidence, experience and inadequate training, or

because they did not want to risk undermining their discipline or control of challenging classes or difficult pupils within a class.

1.3 How to help young learners overcome the difficulties

Only teachers can help young learners overcome the difficulties connected with group work in the classroom. Davies (2009) stated that many students might not have had experience in group work before so teachers needed to define basic rules. Evidently, if the students were familiar with working in groups this might not be necessary. Moreover, the researcher argued that teachers needed to help students in deciding on a task and give them guidelines for member participation. He advised teachers to make a list and explain these guidelines to their class or draw up contracts between group members. The study carried out by Connery (1988) proves that such contracts work well in effective contributions in group activities and helping students learn the skills of group work.

The literature indicates that the size of groups is significant for effective group work. Beebe and Masterson (2003) argued that the dynamics of group size was an important part of group work. A group consisting of three or four people was considered a small group. Groups of two were not encouraged for group work because there were not a sufficient number of learners to generate creativity and diversity of ideas. However, their study suggested that three or four members are more appropriate.

Assigning members to group work is essential in the classroom. Some teachers choose to assign students to groups randomly. This has the advantage of maximizing heterogeneity of the group. It is an effective way of assigning group member in large classrooms. If the class is small and the teacher knows most of the students very well, he or she can select the group members based on known attributes of the students. For example, the teacher can form the groups taking into consideration performance levels, academic strengths and weaknesses, ethnicity, and gender (Connery, 1988).

Giving the right instructions is one of the most difficult tasks in managing an effective learning environment. Instructions that are obvious to a teacher can be confusing to students and may have an impact on students' behaviour, especially young learners' behaviour. Lemlech (1999) proved that students wanted and needed to know what, how, and why. Learners had to understand what a teacher wanted them to do. So, it was essential to get the students attention through effective instructions. Also instructions should have been simple and logical (Harmer, 1998). Moreover Gower, Phillips and Walters (2008) considered that teachers should have not started their

explanation before the confirmation that everyone was listening and watching them. It could be helpful for students to follow well-thought and organized instructions which would enable them to be successful in groups (Lewis, 2011).

This chapter detailed the benefits and disadvantages of group work in the classrooms. It explained how to overcome these problems among young learners. In addition, it proved that group work is a popular and effective activity today. It provides learner-centered teaching and establishes strong relationships between the individual members, which makes learning more effective.

CHAPTER 2 ACTION RESEARCH

Chapter 2 sets out the methodology used in this study and is divided into four main sections. Section 2.1 characterizes the context in which the study takes place and the students involved. Section 2.2 describes methodology. Section 2.3 sets out results with examples, and section 2.4 deals with discussions and conclusion.

2.1 CONTEXT

The students involved in this project were young learners who attended two one-hour English classes on Thursday with a thirty-minute interval in a public school in Lisbon, *Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades*. The weekly classes were conducted in a group of sixteen learners, all of whom were eight or nine years old. All young learners were Portuguese, except the twins- a sister and a brother. These students were bilingual, English-Portuguese. They participated very actively during the lessons and helped peers who needed their contribution, explaining and supporting them. I usually asked these students to perform different activities as an example to follow.

The young learners had been studying English for at least six months and all had beginner level skills in reading and writing. Some of them were better at speaking or listening than others. They had some experience in working in pairs and groups. There were no students with special needs in the class. In general, they were well-behaved and active. The students were motivated to study English. While some of them liked to share regularly, participate actively and contribute with ideas during class discussions, there were others who were often quiet in class.

The classroom was located on the ground floor of the school building. The desks were arranged into rows. Thus, clustering the desks into small groups, I asked the learners to take their seats according to the group number. The textbook used in the class was *Let's Rock* (Abreu & Esteves, 2015).

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The study of group work, the content and the context in which it happens, and the relationship to language learning could help answer the question of my research. This section presents the methodology employed, including instruments and procedures.

There are many ways to conduct research. I chose action research which is often used in the field of education and can be performed in the classroom by the teacher, with the purpose of solving a problem or developing the teaching or learning process (Burns, 2010). Action research means learning by doing. People recognize a problem, then do something to solve it, assess how effective their attempts were, and if not satisfied, try again. It is regular work in the classroom that presents the complete cycle from formulating questions to making changes in the practice of teaching. Burns (2010) suggests the researcher to be careful and do no harm during action research. I attempted to conduct my research in a responsible way. I tried to treat my students as I wished to be treated. Accordingly, I prepared three letters of consent. The first letter was for the school administration about permission to undertake the research with full details of the rationale and participants (Appendix A). As my participants were young learners I needed written permission from their parents or others responsible (Appendix B). Another letter of consent was prepared for the participants (Appendix C). They have a right to know about the purpose and the procedures. Informed consent means assuring the participants about their rights (Burns, 2010).

2.2.1. Group work activities used during research

During my action research young learners were presented with many activities where they were engaged in group work. Some of these activities are described in Table 1.

Table 1 Group work activities used during research

Name of the activity	Aim	Description
1. Bingo game.	1. To learn how to cooperate in groups. 2. To revise old vocabulary. 3. To practice new vocabulary.	Students chose nine mini cards from the course book (three from each topic - pets, weather, and school objects) and put the cards in front of them. Afterwards, I named a word and if the students had this card they would put it face down. The first who had all the cards faced down was the winner and

		had to say “Bingo”.
2. Weather forecast. (Appendix D)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To learn how to cooperate in groups. 2. To revise weather vocabulary. 3. To practice writing and speaking skills. 	Before the activity, a video “Weather forecast” was shown. Following the video (Appendix E), they met in groups to discuss the weather in different parts of Portugal. Students had to ask the question “What’s the weather like in...?” about any Portuguese city; then they answered according to the image and information from the map, wrote it on the paper and later presented the weather forecast to the class.
3. What is he/she doing? (Appendix F)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To learn how to cooperate in groups. 2. To practice Present Continuous tense. 3. To practice writing and speaking skills. 	Each group was given a picture with different images and asked students to use a question “What is he/she doing?” They answered according to the image and wrote the answer on the paper. The picture had an example.
4. On a trip.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To learn how to cooperate in groups. 2. To practice speaking, skills. 3. To revise “Weather” vocabulary. 	Learners in groups were asked to draw a picture of what they did on a trip, step by step. First, they had to draw a certain type of weather (together) and then themselves in action (individually). Then each group presented their work describing the picture. Students in turns described the weather and what they and their friend were doing.

2.2.2 Data collection tools. Questionnaires

In this research, several research instruments such as self-assessments, group assessments, observations, questionnaires, and a teaching journal were used to collect data and provide a variety of information. These instruments were selected for their helpfulness and practical use. In addition, they complemented each other.

Questionnaires are beneficial as they can be used successfully with a variety of people in different situations focusing on a variety of topics (Dornyei, 2003). Group administered questionnaires have the advantage of collecting a vast amount of information in less than an hour. Different questionnaires were given to teachers and learners.

2.2.2.1 The Questionnaire for teachers

The questionnaire for teachers (Appendix G) was distributed once, among twenty English teachers with different professional status: from five to more than twenty years of teaching young learners. They worked with young learners in state and private schools in Lisbon, Portugal. Eleven questions, written in English, were presented to these teachers about their experience with group work. The objective of the questionnaire was to define teachers' attitude to group work, their beliefs and views. The teachers replied according to their personal teaching experience.

Questionnaires in general consist of open or closed questions that measure facts, attitudes, or values. For this study, I used both types of questions to provide more complete or comprehensive answers about group work in the classroom. Qualitative and quantitative analyses were carried out to have a clear picture of teachers' attitudes, understanding and experience with group work. The number of responses were counted for all teachers and analyzed quantitatively and then qualitatively. These results showed the general attitude and understanding of group work by teachers.

2.2.2.2 The Questionnaire for learners

At the beginning of my teaching practice, sixteen young learners were presented with two questionnaires, which were distributed in the classroom. The first questionnaire was aimed to find out the learners' experience and attitude towards group work (Appendix H). It was very important to have a general understanding about group work in the young learners' classroom at the beginning of my research. Since the students had a beginner level of English, it was written in English with a translation in Portuguese. Closed questions forced an answer, scored quickly, and were easy to evaluate. In addition, there were open questions where students shared their experience about what they did in groups, gave an example of what they learned from their group that they probably would not have learned working alone and gave an example of something the other group members learned from them. Afterwards I calculated the number of positive and negative responses in closed questions and drew a conclusion.

Then, I analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively the learners' answers to open and closed questions.

Later, after a week of practice, learners were presented with a questionnaire concerning opinions about speaking and learning English in groups (Appendix I). There were five closed questions with the intent to establish if learners liked working in groups, spoke English and if they liked to speak English during group work. In addition, I asked my students where they learned English best - working in groups, pairs or alone. In developing attitudinal instruments for young children, researchers Reynolds-Keefer and Johnson (2011) recommend response scales with pictures or images (e.g., smiley faces). The familiar "happy" and "sad" faces were used in the questionnaire to assess group work.

The number of positive and negative responses in open-ended questions was calculated for the whole class and summarized. These two questionnaires helped me to understand learners' attitude to group work and, their beliefs about the usefulness of this kind of activity.

2.2.2.3 Self-assessment related to following the rules

I intended to establish how young learners behaved and interacted during group work. Playing any game or doing any activity is impossible without knowing the rules. I believe that rules are very important for group work so I intended to know if group members had any rules and followed them while working together. I prepared a self-assessment sheet (Appendix J) and asked learners to fill it in individually on two occasions during my research – before and after establishing group rules. Firstly, it was done without any preparation at the beginning of my practice, during the group activity "What is he/she doing?". I wanted to define if my learners knew some rules and how to behave in group. In the following lesson, a short Power Point Presentation "Group rules" (Appendix K) with different images was presented to young learners. I chose this type of presentation, because I considered it would be easier for young learners to perceive and understand the basic rules with the help of visual aids. Before watching the presentation, I informed learners that we were going to discuss group rules and asked them to be attentive. I showed a picture and asked students what they saw and thought about the picture, if they could do or behave the same way working together, what the right way of behaviour in group was. The learners were active giving their opinions and answered in Portuguese. Finally, they defined the basic rules for group work such as getting along, respecting others, being on task, using quiet voices, participating and

staying in group. Then, we said all the rules in English aloud and subsequently, learners repeated these rules in chorus before each group work. Moreover, students made a poster (Appendix L) with the established group rules and put it on the wall in the classroom. They tried to follow these rules later working in groups. After that, I analyzed and compared the results of two self-assessments qualitatively and quantitatively.

2.2.2.4 Assessment of a group by the teacher

In the course of my practice I used group assessment (Appendix M) during the activity “What is he/she doing? “. I intended to know if young learners followed group rules. I focused on three students from different groups in the class and observed them during the activity. The first student (S1) was a very good language learner, but shy; the second learner (S2) was a good learner and very active; and the third one (S3) was a weak and passive learner. I used a group assessment sheet with a rating scale. Making notes and filling it in helped me to remain focused on key points. Moreover, I wanted to compare learners’ answers on self-assessment and my observation concerning following rules. After, I read and reread the presented information, analyzing and comparing the results obtained from the observation.

2.2.3 Data collection tools. Observation

Observation is a process that allows the teachers to collect information about learners by viewing their actions and behaviors in their natural surroundings. It can provide good insights into how the different participants behave and interact. In my research I used observations of learners and teacher.

2.2.3.1 Observation of learners

In order to understand fully what group work means to learners and how they perceive themselves, it is necessary to see those learners in action, to experience what it is they do (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). For this purpose written observations (impressions and feelings) about what was occurring during group work were used. These observations were done by me in every lesson and contained the information that is the basis for the study.

2.2.3.1.1 Teaching journal

Doing my action research, I kept a journal in which I recorded my initial reflections on the topic of interest, impressions and personal opinions about the action taken and reactions to it and results obtained from the observation. I started the teaching journal from the beginning of my practice. It was my first own experience of keeping a teaching journal in a young learners' class. I realized the significant contribution journal writing made to deepen my understanding of aspects of the research processes. For this purpose, I had a notebook where I wrote the interesting events that happened in the class. I made notes each lesson. This way I could review previous journals as many times as needed, discovering something new or unusual.

2.2.3.1.2 Learners' grouping

I spent a lot of time reading various articles about different grouping and understood that group work depended on how the groups were formed. There were many ways to put students in groups. I did not know learners very well, so I started with randomly group forming. For "Bingo game", groups were formed according to where students were seated. Next lesson, I organized the students by ability levels. They did the activity "Weather forecast" in groups of mixed abilities – good and weak students together. All these observations I put in my teaching journal and later I read and reread it many times to understand and analyse the problems that arose during the practice.

2.2.3.1.3 Following instructions during group work

I intended to examine the effectiveness of my instructions during group work, so I made some notes in my teaching journal about it. I compared the results of group activities after giving instructions from two different lessons. Firstly, it was done during the group activity "On a trip" at the beginning of my teaching practice, and after a week during the activity "Weather forecast" (second observation). Later, my cooperating teacher and I analyzed the way I was giving instructions.

2.2.3.2 Observation of teacher

Teacher observing teacher is a form of professional development and a model of professional learning that improves teaching practices (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). I asked my cooperating teacher to observe me during two different lessons on group work filling in the observation form (Appendix N). After the lessons, we discussed together positive and negative moments in giving instructions. The results were compared and analyzed qualitatively.

The following section is related to the results gained from these research tools.

2.3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the questionnaire and the observation. It is divided into two sections. Section 2.3.1 presents the results of the student and teacher questionnaires and section 2.3.2 details and the results of teacher observation.

2.3.1 The Questionnaire

The results of teachers' and learners' questionnaire are presented below. This helped me investigate the problem and find the answers to my research questions.

2.3.1.1 Results of learners' questionnaire

As it was mentioned earlier, two different questionnaires were distributed to students and one to teachers during the term. The questionnaire "Learners' experience and attitude to group work" (Appendix H) was given to sixteen learners for individual responses. Results are presented in Figure 1.

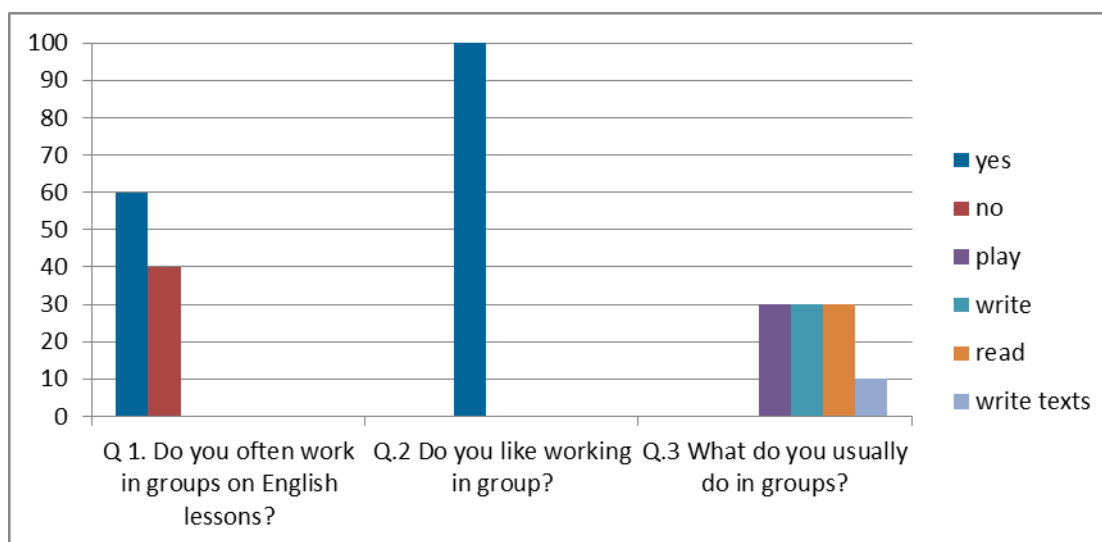


Figure 1 Learners' experience and attitude to group work (expressed as a percentage).

These results show that most students often work in groups and all of them like this kind of activity. Moreover, equal number of learners played, wrote and read in groups. Fewer state that they wrote texts.

Two open questions from this questionnaire gave answers about what students learned from their group and what other group members learned from them. The results are presented in Figure 2.

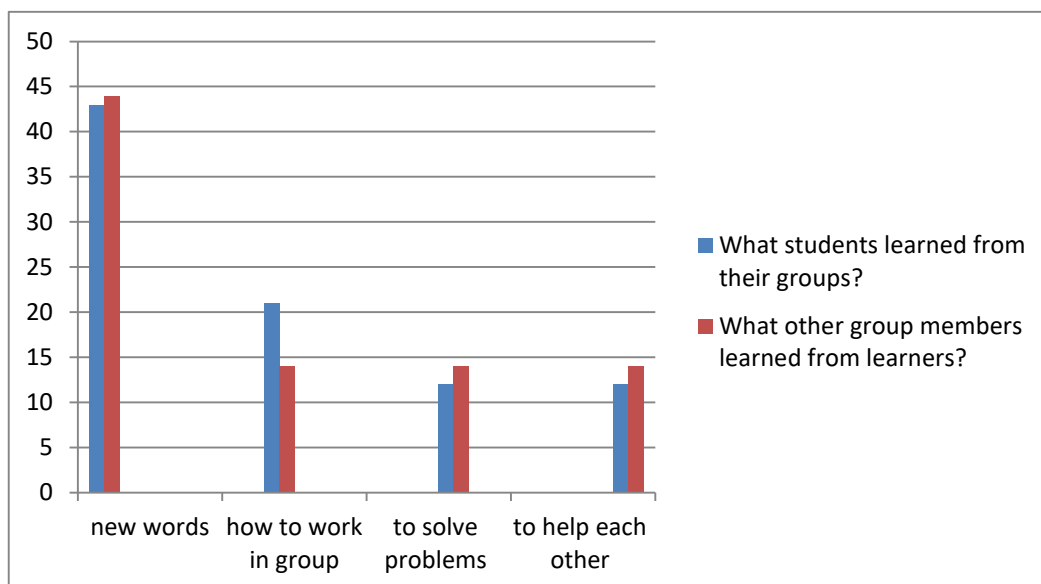


Figure 2 What learners learned from their group and their beliefs about what others learned from them (expressed as a percentage).

The majority of learners agreed that they learned new words in group relating to different topics such as family, weather, clothes, animals, or colour. Moreover the majority of students believed that they could teach new words to the other group members. The number of students who considered they learned how to work in group was higher than the number of students who could teach their peers how to work in group. Almost the same number of learners mentioned that they learned from groups and could teach the other group members how to solve problems and help each other. This questionnaire shows learners' view concerning helpfulness of group work in the classroom where they can learn something new. It proves that learners believe they can be useful for their peers and can teach others working in groups.

I intended to know learners' attitude to group work. The results of the questionnaires show that young learners like working in groups in the classroom. Moreover students believe in the usefulness of group work, because they can learn new words, help each other, solve problems and give a quick answer. In addition, learners state they learn how to work in group. This is very important. It means students have a general idea about this activity and understand that it is necessary to know and learn group work skills. Furthermore, young learners feel that they are significant and useful, because they can teach other group members new words, not to argue, do crosswords and draw. These results helped me to understand learners' attitude towards group work and plan my next actions.

Later, I prepared a questionnaire titled "Learners' opinions about speaking and learning English in groups" (Appendix I) and asked learners to answer it. I wanted to

have learners' opinion about the use of English during group work. Young learners had to color faces on closed questions according to their choice and give detailed answers on open ones. The results of closed questions can be seen in Figure 3.

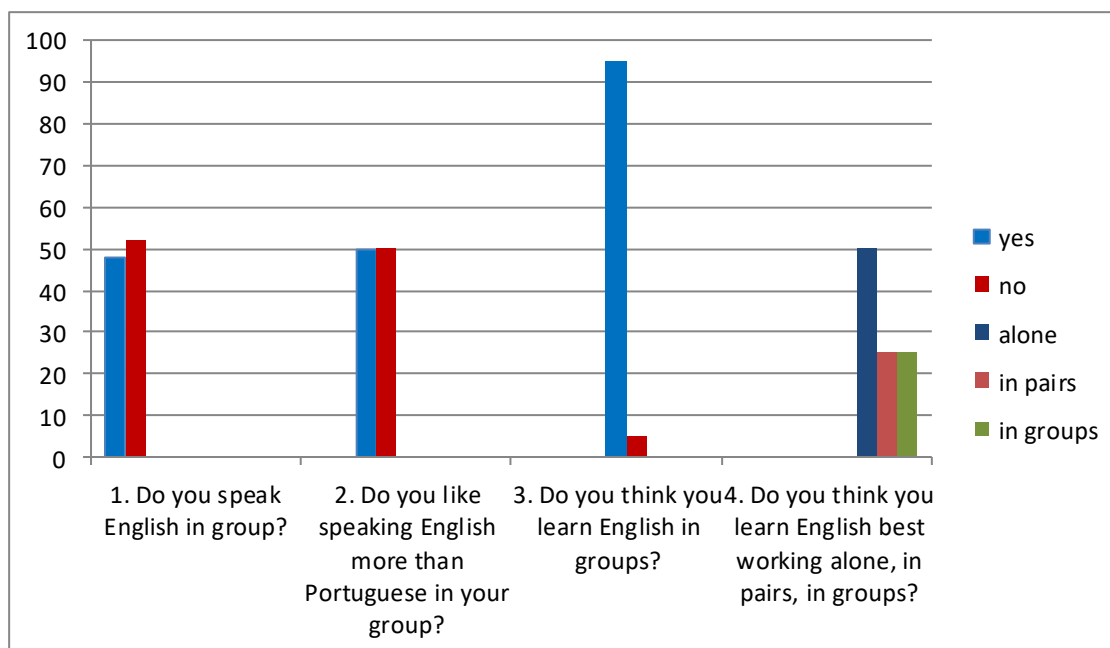


Figure 3 Learners' use of language and their opinions about the effective way to study English (expressed as a percentage).

As it can be seen from Figure 3, almost an equal number of learners liked and spoke English in group which indicates their wish to communicate in English while working in group. I found it surprising that young learners with little knowledge of the foreign language tried to speak English during group work and most students think they learn best working alone.

2.3.1.2 Results of teachers' questionnaire

As I have mentioned before, I asked twenty teachers with different teaching experience to answer eleven questions about group work. I intended to know what they thought and believed about group work with young learners. The results can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 Summarized results of teachers' questionnaires (expressed as a percentage).

Questions (closed)	Answers	
	Yes	No
1. Do you ask students to work in groups in the classroom?	100%	0%
3. Do you have particular criteria (in organizing groups)?	95%	5%
4. Do you ever ask the learners to assume a particular role in group work?	50%	50%
5. Do you provide the language students need for group work?	85%	15%
Questions (open)	Answers	
2. How often do you use group work in the classroom?	2/3 times a month (45%) Once a month (25%) Each lesson (15%) Once per term (10%) Sometimes (5%)	
3. How do you organize groups?	According to: skills, abilities (55%) students proximity (25%) behaviour (10%) activity (7%) gender (3%)	
6. What strategies do you use to encourage learners to work effectively in groups in the classroom?	Changing roles (30%) Establishing rules (23%) Giving instructions (22%) Displaying results (15%) Interesting activities (5%) Praising (5%)	
7. How do you evaluate the success of group work?	Use learners' self-assessment (49%) Take notes (25%) Use observation grids (26%)	
8. What are the advantages of doing group work for you?	Speaking English (51%) Developing social skills (49%)	
9. What are the disadvantages of doing group work for you?	Noise (42%) Behaviour (41%) Different learner participation (17%)	
10. What problems do you have when managing group work?	Intergroup relations (34%) Noise (27%) Assessment (17%) Giving instructions (13%) Time management (9%)	
11. How many years' of teaching experience with young	>5 years (23%)	

learners do you have?	10 years	(34%)
	11-15 years	(27%)
	16-20 years	(16%)

Firstly, I analyzed the results of the open questions. As can be seen from Table 2, all teachers asked students to work in groups in the classroom. This questionnaire showed positive attitudes towards group work. It also demonstrated that the vast majority of teachers had particular criteria in organizing groups and provided the language students needed for efficient group work. An equal number of teachers stated they asked learners to assume a particular role in group work.

The answers on closed questions were more extended and gave detailed and specific information about this kind of activity in the young learners' classroom. Almost half the teachers mentioned that they used group work two or three times a month, while the other half did it once a month, each lesson, once per term or sometimes.

The results show that different teachers have their own criterion in organizing groups. Most teachers formed groups according to learners' skills or abilities, because they considered that some advantages of group work were both speaking English and developing social skills. I was surprised to learn that a quarter of all teachers stated students' proximity as one of the criteria for group organization. Moreover fewer teachers organized groups according to learners' behaviour though they stated noise and behaviour as main disadvantages of group work. Some teachers also noted activity and gender as criterion in group formation.

All teachers had different strategies to encourage learners to work effectively in groups in the classroom. The majority of them changed roles giving learners equal opportunities to participate. There was an equal number of teachers who stated that establishing rules and giving instructions could help students work effectively in groups. In addition, displaying results, interesting activities and praising learners were also used as strategies for encouragement. I expected teachers to evaluate learners during group work by different ways. Most of them mainly used learners' self-assessment. Furthermore, almost an equal number of teachers stated that they took notes or used observation grids.

Although all teachers claimed they used group work in the classroom, all had problems while managing it. Results showed that the majority of teachers were concerned about intergroup relations. They also mentioned noise, assessment, giving instructions and time management as problems connected with group work.

All teachers that participated in the questionnaire had some experience with young learners. The majority had been working for 6-10 (34%) and less for 16-20 (16%) years. Only a small percentage (23%) didn't have great experience working with young learners.

The results show the teachers' attitude towards group work. Moreover it indicates that instructions can play different roles during group work. They can cause problems in managing group work when they are difficult for learners to understand, but on the other hand instructions can encourage learners to work effectively when they are precise and concise. Further, teachers considered roles as an effective way to encourage learners to work better, but they believed that a different level of learners' participation was one of the disadvantages of group work.

2.3.1.3 Results of learners' self-assessment related to following the rules

I am sure that basic rules are important for good cooperation and excellent results. Group rules explain the way in which groups can make decisions, communicate and behave with each other, while working together. The learners were asked to assess their behaviour in two different occasions with self-assessment (Appendix J) - first, before discussing rules for group work and later, after establishing rules. I intended to compare their results to see if there was any difference or changes. The positive results expressed as a percentage of their responses are presented in Figure 4. The first columns in each part mentioned by number (1) show the results of the first self-assessment and number (2) of the second self-assessment.

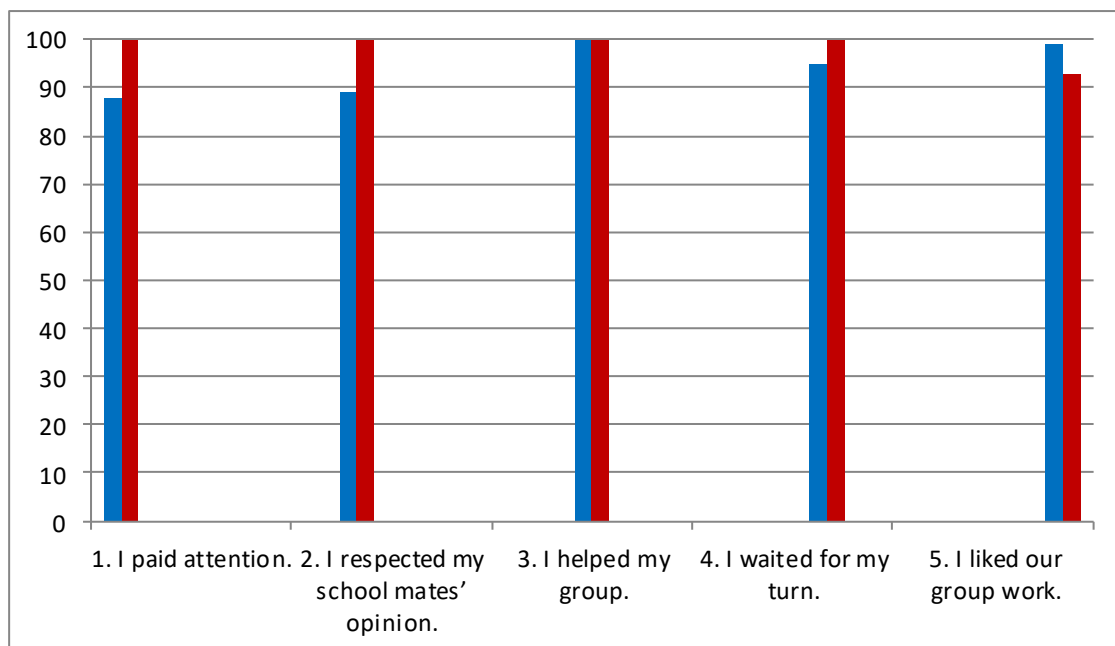


Figure 4 Summarized answers on learners’ self-assessment about participation in a group activity (expressed as a percentage).

These results show that the number of young learners who followed group rules before discussing rules in the classroom was great. It proves that in general students were familiar with how to behave while working together, but more learners interacted better during group work after establishing rules in the classroom. Moreover, rules established and written on the wall by students helped them to behave correctly.

2.3.1.4 Results of group assessment by the teacher

In addition to self-assessment, I intended to know if learners did actually follow group rules. So I used a group assessment during the activity “What is he/she doing?” (Appendix O). The results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 Results of group assessment during the activity “What is he/she doing?”

<p style="text-align: center;">Group assessment Form 3rd C</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date 20/04/2017</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Group work activity – What is she/he doing? He/she is eating a sandwich.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Group Members - S1, S2, S3.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1-never 2-seldom 3- sometimes 4-often 5-always</p>						
Group members	got along working in group	respected their partners	were on task	used quiet voices	participated	stayed always in group
S1	5	5	5	3	5	5
S2	5	5	5	3	5	5
S3	5	4	4	3	4	4

This group assessment helped me to analyze how young learners worked in group and if they followed basic rules. Everyone knows that school is a social environment and student learning is dependent on relationships. Though the learners were from different groups and of different abilities, they all tried to get along and not argue while working together. They found a compromise. The students were always on task, respected their partners and participated. But the young learners often had problems with voice level though different voice norms were discussed before the group activity. I found that when students met in groups, it was normal for voices to gradually grow louder as they talked above the groups around them. This happened to children

involved in my research and was a natural consequence of group learning. Comparing my results with learners' self-assessment, I realized that they were the same. Their answers and mine demonstrated that learners really knew the basic group rules and tried to follow them working in groups.

2.3.2 The Observation

As was mentioned before, section 2.3.2 presents details and results of teacher observation. A teaching journal, observation grids, checklists and assessments with rating scales were used during my research to obtain the necessary information about working in groups in the young learners' classroom.

2.3.2.1 Results of teaching journal (group formation)

From the beginning of my research I attempted to organize learners in groups. Trying different ways in forming groups, I made observations writing notes in my teaching journal. Some extracts from the journal are presented below to share my observations on group work in the classroom. This extract registered the processes I went through in the beginning to study formation of groups:

“Today I faced the problem of learners' formation for group work. I suggested division based on proximity of students seating. I found it the quickest and the easiest way. I didn't consider the abilities and personal qualities of learners. Eventually in different groups there were some problems. For example:

Group 1: (P) who was bossy, but not successful as a learner didn't let other group members participate fully. He took the initiative and as a result I had to help students to fulfill a task.

Group 2: There were two boys in the group who couldn't decide who would be a leader. So they lost some time clarifying the relationship and couldn't perform the task.

Group 3: (M) was a bilingual student (Portuguese/ English), but being so shy she couldn't express herself working with the other group members. The group worked very slowly and the result of the activity wasn't successful.

Group 4: (S) didn't like the idea of the performance of the task. She argued with other group members. As a result the task wasn't completed and all group members were sad. (20 April, 2017)”.

The notes from my journal helped me understand that students' proximity group organization was the quickest way but not that successful. It showed that if I wanted my students to be successful in studying English, it would be better to find another way for group formation.

Later I analyzed the results from my journal about group interaction during the activity. I wrote the following extract during the next phase of my research on group work. I intended to know how learners behave in mixed ability group formation. I made my notes after performing the group activity - “Weather forecast” (Appendix P).

“I liked this activity and found it interesting. Students tried to work cooperatively, performing a common task.

Group 1: There were students with different ability levels. (M) - excellent language learner and active group member; (T) - weak language learner and passive; (R) - good language learner. Members of the group decided on the roles themselves. (M) asked the question, (T) answered the question and (R) wrote the answer on the poster. Amazingly, learners were patient with the weak member, helping and encouraging him during the task. They were always on task. (M) controlled the performance of the task and helped his peers. After, they decided to make a presentation together having set a certain role for each group member.

Group 2: (B) - an excellent language learner, (D) and (V) - learners with medium level of knowledge. During the performance of the task all group members did everything together. (B) was a leader but she let other students participate actively. It was the only group that wrote the names of all group members as participants of the activity on the poster.

Group 3: There were students with different abilities in a group. (S) - a weak learner, but a good leader; (C) and (A) - good language learners. Though the leader was a weak student, he could organize good group work. He said what to do and tried to be useful. (C) and (A) followed his pieces of advice and they completed the task on time and presented their weather forecast successfully. ... (27 April, 2017)”

The extracts I have presented here illustrated the process of young learners’ working in groups. In this experiment, my teaching journal had great benefits, because I could analyze how learners worked in groups with mixed abilities. I found out that not always a good language learner could be a good and useful group member and vice versa, a weak language learner could be very significant in organizing group work. I understood how group formation was important in efficiency of group work. Reading and rereading notes from my journal helped me analyze different group formations. I came to the conclusion that not only good knowledge of English can be the main criterion in choosing group members. Groups work better when the members are balanced. Hence, students must be appointed to groups based on a certain criteria - e.g. learners’ personal characteristics, abilities, etc.

2.3.2.2 Results of teacher's observation

Teaching is a complex activity, and during a lesson many things occur simultaneously, so it is impossible to observe them all. Next step in the research was the observation done by my cooperating teacher. As it was mentioned in the methodology before, the cooperating teacher filled in the observation grid (Appendix N) during two lessons - the first one was done at the beginning of my teaching practice, in the first week, and the second observation was done after a week, so number (1) in the table corresponds to the first lesson and number (2) to the second one. The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of teacher observation

Instruction-giving skills	Clear? (C) Not very clear? (NC) Unclear?(U)	Discussion points
Signaling start of activity(creating a silence)	1) C	Was very clear, T. attracts Ss' attention by clapping hands.
	2) C	Changing voice. Good.
Use of simple language	1) NC	Not always, but T. tries.
	2) C	Good.
Use of short sentences	1) NC	Not always.
	2) C	Much better
Logic and clarity	1) NC	Unclear
	2) C	Was logical and clear, Well-planned
Use of target language	1) C	
	2) C	
Voice quality	1) C	Appropriate
	2) C	Right
Eye-contact	1) C	Good, always had eye-contact
	2) C	Good, always had eye-contact
Use of gesture and body language	1) C	Was emotional and expressive
	2) C	Very good
Repeating instruction in a different way	1) NC	Needs more times
	2) C	Yes, many times

Use of visual aids	1) U	Would be better to have an example to follow that can ease learners' understanding and working
	2) C	Good. Appropriate visual aids
Demonstration rather than explanation	1) U	Needed more demonstration
	2) C	Good
Checking understanding	1) U	T. didn't ask Ss. checking understanding
	2) NC	Good, but needs development
Signaling end of activity	1) C	Good. Constant time controlling. Used bell signaling end of activity
	2) C	Good

After discussing the way of giving instructions with my cooperating teacher I realized that it was one of the most difficult and challenging things in managing successful group work. I found that instructions which seemed to be clear to me sometimes caused unnecessary confusion for students and affected their behaviour. Lemlech (1999) believes that, “students want and need to know what, how, and why” (p.11). Trying to make my instructions effective, I got the students' attention by using different signals, such as clapping my hands, raising my voice and ringing a bell. I noticed that it was useless to start my explanation before everyone was listening and watching me. In addition, I realized that it was better to make my instructions for young learners precise and concise. Scrivener (2005) suggests using short sentences and involving a lot of demonstration while working with young learners. I discussed it with my cooperating teacher. Using many words was ineffective and caused disruption and interruptions among young learners. Moreover I found instructions were really effective for group work and could influence the success of my activity.

2.3.2.3 Results of teaching journal (giving instructions)

As was mentioned before, I used teacher observation and taking notes during the group work activities “On a trip” (Appendix Q) and “Weather forecast”. I intended to define the effectiveness of instructions on group work. While I was giving instructions, my cooperating teacher observed me. After the lesson I wrote my notes in the teaching journal. Later I was able to compare the results and define the influence of instructions on task performance.

“Planning my group work activity, I spent a lot of time preparing the necessary material. After discussing a topic from a course book, I thought the

learners would like the idea of drawing themselves during a trip. They were very creative and emotional showing their actions before class. It seemed to me the explanation was clear and logic, but nearly from the very beginning young learners asked questions, interrupting me and making a lot of noise in the classroom. I believed that I could better explain the activity personally to each group later. But there were so much misunderstanding among group members, that I did not have enough time to help all of them. As a result, only two groups completed the task. I was disappointed, as well as my learners ... (13, April, 2017)

This time I planned the activity more carefully. Taking into consideration failure of a previous lesson, I prepared weather poster as an example to follow and place it on the wall. Video demonstration was effective too. The learners had a general idea about weather forecast – what for, how, the manner of presentation. Keeping in mind my discussion with cooperating teacher about checking learners’ understanding during instructions, I studied different ways how to do it. I asked the learners to listen to me attentively and if they would have any questions they could ask after my explanation. After giving instructions, I asked the students what they should do step by step. We repeated the plan of action together. Then I asked if there were any questions. There were no questions. I was happy - everybody knew what to do. The result of group activity was better. All groups liked working together and were ready to present their work (27, April, 2017)”.

These notes from my teaching journal demonstrate how instructions influence the effectiveness of group activity. In order to have good results on group work, the instructions must be clear, logical, and simple. The learners’ satisfaction by group activity and a wish to work with peers depends on correct teachers’ instructions. It was challenging, because it made me think and study this problem, find the ways out and improve my teaching. I realized instructions really helped young learners during group work and made it more effective.

2.4 DISCUSSION

This section reports the results of the research, implications and future approaches.

2.4.1 Results

This research was conducted with the goals of examining different ways in organizing young learners for group work, to find out how learners and teachers felt about working in groups, to know if my instructions were really effective during group

work, and to identify if teaching students rules for group work made it more effective. From this research I have learned a lot about how to make group work more successful in a young learners' classroom. Well-organized group work gives all learners the opportunity to cooperate and use each other's knowledge and experience to find solutions and solve problems. Through this research, I found that group work can be successful when it has basic group rules, clear and logic instructions, and the right group formation.

My participants, teachers and young learners, emphasized using group work in the classroom and found it useful. It provided an opportunity for students to engage in social interactions and communicate in English. Teachers mentioned the same benefits. It is natural for young learners to communicate and interact with their peers in the classroom, while working together. Furthermore, my participants stated they often organized or did group work in the classroom and liked it. Through group work, young learners could learn new words, how to work in group, solve problems and help each other.

Overall, well organized and prepared group work is very effective in the classroom and allows young learners to practice, and improve skills with their peers.

2.4.2 Implications of the results

The results from the observations and questionnaires suggest that teachers can help students work more efficiently in groups, organizing learners for group work. They should pay attention to how they can organize groups. To help young learners be successful, teachers need to be careful when they group the students. There are many ways to randomly assign students to work in groups. But I found that not always good learners could be successful in groups and vice versa. I believe that teachers must think about how students need to be matched to achieve effective results. The best possibility is to do a preliminary assessment and then, based on the results, purposefully create groups that blend abilities. Moreover, a group works best when students are assigned to a group that matches their ability level. My observation and teachers' answers on the questionnaire indicate that the right mix might involve students with various abilities, or backgrounds together.

The findings show that instructions really play a very important role in the effectiveness of group work in the young learners' classroom. The success of group

work depends on the quality of giving instructions. In an effort to create effective group work where students feel comfortable, teachers should introduce instructions clearly and logically. I found that teachers must develop and communicate a set of clear instructions and explain why and how students can complete the activity. It helps groups better understand how to work on activities and make sure they are on track to finish a task.

Often young learners do not have the skills or expertise needed to work efficiently in groups. Establishing group rules for group work makes it more effective. I found that basic rules can promote respectful interactions in the classroom and help learners better behave when working together. Teachers mentioned in their questionnaires that intergroup relations and noise during group work were the main problems in managing group work. So, basic rules are very effective to solve this problem. In addition, I discovered groups that know how to behave and interact by working together tend to have better results in performing tasks.

Results of the research show the learners' and teachers' positive attitude towards group work. They find many benefits in this kind of activity. Young learners mentioned they can learn new words from their peers and do different activities together. Teachers ask students to work in groups in the classroom, have particular criteria in organizing groups and ask the learners to assume a particular role in group work. It means teachers and learners are familiar with this kind of activity.

2.4.3 Future approaches

This research study can be beneficial for teachers and learners. It allowed me to understand learners' needs and my responsibility as a teacher to help them work efficiently in groups providing right group formation, giving clear instructions and establishing basic rules. Moreover it allows learners to be more independent and communicate better with each other.

There are various aspects of group work that could be explored with young learners. Future research could address the other group formations such as boys to girls, friends or only boys or girls, and try to find the most suitable. Group work is a strategy that offers learning of the content. It provides a lot of opportunities for students to develop, practice, and enhance their skills with their peers.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Letter of consent for the school administration concerning the permission to undertake the research

Pedido de autorização à Direção da Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades

O meu nome é Inga Startseva e é com muito gosto que irei estar com os alunos da Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades a estagiar (Prática de Ensino Supervisionada II) durante o 3º período deste ano letivo.

Estou a fazer um Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas na Universidade Nova de Lisboa, e este implica que durante o estágio faça um pequeno projeto de investigação.

Este projeto fará parte do meu relatório final, e intitula-se How to help students work more efficiently in groups (Como ajudar os alunos a trabalhar mais eficientemente em grupos).

Venho, por este meio, solicitar a vossa autorização para incluir os alunos da Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades neste meu projeto que vai decorrer entre abril e maio de 2017 durante o meu estágio.

Depois de pedir autorização aos alunos e encarregados de educação da referida turma para os incluir no meu estudo, a recolha de dados será efetuada mediante questionários sobre os hábitos de leitura deles, a sua abordagem aos valores expressos nas histórias lidas, o seu conhecimento de outras culturas, suas reações, comentários e opiniões sobre as mesmas e, ainda, autoavaliação e reflexão sobre a experiência intercultural deles. A qualquer momento os alunos podem escolher não participar. As informações obtidas serão referidas no meu relatório final de mestrado e eventualmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

A instituição, todos os seus funcionários e as crianças permanecerão anónimas em qualquer circunstância. Nunca serão tiradas fotografias nem obtidas imagens, quer da instituição quer das crianças, contudo, o mesmo não se irá aplicar aos trabalhos dos alunos, que permanecerão no anonimato.

Se tiver questões a colocar agradeço que me contacte através de mensagem para o email: almada27@mail.ru

Agradeço que autorize a participação dos alunos da Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades no meu estudo.

Lisboa, 23 de março de 2017
Inga Startseva

Prof.ª Doutora Carolyn Leslie
Orientadora de Estágio
FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

Eu, _____

Declaro ter lido e compreendido este documento, bem como as informações verbais que me foram fornecidas pela pessoa que acima assina. Foi-me garantida a confidencialidade das informações e o anonimato dos participantes pela investigadora.

Data: _____

Assinatura: _____

Appendix B

Letter of consent for learners' parents or other responsible people concerning the permission to participate in the research

Pedido de autorização aos Encarregados de Educação

Caros pais e encarregados de educação,

Chamo-me Inga Startseva e é com muito gosto que irei estar com o seu educando a estagiar durante o 3º período deste ano letivo.

Estou a fazer um Mestrado em Ensino de Inglês no 1º Ciclo na Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas na Universidade Nova, Lisboa, e o mestrado implica que durante o estágio faça um pequeno projeto de investigação. Este projeto será incluído no meu relatório final. O meu trabalho intitula-se: *How to help students work more efficiently in groups (Como ajudar os alunos a trabalhar mais eficientemente em grupos)*.

Venho, por este meio, solicitar a vossa autorização para poder incluir o seu educando neste projeto que vai decorrer entre abril e maio de 2017 durante o meu estágio.

Depois de pedir autorização ao seu educando para a/o incluir no meu estudo, a recolha de dados será efectuada mediante preenchimento de questionários e observação, deixando em aberto a opção de escolher não participar no estudo. As informações obtidas serão referidas no meu relatório final de mestrado e eventualmente em artigos académicos e conferências.

A instituição e todos os seus funcionários e as crianças permanecerão anónimos em qualquer circunstância.

Se tiver questões a colocar agradeço que me contactem pessoalmente através da professora titular de turma.

Agradeço que dê autorização para que o seu educando possa participar no meu estudo. Peço que entreguem esta autorização assinada.

23 de março 2017

Inga Startseva

Doutora Carolyn Leslie

Orientadora de Estágio

FCSH, Universidade Nova Lisboa

Eu, _____

encarregado de educação de _____

declaro que fui informado(a) dos objectivos do projeto intitulada *How to help students work more efficiently in groups (Como ajudar os alunos a trabalhar mais eficientemente em grupos)* e autorizo o meu educando a participar no estudo:

Data: _____

Assinatura: _____

Appendix C

Letter of consent for the participants

Por favor, lê, e assinala no final a tua opção

Olá, sou a Inga.

Este ano, durante o 3º período, vou ser a tua professora de inglês. Como também estou a estudar para que no futuro possa ensinar melhor as crianças, venho pedir a tua ajuda.

E como é que me podes ajudar?

Gostaria de convidar-te a participar no meu projeto de ensino que tem como objetivos muito importantes ajudar os meninos e meninas como tu a aprender inglês mais rápido e fazer com que as nossas aulas sejam mais alegres, divertidas e interessantes.

O que é que vamos fazer?

Vamos fazer várias atividades em conjunto, em grupos e em pares. Tu irás conversar com os colegas em inglês, partilhar as tuas opiniões, ouvir e aprender histórias engraçadas e fazer trabalhos giros.

Sempre que tenhas dúvidas ou questões podes, e deves, perguntar-me.

Combinado?

O teu nome e as tuas fotografias não serão utilizados no meu trabalho. Se quiseres inventar um nome pelo qual queres ser tratado, estão a vontade.

Os teus pais também vão saber sobre o nosso trabalho nas aulas, e eu vou pedir-lhes autorização para poderes participar.

Participas só se quiseres. Se recusares, isso não vai piorar a tua nota.

Obrigada pela tua ajuda.

Então, vamos lá! Boa sorte para nós!

Eu(nome)_____

aluno(a) da Escola Básica Quinta dos Frades, em Lisboa,

Aceito

Não aceito

Colaborar com a prof. Inga Startseva no seu trabalho de Mestrado.

Lisboa, de abril de 2017

O(A)Aluno(a)

Appendix D

Group work activity “Weather forecast”



Appendix E

Maple Leaf Learning. (2011, March 8). International Weather Report - Simple Skits
[Video File]. Retrieved from www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpBuaU5OPi8

Appendix F

Group work activity “What is he/she doing?”

ESCOLA BÁSICA QUINTA DOS FRADES

WHAT IS SHE/ HE DOING?

Members of the group:

is plying with leaves.
is drinking hot chocolate.
is eating a sandwich.
is making a snowman.
is eating bananas.
is picking flowers.

Mrs. Startseva

Lindley Cintra

What is Tom doing?
He is singing.
Tom is singing.

Tom

Lucy

Bob

Bill

Sam

Steven

Mary

Appendix G

The teacher's questionnaire

1. Do you ask students to work in groups in the classroom?
2. How often do you use group work in the classroom?
3. How do you organize groups? Do you have particular criteria?
4. Do you ever ask the learners to assume a particular role in group work?
5. Do you provide the language students need for group work?
6. What strategies do you use to encourage learners to work effectively in groups in the classroom?
7. How do you evaluate the success of group work?
8. What for you are the advantages of doing group work?
9. What for you are the disadvantages of doing group work?
10. What problems do you have when managing group work?
- 11 How many years' experience of teaching young learners do you have?





Appendix H

Learners' experience and attitude to group work

Read and answer the questions / Lê e responde às perguntas

YES / SIM NO / NÃO



1. Do you often work in groups on English lessons? Costumas trabalhar em grupo durante as aulas de inglês?	 
2. Do you like working in group? Gostas de trabalhar em grupo?	 
3. What do you usually do in groups? O que fazes normalmente em grupos?	
4. Give an example of something you learned from your group that you probably would not have learned working alone. Dá um exemplo de algo que aprendeste do teu grupo que provavelmente não terias aprendido a trabalhar sozinho.	
5. Give an example of something the other group members learned from you that they probably would not have learned otherwise. Dá um exemplo de algo que os outros membros do grupo aprenderam de ti que eles provavelmente não teriam aprendido.	















Appendix I

Learners' opinions about speaking and learning English in groups

Read and answer the questions- / Lê e responde às perguntas

YES / SIM NO / NÃO



1. Do you speak English in your group? Falas inglês no teu grupo?	 
2. Do you like speaking English more than Portuguese in your group? Gostas de falar inglês mais do que português no teu grupo?	 
3. Do you think you learn English in groups? Achas que aprendes inglês em grupo?	 
4. Do you think you learn English best working Achas que aprendes melhor inglês trabalhando	
- Alone / sozinho	 
- in pairs / em par	 
- in groups?/ em grupo?	 



Appendix J

Learners' self-assessment











Colour the face according to your answer / Pinta a cara que corresponde à tua resposta

YES/SIM



NO/NÃO



1. I paid attention. / Estive atento.	 
2. I respected my school mates' opinion. / Respeitei a opinião dos colegas.	 
3. I helped my group. / Ajudei o grupo.	 
4. I waited for my turn. / Participei quando chegou a minha vez.	 
5. I liked our group work. /Gostei de trabalhar em grupo.	 



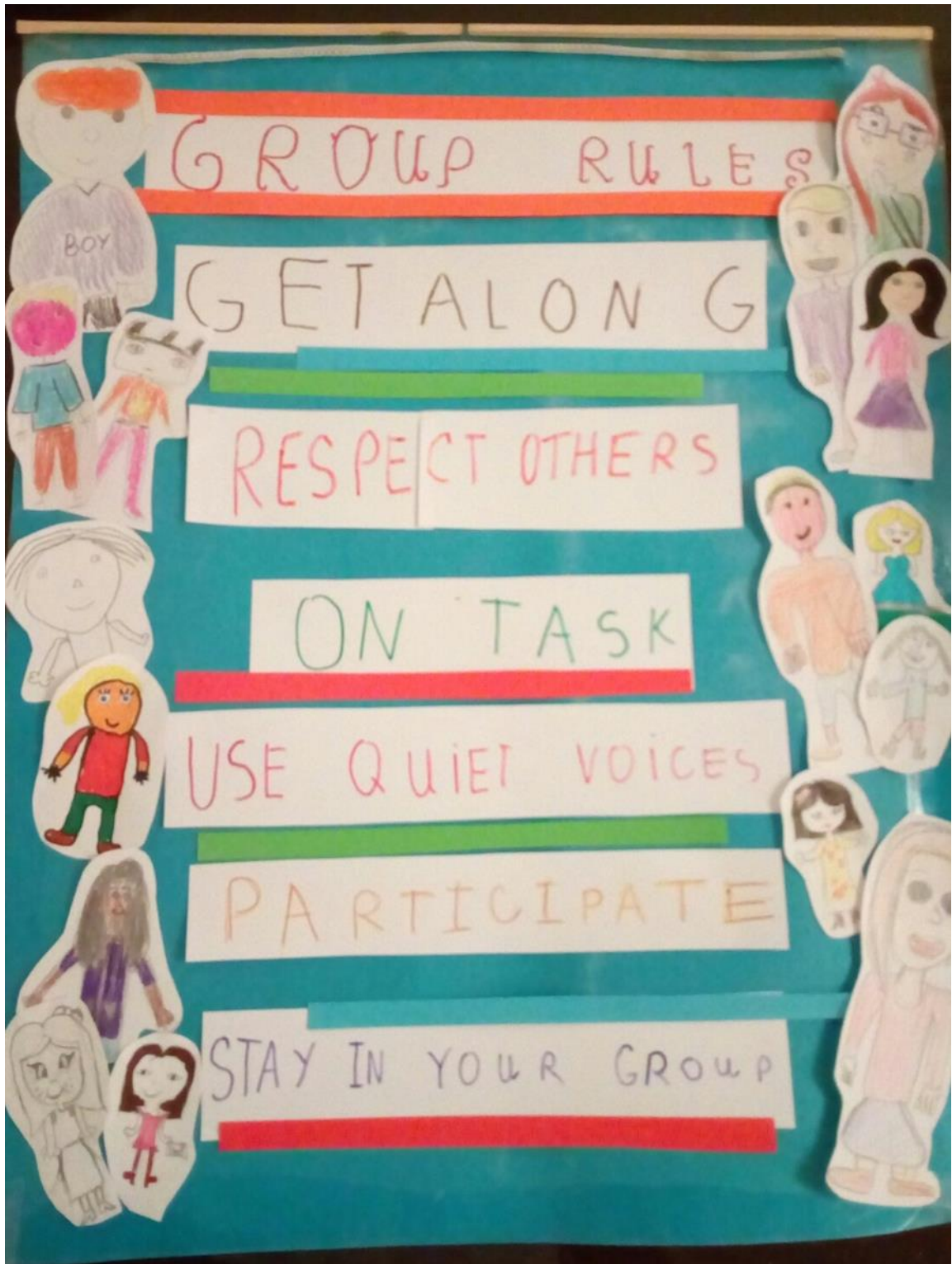
Appendix K

Example of Power Point Presentation on group rules

 <p>GROUP RULES</p>	
	<p>GET ALONG</p> 
	<p>RESPECT OTHERS</p> 
	<p>ON TASK</p> 
	<p>USE QUIET VOICES</p> 
	<p>PARTICIPATE</p> 
	<p>STAY IN YOUR GROUP</p> 

Appendix L

Learners' poster about "Group rules"



Appendix M

Group-assessment

Form 3rd C

Date 20/04/2017

Group work activity – What is she/he doing? He/she is eating a sandwich.

Group Members - S1, S2, S3.

1-never 2-seldom 3- sometimes 4-often 5-always

Group members	got along working in group	respected their partnes	were on task	used quiet voices	Participated	stay in their group during the task
S1						
S2						
S3						

Appendix N

Giving instructions

Task: Observe the instructions the teacher-trainer gives during the group work and complete the table. For each skill, decide how successfully it was achieved, and write your questions or comments for post-lesson consultation in the right-hand column of the table. Instruction-giving skills

Instruction-giving skills	Clear?(C) Not very clear? (NC) Unclear?(U)	Discussion points
Signaling start of activity (creating a silence)		
Use of simple language		
Use of short sentences		
Logic and clarity		
Use of target language		
Voice quality		
Eye-contact		
Use of gesture and body language		
Repeating instruction in a different way		
Use of visual aids		
Demonstration rather than explanation		
Checking understanding		
Signaling end of activity		

Appendix O

Results of group work activity “What is he/she doing? “

ESCOLA BÁSICA QUINTA DOS PRADES

WHAT IS SHE/ HE DOING?

Members of the group: *Miguel*

Sara

João

<i>Lucy</i>	is plying with leaves.
<i>Bob Mary</i>	is drinking hot chocolate.
<i>Bob</i>	is eating a sandwich.
<i>Steven</i>	is making a snowman.
<i>Bill</i>	is eating bananas.
<i>Sam</i>	is picking flowers.

Mrs. Marteva

Professor Lindley Cintra

What is Tom doing?
He is singing.
Tom is singing.

Tom

Lucy

Bob

Bill

Sam

Steven

Mary

ESCOLA BÁSICA QUINTA DOS PRADES

WHAT IS SHE/ HE DOING?

Members of the group: *Isabel*

Diogo V.

Diázel

<i>Lucy</i>	is plying with leaves. 1
<i>Mary</i>	is drinking hot chocolate. 6
<i>Bob</i>	is eating a sandwich. 2
<i>Steven</i>	is making a snowman. 5
<i>Bill</i>	is eating bananas. 3
<i>Sam</i>	is picking flowers. 4

Mrs. Marteva

Professor Lindley Cintra

What is Tom doing?
He is singing.
Tom is singing.

Tom

Lucy

Bob

Bill

Sam

Steven

Mary

Appendix Q

Results of group work activity “On a trip”

