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EÖTVÖS LORÁND TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM

Pedagógiai és Pszichológiai Kar – Bölcsészettudományi Kar

# DIPLOMAMUNKA

*Együttműködés az angolórán*  
*Cooperation in the EFL classroom*

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## NYILATKOZAT

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Budapest, 2019. 04. 20.

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## 1) Abstract

In this study, I detail my observations of a group of special needs high school students and their attitude towards cooperative learning methods. The aim of my empirical research was to see whether cooperative activities are efficient for their language learning purposes and to introduce and encourage the use of various cooperation-based work-forms, such as pair- and small group work. I kept a diary where I noted down my observations, in addition to the reflections from my mentor and the feedback that I received from my students. Additionally, I also constructed an online survey, focusing on the same questions but with a larger audience. The results of this dual research showed that while cooperation among multiple people might not be easy for everyone, working together in pairs does provide more motivation and enjoyment than any other conventional work-form in the EFL classroom.

## 2) Introduction

Working together with other people has become more important in the past two decades in educational institutions and in the world of work alike. If you look past the predominantly old-fashioned education systems, which are implemented in most of the government funded primary and secondary schools worldwide (Saavedra & Opfer, 2012), you can see the endeavours of alternative teaching methods that facilitate more relevant skills than memorising and recalling factual knowledge. One of these soft skills is *cooperation*, a necessary component of any well-functioning community, and the topic of this study. In my thesis, I am going to examine the attitudes towards cooperation among a small group of students from a certain second chance high school, where I did my long teaching practice during the final year of my studies.

First, I will take a closer look at the background literature concerning cooperative learning, then I will introduce the setting and the cooperative tasks I used in detail, and finally I will present the outcomes and my reflections of the conducted research. The reason I chose to focus on cooperation was partially because of its aforementioned significance in today's society, and partially because it is a rather uncharted territory in connection with students who suffer from various behavioural and mental issues. My exact research questions were the following:

- Can students with diverse problematic backgrounds learn English more effectively by working together or on their own?
- What kind of challenges will they face and what can help them to overcome them?
- What is the general attitude of Hungarian high school students towards working in small groups and pairs in the English lesson?

I hope that the results of this empirical study will prove to be useful for those teachers who are considering using cooperative learning methods with special needs students.

### **3) Review of literature**

#### ***3.1) 21<sup>st</sup> century skills***

Education is the backbone of society. Without proper education, children cannot be prepared for the challenges of work and social life. As Lippl (2013) said in her blog, "21st Century students need to have the 21st Century skills that will make them stand out in today's job market. Students now need to be able to show that they can be Collaborators, Communicators, Creators, and Critical Thinkers." (p. 1).

In response to the recent developments in information technology, schools have started to shift focus from the importance of *what* to teach to the importance of *how* to teach (Nazikian & Park, 2016). This change, however, was not only limited to the use of

the Internet or smart devices in the classroom, but also led to the establishment of different theoretical frameworks for educators, such as the “Foreign Language Education Guidelines” (*Gaikokugo gakushuu no meyasu*) by The Japan Forum (*Kokusai Bunka Forum*) in 2012, or perhaps the more well-known *Framework for 21st Century Learning* by the non-profit organization, Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (2015), on the other side of the globe, in the USA. Both of these frameworks are based on those skills and abilities that are essential for everyone in order to become a global citizen and incorporate the competencies which are expected from any adult in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the Japanese framework, these competencies include but are not limited to the ability to utilize information with objectivity and critical thinking, the ability to connect and collaborate with others effectively so as to be able to achieve a common goal, and the ability to understand what is happening in the world around us. Some other important educational goals of the framework are for children to master character traits that support the competencies above; such as empathy, self-reflection, autonomy, creativity or responsibility-taking.

Many of these also appear in the American framework but the four major, so-called Learning and Innovation Skills are the 4Cs of critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Taking a closer look at these four cornerstones of the framework makes it obvious why they were chosen as essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Kivunja (2015) explains that critical thinking “helps students to be open minded, to question, not to take anything for granted and to think and reason through issues in a rational manner” (p. 227). This skill can, for example, help someone judge if a piece of information they found on social media is true or not, but it plays an important role in strategizing and decision making as well.

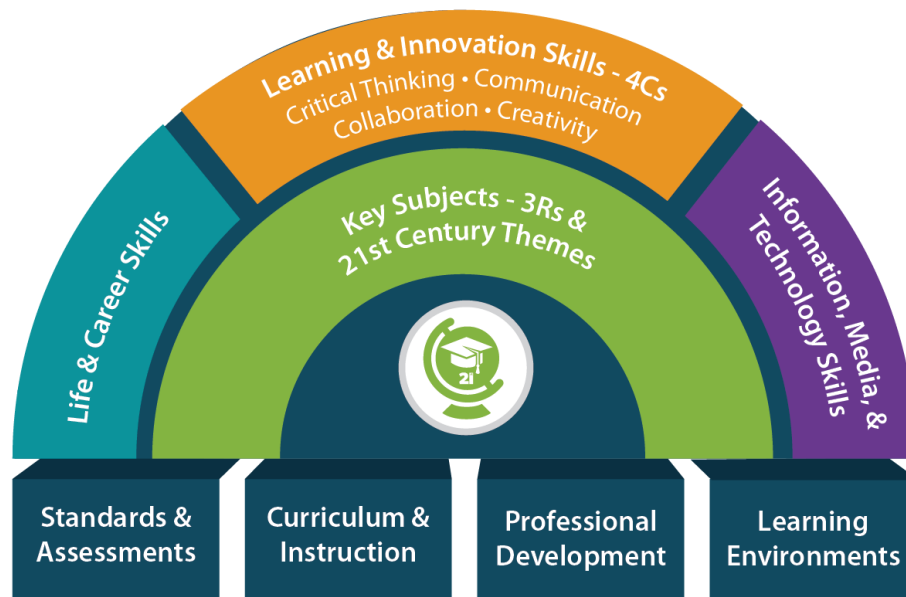


Creativity and innovation do not merely refer to having rich imagination and artistic talents but also to thinking outside of the box and being skilled at problem-solving. It is the drive which moves us forward, as De Bono (1992) said “Without creativity, there would be no progress, and we would be forever repeating the same patterns” (p. 169).

Never has been a higher demand for people with good communication skills than now, in our modern age. Whether it be talking one on one or in a group, face to face or over the telephone, in writing or perhaps non-verbally; conveying one’s message in a clear, meaningful, and politically correct way can be quite challenging, even if both parties speak the same mother tongue. In addition to this, understanding net etiquette has also become an essential skill as communication frequently happens in the virtual space through “e-mail, text messaging, Web sites, online collaboration spaces, social networking tools—the list goes on and on” (Trilling & Fadel, 2009, p. 24).

Collaborating on a project with their peers can enable students to feel as if they were an indispensable part of the team while retaining their individual responsibility and creative freedom. This pattern of working in a group with equally distributed tasks and duties is a common sight in every multinational office environment. Therefore, it goes without saying that collaboration has rightfully earned its place as one of the core skills of this century.

However, these four skills on their own are inadequate to equip a high school graduate with all the necessary knowledge so they must be supported by various Life and Career skills, as well as digital literacy skills; in addition to the traditional 3Rs of reading, writing, and arithmetic that make up the key school subjects. These together are the main elements of the *Framework for 21st Century Learning*, which can be seen on Figure 1.



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Figure 1. Framework for 21st Century Learning. By P21, 2019,  
<http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21/frameworks-resources>.

Regardless of the two nations’ geographical and cultural distance from each other, both the Japanese and the American frameworks highlighted similar, if not the same set of skills, which only confirms their ubiquitous importance everywhere in the world. Nevertheless, there are several other frameworks, models, and guidelines that illustrate a myriad of crucial skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century education; but in this study, I am going to focus on cooperation and cooperative learning techniques in the classroom.

### **3.2) Cooperation and Collaboration**

Now that it has been described what collaboration is, it is time to explain what it is not. Often the term is used interchangeably with cooperation but the two are in fact completely distinct concepts.

In cooperative learning scenarios two or more students work together towards a common goal, which could be as simple as the completion of a classroom exercise or as complex as a long-running group project. This environment enables them to “enhance

their own and each other's learning" (Khodareza & Taheri, 2015, p. 81) as they work interdependently with the support of their teacher. Students are often assigned specific roles in cooperative tasks, such as the note-taker, the illustrator, or the mediator, depending on their skills and abilities. These roles can be discussed among the students or, in a more controlled situation, the teacher will be the one distributing them. According to their roles, each student is responsible for their own work and they are aware that the completion of the task can only be achieved if they all pull their own weight. In a well-constructed cooperative exercise, the responsibilities of the students do not overlap and it is impossible to fulfil the task without equal contribution from every member of the group. Therefore, it is imperative that the teacher should be available for consultation and any kind of help the group might need of them. They usually provide the necessary materials the students need for completing the task, and although their role has changed from being an instructor to being a facilitator, they closely supervise the progress of the groups and keep control of the whole process.

As opposed to this, collaborative learning is less structured and more open-ended. It is not enough for students to simply act according to their assigned role, then, after the execution of their share of the work, put their pieces together to form a whole. Collaboration includes the debate of opinions, brainstorming, and having to find conclusions together. Students act in a more autonomous way, so it is highly possible that they deviate from the teacher's preconceived ideas of what the end result might become by researching different aspects of the subject matter or finding answers to questions the teacher has never had in mind in the first place. Therefore, it was suggested by Bruffee (1995) that this type of work should be more appropriate and beneficial for college and university students than for younger pupils, as their level of maturity and knowledge can allow for self-directed autonomous learning and greater freedom in group projects. He

brings up another important distinction between cooperative and collaborative learning, which is the question of authority. Whereas the former is more structured and the teacher plays the role of the central authority figure in the overall process, the latter encourages students to question themselves and each other, to challenge their boundaries, and not to take the teacher's word for granted.

To sum up, both approaches have the benefit of developing students' interpersonal skills and they emphasise the value of complementing one another, rather than urging students to compete with each other, making them more unforthcoming in the process. Additionally, they both treat knowledge as something to be acquired together and shared; a product of social construct, and not words out of a textbook. However, neither cooperative, nor collaborative learning is without faults. As mentioned before, a slight drawback of cooperative learning is the presence of authority, which strips away autonomy from the students but also guides them on the path, ensuring a predetermined successful outcome. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, sacrifices accountability for freedom as it empowers students with complete autonomy over their joint work.

Due to my circumstances at the high school, I chose to design and carry out exercises that promote cooperative learning instead of collaborative work. Aiming for diversity, I tried different forms of teaching, ranging from pair work to class-wide mingling activities. I used a variety of techniques, which will be explored in the next section of this paper.

### ***3.3) Cooperative learning methods***

Regardless of the number of students participating, the length of the task, or the teaching form used, every type of cooperative learning method must target two or more people who have to interact with each other in a mutually beneficial way while displaying

interdependence in working together and sharing individual responsibility and accountability for the outcome of the learning activity (Sharan, 2010). Based on this description, there are plenty of exercises that can be labelled as cooperative learning methods, and even more that can be modified by teachers to fit into the category. Therefore, it is not easy to keep track of the constantly expanding library of activities and methods.

For the purpose of this thesis, I will follow Slavin's (2000) categorisation and divide cooperative learning methods into two groups, based on the type of learning students experience. The first one is called *group study method*, where every student is given a set piece of knowledge that they must share with the others in order to see the bigger picture and accomplish the task. There is little room for creativity from the students, as all they have to do is just relay the information. The second group of cooperative learning methods involves more critical thinking because here students are tasked with solving a problem together and creating a final product which demonstrates the solution to their dilemma. The product can be anything from a co-written report to a poster presentation, as long as it incorporates everyone's efforts and the steps they took in order to achieve their goal. These type of activities are therefore referred to as *project-based learning methods*.

### **3.3.1) Group study methods**

It would be a rather lengthy and challenging undertaking to list all of the existing techniques which fall under the category of group study methods. Nonetheless, I still find it necessary to introduce some of the most common types that are being used in classrooms nowadays. I gained knowledge of and tried all of the following methods during my university studies, at the Methodology course, with the direction of Szesztay M. (personal communications, September 2016 – May 2018).

Think-Pair-Share: Students are given a problem or question to think about individually. Then, once they have gathered their thoughts and formulated their opinion, students get into pairs and discuss the problem together. Finally, they have a whole group discussion where every pair can share what they talked about. By starting with a silent, individual segment, students are encouraged to carefully consider the issue before having to speak up in public. Pairing them up gives every student equal opportunity to voice their opinion in the matter and it avoids the embarrassment of being judged by their peers in a less friendly class environment. While speaking in public is always a daunting task for many students, this technique is guaranteed to evoke longer contributions than being put on the spot by the teacher, as the steps before prepare the students for the final task in a more efficient way.

Jigsaw: Mainly used in connection with reading comprehension exercises. The whole class is divided into groups of four to five people and each student in a group receives a segment of a story. Those who got the same parts now sit together to discuss its contents and become, so-called, experts in their field. After the expert groups have concluded their exchange of views, every student goes back to their original team and explains what they have learnt from their earlier discussion. This way students are given a chance to broaden their horizon by listening to others' opinion on the same matter and can also practise peer-teaching, which generally amplifies their retention rate compared to passively listening to a lecture. In some variations of the Jigsaw exercise, students are given the same text but have to focus on different aspects of the story, while in another one they have to teach the whole class and not just those few from their original team. Neither iteration of this method is better or worse than the other, they simply aim to facilitate different skills; such as being able to confidently speak in public about a topic of your expertise or to succeed in identifying important aspects of a written document.

Inside-out circle: This is a fast-paced, kinetic classroom activity where time keeping and signalling is essential on the teacher's part. First, the students create two groups and arrange themselves in a way so that the members from the first group stand in a circle next to each other, while the remaining group forms a bigger circle around them. Then, the students in the inner circle have to turn around and face the person standing in front of them from the outer circle. These inner and outer circle pairs will have limited time to discuss a question posed by the teacher and as soon as their time is up, the students in the outer circle take one step to the left, in other words move on to their next conversation partner. This continues for a while but not until the outer circle students get back to their starting position, as the goal of the game is not to talk to every single person but to successfully formulate your thoughts within a short time and listen to the others' as well. Similarly to the previous techniques, this method also maximises student talk time during the lesson but as an added bonus, it provides some physical activity by keeping students on their feet and making them move a bit. Afterwards, getting feedback in either oral or written form from the whole class can be a satisfying closure for this activity.

### ***3.3.2) Project-based learning methods***

In this section, I will briefly introduce and highlight the advantages of one of the most prominent techniques regarding project work. Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to implement this method during my teaching practice as it requires flexible seating arrangements, in-depth knowledge of every student, and overall more complex planning and preparation from the teacher's side.

Complex instruction: As the name suggests, this method combines a complex use of skills and set of roles in multiple heterogeneous groups. After an interesting lead-in and explanation of the task, students are assigned a role and begin to organise themselves

into small groups. Each role comes with a list of unique responsibilities printed on their respective role cards. Obviously, two students with the same role cannot be in one group, therefore mutual interdependence is unavoidable in this situation. Furthermore, each group focuses on a different project, such as writing a song, creating an arts and crafts product, or a drawing. The groups are supplied with materials by the teacher but it is up to them to gather said objects at the start of the lesson. An important distinction of this method is the extra effort teachers put into monitoring these academically and often socially diverse teams, and interjecting when deemed necessary so that equal participation and acceptance among the group members can be guaranteed. (Cohen et al., 1999)

#### ***3.4) Problems in practice***

Although it is an extremely popular teaching approach nowadays, cooperative learning has many obstacles for both teachers and students alike. One of the most common mistakes beginner teachers can make is rushing headfirst into it, without adequate experience or preparation. (Sharan, 2010) They often believe that the aforementioned methods cannot be modified and therefore they carry them out without consideration for their current teaching environment. Tasks and roles are not adjusted to students' abilities, and groups are dysfunctional due to the team members' lack of trust towards one another. At the other end of the scale, we can find teachers who modify so much of the original methods that they do not fulfil the necessary requirements anymore to be called cooperative techniques. As a result, they often feel disappointed and sometimes even refrain from using such methods ever again, after their initial failure.

Students also have reservations about the effectiveness of these methods, which usually stems from their previous experiences with language learning and beliefs about group work. Their willingness to communicate in the target language with their peers depends on a lot of factors, for example their relationship with their classmates, their



communication confidence, their understanding of the task, or their perceived value of cooperation, just to name a few. (Fushino, 2010) It takes a long time to change students' deep-rooted beliefs about anything but with hard work and dedication, teachers can make a difference using cooperative learning techniques in the classroom.

#### **4) Research design and method**

##### ***4.1) Research questions***

After reading the relevant background literature and experiencing my first few days at the educational institution I was situated at, I have decided on the following research questions:

- Can students with diverse problematic backgrounds learn English more effectively by working together or on their own?
- What kind of challenges will they face and what can help them to overcome them?
- What is the general attitude of Hungarian high school students towards working in small groups and pairs in the English lesson?

##### ***4.2) The approach of the research***

I have decided to do a thorough qualitative research with the students I was teaching, along with a larger scale quantitative one with several other high school aged students around the country. The reason why I opted for this solution was due to the nature of my research questions; since one cannot investigate a specific group of students with the same approach and tools as you would use for the general population. While qualitative research focuses more on the participants and their emotional state, quantitative research aims to collect data from a large pool of people in order to create numerical comparisons and charts. (Bell, 2005) Using both approaches allowed me to see the bigger picture of overall trends and how my teaching context related to that.

### ***4.3) Methods of data collection***

Quoting the words of Bell (2005), “no approach prescribes nor automatically rejects any particular method” (p. 7), however there are certain methods which suit certain approaches and situations better. Carefully considering my teaching environment, my research questions, and the purpose of this study, I have settled on the following methods of data collection:

- Observing the students’ behaviour and attitude towards various exercises during my mentor’s and my own lessons.
- For the sake of triangulation, I often talked with my mentor and asked him for a written observation report after the lessons.
- On my last day at the high school, I asked for the students’ feedback on their experience and the type of tasks we have done together.
- Meanwhile, I conducted a survey and gathered responses from other secondary school students on the topic of pair- and group work.

For the qualitative part of my research, my aim was to use methods that explore the relationship between cause and effect, thus giving explanations to human behaviour. Additionally, I needed to support my claims with findings from someone else’s point of view, so that is why I turned to my mentor for triangulation. As for the students, I wanted confirmation that my observations were reliable and valid so I needed their assistance too. Finally, the reason for the survey was simple; it is the most efficient and least time-consuming tool that can reach large audiences and provide me with ample information to be analysed.

#### ***4.4) The setting***

The high school where I did my long-term teaching practice is a foundational school in the heart of downtown, Budapest. Their mission statement is to help those special needs students to graduate who have dropped out of other educational institutions due to their inability to fit in and adapt to the norms. The majority of students here are suffering from various mental and behavioural issues, making it a rather challenging environment for a beginner teacher. The school itself is small and the amount of students attending is low, therefore it is easy to recognise faces even after a couple of days and it is possible to get know everyone by their name by the end of the first month. Lessons start at 9:00 am every day and last until 5 pm but every student picks their own classes based on their academic level and availability. This way, there are no grades or classes with a homeroom teacher, the school functions as a university or college with individually customized timetables.

However, problems arise when students do not show up to their classes until the day of the exam or only come sporadically with varying degrees of participation. Unfortunately, based on my experience, it is a very common occurrence in this school to have five to ten people show up for a lesson where thirty had registered. There were students, even on my last workday, whom I saw only once or not at all. The reason behind this is partially the fact that many of the students attending this school have a part-time or even a full time job, or in rarer cases, a family to support, so they simply cannot afford the luxury of going to classes. Another reason for skipping school is their problematic family background or unstable mental state. A lot of students have hinted at something bad going on in their life at the moment as a way of excusing themselves from going to classes. And last but not least, there are a few overly confident and lazy people who think that their level of English is high enough without going to classes and they will be able

to pass the exams with minimal effort. Ironically, these students had some of the lowest points on the first term closing exam.

Consequently, I actually never had the chance to see the whole class together as one with the exception of the day of the exam. In the first term I taught two groups, one was an intermediate level project group and the other an upper-intermediate group of students preparing for the high school leaving exam this May. At first I was really glad when I heard that they are teaching the lower level group with a project-based learning method because I hoped to learn something from these lessons for future reference. Sadly, that was not the case. Not only did the teachers execute the method incorrectly, but they also did not leave me much room for discussion as my only job in teaching them was mere supervision and occasional assistance while they were working on their essays or presentations individually. The project itself had a relevant and useful topic, *employment*, and it covered areas of finding and choosing the most suitable job for your interests and skills, applying for a job, and assessing what is good or bad behaviour on a job interview. The students were given different tasks to work on during the term, which they had to present or hand in on the day of the exam. These tasks included writing a CV and a cover letter, making a presentation about their topic of choice, and preparing for a 10-question-long, scripted job interview. So there were plenty of products that the students had to create by themselves, but the problem was with the implementation of the method. Cooperative learning must be based on cooperation between the students and mutual interdependence, therefore it goes without saying that giving the exact same task to everyone and asking them to work on it individually is the stark opposite of cooperation and what project-based learning methods should stand for.

There were various other issues with this project group but because they are not relevant to the topic of this study, I decided against mentioning them here. The other

group of students I was teaching throughout the first and the second term mostly needed grammar and vocabulary practise to prepare them for the advanced English high school exam. There were usually around six to eight students present at any given lesson and with a couple of exceptions, they were open and accepting towards me and the cooperative exercises I brought to them. My mentor was also kind and supportive, I knew I could count on his help in anything during the time I spent there.

#### ***4.5) Materials analysed***

I have used various types of exercises which are based on the group study method and facilitate meaningful communication between participants.

*Achievements:* This is a modified version of the activity with the same name from the book, called *More grammar games*. (Rinvoluceri & Davis, 1995, p. 58) First, the teacher dictates ten sentences about her achievements in life, each one starting with the phrase “By the time I was X years old, I had...” and finishing it with a past perfect action. Next, the students have some time to individually mark the sentences which are also true for them and rewrite those that are not. After everyone is finished with their sentences, students get into pairs and discuss their achievements with each other, supported by some extra details. For the last part of the exercise, every student shares the most interesting piece of information they had learnt about their partner.

*Freeze:* This is an exercise I came up with and have used many times for the practise of either past continuous or past perfect continuous, with slight differences between the two versions. The whole class is divided into two teams and the goal of the game is to get more points than the other team by paying attention to and helping each other. Each team chooses someone to be the one who mimes and represents their team in the first round but afterwards, everyone must take up this role at least once. The two

miming students get a piece of paper from the teacher with an action written on it, which they have to act out after one another. The rest of the students have to close their eyes until instructed otherwise. While the first mime is busy acting out the verb on the card, the teacher will suddenly clap her hands, which signals for the mime to freeze mid-action and for the rest of his team to open up their eyes and start guessing what the mime had been doing before he heard the clap. In the first thirty seconds, only the teammates can guess but after that, everyone opens their eyes and it is free for all. The team who reaches fifteen points first is the winner.

Phrasal verbs think pair share: This is another modified activity, based on a matchmaking and gap fill exercise from the *New Headway Upper Intermediate* workbook by John Soars. (1998, p. 26) First, students have to match the phrasal verbs to their definitions on their own. Then, they get into pairs and help each other fill in the gaps by using their partner's words and their own sentences. At last, pairs report back their answers and we check them together, correcting any mistakes in the meantime.

Vocabulary mingle: I created this exercise to have students practise new expressions from a reading test. Students are given a sheet with several example sentences that contain the new expressions in bolded letters. To begin with, they have to try to decipher their meaning from the context and write a short definition for the words in the rubrics next to the sentences. Then, every student gets a dictionary definition for one of the expressions on a separate piece of paper. Now their task is to stand up, mingle, and with the help of everyone, find and match all the proper definitions to the example sentences. As a follow-up, we check the answers and their own made-up definitions together with the whole class.

Crime taboo: I created this exercise to introduce students to some lesser known words from a listening test. The taboo cards I made contain three small taboo words that

are not allowed to be said, on top of the actual taboo word the students need to guess. To make the game easier and quicker, all the solutions were printed out on a separate sheet of paper, which the students could refer to during their guessing phase. The game is played in groups of threes or fours, where one student picks a card and tries to paraphrase the meaning of the word without saying it or any of the other three taboo words on his card. The student who guesses it correctly, gets to keep the card. If someone accidentally says a taboo word, that card is disqualified and nobody receives it. The winner is the person with the most correct guesses and cards.

#### ***4.6) Procedures***

In the duration of the total of seventeen weeks I spent in this high school as a trainee teacher, I tried to include at least one cooperative task in my lesson plans every week. Both groups had two, 90-minute-long English lessons a week, one of which was spent with me as their teacher. The materials described above were used at different intervals of my teaching practice, and I chose these for my thesis in the attempt to illustrate any change or improvement regarding the students' attitude to cooperative learning methods that might have happened over time. The exact dates of the classes where I carried out these exercises were: October 8<sup>th</sup> (lesson 3), October 18<sup>th</sup> (lesson 8), January 7<sup>th</sup> (lesson 14), and January 14<sup>th</sup> (lesson 15). After the completion of each activity, a written observation record was made for later reference and research purposes.

#### ***4.7) Instruments***

Due to the double nature of my study, I had to use both qualitative and quantitative research tools in order to get the desired data for analysis.

- Nonparticipant observation notes from my mentor's lessons
- Participant observation notes from my own lessons

- Reflective feedbacks from my mentor
- Feedback slips with open ended questions from the students
- Likert scale online survey with other high school students

#### ***4.8) Methods of data analysis***

The first thing I always did after a lesson was to have a chat with my mentor to see if my field notes were comparable to how he felt the lesson went. If there were any discrepancies between our views, I would mark it but not raise it as an issue in the beginning. Later on, after we have built some good rapport, I felt more encouraged to share with him my opinion in certain matters. After I started teaching on my own, I asked him to take my place and become the silent observer who is busy taking notes during the lessons. Of course, we also had a quick discussion after the lessons but he never failed to send me his feedback in written form via e-mail. These documents contained the main stages of my lessons, the behaviour of the students throughout the exercises, and my mentor's opinion on my teaching skills, often in connection with how I managed to deal with a challenging situation.

Following the lessons, I hurried home to write my own reflective essays of the events, trying to avoid any kind of bias. Only after this, did I check my mentor's written recounts in my e-mail inbox. I always found it interesting to compare how two people's memories of the same events can carry slight differences in the way they interpret certain situations. My mentor was very kind to me, sometimes maybe even too forgiving for mistakes I would beat myself over for days to come. That is partially why it was useful to compare our observation reports, so that I could see that the mistakes I had made were not deal breakers, and they did not define the lesson in its entirety. However, it felt good to know that he also acknowledged them as a slip-up, instead of trying to brush them off as nothing important.



The same is true for those exercises where the group's activity was the highest; I was happy to see agreement between my mentor's and my own perceptions during the lesson. While it is unquestionably more difficult to observe a process when you are also a participant of it as a teacher or facilitator, with the triangulation received from my mentor, I was able to ensure the validity of my research.

While comparing and contrasting our observation notes and recollections of the events, I found them lacking the students' direct impact, so on the last day of my teaching I asked them four open-ended questions to answer:

- What is your most positive memory regarding me or my lessons?
- What is your most negative memory regarding me or my lessons?
- Which exercises did you like the most and why?
- Which exercises did you dislike the most and why?

Unfortunately, not all of the students took this task seriously enough to give me proper answers, but nevertheless, they provided me with useful triangulation data to rely on.

Analysing the gathered information from the online survey required more analytical skills than any of the qualitative data analysis methods so far. Each of the statements in the Likert scale was related to a type of work-form on the English lesson: frontal, individual, pair-, and group work. One statement supporting a given work-form, while another one disapproving of it, with the exception of pair- and group-work, where I had two of each type of statements since they are in the main focus of my research, thus deserving of more relevance in the survey. On top of that, I added two additional questions to measure students' competitive spirit versus their desire for cooperation. With the help of this survey, I could draw interesting conclusions between the general public and the special needs high school students I was working together with.

#### ***4.9) Limitations***

During my time spent at the high school, I ran into several obstacles and limitations. One of which was my inability to have a meaningful role in the project group's life. I could neither implement proper project-based learning methods, nor tell the three teachers who were leading the group to make some changes in the way they were teaching them because it was blatantly ineffective. Another limitation I was powerless to change was the amount of effort the teens put into the feedback slips. There was a constant low energy in the classroom so it came to me as no surprise when I received feedback slips answering completely different questions than the ones I had asked, in illegible handwriting, or with doodles. Even after repeating and paraphrasing the questions four or five times, many of them were either not able to memorise them or they simply did not care about my request enough. The third and fourth limitations were time and space. I would have liked to try project-based learning methods along with the group-study method ones but unfortunately I was always tasked with preparing standalone grammar and vocabulary exercises for the upcoming lesson, which made my job easier but less exciting in a way. My spatial limitations meant I had to be teaching in a classroom divided by a curtain, with another English lesson happening on the other side of it. It was rather annoying for both of our classes, especially if one of the groups wanted to listen to an audio recording or play a video. Speaking of videos, my final limitation was technology, which oftentimes failed to work in the room.

#### **5) Results and discussion**

I have decided to detail the results of my case study in a chronological order because this way it is easier to see any kind of improvements over time. It is important to note though a number of relevant factors, such as physical or mental tiredness of students, that have to be accounted for when looking at the outcomes of these activities.

### **5.1) Activity 1: “Achievements” – how it went**

#### Activity outline:

1. Teacher’s dictation of past perfect statements
2. Individual sentence creation
3. Discussion of answers in pairs
4. Feedback to the class

One of the first cooperative exercises I used with the students was an activity based on the Think-Pair-Share method, called *Achievements*. The date was October 8<sup>th</sup> and it was my third occasion teaching the upper-intermediate level group. We did this activity early on in the lesson as it required a lot more focus on correct grammar use and creativity in writing and telling stories.

#### ***A slow start***

The students reacted well to the first stage, which was a frontal dictation of past perfect sentences. As I was monitoring them, I noticed some of their clever solutions to not having to repeat the same phrase in writing over and over again, but that did not bother me as long as they followed my lead and noted down all the necessary information for the next phase, which was the individual sentence correction. Here, there was a noticeable drop in energy levels as I asked them to modify those sentences that were not true for their life by writing a different ending to them. One of the wittiest and higher level students, Dave, decided to modify the numbers relating to age and turning positive statements into negative ones, instead of having to think of and write down new ideas. Of course, what he did was not grammatically incorrect but it was a rather lazy and effortless solution from his side. With great effort, I managed to persuade him to write at least a few sentences but those did not carry any relevance to his life either. Others, like Janine,

opened up completely and wrote about some very serious true stories from their childhood. Then, there were those students who used this time to chat on their phone or fix their make-up and I constantly had to remind them to focus on the task in front of them. They seemed to have more difficulties with coming up with their achievements in life than having to use the past perfect correctly. However, those who were not actively participating during this stage also ended up with plenty of grammatically incorrect sentences, as it turned out during the feedback session.

### *Active conversations*

The third part of the activity generated the most excitement and a lot of vivid conversations. Students sitting next to each other formed pairs and shared the sentences they had written about themselves. Everyone seemed to be enjoying this, even those students who were more passive during the individual turn. I encouraged them to ask follow-up questions and talk about their own achievements more in-depth. If a pair was advancing too quickly or they were stuck regarding what to talk about, I helped out by offering some questions with genuine interest. Even Dave, who made up unbelievable fake stories, was happy to share his fantastic adventures with pirates and other shenanigans. Abby and Brian, the two least active students from the previous stage, were more willing to contribute now in speech, albeit Abby often mixed up the past perfect with other tenses. Some pairs finished earlier and though they kept talking, the language of their conversation changed into Hungarian so I had to intervene by asking them to tell me some of the most surprising stories they have heard from one another.

When the majority of students have finished their discussions, I asked the whole class to reconvene and share with everyone the most interesting achievement they learnt about their partner. These contributions were a lot shorter than the original stories and only the most active students spoke up willingly so after a while I decided to start pointing

at students to ask for their feedback. This method seemed to work more efficiently as everyone gave an answer without any resistance.

### **5.2) Activity 1: “Achievements” – reflections**

Honestly, I was surprised how well this activity went. Everything happened according to my plans with the exception of the final stage, where I had to prompt the students to contribute. I had hoped that after a lengthy conversation with their partner, they would be more willing to share with the others but this was not the case. However, this came to me as no big surprise because I have seen a lot of class discussions previously between my mentor and this group, and they always went down in this manner. My mentor would ask specific students to answer his questions but he rarely managed to involve everyone in a group discussion without calling on them. I believe this kind of behaviour is not uncommon in more conventional schools either, since there are always some shy or lower level students who lack the confidence to speak up on their own.

I think it was a good idea to make the exercise more personal for the students because this gave them a chance to practise the grammar in a relevant context, making the experience more memorable and enjoyable for them. Regarding this aspect of the activity, my mentor agreed with me and he said the following in his feedback: “I was particularly pleased that the students had to make ‘true’ statements about their real lives. I’m sure that this helps them to remember the phrases.”

However, as mentioned earlier, not every student took this opportunity to let others peek into their private life. Dave is a smart student and while he likes to speak in English and often makes valuable contributions to the class, he is an incorrigible jokester who tends to test the boundaries with his witty questions and snarky remarks. I actually did not mind him much because he was more amusing than annoying to me, and he often

helped me out in cases when nobody would say a word out loud. As long as he did what was asked of him, I put up with his tomfoolery with minimal chiding on my part.

### **5.3) Activity 2: “Freeze” – how it went**

#### Activity outline:

1. Division of teams
2. Two volunteers receive an action and mime it
3. Teacher’s clap – Miming stops
4. Team members guess the action
5. Other team members join in
6. Distribution of points and new volunteers
7. Repeat until victory

We had this activity on the same day as the previous one but whereas *Achievements* was one of the first exercises we did on October 8<sup>th</sup>, *Freeze* was the last one. Unfortunately, we did not have a lot of time for this game and at this point in the 90-minute-long lesson, a lot of students had already exhausted their mental resources and were quite passive and reluctant to cooperate.

#### ***Resistance to participation***

After explaining the rules of the game, I made two teams and asked them to choose a name for themselves. There were a few creative people in both teams who kept coming up with team name suggestions so this part went well. But when they realised that everyone would have to stand up and mime at least once, an overall disgruntled moan swept through the air. Luckily, there were some volunteers to start off with and that helped put more students into the mood to take part in the action and contribute during the guessing stage. This continued until the first two or three mime sessions but after that,

there were more and more students who simply refused to act out the scene on their card or stopped paying attention entirely.

### ***A surprising change in behaviour***

An additional problem was the remaining time of the lesson, as there were only a couple of minutes left until the break and the students were visibly getting impatient to leave the classroom. Mike was kind enough to take over the miming role multiple times, although he did not necessarily seem to enjoy it. The only student who really got into this game was Georgie, and this is not something to be ignored. I am saying this because up until that point, Georgie had been very uncooperative and passive. Even when he was specifically asked, he did not write or speak at all so it was impossible to pair him up with anyone or expect any contribution from him. He was busy knitting throughout the whole lesson but following the principles of the school, I was not allowed to reprimand him as he was not disturbing the others with his behaviour, he simply chose to opt out of participation for that lesson. However, this exercise activated him beyond belief. He volunteered to mime consecutively and he was adamant that the others try to guess what he was showing them. Seeing his change of heart, my mentor and I were cheering him on and encouraged everyone to guess his actions quickly as time was running out. Thanks to his efforts, his team gained more points than the other one, making them the winners of the game. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to go on until one team reached fifteen points, therefore we settled on this solution instead on the spot.

### ***5.4) Activity 2: “Freeze” – reflections***

This game was a risky endeavour, especially only on my second lesson with this group. But regardless of its foreseeable dangers, I wanted to give it a try to have some competitive fun, make the students stand up and move around after a long lesson, and last

but not least, observe how well they can work together when winning or losing a game is at stake. This feature of two or more opposing teams working together within their own group towards winning a competition was loosely based on the TGT (or Team Game Tournament) cooperative learning method, but instead of the more commonly used trivia games, I chose to do miming and guessing with my students.

Let me start by saying that I have done this activity many times with students who barely knew each other in a summer camp and despite their initial reservations, even older students ended up having a blast with it. The fact that they are allowed to stand up and act out any action in a ridiculous way is usually good enough incentive for the younger students to actively participate in the game. Teens who are above the age of thirteen though, tend to be more reserved when it comes to doing anything with their body, such as acting, miming, or making funny faces. They are more mature and self-conscious, therefore they are less willing to make a fool out of themselves in front of their peers. Based on my experience, this is especially true for girls. However, if I offer them the opportunity to just stand still like a captured moment on a photograph instead of having to act out a scene and freeze in a possibly uncomfortable situation, they usually oblige and let go of their inhibitions soon after.

I tried to do the same thing with these special needs students too but it did not work that well. Every movement of their muscles screamed disinclination as they sloppily moved around per my request. It was a real struggle just watching them sigh begrudgingly during what was supposed to be a fun and active game. If Mike had not felt some compassion towards me, I am sure he would not have helped me out by miming more than what was necessary. On the previous lesson, which was my first occasion teaching this group, he also helped me sort out and distribute some cards to his classmates, which was again something he chose to do on his own volition. Based on the chats I have had



with him, Mike seemed to be a rather mature, diligent, and inquisitive young man. Some might call a student like him a teacher's pet but I honestly appreciated his help and it did not feel like he was doing it for special attention.

The other student who moved the game forward was Georgie who, as opposed to Mike, did not participate in the activity for primarily my sake. He has a very artistic personality, besides knitting he enjoys playing on musical instruments and as it turned out, acting too. I was glad I managed to get him involved by the end of the lesson, which must have meant that this exercise seemed interesting enough for him to put down his knitting equipment and join the others. If it were not for him, I am sure the lesson would have ended on a much less positive note.

### **5.5) Activity 3: “Phrasal verbs think pair share” – how it went**

#### Activity outline:

1. Individual matchmaking of phrasal verbs
2. Gap-filling and discussion of sentences in pairs
3. Feedback to the class

Our eighth lesson started out a bit hectically, on October 18<sup>th</sup>, because we had to relocate to another classroom unexpectedly, which took approximately 10 minutes until everyone was settled down and ready to start. Additionally, there were two students who opted out of participation that day and one more student who left after 45 minutes. So, I paired up the remaining six students and we did this activity after a short break in between our 90-minute-long lesson.

#### ***Perfect harmony***

The exercise served as not only a cooperative task but also as a grammar review of phrasal verbs, which we had been discussing at length since the previous lesson. I

explained the instructions to the students and then paired them up with the person sitting next to them. Brian really wanted to work with his friend, Janine, so I allowed him to switch seats, which turned out to be a great decision since he was very active until the end of the lesson. All of the three pairs seemed to be quite balanced, with one stronger and one slightly weaker student working together. There was a small misunderstanding, however, following the individual matchmaking phase. Some students thought that they had to fill out everything on the worksheet alone so they did not understand why their expressions failed to fit in to the gaps in the sentences. But after a quick reminder of the role of their partner, they comprehended what they had to do and everything was smooth sailing from that point on. When they were in doubt, the students were not afraid to raise their hand and call me there for help. Everyone was actively participating and nobody refused to share information with their partner. They worked autonomously in the first two stages of exercise without any teacher's control imposed on them.

The last part of the activity was as quick and efficient as the rest. I waited for everyone to finish the pair work, then we did a whole class feedback session to check the answers together. In order to avoid idleness, I asked the early finishers to note down those phrasal verbs that were unknown for them in their notebook. They did this too with no objections. After this exercise, we did another successful pair work activity with memory cards but that focused more on competitiveness than on cooperation so I am not going to delve deeper into that topic now.

### **5.6) Activity 3: “Phrasal verbs think pair share” – reflections**

After the success of *Achievements*, I decided to try another cooperative exercise that was based on the Think-Pair-Share group study method. However, this time I removed the personal element that had generated so much discussion previously, and tentatively replaced it with some goal-oriented discourse. This way I could observe the

students peer-teaching the phrasal verbs on their worksheet to their partner and the pairs working strategically towards a common goal. I sacrificed creative freedom for the sake of a more hands-on, problem-solving experience. I see merit in both approaches and the students' enthusiasm and efficiency confirmed this as well.

But as I have mentioned above, there were two students this time who did not wish to participate in the lesson. John was trying his best in the first 45 minutes but then I was asked not to involve him in the remaining time as he was prone to panic attacks and he was visibly getting more and more stressed as the lesson went on. I felt partially at fault because I had kept asking him to speak up as he was talking in a low, barely audible voice so I was afraid that my actions caused his discomfort to set in. In my defence, I had never seen this student before the lesson so I did not expect him to have such a delicate condition. After acknowledging his issue, I let him be for the second half of the lesson. However, he looked so idle and bored during this activity that I felt sorry for him and I wanted him to experience at least some aspects of what the others were doing, thus I decided to hand him both of the worksheets and give him a chance to work on them on his own. He immediately started the matchmaking exercise and he seemed to appreciate the fact that I did not simply ignore his presence. Of course, the point of the activity was lost on him this way but at least he was involved in the lesson and he could participate in his own way.

The other withdrawn student was a girl named Mary, who is prone to depression and having low energy in the classroom. I had a feeling something was wrong with her from the start as she was lying on the desk, face down, even before we started the lesson. She put little to no effort in the first few activities and when she encountered a more challenging task, she refused to do it. She was acting quite aloof and stubborn. Luckily, my mentor was already familiar with her behaviour during these periods and he knew she

just needed a bit of a push and encouragement not to give up when things did not go her way. For this reason, he sat with her and helped her throughout the lesson, acting as her exercise partner, her emotional support, and her instructor at the same time. I realise that teachers need to be prepared for a variety of difficult situations, especially in a high school like this one, but seeing my mentor with Mary reminded me once again that being a teacher is not only about knowing how to teach your subject but also about knowing how to approach and handle your students.

I think that with both of our efforts, we managed to engage these two students in a way which was comfortable and safe for them, while the others could enjoy the lesson uninterrupted. In the end, I am a bit disappointed that John and Mary were not able to work together with their peers but I am aware that this was due to their mental condition, and such things are beyond one's control.

Despite all of these unforeseen circumstances, I would say that *Phrasal verbs think pair share* went exceedingly well and this was supported by many of the students' feedback on this lesson too. My mentor gave me the same impression with his written commendation, as follows: "However, of course, with such student types, nothing is ever simple, and yet Ramona continues to handle this group with deft social skills and a kindly manner. In all honesty, I think Ramona is already a capable teacher."

#### **5.7) Activity 4: "Vocabulary mingle" – how it went**

##### Activity outline:

1. Individual sentence creation
2. Distribution of dictionary definitions
3. Mingle and matchmaking
4. Feedback to the class

My fourteenth lesson, which was the first lesson of the new year on January 7<sup>th</sup>, focused on reading skills as part of the preparation for the high school leaving exam in May. The students were given an article from an earlier exam about the invention of the telephone, with comprehension checking questions, which was followed by this vocabulary activity. The idea was loosely based on the Inside-out circle method with less teacher control and a more generous time limit. As opposed to a typical Inside-out circle where students are instructed to change positions after a set amount of minutes, here they were encouraged to talk to everyone and take as long as they need until they find the answers they are looking for. Everyone's participation was necessary for the completion of this task. Nonetheless, not every student participated equally. Some struggled with the first part, where they had to come up with definitions for the expressions encountered in the article, while others lacked the motivation to stand up and mingle.

### *A difficult venture*

First, I gave them the instructions for stage one, the individual phase, then I handed out the grid with the new words and expressions. I was aware that this was not an easy task for many students, so I was actively monitoring their progress and helped them when they seemed to be in need of some assistance. Oscar had difficulties finding the right words to describe his expressions, although he understood their concept and meaning in Hungarian. Dorothy had a similar problem and she even voiced her disappointment why the task did not ask for a simple Hungarian translation. Others, like Abby, had it worse though. For those who possess a lower level of English language skills, the first obstacle was trying to understand what the words meant and only after that could they start thinking about formulating their definitions. I reminded everyone that they could figure out the meaning of all the words by referring to the example sentences on their worksheet or to the reading task we had done prior to this activity. Regardless of

this, Abby kept using an online dictionary to translate the words into Hungarian, which not only consumed her time considerably but it also gave her inaccurate translations at times. The only student who really excelled at this part of the exercise was Dave. He wrote accurate definitions with minimal grammatical mistakes for every item on the list, completely by himself. He appeared to be in deep concentration while writing and he was also one of the first people to finish.

Seeing how many students had difficulties with paraphrasing words and defining expressions, I decided not to wait for everyone to be finished and start the mingling part sooner. As long as everyone was aware of at least the Hungarian translation of the words, they could match the correct dictionary definitions to them with the help of their classmates. After the initial creative writing stage, this part was not supposed to be any more difficult but unfortunately it turned out to be.

### ***Unwillingness yet again***

As soon as I told them to stand up and mingle, there was a general noncompliance in the classroom. Despite my upbeat tone and energetic behaviour, nobody wanted to move from their seat. Dorothy zoned out and refused to cooperate with anyone, along with the small group of girls she was sitting together with. Dave, who had been so proactive until this point, decided it was not worth the effort to stand up and communicate with his classmates. However, he still wanted to complete the exercise so he kept shouting for the others to go to him and show him their paper slips. Eventually with my guidance, about half of the students did get up and gather around the passive group of girls, so in the end, everyone managed to match the correct definitions to the newly learnt expressions and words.

#### **5.8) Activity 4: “Vocabulary mingle” – reflections**

Following the disastrous outcome of our previous kinetic game, *Freeze*, I thought I should give another try to these kind of exercises but in a different format this time. Instead of pitting two teams against each other, I completely removed the competitive factor and emphasised class-wide cooperation. My aim with doing so was to see whether their drive would be more fuelled by competition or cooperation. Naturally, I would have liked it to be the latter but I am fully aware of the motivating forces an exciting game can provide. Furthermore, I had hoped that with the absence of miming, the students would be more willing to take part in an activity that required some physical movement from them.

Although it was a difficult undertaking, I believe the first stage went fairly well. Everyone was focused and busy writing, even those students who usually need reminders to pay attention. I have noticed this tendency with these students; whenever they are given an individual task to work on, they can become extremely attentive and hardworking. I would say that this is the most effective way of working with them if the teacher wants to get across something important, as they are more likely to lose their interest during a lecture or group discussions. However, language learning cannot be solely based on filling out worksheets individually, so I tried to include as many activities with pair conversations as possible during my teaching practice. More often than not they worked well, with the exception of cases like this one, where the students had to stand up and move around.

I have two theories regarding the students’ general unwillingness to physical activity. The first one lies in dysfunctional group dynamics, whereas the second one is related to herd mentality and group norms. Although there were a couple of marginalized students who were disconnected from the rest, either because of their odd behaviour or

low attendance rate, I did not notice any kind of hostility or bullying between classmates. Even when the lack of trust was apparent, students were usually willing to talk to each other and tried to work together. Sometimes this effort was one-sided, but in the end, at least one of the two learnt something from the experience. It is my conviction that a change of partners would not have yielded different results or evoked more cooperation from these students, which was also proved by this activity. It did not matter who approached them, their attitude towards their partner stayed unchanged and unmotivated.

Which leads me to the conclusion, that their problem was not with the people who tried to cooperate with them but with the exercise itself, specifically with its element of moving, as everyone had been actively working up until that point. It is possible that some students were simply tired but it is highly unlikely that the whole class would be so exhausted as not to be able to stand up and mingle. Therefore, I am convinced that this is the case of pack mentality, where students copy the behaviour of their peers in order to fit in with them. Meaning, if some more prominent students decide to stay seated, the majority of the group will follow suit. Though it is hard to overcome this barrier, it is not impossible. As long as the teacher manages to influence the more extroverted characters to play along, they will eventually take the rest with themselves. On top of this issue, mingling activities were not among the more commonly used practices of this school so they were not yet incorporated into the group norms of the class. It is always difficult to introduce a new type of exercise and as such, it cannot be expected from all of the students to follow it with no defiance. I recon these were the two biggest factors that hindered the success of kinetic games in the classroom.



### **5.9) Activity 5: “Crime taboo” – how it went**

#### Activity outline:

1. Division of groups and distribution of materials
2. Paraphrasing of the taboo word
3. Team members guess the taboo word
4. Distribution of points and next turn
5. Repeat until all the taboo cards are gone

This activity was carried out on my fifteenth and final lesson with this group, on January 14<sup>th</sup>. The goal of the lesson was to improve students’ listening skills and this self-made game was to support that by pre-teaching some of the more challenging vocabulary related to crime that would later be heard in the listening task. It was preceded by a short and fun reading about Scooby-Doo, which helped set the mood for the rest of the lesson.

#### ***A smooth and fun start***

I started the activity by asking if anyone had ever heard of the game called taboo, then asked those who answered yes to elaborate the basic rules to the others. This way I minimised teacher talking time while encouraging peer-teaching and student interactions. After the rules were set, I assigned the students into groups of three to four people and handed out the materials. I also informed the class that there might be a couple of words that are unknown to some of them, in which case they should raise their hand and I would help them as best as I can. Everyone seemed to be very excited and looking forward to start the game.

The groups worked autonomously with little to no issues whatsoever. The students monitored each other and if a taboo word was said accidentally, they confessed to their mistake and disqualified that card with no objections. Despite the smooth sailing, there

was a slight oversight on my part that could have been avoided and it would have made the game more enjoyable for one specific group. The fact that I had printed the possible answers on a separate sheet of paper gave the students the opportunity to guess the correct taboo word, even if they were not sure about what it was. However, I did not anticipate that some students would exploit this advantage by randomly pointing at words on the paper and guessing in quick succession until they get it right. Unfortunately, while this cannot be called cheating since it did not break any of the rules, it still felt unfair towards the other members of the group and it completely ruined the intention of the peer-teaching game. Luckily, Matthew was the only one who resorted to this kind of solution in favour of winning the game. Later he confessed that he did not know the meaning behind most of the words and that is why he had decided to play the only way he could; by relying on his speed and blind luck. Now I am aware that this was something to be expected and therefore to be prepared for beforehand.

### *Not everyone enjoyed it*

Another problem was Billy, a low-achieving student who appeared to have a personal vendetta against me throughout the whole semester. He has always been rude and non-compliant, regardless of the exercise he was tasked with or the people he had to work together with. His only aim was to find the easiest and quickest way to deal with everything, even if it meant he would not learn anything from the experience. But as opposed to Matthew, he was not interested in winning the game either, he just wanted to be over and done with it as soon as possible. So after the first few rounds, he decided to opt out of participation and let his classmates finish the game on their own. The other two students in his group, Abby and Mike, did not seem to mind his behaviour; in fact, they were so engrossed in the game that they ended up playing it during the break too, until they were finished with all of the cards.

The rest of the class enjoyed this activity to its fullest, which becomes evident as well by looking at the sheer number of positive responses about it on the feedback slips I distributed among the students afterwards. Additionally, my mentor deemed it a successful closure to my overall teaching practice and, in spite of Matthew's and Billy's misdemeanour, I also felt thoroughly satisfied with the outcome of the activity.

#### **5.10) Activity 5: “Crime taboo” – reflections**

Although this game was not based on any specific group study method I described earlier, it incorporates interaction between two or more students, relies on their mutual interdependence, and empowers them with individual responsibility as they work their way towards the completion of the exercise. Of course, there is an undeniable element of competition in it as well, which might make some people less cooperative, but luckily, this was not the case with these students. However, if I were to redo this activity now, I would adapt the original rules of the game, where players compete in groups and winning means victory for the whole team, as opposed to individual gratification. I believe this version emphasises cooperation over competition, making it a more suitable candidate for the cooperative classroom.

As mentioned above, there were only a handful of issues that interfered with the undisturbed process of this exercise, and even these could have been avoided in a number of different ways. Regarding Matthew's behaviour, his problems were twofold. On the one hand, he lacked the necessary skills to be able to comprehend his peers' explanations and give educated guesses, while on the other hand, he was extremely motivated by his desire to win first place. Had he been less eager to triumph, he would have ended up like the passive Billy. Whereas, if he had had more advanced control of the English language, he could have joined the others and play more honourably. But as it was not the case, he had to come up with a solution to his problems, even if that meant annoying his classmates

and missing the point of the exercise. The most obvious countermeasure I could have taken was to ban random guessing in the rules or to only allow everyone a set number of guesses before the next person's turn. However, neither of these ideas seem really viable to me, as it is hard to make students keep to such rules in the midst of a game. Perhaps, one alleviating factor could be peer-correction, where students supervise each other at all times and make sure there is no cheating involved.

Another feasible solution for Matthew's situation could be the elimination of the worksheet with all the possible answers on it. Should I have taken it away from his group as a form of punishment or should I have never given it to anyone in the first place? It is hard to answer this question because neither of the options seem beneficial to everyone. If I were to take away the sheet from only one of the groups, that would create a divide between them and the rest of the class, making the whole game unfair from that moment on. However, if I had not printed and given this aid to anyone, it would not only have made the entire progress slower and more difficult for everyone, but it would also have handicapped vocabulary acquisition and retention, which was one of the main objectives of this activity.

My third and final preventive idea for Matthew's case is the aforementioned modification of the game itself. By placing him in a team of multiple members, the responsibility of winning would be shared among his peers, making him less likely to aim to be the best player and spoil the fun for the rest. This way, the element of competition is still present but it caters for groups, rather than individuals; thus making cooperation between students more accentuated than before.

While there are several possible solutions for Matthew's predicament, the reason for Billy's behaviour is presumably more deeply rooted than his dissatisfaction with this certain exercise. I have witnessed him being disrespectful towards his teachers and

classmates alike, on numerous occasions. He is short-tempered, hot-headed, and stubborn. I am certain that no matter what I had chosen to do, he would have always found something wrong with it. Surprisingly though, he called out to me during our final lesson to tell me that I was a good teacher. Whether that was meant to be a genuine remark or an ironic taunt, I shall never know.

#### ***5.11) Feedback slips from the students – results and discussion***

On the same day we had the *Crime taboo* activity, I asked the students at the end of the lesson to provide me with some feedback, since that was the last time I would meet them under those circumstances. There were a total of ten students present, of which two left after the first 45 minutes, so in the end eight students filled out my short, open-ended questionnaire.

##### ***A positive memory***

Three students mentioned the fact that I was kind or patient with them as their best memory of me and my lessons. Another three highlighted learning with games as a positive memory. There was also one student who wrote about how much they enjoyed working in pairs. The feedback slip said the reason they liked it was because everyone “had to speak in English and in [their] previous schools [they] don’t have enough opportunities to speak this much.” I was glad to read these lines, since that is precisely one of the main reasons why I brought in so many pair work activities. Seeing their usual routine of class-wide discussions and individual work during my mentor’s lessons, I felt the student talking time was lacking and I figured pair work would be the best solution for that.

### *A negative memory*

There is not much I can add to this category as most of the students said there was nothing wrong with me or my lessons, with the exception of two. One of them was Billy, for obvious reasons, and he mentioned an argument he had with me as his most negative memory. It was not really an argument per say, but rather an aggressive outburst from him, for which he later had to apologise at my mentor's request. The other student complained about their inability to understand certain instructions or exercises due to the amount of unknown words and expressions in them.

### *Favourite exercises*

Unfortunately, only four students wrote anything about their favourite or least favourite exercises so there is not much data to work with in these categories either. One student mentioned the Scooby Doo reading we did on our last lesson and a phrasal verbs labyrinth game. This was an individual dictation activity, where students had to recognise synonyms to phrasal verbs and get out of the labyrinth by following the correct order. Another student also mentioned games with phrasal verbs but they did not go into details as to which one they considered their favourite. *Crime taboo* was chosen by two, and *Domino words* by three students as one of the most enjoyable activities. The latter was a competitive, small group exercise, where students had to find and match words that either sounded the same but carried different meanings (e.g. flower/flour) or expressions that were synonyms of one another (e.g. cold/freezing). Although it started out as a game with individual contestants, it ended up becoming a cooperative activity where group members helped each other sort out and match the correct domino cards until the completion of the exercise.

### ***Least favourite exercises***

The majority of students did not have any negative comments in connection with the exercises we used. One student said that although they liked all of them, “one or two was a bit too slow.” As to which ones they were referring to, sadly I have no idea. Another student, presumably Dorothy, mentioned “teamwork and ask the others” as her least favourite activity. I assume she meant *Vocabulary mingle* by that description, which would not come as a surprise to me since she was visibly struggling during that exercise and even complained to me at the end of the lesson how much she hated it. Unfortunately, I do not know whether her feelings stemmed from social anxiety or tiredness and low energy on that specific day, but I have noticed that even though she is usually a chatty student during the lessons, she does not speak much with her peers and she prefers to spend her time in the company of her teachers instead, even in the break. This would explain why she dislikes exercises where she has to talk to all of her classmates in a short period of time. They might just be too exhausting for her mentally.

### ***5.12) Likert scale online survey – results and discussion***

Separate from my teaching practice, I have conducted an online survey with other high school students from all around Hungary. I wanted to know their opinion on various kinds of exercises commonly used in the EFL classroom, how often they encounter them, and their underlying reasons for liking or disliking certain types.

#### ***5.12.1) Demographics***

I received 51 responses, from 30 female and 21 male students. More than half of them (52.9%) were between the ages of 14 and 16, while slightly more than one quarter (27.5%) belonged to the young teens’ age group of 10-13-year-olds. The remaining 19.6% were older students ranging from 17 to 19 years old. The vast majority of

respondents (66.7%) attend a secondary vocational school and with the exception of one single person who goes to a school for students with special needs, the rest attend a regular high school. It came to me as a surprise that more than half of the people asked (54.9%) have 45-minute-long English lessons five or more than five times a week. The second most popular option was four lessons with 35.3%, followed by three lessons with a mere 7.8%, and only one student claims to have one English lesson a week.

### 5.12.2) *Different types of exercises in the EFL classroom*

When looking at all the gathered data, frontal instruction still seems to be the most commonly used work-form in the classroom with 13 out of 51 students responding they encounter it every single lesson. However, this does not necessarily mean that the entire lesson is centred around the teacher. While individual- and pair work takes place on every lesson for only 6 and 8 students respectively, an outstanding number of respondents said they often have them in the classroom. 27 students are tasked with individual work frequently and 29 students are engaged in pair work on a regular basis. Looking at the figures from this perspective, it is clear to see that in fact pair work is the most common work-form these days with a total of 37 out of 51 students saying they have it either on each lesson or quite often. Individual work is not far behind with 33 students altogether (see Figure 2).

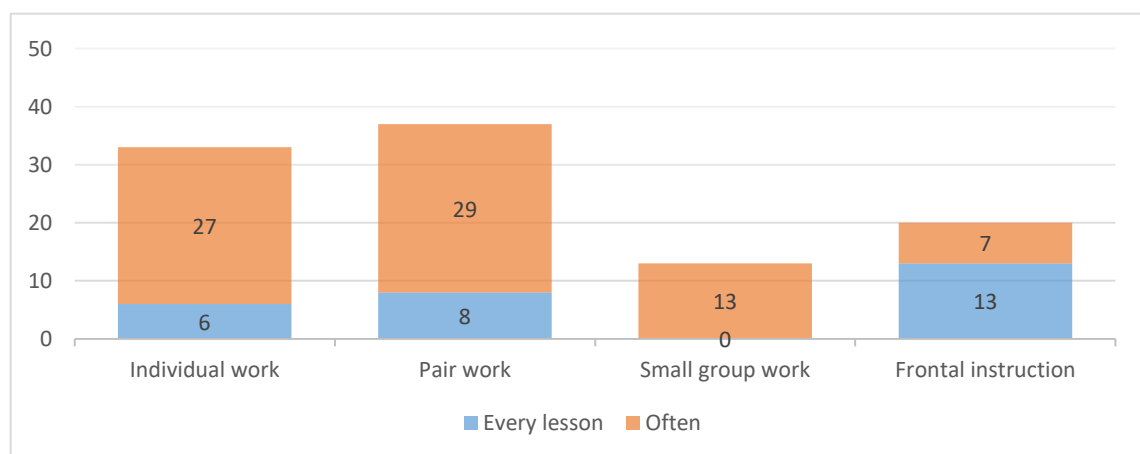


Figure 2. Most commonly used work-forms in the EFL classroom



Small group work is the least applied work-form of the four I listed with only 13 people answering they have it often in the classroom and nobody said they work in groups on every lesson. This unpopularity is supported by the number of respondents who said they either use this work-form sometimes (20 answers) or rarely (17 answers). Surprisingly, frontal instruction has the second highest number of answers in these categories with 12 students saying they have to work this way sometimes, and 15 rarely. Additionally, it also has the most answers in the last category, in other words, 4 students never work under frontal instruction during their English lessons (see Figure 3).

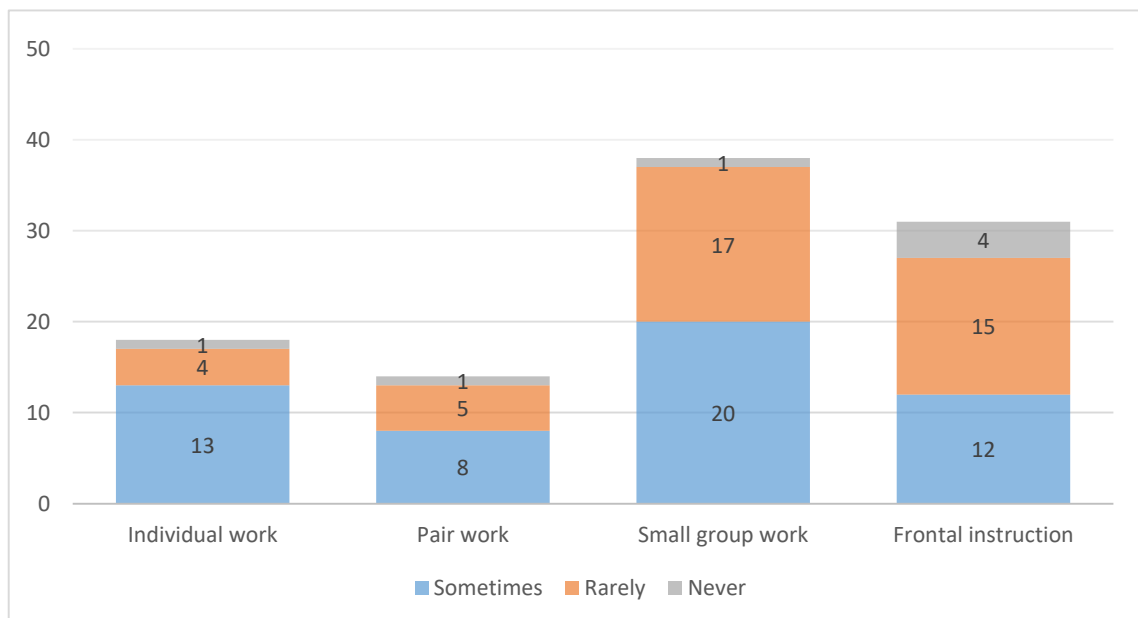


Figure 3. Least commonly used work-forms in the EFL classroom

Taking into account all the information I gathered, it is visible that the popularity of frontal instruction has diminished over the decades and its place has been taken over by a more cooperative work-form, pair work. Unfortunately, small group work still has room for improvement but I would like to think that the reason behind its lack of use in the EFL classroom is not due to its inefficiency in language education but because of spatial restrictions.

Besides getting to know the most and least commonly used work-forms nowadays, I wanted to have some insight into students' feelings in relation to them. Perhaps partially

because it is used more often than the others, pair work has won over 27 students, who said they really like this work-form. A further 8 students claimed it was their favourite even. No other work-form came close to these numbers but small group work was the second most loved type with 14 people liking it and 10 saying it was their favourite. Frontal instruction and individual work is almost head-to-head with 4 students favouring each one over the rest, while the former has 5 and the latter has 6 votes from people who like them. However, both are on the bottom of the students' popularity list with such low numbers as these. In fact, frontal instruction is the most disliked work-form of all with 9 people saying they do not like it that much and a whopping 13 claiming they absolutely hate it. The remaining 20 students were neutral about it (see Figure 4).

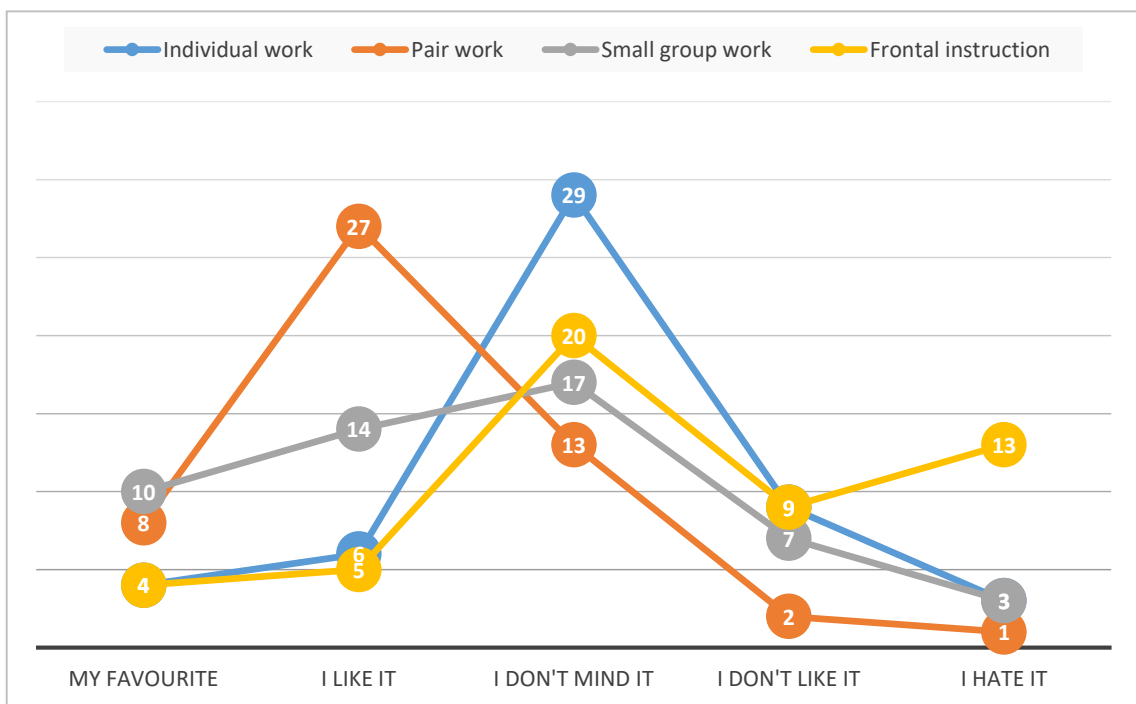


Figure 4. Student opinions on work-forms used in the EFL classroom

It might not be surprising to see frontal instruction so high on the dislike scale, as it is the most passive and oldest kind of work-form which is still being used today. It requires students to be silent and attentive with no interactions among classmates, which is arguably not the best way to teach a language. On the other hand, I was pleased to see

that the lack of small group work activities did not deter students from finding the method fun or beneficial.

### 5.12.3) *Underlying feelings and attitudes*

In the last section of my survey, I showed fourteen statements to the students and asked them to rank every single one based on how relevant they were to their own feelings. The statements displayed some possible emotions and thoughts one might experience as a participant in the different work-forms of frontal instruction, individual-, pair-, and small group work.

#### *Frontal instruction*

The two main aspects of this work-form I decided to observe was the children's relationship to their teacher and their confidence in speaking on the spot in public. I suspected that the majority of students would have some reservations about being called on by the teacher but their answers did not support this idea. Actually, it was close to a 50-50 ratio with only three more respondents saying they did not like having to speak in front of the whole class with no prior preparation. Perhaps it comes as no surprise after this, but the student-teacher relationship was exceedingly well-rated, as it turns out 27 out of 51 students enjoy listening to their teacher's stories and explanations (see Figure 5).

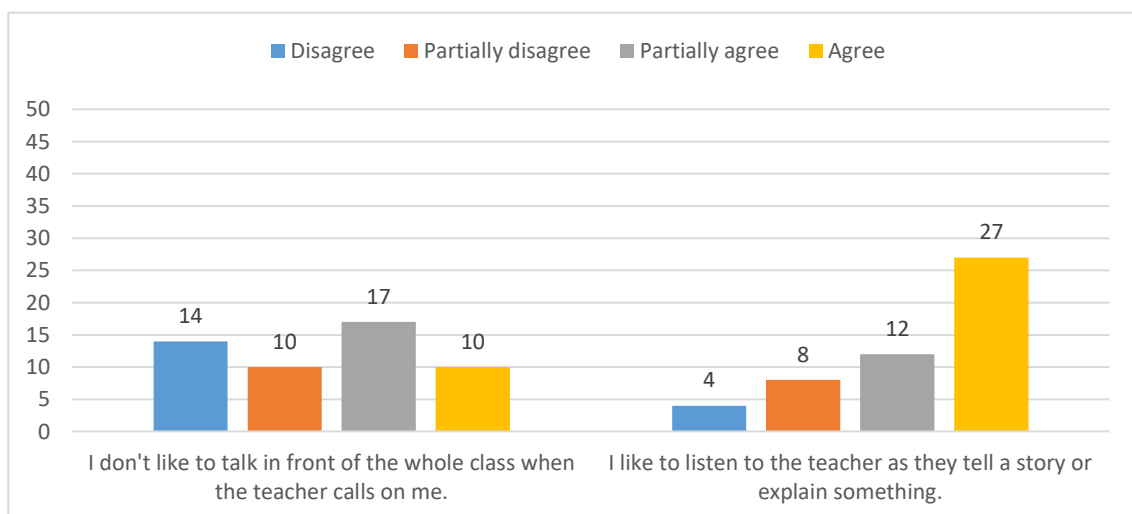
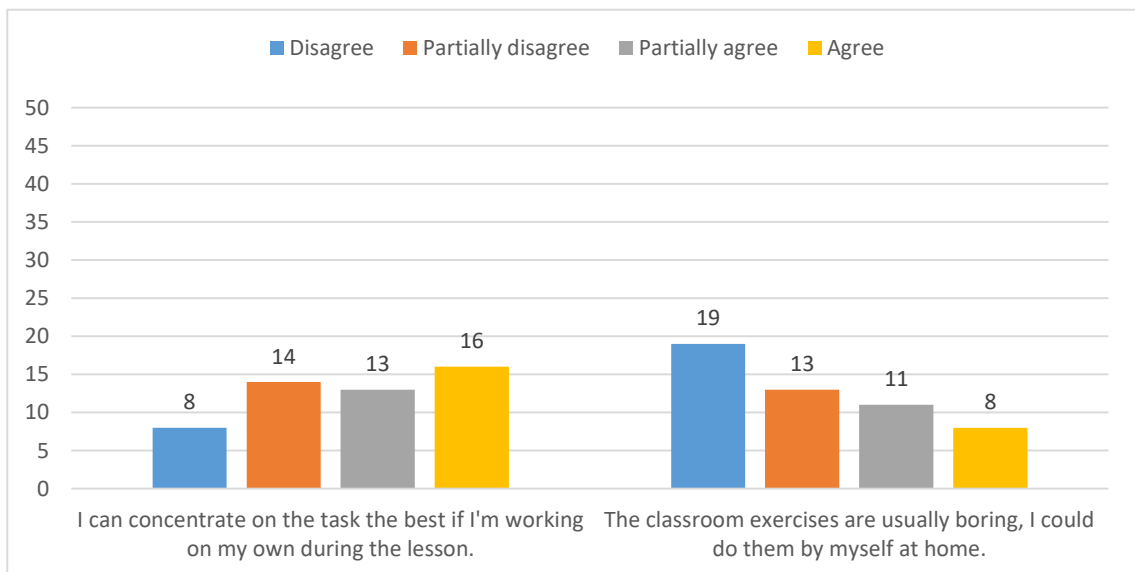


Figure 5. Student opinions on aspects of frontal instruction

Whether it is out of genuine respect for their educator or just because it gives them the chance to space out and do nothing, is something I cannot tell unfortunately.

### ***Individual work***

Since the general attitude to this work-form was rather a neutral one previously, I wanted to explore it more in depth by focusing on two of its main aspects; the students' opinion on the type of exercises they are tasked with and their level of concentration during individual work. While tastes in activities can vary, based on my experiences with the special needs students, I was sure that most people would say they can achieve a deeper level of focus when they are working on their own, uninterrupted. This time I was right, although there were a lot of respondents disagreeing or partially not agreeing with this statement, making it a close 22 to 29 final result (see Figure 6).

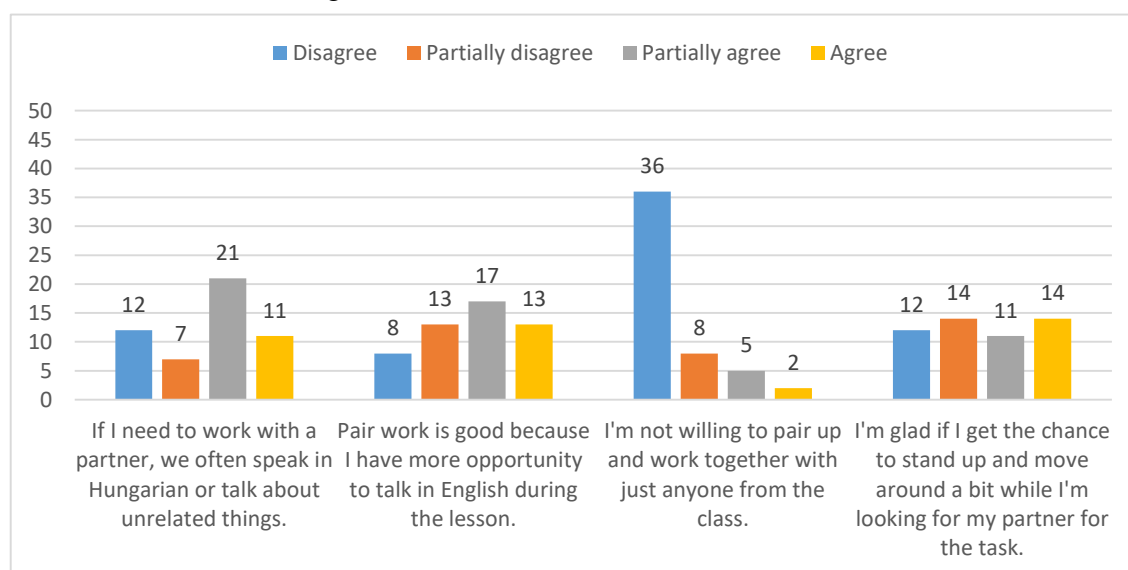


*Figure 6.* Student opinions on aspects of individual work

I did not expect to see such a high number of students claiming they do not find the activities they do in the classroom dull. Obviously, when they answered this question they were probably not only thinking of typical grammar drills and the like but regardless, it is always good to know that students enjoy the exercises their teachers put together for them with great effort.

## *Pair work*

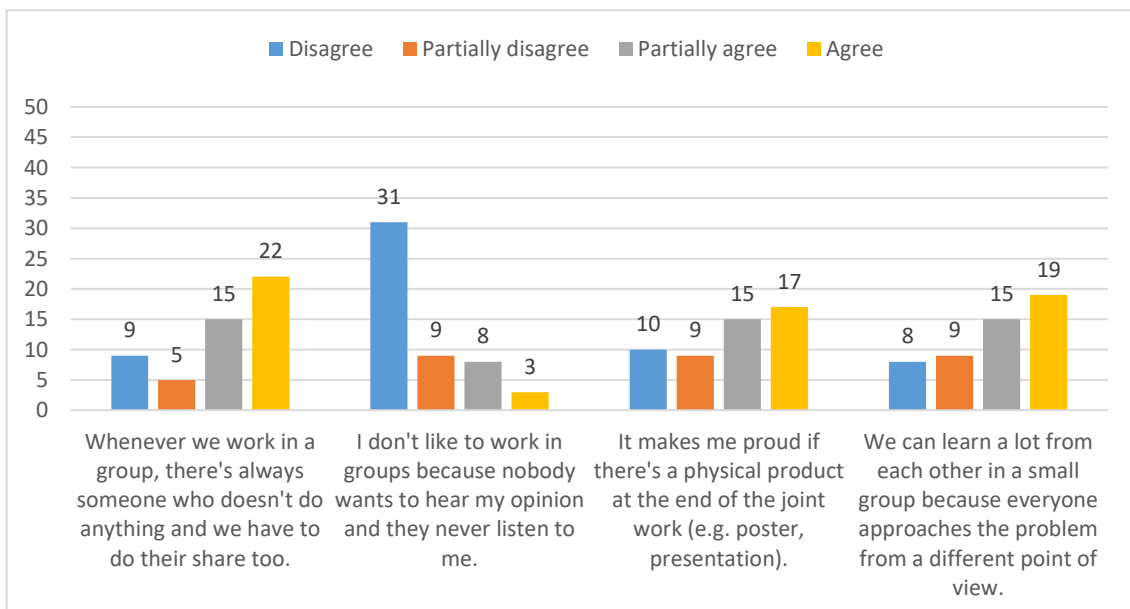
As the most loved and most commonly used type of work-form in the EFL classroom, I was eager to find out how students relate to the specific aspects of pair work. Witnessing one of its drawbacks unfold in front of my eyes on multiple occasions, I was most curious to see if the majority would confess to speaking about unrelated topics or using Hungarian instead of English with their partner. The numbers show that my hunch was correct indeed, with 32 out of 51 students either agreeing or partially agreeing with this statement. Regarding their choice of partners, an amazing number of 44 students said they would be willing to work together with anyone from the class, which is hinting at some very healthy group dynamics. Luckily, more people agreed than not with the notion that pair work is useful because it provides more opportunities for participants to communicate in the target language. Although I do wonder what other benefits would have been highlighted by those 21 students who disagreed with the above statement. Last but not least, I inquired about the students' attitude to some kinetic activity, namely moving around in the classroom or mingling. Despite the strong resistance from the special needs students, the survey did not show such an exceptional negative opinion on it, as it can be seen on Figure 7.



*Figure 7.* Student opinions on aspects of pair work

### *Small group work*

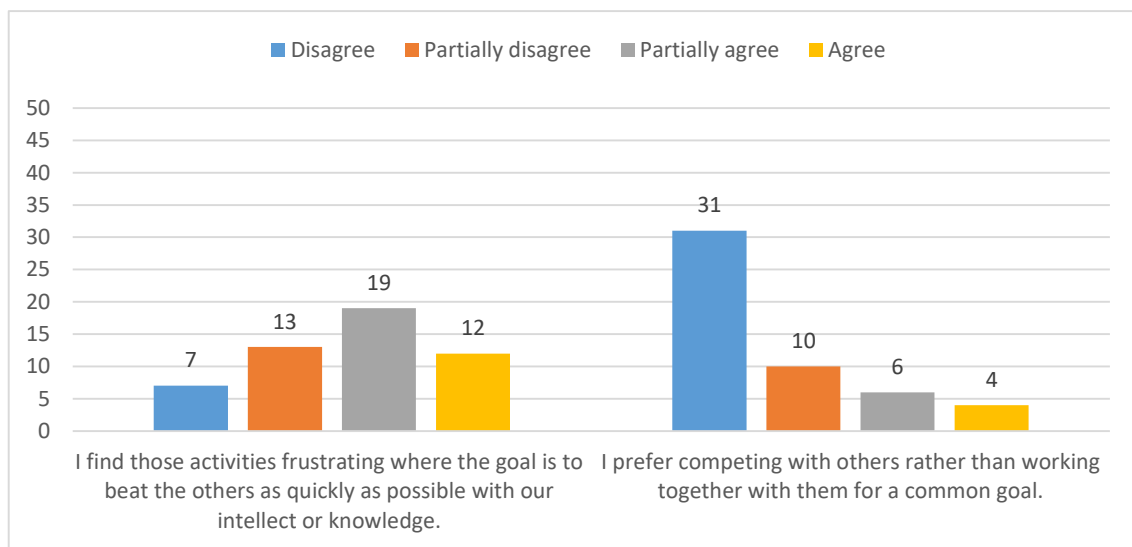
Similarly to the previous cooperative work-form, I decided to look at this one from four different angles as well. Yet again, I was expecting to see quite a lot of affirmative responses for its most common shortcoming, which is none other than those people who do not pull their own weight and depend on their team members to do the work for them. A total of 37 students confirmed there was truth to this statement, which could explain the reason behind why group work has not managed to overtake pair work in terms of popularity and frequency of use in the EFL classroom. Nevertheless, the majority of students agreed that they can learn a lot from each other (34 answers) and it is nice to have a physical product at the end of their joint work (32 answers). This kind of positive attitude shows promise to the utilization of more project-based learning methods in the future. I was also glad to see that 40 out of 51 students did not feel like they were oppressed or ignored during group work, further proving the presence of healthy group dynamics among the respondents (see Figure 8).



*Figure 8.* Student opinions on aspects of small group work

### *Competition and cooperation*

In the final part of my survey, my focus was on the matter of competition versus cooperation as a motivating factor. I have attempted to measure these elements during my teaching practice too, so it only made sense to find out how other high school students would react to them. The answer was loud and clear. 41 people said they preferred working together with others rather than competing with them, and 31 complained that speed-based trivia competitions frustrated them (see Figure 9).



*Figure 9.* Student opinions on cooperation and competition in the EFL classroom

### **6) Conclusion**

Comparing the findings of my time spent at the special needs high school and the results of the online survey, I have come to the conclusion that students are aware of the benefits of working together with others but they have reservations about certain aspects of cooperative methods, such as mobility in the classroom and the dedication of their team members.

Although both the survey and my own experiences showed that technically every student would be willing to be paired up and work together with anyone at the teacher's request, the answers given to my open-ended question at the end of the survey prove

students' dissatisfaction in the matter. The same complaints of having to work together with someone who is not interested in the exercise or has weaker language skills are related to both pair-, and small group work. Thus in order to avoid such issues, certain conditions must be met for these cooperative methods to work successfully. For example, student pairs should not be decided by their friendship but by their level of English. That is not to say teachers must put together people who otherwise would never even talk to each other, since the lack of trust can also hinder cooperation, but they should aim to balance a weaker speaker with a more advanced one. Monitoring of pair-, and group activities is also essential for keeping everything in order.

The second common factor among all the participants of my research was their lack of enthusiasm towards kinetic exercises. Students of this age are simply not too keen on moving around in the classroom so teachers should use these kind of activities sparingly at first, until every student is completely accustomed to one another and they are ready to mingle. Depending on the students' disposition, there could be some who experience anxiety in such situations, therefore it would be wise not to enforce them against their will and try to include them in some other ways.

Regarding the special needs high school students, they were in their element during individual and pair work exercises; but groups worked well too, as long as there was some sort of competitive game to motivate them. Even while they were working with their partners, some students were focusing on finishing first among all the pairs, as if it were a race. On the other hand, there were times when competitive activities turned into cooperative ones over the course of the game, so it would be untrue to state that these students were unable for cooperation within groups. With the right kind of incentive and team members they trust, everyone can benefit from cooperation.



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## Appendix A

Observation notes from my diary (extract from October 18, 2018.)

“Despite the fact that we were moved to a different classroom and this took away almost 10 minutes from the start of the lesson, I was overall satisfied with our progress today. One of the smarter girls was multitasking throughout the whole lesson because she had to finish some sort of arts & crafts project so she was gluing tiny furniture pieces together and cutting sheets of paper but this didn’t seem to bother the others. I guess they are already used to such things at [...]. In the warm-up section, I asked everyone to recall some of the words we had learnt the week before and use it in a question, addressing their peers. At first there was silence, then the muttered disgruntled sounds of some boys filled the classroom. However, after demonstrating and asking a question from one of them, they obliged and did surprisingly well. It turned out to be a useful recap for them and they got to know some bits of information about each other. The rest of the first lesson continued well but it became a bit slow and dragged out towards the end. We didn’t manage to finish everything I prepared and spent a lot of time with one of the activities, the phrasal words labyrinth. My mentor liked the idea and so did I but we both agreed that it could have been performed better. Instead of going through the whole maze from start to finish, I could have paused after every 5 or so words and check the students’ understanding so that they wouldn’t get lost and frustrated. There were a couple of students (one of them was the multitasking girl) who got lost but managed to get back on track, however, for most of the lost ones it ended up being a pointless and frustrating exercise. This became apparent when we started checking the answers and one girl stopped participating completely (she seemed to be rather down for some reason, I’m not sure it was entirely the exercise’s fault as she has shown this kind of behaviour in the past as well) and two other students said they got lost near the start and never managed to (or tried to) get back on track. Overall it was a 50-50 success/fail rate approximately. During the break I was asked to ignore one other student because he’s prone to panic attacks and he was visibly getting more stressed. I felt worried that it was partially my fault, as I had kept asking this boy to speak up during the lesson because he was speaking in a very low, barely audible voice. On top of this, one student had to leave after the first lesson (this is not uncommon at [...]) so we started the second lesson with 3 less students. I paired up the remaining 6 people and we worked very productively. We played two games, first a co-operative matching game where students depended on their partner’s help to proceed, then a competitive memory game with three-word phrasal verbs and their corresponding meanings. Some of them misunderstood the instructions for the first one and though it was an individual task but once I explained to them what they had to do, everyone seemed to have enjoyed the activity. The highlight of the two lessons, however, was the memory game. The students worked autonomously, asked me when they were in doubt, and even noted down the new expressions in their notebook after they were finished. They enjoyed the challenge and aimed to beat not just their partner, but to be the first pair to finish as well. Since they encountered the same expressions over and over again, these became more imprinted in their memory. Overall, this lesson was a successful ending to the first semester, before the exams and the autumn break.”

## Appendix B

Reflective feedback from my mentor (extract from October 8, 2018.)

**Objective of lesson:** continue review of Past Perfect and introduce Past Perfect Continuous.

**Method:**

- students reformulate example sentences using Past Perfect; Ramona helped with error correction when needed.
- dictation of example sentences for students to listen to and write down.
- again, students reformulate example sentences and make them personal. Ramona helped with concept and error correction.
- speaking in pairs and feeding back to the group.
- writing: gap fill worksheet reinforcing the grammar forms.
- feedback and discussion: helped to show that there are alternative options to the Past Perfect + Past Simple 'partnership'.
- introduced Past Perfect Continuous example sentence
- speaking: guessing game.

**Overall Comments:**

This went well. It always helps if a group is cooperative. I was very happy that some of the lower-level members of the group were in attendance, and Ramona got all of them to use the grammar forms correctly. I was particularly pleased that the students had to make 'true' statements about their real lives. I'm sure that this helps them to remember the phrases.

**Other Comments:**

None. 😊

## Notes on the lesson as it progressed:

Intro on board:

E., who is lower-level and has missed many lessons, got involved. Ramona encouraged her to make a correct sentence. There were a couple of students displaying 'low energy' during this part, but all contributed.

Writing down sentences dictated by Ramona

I particularly liked the 'order' of this. By this, I mean the fact that Ramona took total control of this and the students reacted perfectly. (I accept that you can't do this for the whole lesson, but some students did need to do this to make it clearer.) I went round and looked at a couple of examples, and one or two had written a mix of present perfect and past simple. Ramona helped with error correction.

Feedback on board went well.

I liked all of this, because the students had to make sentences that were about their real lives.

Worksheet

On board, feedback showed that there were sometimes options. This encouraged a discussion. Genuinely, most of the students were involved. Again, Ramona helped clarify things for E.

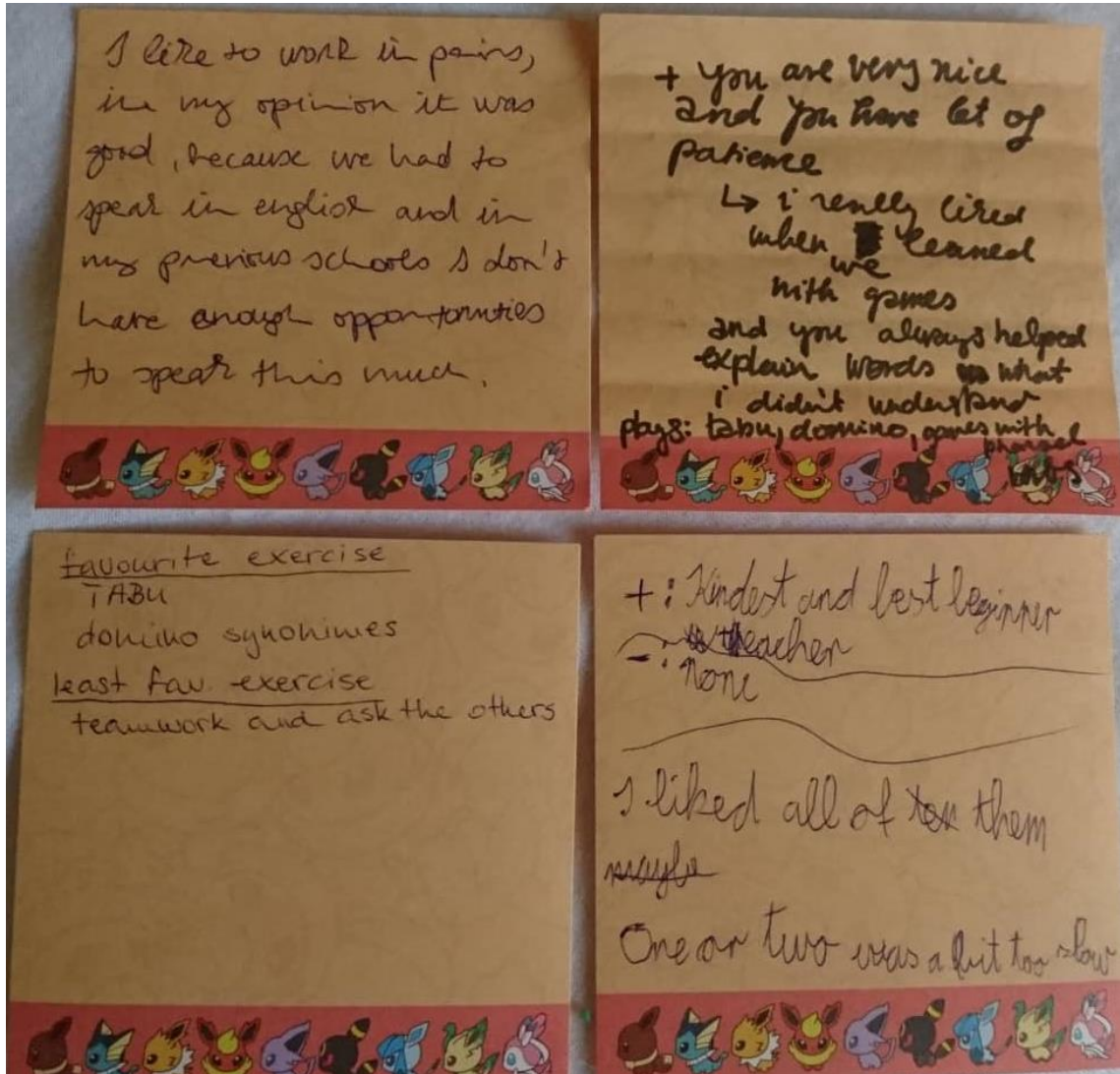
Past Perfect Continuous

As an introduction, this went well. There are aspects of this tense, and the differences in how it and Past Perfect Simple are used that Ramona didn't explain. But we can do that some time in the future if we need to.

By this time, I could see that some people didn't want to be involved in this game. But I think it went well.

## Appendix C

Feedback slips from my students (extract)



## **Appendix D**

Online survey

Available from: <https://goo.gl/forms/HQn39xKxfU13v6G12>

Translation:

### **Different types of exercises in the English lesson**

My name is Bene Ramóna and I'm a last year MA student at Eötvös Loránd University, studying to become an English teacher. I would like to ask for your help for my thesis, in which I examine the attitude of high school students to various types of exercises in the English lesson. The survey is anonym and it takes 5-8 minutes approximately.

**Gender:**

- Male
- Female

**Age:**

- 10-13
- 14-16
- 17-19

**Type of school:**

- High school
- Secondary vocational school
- Vocational school
- Trade school
- School for students with special needs

**Number of English lessons a week (45 minutes = 1 lesson)**

- 1 lesson
- 2 lessons
- 3 lessons
- 4 lessons
- 5 lessons
- More than 5 lessons

### **How often do you have the following types of exercises in the English lesson?**

- Individual work (e.g. reading/writing alone, doing exercises in the workbook)
- Pair work (e.g. discussing a topic or solving a problem together with a classmate)
- Small group work (e.g. discussing a topic or solving a problem together with classmates in a group of 3-5)
- Frontal instruction (e.g. the teacher is explaining something or calls on a student in front of everyone)

### **How do you feel about the following types of exercises in the English lesson?**

- Individual work
- Pair work
- Small group work
- Frontal instruction

### **How much can you relate to the following statements?**

- I don't like to talk in front of the whole class when the teacher calls on me.
- If I need to work with a partner, we often speak in Hungarian or talk about unrelated things.
- I can concentrate on the task the best if I'm working on my own during the lesson.
- I like to listen to the teacher as they tell a story or explain something.
- Pair work is good because I have more opportunities to talk in English during the lesson.
- Whenever we work in a group, there's always someone who doesn't do anything and we have to do their share too.
- I don't like to work in groups because nobody wants to hear my opinion and they never listen to me.
- The classroom exercises are usually boring, I could do them by myself at home.
- I'm not willing to pair up and work together with just anyone from the class.
- I find those activities frustrating where the goal is to beat the others as quickly as possible with our intellect or knowledge.
- It makes me proud if there's a physical product at the end of the joint work (e.g. poster, presentation).
- We can learn a lot from each other in a small group because everyone approaches the problem from a different point of view.
- I'm glad if I get the chance to stand up and move around a bit while I'm looking for my partner for the task.
- I prefer competing with others rather than working together with them for a common goal.

**What other positive/negative experiences do you have with pair work and small group work? Please write about them here briefly.**



## **Appendix E**

### Activity 1: “Achievements”

#### Sentences dictated by the teacher:

By the time I was five, I had travelled abroad.

By the time I was six, I had started learning English.

By the time I was eight, I had learnt how to read.

By the time I was seventeen, I had fallen in love.

By the time I was fourteen, I had got a computer.

By the time I was fifteen, I had won something on a competition.

By the time I was eighteen, I had babysat someone else's child.

By the time I was twelve, I had seen a horror movie.

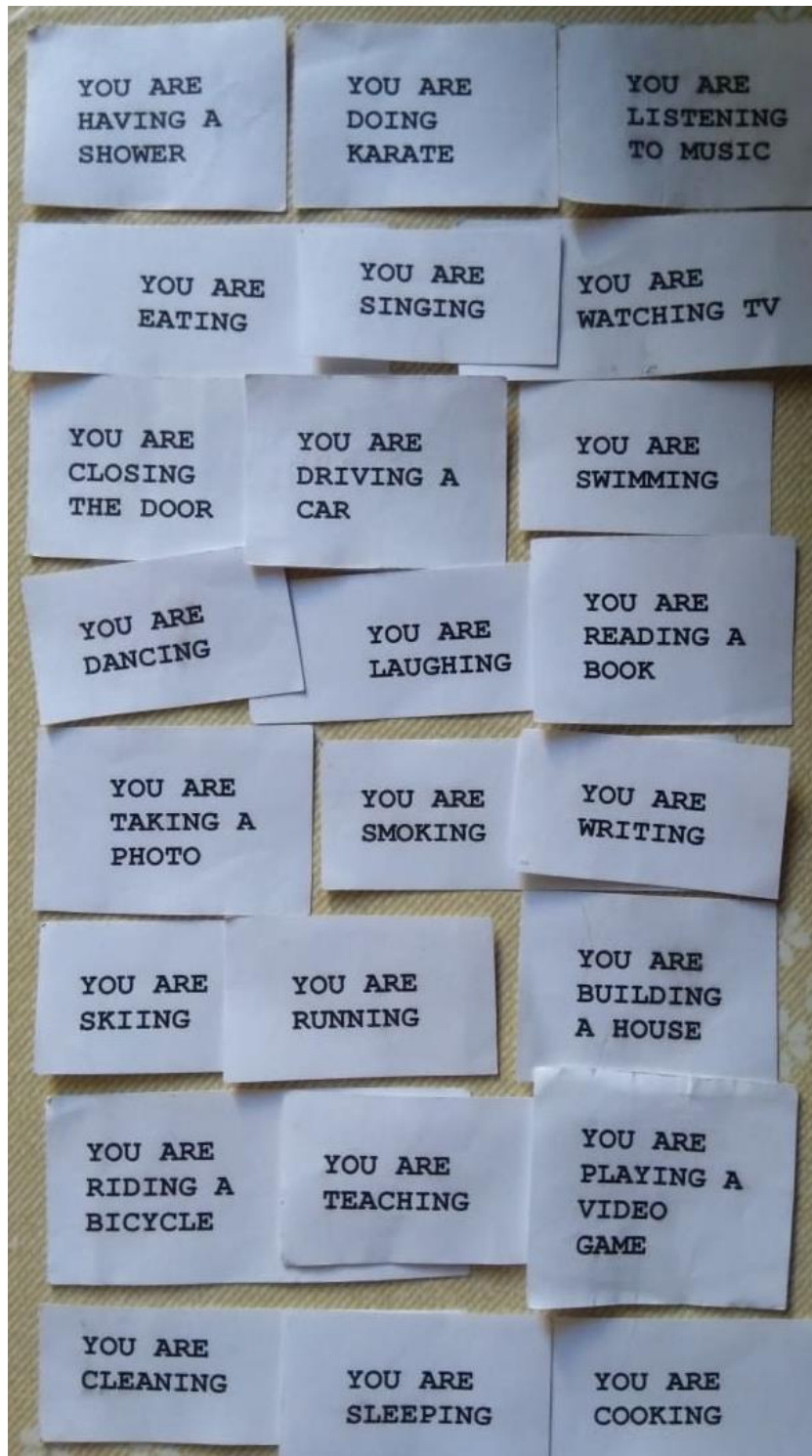
By the time I was sixteen, I had broken a bone.

By the time I was eleven, I had had a big birthday party.

## Appendix F

### Activity 2: "Freeze" (extract)

#### Action cards:



## Appendix G

### Activity 3: “Phrasal verbs think pair share”

Worksheet A:

A	B
Show off	Have a calmer, more stable life
Find out	Wait
Doze off	Discover
Hold on	Boast
Speak up	Fall asleep
Set off	Talk louder
Settle down	Begin a journey

1. Who broke the window? We aren't leaving this room until someone \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The fire \_\_\_\_\_ because we didn't put enough wood on it.
3. “Is Peter at the party?”  
“No, but I'm sure he \_\_\_\_\_ soon.”
4. Why are you so miserable? \_\_\_\_\_! It's not the end of the world.
5. I don't feel like going out tonight. Shall we \_\_\_\_\_?
6. \_\_\_\_\_! I'm trying to watch a programme and you're all talking.
7. A soldier was injured when the bridge he was crossing \_\_\_\_\_.

Worksheet B:

A	B
Blow up	Admit responsibility
Turn up	Explode
Own up	Be quiet
Cheer up	Not go out, stay at home
Go out	Be happier
Shut up	Stop burning
Stay in	Arrive

1. We have a long journey tomorrow. What time do we have to \_\_\_\_\_?

2. "I came first in all my exams."

"Stop \_\_\_\_\_! You're such a big head."

3. Larry was a bit wild at university, but then he got a job, found a lovely wife, \_\_\_\_\_ and had kids.

4. After a heavy meal and a glass or two of wine, I \_\_\_\_\_ in front of the telly.

5. Can I copy your homework? The teacher will never \_\_\_\_\_.

6. "What's Bill's phone number?"

"\_\_\_\_\_. I'll just look in my address book."

7. \_\_\_\_\_! We can't hear you at the back!

## Appendix H

### Activity 4: "Vocabulary mingle"

Example sentences:

He <b>came up with</b> a great idea for the advertisement campaign.		
She's <b>commissioned</b> an artist to paint her portrait.		
She wrote a book about the battle between two titans, beginning with the words: " <b>The race is on!</b> "		
We need financial <b>backers</b> for the project.		
He <b>dedicated his life to</b> helping the poor.		
They <b>set out</b> to discover a cure for cancer.		
My brother decided to <b>give up</b> smoking <b>for good</b> .		
All her hard work <b>paid off</b> in the end, and she finally passed the exam.		

Dictionary definitions:

- A. someone who gives financial support to something
- B. to start an activity with a particular aim
- C. to give completely your energy, time, etc. to something
- D. to result in success
- E. to suggest or think of an idea or plan
- F. used to show that a competition of some kind is about to start, usually when you are excited about it
- G. to ask someone do a particular piece of work for you
- H. to stop doing something forever

## Appendix I

### Activity 5: "Crime taboo" (extract)

#### Taboo cards:

<b>ARSON</b>	<b>SLEEPY TOWN</b>	<b>VANISH</b>	<b>THE GHOST THEORY</b>	<b>TAKE UP RESIDENCE</b>
match burn firefighter	yawn village silent	disappear invisible missing	haunted spirits house	stay move into apartment
<b>ATTIC</b>	<b>REPEATEDLY</b>	<b>SHOPLIFTING</b>	<b>GO MISSING</b>	<b>BURGLAR</b>
roof ladder basement	again always regularly	stealing thief shop	disappear police look for	rob steal thief

#### Answer sheet:

