International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education
IASCE

IASCE Newsletter Volume 34 Number 3 November 2015

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Dear Colleagues,

As we bring you this issue of the IASCE Newsletter, our hearts and minds are still filled with the joys of Odense, Denmark where warm sunshine, beautiful buildings, cobble-stoned pedestrian streets, verdant river walks, and delicious and beautifully presented food formed the backdrop for the 2015 conference. The Danish planning team and our hosts, the University of Lillebaelt, were extraordinarily hardworking and gracious. Presenters were well prepared and generous in their willingness to share and discuss their work. Participants committed themselves to embracing "WOW moments" and to taking the time to truly connect with ideas and with each other. With participants from 29 countries, with many first-time participants, with participants who had taken part in the very first conference in 1979, and with the voice of Morton Deutsch brought to us via video, the conference atmosphere was truly energetic. In this issue you can learn about the IASCE Achievement Award recipients; you can read comments shared by participants at the wrap-up session, reflections from the 2015 bursary recipients, and a reflection from Yael Sharan—one of IASCE's founding members and a member of our volunteer Board.

Within a few months, we will provide links to papers and presentations from the Odense conference at www.IASCE.net. In a conference with five-to-six sessions scheduled in each time frame, these resources should prove useful and interesting both for those who were unable to join us and for those who were in Odense and just couldn't figure out how to be in more than one place at a time. Our Danish colleagues have pictures on the conference site and will soon have links to videos of the keynote addresses. We will also share photos. On our website is an extended interview with Morton Deutsch, recorded on the eve of his 95th birthday! Mort's work has been foundational to our field and we are very grateful to former Board Member Laurie Stevahn for her vision and generosity in offering this video for all of us to learn from and enjoy.

As we have come to expect, this issue of the newsletter includes a variety of abstracts that represent recent work in the field. I noted works by three board members, Celine Buchs, Robyn Gillies, and George Jacobs, the 2015 IASCE Lifetime Achievement Award winners David and Roger Johnson, and Peter Seouw who first joined us in Scarborough in 2013. The wealth of names and geographic distribution represented by all the abstracts reinforce what we know and what we saw in Odense—cooperative learning research and practice is widespread and varied, and the questions and nuances explored continue to expand and respond to context in new and exciting ways. This issue also revitalizes a members' column with a discussion of second-language learning. Voices include Board Member Kumiko Fushino, long-time cooperative-learning supporter David Duran, and Nomi Sharan Gazit whom we met for the first time in Odense.

How to Subscribe to the CL List

Want to dialogue with others about your use of CL? Then, you might wish to join the CL List, an internet discussion group about cooperative learning.

Well-known CL experts as well as "just folks" belong. Currently, the CL List isn't a busy group, but when discussions do take place, they are often enlightening.

Furthermore, you can receive updates on CL related events.

To subscribe, send an email to CL_Listsubscribe@yahoogroups.com. You should very quickly receive an email reply with simple instructions. If that fails, just send an email to george.jacobs@gmail.com and he'll do the necessary.

Talk to you soon!

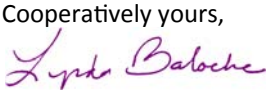
As this is our final newsletter for 2015, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the IASCE Board for their contributions in the past year. It has been a very busy year. Thank you for serving on the planning team, reviewing conference proposals, and providing practical support during the conference itself. Thanks to Jill Clark, our Newsletter Editor, and to Celeste Brody, Maureen Breeze, Lalita Agashe, Don Plumb, George Jacobs, Kumiko Fushino, and Yael Sharan who have helped to ensure that the IASCE newsletter remains a valuable resource for our field. Special thanks to Maureen Breeze, the IASCE Co-president.

In my work, I have regularly experienced the power of cooperation and connectedness, and I know that this power is the result of commitment, generosity, and a willingness to risk. It isn't about taking the easy road; it is about people working together on truly challenging and worthwhile tasks; it is about identifying strengths, being vulnerable to failure, and working through complexities. Even though I know this, each time I have the opportunity to work with a group of committed colleagues—as I did in preparation for the Odense conference—I am grateful for the opportunity, amazed by the results, and touched by the feelings of connectedness that result.

As the year draws to a close, I encourage you to think about a time when you have experienced this power. Take a moment to thank a colleague with whom you have recently collaborated and to reflect on what made it "work." Look back and reconnect with someone with whom you haven't worked for 2-3 years. Take a moment to share what you valued and learned and tell them how they helped. Then consider identifying a new project, one that is challenging and worthwhile and has the potential to develop new connections. Be generous with your knowledge and skills and courageous in your willingness to try something new.

Thank you for your support of IASCE. Your support makes our newsletter, conferences, awards, and bursary funds for emerging scholars possible.

Cooperatively yours,



Lynda Baloche
IASCE Co-president

Writing for This Newsletter

There are so many things happening world-wide related to cooperative learning! Help others find out about them by writing articles or short news items for inclusion in this newsletter, and by submitting abstracts of published work for inclusion in the *From the Journals* section of the newsletter. Short pieces (1000 words or less) are preferred.

The newsletter appears three times a year. Please email submissions or questions about them to the editor of the IASCE Newsletter, Jill Clark at jilliandc@gmail.com . Put "IASCE Newsletter" on the subject line of the email, please.

Thank you for your submissions.

Personal Impressions of the 15th IASCE Conference, in Odense, Denmark

Yael Sharan

By now, when I walk into an IASCE conference venue I expect to be greeted by a display of about 30 flags from the countries represented at the conference; I expect to participate in a broad range of interactive, informative, and inspiring sessions; I expect to exchange experiences and ideas with many of the CL practitioners and researchers who attend the conference (close to 200). And, by now, I also expect to encounter the unexpected, including meeting first-time delegates. In Odense I met first-time delegates from both Brazil and Poland, countries that had never been represented at an IASCE conference. I also met first-time delegates from South Africa, Turkey and Lithuania who were not aware that teachers and researchers from their countries had attended previous conferences. Naturally I encouraged them to seek out their colleagues back home and create a local network.

As always, there were many opportunities - at breakfast, at the conference breaks and dinners, and on the daily walks to and from the hotel to the conference venue - to catch up with people whom I hadn't seen since the last conference in Scarborough two years ago, or longer. An unexpected pleasure for me was to see Neil Davidson and his wife Jan. Neil had attended the very first IASCE conference in 1979 in Tel Aviv, when it wasn't yet IASCE (the Association was formed at the end of that event) and we had met at several conferences since then, but not for a while.

What is not visible, but very much expected, is all the arduous work that goes into preparing an IASCE conference. As soon as one conference is over, discussions about the next one begin. Identifying local hosts and working with them to develop a conference structure and theme, reviewing proposals, organizing strands and finalizing the program. Clearly the local Danish organizing committee and a team of IASCE Board members worked together to meet these challenges, and didn't let any detail escape them. The result was a seemingly seamless event that combined impeccable hospitality (and delicious food), local color and traditions. The presentations were varied and highly professional, in keeping with the principles of interactive engagement that our conferences are known for. The opening keynote by co-president Lynda Baloche, and another by Roger Johnson and David Johnson, (this year's recipients of the IASCE Lifetime Achievement Award), actively engaged us from beginning to end. A totally unexpected pleasure at the award ceremony was a delightful performance by a singer dressed as Hans Christian Andersen, an Odense native, accompanied by a chorus of children dressed as characters from his stories.

Another unexpected and especially memorable experience for me was the school visit that introduced me to happily engaged students and teachers, and a very thoughtful and dedicated principal, all in sunny and aesthetic surroundings. In the classes we visited we got a glimpse of students comfortably working in groups, whether first graders designing games, or sixth graders researching sites in China for a class "travel agency."

Conference sessions are always unexpected, despite the detailed program. Presenters and workshop facilitators plan for the best, but participants' reactions cannot be anticipated. In the sessions I attended, participants welcomed the opportunity to learn new ways of designing group worthy tasks, such as those designed by Stefania Lamberti and Marta Milani, who presented their program for intercultural education; Sharon Ahlquist's "Storyline" for interactive foreign language learning, and Bertha Parades' "Butterflies and Caterpillars," a metaphor for teaching and learning. Several sessions were facilitated by more than one person. In addition to the novelty of facilitators' collaboration, it is a way of modeling varying styles of conducting a CL workshop, an application of cooperative learning that is not always utilized.

Not to be forgotten is how, at the conference dinner, Niels Rebsdorf quietly yet thoroughly engaged us in several ways of singing *Frere Jacques*, and even added a totally unexpected note of mystery to the song. The atmosphere Niels created was contagious and inspired a few people to lead us in songs typical of their countries. What better way to feel a sense of togetherness than when singing altogether in several languages?!

At the closing 'wrap-up' session, Lynda Baloche handed out colored post-its on which people were asked to write their comments about the conference and what they were taking home with them. The general consensus seems to be that the conference as a whole affirmed the flexibility and richness of cooperative learning and the varied ways it can be implemented. CL keeps growing and expanding, in content as well as geographically. This conference, like all before it, offered new contacts, new ways of organizing and activating groups and, above all, new energy for CL.

I'm already looking forward to the next conference; by now there are many familiar aspects I expect to encounter, and I am eager to see what unexpected opportunities and experiences it will offer.

The IASCE Odense Conference Awards

Morton Deutsch, David W. Johnson, and Roger T. Johnson - The IASCE 2015 Lifetime Achievement Award

2015 marks the first time that the IASCE presents its Lifetime Achievement Award jointly to three distinguished individuals who have worked both separately and together to advance our understanding of what grounds effective cooperative teamwork, conflict resolution, constructive controversy, peace education, and distributive justice. Each one stands tall among theorists, researchers, and practitioners. **Morton Deutsch** is E.L. Thorndike Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Director Emeritus of the Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (MD-ICCCR) at Teachers College, Columbia University in New York City, USA. **David W. Johnson** is Professor Emeritus of Educational Psychology and **Roger T. Johnson** is Professor Emeritus of Curriculum and Instruction, both at the University of Minnesota, USA. At the university, David Johnson and Roger Johnson are founders and long-time Co-Directors of the Cooperative Learning Center (CLC) in the College of Education and Human Development.

Mort (doctoral student of Kurt Lewin, credited founder of social psychology) originally conceptualized and pioneered validation of *social interdependence theory*. It was further extended and refined by David (doctoral student of Deutsch) and Roger (brother of David and professional collaborator for over 45 years at the University of Minnesota). They examined and validated this theory and built a model of Cooperative Learning often referred to as "Learning Together." It is defined by five basic elements that support successful cooperative groupwork. Distinctive are their continuous, long-term programs of research and prolific book publications, chapters, and journal articles that have been translated into numerous languages. Cumulatively they hold over 100 honors, awards, and recognitions for their contributions.

The IASCE recognizes Morton Deutsch, David W. Johnson, and Roger T. Johnson as living legacies whose scope of work has enormously influenced our collective understanding of what contributes to successful teamwork, constructive conflict, and interpersonal dynamics for a just and humane world.

Yael Sharan - The IASCE 2015 Award for Outstanding Contributions Through Leadership

2015 marks the first time the IASCE has presented an award for *Outstanding Contributions Through Leadership* and we are pleased to name **Yael Sharan** as the recipient of this award.

Yael Sharan is one of the founding members of IASCE and she has continuously and enthusiastically supported the organization since that time. She has built partnerships with other organizations—notably IAIE: the International Association for Intercultural Education, and has nurtured professional relationships that have resulted in conference collaborations such as Odense 2015.

Yael Sharan is co-developer of the Group Investigation Model (with Shlomo Sharan) and has provided workshops and consulting related to that model in over 20 countries around the world. Those who read the IASCE Newsletter have enjoyed her vivid descriptions of conferences she has attended; these descriptions invariably focus on the contributions of others rather than her own work and include thought-provoking observations related to local customs. Yael is known for her generosity. As a workshop facilitator, she has a long tradition of inviting colleagues to co-facilitate workshops on a wide range of topics linked to cooperative learning. When she co-facilitates, she engages in vigorous co-planning and is a model of curiosity and experimentation.

While Yael Sharan publishes regularly in scholarly journals and edited volumes, another measure of her generosity is her ongoing willingness to serve as a guest editor for cooperative-learning themed journal issues. When she does this work, she invariably identifies new voices and nurtures their success; she is consistently more interested in voices that extend the boundaries of our understanding about the uses of cooperative learning than she is in furthering a particular model.

The IASCE recognizes Yael Sharan for her vision and sustained leadership to the IASCE and for her ongoing commitment to support the multiple generations of scholars whose voices continue to inform the field.

Three Bursary Participants Reflect on Their Experience at Odense

Christine Schmalenbach from Germany, Giovanna Malusà from Italy and Enda Byrt from Ireland received IASCE bursary funds to attend the conference in Odense. We are happy to share their reflections of the conference with our readers.

Christine Schmalenbach, TU Dortmund University writes . . .

Lynda Baloche's keynote speech on daring synergy and boosting creativity through cooperation (and/ or collaboration?) for me became something like a background theme for the conference. In Odense I spent three of the most intense and rewarding days of my academic year. Interaction with interesting people was at all times closely intertwined with processes of reflection and learning, whether during the keynote speeches, workshops, paper panels, informal activities or conversations during breaks. There was much openness - even when dealing with difficult issues; there were discussions about different perspectives – controversial but respectful; there was a plurality of topics, institutional and cultural backgrounds and contexts – however, it was also possible to feel the connection we share. Need I mention how much fun we had (and how hard we sometimes laughed) during some of the exercises, songs, anecdotes, introductions into different cultural habits? I believe there is no setting where you can get a more concentrated dosage of Cooperative Learning and all that it implies than at an IASCE conference.

At the end of these three days I felt somewhat tired but at the same time very energized and inspired. I took home new ideas, perspectives, answers, questions, contacts ... in a nutshell: I have learned once more on a cognitive, emotional and social level "why Cooperative Learning will never die" and how together we can continue "meeting the challenges of the 21st century". Thank you to every one of you who participated in making this conference possible!

Giovanna Malusà, Università degli Studi di Trento writes . . .

This was my first IASCE conference. I was glad to have my proposal accepted and to have the opportunity to meet educators, researchers and academics from all over the world. Participants from 29 countries came together to reflect on and discuss possible new contributions of cooperative learning at educational and organizational level.

I am currently a PhD student in my third year and I was able to participate in the entire conference thanks to the bursary received, which was an important financial support.

I left Italy by myself, full of enthusiasm and motivation. As soon as I arrived, I found a friendly welcome and an efficient organization of all activities, formal and informal, from the lunch buffet to the tour following the footsteps of Hans Christian Andersen in Odense. The pre-conference activity "*Danish school visits*" was an invaluable opportunity to breathe a cooperative atmosphere, observing different classrooms from elementary to middle school. I had the chance to get to know new colleagues from the conference, creating informal interconnections and exchanging experiences.

In particular, overcoming the paradox of "teaching from the front" was the winning challenge of the conference itself. A full program with rich stimuli colored three days in a joyful climate of active participation guided by precise instructions: the constraints given by each speaker, in fact, were the scaffolding of interactive presentations interspersed with moments of reflection, as well as with activities, to stimulate an effective meta-reflection. "*Cooperative Learning by doing*" is what impressed me the most about the conference: the very principles of cooperative learning were directly espoused by presenters, mostly experts of active methodologies. Furthermore, the IASCE team ran three workshops to support the development of cooperative presentations and workshops.

The plenary sessions were rather unique when compared to the normal practice common in conferences: a series of tables arranged as islands, with the chairs around, provided immediate opportunities for sharing the contents proposed by the speakers.

In conclusion, this conference was an excellent opportunity to reflect on effective educational practices to promote equity in education. I directly experienced the value of Cooperative Learning and the deep sense of interconnections it offered.

Three keywords from this conference will characterize my refresher experiential courses for teachers in the primary and middle school: flexibility, creativity and connectedness. Flexibility, to ground the proposals in the concrete needs of the pupils; creativity, to invent joyous and challenging activities; connectedness, to utilize a bigger variety of information, with innovation and generosity, thus creating a cooperative network among the teachers.

Thanks, IASCE community!

Enda Byrt, GMIT Galway writes . . .

I attended IASCE Odense 2015 with my colleague Ann Foley from GMIT Letterfrack Galway Ireland. We have presented the proposition that Cooperative Learning strategies offer significant gateway pedagogy in Irish education particularly in the context of Junior Cycle curriculum change. By gateway we mean a vehicle to assist teachers in moving away from an "instructivist" approach to one where the teacher moves away from the top of the class and engages students in active learning, critical thinking cooperation and effective groupwork in a truly holistic approach.

Our goal in presenting or workshop "From Here to There: Designing Cooperative Learning Strategies to Assist Teachers with Pedagogical Changes of the New Junior Certificate in Ireland" was to "pick the brains" of participants at the workshop and in formal and informal networking at the conference.

We are looking at CL and its relevance in the context of our student teachers at Letterfrack. We are convinced that if they are competent, effective and experienced in CL on graduation they will be effective leaders in pedagogical change.

The conference had most of the leaders in the Cooperative Learning world in attendance and speaking. We were fortunate to attend these presentations and meet with many of them and others informally, all the time seeking information that we thought useful to our context.

IAIE International Conference

Theme: Mobility, Transitions, Transformations –

Intercultural Education at the Crossroads

Budapest, 5-10 September 2016

Special Conference website to be launched in early December 2015

Organizers: International Association for Intercultural Education (IAIE), Institute for Intercultural Psychology and Education (IIPE), Eötvös University, Budapest

In collaboration with the International Association for the Study of Cooperation in Education (IASCE)

The conference focuses on an exploration of the ways in which social, cultural and geographical mobility, transitions and transformations, are interpreted, constructed and re-constructed through the theory and practice of intercultural education and related fields. The conference aims to create an open forum for all who are connected to intercultural education and related fields, including theorists, practitioners, and students. The forum is organized under a series of strands, where each strand also has a parallel student panel coordinated by early career researchers, who will work with postgraduate students.

See the IAIE website (www.iaie.org) for the full call for papers

IASCE Members' Column

Welcome to the first installment of the new IASCE Members' Column, a feature initiated in 2006 by board member and former IASCE newsletter editor George Jacobs. The Members' Column is a platform for IASCE members to have a digital exchange of experiences and ideas about issues in the theory and practice of CL. We begin with a virtual discussion about how interactive elements of CL contribute to the teaching and learning of English as a second language in groups, pairs and individually.

The exchange begins with Professor Kumiko Fushino's ideas for preparing students in groups for L2. Professor Fushino is an IASCE board member and veteran teacher of English at a university in Tokyo.

I often wonder how to form heterogeneous groups effectively in the advanced English-as-a- foreign-language (hereafter L2) classes at my university in Tokyo. In foreign language classrooms, even students with relatively high English proficiency tend to use their mother tongue in L2 group work. In order to develop their L2 communication ability, students must actually use the L2. However, it's easier said than done. Groups need time to mature and function well so we need a strategy that can develop students' readiness for working in groups (RGW).

I define readiness as learners' self-perception of the degree to which they are prepared cognitively and affectively for second/foreign language group work. Readiness for working in groups in L2 classes has several components: overcoming apprehension and developing self-perceived competence in communicating in L2; and developing positive beliefs about L2 group work. You may think L2 learning motivation should be added to my definition of readiness for L2 group work. Yes, it is certainly important, but I found that it affects their WTC (willingness to work cooperatively) indirectly via their self-perceived communicative confidence.

My experience and my research show that if students are confident in L2 communication and have strong, positive beliefs about L2 group work, they will be more ready to participate in L2 group work.

I believe that if students have low communication apprehension, and view their communicative competence in L2 group work as being high, they will be more likely to participate in L2 group work. Moreover, both communication apprehension and self-perceived communicative competence in L2 group work can change as students experience L2 group work. Increased confidence in L2 group work will increase readiness to engage in it.

By mixing students with high-, medium-, and low-RGW, as is customary at my university, I have found that they are able to learn how to work in small groups effectively. Their RGW improves by working together with students with diverse RGW as well as by observing the way higher-readiness students behave in CL group work.

For this purpose some basic CL elements are called for: teachers' non-critical attitude, good relationships among students and between students and the teacher, a classroom atmosphere in which mistakes are considered good opportunities for learning, and for which the students should not be blamed. To attain these goals I introduce many CL activities and exercises that develop basic cooperative skills, such as asking for and providing help, requesting and giving assistance.

In addition, success-oriented activities should be used in class to raise students' perception of their communicative competence. Tasks should be challenging, and designed so that students can be positively interdependent and also fulfill their individual responsibilities. The teacher should develop students' ability to work together effectively so that they can successfully complete the tasks. The more opportunities students have to apply the collaborative skills they learn, the more confident they feel. Conversely, to increase students' confidence and competence, teachers need to design L2 group tasks that call for students to apply and practice the skills they acquire.

Joining the conversation is Professor David Duran, of the Department of the Psychology of Education at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Catalonia. He is the director of a research group on Peer Learning that helps teachers use cooperative learning principles in pair work.

I share with Kumiko Fushino some concerns about the learning of English as a L2, especially the difficulty in using it as an oral communicative tool.

In Catalonia, as in many other countries where English is the preferred foreign language, there is noticeable diversity in English competence among students. Added to the usual reasons for diversity, (interest, ability, preferences, etc.), are the different degrees of students' exposure to the language. Some attend out-of-school English classes, others use English on the internet, and there are those whose mother tongue is English.

To help schools and teachers deal with this great diversity and to use peer learning as an innovative way to teach English, we have developed *Reading in pairs*, a peer tutoring programme with family involvement for the improvement of English as a second language*.

Based on previous successful peer tutoring projects for the development of Catalan, Spanish and Basque languages, *Reading in pairs* takes pedagogical advantage of competence language among pairs of students, and, through a structured relationship, promotes the learning of both members. The 'tutor' learns because of the cognitive and metacognitive processes that teaching others requires, and the 'tutee' learns, because of the personalised help received.

This script for interaction is organised around an *Activity Sheet* for every session. It contains a short text with a guide for activities before reading and after. The tutor prepares, at home, the session's *Activity Sheet*, with the help of an *Audio File* in which a model with proper pronunciation and intonation reads the text. In every session, (the programme suggests 15-20 sessions), the tutor starts with some questions before reading the text, to raise interest in the topic, content hypothesis, difficulties…). After that, he reads the text aloud to the tutee. Then both of them read the text in a sort of echo-reading. Finally, the tutee reads the text and the tutor uses the well-known Pause, Prompt and Praise technique.

In the second part of the session, to promote dialogue between tutor and tutee, pairs discuss questions based on reading comprehension that require critical thinking and promote dialogue between tutor and tutee. These conversations are supported by a *language support* sheet that offers specific expressions and vocabulary for the topic.

As you can see, there are many opportunities for students to converse in English in comparison to what usually happens in a traditional classroom, with more than twenty students and only one teacher. Our first studies of the programme implementation in a dozen primary and secondary schools in Catalonia show that 42% of the session's time students keep talking in English. Results in pre - and post-tests increase, not only in reading comprehension but in speaking too. And this last is the main challenge of learning a second language.

As Professor Kumiko said, after receiving initial training and teacher supervision, students build a confident relationship with their peers that promote conditions for safe and quite comfortable conversation in L2 over a long period of time.

To round out this exchange, Nomi Sharan Gazit, an experienced ESL and Business English trainer and teacher, describes how she incorporates elements and principles of CL in one-on-one lessons to make them as interactive as possible.

I couldn't agree more with Professors Fushino and Duran that a fundamental condition for learning in the ESL classroom is to ensure that learners communicate in L2, and that doing this can be tricky. Teachers can rely on cooperative learning procedures to make this easier and help set the stage for successful communication in L2 in groups and pairs. When we consciously create a safe environment for communication and carefully design activities according to CL principles, we automatically maximize every learner's talking time in L2. And as Professors Fushino and Duran stress, increased production in L2 and competence in communication go hand in hand.

What about a one-on-one "classroom" though? Can it, too, be considered a CL environment? It may seem that things are so much easier in this setting: teachers can engage the student in on-going interaction, ask questions and elicit as much talk as they wish, without worrying about principles like equal participation and individual accountability, which are, obviously, irrelevant when there is only one learner.

However, my experience has shown me that a straightforward "ping-pong" game of question and answer between teacher and learner cannot be the main design of a one-on-one session. It doesn't generate real conversation and can actually reduce learners' competence. Just because this is a teacher -learner "classroom" doesn't mean that our teaching model must necessarily be the traditional transmission model. Providing each learner with equal opportunity for participation is indeed a necessary condition for learning in the CL classroom, but we must keep in mind that it is far from being sufficient in and of itself.

It's clear to me that the same principles that help create the conditions for successful cooperative learning remain just as crucial in a one-on-one setting, even though the learner has, technically speaking, all the participation time in the world.

So which CL principles can guide us in one-on-one teaching and how are they helpful?

Professor Fushino mentions the crucial elements of confidence and self-perceived competence in communicating in L2. In one-on-one teaching, CL principles of interaction between teacher and learner can go a long way in terms of the learner's confidence and competence in communication. The same kind of discourse that a teacher must model in order to create a CL environment where learners share and expand their understanding of content is just as important in a one-on-one setting, when all the focus is on the one learner. Here, too, it's all about facilitating effective communication, not transmitting knowledge; and the key to doing this lies in the kind of questions we ask and the way we respond in our dialogue with the learner. Indeed, when we perceive our role as that of a facilitator rather than an expert, it soon becomes second nature to ask open-ended questions, to elicit opinions from the learner and ask how they understand a concept before expressing our own thoughts, to respectfully challenge their initial responses and invite them to elaborate, to allow them time to think before answering a question, and to respond to what they say by paraphrasing in a positive manner, always avoiding judgmental language.

In addition to the kind of discourse that enables the learner to communicate more with less apprehension and gain more confidence and competence, we can adapt many CL structures to a one-on-one lesson. An individual ranking activity followed by pair ranking (Think-Pair-Share without the "Share" stage); Fact or Fiction; flashcard games and most competitive vocabulary review games (see "www.busyteacher.org" for countless ideas) can easily be adapted, if we take on the role of peer while eliciting as much elaboration from the learner as possible.

Even if can't enjoy the full potential of some of the CL structures, by using what we can we break down the lesson into success-oriented, challenging and, most importantly, structured activities. Real learning happens to the extent that we structure the communication and allow the learner systematic language practice. So even if our lessons become interesting conversations and we relate to our learner on a personal level, we mustn't forget to use specific language instruction, to plan how and when to correct errors and to keep in mind our learner's specific goals. As Professor Duran mentions, (even) good pair work is based on a structured relationship.

Finally, one general principle underlies these structures: they are all aimed at active rather than passive learning.

A lovely teacher from Germany whom I met at the IASCE conference in Odense told me that "teachers are still hunters and gatherers – when we encounter a good activity, we grab it". Maybe this column can serve as a platform for 'hunting and gathering' different ways of applying CL elements and principles and adapting them to readers' specific needs.

*(http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/grai/en/content/reading-pairs).

Have an idea for a discussion topic? Send it to yaelshar@015.net.il.

IASCE Conference in Odense – Participant Comments

At the closing session on Saturday afternoon, Lynda Baloche led participants through a series of reflections and small-group discussions—asking them to utilize Post-it notes to record their thoughts. We excerpt a few that we think are varied and representative.

Participants were asked to share their "Wow Moments":

- The way the presentations and workshops are run is quite inspiring: always giving people some time and space to think and talk things over.
- The friendly atmosphere as a continued WOW moment.
- Deep discussions after sessions.
- Conference dinner (singing); school visit.
- The importance of resilience.
- Speaking and listening about values and social justice.
- Conversations that helped me realize new aspects relevant to my research.
- Things that make us powerful are differences. The weakest cooperative groups are people who are just like you.
- Realizing the crucial importance of group processing and allowing time for it.
- Making large sessions very cooperative.
- Being recognized as a valued contributor in an international setting.
- Positive and engaged delegates.

Participants were asked what they would "Take Home":

- The concept of connectedness.
- Always asking "what do we have in common?"
- Remembering the cooperative spirit in everything I do.
- Remembering to share good moments.
- My work does fit in somewhere and I now have people to share with.
- Enthusiasm to explore more about the theoretical bases of CL.
- Relationship between the physical environment and the facilitation of CL principles.
- Experiencing CL with very experienced practitioners.
- The closeness that can be evoked through CL and shared values.
- I'm part of a community I can identify with and be proud of.
- I'm not alone.

Participants were asked how they would plan to "Continue and Expand" their work:

- More links with other fields (children's rights, youth studies).
- Contact people on IASCE contact list.
- I will contact some people in my networks to share practice and research further.
- Keep going with school network.
- Present in my international networks and courses.
- Ensure all presentations are not wholly didactic.
- Develop Scandinavian network.
- Conference around the world, but support in our local communities.
- Follow unfinished business.

From the Journals
Contributors: Jill Clark, George Jacobs and Yael Sharan

Bansak, C., & Smith, J. K. (2015). The College Fed Challenge: An innovation in cooperative learning. *Eastern Economic Journal 41*, 470-483. doi:10.1057/eej.2015.10.

This paper documents and provides a framework for implementing the key elements of cooperative learning in a course on the College Fed Challenge and gives instructors a framework for introducing and enhancing elements of active learning in their classes. The College Fed Challenge is a competition at the district and national level where students present an update on current economic conditions, make forecasts, and provide a monetary policy recommendation. Advising College Fed Challenge teams provides a unique opportunity to implement and develop the five key elements of cooperative learning. Specifically, summer and in-class preparations focus on individual accountability and small group social skills. Conducting mock presentations and mock question and answer sessions encourages positive interdependence, promotive interaction and group processing. This paper finds that Fed Challenge students learn more economics, enjoy learning more, and develop skills transferable to the workplace.

Buchs, C., Gilles, I., Antonietti, J-P., & Butera, F. (2015). Why students need to be prepared to cooperate: A cooperative nudge in statistics learning at university. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*. doi: 10.1080/01443410.2015.1075963

Despite the potential benefits of cooperative learning at university, its implementation is challenging. Here, we propose a theory-based 90-min intervention with 185 first-year psychology students in the challenging domain of statistics, consisting of an exercise phase and an individual learning post-test. We com-pared three conditions that manipulated the exercise phase: individual work, cooperative dyadic instructions (structuring three basic components of cooperative learning: positive goal interdependence, individual responsibility and promotive interactions) and cooperative dyadic interactions (the three basic components with an additional cooperative nudge, namely explaining why and how to cooperate in this task) in order to test whether a progressive increase in benefits occurs as the cooperative structure is reinforced. Results indicated a linear trend in individual post-test learning and competence perception, from individual work to cooperative instructions to cooperative interactions. Competence perception mediated the effect of experimental conditions on learning. The results highlight the benefits of the cooperative nudge.

Bradford, B. D., Hickson, C. N., & Evaniew, A. K. (2014). The cooperative learning equation: An effective approach in elementary school physical education. *Physical & Health Education Journal, 80*(3), 6-13.

For several decades, ideas and research results concerning effective teaching approaches for elementary school physical education have been discussed and presented. Therefore, there are several ways to approach the learning environment. Hickson (2003) contends that teachers who attend to the variety of teaching approaches available to them are those who strive to truly physically educate students. These teachers understand to the highest degree that different teaching approaches promote different types of teaming (Fishbume, 2005). One approach to teaching that assists students in the learning environment is cooperative learning. Cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to help each other attain social and academic goals (e.g. developing self-esteem; enhancing academic achievement; encouraging positive group relationships). This article aims to present research on cooperative learning, explore the relationship between cooperative learning and physical education, discuss the "Cooperative Learning Equation" and provide assessment considerations.

Capar, G., & Tarim, K. (2015). Efficacy of the cooperative learning method on mathematics achievement and attitude: A meta-analysis research. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 15*(2), 553-559.

This research compiles experimental studies from 1988 to 2010 that examined the influence of the cooperative learning method, as compared with that of traditional methods, on mathematics achievement and on attitudes towards mathematics. The related field was searched using the following key words in Turkish "matematik ve işbirlikli öğrenme, kubaşık öğrenme, işbirlikçi öğrenme" and in English "cooperative learning and mathematics, meta-analysis." This study covered reports, articles published in refereed journals, and MA and Ph.D. theses. For the international literature review, advanced databases, such as ProQuest Digital Dissertations, EBSCO, and Eric, were mined. A total of 26 studies (n = 36) were considered in the meta-analysis. The effect size for cooperative learning on academic achievement was found to be d++ = 0.59 (95% CI: 0.38 between 0.80) and the effect size for cooperative learning on attitudes towards mathematics was found to be d++ = 0.16. In terms of achievement, the effect size was found to be medium, positive, and significant, but for attitude, it was small, positive, and significant. As a result, cooperative learning was reported to be a more successful method than the traditional method with regard to both achievements and attitudes.

Carroll, J. M., Jiang, H., & Borge, M. (2015). Distributed collaborative homework activities in a problem-based usability engineering course. *Education and Information Technologies, 20*(3), 589-617. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10639-013-9304-6

Teams of students in an upper-division undergraduate Usability Engineering course used a collaborative environment to carry out a series of three distributed collaborative homework assignments. Assignments were case-based analyses structured using a jigsaw design; students were provided a collaborative software environment and introduced to a simple model of collaboration. We found that students were able to use the collaboration model, though the quality of their collaboration was poor both before and after training. We found that students were able to carry out the distributed collaborative homework activities using our collaborative software environment, though they often used, and sometimes relied on face-to-face interactions. The use of chat to maintain team awareness, and coordinate the development of shared documents, was particularly notable as a practice of our most successful teams. Students reported a great variety of benefits and challenges in carrying out the distributed collaborative homework activities. We speculate on future directions for teaching collaboration skills, and for better supporting team awareness and workflows in distributed collaborative homework activities.

Cho, Y. H., & Lim, K. Y. T. (2015). Effectiveness of collaborative learning with 3D virtual worlds. *British Journal of Educational Technology*. doi: 10.1111/bjet.12356.

Virtual worlds have affordances to enhance collaborative learning in authentic contexts. Despite the potential of collaborative learning with a virtual world, few studies investigated whether it is more effective in student achievements than teacher-directed instruction. This study investigated the effectiveness of collaborative problem solving and collaborative observation using virtual worlds. Secondary school students (n = 101) participated in the study as part of their coursework in three geography classes. This study found that collaborative problem solving and observation were more effective in facilitating and maintaining intrinsic motivation than teacher-directed instruction. Students in the collaborative observation condition outperformed those in the other conditions when it came to knowledge gains. Lastly, collaborative problem solving and observation were more beneficial for group performance than teacher-directed instruction. These results were discussed in regard to the impacts of interactive learning and the cognitive load of using virtual worlds.

Cox, C. T (Jr). (2015). Incorporating more individual accountability in group activities in general chemistry. *Journal of College Science Teaching, 44*(3), 30.

A modified model of cooperative learning known as the GIG model (for group-individual-group) designed and implemented in a large enrollment freshman chemistry course. The goal of the model is to establish a cooperative environment while emphasizing greater individual accountability using both group and individual assignments. The assignments were designed to be parallel to each other, assessing similar qualitative and quantitative aspects of chemistry. The model was designed for implementation in recitation sections led by teaching assistants. A statistical difference between the treatment group and the control groups was observed, with the GIG group performing statistically higher on the exams. Furthermore, when compared with the traditional passive recitation, students reported a greater satisfaction with the GIG model in the final course survey. The success of the model helped provide support in the department for further innovation of inquiry and active learning methodologies and development of the chemistry curriculum.

Gillies, R. M. (2015). Dialogic interactions in the cooperative classroom. *International Journal of Educational Research*. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2015.02.009.

Attention in recent years has turned to the key role talk plays in mediating students' learning when they work cooperatively together. There is no doubt that talk, albeit by the teacher or peers, has the capacity to stimulate and extend students' thinking and advance their learning. Teachers do this when they encourage students to engage in reciprocal dialogues where they exchange information, explore issues, interrogate ideas, and tackle problems in a cooperative environment that is supportive of these discussions. In turn, students learn to listen to what others have to say, consider alternative perspectives, and engage critically and constructively with each other's ideas by learning how to reason and justify their assertions as they cooperate together. This study involved three Year 7 teachers and 17 groups of students (3–5 students per group) from their classes. The teachers had agreed to teach two units of cooperative, inquiry-based science across two school terms. All three teachers had been trained to use a dialogic approach to teaching designed to challenge children's thinking and learning. This paper presents examples of both teachers' and students' dialogic interactions and discusses the complementarity of these discourses even though the teachers used slightly different dialogic approaches in interacting with their students.

Jacobs, G., & Seouw, P. (2015). Cooperative learning principles enhance online interaction. *Journal of International and Comparative Education, 4*(1), 28-38.

Research suggests that cooperative interactions are associated with enhanced cognitive and affective outcomes. This paper describes eight principles that can be used to promote such interactions among students working in online environments. The principles derive from a well-established approach to education, known variously as cooperative learning and collaborative learning. Each principle is explained as to what it means, why it is important and how it can be deployed. The eight principles are heterogeneous grouping, teaching collaborative skills, group autonomy, maximum peer interactions, equal opportunity to participate, individual accountability, positive interdependence and cooperation as a value.

Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., Roseth, C., & Shin, T. S. (2014). The relationship between motivation and achievement in interdependent situations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 44*(9), 622–633. doi: 10.1111/jasp.12280

This meta-analysis investigates the degree to which achievement is positively associated with motivation within situations characterized by positive, negative, and no interdependence. First, the relative effects of positive, negative, and no interdependence on motivation and achievement were determined. Then the amount of variance in achievement explained by motivation (and vice versa) was calculated. In all, 629 independent studies were included, representing 26 different countries. Results also showed that motivation accounted for 14% of the variance in achievement (and vice versa). When the lowest-quality studies were eliminated, the percentage of achievement explained by motivation increased to 24%. Positive interdependence resulted in greater motivation and achievement than did negative or no interdependence. Implications for theory and application are discussed.

Jurkowski, S., & Hänze, M. (2015). How to increase the benefits of cooperation: Effects of training in transactive communication on cooperative learning. *British Journal of Educational Psychology 85*(3), 357-371. doi: 10.1111/bjep.12077

Transactive communication means referring to and building on a learning partner's idea, by, for example, extending the partner's idea or interlinking the partner's idea with an idea of one's own. This transforms the partner's idea into a more elaborate one. Previous research found a positive relationship between students' transactive communication and their learning results when working in small groups. To increase the benefits of cooperation, we developed and tested a module for training students in transactive communication. We assumed that this training would enhance students' transactive communication and also increase their knowledge acquisition during cooperative learning. Further, we distinguished between an actor's transactive communication and a learning partner's transactive communication and expected both to be positively associated with an actor's knowledge acquisition. Results show a meaningful increase in the benefits of cooperation through the training in transactive communication. Furthermore, findings indicate that students benefit from both elaborating on their partner's ideas and having their own ideas elaborated on.

Koutrouba, K., & Christopoulos, I. (2015). Cooperative learning effectiveness in the bureaucratic school: Views of Greek secondary education teachers. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 12*(2), 64-88.

The present questionnaire-based study examines 491 Greek secondary education teachers' perceptions about and attitudes towards cooperative learning (CL) four years after the official introduction of CL in almost all teaching/learning procedures, in order to find out whether minor changes in typical bureaucratic educational systems, may produce major beneficial results for students, teachers, and education per se. According to the results, significant educational outcomes are linked to CL in a highly bureaucratic educational system, such as students' self-understanding and empathy-developing, increasing self-esteem, the attainment of socio-emotional objectives, and providing teachers with incentives to experiment, diversify and individualize the teaching process within mainstream classes. Such positive outcomes, however, seem to be produced only in cases where teachers are provided firstly with clearly defined socio-affective Curricula objectives, teaching guidelines, and educational instructions, and secondly with official authority and entrustment to implement (almost obligatorily) CL in such a way that major academic objectives can be fulfilled and are not downgraded.

Krammer, M., Gebhard, M., Gastager, A., Palaczek, L., Rossmann, P., & Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (2015). Effects of cooperative learning methods in German language arts on reading ability and social behavior in high school students. *Journal of Studies in Education, 5*(4), 2-22. ISSN 2162-6952.

This study examined the implementation and outcomes of cooperative learning methods in daily school life. In the context of an intervention wait-list control group research design lasting over two years, a group of Austrian students was taught using mainly cooperative learning methods in German language arts. In addition to standardized tests, self and peer report questionnaires assessed reading ability and social behavior before and after the intervention. Focus group interviews of teachers were used to investigate the implementation of cooperative learning methods in daily class life. The participants were nineteen teachers and 294 fifth and sixth graders from eight different schools at the secondary level. The results show that teachers prefer relatively specific cooperative learning methods. The results also illustrate that students who used cooperative learning methods in German language classes developed significantly better in reading comprehension than students in the wait-list control group. However, concerning the reports of social behavior, most differences between the two groups failed to reach statistical significance.

Kwok, A.P., & Lau, A. (2015). An exploratory study on using the think-pair-share cooperative learning strategy. *Journal of Mathematical Sciences, 2*, 22-28.

To develop primary students' skills of thinking and promote cooperative learning, the strategy of "Think-Pair-Share", suggested by Lyman [1], was adopted in this exploratory study to enhance the learning effectiveness in solving monthly challenging problems in mathematics. Four classes in Grade 3, 4 and 6 were selected to participate in this study. Students first thought and worked independently about the monthly challenging problems and wrote down their thoughts; then they paired up to talk about their answers and decided the answer that they thought was the best; finally they shared their decisions by presenting to the whole class. Accuracy of students' monthly challenge problem was checked before and after the process of Think-Pair-Share. Lesson observation, questionnaire and group interview were also employed to investigate students' learning processes and identify the factors that impact on the learning effectiveness of applying this strategy. Data analysis suggested that students' learning outcomes improved significantly from this strategy of "Think-Pair-Share". The new cooperative learning grouping and organization provided students opportunity and time for them to think and understand the question. Students paired up to discuss and clarify the problem and solution, and to present and explain the answer to their peers. Students were more actively involved and motivated in the process of problem solving. The cooperative learning promoted by this strategy helped to lower the anxiety of students in solving the difficult mathematics problems, especially of those students with lower level of achievement in mathematics. This study intends to obtain insights into understanding and developing students' learning experiences of using this strategy of "Think-Pair-Share" in a primary school in Hong Kong.

Mercier, E. M., Higgins, S. E., da Costa, L., & Kirschner, P. A. (2015). Different leaders: Emergent organizational and intellectual leadership in children's collaborative learning groups. *International Journal of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning, 9*(4), 397-432. doi: 10.1007/s11412-014-9201-z.

This paper presents two studies that examine emergent leadership in children's collaborative learning groups. Building on research that finds that leadership moves are distributed among group members during learning activities, we examined whether there were patterns in the distribution of moves, resulting in different types of emergent leaders in groups. Study one examines individual groups working with a teacher, on the same task either with paper or multi-touch tables. Study two examines groups of students in a multi-touch classroom. Results from study one indicated that the leadership was distributed among the students; the distributions aligned with classifications of intellectual leadership moves and organizational leadership moves for about half of the groups. There were no differences in emergent leadership between the multi-touch and paper conditions.

These results were explored in more detail in a multi-touch classroom study, exploring emergent leadership in 22 groups of students across six classes. Again, leadership was distributed among group members, and specific roles of intellectual and organizational leader, taken on by two different students, could be identified in half of the groups. These results suggest that attention should be paid to how students are engaging in collaborative learning tasks to ensure all students participate in the intellectual as well as organizational demands of the task. Additionally, the pattern of the distribution of roles suggests that care should be taken to specify behaviors if the role of leader is assigned to collaborative groups.

Mohamad, A.M., Yusof, F.M., & Aris, B. (2015). Pattern of interaction in online cooperative learning: An analysis of communication perspective. *Jurnal Teknologi, 74*(1), 171-177. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.11113/jt.v74.3807

Communication is one of the generic skills needed by students in preparation for the career path. Cooperative learning, supported by web applications, has been identified as a strategy that can help students to improve their communication skills. The aim of this study is to identify patterns of interaction in an online cooperative learning (OCoL) that helps the communication skill aspect among students. A Learning Management System which is modified based on the principles of cooperative learning with the learning structure in accordance to the method of investigation group has been developed as a learning platform. It also serves as a data collection instrument. A group of 15 students were randomly selected to carry out six OCoL sessions which were implemented using counterbalanced group quasi-experimental design. The results of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the log data showed two patterns of students' interaction i.e. structured and unstructured patterns. The differences in patterns of interaction also influenced students' focus on using interaction tools and the quality of discussion produced. The results of this study have implications for the structural design of OCoL that can assist students in communication aspects.

Muuro, M. E., Wagacha, W. P., Oboko, R., & Kihoro, J. (2014). Perceived challenges in an online collaborative learning environment: A case of higher learning institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning, 15*(6), 132-161.

Earlier forms of distance education were characterized by minimal social interaction like correspondence, television, video and radio. However, the World Wide Web (WWW) and online learning introduced the opportunity for much more social interaction, particularly among learners, and this has been further made possible through social media in Web 2.0. The increased availability of collaborative tools in Web 2.0 has made it possible to have online collaborative learning realized in Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). However, learners can perceive the online collaborative learning process as challenging and they fail to utilize these collaborative tools effectively. Although a number of challenges have been mentioned in the literature, considerable diversity exists among countries due to diversity in infrastructure support for e-learning and learners' background. This motivated this study to investigate components of online collaborative learning perceived as challenging by learners in HLIs in Kenya. Using a questionnaire, a survey was conducted in two public universities and two private universities to identify perceived challenges in an online collaborative learning environment. Through purposive sampling the questionnaire was distributed to 210 students using e-mail and 183 students responded. Based on descriptive analysis the following five major challenges were rated as high: lack of feedback from instructors, lack of feedback from peers, lack of time to participate, slow internet connectivity, and low or no participation of other group members. There was also a relationship between the university type (private or public) with the perceived challenges which included: lack of feedback from the instructor ($p = 0.046$) and work load not shared equally among group members ($p = 0.000$). Apart from slow internet connectivity the rest of the challenges were in line with the observed challenges in the literature. These key challenges identified in this study should provide insight to educators on the areas of collaborative learning that should be improved in order to provide access to quality education that supports effective online collaborative learning in HLIs in Kenya.

Padmaja, C. V., & Lakshmi, B. S. (2014). The effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing life skills through language. *IUP Journal of English Studies, 9*(2), 85-89.

The globally growing demand for better communication, both written and oral, calls for innovative teaching methodologies with greater participation of the learners. Today, the industry needs team effort. Individuals need to be assertive. The competition promotes aggressiveness and either they become passive or lose the race or win the race. But the need of the hour is to cooperate and move forward. Therefore, it calls for an effective method to improve communication skills and soft skills in technical undergraduate students. This paper proposes a method that will not only enhance language learning or develop communication, but also help the students in applying the strategies involved in Cooperative Learning to all subjects even at the optional level.

Prata, D. N., Letouze, P., Cerri, S., & Costa, E. (2016). A qualitative study of insults in collaborative learning. *International Journal of Information and Education Technology, 6*(4), 251-255. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJIET.2016.V6.695.

In computer-supported collaborative learning, automatic coding procedure strategies are necessary for teaching because of the large amount of dialogue acts that must be evaluated. In addition, the characterization of a student's social identification for collaborative and learning behaviors might affect a student's learning outcomes in a variety of ways. An effective learning analysis of the interactive processes cannot dissociate cognitive from social factors. We present a qualitative study of social behavior for insults (flaming) in an anonymous, text-based, collaborative learning dialogue protocol. The application of a nuanced framework of miscommunication for 'flaming' conveys new outcomes for social behavior, as the effect of insults, in collaborative learning processes. This study reinforces the importance of conflict as a variable to understand what, when, and how agents can intervene in collaborative learning dialogues in order to monitor and mediate when necessary, thus keeping the conversation progressing in a productive direction.

Salehizadeh, M. R., & Behin-Aein, N. (2014). Effects of cooperative learning plus inquiry method on student learning and attitudes: A comparative study for engineering economic classrooms. *European Journal of Engineering Education, 39*(2), 188-200.

In the Iranian higher education system, including engineering education, effective implementation of cooperative learning is difficult because classrooms are usually crowded and the students never had a formal group working background in their previous education. In order to achieve the benefits of cooperative learning in this condition, this paper proposes a combination of cooperative learning and inquiry method. The method is implemented by grouping students in a way that the learning procedure is done in non-official class sessions by each group, while the inquiry method is done in the regular programmed class sessions. The study is performed in Islamic Azad University and the methods are implemented in two engineering economic classes with different numbers of students in each working group. The results are compared with a control class in which traditional teaching style is implemented. The results of analysis show simultaneous improvement of learning and behavioural attitudes of the students with cooperative learning plus inquiry method in the classroom with a fewer number of students in each working group.

Sedhu, D. S., Choy, S. C., & Lee, M. Y. (2015). Students' perceptions of using collaborative learning as a tool for acquiring writing skills in university. *American Journal of Applied Psychology, 4*(3-1), 1-6. doi: 10.11648/j.ajap.s.2015040301.

This paper examines students' perceptions of the use of group discussion as a collaborative learning tool among English-as-a-Second-language (ESL) learners when learning writing skills in university. Studies on collaborative learning have shown that group discussions enhance students' learning experiences and knowledge. Collaborative learning in the form of group discussions encourages students to produce work that is creative as well as stimulate critical thinking. This form of learning further develops interpersonal skills and social relationships among students. Twenty-four university students divided into six groups were the respondents in this study. The data was collected using voice recorded transcriptions of a semi-structured interview session with each group after completing the collaborative learning activity. The transcriptions were then analysed qualitatively using the interpretative approach. The transcripts were read and reread until common ideas emerged that were then categorised and discussed under various themes. The results showed that students perceived that collaborative learning tended to help them reflect on the content and context of the tasks they had to carry out. This form of learning was perceived to increase their confidence and motivation to communicate with their peers in a second language, and there were higher rates of task completion.

Tan, Y. J. H., & Mai, N. (2016). Leveraging web technologies for collaborative problem-solving in an authentic learning environment. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity, 6*(7), 536-540. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.7763/IJSSH.2016.V6.706.

This paper presents a study that sought to look at the use of web technologies in supporting collaboration among undergraduate students working in groups to solve problems. The learning environment was designed to be authentic, centering on a problem-based group project and incorporated web technologies. Student attitude and perceptions were gathered through the use of a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, open ended questions and interviews. The results indicate that students responded positively towards this learning environment and support the incorporation of web technologies to create conducive learning environments that facilitate collaborative problem-solving.

Winschel, G. A., Everett, R. K., Coppola, B. P., Shultz, G.V., & Lonn, S. (2015). Using jigsaw-style spectroscopy problem-solving to elucidate molecular structure through online cooperative learning. *Journal of Chemical Education, 92*(7), 1188–1193. doi: 10.1021/acs.jchemed.5b00114.

Cooperative learning was employed as an instructional approach to facilitate student development of spectroscopy problem solving skills. An interactive online environment was used as a framework to structure weekly discussions around spectroscopy problems outside of class. Weekly discussions consisted of modified jigsaw-style problem solving activities in which students cooperatively interpreted infrared and nuclear magnetic resonance spectra. Students' use of the discussion site was monitored and revealed that they accessed discussions in the days prior to examinations. Together with attitudinal surveys, which were used to gauge student perceptions of the activities, these results indicate that students found the discussions to be a useful resource for learning spectroscopy.

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