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Age Group: 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade

Subject Area:

*Language Didactics*

## Motivation:

In my teaching practice, I experienced a variety of different approaches to teach English. Some of them were individual work, where each one got a “fill-in-the-gap” task. Others were to do a plenum summarize of grammar rules. But I thought that these tasks were irrelevant for what my goal is, and that is to make the pupils interact with each other, and speak the language. To do exercises that has relevance for the world they’re about to discover, and not so much fiction. My teaching practice was in some way very enlightening for my view on exercises and tasks for my future pupils, so I thought to myself, how you can teach your pupils with focus on the second language, interaction with your classmates and through relevant material.

## Problem Statement:

How can you to teach English through CL and TBL

## Theory:

This synopsis will describe two different teaching approaches and how to implement them in the classroom. The two approaches are CL (cooperative learning) and TBL (task-based learning). Within CL I would also like to mention Lev Vygotsky’s theory of *the zone of proximal development*.

### Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is an educational approach, that works, through certain principles, where the outcome of all of this is learning. Through cooperation in teams the main goal is to discuss, cooperate and to obtain the perfect synergy-effect. This means to obtain more knowledge, and produce more, than you could do on your own. But CL doesn’t only work with knowledge, but it also develops a better social interaction among the pupils, and are making them social competent<sup>1</sup>. According to Dr. Spencer Kagan there is a natural explanation to this, and that is that the human species has the need to feel like a part of a group, and he backs this theory up by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs CL is a structural approach, where the procedure is very straight

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<sup>1</sup> Kagan, S., & Stenlev, J. (2006). *Cooperative learning: Undervisning med samarbejdsstrukturer*. Albstadt: Malling Beck. P 11

forward. The structure itself doesn't contain a certain topic, and therefore the approach works on every topic you would like to teach your pupils, all from fairytales to grammar rules.<sup>2</sup>

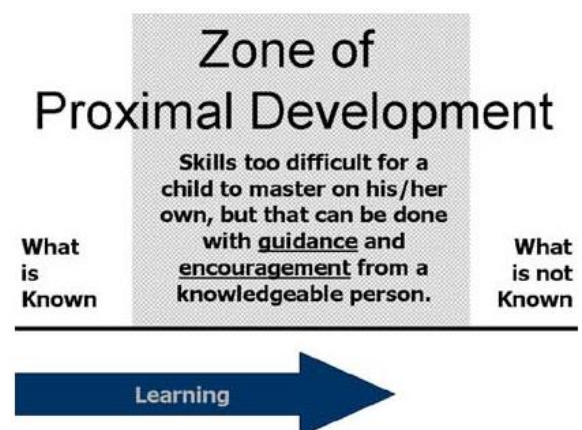
According to Dr. Kagan, the CL structure not only develops knowledge, it also qualifies the pupils to interact in the world's globalized society<sup>3</sup>

The teacher's role is quite simple. The teacher starts the lesson as the leader and the presenter of today's topic. He/she explains the rules and the timeframe, and is making the groups. After this, his/her role changes to the classes "supervisor". The role is a passive role and observant role.

Whether the groups interaction is good or bad, or the time is right. The pupils should know that they can get help anytime, but the point is that they will search for help within the group members<sup>4</sup>. But why all this teamwork, cooperation, interaction? This approach was not developed from one day to the other.

## Vygotsky

Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist, who's work focused on the development through social interaction. His theory *zone of proximal development*, is one of his most important theories behind the CL approach. Vygotsky assumed children to be curious and most of their learning occurs through social interaction and with help from a skillful tutor. To the right, we see the model and how it works. Vygotsky claims that a child, via help and encouragement from a skillful partner, obtain more knowledge that it would ever achieve on its own. When the skill is first achieved, it is easier for the child to use it on its own afterwards. Age doesn't matter according to



<sup>2</sup> Kagan, S., & Stenlev, J. (2006). *Cooperative learning: Undervisning med samarbejdsstrukturer*. Alberstlund: Malling Beck. P. 11-12

<sup>3</sup> Kagan, S., & Stenlev, J. (2006). *Cooperative learning: Undervisning med samarbejdsstrukturer*. Alberstlund: Malling Beck. P.15

<sup>4</sup> Kagan, S., & Stenlev, J. (2006). *Cooperative learning: Undervisning med samarbejdsstrukturer*. Alberstlund: Malling Beck. P. 26.

Vygotsky, and therefore this theory can be practiced through CL in schools. The skillful tutor might as well be your class mate.<sup>5</sup>

### **Task-Based Learning:**

Another approach on teaching is the task-based learning. Here the main focus is on the task itself, and a lesson could easily be built up around this task. The tasks are real-life tasks. It could be to analyze a pamphlet, or to make a shopping list or to do a presentation on a topic. After the task is done, the point is to analyze the language they have used during the task, and now point out errors, correcting grammatical errors, think about the style they have used etc. So, the lesson starts off with the task itself, instead of the classic approach with a “go-through” with the teacher.<sup>6</sup> This is what Scrivener calls *exposure-test-teach-test*<sup>7</sup>

You can say this approach is a lot of “self-study” for your pupils. The lesson would often start with him explaining what task is. This is what Harmer calls *the pre-task*. After this it is up to the pupils to find a way to solve this task. it could be to gather information about a certain topic for example, and this will end up with a final product to show. This is what Harmer calls *task cycle*. In the end of the lesson the pupils must analyze their own product for errors, improvement and practice what needs to be practiced for further development. This is what Harmer calls *language focus*<sup>8</sup>

The teacher puts the focus on the meaning of the content he/she receives as student-products. This means that feedback is also the key to success when working with this approach. The only language spoken in the classroom is the second language, and the teacher needs to make sure that everybody's participating and is speaking English.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> McLeod, S. (1970, January 01). Saul McLeod. Retrieved January 09, 2017, from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

<sup>6</sup> Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman. P. 51

<sup>7</sup> Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning teaching: A guidebook for English language teachers*. Oxford: Macmillan. P 183

<sup>8</sup> Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman. 51

<sup>9</sup> L. (2000). *Techniques and principles in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. P. 145 & 148

## Practice element:

A way of handling these approaches could be this way. I build the lessons up around the task-based approach, where the procedure would be pre-task, task cycle, language focus. The lessons learning goal is that *the pupil can through CL and TBL, do a short presentation of an informative pamphlet*. So, first, they will be introduced to what a pamphlet is, and where they can find certain information about their product. Furthermore, they need to know what the task is, which is a presentation on their pamphlet in groups of two. After this walk-through, each group will be handed support-cards to write their gathered information on, but that is all. The rest is up to the pupils to reach the goals. This is the task cycle. The groups are made by the teacher, and are well thought so that the CL structure will be optimal. I would make the groups so the stronger pupils, can tutor and help the pupils that are less strong. The time frame should be clear for the pupils. They now must do the presentation, and will receive feedback from the teacher. At last they will have to do the language focus, and find change the errors, either in their support cards or their oral presentation.

This, for me, would be an ideal TBL and CL based lesson plan.

## Literature

### Books:

Kagan, S., & Stenlev, J. (2006). *Cooperative learning: Undervisning med samarbejdsstrukturer*. Alberstlund: Malling Beck.

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English*. Harlow: Pearson Longman.

Scrivener, J. (2005). *Learning teaching: A guidebook for English language teachers*. Oxford: Macmillan.

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### Websites:

McLeod, S. (1970, January 01). Saul McLeod. Retrieved January 09, 2017, from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/vygotsky.html>

EMU Danmarks læringsportal. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2017, from <http://www.emu.dk/omraade/gsk-lærer/ffm/engelsk/5-7-klasse/mundtlig-kommunikation>

## Appendixes

### Lesson plan:

Number of lessons	2x 45 minutes
Competence goal	<b>Written communication 5<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> grade:</b> The pupil understands and can write short texts I different genres in English.
Proficiencies – and knowledge goals	<b>Writing (fase 1)</b> <b>Proficiency goal:</b> The pupil can, with support, talk briefly about factual topics.  <b>Knowledge goal:</b> The pupil has knowledge about simple headings, pictures, diagrams and graphic as support to a presentation
Learning goal	The pupil can through CL and TBL, do a short presentation of an informative pamphlet
Activity	Briefly talk in plenum what a pamphlet is  Divide into groups and give each group a pamphlet, and small cards to write gathered information on.  Do a presentation with support from the support-cards, about your gathered information.  After this, the groups will find errors in either the written or oral product.
Evaluation	Hand in the support-cards to the teacher an wait for evaluation next time.

## Interlanguage analysis (appendix)

Many years ago there was a girl with the name Zoella. Zoella was a **feary**, she was **a** queen **for flower-valley**. **There was pretty** and they **was** happy, but there was **a** evil queen from **blackness-forrest** **shes** name was Ellenal. Ellenal was jealous because **shes** forest **not was** as pretty as Flower-**valley**. So she chose to kill Zoella and conquer **flower-vally**. But **so** did not make it that far. Because Zoella built a wall of thorns so Ellenal could not come in and Ellenal **come never** again. **every bodys** from **flower-vally** live happy to **theres** days end.

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**Red** = Mis-spelling, grammar, Danicism,

**Yellow** = Wrong use of word

**Blue** = Proper noun



## Corrections:

- 1) Misspelling. = fairy
- 2) Wrong use of article = the queen. One country, one queen
- 3) Wrong use of the word "for" = queen of .....
- 4) Proper nouns starts with capital letter
- 5) Danicism = It was pretty
- 6) Concord-error = "They" is plural, and therefore "was" should be "were"
- 7) Indefinite article error = "evil" begins with a vowel and/or vowel sound, therefore "a" should be "an"
- 8) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 9) Misspelling = "Forest"
- 10) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 11) Wrong use of word = "She = hun" "her = hendes"
- 12) Danicism = "was not". Auxiliary verb before negative
- 13) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 14) Proper nouns begin with capital letter
- 15) Misspelling and proper noun, capital letter = "Valley"
- 16) Wrong use of the word "so" = "she"
- 17) Danicism and wrong tense (present) and adverb before the verb = "never came"  
never is first because you can't say "neverly"
- 18) Misspelling = Everybody. No plural -s needed, it is already plural.
- 19) Proper nouns begin with capital letter and misspelling = "Valley"
- 20) Danicism = They lived happily ever after (De levede lykkeligt til deres dages ende)
- 21) Wrong use of word = There (Der er), Their (deres)