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Vocational Training and Language Centres



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**Improving 1st of Batxillerat Students'
Collective Scaffolding Skills: An Innovation
Project to Implement Cooperative Learning in
the English Classroom**

Master's Dissertation

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Abstract

The aim of this master's dissertation is to design an innovation project and plan its implementation and assessment. The objectives of this project are, first, to develop 1st of Batxillerat students (16- and 17-year olds) collective scaffolding skills by means of working cooperatively in the English class; second, to improve the learners' overall foreign language skills thanks to cooperative work, by having more opportunities to intervene in English and by aiding each other; and third, to increase group cohesion and mutual helpfulness to, ultimately, create a propitious and safe classroom environment to learn together. This paper first analyses the needs of the specific group of students, followed by an action plan, the core of the project. This action plan starts with a review of literature in the field of collective scaffolding and cooperative work, and it then offers a teaching unit, an annual plan, the educational connections of the project to the Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat, a presentation of the cooperative learning structures that will be used throughout the project, and it ends with a compilation of the possible difficulties that could be encountered. Additionally, this master's dissertation offers an implementation plan, an assessment plan and a communication plan, in the event that the project were to be implemented.

Key words: Collective scaffolding, cooperative learning, foreign languages, innovation project, team building, cooperative structures

Resum

L'objectiu d'aquest treball de fi de màster és dissenyar un projecte d'innovació i planejar la seva implementació i avaluació. Els objectius del projecte són, primerament, desenvolupar l'andamiatge col·lectiu en alumnes de 1r de Batxillerat (de 16 i 17 anys) a través de treballar cooperativament a l'aula d'anglès; segon, millorar el seu nivell de llengua estrangera gràcies al treball cooperatiu, a tenir més oportunitats d'intervenir en anglès i a ajudar-se entre ells; i tercer, a incrementar la cohesió de grup i l'ajuda mútua per, finalment, crear un ambient de classe propici per aprendre conjuntament. Aquest treball primer analitza les necessitats d'un grup d'estudiants concret, seguit per un pla d'acció, que és el centre del treball. Aquest pla d'acció comença amb una revisió de la literatura sobre l'andamiatge col·lectiu i el treball cooperatiu, i ofereix una unitat didàctica, un pla anual, les relacions amb el Currículum de Batxillerat, una presentació de les estructures d'aprenentatge cooperatiu que se seguiran al llarg del projecte, i acaba amb una recopilació de les possibles dificultats que es podrien trobar. A més a més, aquest treball de fi de màster ofereix un pla d'implementació, un pla d'avaluació i un pla de comunicació, en cas que el projecte es pogués implementar.

Paraules clau: andamiatge col·lectiu, aprenentatge cooperatiu, llengües estrangeres, projecte d'innovació, creació d'equips, estructures cooperatives

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1. Introduction

Many theories have been formulated around how collective scaffolding in the foreign language classroom, which emerges in situations in which the students do cooperative work, results in the overall improvement of their language level. Working cooperatively in meaningful and interesting tasks fosters learners' creativity, motivation and mutual helpfulness; necessary skills for the 21st Century. Additionally, it offers more opportunities for active participation in the classroom and it stimulates group cohesion.

Traditionally, Batxillerat lessons are teacher- and information-centered, and there is not enough space left for group work and interaction. Therefore, students are used to working individually. Probably because Batxillerat is an educational stage aimed to prepare the learners to undergo a competitive test to get into their desired university, the level of individuality is high and joint effort is often moved to the background.

Hence, the aim of this master's dissertation is to develop an innovation project that will help improve 1st of Batxillerat students (16- and 17-year olds) collective scaffolding skills through cooperative work in the English classroom. The objective of the project is for the students to learn how to cooperate and interact in groups through a series of recurring cooperative structures that have been proven to increase teamwork and coordination. The project has two additional goals: the first one is to offer the students the biggest number of opportunities to cooperate and interact in the classroom possible in order for them to gain confidence when working in English, and the second one is for the learners to see and understand how cooperation is beneficial for the whole group. Ultimately, as a result, the learners will improve their English language skills.

This master's dissertation is structured as follows. First, a needs analysis presents the situation of the school and the students who would benefit from the innovation project, and it sets the starting point. Second is the action plan, justified with a literature review on collective scaffolding and cooperative work, followed by an example of a teaching unit, which is then contextualized in the annual plan for the project and accompanied by a connection to the Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat and a compilation of the materials and resources needed. Afterwards, the recurrent structures of the project are explained and analysed, and the expected difficulties and possible solutions are presented. Third comes the assessment, divided into two blocks: the assessment of the innovation project

and the assessment for the students. Fourth, a communication plan is presented on how the project would be introduced to the high school's management team and the students, and how the results would be presented to them, as well as how the project would be presented to other teachers of the high school in order to be extended to other subjects and levels. Finally, some conclusions and reflections are drawn.

1.1. Limitations

It should be noted that this master's dissertation has been written during the Covid-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown in Spain. For this reason, it has been designed as an alternative to a previous master's dissertation focused on classroom-based research, which was to be put into effect during this master's compulsory internship in a high school. Because the obligatory lockdown demanded that we terminate our internship before its completion, the research required for the previous dissertation was left incomplete, hence the need to change the direction of this project.

As a result of the current situation, the access to literature and documentation on the topic was limited to what could be found on the internet. In addition, this innovation project has not been implemented and, therefore, there is no data to support its effectiveness. Hopefully, it will be implemented at some point, and it will benefit a group of 1st of Batxillerat learners.

2. Needs analysis and context

2.1. The high school

The high-school for which this innovation project has been designed is a public education center found in the Montbau neighbourhood, in the Horta-Guinardó district, in Barcelona. This center's educational offer is wide and varied, from compulsory education (ESO), to non-compulsory education (Batxillerat, Cicles Formatius de Grau Mitjà and Superior, PFI). It provides education to over 1000 students, around 100 of which are students of Batxillerat.

The school's management team claims that the school's location is very privileged. They are near the education and sociology faculties of the University of Barcelona, and in the same campus we can find other facilities such as primary schools and kindergartens, a nursing home, a sports center and other associations with which the high-school collaborates.

The educational project of the school is very clear about the center's main priorities and goals with their students. Their main objectives are to offer comprehensive training, to guide and prepare students for their future. The goal is to train people who are responsible, cooperative and committed to their surroundings and environment. The students need to be critical, well-rounded and balanced, autonomous, open-minded, capable of adapting themselves to any situation, capable of facing any challenge, and to have spirit of improvement. Moreover, the high school puts a lot of effort into innovation, professional orientation, Catalan culture and research, as well as the student's health and language and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) skills.

2.2. The students

There are around 60 youngsters who study 1st of Batxillerat in this high school. They are divided into two groups, which are humanistic and social sciences, and science and technology. Despite this division, the students of 1st of Batxillerat are sorted into three groups which take English at the same time with a different teacher. Two of the groups are heterogeneous and their English level is ranging from an A2+ to a B1, whereas the third group is claimed to gather the students with a higher level of English who, at the end of Batxillerat, will be ready to take the B2 English language test.

To find out how much cooperative work is carried out in the English class, an interview in the form of a survey was sent to two of the three English teachers in Batxillerat (See Annex 1). The first teacher to answer teaches one of the heterogeneous groups, whereas the second teacher is in charge of the group with the higher level of English. As it could be observed in the survey, they showed different class dynamics regarding group work. When asked about the frequency of group work, the first teacher

claimed that they work cooperatively in every lesson, whereas the second teacher makes her students work in groups in less than half of the lessons (See Figure 1). In addition, the first teacher commented that they do all

kinds of tasks in groups, unlike the second teacher, who claimed that the students are only asked to perform writing tasks, oral tasks and bigger projects (See Figure 2). Regarding group formation, the first teacher works with groups of varying sizes, from couples to groups of four, and the criteria to form groups varies, whereas the second teacher always works with groups of four students and they are free to group themselves.

Moreover, in the question about how students are assessed when working in groups, the first teacher answered that they are assessed as a group, whereas the second teacher evaluates them both individually and as a group.

In the survey, the teachers were also asked about the students' attitude and behaviour during group work (See Figure 3). They both said that students tend to show

1. How often do 1st of Batxillerat students work in groups during your English lessons? For example, out of 10 lessons, in how many do they have to work in groups?

2 responses

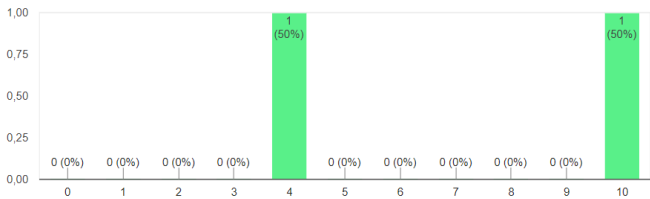


Figure 1. Frequency of group work in 1st of Batxillerat English lessons

3.3. What kind of tasks are they usually asked to perform?

2 responses

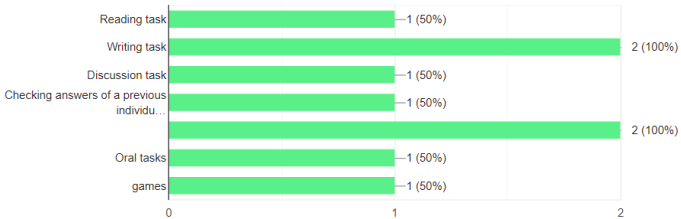


Figure 2. Tasks performed during group work

2. When students are asked to work in groups, what is their reaction?

2 responses

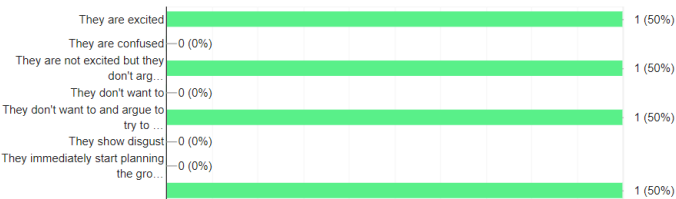


Figure 3. Students' attitude towards group work

reluctance at first, showing discouragement and even trying to change the teacher's plans. On the other hand, in occasions they are excited to work together. However the case, they performed the tasks correctly and they usually finished on time.

Finally, both teachers agreed on the fact that cooperative work in the classroom is not usually viewed as part of the school culture, which might be the reason why students feel reluctant to cooperate with their peers. This reluctance is most probably increased by the fact that they are studying Batxillerat, an educational stage based on competition. Nevertheless, both teachers mentioned that cooperative learning is enriching, that it fosters creativity and cooperation and that it prepares students for real life situations (See Figure 4). As a final piece of advice, the first teacher commented that considering the students' opinions and suggestions is important when making them work cooperatively.

5.1. Why/Why not?

2 responses

Because good learning takes place when doing meaningful cooperative tasks. They can learn and help each other. It fosters creativity and cooperation

I think collaborative work is enriching and prepares students for real life situations.

Figure 4. Answers to why cooperative learning is important for 1st of Batxillerat students

2.3. Starting point

We are presented with three 1st of Batxillerat groups of twenty students with varying English levels. Their previous experience with cooperative work also varies since they come from different high schools of the neighbourhood. Their attitude towards group work is changeable as well, depending on their experience and on their personal preferences and beliefs. Whereas some students tend to be ready and eager to working cooperatively, others might be reluctant and try to change the teacher's plans. On the other hand, what they all have in common is the fact that they are in an educational phase which promotes competitiveness against peers and, therefore, stimulates individualism.

3. Action plan

In the following sections, the totality of the innovation project will be presented, contextualized and elaborated. To do so, first and foremost the goals will be determined and explained further. Following that, the rationale, gathered from literature on the subject, will help contextualize and situate the goals within the project. In the rationale, three main topics will be addressed: collective scaffolding, cooperative learning and the keys to improving collective scaffolding, according to literature. Subsequently, the teaching unit structure and the annual plan will be presented in order to acquire a general overview of the year-long project, followed by the listing of the materials and resources needed and the connections of the project to the Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat. After that comes a detailed description of the recurring structures that can be found in the innovation project and which are part of the aforementioned annual plan and teaching units. As a conclusion to the section, the possible problems will be addressed, and some possible solutions will be suggested.

3.1. Goals

Although many Batxillerat teachers would agree that working cooperatively in meaningful and relevant tasks boosts students' learning and creativity, as well as fostering mutual helpfulness and motivation, cooperative tasks are not carried out often in Batxillerat's classes. Probably due to the fact that Batxillerat is an educational stage devoted to getting ready for Selectivitat, the university entrance exams which enhance competitiveness among peers, students in this level of non-compulsory education are usually compelled to working individually.

The main goal of this innovation project is to improve 1st of Batxillerat students' collective scaffolding skills by means of working on cooperative tasks in the English classroom during the entirety of a school year. A second goal is to promote joint effort and solidarity in the classroom, and to leave competitiveness against peers behind. By working cooperatively, the students will hopefully realize that mutual helpfulness and teamwork are beneficial for everyone to reach their academic achievements and that they can all succeed by working together. The third and final goal is to improve 1st of

Batxillerat students' overall English level: their writing, reading, listening, speaking and interactional skills.

3.2. Rationale

3.2.2. What is collective scaffolding?

To explain collective scaffolding, we need to start by defining the word 'scaffolding' on its own. The literal definition offered by the Collins Dictionary online is that "scaffolding consists of poles and boards made into a temporary framework that is used by workers when they are painting, repairing or building high parts of a building, usually outside". If we transport this literal meaning of scaffolding into the setting of a learning environment, Gibbons (2015) says that "scaffolding is (...) the temporary assistance by which a teacher helps a learner know how to do something so that the learner will later be able to complete a similar task alone" (p. 16). Thus, when talking about scaffolding, we understand the teacher as a support for the students to perform a task so that they know how to do it on their own in the future. That is, with scaffolding, both the teacher and the learner's role in the classroom are active.

According to Vygotsky's line of thinking and his zone of proximal development (ZPD), as human beings, we are capable of acquiring and using language. However, how we use and adapt our language depends on our social context and on what we have experienced through language. Language learning is, therefore, a social act because we need to interact with other individuals to acquire and use language. At the same time, Gibbons (2015) tells us that "language development involves a continuing process of meaning making" (p. 9), that is, we learn language through agreeing on meaning with the individuals surrounding us. As said by Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh (2017) "learning (...) entails dialogue, discussion and debate as learners collectively and actively construct their own understandings in and through interactions with others who may be more experienced" (p. 5). It becomes clear that, for students to really learn, we cannot stick to the traditional teaching methods in which the teacher gives a lesson and learners write down notes in silence. Teachers of the 21st century need to provide their students with opportunities to discuss and debate; basically, to have an active role in their learning process working collectively.

Therefore, the concept of scaffolding is highly related to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), which he defines as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Therefore, according to Vygotsky's theories, this support called scaffolding can be provided by either the teacher, in the form of aid during a lesson, or by the students themselves, in the form of mutual peer support during pair or group work.

But how do we get our students to perform collective scaffolding? Donato (1994) claims that collaborative work provides opportunities for scaffolding among students, and that it is likely that said collective scaffolding results in the individual learner's linguistic development. Other researchers support these statements, such as Slavin (2011), who adds that working cooperatively increases student achievement not only in language environments, but in other school subjects as well, and Jacobs & Hall (2002) who remark that collective scaffolding "(...) encourages mutual helpfulness and active participation of all members" (p. 52).

3.2.2. What makes cooperative learning work?

In the field of education, "cooperative learning methods (...) are known to substantially improve student achievement in most subjects and grade levels" (Slavin, 2011, p. 1). There are many psychological and pedagogical factors that affect students' performance and achievement during well-structured group work. Many researchers have come to the conclusion that "cooperative learning encourages mutual helpfulness and active participation of all members" (Jacobs & Hall, 2002, p. 52) and, done well, it also increases student self-esteem, a more varied speech, better relationships among peers and it creates an overall more relaxed atmosphere (Liang, Mohan & Early, 1998). Slavin (2011) explains the main reasons for the high levels of achievement during cooperative learning. He suggests four main theories, which he calls motivationalist, social cohesion, cognitive-developmental and cognitive-elaboration.

According to Slavin (2011), the motivationalist theory holds that what triggers cooperative behaviour is motivation, which is also the main reason of success. Since the

goals of a group that has to work cooperatively are shared, “group members must both help their groupmates to do whatever enables the group to succeed, and, perhaps even more importantly, to encourage their groupmates to exert maximum efforts” (Slavin, 2011:6). Basically, motivation raises from the willingness of each of the individual team members to succeed.

The perspective of social cohesion, as stated by Slavin (2011), claims that students, when working together, support each other because they care about the group. So, in contrast with the motivationalist theorists who claim that motivation in the group comes from each of the member’s individual eagerness, social cohesion theorists defend that what makes students engage and eventually succeed during group work is that they identify within the group, as they are dependent on one another. According to social cohesion theorists, group cohesion and the feeling of belonging are key to the students developing collective scaffolding skills.

The cognitive-developmental perspective defends that student achievement during group work has nothing to do with motivation or group cohesion, but rather with the way information is processed. Going back to Vygotsky’s theory of social development, students of the same age learn during collaborative tasks because they process information in a similar way, and they find themselves capable of understanding their peers’ thought process and applying it themselves (Slavin, 2011).

Finally, Slavin (2011) explains that, according to the cognitive-elaboration theory, for information to be remembered, students need to participate actively in the rearrangement, reconstruction or elaboration of said information or learning material. In other words, according to this perspective, students need to have an active role in their learning process in order to acquire information and knowledge better.

Although all these theories stand alone, they are clearly intertwined. Moreover, there is one element that has not been mentioned in these four perspectives explained by Slavin (2011), and that is the fact that, during cooperative work, students get the chance to have some control and power over their learning and interaction; “in most classrooms only in peer-interaction do learners have the chance to exert control over certain interactional features usually in the teacher’s hands, such as interrupting, acknowledging

or challenging a contribution, or moving the conversation forward” (Escobar Urmeneta & Walsh, 2017, p. 13).

3.2.3. The keys to improving our students’ collective scaffolding skills

When introducing cooperative group work with the goal of improving students’ collective scaffolding skills in the classroom, there are many elements to take into account. The key elements can be divided into the following groups: motivation, group building, tasks or activities and assessment.

Starting with motivation, it is essential for teachers to find a way to engage their students into working collaboratively. Jacobs and Hall (2002) advise teachers to reflect on whether we want to promote intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when an activity or a task is done because it is personally rewarding and interesting, whereas extrinsic motivation takes place when an activity or a task is done because an external reward is expected, or to avoid a negative outcome, such as punishment (Sansone & Harackiewicz). Regarding motivation, we have two types of structures: competitive structures and cooperative structures (Kagan, 1989). Contrary to what it might seem, it is not true that extrinsic motivation and competitive structures are bad. Kagan (1989) explains that extrinsic motivation and competitive structures work well when done correctly, for instance, competitive tasks that create negative interdependence and set single students against each other are to be avoided, whereas competitive tasks that involve teamwork and healthy competitiveness can be used in a classroom. However, repeated competition and rewards should be avoided, since students would get used to working only when there is something they will get in exchange.

The second key element is group building. When talking about the formation of groups, there are different components that have to be considered: the size of the group, how to form groups and how long groups should last.

First, to decide on the size of the groups, it is important to remember that “the smaller the group, the more each member talks and the less chance there is that someone will be left out” (Jacobs & Hall, 2002, p. 53). However, bigger groups are more suitable for doing big tasks or projects, since there will be an increased variety of people and, hence, of personalities and skills. Jacobs and Hall (2002) recommend that, when starting,

it is advisable to form groups of two or three, whereas Kagan (1992) suggests groups of four.

The second, and probably the most important element, is how to decide on which students will work together. It seems logical that “teacher-selected groups work best, at least until students become proficient at collaboration” (Jacobs & Hall, 2002:54). Jacobs and Hall (2002) also explain that if the teacher wants to have groups with mixed levels and personalities, one should consider language proficiency, first language, gender, race and diligence. One technique to create groups easily is to divide students into three or four (depending on the desired size of the group) groups of language proficiency, and then sort them making sure to mix the rest of the elements. Once students become used to working and doing scaffolding together, they might be able to group themselves.

Finally, the duration of a group is something that has to be thought through as well. Groups cannot be created and dismantled in a single lesson or unit, but they also should not last for the whole year. The members in a group should be given enough time to get comfortable working with each other and to create their own group dynamics (Jacobs & Hall, 2002). And since they will have become close and learned from each other, Jacobs and Hall (2002) recommend carrying out a closure activity when the groups change, to thank each other for the work well done and to do a recap of what has been learned. Furthermore, it should also be considered that some students might not get along, and therefore there might be groups that do not work. Although a group might not work and the teacher might be tempted to dismantle it, the students should learn that they have to be able to work with anyone (Jacobs & Hall, 2002). As mentioned in section 2.1., the success or failure of group work is mostly determined by the cohesiveness of the group. In order to enhance group cohesion, it is important to create interdependence among the members. The idea is that “if students value their groupmates (...) and are dependent on one another, they are likely to encourage and help one another to succeed” (Slavin, 2011: 10-11). Therefore, it is apparent that cohesiveness-building and team building activities are key to successful collective scaffolding.

The third element of successful group work that will develop our student’s collective scaffolding skills is the type of tasks or activities chosen. We should first make a distinction between an activity and a structure because they have different implications in a classroom. Whereas activities have a determined objective and are related to specific

content of a teaching unit, structures are the skeleton, the mechanics in which an activity works and can, therefore, be used with different material from different teaching units in any part of a lesson plan, and they can even be repeated (Kagan, 1989). So, structures are content free, whereas activities are not. Activities, however, do have a structure. For this reason, as teachers, we have to put special attention on the structures, which then can be applied using different content. Students tend to get used to working according to the structures, and each structure is best for reaching a certain objective, so it is useful to have a set of structures that are repeated periodically at hand (Kagan, 1989). In order to develop collective scaffolding skills, these structures should give room to elaborate explanation and negotiation of meaning instead of simply offering fixed answers (Webb, 1985). Moreover, a didactic sequence to develop collective scaffolding should include a variety of tasks: cooperative tasks, competitive tasks and even some tasks that allow students to work alone, so that they can see the difference between working as part of a team and working on their own.

The fourth and final key element is assessment. Assessment can be formative or summative. In formative assessment, also called for learning, the goal of the activities performed during a lesson is to provide feedback, to make sure something has been learned and to increase motivation among students. On the other hand, in summative assessment, also called assessment of learning, final products are judged based on whether they have been completed, meet the requirements and demonstrate improvement (Gardner, 2012). Assessment can also imply individual or group accountability. In individual accountability, each student is evaluated according to their solo performance, whether in group accountability, the group is evaluated as a whole. In many classes, students get a group mark and also an individual mark. For students to understand the importance of teamwork, however, some experts suggest that we “never grade or evaluate students on their individual contributions to the group product” (Cohen, 1986:70).

3.3. The teaching units

This innovation project consists of eight teaching units of three- or four-weeks duration each depending on the complexity of the topic and the work required to complete the final product. The three-week-long teaching units consist of nine one-hour lessons, whereas the four-week-long teaching units comprise twelve one-hour lessons (See section 3.4. and Annex 3 for the Annual plan).

Each teaching unit has its topic, hopefully of interest to the students, such as Halloween horror stories, love and relationships in today's world, fast fashion and sustainability and staying safe on the internet, to name a few. In addition, each teaching unit puts special focus on a specific language dimension, that is on reading, writing, listening, or speaking. The interactional competence is included equally throughout all the teaching units regardless of their focus because interaction is an inherent condition when aspiring to foster collective scaffolding by means of working cooperatively. Finally, each teaching unit has a final product to be elaborated by the students in groups, and from which they will be assessed for their English marks (see section 4.1.2.).

As it can be seen in the lesson plan of the teaching unit that has been elaborated as an example (See Annex 2), for units that are twelve lessons long, the first week is devoted to the students receiving input. The second and third weeks are dedicated to receiving input as well, but also to output, to producing language related to the final product. Finally, the fourth week is employed to fully working on the final product and presenting it. The example is a teaching unit about Halloween in which the students will have to write horror stories in groups. Therefore, during the first week, they receive information about Halloween; on the second and third weeks, they read horror stories, start practicing their writing and do activities to learn how to write descriptions and build characters; finally, during the last week, they write their own stories in groups. Additionally, almost all lessons start by activating the knowledge from the previous session, for example through a memory game to recall the vocabulary from a previous activity.

All the teaching units include some of the cooperative work structures (mentioned in section 3.4.) as they foster opportunities to increase the student's collective scaffolding. When applied, the structures are adapted to the topic and different every time. The goal is for the students to not feel bored nor notice a repetitiveness with the structures, but for them to be similar enough that the students will hopefully master cooperative work by means of naturally finding similarities and autoregulating themselves in groups.

3.4. Annual plan

This innovation project has been designed as a year-long plan to be implemented during the first year of Batxillerat. Throughout this school year, and during their English

lessons, the students will work collaboratively in most of their tasks and projects. During the course of nine months, the duration of a school year, the students will work on their reading, writing, listening, speaking and interaction skills through seven teaching units which are based on cooperative learning. Each unit has its unique content obligatory language and its own original activities and final product. However, they are all interconnected by the fact that there are a number of recurrent structures (See section 3.7.), ways to organize the classroom and the activity. Said structures have been designed by experts on the field of collective scaffolding and cooperative learning specifically to enhance these skills.

This project is to be implemented during the course of nine months, the length of a school year, in three groups of 1st of Batxillerat. Each group is formed by approximately 20 students, who come from the both branches of Batxillerat offered in the high school: the humanities and social sciences group, and the science and technology group. They have three one hour long English lessons per week. A typical school year consists of 37 teaching weeks, so the students have approximately 111 English lessons.

The annual plan for the innovation project is divided into three groups of teaching units focusing on different aspects of the language: it first starts by focusing on reading and writing, and as the school year goes by, it moves on to working on oral skills. These three groups fit into the traditional division of the school year into three terms: from September to December, from January to April and from April to June.

Each term starts with a number of sessions devoted to team building activities. Right at the beginning of the school year, two weeks, what is around 6 sessions, will be dedicated to getting to know each other, to creating a good classroom environment and to building group identity. Moreover, the students will be evaluated on their starting level of English and cooperative work skills in order to set a starting point to assess both their own progress and the effectiveness of the project (See sections 4.1 and 4.2). At the beginning of the second and third terms, only one week will be reserved for team building activities to form the cooperative groups of the next term.

In addition, each term ends with one or two sessions devoted to dismantling the groups that have been working together during the term. During these sessions, the students will be able to summarize and recap the work they have done, to share their

impressions and feelings, and to leave suggestions for the next term. Students will also fill in surveys that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the project, and they will have the opportunity to thank their teammates for the time spent cooperating.

An example of the summarized schematic overview of the annual plan, showing the first term, can be found below (to see the full overview, See Annex 3).

Unit name	Sessions and timing	Objectives	Final product	Dimensions of the Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat
Let's get to know each other! – Team building 1	2 weeks – 6 lessons (September 15 to October 2)	Getting to know each other Team building and group identity Determining English and cooperative learning skills	Team names and logos	Communicative dimension
Halloween is time for spooky stories	4 weeks – 12 lessons (October 5 to October 30)	Reading and writing cooperatively Writing spooky or mystery stories Learning about Halloween	Writing spooky or mystery Halloween stories in groups	Communicative dimension, Aesthetic and literary dimension
Have a nice meal!	3 weeks – 9 lessons (November 2 to November 20)	Reading and writing cooperatively Auto-regulating during cooperative learning Reading and writing instructive texts	Writing a recipe for an original dish in groups	Communicative dimension, Plurilingual and intercultural dimension
A Christmas Carol	4 weeks – 12 lessons (November 23 to December 18)	Reading and writing cooperatively Writing combining present, past and future tenses	Writing a renewed version of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens	Communicative dimension, Aesthetic and literary dimension
Recapping and thanking	1 or 2 lessons (Before Christmas break)	Dismantling the teams Summarizing the work done	A recap of the work done,	Communicative dimension, Research and

our teammates 1		Filling in surveys Sharing impressions, feelings and suggestions	and the things learned Surveys	processing of information dimension
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Table 1. Summarized schematic overview of the annual plan for the innovation project

A more detailed and extended version of this overview of the annual plan has also been designed and can be found below (to see the full extended overview, See Annex 4). It contains a more precise list of goals for each teaching unit, as well as the activities that will be carried out in it and the content obligatory language that will be used.

Title: Halloween is the time for spooky stories			
Duration: 4 weeks (October 5 - October 30) – 12 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Spooky stories Halloween traditions Final product writing spooky stories in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning how to read cooperatively - Learning how to write cooperatively - Learning how to write a spooky/mystery story - Learning how to write chronologically - Learning about Halloween 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Around the table - Jigsaw reading - Memory game - Murder mystery reading - Drawing dictation - Character discussion - Give one – take one - Freeze writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Halloween traditions - Fantastic creatures - Verbs in the past - Connectors to enrich a story

Table 2. Example of a teaching unit of the extended annual plan

3.5. Materials and resources

For the implementation of this project, the common materials and resources generally used in English lessons will be needed. As it has been previously mentioned, the project will be implemented in three 1st of Batxillerat groups of twenty students. Therefore, three classrooms with enough space, chairs and desks to accommodate twenty students will be needed, as well as three teachers-researchers, as all the groups have

English lesson during the same class period. Additionally, each classroom should have a projector or a screen, and the students should have access to a computer room or to using laptops, since some of the final products might require the use of technology. Finally, no English textbook is required, as the texts for reading comprehension and other needed printed copies will be provided by the teacher when necessary, as well as blank papers for activities. The only material that will need to be provided by the students themselves is pens and pencils.

3.6. Connections to the Catalan Curriculum

The Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat – Decret 142/2008 – DOGC núm. 5183, for the area of languages in general, and for the area of foreign languages in particular, offers a set of guidelines about how the competences and the contents for this educational stage should be addressed in the language class. These recommendations have been taken into account in the design of this innovation project, and it has been ensured that the 1st of Batxillerat students who participate in it will be performing tasks that comply with the requirements established in the Curriculum.

The Curriculum presents a set of contents that are approached preferably on the first or on the second year of Batxillerat and which present a progressive increase of difficulty. These contents are divided into four dimensions: the communicative dimension, the aesthetic and literary dimension, the plurilingual and intercultural dimension and the research and processing of information dimension. The foreign language subject is mainly structured around the communicative dimension, since the main goal is for the students to develop their overall communicative capacities and to become competent communicators as well as receivers.

The Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat only does one explicit mention in relation to group interaction, by saying that “the interaction between a learner and an expert or among learners is the objective and the essential means to learning languages” (Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat, 2008, p. 9). Additionally, the Curriculum makes few references to group presentations and projects, but it does not specify how it should be done. Therefore, following the guidelines of the Curriculum, an effort has been made to ensure that the students of 1st of Batxillerat who participate in this project have plenty of

opportunities to develop their communicative competence. This has been done by providing enough chances for them to interact in heterogeneous groups, use English in class routinely, participate actively and to learn how to comprehend and produce discourses and texts of varying typologies, as well as learning to value language and different cultural expressions, reflect on the use of language and to acknowledge their own learning experiences and processes.

3.7. Recurring structures

This innovation project revolves around six recurring structures. These structures can be found across the entirety of the annual plan (see Annexes 3 and 4). Each teaching unit includes and works with the most suitable structures according to its objectives and final product. The students will be performing isomorphic tasks throughout the school year, with the goal of improving their collective scaffolding skills by means of becoming familiar with the structures. The goal is for the students to get used to the structures and, hence, to working cooperatively. The six recurring structures are:

- Jigsaw reading
- Character discussion
- Around the table
- Give one – take one
- Drawing dictation
- Numbered Heads Together

These six structures have different objectives, but they have in common the fact that they all involve interdependence and they require the students to cooperate. Each one will be used repeatedly throughout the project and adapted to the content of each specific teaching unit in the annual plan. Some structures can be modified in different ways and they can be made more challenging as the students get used to working with them.

3.7.1. Jigsaw reading

Also referred to as ‘jigsaw puzzle’ and ‘groups of experts’, the jigsaw reading is a good structure for processing large quantities of text or information, or when there is a

necessity to carry out different tasks that are part of one single process. It is a known cooperative structure originally designed by Aronson (1978), which is also included and elaborated in Kagan's works (2006).

In Aronson's jigsaw structure, students in pre-established groups are set to work in different bits of information in what could be referred to as 'groups of experts', which are students from other groups. In other words, each member of the group joins a new group with other members of the class and work together on their bit of text, piece of information or task. Therefore, they become the group of experts on that topic. Afterwards, each student returns to their original group, where they have to explain the text they have read to their teammates. With this structure, every member is essential for the success of the whole team, which creates interdependence. Moreover, each student has the responsibility to work well and understand their piece of information for the group to achieve its goals.

In the teaching unit that has been designed and developed as an example (See Annex 2), which revolves around the topic of Halloween, the students will have to read texts about how Halloween is celebrated around the world (See Annex 5). Each student will have to explain the tradition they have read to the rest of their teammates, and the group task will be to make a comparison of similarities and differences about how Halloween is celebrated in different parts of the world.

This structure can be adapted in different ways. Each group of experts can work in different texts, but they can also work with the same text but in different tasks, or in different paragraphs of the same text. Slavin (2011) calls this variation Jigsaw II, in which all students have to read the same text, but each member of the group has to become an expert in one aspect of it. Then, all team members take individual quizzes, each on their area of expertise, and they get a score as a group.

3.7.2. Character discussion

This is a task inspired by The Lifeboat Game by *The Student Room* (2017). In the original game, the players have to choose, among fifteen characters who are in a lifeboat after a boat accident, which nine people will survive, since the lifeboat can only hold nine of them. The players are provided with descriptions for every character and they have to

discuss and agree on who the survivors will be. It is a sociology and ethics exercise which fosters debate and requires communication and argumentative skills.

However, in this innovation project the students will not be faced with an ethical dilemma. They will have to choose their characters to perform a specific task (See Annex 6). As it can be seen in Figure 5, students will be given ten character cards which will contain the name of the character, their age, a tool they have and a strength and a weakness, and they will have to give their opinion, take turns to talk, express agreement and disagreement, improvise and, most importantly, understand their peers and make themselves understood.



Figure 5. Example of a character for the Character discussion activity

In the teaching unit set as an example (see section 3.5.), which revolves around Halloween and scary stories, the students have to decide on the most suitable characters to go on a mission into a haunted house based on their overall qualities. This specific activity is designed to be a starter for character building when writing short stories.

3.7.3. Around the table

In this structure by Kagan (2006), each group of students only has one sheet of paper and one pen or pencil on the table for them to use. The teacher sets a task which can have a variety of answers. Then, the students have to take turns to write their answers on the sheet of paper and pass it on to the next member of the group. This is a good technique for brainstorming, making lists of items and activating the students' previous knowledge on a topic.

Around the table is a dynamic structure that ensures that all members of the team contribute to the task and it encourages the students to think fast and support their peers for the sheet of paper to keep moving. It requires group coordination and good communication, which is something essential when trying to increase the levels of collective scaffolding in a classroom. It also boosts reflective and critical thinking.

This structure can be slightly modified depending on the goals and the students' needs. For example, if the teams find it hard to coordinate themselves and take turns, Around the table can be altered by assigning each student a pen or a pencil of a different colour, and the teacher indicating which colour can write on the sheet of paper first. Another variation, which will require the students to think faster and acquire better coordination skills, is setting a time limit for the students to write. The teacher could, for example, say "Try how many connectors you can list in one minute".

An extended version of this structure, referred to as 'Freeze writing' (Cunningham, n.d.) would be making the sheets of paper rotate throughout the whole class, from group to group, in order to have a final product in which the whole class has collaborated. This structure can be done by making the groups write a story, which usually ends with funny texts that are enjoyable to read in the class together.

3.7.4. Give one – take one

This is a structure, also described by Kagan (2006), which is usually used after another a structure related to brainstorming, or after any activity or exercise that involves more than one possible answer. On a first instance, each team brainstorms ideas or words, or performs an exercise, and decide on the best ideas, which they write on the first column of a grid with two columns: one for items they can give and another one for items they receive from other groups. Once the students have filled their "to give" grid, they move around the classroom in an organized way, swapping information with other teams. The rule is that everyone has to give one item and receive one item. After the giving and taking is over, the members of each group put their findings in common and create a complete list.

This structure does not have any variations since it is an addition to a previous brainstorming task. However, some pieces of advice are setting time limits for the give and take interactions to take place and making the students move in a pre-established order (for example, having half of the class stand in a circle, and the other half of the class turning around clockwise). Indeed, these suggestions should only be applied if necessary, or as an initial measure if the students are not used to working as a whole class.

Additionally, a good idea is to have the students carry a notebook or another hard surface, so that they can write while standing up.

Give one – take one is a structure that promotes the sharing of knowledge among teams, which shows the students that they do not only belong to a small group of three or four students, but that they are also part of a bigger collective. It is, therefore, a good structure for team building. It also fosters communicative and social skills, as well as mutual helpfulness.

3.7.5. Drawing dictation

The Drawing dictation structure, also known as ‘dictation drawing’ or ‘picture drawing’, is a cooperative structure that requires good listening and descriptive skills (Grover, 1996). This is a structure usually performed in pairs, in which one of the students has to dictate an image to their partner, who has to draw as they are told (Lawtie, 2017). However, for this innovation project, this structure will be adapted for it to be performed in groups of three or four students.

For this structure, students in groups of three or four decide on one of the members to be the one to describe the picture. Ideally, the picture will be projected on the screen in the classroom, and the students who have to draw will have their backs to the screen, so that they do not see the picture. The rest of the members have to pick a pencil and a sheet of paper and follow the instructions given by the student who is dictating, without looking at their peers’ drawings. Those students who have to draw are allowed to make questions regarding the picture, but they can only be answered by ‘yes’ or ‘no’. At the end of the activity, students compare their drawings to each other’s, and to the original picture on the screen, and the turns change.

This structure can be adapted in different ways depending on the objectives. For example, in order to promote group coordination, instead of having one student dictate and the rest of the team draw, it can be done the other way around: only one student will draw and the rest will have to describe the picture. Since they all have to dictate, they will have to organize themselves and take turns. Additionally, this activity can be extended by making the students compare have an oral discussion in which they have to point out the differences between the drawing and the original and agreeing on why some of the

descriptions worked better than others. Moreover, the students can even write the description of the picture afterwards, in order to practice cooperative writing.

3.7.6. Numbered heads together

Numbered heads together is a cooperative structure by Kagan, also explained by Jacobs and Hall (2002), in which the members of each group have to think together to find answers to questions posed by the teacher. The teacher asks a question or sets a small task, and the members of the group put their “heads together” to think of an answer. Each student in the group is assigned a number (ideally, all groups have the same number of members) and the teacher will call a number to answer the question. The student whose number has been called is in charge of answering the question in representation of the group.

This cooperative learning structure promotes collective thinking and, therefore, collective scaffolding, since students have to think together and come up with an answer for the whole group. In addition, all group members have to be ready to answer if the teacher calls their number. Consequently, each team has to discuss and agree on an answer, which fosters group discussion and develops communicative and social skills, as well as critical thinking and problem solving. Moreover, because there is one student who represents the group by giving an answer, this structure pushes the students to take responsibility for their teammates which, in turn, grows the feeling of group membership.

This structure can be used with many tasks that require giving answers. One way for making it more entertaining and interesting for the students is turning it into a quiz show. That is, if the group is prepared to welcome healthy competition into the classroom.

3.8. Expected difficulties and solutions

Many difficulties can arise when making students work cooperatively. Therefore, being prepared and planning the possible difficulties ahead will help the teachers find solutions faster. Problems can occur in many situations in the classroom. Here, they are divided into three categories: difficulties related to classroom management, difficulties related to working in groups and difficulties related to assessment.

Traditional classroom dynamics change when doing cooperative work, so teachers might find it hard to get the students' attention and to control the noise level. Jacobs and Hall (2002) suggest some solutions regarding noise levels in the classroom, for instance having one student in each group with the role of "noise monitor", having a traffic light system to mark the appropriate level of noise, or even making the students work close together so that they do not have to speak as loud. They also have suggestions on how to get the student's attention, for example having a specific signal, such as the teacher raising their hand, or ringing a bell or a whistle. Moreover, another issue regarding class management that can occur when working cooperatively is what to do when a group finishes earlier than the rest. Jacobs and Hall (2002) make various recommendations in these situations, for example, having the early finishers compare their work to that of other groups', or lend a hand to other teams. Another option is having an extra activity related to the task.

Difficulties can also arise from the simple act of working in groups. There might be students who do not want to cooperate, group members might not get along well, and there might be some students who are frequently absent. When there are students who do not want to cooperate or who do not get along, Jacobs and Hall (2002) suggest discussing the advantages of group work and making them understand that interacting with others is a language learning strategy. They also recommend including some games to make students look forward to working together, as well as making tasks that cannot be done unless students cooperate. Another option is assigning roles to each member of the group so that they become aware that they need each other. In addition, assigning roles improves coordination, which will help avoid the "Frankenstein effect" when working with bigger projects. Finally, dealing with absenteeism is complicated regardless of the type of lesson that is being implemented. If a student is frequently absent, Jacobs and Hall (2002) recommend assigning them as extra members of a group, and having each group be responsible for keeping the missing member updated. They also claim that the responsibility of being part of a group may boost their attendance rate.

Another area in which disagreement with the students can arise is assessment. Cohen (1986) recommends to never assess students on their individual performance during group projects. However, students may disagree, if they see that someone in the group is not doing their part of the work, or if someone is doing extra work. To make workload equal, a solution is assigning roles and creating interdependence, as well as

introducing self- and peer-assessment to ensure that every student is doing their part. In this innovation project, the students will be assessed both on their individual performance and on their performance within the group (See section 4.2.). Additionally, they will have the opportunity to do self- and peer-assessment, so any disagreement will be solved.

4. Assessment

The assessment for this innovation project is divided into two separate sets, as it has two different purposes. The first set is the assessment of the innovation project, which consists in evaluating the effectiveness of the implementation of the series of cooperative structures in the English classroom. The second set is the assessment for the students, the assessment within the innovation project by which the students get their English grades for the course.

4.1. Assessment of the innovation project

During the implementation of the innovation project to improve 1st of Batxillerat students' collective scaffolding skills, data will have to be gathered to evaluate its effectiveness. Said effectiveness will be determined by the evolution of the student's level of English and cooperative learning skills. This data will be gathered throughout the whole implementation, which lasts the entirety of the school year. The data can be divided into three groups, according to the moment of the implementation in which it has been collected.

In the first instance, data will be gathered before starting the implementation of the innovation project. The goal of this data is to determine the initial level of the students' knowledge and cooperative working skills. In this initial stage, the focus will be on determining the students' level of written and spoken English as well as on discovering the students' previous experience when working cooperatively. It will also be important to find out their personal opinions, perceptions and preconceptions about group work and cooperative tasks. 1st of Batxillerat students in this educational centre come from different high schools in the area, so their previous experience might vary.

This first set of data will be collected through three methods. The first one will be a short English written exam in which the students will be asked to write a short story (See Annex 7). They will be offered various topics for writing their short story so that they have broader options, because what matters is not the topic but the written exercise (See Figure 6). From this small test we will be able to determine the general language level of each student and of the group

Initial written test for the assessment of the innovation project on collective scaffolding

Write a short story or an anecdote of a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 150 words on one of the three following topics:

- A summer adventure
- A dream come true
- The happiest moment of your life

Figure 6. Sample of the initial English test

in general, as well as noting their strengths and their weaknesses when writing in English (For the assessment rubric on short stories, see Annex 8). The marks obtained from said initial test will be registered in an Excel document, which will be filled during the school year with the results from other tests and tasks, in order to easily see how the progression went. The second method for collecting data before the implementation will be the teacher's observation of the students' oral English skills during the first two weeks of the school year, which will be devoted to team building interactional activities (see section 3.4.). The teacher will note down their observations in a class journal. Finally, the students' previous experience and perceptions when working collaboratively will be gathered through a survey (See Annex 9).

The second set of data will be gathered throughout the implementation of the project. The focus will be on the different key elements of collaborative work as well as on the progress of the students' academic results from both language tests and the different projects. To gather this information, four different methods will be used. First, the students will have to fill several surveys throughout the school year, one at the end of every term, in which they will have to answer questions regarding their perception on their levels of motivation, the peer support within the group and among groups, and their participation and self-confidence when intervening in the English lesson (See Annex 10). This data will be contrasted with the teacher's perception through observation, which will be noted in a class journal. Moreover, some interviews with the students will be carried out at different points during the school year to keep track of the evolution of the students' perceptions (See Annex 11). Since the students in 1st of Batxillerat tend to be very

opinionated, it could be a good moment for them to give suggestions on how the project could be improved.

The final set of data, gathered after the completion of the project, will consist of a final survey regarding the aspects mentioned above, which are personal and group motivation, peer help and participation and self-confidence during the lesson (See annex 12f). At the end of the project, the students will be asked to take an isomorphic written test to the one taken at the beginning of the year, in which they will have to write a short story (See Annex 7). The sets of texts, initial and final, will be compared to see how much the level of the students' written English has risen. Finally, all the academic results obtained throughout the year, both individual and as a group, will be compared and analysed, hoping to see some positive evolution.

4.2. Assessment of and for the students

During the implementation of this innovation project, the students will be assessed on their level of English and on their development of cooperative learning skills. Each student will be evaluated based on their individual performance as well as on their performance within a group. Because the participants' presumed individual improvement in their English language skills is a possible consequence of the implementation of the innovation project on collective scaffolding, the assessment tools used to evaluate the learners' progress are also used to study the effectiveness of the project.

The students' assessment will be continuous and with the goal of improving not only their collective scaffolding and cooperative learning skills, but also of helping them become aware of their learning progress. Their evolution regarding cooperative work throughout the project will not directly affect their marks for the English subject.

The students will be assessed both individually and as part of a group. For their individual assessment, three tools will be used, some of them are also part of the assessment plan for the innovation project. First, the students will have to take two small tests on writing a short story (See Annex 7) at the beginning of the project and at the conclusion of the project. This will indicate how much their English level has improved as a result of working cooperatively and doing collective scaffolding with their peers. It should be noted that, for the evolution of the students' writing skills because of the

implementation to be considered a success, most of the students should show a clear improvement of their written language competence. Second, the teacher will monitor each individual learner's evolution by carrying out a classroom journal. Each teaching unit, the teacher will have to choose 5 lessons to observe. In each lesson, the teacher will focus on one group to pay special attention to, and he or she will note down the behaviour related to cooperative work of each of the learners in the team. This will be done by taking four indicators into consideration: individual motivation, individual focus on the task (therefore, the lack of distractions), active participation in English (it is not expected for the teacher to count the number of interventions) and the quality of said interventions.

Finally, the students will be asked to answer a survey at the end of each term (See Annex 10) regarding their perceptions of their own work, effort and

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Overall, I felt comfortable working with my group.					
2.	Overall, I think my group worked well together, we coordinated well.					
3.	I had fun working with my group.					
4.	Overall, in my group, we got all the work done in time.					
5.	I helped my teammates whenever they needed my help.					
6.	My teammates helped me whenever I needed their help.					

Figure 7. Sample of the end of term survey

evolution. With the questions of this survey (See examples in Figure 7) the teachers and researchers will be able to see their learners' personal and primary perceptions, such as whether they enjoyed working together, whether or not they got the job done in time or other group dynamics, such as mutual helpfulness. Once they have first taken this survey, the students will hopefully learn what to focus on during the following group activities.

For the group assessment, two tools will be used. First of all, at the end of each teaching unit and after the presentation of the final project, each team will have to assess themselves by elaborating on the following four questions: 'Did we feel comfortable and motivated working together during this teaching unit?', 'Did we all participate equally?', 'Did we help each other?' and 'What could we do to improve our cooperative work?'. The second tool will be, similarly to what has been mentioned in the previous paragraph, the teacher's monitoring of the group work in the lessons dedicated to observation. The indicators will be group motivation, group focus on the task and the interaction among the members of the group.

5. Communication plan

A communication plan has been designed in order to offer information about the goals and the structure of the project to the parties that will be involved. The communication plan has been divided into two phases. The first communication plan is to be done before the implementation of the innovation project, used to provide information about the structure of the project and its goals and which ultimately searches for the approval of the involved parties. The second part of the communication plan is to be carried out at the conclusion of the innovation project to share the results and, if they have been positive, consider implementing it again the following year.

5.1. To the school's management team

Before starting to implement this innovation project to increase 1st of Batxillerat students' collective scaffolding skills, the headmaster of the high school and the rest of the management team, as well as the head of the department of languages must be notified. This will be done in a meeting, in which they will be informed of the different elements of the project: the objectives, the annual plan, the structures, the assessment plan and the resources needed. The management team will have the opportunity to ask questions and suggest improvements. Needless to say, the approval of the management team is essential for the implementation of this innovation project.

After the project, the collection of data gathered during the school year will be shared and explained to the management team. The data will hopefully prove that the implementation of this innovation project has benefited the 1st of Batxillerat students, both academically and collective scaffolding-wise. With this information, the high school's management team will have the opportunity to decide to extend this innovation project to be carried out during the following school year in the same group (which would then be the 2nd of Batxillerat group), and even to other levels.

5.2. To the students

The students are the participants of the project and those who will benefit from it. Therefore, they have to be informed at the beginning of the school year. On the first day

in which they have English class, the students of all the groups of 1st of Batxillerat will be presented with the project, which will hopefully increase their cooperative learning and collective scaffolding skills as the same time as improving their level of English. Additionally, they will be informed of the plan for the year, as well as how they are expected to work in the English classroom and how they are going to be assessed.

At the end of the innovation project, the students will be given an overview of the results of the project. This way, they will become conscious of all the work they have been doing and of their evolution throughout the school year. Additionally, they will have a final opportunity to share their opinions and make suggestions for the project if it were to be implemented again the following year.

5.3. To other teachers of the school

After the implementation of the innovation project has been completed, and in the possible situation that the project has obtained satisfactory results, other teachers of the school will be informed. A voluntary reunion will be organized, and all the teachers of the high school who are interested in the project may attend it. In this reunion, the project will be explained, and the results will be commented and analysed. In addition, suggestions will be made about how this project could be adapted and implemented in other levels and in other subjects, since collective scaffolding and cooperative work can be done in any school subject.

6. Conclusion and reflection

With the experience of designing this project and writing this master's dissertation, I have learned a fair number of things, many of which I never thought I would learn when I started working on my dissertation. I studied collective scaffolding and cooperative work thoroughly and created an innovation project accordingly, and came to some conclusions directly related to this topic as well as other conclusions on education related to the situation we have had to live in.

First, I have realized how complex it is to craft and design the implementation of an innovation project. I have learned all the elements that have to be considered, and that there are a lot of little pieces that have to come together in order to put an innovative action plan into effect. It takes research, time, effort and a lot of thought to be able to create an innovation project that works. Additionally, I personally think that another element needed to design an innovation project is a team, the help of other experts in the field of education. Coincidentally, this relates to the topic of my dissertation and the goals set for the project, which were to promote cooperative work, which has been proven to increase the quality of the outcome.

Second, I have increased my knowledge on the field of collective scaffolding and on the benefits of cooperative work. I have also learned extremely valuable information on the science behind the theories of cooperative work in a classroom and on the most productive structures to do so, as well as on the importance of mutual helpfulness, motivation, companionship and team building. I have equipped myself with structures and activities that will hopefully be put into practice when I start working as an English teacher with teenagers.

Third, and finally, I have come to a conclusion regarding education in this time we have had to live through. Often, our education system sets the students to work and learn individually (although, hopefully, the tendency is slowly shifting). And during the Covid-19 lockdown, the students have been obliged to work individually. They have had to study from home, do their classwork on their own and not physically interact with their classmates, which is the epitome of individual work. However, mutual helpfulness and camaraderie have naturally arisen when they were most needed. Students have been helping each other, despite not being able to meet, to do homework, projects, and even exams, when the opportunity has been presented to them. This would induce us to think that students naturally gather to work together and to help each other. So, my question is, why is the education system basing academic success on individuality? Should not the education system, as a rule, promote cooperative work and mutual helpfulness over individuality? After all, we are preparing our students to be competent adults in the 21st Century, and cooperation is the key to everyone's success.

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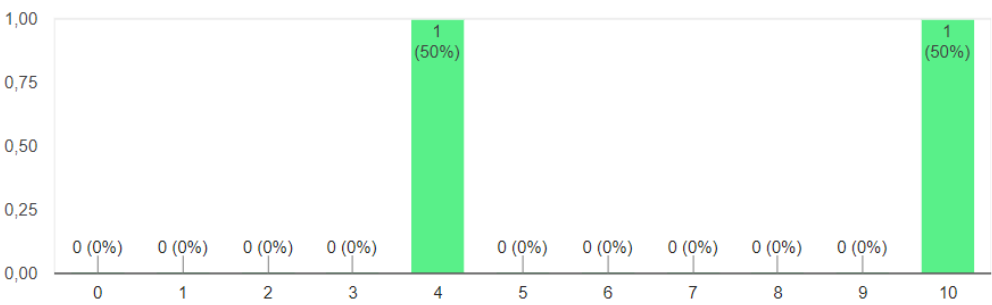
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8. Annexes

8.1. Annex 1: Survey to the English teachers of Batxillerat

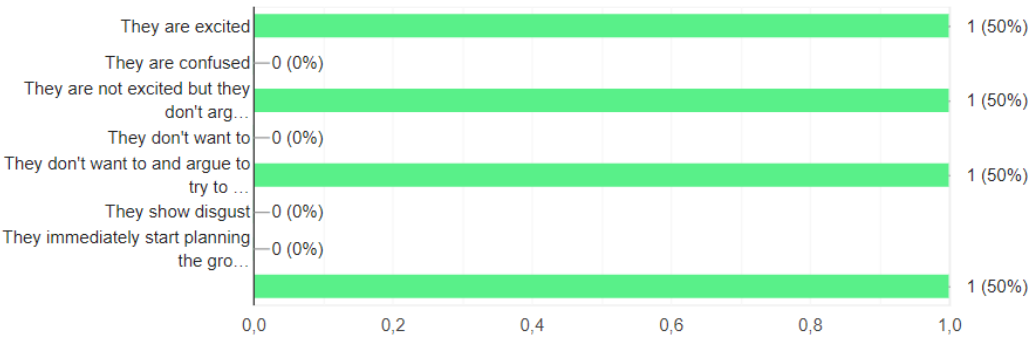
1. How often do 1st of Batxillerat students work in groups during your English lessons? For example, out of 10 lessons, in how many do they have to work in groups?

2 respostes



2. When students are asked to work in groups, what is their reaction?

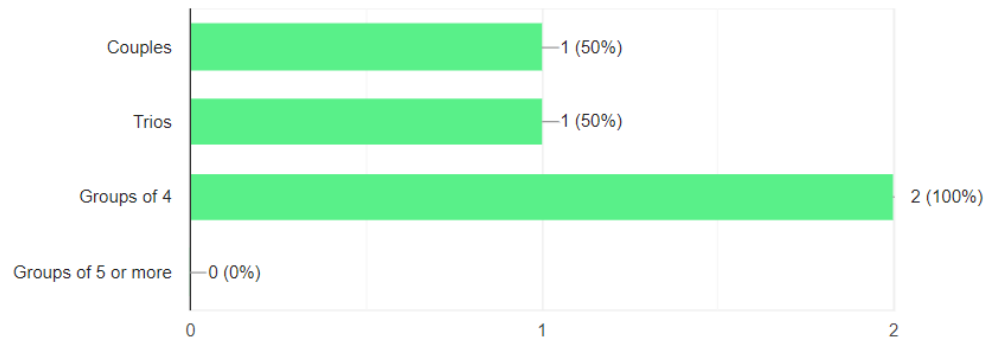
2 respostes



3. When your students do have to work or perform a task in groups...

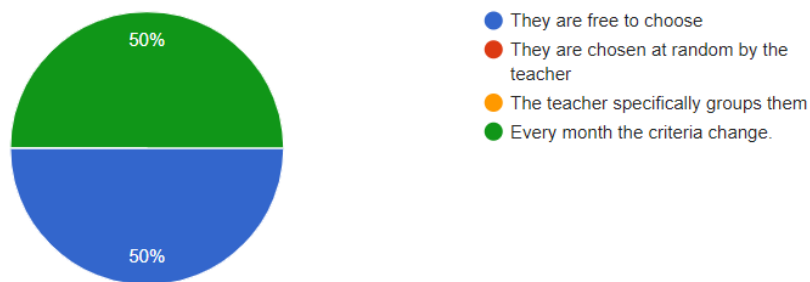
3.1. How big are the groups, usually?

2 responses



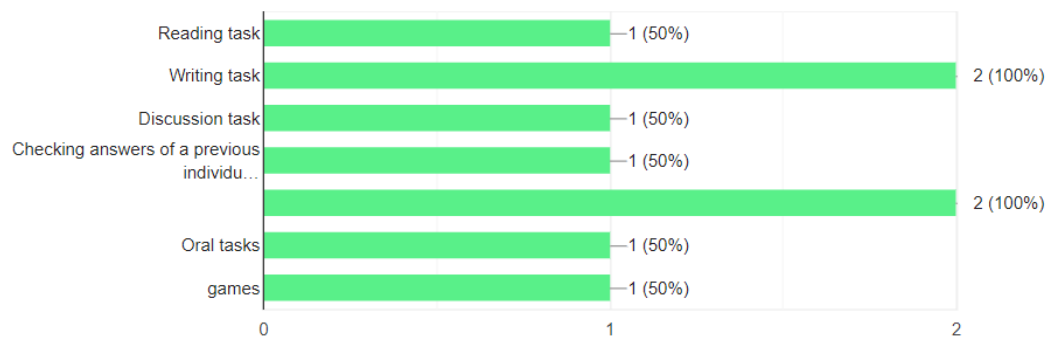
3.2. How are the groups chosen?

2 responses



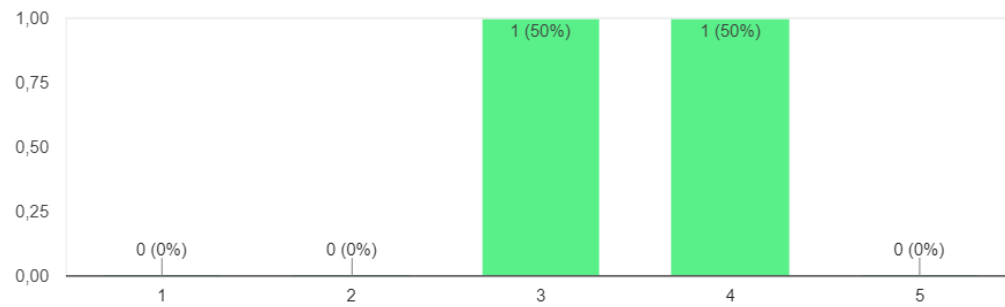
3.3. What kind of tasks are they usually asked to perform?

2 responses



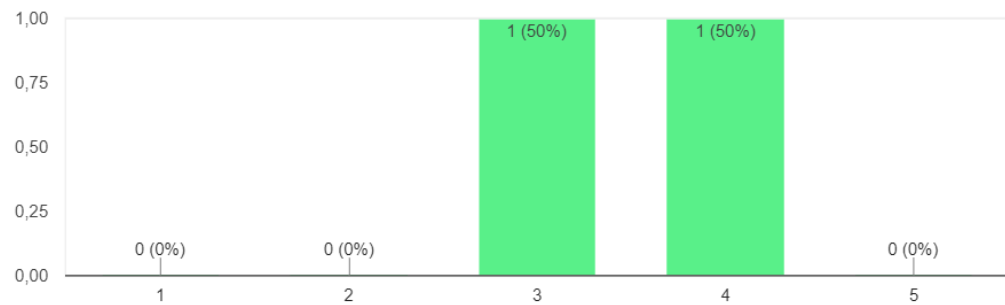
3.4. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do groups work in general?

2 respostas



3.5. On a scale of 1 to 5, do they get the work done in time?

2 respostas



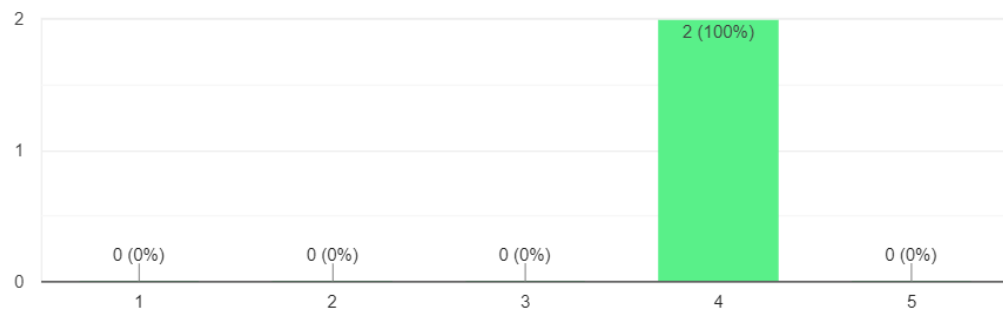
3.6. If you said they don't get the work done, why do you think that is?

1 resposta

Timing is affected by different factors.

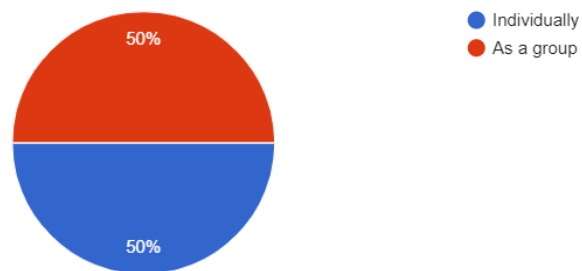
3.7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how good is the final product/result of the task that comes out of group work?

2 responses



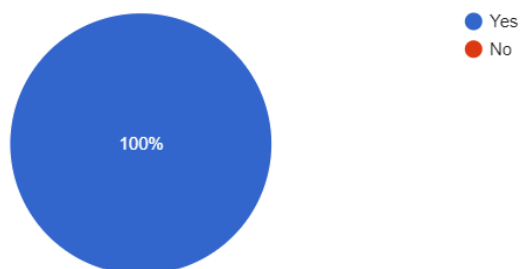
3.8. How are they assessed?

2 responses



4. Would you consider that 1st of Batxillerat students in this high school are good at working cooperatively?

2 responses



4.1. Why/why not?

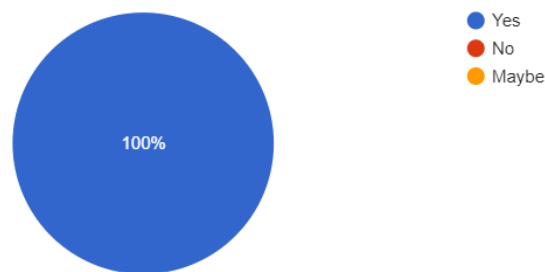
2 responses

They are assessed both individually and as a group. Cooperative work is not necessarily viewed as part of the school culture

I would have answered yes and no. Some students are not used to working collaboratively so they are more reluctant to do so.

5. Do you think it is important for 1st of Batxillerat students to learn how to work cooperatively, since many studies have shown that group work improves individual performance?

2 responses



5.1. Why/Why not?

2 responses

Because good learning takes place when doing meaningful cooperative tasks. They can learn and help each other. It fosters creativity and cooperation

I think collaborative work is enriching and prepares students for real life situations.

6. What recommendations would you give to someone who wants to introduce cooperative work in a 1st of Batxillerat English classroom in this high school?

2 responses

Do your best to get the support not only of your students but also of your colleagues

Consider students opinion when being grouped or when proposing activities. They are very opinionated!

8.2. Annex 2: Teaching unit example, Halloween is the time for spooky stories

Lesson plan for the teaching unit *Halloween is the time for spooky stories*

Week 1	
Day 1: Introduction to the topic (Halloween)	<p>The teacher introduces the topic of the teaching unit, the objectives and the final product. The students organize themselves into the pre-established groups. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Around the Table by Kagan: The teacher asks the students to write lists of items on a sheet of paper (one paper and one pen per group) in order to brainstorm about different aspects of Halloween, for example “You have two minutes to list as many Halloween costumes as you can” or “You have two minutes to say different ways people celebrate Halloween”. This activity is designed to activate the student’s previous knowledge on the topic. (25 minutes)</p> <p>Numbered Heads Together by Kagan: An introductory quiz show about Halloween facts. The teacher asks questions about Halloween and the groups have to come up with an answer. Each member of the group has been assigned a number, and to give an answer, the teacher will call a number. This activity can be done as a little competition. (25 minutes)</p>
Day 2: Learning about Halloween	<p>Activating knowledge from the previous session by commenting orally with the whole class what we learned. The teacher presents what will be done in this session. The students sit with their groups. (5 minutes)</p> <p>Jigsaw reading by Kagan: The students have to read a text about how Halloween is celebrated nowadays in the US and in the UK and answer a questionnaire in groups. (25 minutes)</p>

	<p>Working with vocabulary: From the reading text, the students choose the words they are not familiar with or do not know the meaning of. By going to the other groups in order following the teacher's indications, each team has to try to find the meaning for all the words in their list. (15 minutes)</p> <p>Find someone who interview: The students have to go around the class finding someone who fits for each of the statements related to Halloween on a card given by the teacher. (15 minutes)</p>
Day 3: Halloween around the world	<p>Activating knowledge from the previous session, orally. Revising the vocabulary and making sure everyone understands all the words. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Jigsaw reading in groups of experts by Kagan: Each member of the team joins a group of students that come from different groups. They have to read a text about Halloween traditions around the world and work together. Afterwards, the original groups get back together, and each member has to explain their part of the text. (30 minutes)</p> <p>Mind map: Taking the information from the texts, the students have to make a mind map with the similarities and differences of each Halloween tradition. After that, they will have to answer a true or false quiz on Halloween traditions individually, but they can help each other. (20 minutes)</p>
Week 2	
Day 4: Introduction to spooky stories	<p>Activating knowledge from the previous session through a memory game to remember the vocabulary found during the previous week's lessons and to introduce any necessary vocabulary for the next activity. (15 minutes)</p> <p>Jigsaw reading by Kagan: Each team is given a spooky story cut into pieces. Each member of the team gets a couple of pieces which they have to read and understand to be able to explain them to their peers.</p>

	Once everyone has explained their pieces of information, the task is to put the pieces in order so that the text makes sense. They should consider chronological order and connectors. Afterwards, the groups share their results with each other. (45 minutes)
Day 5: Murder mystery	<p>Activating knowledge from the previous session, orally. Commenting about the story that was read the previous day. The teacher presents what will be done during this lesson. (5 minutes)</p> <p>Reading comprehension: Murder mystery story. The students become detectives. Each group is given a story and a set of clues to help them find out who the murderer is out of a set of characters. Afterwards, the groups compare their answers to see if they came to the same conclusions. (40 minutes)</p> <p>Reflecting on the language used during the previous exercise: language of possibility and language of agreement and disagreement. Through exercises based on the murder mystery story. (15 minutes)</p>
Day 6: Fantastic Halloween creatures	<p>Activating knowledge with a revision of the conclusions to the murder mystery reading. Commenting about the language of possibility and the language of agreement and disagreement. Presentation of the plan for the day's class. (10 minutes)</p> <p>Find the Halloween creature: Interactive activity with the whole class. Each student gets a card with a Halloween creature and its description. They also get a table, which they have to fill in by going around the classroom and asking their peers. After some time, the pre-established groups get together and make a new table combining all the information they have been able to gather. (30 minutes)</p> <p>Starting to write spooky stories: From the previous exercise about Halloween creatures and the readings from the previous two lessons, the students can start planning the writing of their own spooky short stories. (20 minutes)</p>

Week 3	
Day 7: Character building and backstories	<p>Drawing dictation: To remember the creatures from the previous lesson, the students will do a game of drawing dictation. Taking turns, two or three people in the group will have to dictate one of the creatures, projected on the screen, to one of their team members, who will have to draw it and guess it. All the students will take their turn to draw. (20 minutes)</p> <p>Character discussion game: Each group is given a set of character cards, each with a character description (name, age, tool, strength and weakness), from which they will have to decide the four characters that are more suitable for going on a mission into a haunted house. They will later have to justify their decisions to the rest of the groups. (40 minutes)</p> <p>If there is time left, the groups can work on their spooky stories.</p>
Day 8: Getting ready to write a spooky story	<p>Around the table by Kagan: Brainstorming in groups about the elements of a spooky story (parts, setting, characters, scary elements, etc.). (20 minutes)</p> <p>Individual reading comprehension commented in groups: The students have to read a spooky story. The story has connectors, vocabulary and structures that the groups can use in their own stories. (20 minutes)</p> <p>Give one – take one by Kagan: Using this structure and moving in order around the class, the students share their findings with the rest of the groups. When the members go back to the group with their lists of findings, they make a complete list that they will be able to use for their stories. (20 minutes)</p> <p>If there is time left, the groups can work on their spooky stories.</p>
Day 9: We start writing	<p>Activating knowledge by commenting orally the reading from the previous session and recapping the connectors, the vocabulary and the structures from the previous session. (15 minutes)</p>

	<p>Freeze writing: Each group is given one sheet of paper, in which they start writing a story (different from the one they have been planning). They will have some limited time to write, and after the time has passed, the teacher will say “freeze”. When they hear the word “freeze”, the students have to stop writing and pass their sheet of paper to another group. Said group has to read the story and try to continue it, making sure there is coherence. (30 minutes)</p> <p>Writing their spooky stories: Time for the groups to start writing their own spooky stories. (15 minutes)</p>
Week 4	
Day 10: Reading our own funny stories	<p>Reading orally: Each group reads out loud and for the whole class, one of the stories that resulted from the previous lesson. They can choose whether only one person per group wants to read or if they take turns to do so. After all the stories have been read, a collective reflection is made. Questions that could be asked: Are the resulting stories what you had in mind when you were writing them? Do they make sense? What elements are good and what elements have room for improvement? The conclusions from the collective reflection can be useful for them to write their own stories. (30 minutes)</p> <p>Writing their spooky stories: Time for the groups to write their own spooky stories. (15 minutes)</p>
Day 11: Writing our spooky stories	<p>During this session, the groups of students can write their stories taking into consideration everything that has been mentioned during the unit. They can use one computer per group to search for information. The groups can help each other and ask for support from the teacher.</p>
Day 12: Final product presentation and closure	<p>This is the final lesson of the teaching unit. Each group briefly presents what their spooky story is about. (15 minutes).</p> <p>Reading: In groups, the students take some time to read the other groups' spooky stories. (30 minutes)</p>

	Comments and recapping: The students comment what they think about the stories they have read, which ones they enjoyed the most and what elements the stories have in common. If there is time left, there can be a discussion about how group work can be improved for the next unit. (15 minutes)
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8.3. Annex 3: Summarized schematic overview of the annual plan

Unit name	Sessions and timing	Objectives	Final product	Dimensions of the Catalan Curriculum for Batxillerat
Let's get to know each other! – Team building 1	2 weeks – 6 lessons (September 15 to October 2)	Getting to know each other Team building and group identity Determining English and cooperative learning skills	Team names and logos	Communicative dimension
Halloween is time for spooky stories	4 weeks – 12 lessons (October 5 to October 30)	Reading and writing cooperatively Writing spooky or mystery stories Learning about Halloween	Writing spooky or mystery Halloween stories in groups	Communicative dimension, Aesthetic and literary dimension
Have a nice meal!	3 weeks – 9 lessons (November 2 to November 20)	Reading and writing cooperatively Auto-regulating during cooperative learning Reading and writing instructive texts	Writing a recipe for an original dish in groups	Communicative dimension, Plurilingual and intercultural dimension
A Christmas Carol	4 weeks – 12 lessons (November 23 to December 18)	Reading and writing cooperatively Writing combining present, past and future tenses	Writing a renewed version of A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens	Communicative dimension, Aesthetic and literary dimension

Recapping and thanking our teammates 1	1 or 2 lessons (Before Christmas break)	Dismantling the teams Summarizing the work done Filling in surveys Sharing impressions, feelings and suggestions	A recap of the work done, and the things learned Surveys	Communicative dimension, Research and processing of information dimension
New year, new opportunities – Team building 2	1 week – 3 lessons (January 11 – January 15)	Team building Growing self-confidence Sharing experiences and wishes Bonding	Team names and logos	Communicative dimension
Love and relationships in today's world	4 weeks – 12 lessons (January 18 – February 12)	Listening and understanding song lyrics cooperatively Writing cooperatively Discussing about relationships Describing pictures	Making a photo-novel in groups	Communicative dimension, Aesthetic and literary dimension
Planning our school trip for next year	4 weeks – 12 lessons (February 15 – March 12)	Discussing and giving arguments to convince others Reading and writing cooperatively Learning about other cultures	Planning a travel itinerary and budget for the school trip in groups	Communicative dimension, Research and processing of information dimension
Fast fashion and sustainability	3 weeks – 9 lessons (March 15 – April 1)	Discussing and giving arguments to convince others Reading and writing cooperatively Describing pictures and situations	Making posters to raise awareness in groups	Communicative dimension, Plurilingual and intercultural dimension
Recapping and thanking our teammates 2	1 or 2 lessons (Before Easter break)	Dismantling the teams Summarizing the work done Filling in surveys Sharing impressions, feelings and suggestions	A recap of the work done, and the things learned Surveys	Communicative dimension, Research and processing of information dimension
Easter vacations –	1 week – 3 lessons	Team building Growing self-confidence	Team names and logos	Communicative dimension

Team building 3	(April 19 – April 23)	Sharing experiences and wishes Bonding		
Staying safe on the internet	3 weeks – 9 lessons (April 25 – May 14)	Learning how to give oral presentations Organizing and preparing presentations Convincing others and giving advice	Group presentations on how to stay safe on the internet	Communicative dimension, Research and processing of information dimension
Applying for a job	4 weeks – 12 lessons (May 17 – June 11)	Learning how to write a CV Learning how to prepare for a job interview Formal interaction Growing self-confidence	Writing a CV and recreating job interviews	Communicative dimension
Recapping and thanking our teammates 3 - Conclusion	1 or 2 lessons (Before the end of the school year)	Closure of the school year Dismantling the teams Summarizing the work done Filling in surveys Sharing impressions, feelings and suggestions	A recap of the work done, and the things learned Surveys	Communicative dimension, Research and processing of information dimension

8.4. Annex 4: Extended version of the annual plan

1st term

Title: Let's get to know each other! – Team building 1			
Duration: 2 weeks (September 15 - October 2) – 6 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Introducing yourself Likes and dislikes	General - Getting to know each other	Introductory activities - 3 facts about myself (2 true, one false) (Find the fiction)	- Present tense - General vocabulary - Likes, dislikes, hobbies

Hobbies and leisure activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing self-confidence in the English classroom - Interacting with everyone in the group - Building group identity <p>Teacher's goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build good environment of trust and companionship - Get to know the students to group them - Determining the students' English level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find someone who - Corners <p>Team and trust building games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Game of possibilities (mimics) - Blindfold retriever - Sorting game according to preferences, life experiences, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal experiences
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Title: Halloween is the time for spooky stories

Duration: 4 weeks (October 5 - October 30) – 12 lessons

Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Spooky stories Halloween traditions Final product writing spooky stories in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning how to read cooperatively - Learning how to write cooperatively - Learning how to write a spooky/mystery story - Learning how to write chronologically - Learning about Halloween 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Around the table - Jigsaw reading - Memory game - Murder mystery reading - Drawing dictation - Character discussion - Give one – take one - Freeze writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Halloween traditions - Fantastic creatures - Verbs in the past - Connectors to enrich a story

Title: Have a nice meal!

Duration: 3 weeks (November 2 – November 20) – 9 lessons

Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Food and recipes Final product writing a recipe for an original dish in groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning how to read cooperatively - Learning how to write cooperatively - The students auto-regulating themselves to work cooperatively - Learning how to write an instructive text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cooking quiz show - Around the table - Jigsaw reading - Memory game - Give one – take one - Freeze writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recipes - Ingredients, kitchen tools - Instructive text (explaining a process) - Verbs in the imperative

Title: A Christmas Carol

Duration: 4 weeks (November 23 – December 18) – 12 lessons

Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens Christmas traditional stories Final product writing a renewed version of A Christmas Carol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improving students' collective writing techniques - Writing collaboratively - Reading collaboratively - Writing in the present, the past and the future tenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Around the table - Jigsaw reading - Memory game - Give one – take one - Freeze writing - Timeline game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Christmas stories in literature - Christmas traditions - Verbs in the past, present and future - Connectors to enrich a story

Title: Recapping and thanking our teammates

Duration: 1 or 2 lessons (Before Christmas break)

Time to dismantle the groups that have worked together for a whole term and to thank each other for cooperating and for the work well done.

Activities to summarize the work done, to see how much we have worked.

Time to fill in surveys to see how well the groups have worked.

Opinion circle to share impressions, feelings and improvement suggestions for the following term.

2nd term

Title: New year, new opportunities – Team building 2			
Duration: 1 week (January 11 – January 15) – 3 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
New year's wishes and resolutions and what we can do to accomplish them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing self-confidence in the English classroom - Interacting with everyone in the group - Sharing experiences and wishes and bonding - Building new teams to work cooperatively 	<p>Introductory activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find someone who - Corners <p>Team building games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Game of possibilities (mimics) - “How would you do this?” - Give one – take one advice edition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future tense - Modal verbs - General vocabulary
Title: Love and relationships in today's world			
Duration: 4 weeks (January 18 – February 12) – 12 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Romantic love, friendship, familial love and self-love Final product: making a photo-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening and understanding song lyrics cooperatively - Discussing about healthy and toxic relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening comprehension with song lyrics - Around the table - Jigsaw reading - Drawing dictation - Give one – take one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjectives - Idioms and expressions - Present and past tenses

novel inspired by the lyrics of a song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning how to make a photo-novel - Describing pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freeze writing - Fishbowl debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verbs of possibility and prediction - Vocabulary related to relationships
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Title: Planning our school trip for next year

Duration: 4 weeks (February 15 – March 12) – 12 lessons

Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Travelling, directions, culture, languages Budgets Final product: creating a travel itinerary and budget for next year's school trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing and giving arguments to decide on a destination - Convincing others - Learning how to plan a trip - Learning about another culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening comprehension - Around the table - Groups of experts - Give one – take one - Corners - Find someone who - Destination discussion - Fishbowl debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asking for and giving directions - Argumentative vocabulary - General vocabulary about travelling

Title: Fast fashion and sustainability

Duration: 3 weeks (March 15 – April 1) – 9 lessons

Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Fashion, recycling, sustainability, ecology, proximity trade Final product: making posters to raise awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussing and giving arguments - Convincing others - Reading cooperatively - Writing cooperatively - Describing pictures and situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening comprehension - Around the table - Groups of experts - Give one – take one - Jigsaw reading - Find someone who - Fishbowl debate - Freeze writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fashion, sustainability, recycling vocabulary - Argumentative vocabulary - Adjectives - Verbs of possibility and prediction

Title: Recapping and thanking our teammates 2
Duration: 1 or 2 lessons (Before Easter break)
Time to dismantle the groups that have worked together for a whole term and to thank each other for cooperating and for the work well done. Activities to summarize the work done, to see how much we have worked. Time to fill in surveys to see how well the groups have worked. Opinion circle to share impressions, feelings and improvement suggestions for the following term.

3rd term

Title: Easter vacations – Team building 3			
Duration: 1 week (April 19 – April 23) – 3 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Easter vacations and traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Growing self-confidence in the English classroom - Interacting with everyone in the group - Sharing experiences - Building new teams to work cooperatively 	Introductory activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find someone who - Corners Team building games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Game of possibilities (mimics) - Cooperative drawing - Give one – take one advice edition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Past tense - General vocabulary - “used to, usually...”
Title: Staying safe on the internet			
Duration: 3 weeks (April 25 – May 14) – 9 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
Internet, social media, safety, privacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning about the dangers that can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Around the table - Jigsaw reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary about internet and social media

Final product: a group presentation on how to stay safe on the internet	found on the internet - Learning how to give oral presentations - Organizing and preparing oral presentations - Convincing others	- Listening comprehension in groups - Roleplay - Jigsaw reading - Character discussion - Memory game - Fishbowl debate	- Giving advice - Modal verbs
Title: Applying for a job			
Duration: 4 weeks (May 17 – June 11) – 12 lessons			
Topic	Goal	Activities	Language content
How to get a job, CVs, job interviews Final product: writing your own CV and recreating job interviews	- Learning how to write a CV - Learning how to prepare for a job interview - Speaking and interacting	- Interviews - Corners - Around the table - Groups of experts - Jigsaw reading - Listening comprehension in groups - Give one – take one - Roleplay	- Verbs in the past and in the future - Vocabulary related to jobs, working experience, job positions... - Time and discourse connectors
Title: Thanking our teammates 3 and conclusion			
Duration: 1 or 2 lessons (Before the end of the school year)			
Time to dismantle the groups that have worked together for a whole term and to thank each other for cooperating and for the work well done. Activities to summarize the work done, to see how much we have worked. Time to fill in surveys to see how well the groups have worked. Opinion circle to share impressions, feelings and suggestions. Closure of the school year.			

8.5. Annex 5: Jigsaw reading, How is Halloween celebrated around the world?

Jigsaw Reading

How is Halloween celebrated in 4 different countries?

Extracted from: Liana Marinoiu (n.d.) *5 Countries, 5 Halloween Traditions, to get inspiration from.* The GreenPick. Retrieved from: <https://www.thegreenpick.com/halloween-green-world/>

Text 1: **Mexico, an artsy disguise**

Mexicans adore the Day of the Dead. And el Día de los Muertos is among the most important ones in the year! Besides the artistic exhibitions taking place in the streets and the parades of traditional bread for the dead, Mexican people also make offerings honoring nature. The offerings placed on altars represent the 4 elements of nature. The earth is represented by the fruit that feeds the souls; the wind is represented by shredded or soft tissue paper, since due to its lightweight nature it goes with the breeze; the water is placed in a recipient for the visiting souls that calm their thirst after having crossed a long road to get to the altar; and finally the fire that is represented by candles, one for each soul that we remember and one for each forgotten.

Text 2: **China, a forest to honor the dead and celebrate life**

In China, the day of the dead or Qingmingjie, is an occasion for the family to get together. A big meal is organized, offerings are placed on behalf of the ones who are gone and people take advantage of this moment to appreciate their close ones. The Day of the Dead takes place in China in April, when nature turns green again and life resumes. It's an occasion for Chinese people to plant a tree to express this renaissance and honor the lives of the missing. Not so long ago, the day of the dead was even called the reforestation celebration. Afterwards during the night "sacred" lanterns are let go off – one for each soul. These lanterns are usually made out of rice paper and are biodegradable.

Text 3: **Scotland, better to play by the rules!**

In Scotland, the Halloween celebration has its own tradition. The Scots are used to lighting up huge joyful bonfires and they take the flames to light up the torches that they spread around the house in order to be protected in the year to come. Children dress up, put on black makeup and put on old clothing to repel evil spirits. In order to get the sweets, kids have to sing a song or recite a poem or engage in some other type of "trick" that they present at their neighbor's doorstep. Pork meat used to be prohibited from consumption during Halloween thanks to the Witch Craft Act. It was only 60 years ago that this

tradition was abolished. But this doesn't prevent certain Scots to respect it still; it's an example to follow. Games are also very popular, like the game involving an apple to be caught in the water only with one's mouth or with the scone suspended on an eatable rope – of course no hands allowed!

Text 4: **Japan, when the light goes on**

Japanese people celebrate their dead by respecting a Buddhist tradition. They organize a big celebration to comfort their lost ones and they light up lanterns everywhere to guide their path. Actually every Japanese house has a spot for their ancestors. This celebration is renowned for its traditional dances and for the lanterns that the Japanese also like to place on water. These 100% biodegradable lanterns, made out of rice paper or plain paper with a small candle in the middle are supposed to help every soul find its way back to its place of origin.

Halloween, the Day of the Dead, Obon, All Saints – no matters how we call this celebration. The most important thing is the feeling that it is the third most famous event in a lot of countries that can inspire other cultures to innovate and make their own Halloween a bit...greener!

8.6. Annex 6: Character discussion game, *Adventure in the haunted house*

This group of people were walking in the forest and they got lost. It is getting dark and they are scared. They come across a house that seems to be abandoned and hunted. They decide that they will get inside to see if there is someone who can help them, or if the house can be their shelter for the night. However, they think that it is best that only some of them go inside the house while the rest waits outside, just in case. Decide which four out of the ten people are the most capable of going inside a haunted house, considering their strengths, their weaknesses, their tools and their ages. Good luck!

Ellie



Age: 18

Tool:
A flashlight



Strength:
She is very confident

Weakness:
She is afraid of the dark

Evan



Age: 16

Tool:
Ghost detector



Strength:
He is very good at math

Weakness:
He is way too competitive

George



Age: 80

Tool:
Scissors



Strength:
He is calm and open-minded

Weakness:
He is slow

Johan



Age: 34

Tool:
A car



Strength:
He is very creative

Weakness:
If he sees blood, he faints

Julie



Age: 57

Tool:
A book on paranormal activity



Strength:
She is a perfectionist

Weakness:
She is afraid of spiders and snakes

Lilly



Age: 10

Tool:
X-Ray vision goggles



Strength:
She is very good at hiding

Weakness:
She is afraid of the dark

Patrick



Age: 25

Tool:
A rope



Strength:
He speaks 4 languages

Weakness:
He is bad at taking criticism

Kat



Age: 42

Tool:
A knife



Strength:
She is very strong

Weakness:
She is too impulsive

Mia



Age: 17

Tool:
A first-aid kit



Strength:
She is very brave

Weakness:
She gets lost easily

Sam



Age: 31

Tool:
A water bottle



Strength:
He loves scary movies

Weakness:
He is too loud

The game has been adapted from The Student Room (2017). *The Lifeboat Game*.

Retrieved from: <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=305573>

The images are free of copyright and have been extracted from the page Flaticon (<https://www.flaticon.com/>).

The characters have been designed using the tool Storyboard That (www.storyboardthat.com).

8.7. Annex 7: Initial and final tests on writing short stories

Initial written test for the assessment of the innovation project on collective scaffolding

Write a short story or an anecdote of a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 150 words on one of the three following topics:

- A summer adventure
- A dream come true
- The happiest moment of your life

Final written test for the assessment of the innovation project on collective scaffolding

Write a short story or an anecdote of a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 150 words on one of the three following topics:

- A mysterious box gets delivered to your door, but you didn't order it...
- One day, you wake up with a superpower
- A trip that didn't go as planned

8.8. Annex 8: Rubric for writing short stories

Rubric for grading the initial and final test on short stories

	Excellent (9 – 10)	Notable (7 – 8)	Good (5 – 6)	Needs improvement
Content	It has a title, at least one main character, a defined setting, a conflict or a goal and a resolution. The topic is appropriate and it follows the given instructions.	It has most of the essential elements of a short story, but one may be missing. The topic is appropriate but it does not follow exactly the given instructions.	Two or three essential elements of a short story are missing. The topic is appropriate but it does not follow exactly the given instructions.	Three or more essential elements of a short story are missing. The topic is not appropriate and the given instructions are not followed.
Organisation	The story is a logical progression of events. It has connectors to make it more understandable. It has an introduction, a problem, a climax and a resolution.	The story is, in general, a logical progression of events. There might be some lapses. Few or no connectors. It has an introduction, a problem, a climax and a resolution.	There are one or more major lapses in the progression of events. One of the essential parts of a story is missing.	There is no logical progression of events, which makes the story hard to follow.
Language	1 to 3 grammatical errors. The text requires very little editing.	4 to 6 grammatical errors. The text requires little editing.	7 to 10 grammar errors. The text needs some editing.	More than 10 grammar errors. The text is not legible in parts or in its totality.
Creativity	It is an original story. The characters are not copied and the story does not mirror any other story. The ending is unexpected.	It is a generally original story. The characters, the setting or the plot may resemble an existing story.	The originality of the story is doubted. The elements of the story somewhat resemble an existing story.	It is not an original story and it is clear that it is the retelling of an existing story.

8.9. Annex 9: Survey on the student's previous experience in working cooperatively

Previous experience with cooperative work survey for the students of 1st of Batxillerat

Date:

Name:

Answer the following questions according to your experience working cooperatively during this term. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'I completely disagree' and 5 is 'I totally agree'.

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I enjoy working in groups.					
2.	I think that I learn more by working in groups.					
3.	I think that I learn more by working individually.					
4.	During ESO, we worked in groups often.					
5.	During ESO, we worked in groups in all the subjects.					
6.	I have been previously taught how to work cooperatively.					
7.	I think I know how to coordinate with my teammates when doing group work.					
8.	I know the benefits of group work.					
9.	I think it is important to help others and work together to solve problems.					
10.	I think that having a good classroom environment is important.					
11.	I think that having a good relationship with my classmates is important.					
12.	I usually like the English class.					

8.10. Annex 10: End of term survey on cooperative work

End of term survey for the students of 1st of Batxillerat on cooperative work in the English classroom

Date:

Name:

Answer the following questions according to your experience working cooperatively during this term. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'I completely disagree' and 5 is 'I totally agree'.

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Overall, I felt comfortable working with my group.					
2.	Overall, I think my group worked well together, we coordinated well.					
3.	I had fun working with my group.					
4.	Overall, in my group, we got all the work done in time.					
5.	I helped my teammates whenever they needed my help.					
6.	My teammates helped me whenever I needed their help.					
7.	My team helped other teams whenever they needed our help.					
8.	Other teams helped my team whenever we needed their help.					
9.	I feel like I have a good relationship with my classmates thanks to working cooperatively.					
10.	The activities we did in groups during this term were interesting.					
11.	The activities we did in groups during this term helped me improve my English.					
12.	The activities we did in groups during this term were repetitive.					
13.	I think that, in my group, we got the marks we deserved.					
14.	I think that, individually, I got the marks I deserved.					

15.	I prefer cooperative work over individual work.					
16.	I would like to work cooperatively in other subjects besides the English subject.					
17.	In classes of other subjects, I try to help my classmates.					
18.	In classes of other subjects, my classmates try to help me.					
19.	I feel motivated when it's time to go to English class.					
20.	Overall, I think my level of participation in the English class is enough.					
21.	I like participating in the English class.					
22.	I feel more confident when speaking in English than before the project.					
23.	I feel more confident when writing in English than before the project.					
24.	I feel more confident when reading texts in English than before the project.					
Comments and suggestions:						

8.11. Annex 11: Interview outline to the students about cooperative work

1. Do you think that, by working cooperatively, in groups, you...
 - a. Have more chances of participating and practicing your English in class?
 - b. Learn English better than by working individually? Or do you learn better in a traditional classroom?
 - c. Have a better relationship with your classmates? In what way?
 - d. Feel more confident in the English class?
 - e. Like English better than you did before?
2. Is there anything that feels different in the English class than in classes of other subjects? In what way is it different?
3. Do you think it is important to...
 - a. Work cooperatively?
 - b. Help others?

- c. Interact with your classmates?
 - d. Share knowledge and experiences?
4. What do you think are the benefits of working cooperatively in the English class?
Have you experienced them?
 5. Would you like to work cooperatively in other subjects? Which ones?
 6. What are the things you like the most about the English lessons in which students work cooperatively?
 7. What are the things you do not like? How do you think we could change them, or improve the situation?
 8. Time for suggestions, comments, observations...

8.12. Annex 12: End of year survey on cooperative work

End of year survey for the students of 1st of Batxillerat on cooperative work in the English classroom

Date:

Name:

Answer the following questions according to your experience working cooperatively during this term. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'I completely disagree' and 5 is 'I totally agree'.

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	Overall, I have felt comfortable working in the various groups I have worked with.					
2.	Overall, I think I worked well with all my groups, and we coordinated well.					
3.	This year, I have learned how to work cooperatively.					
4.	This year, I have learned the benefits of working cooperatively.					
5.	I always participate in the English class.					
6.	I have seen an improvement of my English level this year.					

7.	I feel more confident when speaking in English now than before the beginning of the project.					
8.	I feel more confident when writing in English now than before the beginning of the project.					
9.	I feel more confident in my listening comprehension in English now than before the beginning of the projects.					
10.	I feel more motivated to learn English now than before the beginning of the project.					
11.	I prefer cooperative work over individual work.					
12.	I think that I got the final grade I deserve.					
13.	I think that my classmates got the final grades they deserve (if you do not know their grades, leave this question blank).					
14.	I liked the topics and the projects we worked with.					
15.	I think I have a good relationship with my classmates.					
16.	In classes of other subjects, my classmates try to help me.					
17.	I would like to work cooperatively in other subjects besides the English subject.					
18.	I would like to work cooperatively in other subjects besides English.					
19.	I would like to work cooperatively in the English classroom again next year.					
20.	I think that, in high school, we should work cooperatively more often.					
21.	I think working cooperatively in class is better than traditional lessons.					
22.	I like the English class.					
Comments and suggestions:						