



## **The Challenging Task of Teaching English at University: Is Cooperative Learning a Solution?**

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### **Abstract**

In an increasingly globalised world, teaching English seems to be more and more complex and challenging, especially at university level. University classes are larger than school classes, students have different levels of proficiency and there are not many hours devoted to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, especially in non-language faculties. Students do not seem to be motivated to learn English, and the way English is traditionally taught at university does not encourage active student participation in most of the cases. Nowadays, more and more language teachers and practitioners are implementing new methodologies, such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) or Cooperative Learning (CL), and research in the field of foreign language teaching seems to support their implementation. Differences, however, exist between school and university implementation as well as between content and language subjects. It seems to be easier to carry out CL activities at university in the case of content subjects because the same language is spoken, whereas languages require more attention and effort in terms of comprehension and modality. Visual aids, for instance, are fundamental in language classes, whereas they could be optional in content classes. CL implementation has undoubtedly many advantages and, to a certain extent, it is a much more effective learning method as compared to individual learning. The problem is, however, that its implementation at university in the case of EFL classes is complex and not always feasible, as too many aspects are involved, such as the need to have smaller classes, extra hours, more resources and more teachers. This study explores the results of CL implementation at university level to teach English in a non-language faculty. This experimental study represents part of a larger, on-going study on the validity and feasibility of CL at university level as a means of enhancing students' engagement and appreciation for the English language in an increasingly globalised world.