Chapter Three: Cooperative writing and Group Work Management

Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting cooperative writing and its effectiveness in teaching the writing skill. The chapter also shows the involvement of students inside the group work Johnson & Johnson (1994). The overall description leads to explore its significance of cooperative writing. The chapter closes with the discussion of group work.

1. Individual Learning

Having students learn by themselves at their own levels may lead them to make mistakes and almost lacking confidence. In this instance Harmer (2001:260) stated that: "individual students found themselves saying and writing things they might not have comer upon with on their own, and groups' research was broader than an individual's normally was".

2. Cooperative Writing

Harmer (2001) stresses the fact that cooperative writing works well with both process and genre-based approaches. In the first case, reviewing and evaluation are greatly enhanced by having more than one person working on it. In genre-based writing, two heads analyze genre – specific texts as well as, if no better than, one head would do, and often create genre – specific texts more successfully as a result. Writing in groups, whether as part of along process or as part of a short game – with communicative activity, can be greatly motivating for students, including as it does, not only writing, but research, discussion, peer evaluation and group pride in a group accomplishment.

It is believed that the use of cooperative writing would make students to learn more effectively, Harmer (2001) states that many of us also place a high premium on teaching techniques that go beyond mere mastery of content and ideas. We believe CL promotes a larger educational agenda, one that encompasses several intertwined rationales.

Slavin (1993) states that Group work can be an extremely useful addition to a large class. Not only does peer discussion help students understand and retain material, but it helps them develop better communication skills. Students also become aware of the degree to which other students can be a valuable resource in learning. As many students will say, they know they really understand the subject matter when they must explain it or teach it to a peer. Some instructors break up a lecture by having students divide themselves into groups of three or four and answer specific questions, or solve specific problems. Each group appoints a spokesperson who may have to report on the group's progress, once the larger class reconvenes. It is not necessary to call on every group for a response–a general sense of the class's understanding can be gained by quickly polling several groups for their questions or comments. Group work can also be used on a more formal scale. Students can be divided into groups early in the quarter, and encouraged to share phone numbers and addresses. Then specific group projects can be assigned that require groups to meet outside of class.

3. Definition of Group Work

It is important to start by defining what group work is. According to Brown, (1989:77), it is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self initiated language. It implies small group work, that is, students in groups of perhaps six or fewer. Three important aspects should be highlighted in this definition. The first one is collaboration, in other words, cooperation. Students have to work together for the completion of the task. All the members of the group are like the pieces of a machine, if one does not work well, a malfunction may occur. Obviously, for lazy or irresponsible students, this is not a problem because the other members will take over and will make the machine work somehow. But real cooperation in group work occurs when everyone is aware of his/her responsibility and role and commits ourself to accomplish it in the best way possible. Kagan (1994:10) affirmed that division of labour is often established by assigning task roles (student 1 is to research the historical character's early life; student 2, his inventions, student 3, his married

family life; student 4, his major inventions) or maintenance roles (student 1, you are the Materials Monitor; student 2, you are the Quiet Captain; student 3, you are the Task Master; student 4, you are the Recorder). Of course, all the members work together, discuss, come out with new ideas, change certain things, but if one does not comply with his/her role, the work is paralyzed. Also, roles are changed within the group every time a new task is assigned; in this way, everybody will have a different responsibility each time a new group work is assigned. This is what Kagan (1994 :07) calls interdependency: "the success of every team member depends on the success of each member (if one fails, all do), then a very strong form of positive interdependence is created and team members are very motivated to make sure each student does well". At first, roles can be assigned by the teacher, but later on, as students get better trained on successful group work, they can be responsible for assigning roles themselves.

The second and third aspects in Brown's definition are interrelated. Self initiated language refers to students using what they know and have learned in class to communicate with others in the classroom. In order to do this, the groups have to be small, as Brown *(Ibid)* previously suggests six students or fewer. In very big groups, shy or passive students tend to fall in silence and let the most talkative ones do the talking. Nunan (1999:157), also pointed out that one of the classroom variables that has had a marked effect on student participation in written activities has been group size. Students who remain silent in groups of ten or more will contribute actively to discussions when the size of the group is reduced to five or three.

3.1 Group Work Advantages

Once group work has been defined, it is important to analyze why EFL teachers use group work. Group work is not just a time-filler, or a thoughtless activity that teachers sometimes use for checking pending papers or extra assignments. Group work should not be used as class time for teachers to read, to rest, to prepare other classes, or just to imitate other teachers that are using group work without really understanding what that is and entails. The real purpose of working in groups in an

EFL class goes beyond the actual command: “Get in a group, please, and answer the following questions,” which, in most of the cases, turns out to be individual work. Harmer (2001) pinpoints the following principles in which group work is grounded:

- Students’ processing language moves from units and pieces to more complex sentence structures faster and spontaneously. “Overanalyzing language, thinking much about its forms, and consciously lingering on rules of language all tend to impede this graduation to automaticity” (Brown, 1989: 56). The key element here is fluency over accuracy.
- Group work gives students more chance to interact and use the target language more freely. Instead of just having a few seconds to talk in teacher-fronted classes, students can participate longer in a small group and feel more confident to give their opinions and even make mistakes when just three or four classmates are looking at them. Brown (1989:178) states that “small groups provide opportunities for student initiation, for face-to-face give and take, for practice [sic] negotiation of meaning, and for extended conversational exchanges, and for students adoption of roles that would otherwise be impossible”
- Language learning is much more meaningful. Instead of memorizing and/or drilling, students use language to talk about something that is appealing, contextualized and relevant to them. “Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning” (Brown, 1989: 57).
- Group work creates a positive atmosphere in the sense that some students will not feel vulnerable to public display that may cause rejection or criticism. It is totally true that shy or low risk-taker students feel much more confident working in small groups than in teacher-fronted classes. It is difficult to hide in small groups.
- Learner’s responsibility and autonomy are encouraged through group work. “The small group becomes a community of learners cooperating with each other in pursuit of common goals” (Brown, 1989: 178). Students are not constantly relying on the teacher to complete their tasks. They learn that they can complete an activity successfully with the help of other classmates or by themselves.

- Group work supports and reinforces the application of the multiple intelligences theory in which learners make use of their individual abilities to accomplish a task. In this way, learners can participate by doing what they like or are very good at, for example, drawing, writing, reporting, among others.
- By using group work, the teacher has the opportunity to teach turn-taking mechanisms. As Krashen (1984:22) suggested that teaching students how to take turns, as easy as this might seem, requires teaching a number of skills that are not automatically transferred from the mother tongue such as to tolerate silences, to direct gaze to addressees, to make use of floor-taking gambits, and to take longer turns.

3.2 Group Work Disadvantages

As everything in teaching, group work has also disadvantages that are important to explore. The first drawback relates to noise. Obviously, students speak all at once trying to accomplish their task, and this causes noise that may bother other colleagues. But as Doff (1992:141) states "the noise created by group work is usually "good" noise since students are using English and are engaged in a learning task". What a teacher can do to solve the "noise problem" is to make students aware that they do not need to shout to be heard and this will help to keep noise at moderate level.

Another negative aspect of group work is the fact that some teachers may lose control of the class or have difficulties controlling the class, especially what concerns discipline. However, even if students are working in small groups and are in charge of the completion of a task, the teacher is still the director and manager of the class and needs to make students aware of this. Doff (1992: 142) highlights that in order "to stop activities getting out of control, it is important to give clear instructions, to give clear defined tasks and to set up a routine so that the students exactly know how and what to do" .If a teacher circulates around the class to clarify doubts and to monitor what students are doing, there is no reason for losing control of the class. The use of native language and lack of correction of mistakes represent another dislikeable feature of group work. This is true even in teacher-fronted classes.

Students make use of any opportunity to switch to their native language. To avoid this, Brown (1989: 180) suggests “to encourage students to practice using the target language in face-to-face contexts and to make them aware of the importance of some real uses for English in their own lives” When working in groups, students are surely going to make mistakes. But as Brown *(Ibid: 181)* pointes out “errors are a necessary manifestation of interlanguage development, and we do well not to become obsessed with their constant correction. Well managed group work can encourage spontaneous peer feedback on errors within the small group itself”. We, teachers, are facilitators and guides, not police officers to stand behind our students’ backs in order to correct everything they say or do. Nowadays, language teaching is heading towards autonomous learning not towards dependent learning.

4. Group Types

Groups can be formed in different ways. In this instance Ledlow (1999:131) states that:

> "There are four types of groups each of which may be subdivided. Firstly, social groups, which come together because they share a common social purpose, for example family, sporting, recreational and social interest groups; secondly , groups which cohere because of interpersonal attraction of the members as in "friendship groups". Thirdly, task groups which meet because they have a specific problem to solve. Finally, therapy or personal growth groups"

4.1. Group Work Types

Johnson & Johnson and Smith (1995) stated that there are three types of group work:

4.1.1. Informal Learning Groups

Informal learning groups are ad hoc temporary clustering of students within a single class session. Examples include peer-pairs during lecture or small groups to answer a question posed during a section. The aim of this group type is to see if students are getting the course content, give the opportunity to integrate and apply course concepts, or change the pace of the class.

4.1.2. Formal Learning Groups

Formal learning groups are established to complete a specific task, such as perform a lab experiment, write a report, carry out a project, or prepare a position paper. These groups may complete their work in a single class session or over several weeks. The objectives of this group type seek to be:

- Helpful to streamline to workload
- Helpful to provide students opportunity for peer feedback
- Helpful to emulate the workplace environment.

4.1.3. Study Teams

Can long-term groups (usually working over the course of a semester) with set memberships provide support, encouragement, and assistance in completing course requirements and assignments? Study teams also inform their members about lectures and assignments when someone has missed a session. The larger the class is, the more complex the subject matter will be. Adapted from Johnson & Johnson and Smith 1995).

4.1.4. Forming Groups

Groups of students could be formed in different ways: whether by using the alphabetical list with three, four to five students. We can as well form groups by mixing students' different abilities. This method ensures that students interact and help each other. In other words, the less able students gain knowledge from more able ones.

4.1.5. Group Work Grading

The grade for the work can be awarded to the individual or to all members of the group. It has been clarified in the following:

- Part of the grade may be the student's participation in the group discussion or activity.
- Part of the grade may include quantitative scores.
- Group members can anonymously "grade" the participation and contribution of the members of the group.

Booth (1996:275), in his book "Assessing Group Work," states the following:

> "We suggested grading the contribution of each student on the basis of individual or group's evaluation of each members work, and when we assign the same grade to the entire group, the bulk of the mark is allocated to the group, with 50%being given for the written report "form", 30% for the oral performance when given an oral presentation , 10%is for peer assessment and consists of each groups member ; and the final 10%is the individuals' efforts including participation, answering students' questions, explaining"

4.1.6. Group Work Aspects

Many aspects of group work have been presented:

4.1.6.1. Assessment

According to Booth *(Ibid, 277)*

> "Students are eminently practical and give priority to what is assessed over what is not …giving group work a realistic value in final assessment procedures legitimizes it in the eyes of students. Assessment both motivates and underlines the importance of a range of skills".

As our main focus is to indulge students to work in small group in writing activities, and as the word assessment concerns one aspect among the other aspects of group work, a variety of questions would come out immediately to our minds , such as what to assess? Who to assess? And how to assess? At the very beginning I would say that group work in itself provides the teacher with so many types and methods of assessment.

4.1.6.2. Interaction

Slavin (1992) reports that when students work in small group they tend to help each other ,sitting face to face, create a natural interactive context in which they have to listen to each others, respect each others' opinions , exchange ideas, simplify and explain difficult element to one another. Group work, then, makes the students comprehend that they really need each other's resources and contribution to successfully complete and perform their tasks. Interaction within group work activities may be of great value in stimulating and above all developing the students' cognitive, social and linguistic abilities.

4.1.6.3. Achievement

According to Slavin (1993, 52-54):

> "Achievement is defined as an outcome measure for some types of performance including tests, grades, quality of performance, such as oral presentation and quality of products as for written reports. However achievement requires positive interdependence, individual accountability- all students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work-interaction and motivation within group work".

Group work may represent a valuable strategy that would increase students' achievement and enhance them to attain a high academic level" Kagan et al (1985). By working through group work, students may experience how to share ideas, exchange information, encourage each other, learn from each other; each student provides at least a positive contribution, and all these factors might enhance a students' better achievement.

5. Noise Control

Cohn (1986) states that one student per group can be the "noise monitor" or "quiet captain," whose function is to urge the group to collaborate actively, yet quietly. The closer together students sit, the quieter they can talk. Having students sit close together not only helps reduce the noise level but also helps foster cooperation and minimizes the chance of someone being left out. Along with sitting close together, students can use special quiet voices, e.g., 6-inch voices or 30-centimetre voices. A signal similar to the one used to get the class's attention can be used as a sign to continue working, but a bit more quietly. For example, for "stop working," the signal might be a hand raised straight up, and for "work more quietly," the signal could be a hand raised with arm bent at elbow. Olsen & Kagan (1992) suggested stoplight cards. A green card goes on a group's desk if they are working together

quietly. A yellow card indicates they need to quiet down a bit. When a red card is put on their desk, the group should become completely silent, and all should silently count to 10 before starting to work again.

6. Motivating Students to Work in Groups

Discussing the advantages that students can derive from learning in groups may help overcome resistance to group activities. These potential advantages include learning more, having more fun and preparing for tasks away from school in which collaboration is necessary. Students may look more favourably on cooperative learning if they understand that talking with others is a language- learning strategy that they can apply outside of class as well (Oxford, 1994). They should realize also that studying in groups is only one of the several ways of learning that will go on in the class. Group games may encourage students to look forward to other group learning activities. There are many enjoyable games which also teach academic and social skills. Start with pairs and tasks which require exchange of information (Nation, 1990). Success here will build confidence in the ability to work in groups. Students who do not want to study in groups can be allowed to work on their own. Hopefully, after a while, they will want to take part in the group interaction and will ask to join a group.

6.1 Group Work Activities

Ur (2001) presents a very good list of group activities that language teachers can incorporate in their classes. Obviously, the selection of these activities will highly depend on the topic being studied, the level of the students, the dynamic of the group and the class time. It is also important to remember that choosing one of the activities above entails a great deal of work for the teacher since s/he needs to find an appealing content, to make a good connection between the content of the activity and the topic of the unit, to write clear instructions, to think about useful expressions for students to carry out the task, and finally, to define the roles of each team member, making sure students have equal responsibilities. All these steps will be clearly developed in the following section.

6.2 Group Work Planning

In order to get successful group work in foreign language classes, Brown (1989) suggests a series of steps in which the teacher should always:

6.2.1 Introducing the Technique

Students need a clear explanation of the activity they will carry out. Learners must know the topic, the number of members they will work with, the time allotted to make the activity, what their responsibilities are, the points they will obtain once the activity is finished, among others.

6.2.2 Model the Technique

Once students have an idea of what they are supposed to do, the teacher should model or exemplify what students will do, if possible. Tasks like debates, discussions, or problem-solving situations cannot be modeled entirely, but at least it is the instructor's responsibility to make the main characteristics clear to students.

6.2.3 Give Explicit Instructions

Instructions must be crystal-clear. They should be short, precise, and with simple words. If an instruction contains several steps, the teacher should highlight those steps by using roman numerals, letters, or numbers bold-faced and with a readable font size. In this way, students will notice the different parts of the activity, and the way they should complete it.

6.2.4 Useful Expressions (Gambits)

One of the most important aspects a teacher should take into account when preparing an activity for group work is to think about all possible expressions students will need to carry out the activity. These expressions or gambits will force students to use English and to avoid the use of the mother tongue. Some of these gambits are:

-It is your turn. Toss / pass the dice.

-Go back to start. Let's glue this piece here.

-Draw a line from ____ to _____. Why don't we_____?

-Switch the pictures. Don't cheat.

-Give the scissors. Throw the dice again.

-Change the card. This is wrong, let's start again!

-These gambits must be explained and practised before the activity starts. They should also be written down in a place where students can easily see them.

6.2.5 Divide the Class into Groups

It is a good idea to use a variety of grouping techniques to make students work with different people every time a new activity is assigned. Some ideas of grouping techniques will be presented at the end of this article.

6.2.6 Assign Roles

Even though students know their own abilities very well and can assign themselves their own roles, it would be a good idea if the teacher can say what every member of the group is responsible for. In this way lazy or irresponsible students would be forced to work hard and to participate as much as the other team members.

6.3 Check for Clarification

It is very important to verify if students have understood what they have to do. One way of doing this is by asking learners to explain the instructions back.

6.3.1 Monitor the Task

The teacher should constantly walk around the room to monitor what students are doing. Students usually like to ask questions and clarify doubts. During this step, the teacher can write down certain mistakes in grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary to give feedback at the end of the activity. Also, depending on the activity, this would be a nice moment to grade the students unnoticeably.

6.3.2 Set time for Debriefing and Feedback

This last step is fundamental to make an activity valuable. Students need to present and share what they did. Sometimes, because of lack of time, teachers do not go through this step, but students do need to be rewarded and praised for what they did. They also need feedback to correct or reinforce certain weak areas. By doing general comments in relation to content, language use and discipline, learners will clearly see the main purpose of the activity.

7. Cooperation and Team Work

Hassard (2000) stated that, in collaborative endeavours, students inevitably encounter difference, and must grapple with recognizing and working with it. Building the capacities for tolerating, resolving differences, building agreement that honours all the voices in a group, caring how others are doing these are crucial abilities of living in a community. Too often the development of these values and skills is relegated to the "Student Life" side of the campus. Cultivation of teamwork, community building, and leadership skills are legitimate and valuable classroom goals, not just extracurricular ones.

7.1 Involvement

Kagan (1994) Calls for involving students more actively in their learning. Involvement in learning, involvement with other students, and involvement with faculty are factors that make an overwhelming difference in student retention and success in college. By its very nature, CL is both socially and intellectually involving. It invites students to build closer connections to other students, their faculty, their courses and their learning.

7.2 Writing Groups

Smith (1992) stressed the fact that both in theory and practice, the most concentrated effort in undergraduate CL has focused on the teaching of writing. The writing group approach, (known variously as peer response groups, class criticism, or helping circles) has transformed thousands of college writing classes. Through the

spread of WAC initiatives, writing groups increasingly are appearing in other courses as well.

Peer writing involves students working in small groups at every stage of the writing process. Many writing groups begin as composing groups: they formulate ideas, clarify their positions, test an argument or focus a thesis statement before committing it to paper. This make challenges among students to think through their ideas out loud, to hear what they "sound like," so they will know "what to say" in writing. Writing groups also serve as peer response groups. Students exchange their written drafts of papers and get feedback on them either orally or in writing. This is a challenging process, one that requires students to read and listen to fellow students' writing with insight, and to make useful suggestions for improvement.

7.3 Peer Teaching

With its roots in one-room schoolhouse tradition, the process of students teaching their fellow students is probably the oldest form of CL. In recent decades, however, peer teaching approaches have proliferated in higher education, under many names and structures (Whitman, 1988).

7.4 Writing Fellows

The Writing Fellows approach, pioneered by Haring (2001), is a peer teaching approach. The writing fellows are upper-division students who are strong writers. After extensive training, these students are deployed to an undergraduate class generally in the discipline of their major, where they read and respond to the papers of all the students. Haring *(Ibid)* calls this a "bottom-up approach" to sustaining WAC initiatives, particularly in large classes where many faculties flag at assigning writing because there are simply too many papers to which to respond. Over 50 colleges and universities have created Writing Fellows Programs.

8. Implications for Teaching Writing through Pair Work

In Focus on Basics researcher Harris (1975:145) explained,

> "Teachers find that pair work is good for language learning particularly the writing skill. The results of this research confirm that belief and call for more pair work when possible. This, as well as other research in the field, suggests that negotiation between students is an important part of language acquisition. To this end, teachers can choose pair activities that promote or maximize negotiation between their students".

Harris *(Ibid)* work also confirmed Slavin (1992:75) finding that negotiation will likely stop when teachers approach the student pairs. "Students appeal to the teacher for the correct answer, or they go back to a previous item to perform it for the teacher, or they start interacting with the teacher directly"

8.1 Trouble Shooting

According to Harmer (2001: 124) when we monitor pairs and groups during a groupwork activity we are seeing how well they are doing, and deciding whether or not to go over and intervene. But we are also keeping our eyes open for problems which we can resolve either on the spot or in the future.

8.2 Awkward Groups

During the written activities, teachers should observe how students could interact with each other. Harmer *(Ibid)* stated that:

> "When students are working in pairs or groups we need to observe how well they interact together. Even where we have made our best judgments-based on friendship or streaming-it is possible that apparently satisfactory combinations of students are not ideal. Some pairs may find it impossible to

concentrate on the task at hand and instead encourage each other to talk about something else, usually in their first language"

9. Using Groups in Class

Davis (1993) reports that students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. And we know from experience that when students feel connected, engaged, and included, they feel more satisfied with their courses. In addition, group work provides students with more “real world” experience, because most of them will indeed be spending much of their working lives developing projects in groups. Groups also often provide a sense of “shared purpose” in a class, which means that students feel a greater sense of dedication to the material.

9.1. Assign Students to Groups Based on Specific Criteria

Students are assigned to groups to maximize their heterogeneity: a mix of males and females, verbal and quiet students, the cynical and the optimistic. By assigning students, you can take into account students’ prior achievement, levels of preparation, work habits, ethnicity, and gender. For larger classes, this can be handled in sections.

9.2. Assign Students to Groups Randomly

Some faculty assigns students to groups randomly using the first letter of the students’ last names or a table of random numbers. By assigning students to groups, even randomly, you avoid the risk that students who select their own groups or partners will socialize too much, self-segregate, or that some students will be excluded or “last chosen”.

9.3. Rotate Groups throughout the Semester

If you make assignments, consider rotating groups throughout the semester. One science faculty member makes it known to students that they will be assigned various lab partners during the course.

9.4. Regularly Check in with the Groups

If the task spans several weeks, you will want to establish checkpoints with the groups. Ask groups to turn in outlines or drafts or to meet with you periodically. (Davis & Jossey-Bass, 1993).

9.5. Organizing Groups / Teams Effectively

Davis & Jossey-Bass, 1993) states that there are three guidelines can optimize team cohesion and eliminate many of the dysfunctional aspects of groups.

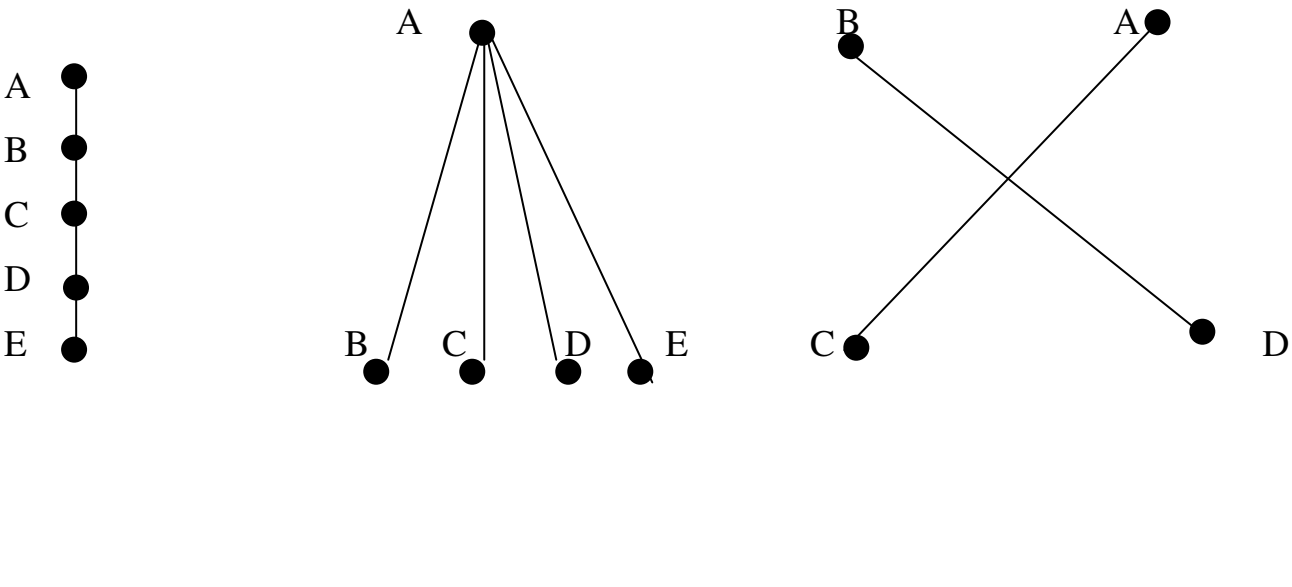
9.6. Group Size should remain Small

Most teachers experienced with group work advocate groups composed of three to four students. Four, or a quad, is generally considered the ideal because the group is large enough to contain students who will bring diverse opinions, experiences, and learning styles to aid in problem solving. In this instance Booth (1996:38) maintains that: "Smaller groups of three contain less diversity, and varied expertise that help to animate collective decision making. Conversely, in larger groups, it is difficult to ensure that all members participate". If a group member is absent, the group can continue to function smoothly. A group of four is not so large, that students can hide. All must carry their fair share of the workload. A quad has the additional advantage of offering easy pair formation within the group.

Supporting the idea that group seize should remain small Johnson & Johnson (1994) ;Coop (1990) and Smith (1992) maintain that the less skilful the group members are, the smaller the groups should be, and the shorter amount of time available , the smaller the groups should be.

9.7 Group Structure

The main example of group structure cited by Turner (1977:136), who stated that groups could be structured differently as follows:



(a) (b) (c)

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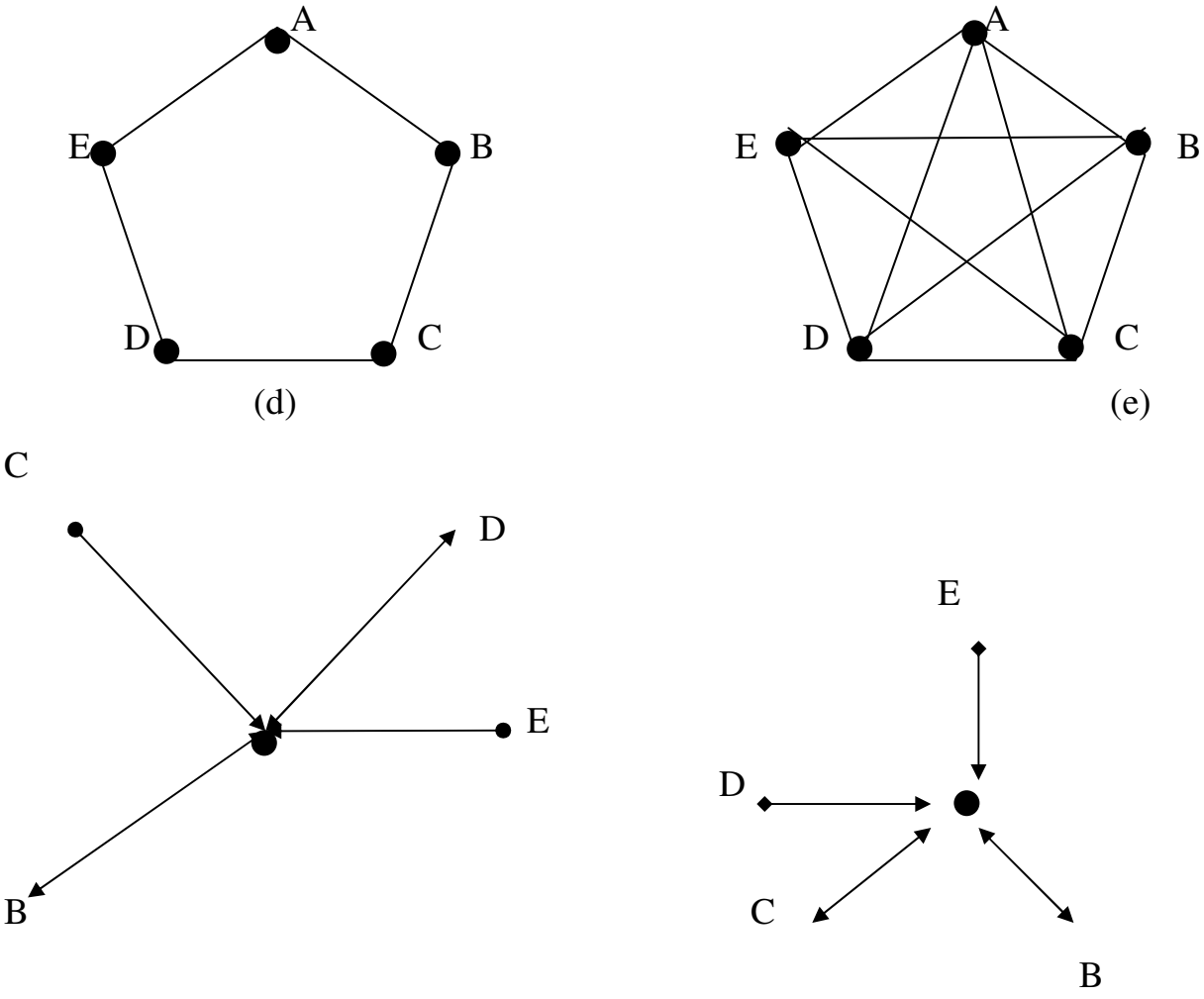

(d) (e)

(f) (g)

Figure 2: Group Structures Turner.1977. (P.136).

9.8. Group Processing

This activity enables each student to assess the quality and quantity of his or her own work habits and those of the other students in the class. These habits include arriving on time, preparedness to learn, and positive attitudes towards self, peers and subject matter. The activity is also an opportunity for students to reflect on their individual performances and the performance of their groups.

Davis (1993) presented the following procedures:

1.Assign students to small groups and have them each complete a checklist about their individual work habits.

2. Ask them to compare their self-ratings with the ratings of their group mates.

3. Ask students to discuss their learning experiences and reflect on the performance of group members in terms of their achievement levels, work habits, and ability to assist others.

4. Have them specify what was most successful and what could be improved for future work.

5. Have students celebrate their success, for example, by planning a class party.

9.9. Interviews

Cohen (1986) maintains that interviews can be very useful in determining students' levels of learning, cognitive reasoning, and problem-solving abilities. However, interviews require a certain level of proficiency in order for students to express themselves in the target language. As such, this activity may not be applicable at the beginning level of proficiency. The procedure is as follows:

1. Assign students to heterogeneous groups of four or five and give each group a set of questions.
2. Instruct the groups to prepare all members to respond to the questions. Give the groups some classroom time to practice so that all members can answer the questions correctly.

3. Select randomly a student to answer a certain question or a series of questions. Ask follow-up questions if necessary to probe for more information. When the student finishes responding to the question, have other group members add to the answer.
4. Call on other students to answer different questions until all the questions are answered adequately.

9.10. Observing Students at Work

Observing students at work provides valuable information regarding a number of core objectives related to student behaviour, for example, work habits, persistence in completing tasks, and development of leadership and social skills. These skills include giving encouragement, respecting others, using a quiet voice, staying in group, and checking for understanding. Ledlow (1999) states the following procedures:

1. Specify exactly what behaviours, actions, or events you need to observe and define them operationally by generating a list of the verbal phrases and nonverbal actions that demonstrate the skills.
2. Devise or use existing observation forms such as those suggested by Johnson & Johnson (1994).
3. Assign students to heterogeneous groups and give them an assignment, such as completing a task sheet, answering comprehension questions, or practicing language rules and mechanics.
4. Move from one group to another and listen to students' explanations and discussions on how to complete the assignment, and fill in the observation form. Assess students' level of understanding and cognitive reasoning, and assess the strategies they use to complete the assignment.
5. Teachers may appoint student observers or ask class visitors to help them. In addition, individual group members may fill out a checklist or questionnaire at the end of this activity to assess how well and how often they performed certain behaviours and mastered certain social skills.

Conclusion

Group work is one pedagogical strategy that promotes participation and interaction. It also fosters a deeper and more active learning process. In addition to exposing students to different approaches and ways of thinking, working with other students in groups can promote a sense of belonging to combat anonymity, isolation or even shyness that often accompany a student's experience at a large campus. Working together in groups also gives students the opportunity to learn from and teach each other. Classroom research has shown that students often learn better form each other than they do from a teacher.

It is not difficult or time-consuming to incorporate group work activities into your lesson plans, but there are some general rules-of-thumb about structuring group work well. There are many learning goals that can be achieved by having students collaborate either in pairs or in small groups. In groups, students can summarize main points; review problems such as for exams, compare and contrast knowledge, ideas, or theories; solve problems; or generate comments for you on class progress or on their levels of skill and understanding. Think about what your goals for the activity are: what do you want your students to get out of this activity? .This chapter has explained the way cooperative writing works through presenting different methods and techniques to enhance students' written production. The advantage of Cooperative writing and group work will serve as basis for the elaboration of the questions to be formulated in the teachers' and students' questionnaires to diagnose the state of teaching writing in Biskra University.