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Groupwork - An Effective Technique for Developing Language and Co-operation at Elementary Schools

(Skupinová práce - efektivní technika pro rozvoj jazyka a spolupráce na ZŠ)

(Diplomová práce 99-PF-KAJ-42)

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Děkuji tímto paní Mgr. Věře Bitljanové, MEd. za trpělivost, vydatnou pomoc a cenné rady.

Anotace

Diplomová práce se zabývá skupinovou prací, která kromě jazykového rozvoje, poskytuje také místo pro vytváření a posilování sociálních hledisek. Navíc skupinové aktivity zaměstnávají všechny studenty, aby spolupracovali a sdíleli poznatky. Projekt dokazuje, že práce ve skupinách je efektivní aktivita, která pomáhá rozvíjet studentovu spolupráci, ochotu sdílet a tolerovat rozdílné názory, jeho schopnost být méně závislejší na učiteli. Studenti mohou tyto techniky jak spolupracovat využít i v dalších předmětech.

Abstract

The Professional Project deals with groupwork which besides language development provides also a place for building and strengthening social aspects. Furthermore, group activities engage all students to cooperate and share information . The Project has proved that groupwork is an effective activity which helps develop student cooperation, willingness to share and tolerate different opinions, and the ability of being less dependent on the teacher. Students can then use cooperative techniques also in other subjects.

Annotation

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigen sich mit den Gruppenarbeit, die außer den Sprachentwicklung gewährt auch einen Raum für die Formung und die Festigung der sozialen Gesichtspunkte. Außerdem die Gruppenaktivitäten zwingen alle Studenten zusammenarbeiten und teilen Erkenntnisse. Das Projekt beweist, daß die Gruppenarbeit eine Effektivaktivität ist, die hilft die Zusammenarbeit eines Student zu entwickeln, seine Bereitwilligkeit zu teilen und verschiedene Ansichten zu tolerieren, seine Fähigkeit sein weniger abhängig vom Lehrer. Die Studenten können diese Mitarbeittechniken nutzen auch in anderem Fächer aus.

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Chapter I. Needs for Using Groupwork at Schools

A. Importance of Groupwork

Working in groups is an activity that helps students, develop their knowledge - skills and systems, their integration and co-operation among other students, and create and strengthen their confidence. Groupwork brings variety to the lesson and connects different learning areas in one place.

1. Personal Experience with Groupwork as a Student

Co-operation and helping others is very important for me, either in my personal or professional life. Sharing and learning new information from others gives me as a teacher an opportunity to enrich the lesson with a wide range of activities.

At the elementary school I experienced groupwork only in Biology or Chemistry. It was a kind of research, properly planned, when we knew exactly what our task was. First, we were presented a certain problem, then we practised it as a whole class and then we were divided into groups, given necessary material and we started to work. After the activity, each group presented its results and the teacher summarised them. Then we wrote the summary down. Other lessons did not plan groupwork at all, they used more whole-class or individual work, sometimes pair work instead.

On the other hand, Secondary Grammar School teachers tried to create enough opportunities for working in groups. We collaborated in groups during English, German, Czech, Biology, Chemistry and sometimes Physics. The teachers used different kinds of groupings - they divided us into groups or asked us to choose people we wanted to be in groups with. They prepared interesting group activities which tried to develop both language and social skills, especially during English and German. They followed the same procedure as mentioned above.

Both attitudes brought me to a decision to explore the problem of work in groups more deeply.

2. Personal Experience with Groupwork as a Teacher Trainee

When I started to teach at elementary schools, I tried first to develop co-operation through pairs but two people were not enough and the pupils had less chance to work collaboratively. But when they worked in groups, they started to co-operate. Some classes were slower and needed more time to get used to groupwork (especially, the younger learners), however; the older students were quite successful and interacted and worked together.

I started to concentrate on the social aspects of learning during my teaching in year 3. I was mainly interested in involving every student during groupwork. This interest came from my observations when I saw many students neglected or excluded by their teachers from various activities only because of their knowledge or their speed.

During my observations and teaching practice at elementary schools I had an opportunity to see some teachers who used groupwork quite rarely, almost never. But besides this, I met teachers who prepared tasks for groups in advance and then organized them with their classes. These situations helped me explore the topic of social aspects developed and strengthened through groupwork and its use in a lesson.

Therefore, I focused, besides developing language skills, especially on social aspects of the use of groupwork within the learning/teaching process - these are students' work in groups, their co-operation and interaction within groups, involving all students at the same time, reducing students' shyness when talking in their groups, providing a place where the students respect and tolerate their classmates' opinions and developing their independence from the teacher.

B. Theory of Groupwork

The following part is discussing the theory of groupwork. The section is divided into parts which deal with different topics related to the main theme - co-operation and involvement of all students. The topics go through students' work in groups from educational and social point of view, then teachers' and students' roles are discussed, after that suitable tasks are described and finally, possible problems during groupwork are described.

1. Students' Work in Groups

The above mentioned personal experience support following section where the theory of groupwork will be discussed.

As mentioned already, groupwork develops learning and social skills. It is essential to try to develop and strengthen both categories. Paul Nation (1994) describes groupwork as a phenomenon: "... where everyone involved is interested, active and thoughtful" (Kral, 1994: p.160). Groupwork is an activity which creates a place for connecting both - the educational and social point of view.

a. Educational Point of View

The teacher gives the students more talking time during groupwork than it is during a whole class activity. The students have more opportunities to express themselves, to listen to different opinions, to express their ideas in front of a smaller amount of people. Atkinson (1993) writes in his book that: "...group activities give more students more practise more of the time" (p. 41).

These are all views which are connected with properly planned activities for groupwork. They are prepared to practise all four skills: productive - speaking and writing, receptive - listening and reading; and three sub-skills: grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation; therefore, the

teacher can choose from many different tasks. Jeremy Harmer (1991) adds that:

> It [groupwork] can be used for oral work, tasks where decisions have to be taken, joint reading tasks, listening tasks, co-operative writing and many other things : it also has the great advantage of allowing different groups of students to be doing different things in the same classroom.
> (p.247)

He agrees that groupwork activities develop the learning aspect but there is also another part where groupwork plays a big role - the social development.

b. Social Point of View

As well as groupwork improves all skills and sub-skills, it plays a crucial role in creating social relationships between classmates. These are for example, co-operation, sharing information, respecting and tolerating others' opinions, listening to and learning from each other, being responsible for own work, all students' involvement. These are all features of co-operative learning which will be covered in this section.

Many experts say that groupwork gives students an opportunity to work together, learn from their teacher and mainly from their classmates and themselves. David Atkinson (1993) states that:

> The learners can learn from each other; the teacher isn't the only person in the classroom who the students can learn from. Every learner knows different things and learns in different ways; pair and groupwork creates opportunities for learner's knowledge to be shared.
> (p.41)

He indicates that students are exchanging information and this way they enrich their knowledge. This also means that students, besides obtaining information from their classmates, are also

responsible for their work in a group, as well as their knowledge and sources. All students are involved in the process of learning; weaker students are collaborating the same way as their stronger classmates. The students are also given more talking time and therefore, they have a great opportunity to express themselves in smaller groups which reduces their fear of speaking in front of the entire classroom. Adrian Doff (1991) summarises that: "Students feel less anxiety when they are working 'privately' than when they are 'on show' in front of the whole class" (p. 141).

When the students learn to co-operate in groups, it brings effectiveness into the lesson. This occurs in the pace of a lesson or a given task. The students are able to complete their tasks faster because they are helping each other. J. Clarke, R. Wideman and S. Eadie (1990) say:

> Working collaboratively requires the use of co-operative skills .... The process involves working together, reflecting on the experience, understanding something about working together, and practising that learning in subsequent rounds of group activity.
>
> (pp. 11-12)

The authors focus on co-operation and work together based on an experience and practice. They also emphasize that students working in groups are more tolerant to their classmates' opinions. These are phenomena which help develop students' social awareness, and moreover; when a healthy kind of competition occurs.

Marianne Celce-Murcia (1991) suggests the same when she writes about a method called cooperative learning. She believes that this is not the same as an ordinary groupwork but it gives students more responsibility for their work in a group, special roles, feeling of security etc. She also adds:

> Second language learners can thus practice language in small groups without the fear of making errors in front of the whole

class. ...moreover, because rewards depend on team achievements, individual learners are more likely to be motivated to accomplish the tasks using as much of the second language as they can muster.

(pp. 382 - 383)

The aspect of experience, sharing, tolerating, learning, listening to each other, involving students, providing conditions for being responsible for one's work while working co-operatively is an essential theme which takes part in groups.

The teacher is the person who provides group activities as it is seen in the following part.

2. Teachers' Roles

As said earlier groupwork contains educational and social aspects which is necessary to be aware of. Therefore, the teacher plays a crucial role during organizing groupwork. On the other hand, she tends to be less visible and more encouraging for her students to work on their own without her help. Both approaches are inseparable and are dealt with in this part.

a. Qualities and Skills

The teacher has to have many qualities and skills that occur gradually during groupwork. These are, for instance, fairness, politeness, tolerance, being ready to solve problems, having particular skills for organizing groupwork, such as giving instructions, explaining the activity, setting up the activity, checking that everybody works, dealing with problems and disorder, giving feedback, and assessing students' performance. They are all needful when the teacher is planning a group activity.

b. Groupwork Organization

When considering all qualities and skills the teacher has to have, organizing groupwork is one of the activities where the teacher proves them. First of all, the teacher is no more the person whom the students are only dependent on. She is less dominant; she does not play the main role.

On the other hand, the teacher is an element which cannot be excluded from the classroom. At the beginning she prepares suitable tasks, then she works as an organizer who divides the class into groups, chooses the leader (or the groups choose their leaders by themselves) and indicates other roles in the group if the task requires that and then explains the activity and gives instructions. During the groupwork she is a counsellor when she checks students' work and helps if necessary; she also works as an advisor and encourages the students to work together. After the activity the teacher acts as an assessor or summarising person who concludes all information and also corrects the most important mistakes which occurred during the activity. This is a feedback which helps the students become aware of their knowledge.

The role of the teacher is crucial. She prepares everything for groupwork, then the students work and the teacher checks if everything goes well. Although she is there, the students already have more people to ask for help and are not dependent on the teacher all the time. This depends on the type of tasks and activities, the students go through. Penny Ur (1992) in her books writes:

> ... it [groupwork] frees the teacher from her usual role of instructor-corrector-controller, and allows her to wander freely round the class, giving help where needed, assessing the performance of individual students, noting language mistakes for future remedial work, devoting a little more time to slower learners.
>
> (p. 8)

Any teacher has to be aware of her job and needs to know what to do, how to deal with possible problems, where to find solutions etc. One of the crucial tasks for the teacher is to find and prepare an appropriate task for groups that will work and is meaningful to the students. But not only teachers play certain roles. The students as well have to complete several roles to work properly as it is shown in the following part.

3. Students' Roles in Groups

When the teacher is planning a group activity, she has to know which roles each member of the group will have. Therefore, the teacher has to take all possible positions in the group and divide the students according to this fact. The learners roles are of the same importance as teachers' roles.

First, the students have to be used to working in groups. Mary Underwood (1991) explains that groupwork is not used very often but: "...students who have got used to pair work can easily be put into groups" (p. 77). She supposes that the stage before working in groups is pair-work where the students first work with somebody else and they get experience with social interaction. The next stage is groupwork where the students are working with more people and the social contacts are wider and more intensive.

Therefore the roles of students in groups vary according to the task and its stage of development. The students control the group mainly by themselves. They are given a task, instructions, they are divided into groups and then they start working together to complete the task. Before they start, the teacher or the experienced group chooses who will have which roles in the group. First, they indicate a group leader who according to Jeremy Harmer (1998): "...can be used to hand out copies, check that everyone in their group (or row or half) has understood a task, collect work and give feedback" (p.129). The group can also have a secretary who writes solutions and a speaker who

presents them, other members of the group are contributing and helping the group. The roles are changeable and the pupils take turns in these roles.

Dividing groups into roles cannot be avoided and is very important for the successful completing of the task but mainly for building good relationships between students. Harold W. Bernard (1972) offers a lot of possible roles the students can play in groups. He quotes Berne who comes up with student roles in groups which are either relating directly to the activity or linked to social development of the students in the group. The roles are :

-Initiating role - a leader
-Information-seeking, information giving roles
-Clarification role
-Summarising role (it can be the teacher or a student)
-Building/maintaining role (for the stability of groups)
-Encouraging role (strengthening motivation, praising...)
-Harmonizing role (quieting the students)
-Gate-keeping role (providing communication with others)
-Standard setting role (agreement with group decision)
-Indifferent acquiescer (not involved in group activity at all)
(pp. 381 - 382)

According to the list above, the students can have several roles in a group. For example, the leader can also be a harmonizing or gate-keeping person etc. There are several opportunities for combining these roles. The most important task for the teacher is to avoid the person who is absolutely not interested in working and try to involve him somehow. Berne pointed out very important facts and his division also considers social aspect of groupwork.

The most essential thing about groupwork is that students are working co-operatively which means that they are working together, they are sharing information and knowledge. They are helping each other and therefore, they rely on each other. They know that to fulfil

their tasks, they must work as a team and that all members take responsibility for their work. Students are also more involved in their work and they are concentrated on the task.

Students' roles are very important and help the pace of the groupwork and the smoothness of the activity. Moreover, the students become more independent and solve their tasks with little help from their teacher. Therefore it is essential to prepare a well organized and planned activity for groupwork, so it covers learning and social development together. All these characteristics are described in the following part.

4. Suitable Tasks for Groupwork

As stated above, the teacher plans groupwork in advance to prepare activities developing both discussed areas. The teacher has to be aware of her students' needs and their abilities, level of English and their experience with groupwork. Clarke, R. Wideman and S. Eadie (1990) summarise: "Small group work is an ideal setting for teachers to learn from and about their students" (p.21). The teacher starts with short and simple activities and later moves to longer ones. But they are always specific, concrete and contain a communicative purpose - either an opinion or information gap which will make the communication interesting and meaningful. The teacher has to consider possible problems which may occur during the activity and be prepared for them. The activities motivate the students to work.

Organizing an activity which has all features of educational and social development is quite difficult. The activity is focused also on fluency, so the purpose of doing a particular activity is for the contents, not for the accuracy. Donn Byrne (1991) divides group activities into several categories. They are:

Interpretation activities

- students develop their learning skills and social interaction when describing a picture etc.

Problem-solving activities

- students are discussing and then solving a particular problem
- they have to co-operate and work together

Planning activities

- students decide where to build a park/house and they have to share information and different opinions before they start and then during their work

Invention activities

- students try to use their imagination, they are working together, as a team, they rely on each other

Role-play

- students prepare by themselves or the teacher gives them some clues for performing a part of a story and the students have to decide who will play each role and respect and tolerate each other

Byrne (1991) adds a very important thing: "Group work provides almost constant opportunities for integrating skills because the students *have* to talk when they are doing a reading or writing activity - and they *have* to listen to one another all the time" (p. 102). And besides this, group activities create a place for collaboration and all students' work.

Preparing an activity for groups is quite challenging, but on the other hand, the teacher can choose to practise any skill or sub-skill she wants to. Along with organising a groupwork activity, some problems may appear and the teacher needs to solve them.

5. Problems during Groupwork

A group activity does not bring only positive outcomes for the students but is also connected with several problems which lower the positive impact of groupwork.

One of the major disadvantages is the problem with the mother tongue. The students are in groups and they complete a particular task in English but sometimes they switch languages and use their mother tongue. The teacher has to be aware of this and give the students target language before they start working.

The next problem with work in groups is an indiscipline in a classroom - the students are more noisy and the atmosphere in the class can be interrupted and the students' attention can be distracted. Therefore, the teacher has to solve it by preparing a different type of activity, stopping the activity, changing the length of the task etc. or setting up rules for working in groups which the students admit and work according to them. It is an agreement between the teacher and her students. The rules usually deal with the use of the mother tongue, disorder, indiscipline and other distractions which are disturbing the lesson.

The theoretical section dealt with areas which defined the topic of groupwork, the next part covers the current methodology of groupwork.

C. Methodology of Groupwork

The previous section demonstrated opinions of experts who stated that groupwork is a technique which cannot be excluded from a lesson. It showed that groupwork strengthens students' linguistic and co-operative skills. However, the methodology indicates and represents the connections between the theory and practice.

Methodology of groupwork focuses mainly on the classroom management - seating arrangement, different ways of groupings; and evaluation of students' work in groups. These aspects will be discussed in the following section.

1. Classroom Management

As said in the theory, a group activity needs to be planned carefully with the emphasis on a balanced development of educational and social points of view. Because of this, groupwork has to be organized properly to consider both sides. The teacher has to be very sensitive when dealing with the size and location of the classroom and then planning the seating arrangement which would suit the task and the students.

a. Seating Arrangement

The size of the classroom, number of students, possibility of moveable desks, enough space - these are very important things that have to be considered when organizing groupwork. They influence the quality of students' work - how they complete their tasks, how they co-operate, how they behave in groups etc.

The teachers have to decide which seating arrangement is suitable for different group activities. Some tasks require a lot of space where the students have to move from one place to another (for example, problem-solving activity: Planning and then drawing an amusement park - the students have to have enough room) or there are activities where the students can just turn to their classmates and there is not necessary to move desks (for instance, spotting differences in two pictures). The most suitable arrangement for groupwork is the cafe style when the students sit around a table and solve a problem. The students have the same opportunity to work on the task, they all have the same distance from the material, and moreover; they look at their classmates' eyes, they do not have to shout at them because they are close and so they can build their relationships easier.

The seating arrangement depends on the number of students in a classroom because then the teacher decides which arrangement she chooses and also the type of groupings she uses. The number of students and their division into groups is very important too.

b. Groupings of Students

The section above showed that it is very important to arrange the students seating well when planning groupwork. Division of students into groups according to their size and needs of the task will be dealt in this section.

Groups can differ their size (big and small groups) or they vary in their consistency - there are either same-ability or mixed-ability groups. Same-ability groups consist of pupils with almost the same level of English and on the other hand, there are pupils of different level in mixed-ability groups. Each grouping is suitable for different activities and each of them has its own advantages and disadvantages. Donn Byrne (1991) believes that: "On the whole, mixed ability groups - with fast and slow students together - are better for fluency work. ... Students *do* help one another, because the kind of work they have to do involves co-operation and collaboration" (p.76). He points out that faster students may help the slower students and the weaker students may learn from the stronger students. Therefore, mixed-ability groups are preferable.

Mixed-ability groups are more suitable for groupwork because the learners can learn more from their classmates and the length of work in groups is almost the same in each group. The slower students can learn from their faster classmates and, moreover; the faster can learn to tolerate the slower. The knowledge gap between the pupils is not increasing and the teacher can plan the final result sharing for the whole class.

Grouping can also be done randomly, especially when the teacher is not interested in students' level of knowledge but when she wants the students to work with as many of their classmates as possible. There are several techniques that can be used, such as giving each learner a number - e.g. 1 to 4 when we want to have four-member groups and then asking all 1's to get together, and 2's etc.. Or another way of dividing students is to give them cards with a word on them and

the students have to find their colleagues. In addition, one group will be looking for months in a year, the second for days of a week etc. The simplest way of dividing the class is to let them make groups of their own or simply divide them the way they are sitting. Each grouping is worthwhile and it should be concerned very carefully with the characteristics of a class and students' knowledge.

The seating arrangement, size of the class and various types of groupings affect students' work in groups and determine their level of social interaction. The best seating arrangement and grouping is where the students have only small distance to speak, they can listen to members of their group clearly, they are facing each other and they can talk to others personally. These factors help in co-operation between the students, sharing information, learning from each other, reducing shyness, extending time for speaking etc.

The students' performance in the group has to be assessed somehow and it is mainly the teachers' role to do that. The following section deals with the evaluation of groupwork and its outcomes.

2. Evaluation of Students during Groupwork

Groupwork develops learning and co-operative skills; therefore the teacher has a very crucial role when assessing groupwork because of various views. The teacher is not the only person who can evaluate the students. This section will demonstrate the necessity of evaluation and various types of assessors.

Activities in groups are freer and the students try to express their thoughts and they are mainly focused on what they say and not how they say it. As Julian Edge (1990) shows: "If students are to say anything meaningful, they need to feel that people are listening to *what* they are saying, not to *how* they are saying it" (p.37). But it does not mean that group activities should not be evaluated. Mistakes, attempts, errors are signs for the teacher that the students are learning and trying to use the language.

Many teachers tend to correct every mistake they hear but it is not possible during groupwork. First, the teacher cannot hear everything the students say and second, it is frustrating for the students to be corrected all the time. The teachers have to take mistakes as signs of effort making, and therefore; write them down and then work with them during feedback which is the best way of showing the students where they made a mistake and try to fix or correct it.

The teacher may reduce the amount of mistakes by giving enough time for practising the structure or function. When the students worked with the material before, they will know what they are supposed to do with it in a group.

Evaluation of groupwork is the most difficult task for the teacher. The teacher has to set up criteria for assessing groupwork in advance, so then during groupwork she knows what to expect and what to evaluate. Therefore, the teacher needs to monitor the groups carefully and when there is any doubt, the teacher may join the group to check how the students are working. The teacher focuses on fluency during groupwork because she is interested in students' thoughts and ideas. The teacher corrects mistakes only when they influence the meaning of students' speech. When the teacher hears a mistake she has several ways of correcting it. She may use a delayed correction which means that she tells the students what was wrong after the activity. She can also encourage the students to correct their classmates' mistakes, or their own mistakes after the activity. Evaluation and correction are very sensitive areas and each teacher should consider them according to a particular situation.

The teacher is not the only person who evaluates and corrects mistakes. It is done mainly in groups when the students correct themselves or are corrected by their classmates. As well the teacher may ask students to assess their performance as a group or other groups'. Furthermore, the teacher can set up a role in a group called "an observer" who represents the teacher in the group and writes down all mistakes. Then at the end, the observer says which mistakes the

group made. Next lesson, the teacher changes the role. This is a very useful method, but it is used rather in more guided activities than in free activities. The students should not be so concentrated on their possible mistakes when speaking in groups. One of the most important aspects developed in groups are social interaction, students' behaviour to each other, absorbing and learning new things from members of groups, speaking English, helping each other, being responsible for team work etc.

Evaluation needs to be done sensitively with a consideration to students' needs and abilities, and moreover; according to a type of group activity the teacher prepared. The students need to see that their surroundings want to know their ideas and not the structures.

In the experts' opinions, and according to methodology, groupwork is an essential part of a teaching/learning process and it is necessary for students to meet with this kind of activity. To summarise, groupwork can be organized in almost every lesson and helps develop learning skills and sub-skills as well as social aspects. One of the biggest advantages of groupwork is that all students are working and they all have chance to exchange information and enrich their knowledge of opinions and ideas of others. Groupwork plays the most essential role in building and strengthening co-operation among students.

D. The Thesis Statement

The Professional Project is going to support following thesis: Groupwork is, besides language development, an effective tool for developing co-operation. Despite the fact that groupwork is used rarely at schools, the focus is mainly on the use of groupwork to help all students join and co-operate. Therefore, it demonstrates that a well planned groupwork with consideration to both language and social development helps students learn and improve social skills based on their work and co-operation. The Professional Project proves this and shows results, and areas for further development. I have decided to investigate the subject of groupwork focusing on co-operation, all students' involvement and related social aspects. The goal of the Professional Project is to prove that groupwork is, besides language development, essential for developing co-operation while involving all students.

E. Paper Parts

1. Practical Teaching Experience

Chapter II shows practical examples of my continuous teaching practice from September to October 1998 and also from March to April 1999. It starts with methods of investigation at elementary schools, then descriptions of particular classes, lesson plans and reflection focusing on groupwork and its social connections - co-operation and all students' involvement.

2. Summary of the Project

Chapter III presents the summary of the teaching practice, the connections between the theory, methodology and the practice, then evaluation of a questionnaire and interviews and results of group activities from Chapter II and their outcomes. Chapter III states at the end further development of the research.

Chapter II Implementation of Professional Project

A. Discussion of Project

The previous chapter stated theoretical and methodological thesis dealing with groupwork as a strategy developing learning skills and, moreover, engaging all students in a group activity and strengthening social skills, such as building co-operation, sharing information and opinions, learning from each other, respecting others' opinions, building more independence from the teacher etc.

Chapter II begins with methods of investigation where first, is a reflection on groupwork observation, then summary of elementary school teachers' interviews about their experience with groupwork, and after that textbooks analysis. The next section demonstrates practical examples of lesson plans where groupwork was organized with a focus on co-operation, all students' involvement and other social aspects with a reflection section after each lesson.

The following section shows different methods of investigation I used to find out more information about groupwork and its use at schools.

B. Methods of Investigation

Before I started to investigate, I designed a Project Model where I outlined all methods used later in the research. This section shows different methods of investigation I used to find out how often groupwork is used, what advantages or disadvantages it brings, which methodology is practised, what kinds of activities the teachers use, how students co-operate in groups, how the teachers deal with problems during groupwork, and the age of students involved in groups.

The subject of the Final Paper is groupwork which develops social aspects, mainly co-operation, students' involvement and related areas. Therefore, I have focused my investigation on exploring them .

I observed and monitored a lot of lessons and different teaching approaches to groupwork and moreover; I interviewed teachers and wanted to know their opinions about groupwork implementation into a lesson.

The first method was a groupwork observation focused on different techniques and attitudes.

1. Groupwork Observation at Elementary Schools

As mentioned in Chapter I, groupwork is an activity that needs a lot of preparation and the teacher has to be aware of many aspects and possible problems which groupwork may bring. Since I visited these schools in Liberec: 10th Elementary School, 17th Elementary School, 22nd Elementary School, 25th Elementary School, 30th Elementary School where I had an opportunity to observe different kinds of approach to groupwork, it was possible to select some basic principles for my future research.

I focused my observation on these main areas :

- the frequency of groupwork
- the size of classrooms and different types of grouping
- students' work and co-operation
- teachers' dealing with problems - disorder, using Czech, etc.

I saw various attitudes to groupwork. They differed from not using it at all to frequent practice. There did not exist one way of treating groupwork. Generally speaking, groupwork was used rarely . Most of the teachers preferred pair-, whole-class or individual work, despite the fact that their classrooms were big enough for organizing group activity and the textbook suggested groupwork in several cases. The teachers decided to avoid disturbance or other problems by not using groupwork but the disorder appeared as well.

On the other hand, I had a great chance to observe a lot of groupwork organization during my teaching practice. I spent six weeks at the 25th Elementary School in Liberec and I taught and observed

about 70 lessons which helped me concentrate on groupwork and mainly on developing social co-operation among the students.

The teacher tried to use groupwork with all her students. First, she presented a grammatical structure, a dialogue etc., then she practised it with the whole class or in pairs and then when she saw that the students knew the structure, she introduced groupwork. The students were not puzzled because they used familiar structures and they were also used to working in groups. The teacher divided the class into mixed-ability groups because she wanted the stronger students to help the weaker ones. The result at the end was that some students really helped their classmates and they shared some information with them. Most of the groups finished at the same time or when some finished sooner, the teacher gave them a task prepared in advance for that particular case.

I could see some signs of co-operation during that groupwork. Some students worked together; they acted as a team. They really wanted to be the best as a group; there was also a healthy competition well strengthened during the lessons. So the pupils worked in quite a good working atmosphere.

Even though the classroom was quite small with non-moveable desks, the teacher managed to organize interesting groupwork activities. When disorder or indiscipline occurred, the teacher either stopped the activity for a while or she canceled the groupwork completely to calm the students down. The students were given more time for talking in English, more independence but the teacher was always the person who controlled the lesson.

I liked her approach when she treated the students well and used many different techniques in her lessons to make the activities more interesting and vivid for the students. Although the students were not told to work co-operatively, they shared information and learned something new from their classmates. I had a great possibility to see that well planned and in advance prepared group activities worked most of the time and that they developed various learning skills, furthermore;

they engaged all students who were trying to share information and collaborate. These were points that also occurred in the conversations with teachers as debated in the following part.

2. Interviews with Elementary School Teachers

Besides observing groupwork in lessons, I interviewed several teachers from elementary schools about their opinions of using and organizing groupwork at schools.

My questions covered these areas :

- how often they use groupwork - what the reasons are
- the age of students involved in groupwork
- the advantages of groupwork

The majority of the teachers said that they used groupwork only occasionally or never because it was time consuming, they did not have suitable tasks for groups or that the students did not like it. They also stated that groupwork caused many problems such as the use of Czech instead English, which they were not able to check. Some of them added that it was almost impossible for them to correct all mistakes. Then the major problem for almost every teacher was indiscipline which was very difficult to avoid and then they mentioned the inappropriate size of their classrooms etc. Some of them also pointed out that it was very difficult to convince students that groupwork was an activity which normally fitted to the lesson.

Despite the fact that most of the teachers did not use groupwork often, they agreed that successful groupwork should be practised from the beginning; starting with the simplest tasks for the youngest children to more difficult for the elder ones and then the students would get used to groupwork and accept it as something natural during their study. Some teachers said that some students co-operated and shared information in other subjects, such as Civics or Biology but they were not able to that in English.

All these very important opinions and ideas were essential and they helped me consider main aspects of groupwork. The teachers' complaints strengthened my decision to work on my topic. The interviews helped me form my view and narrow the subject of the Diploma Thesis. The next method of investigation was textbook analysis where I studied different textbooks used at elementary schools.

3. Textbook Analysis

Previous sections demonstrated meeting with real teachers and students - observations and interviews. This section deals with textbooks and their analysis focused on developing social aspects.

I went through many textbooks to find out how groupwork was organized. I found out that it was planned quite often and developed both language and social aspects. I analyzed more deeply two textbooks I used during my teaching: Project English 1, 2, 3 by Tom Hutchinson and Stepping Stones 1,2 by Julie Ashworth and John Clark.

Stepping Stones1,2 are for young learners - beginners and their activities are arranged and adapted for children - a lot of games, amusing activities, songs etc. These books are excellent for encouraging students and showing them advantages and positive sides of English. Project English 1 is also for beginners but does not contain so many games and songs as Stepping Stones. Project English 2, 3 are made mainly for older students who have already learned English for couple of years.

The following sections give brief descriptions of these two textbooks with focus on exercises providing an opportunity for students to develop social skills in groups.

a. Stepping Stones Analysis

These textbooks are divided into several topics which continually develop the language. The authors emphasize the fact that activities are based on having fun which encourages children to work. Groupwork is

recommended to be used quite often. There is an attempt to connect learning skills with social development. They use special questionnaires to show a real purpose for communication. During these activities in groups the students are trying to find out a lot of information about themselves and their classmates. These are, for example, classroom surveys where the students are to find out which hobbies their classmates have, what they like or dislike, or what they know about their town etc.

Besides planning a group activity, the books also carefully consider classroom management. They suggest that an appropriate seating arrangement where the students are facing each other is very important.

Stepping Stones are valuable textbooks which provide activities that practise learning skills or sub-skills and they also give an opportunity for the students to work together and improve co-operation with others, listening to different opinions, learning new information, helping each other. For instance, learners have to decide which things to take to the desert island or plan a town or park etc. The students are also offered a lot of games where they work in groups and help each other. Stepping Stones are focused on younger students and therefore activities are adapted to them. The following section about Project English will show a slight difference between these two textbooks.

b. Project English Analysis

These textbooks use groupwork more often than Stepping Stones. The author provides a lot of exercises that are transferred into groupwork which practise learning skills and extend social skills. In my opinion, Project English offers more opportunities to interact among others in a group and then strengthening the social view. For example, Project English 2 offers students to work in groups to make their own magazine. They have to co-operate while they are speaking English and practising certain grammatical structures. The textbooks contain a lot

of games such as board games and puzzles for intermediate students which need to be solved and played in groups. Furthermore, each Issue or Project ends with a group activity which is based on revision of particular structures but mainly on work in groups and share of opinions. These are moments when the students have a great chance to be all engaged in a task.

Both textbooks see groupwork as an inseparable part of a lesson. Their authors recommend using groupwork quite often and they offer activities which create a place for improving learning and social skills.

I used several group activities from the textbooks. First, I took two group activities from the books. These were board games in the 4th and 6th forms and plans of towns in the 5th forms. I did not have to change any instructions or grammar structures. The students tried to fulfill various commands to win or to complete a town. Then I took the target language from the Project English and made up a group activity which contained the structures and developed cooperative skills. These were activities where the students in the 6th and 7th forms had to decide which things they would take to the Moon and the students in the 8th and 9th forms had to agree on a place where they would go for their trip and what they would do there. The activities developed both students' social and linguistic skills while working in groups. When there was an interesting activity, I decided to put it into a lesson as groupwork. Practical examples are discussed in the Classroom Practice section.

This part summarized methods used for investigation and narrowing the subject of the Diploma Thesis. Although the textbooks and methodology books recommend using groupwork, many teachers do not take this advice and use other kinds of grouping. Therefore, it was necessary for me to find out how group activities work and what outcomes they bring. Next section presents practical examples of groupwork in several lessons with focus to social development.

C. Classroom Practice

1. Introduction

I taught at two elementary schools in Liberec - at the 25th Elementary School from September to October 1998 and at the 22nd Elementary School from March to April 1999. I spent 6 weeks at both schools. It was a very important and useful experience for my professional growth.

In the following section, the classes where group activities were tested are presented, then their brief characteristics and after that detailed descriptions of group activities within a lesson together with a reflection section.

2. Classrooms Characteristics

I organized groupwork in various classes where I met different kinds of students and their attitudes towards school and learning. I tested activities which were concentrated mainly on social skills besides language development.

I focused on the social aspect of groupwork and I also designed the group activities according to this standpoint. I have chosen four activities where the students developed their co-operative skills. Because I tested several activities in different classes, their reflections are also enclosed.

I have chosen these classes : 4th form, two 5th forms, 6th form, 7th form, 8th form and 9th form where I organized groupwork several times. The group activities were mainly focused on creating a space for cooperation.

The students in these particular classes were of different age, knowledge, background, abilities, needs, interests and learning experience. They were all mixed-ability classes. The approach towards various age groups was slightly different but all the activities were organized with the focus on major social progress.

4th form

language level : beginners

age of students : 9 - 10

number of students : 18 (17 girls, 2 boys)

textbook : J. Ashworth & J. Clark - Stepping Stones1

group activity : The Monster Game

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, helping each other, more independence

teaching period : September - October 1998

5th form

language level : beginners

age of students : 10 - 11

number of students : 19 (10 girls, 9 boys)

textbook : J. Ashworth & J. Clark - Stepping Stones 2

group activity : Planning a Town

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, tolerating others' opinions, more independence

teaching period : September - October 1998

5th form

language level : beginners

age of students : 10 - 11

number of students : 16 (10 girls, 6 boys)

textbook : T. Hutchinson - Project English 1

group activities : Planning a Town

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, tolerating others' opinions, more independence

teaching period : March - April 1999

6th form

language level : beginners

age of students : 11 - 12

number of students : 9 (4 girls, 5 boys)

textbook : T. Hutchinson - Project English 1

group activities: A Board Game

Which 10 things to take to the Moon ?

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, helping each other, more independence

teaching period : March - April 1999

7th form

language level : low intermediate

age of students : 12 - 13

number of students : 9 (5 girls, 4 boys)

textbook : T. Hutchinson - Project English 1

group activity : Which 10 things to take to the Moon ?

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, more independence

teaching period : September - October 1998

8th form

language level : intermediate

age of students : 13 - 14

number of students : 15 (13 girls, 2 boys)

textbook : T. Hutchinson - Project English 2

group activity : Planning a Trip

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, respecting different opinions, relying on each other, roles division

teaching period : March - April 1999

9th form

language level : intermediate

age of students : 14 - 15

number of students : 15 (8 girls, 7 boys)

textbook : T. Hutchinson - Project English 3

group activity : Planning a Trip

social aspect : cooperation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, relying on each other, roles division

teaching period : March - April 1999

The next part presents lesson plans including group activities focused on social aspects and finished with reflection sections.

3. Lesson Plans for Group Activities

a. Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter I, there are several sorts of activities suitable for groupwork. I used these activities not according to which language skill they emphasized but which social aspect they developed.

The next part shows four group activities during lessons and reflections on them. All the activities dealt with developing co-operation and all students' involvement. And then each activity also covered particular social skills such as respecting others' opinions, sharing information, being independent from the teacher, helping each other, relying on each other, and roles division.

b. Lesson Plans and Reflections

This section consists of specific lesson plans with group activities based on social aspects and their reflections.

Lesson plan for activity 1 - A Board Game

1a The Monster Game

class : 4th form

teaching aids : buttons, a dice, a pencil, a work book

social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, helping each other, more independence

overall aim : - to practise vocabulary - parts of body
- to provide a place for co-operation

objectives : - students are able to work in groups and revise the vocabulary through the game
- students are able to co-operate and help each other

Procedure :

Stage 1 : 5 minutes

aims : - to introduce the lesson
- to practise vocabulary - a song - Head and Shoulders
- the hangman

objectives : - students are able to revise the words

- the teacher starts a lesson with a song - *Head and Shoulders* - students sing the song and show the parts of body they sing about
- then the teacher writes seven hyphens on the board and encourages students to name letters and guess the hidden word; the solution: MONSTER

Stage 2 : 7 minutes

aims : - to prepare the students for groupwork
- to explain the game
- to introduce new phrases

objectives : - students are able to understand what their task is
- students are able to understand the phrases

- the teacher points at a board game - The Monster Game

It is a game which has 37 fields with commands related to the topic of a human body. The students have buttons, a dice and they move along the game, read the commands and write descriptions into a

chart in their work books. Their task is to make a monster with parts of body they step on. They take turns and when they have all parts of a monster, they have finished.

- the students are asked to find unknown words in the game and they translate them
- then the teacher writes several commands from the game on the board - the teacher demonstrates their meanings, they are: *Go to number 4. Give your monster green hair.* - these commands tell the students what to do during the game
- then the teacher demonstrates a part of the game with students

Stage 3 : 25 minutes

aims : - to introduce phrases necessary for the game
- to group the students
- to practise parts of body

objectives : - students are able to use the phrases
- students are able to find their group members
- they are able to help each other
- they are able to read the commands and make a monster according to them

- the teacher introduces phrases the students should use: *Your turn. My turn.* - the teacher translates them - the teachers asks the students to speak and count English while playing
- the teacher divides the class into groups - each student gets a card with a part of a head *(an eye, an ear, a mouth)*
- they have to make groups
- the teacher asks the students if they understand the game and then sets a time limit - 15 minutes (she writes it on the board)
- the teacher monitors the students
- the teacher focuses on fulfilling social goals : co-operation, all students' involvement, helping each other, more independence

Stage 4 : 6 minutes

aims : - to finish groupwork

- to ask students to describe their monsters

objectives : - students are able to finish and show their monsters

- the teacher finishes the group activity
- she asks the groups to describe their monster, first, in groups and then choose the best monster and describe it to the whole class

Stage 5 : 2 minutes

aims : - to give feedback

- to set up homework

objectives : - students are able to understand their homework

- the teacher tells the students how they worked - well, bad; which mistakes they made - the students correct them
- the teacher sets up homework - to draw their monsters according to their descriptions

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 4th form

There were eighteen students in the class and they began learning English a year ago. I used the game to revise their vocabulary and mainly, to test students' ability to develop their social skills. During that lesson I focused on co-operation, helping each other while engaging all students and their independence.

I started the lesson with a song *Head and Shoulders* and a hangman because the students needed vocabulary practice. Then I showed the students a game in their course books. The students were supposed to go through the game and when they landed on a field, they were to read a particular command (for example, *Give your monster a big orange eye.*) and note it down to make a monster. The winner was the student who first completed the monster. Then the students looked for unknown words and translated them. I also played a part of the game for better comprehension. The demonstration appeared more

effective than long explanations because the students knew exactly what to do.

Before the class division, I introduced phrases that the students needed to use during the game : *Your turn. My turn.* I reminded the students of using them, and moreover; of counting in English during the game. The students had to show that they were able to use English, and moreover; work collaboratively. Then each student was given a card with a part of a head written on it. They got *an ear, an eye, or a mouth.* They created three-member groups. The students practised this way the words and simple questions like *Who are you ?* and answers *I am an eye....* They made mixed-ability groups in two minutes and were ready to complete the task. Each member had a button and every group had a dice. Before they started, I set a time limit of 15 minutes and let them work.

While they were working, I observed them and was prepared to help if necessary. First, I concentrated on co-operation. I wanted to find out if the students managed to work together. As written above, there were three learners in each group, so the students had enough opportunities to work with all group members. The groups worked as teams when they checked together if they counted correctly, if the body parts were properly noted down etc.

At the beginning of the activity the students needed more help from me. This meant that I answered various questions when they wanted to know how to pronounce e.g. *a spider* or who could start, what *hairy* meant etc. This showed that the students were not very used to groupwork because they needed more advice from me than from their colleagues. Therefore, I encouraged them to ask similar questions in their groups. Later, they tried to find some answers to their questions among their group members and they received some help.

Secondly, I focused on the fact that all the students were involved in groupwork. There was no student who would refuse to play the game. Sometimes they were speaking too loud and I had to ask them to calm down not to disturb the other students.

Finally, I paid attention to helping each other. The students were trying to finish their monster as soon as possible. They wanted to be the best, they helped each other with pronunciation or comprehension. When I observed the groups, I also found out that they were sharing their knowledge - for example, when a learner did not know what *ears* meant, the other members advised him.

After fifteen minutes groupwork finished and the students were asked to describe their monsters in groups and then to choose one monster from their group and present it in front of the whole class. The monsters were quite interesting. Then I told the students that they worked well and pointed out some mistakes they made during their work. These were especially, errors in singular and plural forms of nouns - *hairs* instead of *hair*, *1 teeth* instead of *1 tooth* etc. The students tried to correct these mistakes by themselves and then they got homework which was to draw the monster.

The students were able to work, co-operate, share information, help each other and be less dependent on the teacher. They played the game, read the commands, and wrote different body parts to make their monster. I learned that despite of giving enough information and material, the students asked me a lot of questions at the beginning of the activity. On the other hand, the students showed several times that they were able to work together and helped each other. This was shown mainly when the students were finishing their monsters. They waited for their slower colleagues and then they discussed their monsters in groups and chose one to be presented in front of the class.

Lesson plan for activity 1 - A Board Game

1b Land on a Word

class : 6th form

teaching aids : buttons, a dice, a pencil, exercise books

social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, helping each other, more independence

overall aim : - to practise the simple present and past tense
- to practise making of affirmative and negative sentences and questions
- to provide a place for co-operation

objectives : - students are able to work in groups and revise the making of sentences through the game
- students are able to co-operate and help each other

Procedure :

Stage 1 : 5 minutes

aims : - to introduce the lesson
- to practise past forms of verbs

objectives : - students are able to make the past forms

- the teacher greets the students and hands out a crossword: the students have to write correct past forms of verbs into a crossword and the solution : A BOARD GAME

Stage 2 : 7 minutes

aims : - to prepare the students for groupwork
- to explain the game

objectives : - students are able to understand what their task is

- the teacher opens a textbook and points at a board game *The game consists of many fields with different words on them e.g. wrote, write, he, they. The student who lands on a field, writes down the word and waits till he has all necessary parts to make an appropriate sentence consisting at least of the subject and the verb. The winner is the student who has the biggest number of sentences at the end of the game.*

- then the students are asked to find unknown words in the game and they translate them
- then the teacher demonstrates a part of the game with students

Stage 3 : 25 minutes

aims : - to introduce phrases necessary for the game
- to group the students
- to practise making of sentences

objectives : - students are able to use the phrases
- students are able to find their group members
- they are able to help each other
- they are able to write down the words and then make sentences from them

- the teacher introduces phrases the students should use : *Your turn. My turn.* - the teacher translates them - the teachers asks the students to speak and count English while playing
- the teacher divides the class into groups - each student gets a card with either a verb infinitive, or a past form of a verb or its Czech translation - e.g. *go - went - jít* the students have to make a group by finding all three parts
- the teacher asks the students if they understand the game and then sets a time limit - 15 minutes (she writes it on the board)
- the teacher monitors the students
- the teacher focuses on fulfilling social goals : co-operation, all students' involvement, helping each other, more independence

Stage 4 : 6 minutes

aims : - to finish groupwork
- to ask students to count their sentences and read them

objectives : - students are able to count and read their sentences

- the teacher finishes the group activity
- she asks the groups to count their sentences and the students read them

Stage 5 : 2 minutes

aims : - to give feedback

- to set up homework

objectives : - students are able to understand their homework

- the teacher tells the students how they worked - well, bad, which mistakes they made - the students correct them
- the teacher sets up homework - to choose 5 sentences from their list and write them down

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 6th form

I planned and organized almost the same board game also in the 6th form where were only nine students. The language focus was on making sentences from the game but the social aspect remained the same : co-operation, all students' engagement, their help to each other, and gaining more independence from the teacher. The students were supposed to play the game and when they landed on a field, they noted down a word written on it. The winner was the person who had the biggest number of complete and correct sentences when the group activity finished.

The lesson started with a crossword. It was a revision of the past forms of verbs. The solution was A BOARD GAME which smoothly connected the following stage. I showed the students the board game and explained what their task would be. Then the students were given cards with either a verb infinitive, or a past form of a verb, or the Czech translation. For example, a student with *go* had to find his partners who had the remaining forms of the verb and create a three-member group. When the students were divided, each student got a button and a dice and they started to play. I observed the groups and checked if they needed some help.

At the beginning, I concentrated on the co-operation. The students helped each other with spelling and writing down the words and they paid attention to making sentences. They checked if the sentences created by their group members contained all necessary

parts, at least the subject and the verb. When a student did not know how to make a sentence from her words, the other members helped her. For example, a student gathered words like *hospital, you, injured* and tried to create a sentence. She was advised to get more words which would be useful.

Secondly, I concentrated on all students' involvement. They showed that they were really interested in the game because the students were talking and discussing who would start, and they also checked if they worked properly and did not cheat. For instance, a student in one group tried to skip a field with *wrote* because he already had the word but the rest of his group did not allow him this and he had to note it down.

After twenty minutes, I finished the activity and asked the students to count their sentences and then I said who was the winner - a student with thirty sentences. He read them and all the students checked if they were correct. After that I encouraged the other students to read some of their sentences. The activity was concluded by telling the students that they worked very well but some mistakes appeared - errors in creating sentences and questions. The students sometimes used *I did not broke my leg.* instead of *I did not break my leg.* or *Did you injured your leg ?* instead of *Did you injure your leg ?* Then the students got homework to choose five sentences from their list and write them down.

The students of the 6th form were more independent from me than the younger ones. When they were in doubts, they requested an answer from their group members. It was mainly influenced by the fact that the students were used to working in groups more frequently than the 4th form. But both classes showed during their work in groups when they helped each other with pronunciation or comprehension that they were able to work collaboratively.

Lesson plan for activity 2 - Planning a Town

classes : two 5th forms

teaching aids : a sheet of paper, coloured pencils

social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, tolerating others' opinions

overall aim : - to practise vocabulary - our town
- to practise grammar structures - *There is/There are*
- to provide a place for co-operation

objectives : -students are able to practise vocabulary and grammar
-students are able to create their town
- students are able to co-operate and respect each other

Procedure :

Stage 1 : 5 minutes

aims : - to introduce the lesson
- to practise vocabulary - describing a picture

objectives : - students are able to revise words

- the teacher starts with a vocabulary revision - students describe a picture of a town - buildings and things

Stage 2 : 5 minutes

aims : - to prepare the students for groupwork
- to explain the groupwork

objectives : - students are able to understand the activity

- the teacher writes MY DREAM TOWN on the board
- then the teacher explains that the task will be to work in groups and plan a town - the teacher writes following :

  MY DREAM TOWN

  - a name of your town
  - 7 - 10 different buildings
  - draw any house/animal/tree you want to have in your town
  - write on a big sheet of paper + use coloured pencils
- the teacher reads each line and explains it

- the teacher also introduces phrases the students should use during the activity - *Here. There is a... There are... Give me..*

Stage 3 : 20 minutes

aims : - to group the students

- to start and observe groupwork

objectives : - students are able to work in groups and create a town of their dreams

- each student gets a coloured card (yellow, red, blue, green) and he has to find his partners with the same colour to make a group
- the teacher reminds the students of using the phrases and then sets a time limit - 15 minutes
- when the students are working, the teacher monitors
- the teacher focuses on fulfilling of social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, tolerance to other ideas

Stage 4 : 10 minutes

aims : - to finish groupwork

- to ask students to describe their towns

objectives : - students are able to finish their towns and talk about them

- the teacher finishes the activity and asks the students to describe their towns
- the students describe their towns using structure *There is/are*

Stage 5 : 5 minutes

aims : - to give feedback

- to give homework

objectives : - students are able to understand homework

- the teacher tells the students how they worked, she presents mistakes the students made
- then the teacher gives homework - to write 5 sentences about their town

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 5th form

There were 16 students in the class. The social goals of this group activity were co-operation, all students' involvement, and tolerance to others' opinions.

I began the lesson with describing a picture of a town. The students practised vocabulary. This warmed the students up and they were prepared for the following activity. Then I wrote MY DREAM TOWN on the board and explained to the students that their task would be to work in groups to plan their dream town. The students were given all important instructions and phrases.

First, I grouped the students. Each student was given a coloured card and asked to find three more people with the same colour. This way I separated some students from each other and created mixed-ability groups. Then the groups were moved to different corners, so they would have enough space. Then I set the time limit and let them work.

While the students were working, I monitored them. First, I observed the students' co-operation. I noticed that the stronger students in groups were writing the names of buildings, however the weaker students were drawing and organizing the location of buildings. I also found out that the students helped each other in a group. When a student did not know a word, e.g. how to write *a church*, the rest of the group advised him.

The most difficult task for the students was when they had to accept different opinions. For example, a students suggested that they could put *a library* into the town but the other members did not agree and started to argue. Because the students were most of the time discussing the picture, they were not very quiet. Sometimes, they needed to be calmed down not to disturb the other groups. I had to remind them several times of tolerance to other ideas. Another example appeared when one group argued about the number of buildings and their location. That was why they voted and decided on eight buildings - each student was supposed to draw and label two houses. Finally, they came to an agreement.

Sometimes, the students asked me to explain words connected to the topic of the town, for example, how to write *a swimming pool* or *a football stadium* etc. But most of the time, they worked as groups and did not need any help from anybody else but their group members.

After fifteen minutes the activity finished and each group was asked to describe the town. The students used *There is/are* while describing the towns. When they ended, we corrected mistakes they made - these were especially errors in spelling of words - *librari* instead of *a library* or missing articles. Then the students were given homework where they had to write 5 sentences about their dream town.

Despite the fact that the students showed that they were not very open to various opinions or suggestions of their classmates, they solved it quite well because they voted for the best solutions or they suggested different ideas. The students demonstrated that they were able to work quite independently which meant that when they needed to translate only few words; first, they asked me but later, the students requested responses from their group members.

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 5th form

The same activity was organized in another 5th form with 19 students. The linguistic and social aims remained the same.

The lesson began the same and then I started to organize groupwork. I avoided grouping according to colours because the classroom was quite small and the students could not move properly. Therefore, I divided the class into four four-member groups and one three-member group. I also shifted some students to make mixed-ability groups.

When the students were working, I observed them. The students were not so independent from me as the previous class. They were not working as teams from the beginning. They asked me several times where to put *a supermarket*, if they could draw *a horse* etc. I explained

to them that they had to solve these questions with their colleagues. After several remarks, they finally started to work as groups. This meant that they decided in groups which buildings should be in their town and where to put them in the map. And they began to co-operate and work together. Most of the groups decided on a name of the town and then each student got a task to complete. The groups made pairs which worked on different parts of the town - two students were working on the left side and the other on the right side. At the end, they discussed and put all items together.

I found out that the students were more open to their classmates' opinions or suggestions than the previous class. They were willing to discuss and accept them or suggest different thoughts. When a student wanted to put *a bank* into a plan, the group discussed it an decide. They also suggested different locations of buildings and then they decided in groups on the best ones. They debated over each item and tried to agree on the complete picture.

Although some students were not always working together when asking questions outside their groups, they were able to listen to different opinions. As seen above, the students collaborated quite well in groups. For example, they helped each other with spelling or pronunciation of various words or they made up the name of the town.

Both classes collaborated quite well with different approaches to the tasks. The students of the first class relied more on their group members but they usually refused their colleagues opinions. On the other hand, the second class was not so independent from the teacher but they were able to accept and discuss various opinions.

Lesson plan for activity 3 - Which 10 Things to Take to the Moon?

classes : 7th form, 6th form

teaching aids : a sheet of paper, cards with instructions

social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, more independence

overall aim : - to practise vocabulary - the Space
- to practise grammar - the future tense
- to provide a place for co-operation

objectives : - students are able to practise vocabulary and grammar
- students are able to work in groups
- students are able to co-operate and respect other opinions

Procedure :

Stage 1 : 5 minutes

aims : - to introduce the lesson
- to start the lesson with a vocabulary revision

objectives : - students are able to order the words

- the teacher practises vocabulary - the students have to order jumbled words and translate them *oonm, haert, mnoo abse, acpes tsuleht, orkcte*

Stage 2 : 5 minutes

aims : - to revise the grammar - the future tense
- to explain groupwork - to give necessary instructions

objectives : - students are able to revise the future tense
- students are able to understand the activity

- the teacher prepares and practise certain grammatical structures necessary for groupwork
- the teacher asks the students what they will do in 2030
- the teacher encourages them to use the future tense
- the teacher explains the task - to work in groups and decide which 10 things to take to the Moon

- each student gets the following card with detailed information You won a 20-day trip to the Moon. There is no food, no water, only a house where you stay. Decide in a group which 10 things to take there. Have a nice holiday !

Stage 3 : 20 minutes

aims : - to divide the class

- to give further information

objectives : - students are able to work in groups

- they are able to agree on 10 things

- each student is given a card with a picture of either a star, or a comet, or a planet to find his partners and make groups of stars, planets and comets - the students make three-member groups
- then the teacher sets a time limit- 15 minutes
- when the students are working, the teacher monitors them
- the teacher concentrates on social aims of groupwork: co-operation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, building more independence

Stage 4 : 10 minutes

aims : - to finish groupwork

- to ask students to read their lists of 10 things

- to ask the class to choose 10 things from all groups

objectives : - students are able to read and write their lists of things

- they are able to choose 10 things as a class

- the teacher finishes the activity and asks the groups to present their words - then they choose 10 things from the whole class

Stage 5 : 5 minutes

aims : - to give feedback

- to give homework

objectives : - students are able to understand homework

- the teacher tells the students how they completed their task
- then the teacher gives homework - to write what they will take to the Moon

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 7th form

There were only nine students in the class and they had enough opportunities to interact. The social goals I set up were co-operation and all students' involvement, respecting other suggestions, and creating more independence.

The lesson started with a vocabulary revision where the students revised words related to the topic - The space. It smoothly connected the following stage of the future tense revision. I wanted the students to realize that they would use the future tense. Then each student was given a card with detailed information. Their task was to decide in a group which ten things to take to the Moon.

When the students knew the instructions, they were given cards with stars, planets or comets and they had to make three-member groups of one of the space phenomena. When they were seated, they got dictionaries to check different words and I set a time limit of fifteen minutes and let the groups work.

During groupwork I concentrated on students' development of their social skills in groups. Each group had a different approach towards the task and they did not solve it same ways. Two groups worked as teams. One student was looking up in the dictionary, the second was spelling the words to the third learner who was writing them. They debated which things were suitable for their trip. The third group, on the other hand, did not work at the beginning as a team; one student did everything - she made up the words and then she wrote them down. She almost forgot her colleagues. Therefore, I had to warn her that it was a group activity, not an individual task. After my remark, she showed the list of things to her group members and they finally started to work together and discussed which things were appropriate. In the middle of the activity, she let her classmates contribute some items. At the end of the activity all groups had a list of things and were ready to present them.

Then the students read their lists and the whole class chose ten most important things they would take to the Moon. They were *sleeping*

bags, matches, water, books, tins, TV set, a Walkman, a pen, a paper, and *a gun.* and After that I told the students mistakes they made. The students misspelled various words such as *a sleaping beg* instead of *a sleeping bag*, and they sometimes forgot to use the future tense. The students corrected these words together. At the end of the lesson the students were given homework to write a short story about their trip to the Moon and which things they would take there.

The majority of the students showed that they were also less dependent on the teacher because when they were working in groups, they had other people to ask for advice. There was a group where the students discussed various words and things together. They suggested words: *a radio, a TV set, and a Walkman.* And then they debated which electrical appliance was the most suitable for the trip. Finally, they agreed on the Walkman.

This group activity demonstrated that almost all the students managed to collaborate and respect other opinions. Except one student who did not accept the role of a group member and tried to fulfill the task by herself. Therefore, it was essential to remind her of showing the list to her colleagues so they could work too. Even though she started to work as an individual, at the end she collaborated quite well when she encouraged her group members to add and discuss different items from the list.

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 6th form

I planned a similar group activity with the students of the 6th form. They practised a different kind of grammar - the past tense; the social goals remained unchanged. There were also 9 students who were used to groupwork.

The beginning of the lesson was also a vocabulary revision. The students were given enough information and got the cards with space items to form groups by themselves. My observation was based on students' co-operation, involvement, respect to other opinions, and building more independence.

All the groups were working together. They discussed every word they wrote down. They decided who would note the things down and then all three made up different words. The students in groups were helping each other when they did not understand a word or when they could not pronounce or write it. For example, they wanted to write the word *matches* but they first wrote it as *mathes*, but when a student checked it in the dictionary, he corrected it.

Sometimes they had problems with accepting different suggestions or they had more than ten things and so they had to compromise. It was quite difficult for some students who did not want to give up their things. One group had a quarrel about *a blanket*. One learner wanted to take it but the rest of the group did not. So they started to debate and came up with a different word *a sleeping bag*.

Although the students had some problems with tolerance of various opinions, they were able to agree on this list of things: *matches, sleeping bags, water, cans, a mobile phone, a radio, fresh air, a pocket knife, money, and good shoes*. The students were able to compromise at the end of the activity. They chose an appropriate word by voting and by suggesting similar idea but suitable for the entire group.

As seen above, students in both classes were working together when completing the task. Even though there appeared a student who did not participate co-operatively when the activity started, later she managed to work with her group members. Almost all the students from both classes were able to accept different opinions or at least agree with the most suitable thoughts.

Lesson plan for activity 4 - Planning a Trip

classes : 9th form, 8th form

teaching aids : a sheet of paper, pens

social aims : co-operation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, relying on each other, roles division

overall aim : - to practise vocabulary - *holidays*
- to practise grammar
(9th form - *conditionals*; 8th form - *going to*)
- to provide a place for co-operation

objectives : - students are able to practise vocabulary and grammar
- students are able to work in groups and decide where and when they would go

Procedure :

Stage 1 : 5 minutes

aims : - to introduce the lesson - vocabulary revision

objectives : - students are able to say words related to holidays

- then the teacher writes HOLIDAYS on a board and asks the students to say words related to this topic

Stage 2 : 5 minutes

aims : - to prepare groupwork - to practise grammar
- to explain the groupwork

objectives : - students are able to understand the activity
- they are able to revise grammar

- then the teacher hands out cards with detailed information:
You won a seven-day trip. You have to choose where to go as a group. It can be anywhere. Decide who would:
  - be your leader
  - be responsible for a decision what to take with you.
  - choose how to go there
  - say what to do there - going for walk, mountaineering, swimming, etc. Try to make the best trip.

- the teacher asks the students which grammatical structures to use during the group activity - the students respond and practise them

Stage 3 : 20 minutes

aims : - to divide the class

- to give necessary material

objectives : - students are able to work in groups

- the teacher gives each student a number 1,2,3;1,2,3; ... and divides the class into three five-member groups
- the teacher reminds the students of dividing the task into particular students and then sets a time limit and lets the students work
- when the students are working, the teacher pays attention to social aspects : co-operation, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, relying on each other, roles division

Stage 4 : 10 minutes

aims : - to finish groupwork

- to ask students to describe their trips
- to ask the students to choose the best trip

objectives : - students are able to talk about the trip

- students are able to agree on one of the trips

- the groups describe their trips - then the teacher asks the whole class to choose the best trip for them - students discuss which trip is the best for their class

Stage 5 : 5 minutes

aims : - to give feedback

- to give homework

objectives : - students are able to understand their homework

- the teacher tells the students how they worked and they correct mistakes they made
- the teacher gives homework - to write a page about their trip

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 9th form

First, I organized this activity with students in the 9th form. I decided to prepare an activity where they would use new grammar - the conditionals and revise vocabulary. I set up social goals which were collaboration, all students' involvement, respecting others' opinions, relying on each other, and roles division.

At the beginning the students had to name various words connected to holidays. The students then were prepared to talk about holidays in following exercises. After the students brainstormed a lot of words and were focused on a specific area of vocabulary, they were given cards with information and instructions. The students learned that their task would be to decide in a group who would become a leader, then vote for someone who would suggest where and how to go, what to take with and what to do there. After reading the instructions, they got numbers from one to three and had to form three groups consisting of 5 members. Each group got a dictionary and I let them work.

During the group activity I focused on social aims, given in advance. First, I concentrated on their co-operative work and ability to divide the task among group members. All groups worked differently but collaboratively. They sat around a table and worked. The entire group first voted for their leader who divided the task. Two people discussed where to go, one person looked for how to go there and the rest of the group decided on the possible activities. They divided the roles and then when all students had enough information, they discussed it as a group. This was an important moment when the students followed instructions.

Besides co-operation and roles division, I was also interested in their respect to other opinions and possibility to rely on each other. All the groups demonstrated that they were able to accept different opinions or they suggested a different thought. For instance, a student said that he choose a train to Switzerland. So the whole group started to discuss the price and speed of trains and finally decided that a bus

would be cheaper and faster. The students could see that they were correct and admitted their suggestion. The whole group also relied on all the members. When two students were responsible for food and drink, they had to fulfill their task and then be prepared to present them in a group. The rest of the group was working on other areas so at the end of the activity, all the students could agree on the final shape of the task.

When the students were finished, they presented their suggestions: *Switzerland, Brazil, Japan*, and finally the whole class decided on a trip to *Brazil*. After that I told the students some mistakes they made and they corrected them. The errors were mainly wrong use of prepositions. They said quite often *We would go at a train.* instead of *We would go by train.* Then the students were given homework where they should write a story about their trip to Brazil.

The students were first disappointed when they were asked to work in groups but at the end of the lesson they wanted to continue. They suggested that we could make a travel agency next lesson and use some information from this lesson.

The students collaborated quite well, which was noticeable when they put all pieces of information together and they started to choose the best choices. All the groups divided the task among their members. It was quite effective because two learners were interested in a particular topic, e.g. things to take with, and the other members were involved in transportation etc. When they had five minutes to the end, each pair or individual presented their findings and the whole group agreed or suggested another possibility.

Reflection Section : Groupwork in the 8th form

I provided almost identical groupwork in the 8th form with different language aims - practising *going to* but the same social goals. There were also 15 students which were also divided into five-member groups. They got the same instructions and they started to work. I

focused on developing co-operation, all students' engagement, tolerating other thoughts, relying on each other, and roles division.

The groups decided at the beginning of the activity who their leader would be. The first group divided their task among their members. They chose the place: *Greece* and they started to work. The second group did not divide the task at all and worked on all the items together. First, they agreed on the place where to go: *Sweden*, then they started to choose how they would go there etc. The third group agreed on their leader, on a place: *Australia* and then they fulfilled or discussed some parts of the task together and some were completed by students who were interested in them. For instance, the whole group discussed the place and different activities, and then three people had to choose the transportation and things to take. Two remaining members were writing down all information. At the end of the activity, the groups debated about all suggestions and chose the best trip to *Australia*.

This class did not follow the instructions carefully. Only one group divided their work among their members, the second group did not divide the task at all and the last group completed some tasks together and some were given to particular students. Although the students worked differently and some of them did not work according to the instructions, they all solved and completed the task successfully and presented results. But the groups which did not divide the task into roles were puzzled during the presentation in front of the class and needed more time to decide who would read which category. Then their presentation was slightly confused and they repeated some pieces of information. On the other hand, the first group knew exactly who would present e.g. transportation and were immediately ready to give the presentation.

When these groups tried to tolerate different suggestions, they were quite open to them. For example, there was a student in the first group who wanted to go to *Canada*, his colleagues wanted to go to India or Greece etc. So all the students had to describe the places and say

what was so beautiful about them. Then the group decided that Greece was the best because of its climate and history. They were able to choose the best option without any quarrel.

Both classes completed the activity well but the 8th form had some problems with task division. I appreciated the approach of the 9th form where all the students read the instructions carefully, and therefore; completed the activity very well and did not have any problems. It was caused mainly because they were more used to working in groups than the 8th form. Even though, the 8th form planned the trip also well, they needed more experience in this.

Chapter III. Project Evaluation

A. Discussion of Conclusions

The Final Project aimed at supporting the thesis which states that groupwork plays an important role in language and social development. However, the social aspect of groupwork is emphasized while considering all students' involvement and co-operation. The Project investigated groupwork and its influence on students and provided essential information to prove the thesis.

Chapter III deals with the summary of the teaching practice then it brings the relationships between the theory, methodology, and teaching practice. The next section shows results of a questionnaire and several interviews with the students, and outcomes of the teaching project, and finally, further development of collected data.

B. Teaching Practice Summary

As seen in Chapter II, I tested the social aspects of groupwork with students of different age and interests. Moreover, I tested one activity in various classes and the results were almost the same. It was an excellent experience which supported and proved the subject of my Final Project which states that groupwork is an effective activity which develops language skills and also makes a space for social development of all students.

I used a lot of methods of investigation, from observations to textbook analysis from where I learned a lot of useful findings. I found out that groupwork was not used very frequently at schools, that it was time consuming and brought disorder into the lesson. Besides these negative statements, I learned that groupwork helps joining all students, that groupwork develops both linguistic and social skills of the students, and that it could be used with all age categories. The textbooks used at schools also confirmed that groupwork is an activity which should not be excluded from the lesson.

After gathering these pieces of information, I tested the social aspects of groupwork and their effects on students. I wanted to find out and confirm that groupwork develops both skills : language and social. Mainly, I focused on the social skills, explicitly, co-operation, all students' involvement, sharing information, helping each other, respecting other opinions, relying on each other, and roles division.

Most of the students showed that they were able to work in groups and collaborate. Some students wanted to work as individuals at the beginning of the activity but later they were asked to co-operate and they finally did it. For example, the student from the 7th form who started to complete the task on her own forgetting her two colleagues but then she was asked to collaborate and she managed to. At the end, the group worked together.

The majority of students tried to be less dependent on the teacher and gain information from the group members. The difference appeared between the younger students who needed more help from the teacher during groupwork and more time to get used to working in groups than the older students. The older students were more independent than the younger learners and found advice among their group members. Moreover, the older students were given dictionaries where they could find necessary information, which also strengthened their independence from the teacher.

The students also tried to tolerate opinions of other classmates in groups but the majority had difficulty with it. After reminding of being more respectful, some groups started to listen to different thoughts and think about them. It is not possible to say which classes were more tolerant to different opinions. There appeared some students in every class which were able to agree with some opinions but there were also students who did not want to change their mind and refused to admit suggestions of their classmates.

Besides already mentioned social aspects, the 8th and 9th forms practised a group activity where they had to divide their task among group members. The older students were able to decide who would

complete which part of the task but the students of the 8th form had some problems with that and needed more practice.

To summarize, the students demonstrated during several groupwork that they were able to co-operate and help each other, mainly when checking comprehension or pronunciation. They, especially the older learners, emphasized that group activities enabled them to be less dependent on the teacher and rely more on their group members. The older students also showed that they knew how to divide a task between their group members. But the practical examples of groupwork revealed that a lot of students were not prepared to listen to their classmates' opinions, admit them, and work with them.

These conclusions of the teaching practice will be developed in the following section where the theory, methodology from Chapter I, and practice from Chapter II are linked together.

C. Relationship between the Theory, Methodology, and Practice

As mentioned above, the practical examples summarized the conclusions of groupwork. This section looks at the conclusions according to the theory and methodology.

I closely co-operated with the experts' opinions and suggestions of the methodology during my teaching practice. The experts such as Atkinson; Clarke, Wideman and Eadie suggested that groupwork created opportunities to learn a language during social interaction. Furthermore, Marianne Celce-Murcia emphasized the social and cooperative standpoint of groupwork.

The theory section dealt with the balanced development of both linguistic and social skills. It also stated that the topic of suitable tasks for groupwork was very important. It was said that a properly planned groupwork offers a place for language and social development. These were aspects, mainly social, which followed my activities. I worked with Stepping Stones 1, 2 and Project English 1, 2, 3 , textbooks frequently used at elementary schools, which recommended a lot of group

activities. I used some of them right from the textbooks - board games and plans of towns. But often I took the grammar from the textbooks and prepared a group activity which helped practise the grammar and also developed social skills. For instance, when I planned the activity in the 9th form, I prepared groupwork called *Planning a Trip*. The students practised conditionals, and moreover; strengthened their social skills. The students in all my classes were of different abilities so it was necessary to make the group activities according to them.

The methodology section advised different groupings of students to avoid the same people working together all the time. I used this advice and prepared several groupings of my students. I used numbers, pictures (e.g. space elements, colours etc.), words (body parts, verb forms etc.) and also simple shifting of students. I created these ways mixed-ability groups which shared information and tried to learn from each other. This method showed its results quite soon, mainly in the 5th forms where the students had to make their dream town. They were mixed-ability groups where the slower students were drawing the buildings and the faster students labeled them.

The size of the classroom was a topic which was closely connected with different ways of grouping. Sometimes it was not possible to move the desks or change the classroom. But the small classroom did not stop my effort of organizing the group activities. The activities were, for instance, making the list of things suitable for the trip to the Moon in the 6th and 7th forms, planning the trip with the 9th and 8th forms, even the board games for the students in the 4th and 6th forms were excellent groupwork for small classrooms.

As I tried to assess students' work in groups, I evaluated their level of co-operation during groupwork and then their results. I paid attention to fluency not accuracy during groupwork. For example, I concentrated on all the members of one group. I made a chart with items like co-operation, helping each other, independence, and I tried to find out if the students acted according to the aspects. These charts helped me in reflections and later during gathering all findings about

the social aspect of groupwork. (For The Observation Charts see Appendix 2 - 9)

The group activities which I organized also brought some problems. They were problems with indiscipline when the students were sometimes too loud when talking in groups or discussing their opinions. They sometimes changed languages and they started to speak Czech instead of English, mainly during discussions.

Although these troubles appeared in almost all classes, they did not stop the activities. But there was another problem which was linked to the social aspect of groupwork and it was the problem of tolerance to different opinions. Some students did not want to agree on opinions of their classmates and sometimes they were arguing. Because my second subject is Civics, I tried to use some methods from its methodology. These were: asking for reasons which would support the different opinions, suggesting a compromise, looking at the topic from different sides etc. Finally, some groups came to an agreement. I practised and used these methods frequently and it was sometimes successful, sometimes not. But I found the topic of tolerating different opinions very important which needed a deeper investigation.

The link between the theory, methodology and practice was clear and I carefully selected important experts' opinions for supporting the thesis. I found their statements and observations very interesting and worthwhile for the Professional Project. The thesis which declares that groupwork also improves social part of learning was proved also because of connecting the theory, methodology, and practice together and showing their inseparability.

The following section indicates different methods: questionnaires and interviews with students which helped me evaluate the Professional Project.

D. Methods of Data Measurement and Retrieval

When I designed the Project Model, I also thought about different methods of finding out students' opinions about the group activities at classrooms. Therefore, I prepared questionnaires and interviews for the students. I wanted to find out what the students think of their own work in groups. Besides this I interviewed ten students and wanted to know the same things.

1. Questionnaire

I chose this type of method to have answers from almost all the students because questionnaires are faster to complete and they cover all respondents. I prepared four closed questions where the students could choose only between *yes, sometimes* or *no;* and one open question where the students wrote what they liked best during groupwork. I distributed the questionnaires into all my classes where I organized groupwork and I received answers from 82 students which I evaluated. (For Evaluation Chart and sample questionnaires see Appendix No. 1)

Before they started to complete the questionnaires, I assured the students that they were anonymous so they did not have to sign their names.

The first question asked the students if they liked working in groups. Most of the students agreed that they enjoyed working in groups. The next question dealt with their willingness to co-operate and share information. More than half of the students responded that they would like to collaborate and exchange information. And the rest stated that they wanted to co-operate only sometimes or never. The third question covered the topic of respecting others' opinions. This was the question where more than half of the students said that they would not like to do that or only sometimes. The rest of them accepted to respect different suggestions. The fourth question wanted to know students' opinions about their own benefit from the group activity. The majority of the students believed that they learned new information from their

group members, only some students expressed doubts that they would receive something new from their colleagues. The fifth open question asked the students to write what they particularly liked about groupwork. The answers varied but they could be put into following topics :

- speaking more English
- working with people they usually did not work
- being less shy when speaking in groups
- not being corrected all the time
- meeting different opinions

Only three students responded negatively to all questions and they wrote to the open question that they did not like the activities because, as they wrote, they were for children and they participated only because they had to.

The questionnaire helped me in my further research and opened the students' world and their attitudes towards groupwork. I realized that students thought about groupwork and its social aspects.

2. Interviews

Besides using the questionnaire, I also interviewed ten of my students. I wanted to find out what the students thought of the group activities. I learned new facts about groupwork when the students said for example that :

- they were more independent from the teacher
- they spent more time with their classmates
- they corrected some mistakes while working in groups
- they discussed certain issues in English for the first time
- they experienced different type of correcting/evaluating
- they were more confident when speaking in groups

The interviews were quite useful because the students said things which they were not asked in the questionnaire. These were, for

example, that they were less dependent on their teacher than during a whole-class activity, or that they appreciated that they corrected some mistakes in groups from their classmates.

Both methods showed that the students were thinking about groupwork, and moreover; some of the students realized aspects of groupwork that were not exactly emphasized during groupwork. This was, for example, the reduction of students' shyness when speaking in smaller groups. Their responses mainly during the interviews were sharp and accurate. They showed that groupwork really offers opportunities to improve students' social skills.

The next part discusses the results of the project, mainly analyses the findings and outcomes of groupwork during the teaching practice.

E. Results of the Final Project

During the teaching practice I gathered a lot of findings which came from different investigations : classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, textbooks analysis, the teaching practice, and questionnaires. The next part shows the results of these methods with a focus to social skills and their development.

I was interested in the topic of groupwork and its social development for almost two years and I continually gathered information and findings about this topic. When I tried groupwork with students for the first time - during the teaching practice in year 3 - it was not very successful and the students looked puzzled but later I practised it more and I realized things I did not see earlier. These were, for instance, the importance of giving phrases in advance so the students could speak more English, or giving first the material and then divide them into groups. During my teaching practice in year 4 I kept them in my mind and tried to avoid mistakes.

During the teaching practice I experienced following important and interesting aspects of groupwork:

- groupwork can be organized with younger and older students (the only difference is the level of English)
- groupwork offers an opportunity for helping each other and collaboration (for all students)
- students in groups can rely on their colleagues to finish a task
- students get some knowledge from their classmates in groups
- carefully prepared groupwork can be organized even in a small classroom
- students are more interested in groupwork when the covered topic is familiar and attractive to them
- students have problems with accepting various opinions
- older students are usually more independent from the teacher that the younger ones
- older students are able to divide a task between group members

These findings were very important for the support of the thesis statement which suggests that groupwork is an important tool for developing both aspects - linguistic and social. As I learned from the observations and interviews with elementary school teachers, groupwork was rather neglected. This Professional Project wanted to prove that it is unfair because groupwork brings new elements to the lesson, mainly of co-operation and involving all students.

The next section discusses the development of the collected data and recommendation for further investigation.

F. Further Development of the Project

Groupwork is an activity which can be organized with any students, at any classroom. Group activities seem easy but the preparation takes time because the students deserve a meaningful activity which would help them develop their language and social skills. Earlier mentioned noise and disturbance represent the reason why

groupwork is not used often. Despite of these problems, groupwork represents an essential activity in linguistic and co-operative development of students. The results of groupwork supported the thesis statement that group activity provides chances to all students to develop language and social skills, with focus on co-operation.

When I designed and practised the Project Model, I found out some areas related to the thesis which would deserve a bigger attention. These are also topics which are not specific only for English but for almost all the subjects. First, the problem of tolerance to different opinions appeared almost in all classes. The students were not used to respecting opinions of others and wanted to speak only about their ideas. This area needs deeper investigation which would go through other subjects and mainly it could start with the youngest pupils. The next topic which should be also discussed more is organizing of groupwork in other subjects, not only in language classes. The students should see that working in groups with their classmates is not a specific activity for language classes but it can be done in almost all subjects. As mentioned earlier, my second subject is Civics which works most of the time with students' opinions and their tolerance. Therefore, the above areas suggested for further exploration are closely connected to my professional growth.

The topics are linked together and they both need a deeper investigation and research. They are also connected to the thesis of my Professional Project but are broader and deserve their own Project.

The thesis was proved and the Project reassured me to use groupwork reasonably with balanced focus to both linguistic and social points of view. I consider all the findings and outcomes which the Project brings and it helps me realize that groupwork will be a very important part of my lessons - both English and Civics.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1

Evaluation of the Questionnaire

Respondents : 82

Questions :

1. Do you like working in groups ?
2. Do you collaborate with your classmates in groups ?
3. Are you able to tolerate your classmates' opinions in groups ?
4. Do you learn anything new from your classmates in groups ?

Question Numbers	YES (ANO)	NO (NE)	SOMETIMES (NĚKDY)
1	65	6	7
2	50	11	21
3	16	31	35
4	61	11	10

Milí žáci,
chtěla bych Vás požádat abyste vyplnili tento dotazník. Jednu z odpovědí ANO - NĚKDY - NE zakroužkujte. Poslední otázka vyžaduje Vaši vlastní odpověď. Tento dotazník je anonymní, takže se nemusíte podepisovat.

Děkuji Petra Quirenzová

1. Pracujete rádi ve skupinách ? ANO - NĚKDY - NE
2. Spolupracujete dohromady se svými spolužáky ve skupinách ?
ANO - NĚKDY - NE
3. Dokážete tolerovat názory svých spolužáků ve skupinách ?
ANO - NĚKDY - NE
4. Naučíte se něco nového od svých spolužáků ve skupinách ?
ANO - NĚKDY - NE
5. Co se vám nejvíce líbilo, když jste pracovali ve skupinách ?
Že jsem mluvila hodně anglicky

A to je konec dotazníku. Děkuji.

Milí žáci,
chtěla bych Vás požádat abyste vyplnili tento dotazník. Jednu z odpovědí ANO - NĚKDY - NE zakroužkujte. Poslední otázka vyžaduje Vaši vlastní odpověď. Tento dotazník je anonymní, takže se nemusíte podepisovat.

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1. Pracujete rádi ve skupinách ? ANO - NĚKDY - NE
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ANO - NĚKDY - NE
3. Dokážete tolerovat názory svých spolužáků ve skupinách ?
ANO - NĚKDY - NE
4. Naučíte se něco nového od svých spolužáků ve skupinách ?
ANO - NĚKDY - NE
5. Co se vám nejvíce líbilo, když jste pracovali ve skupinách ?
Že jsem byl s Klubem v jedný skupině

A to je konec dotazníku. Děkuji.

Appendix 2

The Observation Chart for groupwork 1a - The Monster Game

4th form - 16 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Help each other	Independence
Group 1	++	+	+/-
Group 2	+/-	+/-	-
Group 3	+/-	+	-
Group 4	+	++	+/-
Group 5	+/-	+	+/-
Group 6	++	+	+/-

Appendix 3

The Observation Chart for groupwork 1b - Land On A Word

6th form - 9 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Help each other	Independence
Group 1	+++	++	++
Group 2	+	+/-	+/-
Group 3	++	+	+

Appendix 4

The Observation Chart for Groupwork 2 - Planning a Town

5th form - 16 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Tolerance to various ideas	Independence
Group 1	+	+/-	+
Group 2	+/-	+/-	+/-
Group 3	++	+	+
Group 4	+	+/-	+

Appendix 5

The Observation Chart for Groupwork 2 - Planning a Town

5th form - 19 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Tolerance to various ideas	Independence
Group 1	++	+	-
Group 2	+	+	+/-
Group 3	+	+	-
Group 4	+	++	+/-
Group 5	+/-	+/-	-

Appendix 6

The Observation Chart for groupwork 3 - Which 10 Things to Take to the Moon ?

7th form - 9 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Tolerance to various ideas	Independence
Group 1	+++	++	++
Group 2	++	+	+
Group 3	- +/-	+/-	+

Appendix 7

The Observation Chart for groupwork 3 - Which 10 Things to Take to the Moon ?

6th form - 9 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Cooperation	Tolerance to various ideas	Independence
Group 1	++	+	++
Group 2	+	+	+/-
Group 3	++	+/-	+

Appendix 8

The Observation Chart for groupwork 4 - Planning a Trip

9th form - 15 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Co-operation	Tolerance to various ideas	Relying on each other	Roles division
Group 1	++	+	++	++
Group 2	++	+	+	++
Group 3	+	+/-	+	++

Appendix 9

The Observation Chart for groupwork 4 - Planning a Trip

8th form - 15 students

+ participate in the activity
+/- something in between
- did not participate

Groups	Co-operation	Tolerance to various ideas	Relying on each other	Roles division
Group 1	+	+/-	+	++
Group 2	++	+	++	+/-
Group 3	++	+	+	-