

"Whoever is doing the most talking is doing the most learning."

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Interaction is the key to the interpersonal mode and to language development for second-language learners.

Pair and small group work is the most important means by which this interaction can be accomplished.

When students work cooperatively in small groups or in pairs, they are often more willing to speak and their opportunities for language use are multiplied substantially.

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- Partner and small-group activities are a very effective strategy for *practicing* language that has already been learned through a variety of other activities, and for *using* that language to achieve important goals. When partner and small-group activities are introduced prematurely, before the needed language is readily available, students will be frustrated and may revert to English in order to accomplish the task.
- Learners need guidance in developing cooperative skills as they work in pairs and groups.
- Organizing partners can be done both randomly to maximize conversation partners and deliberately to focus on strengths and weaknesses of individual students.
- Partner activities also provide opportunities to practice social skills.

Making it Personal...

- Do you regularly implement pair or small group work in your class?
- Who is doing the most talking in your classroom?

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Form partners and pairs in novel ways. Try the following!

- finding partners for each hour on a clock, or various countries on a map, or places in a target language city
- Matching cards according to relationship e.g. city & state, antonyms, synonyms.
- lining up according to any category (e.g. first letter of favorite item) and pairing with students nearby in the line.
- Finding a partner with a small object that has a similar color.



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Curtain & Dahlberg.
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Chap. 5. Pearson

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Productive Group Work: How to Engage Students, Build Teamwork, and Promote Understanding. ASCD

