#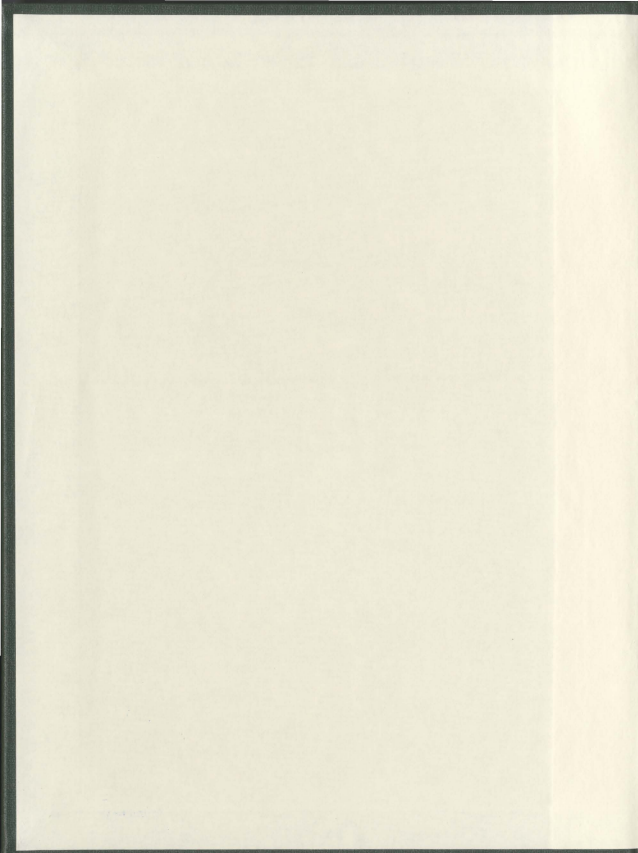 A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES ON THE AURAL COMPREHENSION AND ORAL PROFICIENCY OF GRADE 6 CORE FRENCH STUDENTS

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A Study of the Effect of Cooperative Learning Activities on the
Aural Comprehension and Oral Proficiency of Grade 6 Core French
Students

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop a package of cooperative learning activities for the unit "Plume et Poil" in the Grade 6 core French resource, <u>Aventures 3</u>, and to test the effect of these activities on the aural comprehension and oral proficiency of those students who participated in them.

This study is quasi-experimental in design. The sample for the study was a class of twenty-four grade six students. This sample was divided into two groups, comprised of matched pairs. The experimental group participated in four cooperative learning activities while the control group participated in more traditional FSL activities. Both groups were then given a multiple choice test, designed to test aural comprehension. In addition, both groups participated in an oral interview designed to test oral proficiency.

Overall, scores of students in the experimental group tended to be higher than those of students in the control group, suggesting that the cooperative learning activities had a positive effect on students in the experimental group. The difference in scores between the experimental and control group was greater for the multiple choice test than for the oral interview, suggesting that the cooperative learning activities were more effective in developing students' listening skills. The data also indicate that the test scores of weak and average ability students in the experimental group tended to be higher than those of their counterparts in the control group, while the test scores of higher ability students in both groups were nearly identical. Further analysis of the speech samples on the oral interviews revealed that all students performed well in the categories of pronunciation/ intonation and comprehension, reasonably well in the category of vocabulary and poorly in the category, appropriateness of structure. Students in the experimental group tended to use a broader repertoire of vocabulary items in the oral interview than students in the control group, suggesting that the activities were conducive to vocabulary acquisition.

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Chapter One
Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Research has shown that cooperative learning can be an effective instructional tool in teaching a second language. Johnson and Johnson (1975) define cooperative learning as the use of small heterogeneous groups designed so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. The model of cooperative learning developed by Johnson and Johnson (1985) is based on four principles: positive interdependence, face to face interaction among students, individual accountability for mastering assigned material, and instructing students in appropriate interpersonal and small-group skills.

A study by McGroaty(1989) points to important parallels between the principles of cooperative learning and the models and methods of second language acquisition. Both place an emphasis on input, output, negotiation of meaning, social interaction and context.

Second language teachers who teach according to the communicative approach to second language learning, seek instructional techniques and strategies which facilitate communication in the target language among their students. The goal of second language learners is communicative competence, the ability to use language appropriately in the process of communication. (Spolsky, 1978)

This project was designed to examine the effect of specific cooperative learning activities on aural comprehension (listening) and oral proficiency (speaking). These activities, which were designed for the unit "Plume et Poil" in the Grade 6 core French learning resource, **Aventures 3**, are based on the competitive cooperative learning models: TGT(teams-games-tournaments) and STAD(student teams-achievement division). The TGT approach developed by DeVries and Slavin (1978), involves students working together in four to five member heterogeneous groups, helping each other to master assigned content and to prepare for competition against other teams. STAD, developed by Slavin (1986), is a simplification of TGT in which the grouping and cooperative learning procedures are similar but instead of tournaments, students are given a quiz. Individual quiz scores are translated into team competition points based on how students have improved in their averages. Both methods combine cooperative task structures, which require students to work cooperatively in order to meet task requirements, with team competition and group rewards based on the combined results of individual performances. A summary of the research done by Slavin (1983) shows that cooperative learning models which make use of team rewards, such as TGT and STAD, tend to have consistently positive effects on student achievement, whereas the purely cooperative methods, such as Jigsaw or Group Investigation, are less likely to produce significant achievement advantages over traditional techniques. Slavin also found that those methods which make individuals accountable to their teammates

were much more effective than methods which allowed for only one or two individuals to do most of the work. (Slavin, 1988)

1.1 Rationale

This project provided an opportunity to examine whether or not specific cooperative learning activities designed specifically for the Grade 6 core French classroom , would have a positive impact on students' listening and speaking skills in French. In a practical sense, it gives teachers a package of cooperative learning activities to use in teaching the unit.

The **Aventures** learning resource is based on principles of communicative language teaching. While there are a variety of activities and techniques suggested within the manual, it is sometimes necessary for the teacher to develop further activities which allow students an opportunity to communicate and to negotiate meaning in the target language. Cooperative learning activities provide students with an opportunity to interact in a meaningful communicative situation. The cooperative learning activities developed for this project were designed with this goal in mind.

1.2 Background

Consistent with the communicative approach to second language teaching in the **Aventures** resources, cooperative learning activities were designed to encourage students to communicate in

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the target language. This is the challenge facing core French teachers. It appears to be particularly challenging at the Grade 6 level possibly because as students get older, they seem more inhibited, and are less willing or motivated to speak in the target language. As well, students seem to experience more difficulty in the Grade 6 program than in the Grade 4 and 5 core French program with the transition from the Grade 4 to the Grade 5 core French program tending to be much smoother than from Grade 5 to Grade 6. The Grade 6 learning resource assumes a level of competence which many Grade 6 core French students do not have, having gone through two years of core French.

In an attempt to make the transition smoother, teachers frequently develop activities and resources which will meet the objectives of the program and which are suited to students' communicative needs and abilities. Cooperative learning appears to be one of the tools available to teachers to bridge this gap. The nature of cooperative learning is such that it encourages interaction and negotiation among students, both of which are necessary for communication in the target language.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this project was to develop cooperative learning activities designed for the Grade 6 core French classroom to complement the Grade 6 **Aventures** resource, and to determine whether students' participation in these activities would

contribute to improvement in their oral proficiency and aural comprehension in French. This project was practical in that its intent was to design activities for use in the classroom and then test the effectiveness of these activities. This project was in response to a perceived need for an improvement in students' language proficiency, and for communicatively oriented activities which are suited to Grade 6 students' level of communicative competence.

1.4 Limitations

This project examined the effectiveness of specific cooperative learning activities on the oral proficiency and aural comprehension of a small sample of Grade 6 Core French students. The project tested the specific cooperative learning activities developed, rather than the usefulness of cooperative learning per se as a strategy in developing skills in French. Research has already shown that cooperative learning is an effective technique for second language learning. (Slavin, 1983)

In contextualizing the research, some of the studies used were conducted in English Second Language (ESL), English First Language (EFL), or second language learning situations other than French Second Language (FSL). The findings from such research, while deemed useful and applicable in so far as the principles of second language acquisition are similar for all studies, may not apply completely to the Grade 6 core French classroom.

In an attempt to ensure confirmability of the data, the oral interviews were taped. This procedure however, could have adversely affected the representativeness of the data if the students in the sample were inhibited by or affected in any way by audio recording. Attempts were made to ensure representativeness of the data by making the audio recording devices as unobtrusive as possible. In addition, the evaluator was familiar with the students in this sample and had previously conducted short, informal interviews with the students.

The major limitation of the project is thatparticular characteristics of the sample (e.g.,small sample size and rural context) prevent the researcher from generalizing the findings to the entire student population.

The study is also limited by the nature of the instruments used to evaluate the oral competence of the students. Improvement in oral proficiency is limited to appropriateness and use of complete sentences; increased competence in expression of meaning cannot be measured by the instruments used.

Finally, the findings are also limited by the type of activities used (TGT and STAD). Other types of activities might produce other results.

Chapter Two
Review of the Literature

2.0 Introduction

The main goal of the communicative approach to second language learning is communicative competence. Second language programs are designed to encourage accurate, fluent and independent communication on the part of the learner. In an attempt to further this goal, educators are seeking instructional strategies and techniques which will improve students' ability to communicate in real-life, communicative situations. One technique which has proven to be successful in second language acquisition is cooperative learning.

This review of the literature will begin with a description of two major concepts associated with a communicative approach to second language learning: communicative competence and communication strategies. This will be followed by a discussion of proficiency and proficiency testing. The review will conclude with an overview of the research on cooperative learning in general and more specifically, the role of cooperative learning in second language acquisition.

2.1 Communicative Competence

The notion of communication is central to any discussion of second-language acquisition. According to Canale (1983) communication

a) is a form of social interaction, and is therefore normally acquired and used in social interaction;

b) involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message;

c) takes place in discourse and sociocultural contexts which provide constraints on appropriate language use and also clues as to correct interpretations of utterances;

d) is carried out under limiting psychological and other conditions such as memory constraints, fatigue and distractions;

e) always has a purpose;

f) involves authentic, as opposed to textbook-contrived language;

g) and is judged as successful or not on the basis of actual outcomes.

In other words, communication is an active process involving the exchange and negotiation of meanings and conventions. (Breen and Candlin, 1980)

Communicative competence is an essential part of actual communication and refers to the ability to use the language appropriately in the communication process. (Spolsky, 1978) The term communicative competence was first coined by Hymes (1971) and referred to a knowledge of the sociolinguistic rules of language in conjunction with a grammatical or linguistic competence. This differed from the predominant view of competence advocated by

Chomsky (1965) with its emphasis on a knowledge of the rules of grammar. In his theory, Chomsky made a distinction between linguistic competence and linguistic performance; competence meaning the underlying grammatical competence assumed to be common to all native speakers and performance being the manifestation of this competence. Whereas Chomsky focused on the ideal speaker/listener, Hymes focused on the real speaker/listener and the role of social interaction in attaining communicative competence. (Savignon, 1983)

Having surveyed the many communicative approaches to language teaching, Canale and Swain (1980) developed a model for communicative competence which identifies four components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. In Canale and Swain's model,

grammatical competence refers to the mastery of the linguistic code, including a knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the social rules of language use. It requires an understanding of the social context in which the language is being used and of what is appropriate.

Discourse competence is the ability to interpret and produce a cluster of sentences or phrases to form a meaningful whole. It is the ability to achieve unity in discourse through cohesion in form and coherence in meaning.

Finally, strategic competence refers to the ability to use communication strategies to cope with breakdowns in communication, or to enhance the communication process. The effective use of these strategies is what distinguishes the competent communicator from the less competent.

An effective second language program seeks to develop overall communicative competence by developing these four competencies.

Savignon(1983) argues that each of these four components is extremely important and that one is proficient in a foreign language only if these four competencies have been developed. Savignon's model of second language acquisition, based on the framework of Canale and Swain (1980), recognized the multifaceted nature of communication and the language learning process. Savignon defined communicative competence as the ability to convey meaning by successfully combining linguistic and sociolinguistic rules in authentic communicative interactions. She saw it as functional language proficiency or the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning taking place when people interact in an authentic communicative situation.

Tarone (1983) also developed a model of communicative competence similar to that of Canale and Swain. Her model stressed the interactional nature of language, describing language as a "living organism created by both speaker and learner." (Faerch and Kasper,1983:64)

Allen defines communicative competence quite simply as "using language for real purposes." (Allen, 1985:1991) He describes the classroom activities of the past, such as those used with the audio-lingual method, as being artificial and emphasizes the need to provide second language learners with tools to enable real communication in real life situations.

Strategic competence, an integral component of communicative competence, refers to the use of communication strategies which allow learners to cope with communication difficulties in real life situations. These communication strategies will be described in the next section.

2.2 Communication Strategies

The **term** communication strategy, first coined by Selinker(1969), has been defined in different ways. Faerch and Kasper define communication strategies as "potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal." (Faerch and

Kasper, 1983:212) Meanwhile, communication strategies are described by Corder as a "systematic technique employed by the speaker to express his meaning when faced with difficulty." (Faerch and Kasper, 1983:16) Tarone, Cohen, and Dumas (1976) define a communication strategy as a" systematic attempt by the learner to express or decode meaning in the target language, in situations where the appropriate systematic target language rules have not been formed." (Faerch and Kasper,1983:5)

A variety of strategies have been identified and categorized by researchers such as Faerch and Kasper(1983), Corder(1983), Savignon(1983), Kramsch(1984) and Willems(1987). According to Faerch and Kasper(1983a), three types of communication strategies exist: achievement strategies, formal reduction strategies and functional reduction strategies. While achievement strategies involve risk-taking behaviours, reduction strategies involve risk avoidance. Reduction strategies include:

1. avoidance
2. message abandonment
3. meaning replacement

while achievement strategies include:

1. facial expressions
2. borrowing
3. literal translation
4. foreignizing
5. approximation
6. word coinage
7. paraphrase
8. smurfing
9. self repair
10. appeals for assistance
11. initiating repair (Willems, 1987:355)

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Willems (1987) subcategorizes achievement strategies into intralingual and interlingual strategies. Intralingual strategies generally exploit only the language in which the conversation is taking place, while interlingual strategies make use of the mother tongue or another foreign language in the effort to communicate.

These strategies provide the framework through which second language learners manipulate and negotiate meaning in the target language. Research has shown that there is a relationship between the speaker's use of communication strategies and the level of proficiency attained. (Tarone, 1977; Paribakht 1985)

2.3 Proficiency

Proficiency, an important aspect of communicative competence, consists of four components: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The term "proficiency" has been described differently in the research, with some (e.g., Lyster, 1990; Harley et al., 1987) emphasizing grammatical accuracy, or attention to form, while others, (e.g. Bialystok, 1978; Widdowson, 1978; Breen and Candlin, 1980) focus on the ability to communicate a message, or the functional use of the language.

Several definitions of language proficiency exist. Liskin-Gasparro (1984:12) defines language proficiency as "the ability to function effectively in the language in real life situations."

Kramsch (1986:366) refers to proficiency in terms of "language being a functional tool, one for communication." Meanwhile, Fallen (1986) argues that students are proficient if they can memorize passages, change sentences from present to past tense, and use language which is grammatically accurate. Toukomaa (1976) refers to this as "surface fluency." Allen (1985) defines proficiency as the use of language for real purposes while Clark (1972) refers to proficiency as the ability to get across a message in the target language with a specified ease and effect.

A comprehensive definition of proficiency is provided by Stern (1990:34) who states that a student is proficient if he/she has:

1. an intuitive mastery of the forms of the language,
2. an intuitive mastery of the cognitive, affective, linguistic and socio-cultural meanings, expressed by the language forms.
3. the ability to use the language with maximum attention to communication and minimum attention to form and
4. creativity of language use.

Higgs and Clifford (1984) argue that a student cannot simply be declared competent or proficient. There must be some type of criteria which help pinpoint the level of proficiency. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) developed a set of criteria or guidelines for the four components of language proficiency: speaking, reading, writing, and listening.

These guidelines have been the basis for developing instruments to measure proficiency levels. The ACTFL descriptors are the basis used in the French 3200 oral interview designed by the Department of Education and contained in the manual for interviewers. (Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 1992)

2.4 Proficiency Testing

Savignon (1986:308) defines proficiency testing as "any test that is based on a theory of the abilities required to use language." It is a criterion-referenced or goal-referenced test. The test-takers are evaluated on their ability to achieve a certain level of performance, or criterion. The student is not tested on how much content he/she has learned but rather how well he/she can perform in relation to overall language proficiency.

A distinction must be made between proficiency testing and achievement testing.. Achievement tests are norm referenced and examine specific features of the language . They are usually based on specific amounts of content presented to the learner. Proficiency tests, however, are criterion referenced, are based on functional language ability, and are globally rated.

Several studies have been conducted on second language proficiency testing. There have been questions raised as to the validity of proficiency testing and the guidelines developed by

the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).
A study by Thomas, in which different raters rated interviews of
EFI students (1995), found considerable variability among raters of
the oral interview. As well, a study by Flynn (1991) testing the
validity of the French 3200 interview, found that different
interviewers had significant differences in their rating of
vocabulary, grammar, and fluency items. Overall, however, global
ratings were more consistent.

Lantolf and Frawley (1985) suggest that the proficiency level
of the tester affects the given proficiency level of the individual
being tested. They point to the lack of a uniform theoretical
structure to guide the development of objective testing procedures.
Bachman and Savignon (1986) point to the variety of language norms
deemed acceptable by the interviewer suggesting that a certain
amount of variability exists in rating oral proficiency levels.

Some studies conducted with postsecondary students support the
use of the oral proficiency testing guidelines. In a study by
Meredith (1990) of university students, results indicated that the
range in the scale for the ACTFL proficiency guidelines was
appropriate. Similarly, studies by Henning (1992) and Dandonoli
(1990) of learners at the university level also showed that the
rating scale was an appropriate tool.

Researchers such as Clark (1975), Carroll (1978), and Backman

and Palmer (1981) have categorized oral proficiency testing as direct and indirect. Indirect proficiency tests may involve quasi-realistic activities such as describing pictures orally, using taped questions to elicit responses, cloze tests, dictations or any elicitation technique other than the direct interview. On the other hand, direct proficiency testing may involve reading aloud, presenting a prepared speech, small group discussion, playing a game, conducting a survey, speaking on the phone or the face-to-face interview. (Flynn,1991)

Byrnes (1987) posits the position that the oral interview does not give a sample of natural language use. She states that two things may result from the interview; either the student does better than normal because he/she is concentrating harder and paying closer attention to what he/she says or he/she does not perform as well as normal because he/she becomes nervous in the artificially created setting. Perren (1986) also suggests that the interview setting gives rise to psychological tensions and linguistic constraints of style and thought, given that both participants are aware that the interview is a test-taking situation rather than a naturally occurring communicative exchange.

Aside from these limitations, the face-to-face interview remains one of the most life-like oral assessment techniques available and is believed to be a valid measure of oral proficiency. (Backman and Palmer, 1981)

As well, writers such as Clark (1972), Clifford (1980), Backman and Porter (1981), and Adams (1987) report respectable inter- rater reliability for the oral proficiency interview.

2.5 Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy which is gaining the attention of second language teachers and researchers as an effective tool in establishing a communicative or proficiency oriented classroom. Slavin (1983) defines the cooperative learning process as a set of alternatives to the traditional systems of instruction whereby students work in heterogeneous groups of four to six members and earn recognition, rewards, and sometimes grades based on the academic performance of the group. Johnson and Johnson's (1985) model of cooperative learning is based on four principles: positive interdependence, face to face interaction among students, individual accountability for mastering assigned material, and instructing students in small-group and interpersonal skills.

Cooperative learning has been the subject of research since as early as 1898. Since then, nearly 600 experimental and over 100 correlational studies have been conducted on cooperative, competitive, and individual efforts to learn. (Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1994)

Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994) classify research on cooperative education into three major categories: efforts to achieve, positive relationships, and psychological health. Compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, the research suggests that cooperation results in greater efforts to achieve. This translates into higher achievement and productivity by high, medium, and low achievers, long term retention of information, intrinsic and achievement motivation, more time on task and an increase in higher level reasoning and critical thinking. Researchers (e.g., Johnson and Johnson, 1991) suggest that participation in cooperative learning activities contributes to more positive relationships among students such as increased personal and academic support, caring and commitment among students, greater tolerance of diversity and a desire for cohesion. In terms of improved psychological health, Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994) suggest that cooperative learning results in better psychological adjustment, increased social development and competencies, higher self esteem and a greater ability to cope with conflict and stress.

Slavin (1983), in his summary of the research, elucidates a number of findings. First, the effects of cooperative learning on achievement are positive. Of 41 studies conducted in the regular classroom, 26 found significantly greater learning in the cooperative learning groups. Only one of these studies found significantly greater learning in the control group. It was also

found that the group reward structures, such as Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT) and Students Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) appear to have consistently positive effects on students' achievement whereas the purely cooperative methods such as Group Investigation and Jigsaw are less likely to result in a higher achievement advantage over the traditional techniques. As well, the most effective methods combine group goals with individual accountability. Slavin indicates that achievement effects appear to be positive for all types of students, regardless of ability and race. Affective outcomes such as self-esteem, self-confidence, liking for the class, empathy, and social cooperation also correlate positively with cooperative learning.

Colville-Hall (1983) also points to the positive effects of cooperative learning on achievement and on students' attitudes towards learning. In 1981, researchers reviewed 122 studies on cooperative learning in a variety of academic areas, concluding that cooperation is more effective than competition or individualist efforts. An analysis by Johnson, Johnson, and Maruyama (1983) of a large number of cooperative learning studies suggested that cooperative learning was positively related to the successful interaction and achievement of minority and handicapped students.

A study by Sharan and Shachan (1988) examined the effects of cooperative learning on higher level thinking and informational

knowledge in English First Language (EFL) classes. The results indicated that students attained a superior level of academic achievement in activities which required both low and high level thinking. As well, the cooperative language setting tended to equalize the participation of the majority and minority ethnic group members, whereas in the traditional classroom format, the situation would normally be dominated by the majority group.

Bossert (1988), in his review of cooperative learning research, indicated that the benefits of cooperative learning held for students of all ages, for all subject areas and for a wide range of tasks, such as those involving retention, memory skills, rote-decoding and problem-solving abilities. These types of skills are essential for the second language learner .

Clarke (1992) points to the benefits of cooperative learning for the teacher in that it generates enthusiasm and energy for learning among students and allows teachers more flexibility in assuming different roles in the classroom.

To summarize, the research on cooperative learning suggests positive effects on academic achievement, self esteem, attitudes towards school and learning, and students' ability to cooperate with others. Students tend to take more responsibility for their learning, set higher expectations for themselves, and are more in control of their own learning. Studies show there is generally

more time on task, and fewer disruptions in classrooms.

Overall, much research presents cooperative learning as an effective instructional tool. While limited research on the use of cooperative learning in the second language classroom has been conducted, there have been a number of studies done in the ESL classroom and a few in FSL settings. Since these studies are dealing with second language acquisition, the results in ESL and other second language learning situations would likely be applicable to the French second language classroom.

2.6 Cooperative Learning and Second Language Acquisition

One of the earliest studies on cooperative learning in the foreign language classroom, by Gunderson and Johnson (1980), reported that cooperative learning promoted positive attitudes towards language learning in four areas: learning the language, relationship with one's peers, impact on student motivation, and personal benefits.

Berjerano (1987) concluded that cooperative learning suited the basic requirements of the communicative approach to second language learning in that it aimed for basic knowledge of grammar and vocabulary on the one hand and functional competence on the other. She found that those classes using small group techniques scored higher in language achievement tests.

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Kagan (1985) posits the view that second language acquisition is determined by such variables as input, output, and context. He suggests that cooperative learning can have a positive effect on all these variables which are so critical to language. He also suggests that there is a "natural marriage" between the ESL classroom and the cooperative learning classroom.

Perhaps the strongest in support of cooperative learning as an effective tool in second language acquisition is McGroaty (1989) who points to important parallels between the models and methods of second language learning and the principles of cooperative learning. According to McGroaty, there are three important aspects of classroom processes in second language acquisition. The first is repeated and varied exposure to language or, as Krashen (1982) might call it, input. The second refers to interaction, more specifically task based interaction, which is effective in conveying meaning and in allowing students a major role in understanding the new language content being studied. The third principle, negotiation, is essential in second language acquisition and cooperative learning. Those cooperative learning activities which demand negotiation among students and arrival at some sort of consensus are generally effective in developing competence in the second language. Through negotiation with others, students learn to refine their own language skills in an attempt to provide comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) to those in their cooperative learning groups.

Colville-Hall (1983) supports the view of Berjerano (1987) and McGroaty (1989) that cooperative learning leads to greater frequency of linguistic practice, increased interaction, positive attitudes towards second language learning, and a more active role for the learner. She also suggests that cooperative learning can provide an effective model of how individuals can negotiate meaning and manage conversation in a foreign tongue in an interactive environment.

Szostek (1994) observed an increased use of Spanish, the target language, among honours students in a post-secondary foreign language classroom, while they worked in cooperative learning groups. She concluded that cooperative learning is indeed an effective strategy in the honours foreign language classroom.

A number of studies have also been done on group work whose results may be extrapolated to cooperative learning, a more sophisticated form of group work. Pica and Doughty (1983) point to benefits of group work in the second language (L2) class, such as an increase in student opportunity to use the L2 in group activities as opposed to the more traditional activities. They also state that in small groups, students are more likely to be aware of breakdowns in communication than in larger groups and are thus forced to negotiate and refine their language in an effort to make it more comprehensible. Pica and Doughty are quick to caution

however that the type of task structure is important in determining whether or not there will be any negotiation of meaning. "Neither a teacher-fronted nor group format can have an impact on negotiation as long as these tasks continue to provide little motivation for classroom participants to access each other's view." (p.246) They suggest that the most effective types of activities are two way or information gap activities which require all group members to share their information in order to successfully complete the task. Research done by Long and Porter (1985) also support the effectiveness of group work on second language acquisition.

While much research reports positive effects of grouping on L2 learning, Wong (1995) writes that group activities are not conducive to language learning when group members do not have sufficient command of the L2 to provide accurate, appropriate input. She argues that the students' main opportunity to receive accurate input is in teacher fronted activities. Pica and Doughty (1983) note, however, that L2 learners made no more errors in group activities than in teacher-directed activities, and that students corrected each other's errors more frequently than in whole class activities. Lyster (1994), in a study of French immersion students who have advanced language competence, found that students did indeed negotiate form among themselves in cooperative learning activities with an analytic focus.

2.7 Conclusion

Much research supports cooperative learning as an effective tool in teaching a second language. (Slavin, 1983; Johnson, Johnson and Holubec, 1994; Kagan, 1995) The similarities between the cooperative learning model and the models of second language acquisition within a communicative approach, with their emphasis on input, output, negotiation of meaning, and context, would seem to suggest that cooperative learning activities, if the tasks are properly structured, could indeed lead to increased use of the target language.

Chapter Three
Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This project involved the design of cooperative learning activities for a unit in **Aventures 3**, and an evaluation of the impact of these activities on students' oral proficiency, particularly form and accuracy, and aural comprehension. The goal of the cooperative learning activities was to develop students' listening and speaking skills in French. In order to complete the assigned tasks, students had to listen, comprehend and speak in the target language. Reading and writing skills were also involved in the activities, but to a much lesser extent.

The cooperative learning activities were designed to help meet the objectives of the unit entitled "Plume et Poil" in the Grade 6 core French program: naming and describing pets, becoming aware of the responsibilities of owning a pet and the advantages and disadvantages of certain pets. In all four activities (Appendices A,B,C,D) students were exposed to the vocabulary items taught in the chapter. A knowledge of these items was necessary for the successful completion of the assigned tasks. Students were required to negotiate meaning while drawing upon their knowledge of the words, phrases, and language structures learned throughout the unit.

In designing the activities, it was necessary to consider the

limited language of the students.   It was not expected that students would be able to communicate in full sentences using appropriate structure. The focus was on the function rather than the form of the language. Generally, students in the elementary core French program communicate using single words and phrases rather than in complete sentences. With respect to listening comprehension, it was anticipated that exposure to the vocabulary items related to the topic, in a variety of contexts, would improve students' listening comprehension. The more exposure the students have to the unit vocabulary, the easier it should be to comprehend aurally the global meaning of situations/vignettes, such as those used in the multiple choice test (Appendix H).

For the cooperative learning activities, there were four heterogeneous groups of three students, each group evenly matched in terms of the range of second language ability. As an example, in one of the activities, the tournament, students moved from their heterogeneous base groups to homogeneous tournament groups. Within these homogeneous tournaments groups, students of similar ability competed against each other, then returned to their heterogeneous base groups with their individual scores.

The cooperative learning activities were competitive in design. Each base group was competing against one another for group rewards. Group rewards were given based on the combined scores of individuals within the group. Therefore, the success of

the group depended on the individual efforts of each member of the group. The objectives and procedures of each activity, as well as a list of materials, is provided in Appendices A,B,C and D.

Prior to their involvement in the activities related to this project, all students participated in the activities suggested in the manual for this unit such as games, small group activities, direct instruction, brainstorming, work-book activities, songs and role-playing. The experimental group went on to participate in the cooperative activities, while students in the control group participated in more usual FSL activities.

This study was quasi-experimental in design in that a treatment was administered to one group and its performance was compared with another equivalent group, similar in ability, which had received a different treatment type.

The questions to be answered in this study were as follows.

1. Will the cooperative learning activities in this project for a unit in the grade six core French program, have an effect on the aural comprehension of students who participate in these activities?

2. Will these activities have an effect on the oral proficiency of those students who participate, oral proficiency being measured by the performance criteria used in the criterion referenced test designed and tested by the Department of Education?

3. Are there any differential impacts of treatments on the students of differing abilities?

3.1 Sample

The sample for this project was a group of 24 Grade 6 students of varying ability. This sample was divided into two groups of matched pairs: a control group and an experimental group. Each group was similar in that, based on the teacher's assessment, there were five students of strong ability in each group, four students of average ability in each group, and three students of weak ability in each group. The ability groupings were formed based on the teacher's knowledge of and experience with these students, having taught this group for approximately two years.

These students have been together for the last six years. They come from a small school in a rural area and have similar socio-economic backgrounds. They range in age from 11-12, with the boy girl ratio being 8:16.

Permission to have these students participate in this project was sought and obtained from the parents of the students and the school board before proceeding with the project. These letters of permission are found in Appendices I and J respectively.

3.2 Data Treatment

For the project, the unit "Plume et Poil" was completed over a six week period. The unit was taught in the same fashion as the other units, using a combination of small group activities, role playing, and some direct instruction. In other words, the unit was taught using the methods and activities outlined in the teacher manual for **Aventures 3.** The students were not exposed to cooperative learning activities during the six week period.

Once the unit was completed, students in the experimental group participated in four cooperative learning activities. While the experimental group participated in these activities, the control group received treatment that was more typical of the regular classroom. As an example, students in the control group completed a crossword in French, an activity whose goal was to promote vocabulary acquisition, similar to some of the cooperative learning activities.

3.3 Data Collection

On the day following the completion of the cooperative learning activities, all students were given a multiple choice test (Appendix H), which had been verified by the Department of Education consultant for core French, designed to evaluate students' aural comprehension. The scores of the control and

experimental group were then tabulated and compared.

Two days following the completion of the cooperative learning activities, all students participated in the interview which was designed to evaluate students' oral proficiency. (Appendix E) These interviews took place over a two day period. Interviews were carried out in a separate room, totally removed from the regular classroom area. The interviews were conducted using questions developed by the researcher and validated by the Department of Education, and the speech samples were rated using an already established and approved scoring instrument designed by the Department of Education and used in the 1996 Grade 6 core French criterion referenced test (Appendices F and G).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data was collected from the oral interviews and multiple choice tests administered to the control and experimental groups. The multiple choice tests were administered during a regular classroom period to all students. The oral interviews were conducted in a separate room and were recorded on tape.

Once the data was collected, it was analysed and scored. Analysis of the multiple choice test consisted of comparing the scores of students in the control and experimental groups in order to compare the impacts of the cooperative learning and traditional

FSL activities on the aural comprehension of students. The global scores of each group were tabulated and compared. Besides the inter-group comparison, the scores of students in the three ability groupings, namely weak, average, and strong, were compared to examine whether or not there were differential impacts of treatments on students of differing ability levels.

Analysis of the oral interview was similar to that of the multiple choice test in that the global scores of each group were tabulated and compared. As well, the individual scores of students of different abilities in both the control and experimental groups were compared. However, given the qualitative nature of this type of evaluation, the analysis of the oral interviews went beyond an analysis of test scores to a more in-depth examination of the language of the data sample, to determine whether or not there were any qualitative differences.

The performance criteria for the Grade 6 oral interview were used to rate the speech samples (Appendix F): comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation/intonation, and appropriateness of structure. This generated a global score for each interview. Subsequently, each speech sample was analysed in terms of the four criteria mentioned above to compare the performance of students in the control and the experimental group on each of the four aspects of the language.

While a global score on the interview can give an indication of students' performance, detailed analysis of the data may reveal qualitative differences in the language used by the control and experimental group.

The interviews were scored by the students' core French teacher and by an independent marker proficient in French who was familiar with the students in the sample, having taught these students core French for a four month period. The performance criteria were discussed beforehand by the teacher and the independent marker to ensure consistency in the scoring procedure. The scores of the teacher were compared with those of the independent marker to determine the level of inter-rater consistency.

Retrievability of the results was ensured through access to student responses on the multiple choice tests and through taping of the oral interviews.

Chapter Four
Presentation of Results

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a package of cooperative learning activities and to determine the effect of these activities on the aural comprehension and oral proficiency of a small sample of Grade 6 core French students. These cooperative activities are based on the competitive cooperative learning models: TGT (teams-games-tournaments) and STAD (student-teams-achievement-divisions). These methods involve cooperative task structures which require students to work together cooperatively to meet the task requirements. Team rewards are based on the combined results of individual performances. The design of the study involved a control and experimental group. These groups were even in terms of ability and prior knowledge of French.

In this study data was collected from two sources: the multiple choice evaluation, designed to test aural comprehension, and the oral interview, designed to rate oral proficiency levels . (See Appendices H and E respectively)

On the multiple choice test students chose either Vrai (true) or Faux (false) in response to the questions posed. Given the objective nature of this test, it was scored solely by the Grade 6 core French teacher.

The oral interview, on the other hand, was more subjective in nature. It was scored using the performance criteria used in the Grade 6 Core French criterion referenced test (Appendix F). The criteria consisted of four categories, namely vocabulary, appropriateness of structure, pronunciation/intonation and comprehension. Within each of these categories, there was a scoring range from 1-5. In this type of evaluation scheme, there can be a variation of the scores assigned, based on the rater's interpretation of the criteria. Although the performance levels from 1-5 are described in the performance criteria, an element of choice exists. Given the subjective nature of this type of marking scheme, it was necessary to ensure reliability of the data through triangulation of the results. Consequently, the oral interviews were rated independently by two raters.

4.1 Analysis of Data from Multiple Choice Test

Following the administration of the multiple choice listening comprehension test, the scores of the control group and experimental group were tabulated. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

TABLE 4.1
Comparison of Scores of the Matched Pairs on the Listening Comprehension Test.

Control Group n=12	Experimental Group n=12
8	12
7	10
8	12
7	10
10	12
8	10
11	11
12	14
13	15
12	10
14	12
12	12
TOTAL SCORE 122 (out of 180)	140 (out of 180)
MEAN SCORE 10.16	11.66

As Table 4.1 indicates, the total score for the control group was 122 points out of a possible 180. The total score for the experimental group was 140 points out of a possible 180. The total score of the experimental group was 18 points higher than that of the control group. Calculated as a percentage, the experimental group scored 10% higher than the control group. The mean score of the control group was 10.16 while the mean score of the experimental group was 11.66.

Students in the experimental group tended to score higher than peers in the control group on a test measuring aural comprehension. This result would seem to suggest that the experimental group did benefit from the cooperative activities, in that their overall listening comprehension score was 10% higher than that of the control group.

Aside from an analysis of overall test scores, the test scores were analysed according to ability groupings, to determine whether or not certain groups of students within the experimental group benefited more from these activities. As described in the design of the study, students were divided into three ability groupings: weak, average, and strong. In the control group and the experimental group, there were three students of weak ability, four students of average ability, and five students of strong ability. The ability groups were formed based on the teacher's knowledge of and experience with these students. Table 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 present the scores by ability group.

When scores for the matched pairs of weak ability students were tabulated, we obtained the scores shown in Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2

Comparison of Listening Comprehension Scores of Weak Ability Students

WEAK ABILITY			
Control Group n=3		Experimental Group n=3	
Student	Score	Student	Score
1	8	2	12
3	7	4	10
5	8	6	12
TOTAL	23(out of 45)		34(out of 45)
MEAN	7.67		11.33

As seen in Table 4.2, in the weaker ability groupings, the mean score of students in the control group was 7.67 while the mean score of students in the experimental group was 11.33.

A similar analysis was done for the matched pairs in the average ability group. The results are found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Comparison of Listening Comprehension Scores of Average Ability Students

AVERAGE ABILITY			
Control Group n=4		Experimental Group n=4	
Student	Score	Student	Score
7	7	8	10
9	10	10	12
11	8	12	10
13	11	14	11
TOTAL	36(out of 60)		43(out of 60)
MEAN	9		10.75

From Table 4.3, we observed that in the average ability grouping, the mean score of students in the control group was 9, while the mean score of students in the experimental group was 10.75.

When the listening comprehension scores of the stronger students were analysed, we obtained the results shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Comparison of Listening Comprehension Scores of Strong Ability Students

STRONG ABILITY			
Control Group n=5		Experimental Group n=5	
Student	Score	Student	Score
15	12	16	14
17	13	18	15
19	12	20	10
21	14	22	12
23	12	24	12
TOTAL	63 (out of 75)		63 (out of 75)
MEAN	12.6		12.6

Table 4.4 indicates that in the stronger ability groupings, the mean score of students in the control group and the experimental group was identical, 12.6.

In this particular project, the weaker ability experimental group seemed to benefit most from the cooperative learning activities, scoring 11 points higher than the weaker ability control group. The average ability experimental group also seemed to benefit considerably from the cooperative activities scoring 7 points higher than the average ability control group. For the stronger ability students, however, the impact of cooperative learning and traditional treatments tended to produce similar results.

While the weaker and average students who participated in cooperative learning activities obtained higher aural comprehension scores than their peers in the control groups, the stronger students in both the control and experimental groups had the same mean aural comprehension score.

4.2 Analysis of Data from Oral Interviews

The oral interview was designed to rate the oral proficiency of students in the sample. Proficiency levels were obtained by conducting taped interviews using the oral interview in Appendix E. A tape recording of the interviews is found in Appendix K. Once the oral interviews were completed, students' speech samples were rated using the scoring sheet (Appendix G) and the performance criteria (Appendix F) used in the core French criterion referenced test administered by the Department of Education in June, 1996.

Given the subjective nature of the oral interview, it was decided that both the teacher and an independent marker would score the interviews. Table 4.5 shows the ratings of the two evaluators for the oral interviews.

Table 4.5 Raters' Scores on the Oral Interview

STUDENT	SCORES		
	TEACHER 2	TEACHER 1	DIFFERENCE
1	4.5	5	+1/2
2	4.5	5	+1/2
3	4.5	4.5	0
4	6	6	0
5	5	5	0
6	6	5	−1
7	5	4.5	−1/2
8	6.5	7.5	+1
9	6.5	7.5	+1
10	5.5	4.5	−1
11	6.5	6	−1/2
12	6.5	6.5	0
13	5	5.5	+1/2
14	6	7	+1
15	5.5	5.5	0
16	6.5	7.5	+1
17	7	7.5	+1/2
18	7.5	7.5	0
19	6.5	6.5	0
20	6	5.5	−1/2
21	6.5	7	+1/2
22	6.5	7	+1/2
23	6.5	6.5	0
24	6	5.5	−1/2
Mean	5.9375	6.0625	0.125

As seen in Table 4.5, in ten of the interviews, teacher two gave

higher scores than teacher one, while in six of the interviews, teacher two gave lower scores than teacher one. In eight of the interviews, both teachers gave the same score.

Table 4.6 presents the global scores of the matched pairs from the control and experimental group on the oral interview.

TABLE 4.6

Comparison of Global Scores of Matched Pairs of Students in the Control and Experimental Group on the Oral Interview

Control Group n=12	Experimental Group n=12
4.5	4.5
4.5	6
5	6
5	6.5
6.5	5.5
6.5	6.5
5	6
5.5	6.5
7	7.5
6.5	6
6.5	6.5
6.5	6
TOTAL SCORE 69(out of 120)	73.5(out of 120)
MEAN SCORE: 5.75	6.125

As Table 4.6 indicates, the mean score for the control group was 5.75, while the mean score of the experimental group was 6.125.

The data shows that the experimental group scored slightly higher than the control group on an interview measuring oral proficiency. This would suggest that the experimental group did benefit from the cooperative learning activities, but not considerably more than students exposed to more traditional type activities.

The oral interview scores are consistent with the results on the multiple choice test in that the overall score of students in the experimental group was greater than that of students in the control group.

Aside from an overall analysis of test scores, the test scores of students in the three ability groupings were compared to determine the impacts of the two treatments on students in each ability grouping.

Ability groupings were the same as those used in the analysis of the multiple choice test. Table 4.7 below indicates the individual and total scores for the weak ability students.

TABLE 4.7

Comparison of Oral Interview Scores of Students of Weak Ability

WEAK ABILITY			
Control Group n=3		Experimental Group n=3	
Student	Score	Student	Score
1	4.5	2	4.5
3	4.5	4	6
5	5	6	6
TOTAL	14(out of 30)		16.5(out of 30)
MEAN	4.67		5.5

As Table 4.7 indicates, in the weaker ability groupings, the mean score of students in the control group was 4.67 while the mean score of students in the experimental group was 5.5.

When the interview scores of average ability students were examined, the results shown in Table 4.8 were obtained.

Table 4.8
Comparison of Oral Interview Scores of Students of Average Ability

AVERAGE ABILITY			
Control Group n=4		Experimental Group n=4	
Student	Score	Student	Score
7	5	8	6.5
9	6.5	10	5.5
11	6.5	12	6.5
13	5	14	6
TOTAL	23 (out of 40)		24.5 (out of 40)
MEAN	5.75		6.125

From Table 4.8 we observed that in the average ability groupings, the mean score of students in the control group was 5.75 while the mean score of those in the experimental group was 6.125.

Analysis of the scores for the strong ability students yielded the scores found in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9
Comparison of Oral Interview Scores of Students of Strong Ability

STRONG ABILITY			
Control Group n=5		Experimental Group n=5	
Student	Score	Student	Score
15	5.5	16	6.5
17	7	18	7.5
19	6.5	20	6
21	6.5	22	6.5
23	6.5	24	6
TOTAL	32(out of 50)		32.5(out of 50)
MEAN	6.4		6.5

Table 4.9 indicates that in the stronger ability groupings, the mean score of students in the control group was 6.4, while the mean score of students in the experimental group was 6.5.

While the differences are small, the oral interview ratings for students in all ability groups tended to be slightly higher for students who participated in cooperative learning activities than for peers who participated in more traditional activities.

The scores on the oral interview are consistent with those on the multiple choice test which measured aural comprehension. In terms of test scores, the weaker and average ability experimental groups seemed to benefit most from the activities, while the scores

of the stronger ability experimental group were not noticeably different from those of the control group.

The performance criteria for the oral interview consisted of four categories: comprehension, vocabulary, pronunciation/intonation, and appropriateness of structure. Given the subjective nature of the oral interview, it was decided to examine the scores by category. The explanation of these categories is contained in Appendix F. The following tables indicate the ratings (on a scale of 1-5) of students from the control and experimental groups on each of the four categories.

When ratings on the comprehension category were tabulated, we obtained the data found in Table 4.10.

TABLE 4.10

Comparison of Scores of Students in the Control and Experimental Group on Category 1 of the Oral Interview: Comprehension

CATEGORY 1: COMPREHENSION			
Control Group n=12		Experimental Group n=12	
Rating	Number of Students	Rating	Number of Students
5	0	5	2
4	8	4	8
3	4	3	1
2	0	2	1
1	0	1	0

As Table 4.10 indicates, there were marginal differences in the ratings of students in the control group and the experimental group in this category. Two of the students in the experimental group scored 5 while none of the students in the control group received this rating. In both groups, 8 students received a rating of 4. A rating of 3 was given to 4 students in the control group and 1 in the experimental group. One student in the experimental group received a rating of 2. There is a tendency for students in the experimental group to score better than students in the control group.

An analysis of student scores on vocabulary yielded the results found in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

Comparison of Scores of Students in the Control and Experimental
Group in Category 2 of the Oral Interview:
Vocabulary

CATEGORY 2: VOCABULARY			
Control Group n=12		Experimental Group n=12	
Rating	Number of Students	Rating	Number of Students
5	0	5	0
4	0	4	1
3	7	3	8
2	5	2	3
1	0	1	0

From Table 4.11 we observe that neither the control group nor the experimental group received a score of five on vocabulary. One student in the experimental group received a 4 rating. A rating of 3 was given to seven students in the control group and eight students in the experimental group. A rating of 2 was given to five students in the control group and one student in the experimental group.

While there were no noteworthy differences in the ratings for this category, there was a difference in the number of vocabulary items used by the control group and the experimental group. This was not evident in the scores because the ratings in this category did not take the number of different vocabulary words used into consideration, but rather the use of full sentences and the nature

of the responses. A comparison of the number of vocabulary items used by the control and experimental groups shows that the control group used a total of 104 vocabulary items while the experimental group used a total of 139 items. This seems to suggest a positive impact of cooperative learning activities on vocabulary acquisition for students in the experimental group.

The speech samples were also rated with respect to pronunciation/intonation. The number of students who obtained various ratings is shown in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12
Comparison of Student Scores in the Control and Experimental Group in Category 3 of the Oral Interview: Pronunciation/Intonation

CATEGORY 3: PRONUNCIATION/INTONATION			
Control Group n=12		Experimental Group n=12	
Rating	Number of Students	Rating	Number of Students
5	1	5	4
4	5	4	7
3	6	3	1
2	0	2	0
1	0	1	0

As seen from Table 4.12, the category of pronunciation/intonation was also a category in which many students in both groups received high scores. While students in the experimental group performed slightly better than students in the control group, the difference

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was not great.

A rating of 5 was given to 1 student in the control group and 4 students in the experimental group while a rating of 4 was given to 5 students in the control group and 7 in the experimental group. While 6 students in the control group received a rating of 3, only 1 student in the experimental group received this rating. No student in either group received a rating of 2 or 1, indicating that overall this was a strong area for both groups, but somewhat stronger for the experimental group.

Finally, student scores were compared with respect to appropriateness of structure. Table 4.13 gives the number of students who obtained ratings on each level of the 1-5 scale.

Table 4.13

A Comparison of Student Scores in the Control and Experimental Groups on Category 4 of the Oral Interview: Appropriateness of Structure

CATEGORY 4: APPROPRIATENESS OF STRUCTURE			
Control Group n=12		Experimental Group n=12	
Rating	Number of Students	Rating	Number of Students
5	0	5	0
4	0	4	0
3	1	3	0
2	4	2	3
1	7	1	9

As Table 4.13 indicates, this was the weakest area of all 4 categories. Students from both the control group and the experimental group scored poorly in this area. Only 1 student from the control group received a rating of 2 while 3 students in the experimental group received this rating. A rating of 1 was given to seven students in the control group and 9 students in the experimental group.

A possible explanation for this weakness might be found in how the ratings for this category are defined. The ratings were based on students' use of full sentences and appropriate structure. Given the age and the general level of competence of Grade 6 core French students, it might not be realistic to expect complete sentences, appropriately structured. As well, the most natural of

conversations, especially at this age level, often consist of one word answers and short phrases. This does not mean that communication is not occurring. The rating of students in this category should therefore be interpreted in light of how these ratings are defined in the criteria. Most of the students did respond with one word answers, which merits a rating of 1 in the criteria.

Another possible explanation for the findings in Table 4.13 is that neither the cooperative learning activities nor the more traditional activities in which the students participated, emphasize the use of full sentences or appropriate sentence structure.

4.3 Other Observations

Observation of the students while they participated in the cooperative learning activities revealed that students were generally actively engaged in the process. All students seemed eager to do their best so that their home group would win. The competitive nature of the activities seemed to provide a strong incentive to succeed.

There were no discipline problems encountered throughout the activities. Students were on task and worked independently within their home groups, occasionally asking for clarification of

instructions. The teacher acted primarily as facilitator, which is the desired role in cooperative learning activities. Students seemed eager to help and encourage one another. Even the weaker and quieter students tended to be actively involved in the activities. The groups were generally animated and dynamic in pursuing their assigned tasks. Students seemed to genuinely enjoy the activities, asking if they could do additional activities.

Compared with students' use of the target language during the regular French class, there was a noticeable increase in their use of the target language during the cooperative learning activities. The majority of the time, students used the target language. On occasion, however, they had to be reminded to make every effort to communicate in French. Most of the student utterances were one word answers or short phrases. Any complete sentences used were those with which students were very familiar such as " Je ne sais pas," "Qu'est-ce que c'est?", "Oh-la-la!" and others. Students relied on the members of their group for help in pronunciation, often looking to another member of the group while repeating the word or phrase in question. The final result was usually quite accurate once the input of group members had been given. Often one student would start a word or phrase and it would be completed by another student. Students corrected themselves and others in their group on their pronunciation.

The informal observation of students during the cooperative

learning activities would seem to confirm some of the research findings. Students tended to be more enthusiastic about learning (Clark, 1992); there was more time spent on task and less disruption in the classroom (Slavin, 1983); students were actively engaged in the activities (Slavin, 1983); and students spent time negotiating meaning (Mcgroaty, 1989) and pronunciation (Wong, 1995) during the cooperative learning activities. Whereas Wong (1995) argued that group activities were not conducive to second language learning because of the lack of accurate, teacher-fronted input, observation revealed that students, particularly those who are more proficient in the language, can provide accurate input to other students.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has included the presentation and analysis of data obtained from a multiple choice test, measuring aural comprehension, and an oral interview, measuring oral proficiency. The data indicates that students who participated in cooperative learning activities tended to have higher scores on the aural comprehension test and the oral interview. More detailed analyses of scores seem to indicate differential impacts of the different treatments on students in the various ability groupings.

Chapter Five
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to develop a package of cooperative learning activities and to compare their effects on the aural comprehension and oral proficiency of a small sample of students with that of more traditional treatment. Analysis of the data indicates that the overall scores of students in the experimental group on the instruments designed to measure aural comprehension and oral proficiency tended to be higher than the overall scores of students in the control group. This suggests that the cooperative learning activities did have a positive effect on those students who participated in them.

The difference in scores between the experimental and control group appears to be greater for the listening comprehension test than for the oral interview. This might suggest that the cooperative learning activities were particularly effective in developing students' aural comprehension skills. This is consistent with a study by Berjerano (1987) in an EFL classroom, which pointed to the effectiveness of cooperative learning activities in developing listening comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the data indicates for our sample that the test scores of students of weak and average ability in the experimental group tended to be higher than those of their counterparts in the control group while the test scores of higher ability students in

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both groups showed small gains. The research on cooperative learning as summarized by Slavin (1983), indicates that the effects on achievement appear to be positive for all types of students. A possible explanation for the low differential impact of these activities on the stronger ability students could be that the stronger ability students, regardless of the type of treatment, were intrinsically motivated to do well. Alternatively, it is possible that high ability students perform better in homogeneous groups, regardless of treatment type.

An analysis of student ratings in the four categories of the performance criteria on the interview revealed little variation in student ratings in the categories of comprehension, vocabulary, and appropriateness of structure. In the category of pronunciation/intonation, students in the experimental group did perform noticeably better than students in the control group. This is not consistent with Wong's (1985) argument that group work does not provide accurate input and therefore does not lead to accuracy in pronunciation/intonation.

In the category of vocabulary, students in the experimental group did use more vocabulary items than students in the control group, suggesting that the cooperative learning activities did influence vocabulary acquisition of students in the experimental group. This is consistent with a study by Berjerano (1987) which pointed to the effectiveness of cooperative learning on learning

discrete point material such as vocabulary.

It should be noted that interview ratings for the two raters were consistent. This is consistent with findings of Bachman and Palmer (1981), Clifford (1980), Adams (1978), and Clark (1967), which point to the oral proficiency interview as yielding respectable levels of inter-rater reliability.

5.2 Conclusions

The questions to be answered in this study were as follows.

1. Will the cooperative learning activities in this project for a unit in the grade six core French program, have an effect on the aural comprehension of students who participate in these activities?

2. Will these activities have an effect on the oral proficiency of those students who participate, oral proficiency being measured by the performance criteria used in the criterion referenced test designed and tested by the Department of Education?

3. Are there any differential impacts of treatments on students of differing abilities?

The answers to these questions must take into consideration the small sample size of the overall group, and the even smaller

sample sizes in the ability groupings.

1. In the multiple choice test measuring aural comprehension,
the mean score of students in the experimental group was 11.66
while the mean score of students in the control group was 10.66.
The cooperative activities, then did appear to have a positive
effect on the aural comprehension of students.

2. On the oral interview, which measured oral proficiency
levels, the total score of students in the experimental group was
4.5 points (out of a possible 120) higher than the total score of
students in the control group. The mean score of the experimental
group was 0.375 percent higher than that of the control group. The
difference in the scores, although not as great as that of the
multiple choice test, does indicate that the cooperative learning
activities did have a positive effect on the oral proficiency of
students.

3. On the listening comprehension test, students of weak
ability in the experimental group scored an average of 0.83 points
higher than students of weak ability in the control group while
students of average ability in the experimental group scored an
avarage of 0.375 points higher than students of average ability in
the control group. Students of strong ability in the experimental
group had the same mean score as students in the control group.

On the oral interviews, students of weak ability in the experimental group scored 2.5 points higher than students of similar ability in the experimental group, while students of average ability in the experimental group scored 1.5 points higher than students of similar ability in the control group. Students of strong ability in the experimental group scored 0.5 points higher than students of similar ability in the control group. In other words, the differences in test scores on the oral interview were marginal.

The results may be related to a level of incongruence between the design of the cooperative learning activities and the evaluation criteria. These activities did not emphasize the use of appropriate structure as defined in the evaluation criteria for the Grade 6 criterion referenced test. As well, the activities seemed to have a greater impact on listening comprehension than on oral proficiency. The findings, however, cannot be generalized to any other cooperative learning activities because of the small sample size.

Informal observation of the students as they participated in the cooperative learning activities indicated that students seemed actively engaged in the process, that they were working cooperatively to successfully complete the assigned task, and that despite a limited knowledge of the target language, students could successfully negotiate meaning.

5.3 Recommendations

1.   In this project, the data suggests a difference in the effect of the cooperative learning activities on different ability groupings particularly on aural comprehension scores. In order to verify these findings, it is recommended that a study with a larger sample size be conducted.

2.   A comparison of student ratings in the control and experimental groups on the four categories of the performance criteria revealed that the weakest area for all students was appropriateness of structure. This is consistent with the results of the Grade 6 criterion referenced test administered in June, 1996. However, since the scoring scheme did not include a scale on the transmission of meaning, it is recommended that this element be added to the rating criteria for a future study.

3.   An analysis of the oral interviews revealed that students in the experimental group used more vocabulary items than students in the control group. This was not reflected in the oral interview scores because the performance criteria rated students on the use of complete sentences and appropriate structure, never taking into consideration the number of vocabulary items used. If this were recognized in the criteria, there would have been a greater difference in the scores of the experimental and control groups on the oral interview. It is recommended that vocabulary acquisition be included in the performance criteria for the oral interview for future administrations of the Grade 6 criterion referenced test.

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Appendix A
Cooperative Learning Activity 1- Tournament

Cooperative Learning Activities

Background

The following four cooperative learning activities have been designed for Unit E, "Plume et Poil" in the Grade 6 core French program _Aventures 3_. These activities are competitive in nature and are based on the TGT (teams-games-tournaments) and STAD (students achievement division) cooperative learning models described in Chapter one.

These activities will be carried out with students who are already familiar with the philosophy and design of cooperative learning. Throughout the school year, these students have been competing among their cooperative learning groups for the largest number of stickers. The group with the most stickers at the end of a given time period wins a prize, such as pizza, a movie, or school recognition. The reward incentives used are the decision of the individual teacher.

Activity 1: Tournament

Materials

- envelopes containing question/answer cards for each group
- individual tally sheets
- group tally sheets

Objective

The object of this activity is to have students leave their heterogeneous cooperative learning home groups to compete in homogeneous tournament teams. Students will be competing for the highest number of correct answers on material related to the unit. The cooperative leaning group with the greatest number of points will win.

Procedure

1. Students, within their cooperative learning groups, study cooperatively to review and master material covered in the unit. Students are responsible for their own and each other's learning.
2. Students move to homogeneous (equal ability groups) to compete in a game whereby each student in the tournament team is asked the same number of questions pertaining to the unit material. Students take turns asking and answering questions. Points are awarded for each correct answer. Students keep track of their points on the individual tally sheets.
3. Students return to their home groups with their individual scores to calculate their total team score.
4. The winning team is rewarded.

** The design of tournament teams is the decision of the individual teacher. It is important that tournament teams are homogeneous.

These questions/answers are to be written on cards, the question on one side and the answer on the other. Which questions are used and how many per student, is the decision of the individual teacher. Teachers may wish to add their own questions to the list.

1. Nomme un oiseau qui chante. un canari

2. Nomme un oiseau qui parle. un perroquet

3. Nomme un poisson qui est rouge. un poisson rouge

4. Un magasin ou on achète les animaux. une animalérie

5. Une personne qui aide les animaux malades. une vétérinaire

6. Un bébé chat. un chaton

7. Un bébé chien. un chiot

8. Un petit animal gris qui a peur des chats. une souris

9. Un chien qui aide les policiers. un chien policier

10. La maison d'un poisson. un aquarium/un bocal

11. Une personne qui prend les photos des animaux. une photographe

12. Le meilleur compagnon des hommes. le chien

13. Une personne petite qui travaille avec les chevaux un jockey

14. Une personne qui dresse les chiens. un dresseur

15. Un poisson aux couleurs vives. un poisson tropical

Vrai ou Faux?

16. Un poisson tropical habite dans une cage. Faux

17. Un chiot est un bébé chat. Faux

18. Une vétérinaire prend soin des animaux. Vrai

19. Il faut brosser les chiens. Vrai

20. Il faut promener les oiseaux. Faux

21. Un animal domestique est une grande responsabilité. Vrai

22. Normalement, les chats sont très indépendants. Vrai

23. *Un chien d'aveugle travaille avec les policiers.* <u>*Faux*</u>

24. *Les lapins habitent dans l'eau.* <u>*Faux*</u>

Oui ou Non?

25. *Est-ce qu'un guppy a des plumes?.* <u>*Non*</u>

26. *Est-ce qu'un chaton est un bébé chat.?*<u>*Oui*</u>

27. *Est-ce que les chiens ont besoin de laisses et de colliers?* <u>*Oui*</u>

28. *J'ai six laisses et six chiens. Est-ce que j'ai assez de laisses?* <u>*Oui*</u>

29. *J'ai trois poissons et dix aquariums. Est-ce que j'ai trop d'aquariums?* <u>*Oui*</u>

30. *Est-ce qu''il faut laver les serpents?* <u>*Non*</u>

Appendix B
Cooperative Learning Activity 2- Qui Suis-Je?

Activity 2 "Qui Suis-Je?"

Materials

- sheet A,B,C,D per group
- one answer sheet per group
- one pen per group

Object

The object of this activity is to listen to four clues about an object/person/animal and to then decide, as a group, what the correct answer is. The first group who correctly completes the answer sheet will be rewarded.

Procedure

To ensure the involvement of all group members, share the resources among the group. Distribute the clue sheets, A,B,C,D and the answer sheet to different members of the group. In this way each member has a role in the activity, either to read out a clue or to write down the answer. This creates group interdependence.

Explain to the group that those members with the clue sheets shall read out one clue each for each number. For example, Student A will read out Clue 1 on Sheet A. Student B will read out Clue 1 on Sheet B. Student C will read out Clue 1 on Sheet C and Student D will read out Clue 1 on Sheet D. Once the four clues for number one have been read out, the group will try the decide on the answer. The recorder within the group will record the answers on the answer sheets. Answers must be spelled correctly in order to receive full points for the answer. Students will be given the number of letters in each answer on the answer sheet. Students may use any resources they need to complete the activity; tesxt, dictionnary, vocabulary sheets etc.

Once the answer sheet has been completed, students will submit their sheet to the teacher. The teacher should not announce the winning group until all answer sheets have been submitted, so as not to discourage those groups who are still working after the first group has submitted their answers. There is always the possibility that the first group could have made a mistake. The winner could be the very last group to sumbit if the groups before them have made any errors in their answers. It is important to explain this to the students before starting the activity.

1. *C'est un animal qui a des poils.*

2. *C'est un animal sans plume et sans poil.*

3. *C'est une personne.*

4. *C'est un magasin.*

5. *C'est un animal grand.*

6. *C'est un animal.*

7. *C'est un animal qui habite dans le fôret.*

8. *C'est un animal.*

9. *C'est une personne.*

10. *C'est un animal qui habite dans l'eau.*

1. *Il aime le lait.*

2. *Il habite dans le fôret et dans le desert.*

3. *Il aide les animaux.*

4. *Il y a beaucoup d'animaux là.*

5. *Il est très intelligent.*

6. *Il est grand et il court vite.*

7. *Il a des grand oreilles.*

8. *Il habite dans une cage.*

9. *Il/Elle est très petit(e).*

10. *Une couleur fait partie de son nom.*

1. *Il est très petit.*

2. *Il peut être dangereux.*

3. *Il faut aller à l'université pour travailler dans cette profession.*

4. *On doit faire l'inventaire là.*

5. *Il chasse les voleurs.*

6. *Il faut le brosser.*

7. *Il saute bien.*

8. *Il chante bien et il vole.*

9. *Il/Elle adore les chevaux.*

10. *Il est très petit.*

1. *Il chasse les souris.*

2. *Il est très long.*

3. *Il faut avoir la patience.*

4. *Il y a beaucoup de bruit là.*

5. *Il peut être féroce.*

6. *Il habite sur une ferme.*

7. *Il apporte les oeufs aux enfants pendant les Pâques.*

8. *Il n'est pas très grand.*

9. *Il/Elle est très sportif/sportive.*

10. *Il faut le nourrir.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Appendix C
Cooperative Learning Activity 3- Animal Graffiti

Activity 3 "Animal Graffitti"

Materials
- large sheet of chart paper or bristol board for each group
- different coloured marker for each group
- stop watch or some other means of recording time

Object
The object of the game is to brainstorm as many qualities or characteristics of different animals as possibile within a given time limit. The group which can record the most words or ideas associated with a certain animal, will win three stickers. The group in second place will receive two stickers and the group in third place will receive one sticker. How rewards are distributed is determined by the individual teacher.

Procedure
Each group is given a sheet of chart paper with the name of an animal written in the middle. These should be animals studied in the unit. Each group is given a different coloured marker. One person in each group, the recorder, writes the group's suggestions. Students are given two minutes (time limit may vary) to record as many words/ideas in French as they can, associated with a particular animal. Groups start with the sheet they have been given. Once the time is up they move to the next sheet/next animal and do the same thing again. This rotation continues until each group is back at the animal they started with. Students cannot write a word which has already been recorded. They have to come up with new ideas. Students are allowed to use whatever resources are available to them during this activity.
Once the activity has been completed, the sheets are posted in the classroom. The number of words recorded by each group is calculated. For example, if group 1 for · has used a green marker, the number of words written in green are counted. The same method is used for each group. Incorrect or unclear answers shall be discounted. Spelling does not have to be perfect for this activity, however the word should be clearly discernable.

Appendix D
Cooperative Learning Activity 4- Quiz Me

Activity 4 "Quiz Me"

Materials
- individual quiz sheets

Object
    The object of this activity is to have students study cooperatively in their cooperative learning groups to prepare for an individual quiz to be given as the last activity in the unit. Each student shall receive an individual score on the quiz. The average of the cooperative group shall be calculated and the group with the highest average will be rewarded.

Procedure
    In this activity students are asked to match the person or animal in the left hand column with the word or phrase in the right hand column which is most closely associated with that person or animal.

Nom:_____

Write the letter of the word or phrase next to the appropriate person/animal.

lion_____   a) Je suis noir et blanc.

chat_____   b) J'aide les personnes handicapées.

chien d'aveugle____   c) J'ai besoin d'une litière.

vétérinaire_____   d) Je suis gris et j'ai peur des chats.

perroquet____   e) J'aime macher les pantoufles.

hamster____   f) Je porte une masque comme un voleur.

canari____   g) Je suis un bébé qui aime le lait.

raton laveur____   h) Je travaille à l'animalérie.

photographe____   I) J'ai beaucoup de patience.

souris____   j) Je parle beaucoup.

chiot____   k) Je suis petit et j'habite dans une
                                  cage.

zèbre____   l) J'aime aider les animaux malades.

chaton____   m) Je chante bien.

jockey____   n) J'adore mon cheval.

vendeur____   o) Je suis grand et féroce.

Appendix E
Oral Interview

<u>**Evaluation Tools**</u>

The evaluation tools for this project are an oral interview and a multiple choice test. These evaluation tools have been designed in accordance with the aims of the unit *Plume et Poil* in the Grade 6 core French learning resource <u>Aventures 3.</u> The aims of the unit are:

1. Naming and describing pets
2. Explaining the responsibilities of pet care
3. Discussing the advantages/disadvantages of different pets.
4. Expressing opinions about pets.
5. Exploring professions related to animals.

The oral interview has been designed to focus on the first four aims. Given the difference in students' backgrounds, knowledge, and personal situations, responses will differ. The interviewer must attempt to personalize the interview as much as possible, while guiding and encouraging the student to fulfill the objectives of the interview. The interviewer must be able to adapt his/her style and line of questionning to each individual situation. Since the interview cannot be rigidly defined, there must be flexibility on the part of the interviewer.

The multiple choice test is also designed to test the aims of the unit. It draws heavily upon the vocabulary and linguistic structures introduced in the unit.

<u>Oral Interview</u>

The following are possible guides for the interviewer to follow in administering the oral interview. The interviewer should be very familiar with these structures before beginning the interviews. The interviewer should aim at a minimum of five exchanges (the student will speak at least five times) before bringing the interview to a close. Approximately ten communicative exchanges would be ideal.

The following instructions are taken from the CRT(criterion referenced test) administered by the Department of Education in June,1996.

<u>Interview Procedure</u>

The interview should be friendly and relaxed. The task of the tester is to guide the student in performing spontaneously in French. Before the interview session, the teacher should review question types. While conducting the conversation, the teacher must keep clearly in mind that the purpose of the interview is to determine the highest sustained level at which a student can function in French.

As the topic is introduced, the teacher should begin with a couple of simple quesrions such as *Comment t'appelles-tu? Comment ça va?* which will set the student at ease but will not be used to evaluate the student. Questions should be posed in a normal tone of voice and at a normal pace. When a student has difficulty it may be necessary to repeat, slow down, or paraphrase.

There are many encouragers which can be used to further communication. These show that the tester is listening attentively while being minimally disruptive and nonevaluative. Nonverbal encouragers include the following:

1. Keeping eye contact.

2. Being alert and keeping an attentive body posture.

3. Avoiding looking at the clock.

4. Smiling.

5. Nodding.

Once the topic is selected, focus on one or two simple questions and elaborate on these based on the student's responses. In order to decrease student uneasiness and encourage the student to talk, begin with short questions. Gradually progress from simple to more complex questions.

Teacher: Bonjour (name of student)! I would like to have a conversation with you in French about animals. I am going to ask you some questions on this topic and I want you to answer in French as well as you can. If you wish, you can ask me some questions as well. Do you have any questions before we start? O.K. Just relax.

Est-ce que tu aimes les animaux?

As-tu un animal à la maison?

Quels animaux est-ce que tu as à la maison?

Quel animal est-ce que tu préfères?

Est-ce que ton ami(e) a un animal à leur maison?

Comment s'appelle ton chien/ta chienne/ton chat/ta chatte?

Quel âge a ton animal domestique?

As tu un collier/une laisse/un aquarium/un bocal pour ton animal?

Qui prend soin de ton animal?

Quels animaux est-ce que tu vois dans la forêt?

Quels animaux est-ce que tu vois à la télé?

Préfères-tu un chien ou un chat? Pourquoi?

Est-ce qu'un animal domestique est une grande responsabilité? Pourquoi?

Décris ton animal.

Aimes-tu ton animal? Pourquoi?

Merci bien. C'est tout!

Appendix F
Performance Criteria for Oral Interview

Performance Criteria for the Oral Interview

Students performance will be rated according to the following criteria:

* Vocabulary
  - 5   - full sentences
  - 4   - majority full sentences with some one word responses
  - 3   - mostly one word answers and occasional full sentences
  - 2   - one word answers (6 to 7 words)
  - 1   - one word answers to few questions (0 to 5)

* Appropriateness of Structure
  - 5   - always responds in full sentences with appropriate structure
  - 4   - generally responds in full sentences with appropriate structure
  - 3   - uses appropriate structure in half of the responses
  - 2   - generally poor use of structure
  - 1   - no subject/verb/predicate completion; responds in single words

* Pronunciation/Intonation
  - 5   - pronounces all vocabulary accurately
  - 4   - generally pronounces vocabulary accurately
  - 3   - pronounces vocabulary accurately in half of responses
  - 2   - generally poor pronunciation
  - 1   - markedly English or use of "oui" / "non"

* Comprehension
  - 5   - rarely requires repetition; no rephrasing; understands all questions
  - 4   - requires some repetition and rephrasing; understands majority of questions
  - 3   - understands at least half of the questions with frequent repetition and rephrasing
  - 2   - understands at least two questions
  - 1   - understands at least one question

Each of these elements will be rated out of five. The total will then be divided by two for a total out of ten.
***This performance criteria is taken from the core French CRT administered by the Department of Education in June, 1996.

Appendix G
Criterion Reference Test Score Sheet

Elementary Core French
Criterion Referenced Test
Conversation Score Sheet

Student Name: _____
Date: _____
Topic: _____

Performance Criteria

Comprehension full comprehension of questions but may hesitate while responding	5	4	3	2	1	0	no comprehension
Vocabulary good range appropriate to the topic; full sentences	5	4	3	2	1	0	extensive use of English no range of vocabulary French
Pronunciation/Intonation adequate to be easily understood	5	4	3	2	1	0	markedly English impossible to be understood
Appropriateness of Structure good command of subject/verb/ completion	5	4	3	2	1	0	major errors prevent comprehension

Total , 20 ÷ 2 = / 10

Student Name: _____
Date: _____
Topic: _____

Performance Criteria

Comprehension full comprehension of questions but may hesitate while responding	5	4	3	2	1	0	no comprehension
Vocabulary good range appropriate to the topic; full sentences	5	4	3	2	1	0	extensive use of English no range of vocabulary French
Pronunciation/Intonation adequate to be easily understood	5	4	3	2	1	0	markedly English impossible to be understood
Appropriateness of Structure good command of subject/verb/ completion	5	4	3	2	1	0	major errors prevent comprehension

Total , 20 ÷ 2 = / 10

Appendix H
Listening Comprehension Test

Student Copy

You will hear five different situations in French. After each situation, you will hear three statements or questions. Listen carefully to each situation and answer the questions which follow by circling *vrai* or *faux* on your answer sheet. We will do an example before beginning. Ecoutez bien!

Example

ex.   vrai   faux

Let's begin. Allons-y!!!

Situation 1:

1.   vrai   *faux*
2.   vrai   *faux*
3.   vrai   *faux*

Situation 2:

1.   vrai   *faux*
2.   vrai   *faux*
3.   vrai   *faux*

Situation 3:

1.   vrai   *faux*
2.   vrai   *faux*
3.   vrai   *faux*

Situation 4:

1.   vrai   *faux*
2.   vrai   *faux*
3.   vrai   *faux*

Situation 5:

1.   vrai   *faux*
2.   vrai   *faux*
3.   vrai   *faux*

Multiple Choice Test
Teacher's Copy

You will hear five different situations in French. After each situation you will hear three statements or questions.   Listen carefully to each situation and answer the questions which follow by circling *vrai* or *faux*. We will do an example before beginning. Ecoutez bien!

Example: *On dit que le chien est le meilleur ami de l'homme. Il est toujours fidèle, un bon compagnon. Il aide les personnes handicapées, les policiers, et les chasseurs. Il existe un lien entre les hommes et les chiens.*

<u>ex.</u> *Le chien est un bon compagnon.*   vrai   faux

You are right if you circled "vrai." Let's continue. Ecoutez bien!

Situation 1: *Un poisson tropical est un animal domestique très populaire parce que c'est facile de soigner. On n'a jamais besoin de promener ou laver un poisson tropical, mais il faut toujours le nourrir.*

1. *Un poisson est très populaire comme animal domestique.*   <u>*vrai*</u>

2. *Il faut promener et laver un poisson tropical.*   <u>*faux*</u>

3. *Un poisson tropical est facile à soigner.*   <u>*vrai*</u>

Situation 2: *Annette a acheté un petit chiot à l'animalérie. Il s'appelle Kimo. Il faut le promener, le nourrir, le laver, et le brosser. Malheureusement, Annette est toujours occupé avec son amie Leanne alors c'est sa mère qui prend soin de Kimo. Pauvre Maman, elle n'est pas contente!*

1. *Annette a acheté un petit chaton à l'animalérie.*   <u>*faux*</u>

2. *Il faut laver et promener un petit chiot.*   <u>*vrai*</u>

3. *Annette prend soin de Kimo.*   <u>*faux*</u>

Situation 3: *Marie va à l'animalérie pour acheter un petit chaton. Il n'y a plus de chatons alors elle décide à acheter un petit chiot. Malheureusement, il n'y a pas de chiots non plus. Il y a beaucoup de perroquets et de poissons tropicaux. Finalement, elle décide à acheter un perroquet jaune qui s'appelle Kiki. Elle adore son perroquet jaune.*

1. *Il n'y a plus de chiots à l'animalérie.*   <u>*vrai*</u>

2. *Il y a beaucoup de poissons tropicaux.*   *vrai*

3. *Marie achete un perruche jaune.*   *faux*

Situation 4: Ce matin, c'est très occupe chez le vétérinaire. Tous les animaux sont malades. Le chat de Mme. Roppo ne mange pas. Le perroquet de M. Roland a perdu son voix et il ne parle plus. Le petit chiot de Mme. Carmen se gratte constamment. Oh la la! Où est le vétérinaire?

1. *Tous les animaux chez le vétérinaire sont malades.*   *vrai*

2. *Le chat de Mme. Roppo mange beaucoup.*   *faux*

3. *Le perroquet de M. Roland ne parle plus.*   *vrai*

Situation 5: Beaucoup de personnes aiment travailler avec les animaux. Pour devenir une vétérinaire, il faut aller à l'université. Pour devenir un jockey, il faut être petit. Pour devenir une photographe, il faut avoir beaucoup de patience. Qu'est-ce que vous voudrez faire?

1. *Il faut aller à l'université pour devenir un jockey.*   *faux*

2. *Il faut avoir beaucoup de patience pour devenir une photographe.*   *vrai*

3. *Il faut être petit pour devenir vétérinaire.*   *faux*

Appendix I
Letter of Permission to Parent or Guardian

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am presently in the process of completing a research project which is the final requirement for a Masters of Education in Teaching and Learning, with a concentration in Second Language Learning, at Memorial University of Newfoundland. This project is being supervised by Dr. Glenn Loveless. My project consists of developing a package of cooperative learning activities for a unit in the Grade 6 French program and then testing the effect of these activities on the oral proficiency and listening comprehension of students.

Your child's participation will consist of completing a multiple choice test aimed at evaluating listening comprehension, or how well the child has understood what has been said in French. Students will hear dialogues or situations in French related to the theme of animals/pets. Students will then be asked comprehension questions on what they have just heard and will respond by circling one of the multiple choice answers. This will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. As well, fifteen students will be randomly selected to participate in an oral interview. Students will be asked about 10 questions on the theme of animals/pets and will attempt to answer these questions to the best of their ability. The student interview should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The student interviews will be recorded on audio cassette. The tests and interviews will be scored by myself and by another colleague proficient in French.

The purpose of this project is to determine how well the cooperative learning activities in which the students have

participated, have helped them understand what is being said in French, as well as how well they have helped them communicate in French. In other words, are these activities useful to students in helping them to develop necessary speaking/listening skills in French?

Participation is strictly on a volunteer basis. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and can refrain from answering any questions he or she is asked. Confidentiality of all participants is assured and at no time will any individuals be identified by name. The purpose of the study is not to evaluate your child but rather to evaluate the effectiveness of the activities developed by myself. This study meets the ethical guidelines of the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The results of my research can be made available to you upon request.

This letter therefore is asking your permission for your child to participate in this study. If you are willing to allow your child to participate in this study, please sign the form below and return it to me. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at 337-2500 or 338-2053. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kim Careen

I_____(parent/guardian) hereby give permission for my child to take part in a study investigating the effectiveness of a package of cooperative learning activities developed by Kim Careen for a unit in the Grade 6 French program. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my child and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. I understand that participation in the study is strictly confidential with no individuals being identified.

_____   _____
        Date   Signature of Parent/Guardian

Appendix J
Letter of Permission to District Superintendent

Dear Sir/Madame:

I am presently in the process of completing a research project which is the final requirement for a Masters of Education in Teaching and Learning at Memorial University of Newfoundland. This project is being supervised by Dr. Glenn Loveless. The project consists of developing a package of cooperative learning activities for a unit in the Grade 6 core French program, Aventures 3, and then testing the effectiveness of these activities in improving the oral proficiency and aural comprehension of students.

The study requires the participation of my home room class of 26 Grade 6 students in a multiple choice test aimed at evacuating aural comprehension as well at the participation of 15 of these student, of varying ability, in a taped oral interview designed to evaluate oral proficiency. The multiple choice test should take about 15-20 minutes to complete as should the oral interview. These tests/interviews will be scored by myself and another colleague proficient in French who is familiar with the scoring procedure.

Participation by these students is on a volunteer basis. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to refrain from answering any questions he/she wants to omit. The confidentiality of all participants in the study will be respected and at no time will individuals be identified. This study has received the approval of the Faculty of Education Ethics Review Committee. The results of my research can be made available to you upon request.

This letter is seeking permission from the board for students

to participate in this study.   If this permission is granted, please complete and return the attached form to me.   I trust this study meets with your approval. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact me at Fatima Academy at 337-2500 or at my home, 338-2012.   Thank you for your time.   I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kim Careen

I _____ hereby give permission for students within this school board to take part in a study measuring the effect of cooperative learning activities, designed by Kim Careen, on the oral proficiency and aural comprehension of students.   I understand that participation is strictly voluntary and that the participants can withdraw at any time.   Participation in the study is strictly voluntary with no individuals being identified.

_____	_____
Date	Signature

Appendix K
Oral Interview Tapes