COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN AN ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Judith Grundman

My research study and following paper resulted from the difficulties ESL students have with social interactions in a school setting. Schools have the opportunity to help ESL students develop socially by using appropriate instructional strategies and implementing social skill instruction into the curriculum. Cooperative learning is one of the main instructional strategies that can be used to create a non-threatening environment, which encourages participation and promotes positive social interactions.

My review of literature provides evidence that improved social and affective development is one of the positive outcomes of cooperative learning. My literature review also establishes that cooperative learning activities are effective for the social and academic success of ESL students.

The purpose of my study was to examine whether student participation increased when cooperative learning structures were used in an ESL classroom. My study consisted of five ESL students in second and third grade. Cooperative learning structures were implemented into the ESL curriculum. Students were observed throughout the study on the following areas of participation: being on-task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help.

The results indicated that student participation increased when ESL students were engaged in cooperative learning activities. The results from my study concluded that cooperative learning used in an ESL classroom: provided more opportunities for students to listen and produce language, created strong friendship connections, supported first language skills, improved classroom environment and student attitude, and encouraged leadership skills and teamwork.

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by

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Forming positive relationships with peers and developing socially are extremely important for all children. Children who have difficulties in these areas are more likely to suffer from problems in other areas of their lives, for example they may have a low sense of self-esteem and underachieve in academic work. When a child relates well to others it promotes positive feelings toward self and others (Cowie, Smith, Boulton & Laver, 1994).

Social interactions can be difficult for English as a Second Language (ESL) students. Being surrounded by a new language and culture make interacting with adults and peers more challenging. As an ESL teacher in an elementary school, I have noticed that ESL students struggle socially with peer acceptance, positive inter-group relations, friendship and self-esteem. Specifically, ESL students lack the knowledge of when and how to use the following social skills in a group setting: asking for help or clarification, using quiet voices, participating actively, respecting others, describing feelings, taking turns, sharing ideas and opinions, encouraging others' participation, and staying on task. Unfamiliarity with English and school in general causes ESL students to struggle with social relationships, social skills and to need extra time to make friends (Madrid, 1993). These problems with social development might decrease if ESL students are given social skill instruction and opportunities to interact with peers.

Schools have the opportunity to help ESL students adjust socially. Two ways schools can contribute to the social development of ESL students are by creating a non-threatening environment and implementing social skill instruction into the curriculum.

First schools have the opportunity to create a non-threatening environment, which means that the school and classroom environment should be one where there is minimal risk, and a sense of belonging. Activities should be meaningful and collaborative, where students are encouraged to become responsible for their own learning as well as helping others to learn (Madrid, 1993). ESL students in my classes are reluctant to share their ideas and opinions in large and small group settings. It seems critical to create a climate of trust that encourages children to participate and take risks in a non-threatening environment. My experiences demonstrate that trust and a feeling of belonging appear to be key factors to strengthen student relationships and to support academic achievement. The environment should also allow students to interact with their peers in a natural setting. Opportunities for talk are especially important for students who are learning a new language. Lack of proficiency in the language of instruction is an important factor in the lower academic achievement of minority students. Cummins attributes the failure of many minority students to develop the language skills necessary to achieve academic success to the teacher-centered methodology that is used in many classrooms. An interactive environment, on the other hand, develops higher level cognitive skills and meaningful, communicative language skills (Coelho, 1994).

Another opportunity for schools to help students adjust socially is by integrating social skills instruction into the curriculum. The mainstream teachers and principal in my

school have expressed concern that ESL students have difficulty making friends in a mainstream setting and have struggled with adult and peer social interactions. They have requested that social skills be taught during my ESL classes. I have also noticed students struggling with social issues in my ESL classroom. Some ESL students feel distant from their peers, have problems with friendships, and are reluctant to ask for help. These social skill problems can be viewed as educational opportunities to help develop appropriate curriculum for ESL students. Every social skill problem is an important piece of curriculum not yet acquired, and it tells us what the students need to learn. For example, if students are off-task, it is because they need to learn how to monitor their behavior, check to see if it is on-task, and adjust accordingly. Staying on task is a social skill that can be learned, similar to any other skill (Kagen, 1994). Implementing social skill instruction into the curriculum might reduce the social difficulties many ESL students encounter.

Cooperative learning is one of the main instructional strategies that can be used to promote positive social interactions and to create an appropriate learning environment for ESL students. Chapter Two of this paper will review literature, which provides evidence that improved social and affective development is one of the positive outcomes of cooperative learning. Students placed in a cooperative group, feel a sense of belonging. They learn to ask for and receive help. As others ask for their input, they learn that their suggestions are valued. They learn that their success is linked to the success of others. Group participation is learned along with other social skills necessary for working together (Madrid, 1993).

The following experience of Whe, a five-year old Cambodian boy illustrates one benefit of cooperative learning: the power to help ESL students adjust to the social and academic demands of school. Whe was enrolled in kindergarten in the middle of the year and cried when his father dropped him off at the classroom. The other students were working in pairs, studying beginning sounds. Not having much success in calming him down, the teacher asked him to join two students who were looking through magazines for pictures of things that begin with the letter "r". He stopped crying almost immediately as the students showed him pictures they had found, saying the words to him. They then showed him how to cut and paste the pictures on the newsprint. In the next few days, Whe's two group members cared for him as he made other new friends (Madrid, 1993).

Another benefit of cooperative learning is that it helps students to work together effectively, regardless of their race, language, or personal appearance. At the elementary level, students are conscious of factors such as academic achievement, personal appearance, and language proficiency that cause some students to be considered at a higher status level than others. Cooperative learning activities are designed to sustain and develop positive attitudes toward students from various racial and cultural backgrounds. Students learn to regard their peers as valued sources of support in their effort to become successful socially, linguistically, and academically (Madrid, 1993).

Cooperative small-group instruction provides students with opportunities to explore, clarify and internalize ideas among their peers. This kind of classroom conversation helps students to develop higher-level thinking skills through the analysis, evaluation, synthesis and application of new information (Coelho, 1994).

Given my setting and the benefits of cooperative learning found by research, I created a study which aimed to use cooperative learning as a curriculum approach which might help ESL students with social interactions and encourage participation in group activities. Ultimately, the purpose of my study was to examine whether student participation increased when cooperative learning structures were used within the ESL curriculum. Specifically, I looked at the following areas of participation: being on-task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help.

Studies which examine cooperative learning in K-12 classrooms have found that cooperative learning promotes higher achievement across all age levels, subject areas, and almost all tasks than competitive and individualistic learning structures across all age levels, subject areas, and almost all tasks. Additionally, multicultural classrooms have recognized that cooperative learning strategies are useful for managing linguistic diversity. My study combines these two strands of research by focusing on implementing cooperative learning in a classroom with only ESL students. Specifically, I will attempt to determine if cooperative learning encourages ESL students to participate in a group setting.

Chapter Two includes a review of literature that describes how social development affects academic achievement, defines and lists benefits of cooperative learning, and presents research on cooperative learning and second language learning. It is presented in the following areas: social development and academic achievement, cooperative learning, effectiveness of cooperative group work, overview of selected cooperative learning structures, and rationale for cooperative learning in an ESL

classroom. Chapter Three will describe my research study and the assessment tools used to collect the data. In Chapter Four the results will be discussed and Chapter Five will be the conclusion and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Research that is important to my study has been divided into five sections. The first section explains how social development is important to academic success.

Cooperative learning is an effective instructional strategy that can be used to support social development. The next section defines and lists the four basic principles of cooperative learning. The third section describes the effectiveness of cooperative learning. Then an overview of selected cooperative learning structures is given. Finally, research on cooperative learning and second language learning is presented. The purpose of this study is to examine whether student participation increases when ESL students are engaged in cooperative group work.

Social Development and Academic Achievement

As stated in Chapter One ESL students struggle with social interactions in a school setting. These challenges make learning difficult and impact academic performance. Developing socially forms the basis for academic growth. Establishing trust and providing a setting where children feel a sense of belonging contribute to social development. Children have certain basic psychological needs and are more likely to become engaged in the learning process when the learning environment is compatible with those needs (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992). The need to belong has been identified as one of the chief psychological needs that children seek at school and elsewhere in their interactions with others. If this need is not satisfied within the

academic program, the student feels isolated from the classroom (Coelho, 1994) and their academic work will suffer (Cowie et al., 1994).

Along with creating a climate of trust and a feeling of belonging, providing students with instruction in social skills also contributes to social development. Positive social interactions with peers and adults in a school will benefit academic performance. Before expecting students to have positive interactions, it is necessary to teach and model social skills. Social skills affect all parts of a child's life. Social skills are used to make connections among people. Any time you talk to, play with, interact with, or work with others, you are using social skills. The number of children and young adults that do not have necessary social skills to establish and maintain positive relationships is increasing. Also, many students are no longer taught how to interact effectively with others by parents and peers because of changes in the structure of family, neighborhood, and community life. The effects that social skills have on a child's academic performance requires that schools become more involved in teaching social skills (Johnson, Johnson & Holubec, 1998).

Cooperative Learning

This section contains the definition, major outcomes, and essential components of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning is an effective instructional strategy that can be used to support the social development of ESL students in a school setting. Small groups are used so that students work together to accomplish individual and shared goals. During cooperative activities, individuals seek outcomes that are beneficial to themselves and beneficial to all other group members. Cooperative learning may be contrasted with

competitive learning (where students work against each other to achieve an academic goal that only one or a few students can attain) and individualistic learning (where students work by themselves to accomplish learning goals unrelated to those of the other students) (Johnson et al., 1998).

Extensive research indicates that cooperative learning is a highly effective instructional approach. According to Johnson et al., (1998) the first research study on cooperative learning was published in 1898. Since then there have been over 600 experimental and over 100 correlational studies conducted on cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts. These studies demonstrate that cooperative learning has a number of positive outcomes. The results typically show: academic gains, improved positive relationships among students, and improved social and affective development (Johnson et al., 1998 & Kagen, 1994).

The academic gains are most noticeable for minority and low achieving students. Along with the academic gains are increased intrinsic motivation, time-on-task, and critical thinking. The positive relationships among students include caring and committed relationships, personal and academic social support, and valuing of diversity. The gains in social and affective development includes increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and improved positive social interactions (Johnson et al., 1998 & Kagen, 1994).

There are four basic principles to cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation, and simultaneous interaction (Kagen, 1994). First, cooperative learning involves simultaneous interaction. When a classroom

is engaged in a simultaneous structure, for example 'pair discussion', then active participation is occurring for all students at the same time. In contrast, in traditional classrooms, one person at a time speaks - usually the teacher. Occasionally a student is called on by the teacher. Teachers on the average do almost eighty percent of the talking in a traditional classroom (Goodlad, 1984). The time left for student talk is less than twenty percent because some time is taken for management. The second basic principle of cooperative learning is positive interdependence. Positive interdependence occurs when team members realize that they need each other in order to complete the group's task. For example, group members study together and insure that all have mastered the assigned material. Each then takes a test individually and is awarded that score. If all group members achieve over a predetermined score, each group member receives bonus points. Thirdly, including individual accountability contributes to academic gains in cooperative learning. Each member's contributions are assessed and results are given to the individual and the group. Finally, the fourth basic principle is equal participation. During cooperative learning, students learn by interacting with the content and their peers. Each student contributes equally to the process and final product of an activity. Participation is an essential part of the learning process and an important element for student success.

Along with the four basic principles of cooperative learning there is an activity that is essential to the cooperative learning experience. This part of cooperative learning is sometimes called *group processing* and sometimes called *debriefing*. Periodically, it is necessary for each group to take time to reflect on processes which are taking place

within the group. During debriefing activities group members have the opportunity to reflect on an experience. This can take five minutes or a whole lesson; it can happen immediately after the experience or at a later date. Debriefing takes many forms. It can be structured or unstructured, directive or non-directive. A formal debriefing session might, for example, be created by the teacher to find out how much the students had actually learned about a specific topic: questionnaires or checklists could be used and the teacher would direct the activity. A more informal debriefing session would be used to allow students to discuss their understanding of the new information learned during the lesson. The teacher would not direct this activity, rather it would be directed by the topic the students wanted to discuss. The techniques vary for debriefing activities. Children can fill in smiley faces; they can write letters to group members; they can complete openended sentences like 'At the beginning of the activity I felt...', or any other form which elicits student responses. The main point of debriefing is to help students move towards a higher level of understanding by reflecting on their experiences (Cowie, Smith, Boulton & Laver, 1994).

Effectiveness of Cooperative Group Work

The previous section defined and listed the main components of cooperative learning. This section will present research that demonstrates the effectiveness of cooperative learning on both academic achievement and social development. Research supporting group work has a long history. The research has found that cooperative learning is an effective instructional strategy to promote academic achievement and

social development. It has been recommended that schools increase their use of small interactive groups as a way to help students relate new knowledge to previously learned concepts. Children learn to communicate effectively with one another, gain in self-confidence as they share ideas of mutual concern, and widen their network of friendships. Also, the relationship between language and learning throughout children's years at school has been stressed. (Cowie et al., 1994).

Some of the research on academic achievement and cooperative learning is given in the following paragraphs. In the Vygotskian tradition, it is the social context of cooperative learning that is a key ingredient in learning. Although Piaget recognizes the role of social experience in intellectual growth, Vygotsky is the developmental psychologist who has placed most emphasis on the social nature of individual thinking processes. In his view, children develop as thinkers by internalizing processes that were originally experienced in the social context (Cowie et al., 1994).

There are clear benefits when a more knowledgeable peer or adult interacts with a less expert child. Rather than just transferring information from one person to the next, learning is about 'the negotiation of meaning'. For it to be effective, it must be embedded in personally significant issues, human settings and social relationships. Cooperative learning, from this standpoint, creates opportunities for the understanding of meanings to take place through dialogue. The contexts of such dialogue should allow for a variety of views and experiences to be taken into account and give the students some say in what is to be learned and how learning goals are to be achieved (Cowie et al., 1994).

Vygotsky views learning as a cooperative task. Like Piaget, he argues that action is the way in which the child responds to the world. However, in Vygotsky's view, children also learn by reflecting on their experiences using language and as a result move towards a new level of understanding. Additionally, Vygotsky states that learning is achieved through cooperation with others in a whole variety of social settings – with peers, teachers, parents and other people who are significant to the child (Cowie et al., 1994).

Academic learning with the help of others is supported by Vygotsky's theory of a zone of proximal development (see appendix B for a diagram of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development). The zone of proximal development is the distance between the child's actual developmental level and his or her potential level of development with the help of adults or in collaboration with more competent peers (Cowie et al., 1994). The child learns by working with others to form his or her understanding of issues and events in the world. Vygotsky explains that children learn from other people who are more knowledgeable than themselves. The process of collaborating with other people not only gives the child more information about a topic but also verifies the parts of the topic that the child does understand. The process of cooperation enables the child to proceed to the next level of learning. Group work is most effective when it builds on the child's previous knowledge and stays within the child's zone of proximal development (Cowie et al., 1994).

Along with supporting academic achievement, cooperative group work also contributes to a child's social development by providing a setting where children can

explore relationships with one another and can share issues in a non-threatening environment. It is a climate in which children can learn to be confident and learn how to resolve conflicts (Brandes & Phillips, 1979; Hopson and Scally, 1981; Pike and Selby, 1988). Many educators believe that social experiences form the basis for both personal and academic growth. If the basic needs of the person are neglected then academic work will suffer. Cooperative learning methods contribute to a climate of acceptance and tolerance in the classroom. Students, regardless of gender, social class or ethnic background, who have experience of working cooperatively with one another are likely to have higher self-esteem and to view their peers more positively (Kutnik, 1988).

This section showed some of the research on the effectiveness of cooperative learning on academic achievement and social development. The next section will list and define some cooperative learning structures that can be used in cooperative learning.

Overview of Selected Cooperative Learning Structures

There are many different cooperative learning structures, as well as variations among them. This variety is necessary because the structures have different functions and are used to develop different skills. Kagen (1993) explains that the goal of structures differ in the areas of academic, cognitive, and social development. Three questions must be considered when determining the functions or goals of a structure:

- 1. What kind of cognitive and academic development does it foster?
- 2. What kind of social development does it foster?
- 3. Where in a lesson plan does it best fit?

The design of lessons involves using a variety of structures, each chosen for a specific academic, cognitive or social goal. Dependence on any one structure limits the cognitive and social learning of students (Kagen, 1993). The table on the following pages, is a representative sample of cooperative learning structures including the structures I used in cooperative lessons for my research study.

Table 1. Overview of Selected Structures

Table 1. Overview of Selected Structures				
Structure	Brief Description	Functions		
		(Academic and Social)		
Roundrobin	Each student in turn shares	Expressing ideas and		
	something with his or her	opinions, creating stories.		
	50 5	opinions, crowing stories.		
	teammates.	Equal participation, getting		
	teammates.	Equal participation, getting		
		acquainted with teammeter		
		acquainted with teammates.		
36 . 136	G. 1	** 1 1 1 1		
Match Mine	Students attempt to match	Vocabulary development.		
	the arrangement of objects	Communication skills, role-		
	on a grid of another student	taking ability.		
	using oral communication			
	only.			
	5112) .			
Numbered Heads Together	The teacher asks a question;	Review, checking for		
Numbered Heads Together	The teacher asks a question,	Review, enceking for		
	atudanta aonault to malza	Irmovulados, communica		
	students consult to make	knowledge, comprehension.		
		m		
	sure everyone knows the	Tutoring.		

answer. Then one student is called upon to answer.

Students interview each

Three-Step Interview Students interview each other in pairs, first one way,

information such as

Sharing personal

then the other. Students

hypotheses, reactions to a

each share with the group

poem, conclusions from a

information they learned in

unit. Participation,

the interview.

listening.

Structure	Brief Description	Functions
	-	(Academic and Social)
Think-Pair-Share	Students think to	Generating and revising
	themselves on a topic	hypotheses, inductive
	provided by the teacher;	reasoning, deductive
	they pair up with another	reasoning, application.
	student to discuss it; they	Participation, involvement.
	then share their thoughts	
	with the class.	
Team Word-Webbing	Students write	Analysis of concepts into
	simultaneously on a piece	components, understanding
	of chart paper, drawing	multiple relations among
	main concepts, supporting	ideas, differentiating
	elements, and bridges	concepts. Role-taking.

	representing the relation of	
	ideas in a concept.	
Roundtable	Each student in turn writes	Assessing prior knowledge,
	one answer on a paper and	practicing skills, recalling
	pencil are passed around the	information, creating
	group. With Simultaneous	cooperative art. Team-
	Roundtable, more than one	building, participation of
	pencil and paper are used at	all.
	once.	

Table 1. Overview of Select	ed Structures (continued).	
Structure	Brief Description	Functions
		(Academic and Social)
Jigsaw	Each student on the team	Acquisition and
	becomes an "expert" on one	presentation of new
	topic by working with	material, review, informed
	members from other teams	debate. Interdependence,
	assigned to the same expert	status equalization.
	topics. Upon returning to	
	their teams, each one in turn	
	teaches the group; and	
	students are all assessed on	
	all aspects of the topic.	
Partners	Students work in pairs to	Mastery and presentation or

reate or master content.

new material, concept

development. Presentation

from other teams. They

and communication skills.

then share their products or

understanding with the

other partner pair in their

team.

Adapted from a table in Kagen (1993).

I chose the cooperative structures in table 1 and not other structures to use in my research study because these structures were beneficial to the academic and social skills I wanted to include in my lessons.

Rationale for Cooperative Learning in an ESL Classroom

Recent research and experience in language classrooms have established the benefit of small-group activity in expanding student exposure to a new language and in providing many more opportunities to practice the language naturally than are available in traditional, whole-group instruction (McGroarty, 1993). Student participation in pair and small-group work following cooperative methods facilitates second language acquisition along with the subject matter mastery (McGroarty, 1991). For these reasons, educators concerned with building students' second language skills would benefit from learning about cooperative learning techniques. The following paragraphs present information from studies done with cooperative learning and second language learning.

A study on the experiences of ESL teachers in a Malaysian postsecondary institution supports the use of cooperative learning in a classroom. A variety of cooperative learning activities were introduced in classes, meetings, and after class by three ESL teachers at this school. The results from the three teachers involved in this study were similar. At the end of the semester the students were learning English from each other, English grades were improving and the Malay learners felt more confident to express their opinions and ideas in a collaborative learning environment (Crismore & Salim, 1997).

According to McGroarty (1993), there have only been a few studies that examine cooperative second language learning in K-12 classrooms in the United States. However, there is enough evidence from investigations of various types of group work in language learning to determine whether cooperative learning is a beneficial strategy for ESL students (McGroarty, 1993). These benefits relate to three areas of major theoretical importance for language development: input, interaction, and contextualization of knowledge.

Input

Input refers to language that students are exposed to. In traditional classrooms, ESL students receive less teacher and peer communication and communication at a lower linguistic and cognitive level than in cooperative learning classrooms. One of the main advantages of group work for second language learners is that it offers students the chance to hear more language and more complex language during interaction. In

discussion with others, students may hear more complex language from their peers than from the teacher in whole-class discussion.

It is not likely that every member of a class will be at the same i + 1 level (the stage of linguistic development where the learner can process the input, i, and still be exposed to new language forms and structures just beyond the current level of comprehension, i + 1) (McGroarty, 1993). However, if students are engaged in cooperative activities, there will be many kinds of interaction among speakers of different levels. Consequently, at least some of the input will be at an appropriate level. In one study, students participating in group-based investigation made more high-level cognitive gains than those who took part in peer-tutoring or whole-class methods (Holt, 1993).

Interaction

The structure of traditional classrooms gives only one person at a time the chance to speak and provides little opportunity for students to express themselves to teachers or peers. Most observational research indicates that the speaker is the teacher 60 to 70 % of the time during teacher-centered interaction. In comparison, in cooperative learning, one fourth to one half of the students can speak at any given time, depending on whether pair work or group work is being used (McGroarty, 1993). This is important to language learning because it give students more opportunities to practice using language skills.

In addition to increasing the number of opportunities available for verbal expression, cooperative learning methods promote use of a wide range of communicative

functions. This is important to language learning to expose students to a variety of language skills. Through teacher modeling and preteaching exercises, students are given specific instructions in such skills as paraphrasing the ideas of others, asking for explanations, summarizing, clarifying, indicating agreement or disagreement, and interrupting politely, all verbal skills, which are beneficial to the language acquisition process.

Researchers have asserted that use of pair or group work increases practice opportunities greatly, often leads to development of better oral skills, and provides diverse activities in the classroom (McGroarty, 1993). A study comparing cooperative and traditional instructional methods in high school English as a foreign language classes in Israel also confirmed the considerable increase in opportunities for natural practice of language when cooperative methods were used (Bejarano, 1987). Similarly, a cooperative Jigsaw activity created many more practice opportunities than did teacher-centered instruction in a university Dutch class (McGroarty, 1993). These studies have shown that cooperative learning activities give students much more opportunity to use the new language than they typically receive in teacher-centered instruction.

Cognitive Context

An additional benefit to using cooperative learning with ESL students is its potential for students to use their first language. While little research in this area has been done, it has been suggested that, in cooperative groups where there are bilinguals and monolinguals (who speak only Spanish or only English), the bilinguals and the monolingual Spanish speakers need to use their first language in order to accomplish the

learning activity. Thus, this study offers some support for possible contribution of the first language to second language mastery. Cooperative work, appropriately structured, can effectively use students' first language capabilities and consequently strengthening first language skills benefits the development of the second language (McGroarty, 1993).

This chapter was a review of literature on the importance of social development to academic success, the major components of cooperative learning, the effectiveness of cooperative learning, and cooperative learning's value as an appropriate instructional strategy to use with second language learners. This literature review provides supporting evidence for my research study on ESL students and social interactions. Chapter Three will explain in more detail the method of my study, which attempted to find out if student participation increased when cooperative learning activities were used in an ESL classroom.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine whether student participation increased when cooperative learning activities were used in an ESL classroom. This study focused on the following areas of student participation: being on task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help. Data was collected intermittently throughout the eight week study to evaluate whether student participation improved as more cooperative learning activities were introduced. The academic and social goals of cooperative learning structures described in Chapter Two, gave students the opportunities to engage in the above participation behaviors. The results of this study are beneficial for both mainstream teachers who have ESL students in their classroom and for ESL teachers. It provides information on how to adapt curriculum to better meet the needs of ESL students. This section has been separated into four parts: Context and Subjects, Description of Cooperative Learning Activities, Assessment Materials, and Description of Tools and Data Collection Procedure.

Context and Subjects

The study was conducted in a pull-out ESL classroom at a suburban elementary school in Minnesota. The school involved in this study has a total population of approximately 800 students and only 15 of those students were in the ESL program. The participants in the study consisted of five second and third graders. They were chosen for this study because of their grade level. Second and third grade is the highest grade level in the ESL program at this school. It was beneficial to have higher level students in the

study so they could comprehend and perform a variety of cooperative learning structures. The participants are in the ESL program and attended ESL class thirty minutes a day, Monday through Friday. The duration of the study was for eight weeks during the months of April and May 2002. This study was part of the ESL curriculum. The cooperative learning structures were implemented into the ESL objectives for second and third grade.

There was a variety in the background information for each student. Student one was an eight year old male in the third grade. He came to the U.S. at the age of four from Vietnam. Student two was a seven year old male in the second grade. He came to the U.S. at the age of three from Mexico. Student three was a seven year old female in the second grade. She was born in the U.S. and her family is from China. Student four was an eight year old female in the third grade. She was born in the U.S. and her family is from Korea. Student five was a seven year old female in the second grade. She came to the U.S. at the age of five from Vietnam.

Some of the students shared a mainstream: students one and four were in the same third grade classroom and students three and five were in the same second grade classroom. Student two was the only ESL student in his second grade classroom. The students in my study were the only second and third grade ESL students in the whole school. The table on the following page lists the English proficiency level for each student. The levels were determined by the Language Assessment Scales test.

Table 2. English Proficiency Level of Participants

	Student Number	Reading Proficiency	Writing Proficiency
1		Competent reader	Competent writer
2		Limited reader	Limited writer
3		Competent reader	Competent writer
4		Competent reader	Limited writer
5		Limited reader	Limited writer

Description of Cooperative Learning Activities

During the study, these five students worked in small groups or teams to help each other learn social skills and academic content. Cooperative activities were adapted for ESL students from a variety of sources (Holt, 1993; Kagen, 1994). A lesson plan was created for each day of the eight weeks, and contained the following elements: content area, lesson topic, academic objectives, language objectives, cooperative structures, roles, time required, materials needed, and a description of the teaching process. See appendix C for an overview of the cooperative learning lessons used in the study. The cooperative group work activities each started with a trust-building exercise before going to group activities such as problem-solving, cooperative games and discussion groups. A variety of cooperative learning structures were included in each activity. In Chapter Two we saw a brief description and functions of the structures used in the study. The academic and social goals of the cooperative learning structures gave students the opportunity to engage in the participation behaviors being observed. The session usually

ended when the groups reported back to the whole ESL class, along with an oral, written, or whole group debriefing activity, in which the teacher and student could discuss the successes as well as any problems such as non-cooperation between children. The debriefing activities were regarded as an important element in the whole process of cooperative group work as they gave students the opportunity to reflect on their cooperative experience.

As stated above there was a lesson plan created for each day of the eight weeks. Each day the students were divided into groups of two or three. Different students were grouped together each week. Students were observed on participation behaviors four times during the study. The cooperative learning activities for these four observed and videotaped weeks are described in detail below to illustrate the exact activity students were engaged in.

Week One

Group One consisted of students four and two. The lesson topic was folktales and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was roundtable. During this cooperative learning activity the students each shared one pencil and each student in turn wrote one answer on a shared paper. Their task as a group was to write the names of as many characters they could remember from the folktales previously studied.

Group Two consisted of students five, three, and one. The lesson topic was folktales and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was roundtable. During this cooperative learning activity the students each shared one pencil and each student in turn wrote one answer on a shared paper. Their task as a group was to

complete five writing activities that pertained to a previously discussed folktale. The five writing activities were: write the title of the story, list the characters of the story, list at least six things that happened in the story (in correct sequence), write a new title for the story, and list a reason why the group likes the new title.

Week Three

Group One consisted of students three, one and two. The lesson topic was folktales. Students were engaged in a trust-building exercise, which helped students form a group. Their task as a group was to complete a sheet titled: our group. Students took turns writing answers to complete the following open-ended statements: we've named our group..., the group roles we are learning about...., the names of the people in our group are...., and list the group's favorite food.

Group Two consisted of students four and five. The lesson topic was folktales and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was Think-Pair-Share. During this cooperative learning activity, group two was listening to group one read five statements they had written about a previously read folktale. The task for group two was to listen to the five statements and decide which ones were true and which ones were false. The cooperative learning structure, Think-Pair-Share started by each student thinking about the answer individually. Then students four and five told each other the answer. Then they shared their answers with the class.

Week Five

Group One consisted of students three, two, and four. The lesson topic was story elements and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was Think-Pair-

Share. During this cooperative learning activity students were learning about the elements of a story by reading clues to a mystery and trying to solve it. Their task as a group was to use the cooperative learning structure Think-Pair-Share when solving the mystery. It started by each student thinking about the solution individually. Then students shared their answers within their group. Finally, they shared their answers with the class.

Group Two consisted of students one and five. The lesson topic was story elements and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was using paraphrase chips. During this cooperative learning activity students were learning about story elements by solving a mystery. Their task as a group was to take turns reading the clue. After each clue was read, students used their paraphrase chip and restated the clue using his/her own words. Each student was given a round paper circle that represented a paraphrase chip.

Week Seven

Group One consisted of students five and four. The lesson topic was prediction and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was Three-Step Interview. During this cooperative learning activity students were shown the cover of a book and asked to interview each other to share their ideas on what they thought the book was about. Next each group member shared his or her idea with the class.

Group Two consisted of students three, two, and one. The lesson topic was prediction and the cooperative structure the students were engaged in was Group

Processing. During this cooperative learning activity each student in the group takes turn describing their predictions for an ending to a story.

Assessment Materials

The assessment tools used in this study were adapted from a variety of sources to evaluate student participation in an ESL classroom. The four tools used were a Cooperative Learning Progress Report (Johnson et al., 1998), a Teacher Observation Form (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998), a student checklist titled, My Checklist for Cooperative Groups (Kagen, 1994), and a teacher created written questionnaire titled Student Cooperative Learning Log. All assessment forms can be found in appendix A.

Description of Tools and Data Collection Procedure

The study was carried out for two months. During the two months the ESL students experienced a curriculum that involved different types of cooperative group work. The main objective was to find out if student participation in the areas of: being on-task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help increased or changed over time when cooperative group work was used in an ESL classroom.

Cooperative Learning Progress Report (see appendix A)

This daily progress report was adapted from a form in Johnson et al. (1998) by the ESL teacher. This form focused on the following five areas: critical or interesting incidents, successes, problems, my thoughts, and ideas to improve future cooperative learning lessons. Throughout the eight week study, the ESL teacher before, during and after cooperative group work recorded observations. It was completed daily to record successes and problems from each cooperative learning activity. Furthermore, it was

used as a journal to record anecdotal observations of the students and ideas that would be helpful for future cooperative learning activities. The written anecdotal observations collected by this assessment tool were used to help determine if students were participating in the cooperative learning activities. The results for this assessment tool were divided into the five areas mentioned above. The entries for each section were summarized to include the major observations from the eight week study.

<u>Teacher Observation Form (see appendix A)</u>

This form was adapted from a form found in Johnson et al. (1998) by the ESL teacher. It included four different types of student participation: *On-Task, Contributed Ideas, Helped Groupmates*, and *Asked for Help if Needed*. Within each of these categories there were specific expectations listed which were indicators to measure whether students were showing participation for that category. A rating scale (1 = Inadequate, 2 = Poor, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent) was used to rate these specific participation behaviors.

Prior to the research study, the video camera was set up in the classroom, so that during the eight week study the camera would not distract the students and affect the results of the study. During the study, students were videotaped for thirty minutes while engaged in cooperative learning activities. The ESL teacher rated the five students on two separate days of the observation week. One day two students were observed and on another day three students were observed. The observations were carried out at four time points throughout the eight week study: week one, week three, week five and week

seven. Without the students present, the ESL teacher viewed the videotape and the information was recorded on the observed task.

These observations were used to score each child's participation in cooperative group work on a four point scale from 1 to 4 (1 = inadequate, 2 = poor, 3 = good, 4 = excellent). The results were limited because only one rater was used to score this tool. The scores are subjective and indicate the opinion of the rater. The results for this tool were scored weekly. First, the total score for each participation behavior (on-task, contributed ideas, helped groupmates, and asked for help) was added up. Next, the total points each student received were divided by the total possible points to get a percentage. The following paragraph is an example of this rating system.

For example, the 'on-task' participation behavior has five specific expectations (see Appendix A for a list of the specific expectations). The highest score each specific expectation can receive is four. Therefore, the total points possible for 'on-task' is twenty. If a student received a four on each of the specific expectations, than the student's score would be 20/20 or 100%. Indicating that the student demonstrated 100% participation by being on-task for 100 % of the time. The rest of the participation behaviors were scored the same way. Contributed ideas had eight total points. Helped groupmates had sixteen total points, and asked for help if needed had eight total points.

Additionally, the total points for all four behaviors were added up to find an overall percentage of how students participated during cooperative learning activities. The total possible points for all four behaviors was fifty-two. This tool directly related to the

research question by showing that an increase in total points indicated an increase in student participation.

My Checklist for Cooperative Groups (see appendix A)

This form was designed by Kagen (1994) to have students reflect on the social skill of 'being helpful'. For example, students tried to be helpful by sharing ideas or answers, encouraging others, and by clarifying new concepts to group members that did not understand. To choose this skill I examined the students involved in the study and selected the social skill that these students were most in need of acquiring: being helpful to group members. Students reflected on how helpful they were during cooperative learning activities. This form contained seven statements, which expressed ways to be helpful as a group member. The seven statements were:

- 1. When I knew an answer or had an idea, I shared it.
- 2. I encouraged others in my group.
- 3. I used names.
- 4. I felt encouraged by people in my group.
- 5. When my answer was not the same as my partner's, I tried to find out why.
- 6. When I did not understand something, I asked my partner.
- 7. When my partner did not understand, I helped him/her.

There was also one open-ended question at the end that asked students to comment on something they could do to make their group better.

During the eight week study, individual students completed this form at the end of week one, week three, week five, and week seven. Each of the seven statements was read and explained by the ESL teacher to clarify the meaning. The students were instructed to complete the close-ended statements by circling a 'happy' or a 'sad face' as a way to agree or disagree with each statement. The last part of the checklist was an open-ended question on goal setting. The goal setting question asked students to describe one thing they could do to make their group better. This is a debriefing activity. As stated in Chapter Two, debriefing is an essential activity to cooperative learning. The main purpose of debriefing is to move students to a higher level of understanding by reflecting on their cooperative experiences.

The results for each student were added up weekly. When students circled a 'happy face' one point was given and when students circled a 'sad face' zero points were given. The total possible points for each week was seven. A percentage was found by dividing the total number of points a student received by the total points possible. For example, during week one student one circled three 'happy' faces and received three points out of a possible seven points (3/7). Indicating that 43% of student one's checklist contained 'happy' faces or positive responses.

This assessment tool relates to the research study by integrating social skills into the curriculum. Evidence in Chapter Two states that implementing social skills into the curriculum might increase student participation.

Student Cooperative Learning Log (see appendix A)

This questionnaire was created by the ESL teacher as a debriefing activity, which gave students the opportunity to express how they felt about working in cooperative groups. The questionnaire consisted of four open-ended questions:

- 1. What did you like about the activity?
- 2. What did you NOT like about the activity?
- 3. How did you help your teammates?
- 4. What is one thing you did today?

Question one and two refer to the cooperative learning activity the individual student was involved in for the day the student cooperative learning log was completed. Question three refers to the social skill ('being helpful) that was stressed during the eight week study. Students responded with one thing that they did to help their teammates. Question four is similar to questions one and two. It refers to the cooperative activity each student was involved in when the student cooperative learning log was completed. For example, during week three student three responded to number four by writing: "worked together".

Throughout the eight week study, students completed these during week one, week three, week five, and week seven. Students individually completed one question a day during the weeks mentioned above.

The student cooperative learning log was a debriefing activity used to increase student participation by helping students realize that their response made a difference to their learning. It allowed students to have a sense of ownership in the activities they were involved in. The ESL teacher also benefited from the feedback by using the information to plan and adjust future cooperative learning activities according to student interests and

learning styles. This processing step is beneficial to ESL students, as it will increase comprehension, peer support, and participation. Debriefing is an essential part of the cooperative group work process. In particular, debriefing activities are crucial in consolidating the potential gains in understanding on the part of the children brought about by cooperative group work activities (Cowie, Smith, Boulton & Laver, 1994).

Two different raters coded all student answers for the eight week study. The raters gave each question an answer code number that corresponded to a general category of answers. A different set of answer codes was developed for each of the four questions. Also, each question contained a list that represented the frequency of answers. For example, during week five student two's answer was coded with a 'three' which indicated that he or she answered "disagreed with group members" to question two: what did you not like about the activity?

The context and subjects of this research study have been presented, along with a description of the cooperative learning activities used to encourage ESL students to participate in group activities. Additionally, the four assessment tools and method for collecting data have been given. In Chapter Four, the data that were gathered in this study will be presented, analyzed, and interpreted to determine whether there was a difference in student participation when cooperative learning activities were used in an ESL classroom.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In Chapter Three, the study was explained in detail, including a description of the participants, setting, assessment tools, and method for collecting the data. The purpose of this study was to examine whether student participation increased when cooperative learning activities were used in an ESL classroom. In Chapter Four, data gathered from four different research tools will be presented. Analysis and interpretation of this data will determine if students participated more during cooperative learning activities.

The overall results showed an increase in student participation. The results are separated into four different sections to represent the four different assessment tools described in chapter three. The four sections are in the following order: cooperative learning progress report results, teacher observation form results, my checklist for cooperative groups results, and student cooperative learning log results.

The first section summarized the major observations that were listed on the cooperative learning progress report during the eight week study. Next, five tables are shown to give the results for individual students from teacher observations done during cooperative learning activities. Students were observed on four different participation behaviors: being on-task, contributing ideas, helping groupmates, and asking for help. Then, individual student results for 'my checklist for cooperative groups' will be

presented. Finally, the group results from four open-ended questions asked on the student cooperative learning log are shown on the last four tables in this section.

Cooperative Learning Progress Report Results

The results for this assessment tool were divided into the five areas: Critical or interesting incidents, successes, problems, my thoughts, and ideas to improve future cooperative learning activities. The entries for each section were summarized to include the major observations from the eight week study. Each of the five paragraphs below present the major observations for the five areas.

The main critical or interesting incidents that were recorded were about the classroom environment and student attitude. Cooperative learning activities motivated students to come to class early and not want to leave. Also noted many times in the progress report was that students had many opportunities to interact when cooperative learning was used in the ESL classroom.

One of the main successes from the eight week study was that students from the same background started to use their first language with other students from the same country. Another success was that through the trust building exercises that were done before each activity, a non-threatening environment was created. This gave students confidence when interacting with their peers and acquiring new skills.

At times during the cooperative activities it was difficult for students to agree or to make decisions. This often led to disagreements. Students noted in their student cooperative learning logs that this was a part of cooperative learning that they did not like.

The next area was a place for the ESL teacher to write personal thoughts about student interactions or the planning process of cooperative learning. The main observations that was written often in this category was that toward the end of the eight week study, students that were not friends before now seemed to enjoy working together. There was less arguing than in the beginning of the eight week study. Also, some student expressed that it was more fun to work as a team than alone.

The last area contained ideas that could be used for future cooperative learning lessons. The main theme that was mentioned in this section was to use less complex cooperative learning structures. It was stressed that because these students were just beginning to learn how to work as a group the simple cooperative learning structures were more successful.

Teacher Observation Form Results

The tables and figures on the following pages show the results for the four weeks students were observed during cooperative learning activities. This assessment tool measured each student on four different behaviors to help determine if student participation increased when cooperative learning was used in an ESL classroom. The four participation behaviors measured were: being on task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help.

The results were limited because only one rater was used to score this tool. The scores are subjective and indicate the opinion of only one rater. The overall results show an increase in student participation. Each week shows the percentage of the total points students received for classroom participation. Two students increased participation by

20%, however the other three students only had a slight increase that ranged from 2% to
8%.

Table 3. Teacher Observation Form Results for Student One

Student One	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
On-Task	12/20 = 60%	19/20 = 95%	15/20 = 75%	17/20 = 85%
Contributed Ideas	5/8 = 63%	6/8 = 75%	7/8 = 88%	6/8 = 75%
Helped Groupmates	10/16 = 63%	12/16 = 75%	12/16 = 75%	12/16 = 75%
Asked for Help if Needed	4/8 = 50%	8/8 = 100%	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%
Total Score	31/52 = 60%	45/52 = 87%	40/52 = 77%	41/52 = 79%

Table 3 shows the results from the four weeks that student one was observed. During week one student one's score was similar for all the participation behaviors. His total score for week one was 60%. Week three there was approximately a 30% increase. Student one showed the most increase in being on-task and asking for help. This increase could have been because his group role assignment was to be the leader of the group. As a leader, he was concerned about each group member equally participating. He asked his group members to help complete the activity by stating, "This is a team project, we each need to add our ideas". The total score for week five was 77%. The last week observed showed a high percentage of 85 in the area of being on task and all three of the other

behaviors were scored at 75%. His total score for the week started out at 60%, then increased to 87% and went down to 77% but not below the initial week. The final week student one scored a total of 79%.

Table 4. Teacher Observation Form Results for Student Two

Student Two	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
On-Task	13/20 = 65%	20/20 = 100%	8/20 = 40%	13/20 = 65%
Contributed Ideas	5/8 = 63%	8/8 = 100%	4/8 = 50%	6/8 = 75%
Helped Groupmates	10/16 = 63%	13/16 = 81%	7/16 = 44%	12/16 = 75%
Asked for Help if Needed	6/8 = 75%	8/8 = 100%	4/8 = 50%	6/8 = 75%
Total Score	34/52 = 65%	49/52 = 94%	23/52 = 44%	37/52 = 71%

As shown in table 4, student two started this study with a total score of 65% in the first week of cooperative learning activities. He showed a considerable difference in participation level between week three and week five. Student two reached 100% on three of the participation behaviors in week three. These behaviors were being on-task, contributing ideas, and asking for help if needed. This student was very distracted and frustrated for the observation period during week five. The reason for frustration was not known, but it could have been the reason for the drop in scores. His scores in week five went lower than week one. The last week of observation showed a total score of 71%.

Table 5. Teacher Observation Form Results for Student Three

Student Three	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
On-Task	14/20 = 70%	20/20 = 100%	14/20 = 70%	16/20 = 80%
Contributed Ideas	4/8 = 50%	7/8 = 88%	5/8 = 63%	7/8 = 88%
Helped Groupmates	11/16 = 69%	15/16 = 94%	11/16 = 69%	14/16 = 88%
Asked for Help if Needed	5/8 = 63%	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%
Total Score	34/52 = 65%	48/52 = 92%	36/52 = 69%	43/52 = 83%

The results for student three are shown in table five. She started week one with a total score of 65 %. Her highest score for week one was 70 % in the area of being ontask. She scored 100% in week three in the same area of being on task. Week three showed quite an increase in all four areas. This increase in participation behaviors was most likely because she was very interested in the lesson topic, which was folktales. She contributed to group discussion by telling the class a folktale that originated from her native country, China. Then in week five her score went down slightly and were similar to the scores in week one. In week seven her scores went up again, but not as high as week three. Her total score started with 65% and then showed an increase between 70% to 90 % in the last three observed weeks.

Table 6. Teacher Observation Form Results for Student Four

Student Four	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
On-Task	15/20 = 75%	11/20 = 55%	12/20 = 60%	14/20 = 70%
Contributed Ideas	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%	5/8 = 63%	5/8 = 63%
Helped Groupmates	10/16 = 63%	11/16 = 69%	7/16 = 44%	13/16 = 81%
Asked for Help if Needed	6/8 = 75%	4/8 = 50%	5/8 = 63%	6/8 = 75%
Total Score	37/52 = 71%	32/52 = 62%	29/52 = 56%	38/52 = 73%

The results for student four are shown in table six. Her scores on week one were very similar. She scored 75% on three participation behaviors: being on task, contributing ideas, and asking for help. She had a slightly lower score for helping groupmates. Her scores went down in week three in the areas of being on task and asking for help. The scores for student four showed quite a decrease in week five. They went lower than week one. Her lowest overall score for the eight week study was during week five. It was a score of 44% in the area of helping others. The results for week seven were encouraging. Her scores for helping groupmates increased to 81%. These results indicate that at the end of the eight week study, she realized the benefits of group work by

asking her group members for help. It was noted in the cooperative learning progress report that this student is very independent, quiet and prefers to work alone. These behaviors affected how she performed in a group activity and the data by showing a decrease in 'contributed ideas' during weeks five and seven. Week seven her scores increased with a total of 73%

Table 7. Teacher Observation Form Results for Student Five

Student Five	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
On-Task	15/20 = 75%	9/20 = 45%	18/20 = 90%	14/20 = 70%
Contributed Ideas	5/8 = 63%	5/8 = 63%	7/8 = 88%	7/8 = 88%
Helped Groupmates	10/16 = 63%	10/16 = 63%	13/16 = 81%	12/16 = 75%
Asked for Help if Needed	5/8 = 63%	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%	6/8 = 75%
Total Score	35/52 = 67%	30/52 = 58%	44/52 = 85%	39/52 = 75%

As shown in table 7, student five started week one with a total score of 67%. She went down in the area of being on task to a score of 45%. This score is low because during the cooperative activity she became very frustrated when the content was difficult for her. She stopped trying to complete the activity even when her group members offered to help. Week five showed an increase in all of the areas with an overall total score of 85%. Her scores were similar in week seven. Student five's total increased by 15% from week one to week seven.

My Checklist for Cooperative Groups Results

The tables on the following pages show results from when student were asked to reflect on how helpful they were during the activities. The results for each student were added up weekly. When students circled a 'happy face' one point was given and when students circled a 'sad face' zero points were given. The overall results were positive. Between week one and week seven positive student responses increased by 14%, 28%, 28%, 29% and 57%. This increase indicates that students' perception of their group involvement increased. Increased student involvement was shown when students shared ideas, encouraged others, and helped group members when something was confusing. These are all indicators of increased participation and a feeling of trust and acceptance from their classmates.

Table 8. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student One

Question	W 1.0	TT 1 (D)	W. 1 D'	W. 1.6
Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
1	0	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	0
3	1	1	1	1
4	0	1	1	1
5	0	1	1	0
6	0	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	0
Total Score	3/7 = 43%	7/7 = 100%	7/7 = 100 %	4/7 = 57%

As shown in table 8, student one showed an increase up to 100 % for weeks three and five. The last week his scores went down again, but not below week one. Student one's English proficiency level is very high. According to the Language Assessment Scales test he is a competent reader and a competent writer. The reason his score decreased in week seven could be because the content was below his level of competency. He wasn't challenged and therefore became disinterested with the group activity.

Table 9. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student Two

Question	Quartien			
Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
1	0	1	1	1
1	0	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	0	1	0	1
4	0	1	0	1
5	0	1	1	0
6	0	1	0	0
7	1	1	1	1
Total Score	3/7 = 43%	7/7 = 100 %	5/7 = 71%	5/7 = 71%

Table 9 shows that student two started out the eight week study with a low score of 43% and increased greatly in week three with a score of 100%. This increase could be due to the fact that week three was the first week 'talking chips' was introduced to the group. Each student was given a chip, which could be used when he or she wanted to

express their opinion during group discussions. This helped all students to equally participate. The 'talking chips' increased student participation and decreased disagreements among all students. It is interesting to note that the last two weeks student two received the exact same score of 71%.

Table 10. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student Three

Question Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
Tuilloci	WCCK OILC	WCCK TINCC	VV CCR I IVC	WCCK SCVCII
1	0	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	1	1
5	0	1	1	1
6	0	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1
Total Score	3/7 = 43%	6/7 = 86%	7/7 = 100 %	7/7 = 100%

Table 10 shows that student three started out with a low score of 43%. She increased to 86% in week three and in the last two weeks increased all the way to 100%. Her score from week one to week seven increased by 60%. This is the most increase on this assessment tool shown out of all the students in the study. At the beginning of the

eight week study student three was very dependent on the ESL teacher. She continuously asked the teacher for direction and approval. The increase in her cooperative checklist scores demonstrates that at the end of the study she asked her group members to help her instead of the ESL teacher. Additionally, she showed more group involvement by encouraging others and contributing ideas.

Table 11. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student Four

Question	eeje. eoopere	uive Groups. Resu	je. 2e 1 0.	••
Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
1	0	1	1	1
2	1	1	0	0
3	1	1	1	1
4	0	0	0	1
5	0	0	1	0
6	0	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1
Total Score	3/7 = 43%	5/7 = 71%	5/7 = 71%	5/7 = 71%

Student four starts out with a low score of 43%. It is interesting to note that her overall score in the last three weeks were exactly the same. Her responses to the seven statements were similar but not the same for these three weeks. This increase from week

one to week three indicates that she improved on sharing ideas and encouraging others in her group. The reasoning for the consistent scores on week three, week five and week seven is not known. When student four completed the checklist for each week, she took time answering each question. It was evident that she was in fact reflecting on her experience and not just quickly completing the form in order to complete it.

Table 12. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student Five

Question	centist je. coopere	iiive Groups. Resu	iis joi simuein 1 iv	<u>-</u>
Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
4	4	4	4	1
1	1	1	1	1
2	0	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
	_			
4	0	1	1	1
5	0	1	1	0
6	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1
Total Score	4/7 = 57%	7/7 = 100%	7/7 = 100%	6/7 = 86%

As shown in table 12, student five had a score of 57% for week one. She increased all the way to 100% for weeks three and five. Her score for week seven was slightly lower but still in the high range. For week seven she responded positively to all but one statement. The statement she responded negatively to was: when my answer was not the same as my partner's, I tried to find out why.

Answer Codes	Frequency of Answers
1 = help more	1 = 5 times
2 = treat others as you want to be treated	2 = 4 times
3 = be kind	3 = 7 times
4 = work together	4 = 1 time
5 = listen to my group members	5 = 1 time
6 = encourage my friends	6 = 1 time
7 = share	7 = 1 time

Table 13. My Checklist for Cooperative Groups: Results for Student Goals What can you do to make your group better?

Student				
Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
1	1	1	1	1
2	3	1	3	3
3	2	2	2	2
4	3	3	5	3
5	7	3	4	6

There was also one open-ended question at the end of the cooperative checklist that asked students to comment on something that they could do to make their group better. The results are listed above in table 13. Overall, students chose goals that focused

on being more active in group activities. Their goals showed a desire to participate more in their learning by helping, sharing, listening, working together and encouraging their friends. Table 13 shows the data collected regarding the goal individuals set for future group experiences. I was not able to follow through to find out if students achieved these goals. The main purpose for using this tool was as a debriefing activity.

Student Cooperative Learning Log Results

This questionnaire was created by the ESL teacher as a debriefing activity, which gave students the opportunity to express their opinions in writing on the following areas. Two different raters coded all student answers for the eight week study. The raters gave each question an answer code that corresponded to a general category of answers. A different set of answer codes was developed for each of the four questions. The openended questions asked students to comment on:

- 1. What did you like about the activity?
- 2. What did you NOT like about the activity?
- 3. How did you help your teammates?
- 4. What is one thing you did today?

Answer Codes	Frequency of Answers
1 = writing	1 = 1 time
2 = working together	2 = 3 times
3 = sharing	3 = 5 times
4 = fun activity	4 = 5 times
5 = helping each other	5 = 1 time
6 = reading	6 = 1 time
7 = drawing	7 = 4 times

Table 14. *Question 1 - What did you like about the activity?*

Student	Week	Week	Week	Week
Number	One	Three	Five	Seven

1	5	2	6	7
2	1	2	3	7
3	3	3	4	7
4	4	4	4	7
5	3	4	2	3

Table 14 shows how students responded to the first question. It was interesting to note that what students liked most about cooperative learning activities was that they were fun and that they were able to share stories and ideas with other students.

According to research stated in Chapter Two, improved positive relationships among students are a positive outcome of cooperative learning.

Answer Codes	Frequency of Answers
1 = nothing	1 = 4 times
2 = liked everything about the activity	2 = 4 times
3 = disagreed with group members	3 = 3 times
4 = fought or argued with group members	4 = 6 times
5 = other group members complained during activity	5 = 1 time
6 = content was difficult	6 = 1 time
7 = not enough time to complete activity	7 = 1 time

Table 15. Question 2 - What did you NOT like about the activity?

		,,,,,,,,,		
Student	Week	Week	Week	Week
Number	One	Three	Five	Seven
1	4	2	1	1
2	1	2	3	1
3	4	2	2	7
4	4	4	4	6
_	_			_
5	3	3	4	5

When students were asked what they didn't like about the activities, the most common response as shown in table 15 was when they argued or fought with group members. The next highest response was 'I liked everything'. One student commented that she was frustrated because there wasn't enough time in a day to complete an activity. Each class period was only thirty minutes long. This short class period was often enough time to start and finish a cooperative learning project.

Answer Codes	Frequency of Answers
1 = giving ideas	1 = 2 times
2 = spelling words	2 = 3 times
3 = writing	3 = 3 times
4 = cooperating	4 = 5 times
5 = being nice	5 = 2 times
6 = didn't help teammates	6 = 4 times
7 = drawing	7 = 1 time

Table 16. *Question 3 - How did you help your teammates?*

Student Number	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
Number	One	111100	Tive	Seven
1	4	1	3	6
2	3	2	2	7
3	2	5	1	6
4	4	3	6	6
5	4	5	4	4

The responses for question three indicated that students helped their teammates most by cooperating with group members. Students stated that they helped by 'giving turns to write', 'working together', and 'being nice' (see Table 16). The social skill

implemented during this eight week study was 'being helpful'. It is interesting to the results to note that all students were able to write a response for this question each week, which indicated that each student in some way found a way to be helpful.

Answer Codes	Frequency of Answers
1 = write	1 = 5 times
2 = described his/her group member responsibility	2 = 1 time
3 = read and write	3 = 3 times
4 = read	4 = 1 time
5 = worked together	5 = 1 time
6 = answer related to an activity in lesson	6 = 7 times
7 = helped teammates	7 = 1 time
8 = be nice	8 = 1 time

Table 17. Question 4 - What is one thing you did today?

			7	
Student	Week	Week	Week	Week
Number	One	Three	Five	Seven
1	3	4	1	6
2	1	2	6	6
3	1	5	6	6
4	1	3	6	6
•	•	3	Ü	O
5	3	1	7	8
-	-	-	,	

The last table for this section shows how students responded when asked one thing they accomplished for the day. The highest answer given was coded as a '6: answer

related to an activity in the lesson'. This answer indicated that students reflected on the cooperative activity for the day and wrote one thing they contributed to the group to help complete the cooperative activity.

Examining the data gathered from the four assessment tools reveals that in general, students participated more in a group at the end of the study than they did at the beginning. The results of four assessment tools were presented and discussed in this chapter. The information gathered from the research study supports that using cooperative learning in an ESL classroom increases student participation and promotes social development in a natural context.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The preceding chapter stated the results from this study and discussed how they related to the research question. In Chapter Five, the major findings of the current research cited in Chapter Two will be presented, the results of the study will be analyzed and the benefits to educators will be discussed. The limitations and problems of the study will be discussed in addition to ideas for improvements and future research.

My goal in planning this research study was to create a non-threatening environment, which encouraged participation and promoted positive social interactions in an ESL classroom. In my study I wanted to find out if cooperative learning activities increased student participation among students in an ESL classroom. My study consisted of five ESL students in second and third grade. Cooperative learning structures were implemented in the ESL curriculum. Students were observed throughout the study on the following areas of participation: being on-task, contributing ideas, helping classmates, and asking for help. In order to reinforce and develop social skills, we focused on one social skill (being helpful during cooperative group work) during the eight week study. Additionally, I recorded observations before, during and after cooperative learning activities to document successes and problems from each activity.

Chapter Four included a detailed description and discussion of the results from my study. Overall the results from the teacher observations indicated that student participation increased when ESL students were engaged in cooperative learning activities. Reviewing my cooperative learning progress report and student cooperative learning logs led me to conclude that my study accomplished five things.

First, students had more opportunities to listen and produce language. Discussion and sharing ideas in a natural setting encouraged and motivated students to share their ideas. A noticeable change occurred in my classroom as I began to recognize that I spoke less and the students were talking more. My classroom was less teacher-centered and more focus was on the students.

Second, students created strong friendship connections and cross-cultural respect for each other through group interactions. I recognized this in a situation with two students who both expressed to me at different times that they didn't like each other. During week four of my study, I decided to put these two students in a group together. I observed them interacting, laughing and accomplishing their task.

Third, engaging students with the same background in a group supported first language skills. When placed in a group together, two students from Vietnam automatically started to used their first language during the activity. It surprised them that they could understand each other. They were excited to have an opportunity to use their first language at school.

Fourth, the classroom environment and student attitude improved. Students were interested and excited about ESL class and the activities we were doing. This was evident when students came to class early and didn't want to leave at the end.

Finally, cooperative learning promoted leadership skills and teamwork. Students were learning from their peers by providing comprehensible input and output. More advanced students used academic language to explain concepts to group members.

<u>Implications for Educators</u>

Cowie, et al. (1994) emphasize the need for children to develop friendships. Although it seems impossible to create authentic friends for children, educators have many opportunities that may facilitate the growth of friendships. During classroom activities teachers can present situations for children to work with partners or groups. My research study supports that a small group setting is an ideal situation to foster friendships as it may decrease anxiety for children that are withdrawn in large groups and possibly establish a connection with one of the peers.

Educators need a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of their students. This is particularly apparent when working with students from variety of cultural backgrounds. Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy which provides a culturally appropriate learning environment that can raise the levels of academic achievement of minority students, promote their affective development, improve race relations, and support second-language acquisition (Coelho, 1994).

Recommendations for Future Research and Limitations

My research study examined cooperative learning and student participation. One way to expand this research would be to identify the effects of cooperative learning on academic achievement. During cooperative learning small groups of students work together to accomplish individual and shared goal. Johnson, et al. (1998) recommend giving individual grades and group grades when assessing students.

The length of my ESL classes and the duration of my study influenced my results. My class periods were only thirty minutes, which made it difficult to start and complete a cooperative learning activity. I would recommend that cooperative learning activities be implemented for a longer time period. In my study I used nine different cooperative structures. Students were not able to master any of them because of the large number and length of time. I think it would be better to use fewer cooperative structures and provide students more time to learn how to do them. My results were limited because of the small sample of students I used. It would strengthen my results to use a larger group or a different age group. After conducting this study, I have realized that eight weeks is a short period to teach and implement cooperative learning activities.

In a future study, I would attend training on cooperative learning before attempting to implement these activities into my classroom. It was difficult to learn about cooperative learning and try to implement the new ideas at the same time. During my study I learned that creating and gathering materials for cooperative learning projects involves a huge amount of preparation. Therefore, instead of working alone on implementing cooperative learning, I would recommend that a small group of teachers work together. For example, a small group of teachers could work together to produce a

jigsaw unit. This not only reduces the workload for an individual, but also results in a better product.

Kagen (1994) states that a curriculum should include a balance of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic learning experiences. When only one instructional strategy is used the amount of learning will be limited. It would be beneficial for future research to find out how the combination of a variety of learning experiences impacts student achievement and social development. Kagen (1994) supports this by stating that if we provide a wide range of experiences, learners will be more prepared to adjust or change to their physical and social environment. The ultimate goal in education is to prepare students for their future. Providing students with a variety of instructional strategies helps students to be successful in many of life's settings.

APPENDIX A

Assessment Tools

- Cooperative Learning Progress Report
- Teacher Observation Form
- My Checklist for Cooperative Groups
- Student Cooperative Learning Log

COOPERATIVE LEARNING PROGRESS REPORT

Date:
Week:
Lesson Topic:
Describe Critical or Interesting Incidents:
Successes:
TO 11
Problems:
My Thoughts:
Ideas to Improve Future Cooperative Learning Lessons:
<u> </u>

Teacher Observation Form

Date:	Observer:				
Rating Scale: (1 = Inadequate, 2 = Poor, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent, NA = Not Applicable for Date of Observation)					
On-Task	1.	2.	Comments: Student #1	Comments: Student #2	
Stayed on task.					
Showed interest in group activity by sitting close to group members and making eye contact with members. Did not become frustrated or stop trying if activity was difficult. Performed assigned role.					
Understood instructions and was able to begin activity. Contributed Ideas					
Contributed one or two opinions orally during group activity. Waited for teammates to finish speaking before					
contributing					

opinions.

General Comments:

<u>Rating Scale</u>: (1 = Inadequate, 2 = Poor, 3 = Good, 4 = Excellent, NA = Not Applicable for Date of Observation)

Helped	1.	2.	Comments:	Comments:
Groupmates			Student #1	Student #2
Listened to				
teammates'				
ideas by				
making eye				
contact and not				
interrupting				
others.				
Encouraged				
teammates by				
giving positive				
feedback or				
words of				
encouragement.				
Respected				
teammates by				
using kind				
words ('please',				
'thank you',				
etc).				
Volunteered to				
help teammates				
if necessary.				
Asked for				
Help if Needed				
Asked				
teammates for				
help.				
Asked teacher				
for help.				

General Comments:

My Checklist For Cooperative Groups

STUDENT COOPERATIVE LEARNING LOG

Name:
Date:
1. What did you like about the activity?
2. What did you NOT like about the activity?
3. How did you help your teammates?
4. What is one thing you did today?

Date:
1. What did you like about the activity?
2. What did you NOT like about the activity?
3. How did you help your teammates?
4. What is one thing you did today?

APPENDIX B

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Z.P.D.)

APPENDIX C

Overview of Cooperative Learning Lesson Plans

	Week One	Week Three	Week Five	Week Seven
Content Area	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts
Lesson Topic	Folktales	Folktales	Story Elements	Prediction
Academic Objectives	 Understand story sequence. Understand story elements. Understand folktale genre. 	 Write three true statements. Write two false statements. 	• Understand story elements, story sequence, plot and characters.	 Predict beginning and end of story. Identify setting, characters, problem and solution.
Language Objectives	Develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English.	• Develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English.	• Develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English.	Develop oral and written language by labeling, illustrating, and discussing structural story elements.
Cooperative Structures	 Match Mine Three-Step Interview Jigsaw Roundtable Group Processing Numbered Heads Together 	RoundrobinThink-Pair-Share	 Brainstorm Think-Pair-Share Talking Chips Paraphrase Chips 	 Three-Step Interview Roundrobin Group Processing Talking Chips Think-Pair-Share Paraphrase Chips

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