Comparing competitive team-based learning with other instructional methods and approaches

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Abstract

Having introduced Competitive Team-Based Learning (CTBL), this paper presents a cogent and critical analysis and comparison of CTBL with other *popular* methods and approaches in the arena of Education in general and Language Teaching in particular, in terms of their distinguishing features and characteristics. Among such methods and approaches are Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Collaborative Learning (ColL), Interactive Learning (IntL), and Cooperative Learning (CL)/methods which are appreciated particularly in the U.S. and in the West. A synthesis of the distinguishing drawbacks of the comparison methods and approaches is considered in this article. The article also explicates how CTBL, this researcher's educational innovation, which has been formulated based on his edu-political theories in the last analysis, is an approach to human security and prosperity, and world peace. This article would contribute to making a sound decision on implementing CTBL in the arena of Language Teaching/Education for the ultimate goal of peace-making and more compassionate civilization building.

Keywords: Competitive team-based learning; edu-political theories; interactive learning; cooperative learning; collaborative learning

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1. Introduction

Despite their commonalities in some aspects, the conventional didactic methods and approaches have their unique and distinguishing features and characteristics, which encapsulate their designers' views on and interpretations of learning, teaching, and even the world (Bustamante-León et al., 2022). The present methods and approaches diverge due to a range of variables, from their views on affective aspects of learning and the role of learners in the learning process to the types of patterns of interaction they (intend to) pattern among classroom participants.

As regards this educationist's innovative approach to teaching, in contrast to some strictly prescriptive methods, CTBL does not necessarily stipulate and follow specific steps. Therefore, in virtue of its flexibility, CTBL has the potential to compensate for the deficiencies of the conventional methods and approaches not merely in the sphere of Language Teaching but in the arena of Education as a whole also, to make (language) learning (environments) more interesting, motivating, and effective, for more comprehensive development of citizens.

1.1. Purpose of study

This paper presents a cogent and critical analysis and comparison of CTBL with other popular methods and approaches in the arena of Education in general and Language Teaching in particular, in terms of their distinguishing features and characteristics.

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a descriptive method. The research analyses and discusses the concepts under consideration. All ethical considerations were made to ensure all cited materials were referenced.

3. Results

3.1. Competitive team-based learning (CTBL)

CTBL is a holistic contextualized approach to teaching and learning that reflects real-world holism. As a fundamentally different approach to Language Teaching/Education, CTBL tries to produce a more realistic depiction of the real-world norms and settings in the classroom, as the microcosm, to more effectively connect learners to the real world, the macrocosm. This way CTBL reduces the discrepancy between what the present education system makes out of our nations and what the realities of today's world context exact them to be. CTBL foregrounds the significance of effective *teamwork amidst highly competitive environments*, as the very demand of tomorrow's citizenry, in an atmosphere which emphasizes adherence to a 'learning culture' not only to foster academic progress of people/students but also to more significantly contribute to their future success, academically, socially, and in life (Rudolphi-Solero, 2021; Bergman & Carlson, 2020; Collin, 2021).

As understood from the above videos, contrary to the conventional methods and approaches, the procedure in classes run through CTBL *is not* a 'loose anything goes' one. It is highly structured and systematic. For the summary of the procedure followed in a (reading) class run through this researcher's instructional approach, see Figure

Figure 1

Main components of CTBL
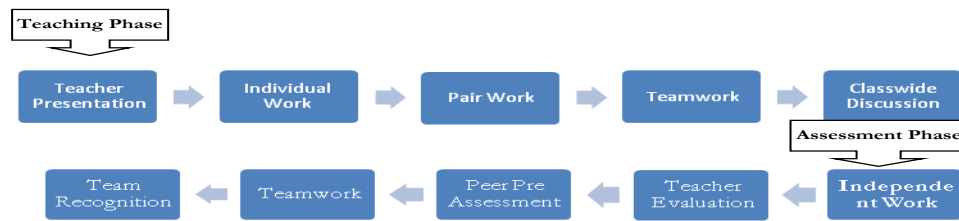
As indicated in Figure 1, the procedure for presenting a unit/lesson, in CTBL classes, follows two phases each of which incorporates five main components. As it is realized, the activities follow a regular cycle. The mechanism underlying CTBL provides all team members not just with the opportunity but with the need for perseverance, collaboration, and joint activity as well. It also intends to keep all teams in a state of dynamic perseverance in a win-win situation for all learning and social atmosphere in the classroom which is highly supportive, relaxing, communicative, referential, effective, developmentally motivating, and appropriate (Burgess et al., 2019; Burgess et al., 2020). Such productive and engaging learning conditions, which ensure and scaffold the involvement of all learners in the process of shared (language) learning, not merely generate short-term results along with learning and excellence in the learning. They also supply students with the opportunities to acquire and internalize more effective tactics and methods for obtaining knowledge and solving problems, and in the process develop their communicative competence. Furthermore, such situations stimulate students to more effectively and comprehensively exercise their brain cells in higher order and incisive analytical thinking skills rather than lower forms of mental behavior/thinking, and, in the process, come up with fresher, more innovative and more powerful ideas, to construct new knowledge.

Regarding the evaluation system of CTBL, it is against undifferentiated group grading for teamwork as it is in Johnsons' methods where all team members receive the same grade regardless of differences in contributions to the total team/class effort. In CTBL motivational incentives are encouraged to sustain individual efforts and immersion in the process of learning in team activities and furthering the cooperation of team members in the course of learning.

Also, although in CTBL team members take final exams individually as it is in Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Students Teams Achievement Division (STAD), and Teams Games Tournaments (TGT), they take midterm exams, tests, or quizzes cooperatively. The main philosophy beyond allowing students to take some exams, tests, or quizzes collaboratively is to subordinate testing to teaching. Apart from its contribution to positive interdependence, this strategy subjects' students to more opportunities for the transference of skills, strategies, thinking styles and approaches, attitudes, and so forth in a meta-cognitive way (e.g., through listening to their teammates who are thinking aloud).

Competitive Team-Based Learning focuses on deleting certain damaging problems of traditional methods, to suit particularly the specific requirements of language classes in the present world context. CTBL has offered language classes to enrich and enhance the process of language learning. This is possible through a win-for-all dynamics ushered in by the role of the teacher as facilitator, creator, and orchestrator of opportunities for comprehensible input-output treatment for learners' comprehensive development and growth, which comes about with their total engagement and active participation and contribution in-class activities. English language learning via CTBL has been viewed as an act of learning the language together through activities like negotiating, clarifying, expanding, elaborating, synthesizing, paraphrasing, and summarizing and as an act of learning to share language learning skills and strategies by equipping students to learn it as an FL or as an L2 through critical and creative thinking.

CTBL best benefits especially language classes as it unlike the conventional approaches, particularly seat-work teacher-dominated approaches, underscores the value of some pivotal factors of critical importance to language learning and language use. Among such factors are affective aspects of learning (e.g., the emotional state of students' minds including their affective filter and attitudes, and learning environment), meaningful interaction, exposure of students to comprehensible input in the target language and language learning strategies, attention, purposeful communication, and multiple sources of input and output. Some other crucial significant contexts variables like motivation and active engagement of all learners in the process of language learning are also appreciated in CTBL semi/authentic, analytical, and suggestive feedback-rich relaxing environments. CTBL, thereby, is of high value for language classes in the sense that the mechanism underlying it is naturally highly favorable to language acquisition and the development of all aspects of communicative competence of students. More importantly, it contributes effectively to the critical sensitivity of students and the quality of their understanding and reasoning and thus to the accuracy of their long-term retention, which is a criterion for real learning. CTBL intends to make (language) learning a more vivid, interesting, motivating, and goal-oriented exercise. For more information about CTBL, the how about of its transforming power, research is done about its effectiveness, and particularly its edu-political/ theoretical foundations, (see Hosseini 2023)

3.2. The significance of competitive team-based learning vis-à-vis other methods and approaches in the field of ELT

Like the lexical approach (LA), CTBL appreciates the importance of functional words for effective communication and focuses on providing sufficient and appropriate input for empowering students with essential words. As in Natural Approach (NA), CTBL foregrounds the significance of comprehensible input and semi-authentic learning environments. CTBL is not negligent of Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) principles and techniques in the sense that it avails itself of various kinds of drills, whenever needed. As it is in Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), CTBL realizes the critical importance of tasks and activities that incorporate real and naturalistic communication, and encourage students to negotiate meaning and discuss ideas. Tasks are designed to provide better contexts for the activation of not only input-output practice and the learning process but also students' critical sensitivities, which are conducive to more effective language learning. Like Whole Language Approach (WLA), with the presupposition that the meaningfulness of the language to the learner supports the learning process, CTBL relishes teaching language as a whole and not in the form of isolated (sub) skills. The belief is that the whole language, rather than its isolated parts, carries more meaning, that should be negotiated and processed in this educationist's classes. This educationist is also of the view that students can best learn and remember the kind of language that they fully understand; and that the whole language is more meaningful, and meaningfulness of the language and learning situation is conducive to more effective understanding and remembering after a longer duration of time. Therefore, the mechanisms underlying CTBL intend to make language and learning situations more meaningful and engaging through different strategies, stages, activities, techniques, etc.

Just as CLT stresses the development of communication skills of students, CTBL intends the development of such skills in well-designed relaxing as well as motivating dialogic social frameworks. It cherishes communication for real purposes, encourages risk-taking, and accepts errors as signs of learning. As it is in the Silent Way (SW), CTBL encourages discovery learning and knowledge construction to make learners more independent and self-reliant. CTBL is also consistent with Multiple Intelligences (MI) as it values the uniqueness of the learner and takes care of individuals' differences. By shifting the roles of the students in their heterogeneous teams, CTBL aims at not just accommodating diversity in intelligence but also improving their multi-intelligences simultaneously. CTBL is aligned with Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) as it lays the stress on teaching learning strategies whenever possible, not just

implicitly but explicitly also. As in SO, CTBL focuses on *desuggesting* psychological barriers and making the learners feel relaxed and open and, consequently, more receptive to what is learned. It also prioritizes the importance of peripheral learning. Like Counselling Learning (ConL), CTBL accentuates both cognitive and affective aspects of learning. It attempts to make the learner feel comfortable as a member of a team: Spontaneous exploratory discussion and confidence building within the privacy of small teams in a friendly ambiance encouraged by the teacher as a fellow facilitator contributes to the development of such a feeling. And CTBL is similar to Neuro Psycholinguistics (NP) in the sense that it aims at equipping students with techniques and strategies for personal growth and change.

On the other hand, *unlike* the conventional methods and approaches, particularly seat-work teacher-dominated methods and approaches such as the Traditional Lecture Method (TLM), CTBL underscores the value of some pivotal factors of critical importance to language learning and language use. Among such factors are meaningful interaction, exposure of students to comprehensible input in the target language, language learning strategies, attention, purposeful communication, and affective aspects of learning (e.g. students' affective filter including their emotional state of mind and attitudes, learning environment, etc.). Unlike Suggest Opedia (SO), CTBL is not merely focused on vocabulary at the expense of other (sub) skills. In comparison to CoL, CTBL can be employed for large groups of learners. Considering Total Physical Response (TPR), CTBL can be applied to all levels of proficiency and for all skills. Unlike the SW, CTBL is not boring. In direct contradiction to Grammar Translation Method (GTM), CTBL focuses upon the *process of learning* in semi/authentic, analytical, and suggestive feedback-rich relaxing environments, rather than products of teaching in contrived environments. In sharp contrast to ALM as well as the Banking Method, CTBL respects and treats students as whole persons/human beings rather than animals and gives prominent importance to their creativity and higher-order thinking abilities. As opposed to Direct Method (DM), CTBL makes students accountable for their learning and pays specific attention to the realities of classrooms by contrast. What adds to the significance of this educationist's seminal approach to emancipatory education refers to the fact that, contrary to all the above-mentioned methods and approaches and particularly 'CLT', it (i.e., CTBL):

- Has strong theoretical foundations (see Hosseini, 2023);

- Is not restricted to the Present, Practice, and Produce (PPP) model of presentation; CTBL values another P, which stands for Personalizing what has been learned.

- Never forgets the idea that learners are human beings;

- Systematically caters to learners with different ability ranges and learning styles;

- Supplies pragmatic guidelines for effective and systematic implementation of group work, which is of paramount importance for the success of language classes;

- Appreciates the significance of multiple sources of input, output, and feedback, and some other crucial context variables e.g., motivation and active as well as total engagement of all learners in the learning process, in highly motivating as well as relaxing environments for more effective language/knowledge acquisition;

- Facilitates simultaneous development of all aspects of communicative competence of students, including their *thinking*/reasoning and particularly *socio-political* competencies which are overlooked by the present modern methods and approaches;

- Generates highly motivating learning atmospheres;

- Conveys crystal-clear views regarding the learning process and the mechanisms under which effective language learning occurs;

- Is not limited to a particular view of language learning or a particular type of syllabi;

- Is cognizant of the fact that successfully living in the present real-world settings and being able to face the realities of this dynamic and complicated competitive world demands something more than the appropriate use of language in benign environments. This is the reason why it prioritizes the significant role of some effective variables in the learning process such as socio-cultural and particularly socio-political expectations of the present world context;

- Takes great care of moral and human values, and

- Intends to prepare students for today's competitive world environments in such a way that they would have the capacity to influence the world and contribute to more civilized social order/cohesion and world peace.

In sum, CTBL is of high value particularly for today's world (language) classes in the sense that the mechanisms underlying it are naturally favorable not only to language acquisition and to the development of all aspects of communicative competence of students. They are also highly conducive to the critical sensitivity of our students, the quality of their understanding and reasoning, and the accuracy of their long-term retention, which is a criterion for real learning. All of these are contributive to our citizens' personal growth/development, and disposition.

3.3. Differentiating CTBL from Interactive Approaches Like Collaborative Learning, Interactive Learning, and CL

From a broad perspective, CTBL, Collaborative Learning (ColL), Interactive Learning (IntL), and CL seem to be the same. They bring an inclusive departure from the values and styles of traditional methods and approaches in four major ways:

- They stress a shift from dependence on the teacher towards greater reliance on self and peers;

- They emphasize discovery-based learning, in situations that cherish problem-solving activities;

- They prioritize the significance of interpersonal skills, and

- They focus on the significance of group work and require students to share and compare their findings.

In general, teachers, in such approaches, are considered fellow facilitators of learning and learning process managers rather than expert transmitters of knowledge, as it is in traditional methods and approaches. Students are likewise valued as active negotiators of meanings and ideas who are both giving as well as receiving rather than reticent bench-bound recipients (Shoair et al., 2023).

This kind of interactive model reflects the strand of communication with the difference that Collaborative Learning, as Oxford (1997) explained, brings in the shared context of thought in a community of learners which is *less structured*, whereas Interactive Learning is highly concerned about the interpersonal communication which lays significant emphasis on *acculturation*[1] of individuals in social relationships in learning communities (Shoair et al., 2023; Kuo et al.,2020). CL differs from these collaborative learning approaches in the sense that it emphasizes *positive interdependence*, which brings a sense of common fate among group members, and individual accountability or the feeling that each individual is responsible. It could also be claimed that CL stresses academic achievement and clearly defined curricular goals more than Interactive Learning and Collaborative Learning. Another significant feature of CL, according to Adprima (2010), an online educational magazine, refers to the fact that 'in Cooperative Learning methods, students learn to be patient, "less critical" and more compassionate'. To remind the superiority

of CL over other forms of group learning, Cuseo (1992, p. 3) confirmed that CL is "the most researched and empirically well-documented form of collaborative learning in terms of its positive impact on multiple outcome measures".

On the other hand, as a special, in-depth approach to the use of small groups in teaching, CTBL entails the salient features of humanistic approaches. But contrary to Interactive Learning and Collaborative Learning environments, students in CTBL settings do not have the unstructured freedom that they might be given in an open classroom; nor does the system underlying this approach cater too much to their strengths and preferences as it might be in a class organized to individual learning styles. The below critical characteristics also discriminate CTBL from the abovementioned interactive innovations or any other type of humanistic approach that foregrounds the significance of group work:

- CTBL advocates more direct training of students to function properly in groups;

- CTBL focuses on transforming groups into teams and then engages those teams with challenging, complex authentic learning tasks;

- CTBL is directed towards technicality – psychological and socio-political oriented techniques and strategies are prioritized;

- CTBL is highly detailed, organized, structured, and strategic;

- CTBL teaches students to be critical;

- CTBL pursues the whole development of our citizens in semi/authentic environments which reflect real-world holism, and

- *CTBL's final aim is transforming our sheeple into People/Subjects, the ultimate change makers.*

Now, at this juncture, instead of the popularity of CL methods among educators and researchers, this educationist would rather proceed with his discussion about the significant features of CTBL concerning CL methods in the following sections.

3.4. The Significance of CTBL in Comparison with Other Methods in the CL Sphere

This section presents a comparison of CTBL and some popular methods of CL concerning the following areas:

- The concept of *teacher-/learner-centeredness*;

- The stress they put on *positive interdependence*;

- The emphasis they lay on *individual accountability*;

- The *pattern of interaction* they bring among class participants;

- The *evaluation systems* they employ;

- The kind of *tasks* they focus on, and

- The *feasibility of their application* in real classroom situations.

For other distinguishing features of CTBL concerning its design, objectives, syllabus, activities, materials, etc. (see Hosseini, 2022, 2023).

3.4.1. Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning the Concept of Teacher-/Learner-Centeredness

In different CL methods, learners are appreciated differently. In this regard, Group Investigation (GI) and STAD can be considered as two extremes. Whereas in the former, as the

byword of learner-centered methods of CL, students are given considerable freedom in, for instance, determining how to organize their teams, assigning their roles, doing their assignments, and presenting their products to the class; in the latter, as one of the most teacher-centered methods of CL, students do not have such choices and opportunities. It is the instructor who often determines the members of individual teams, their roles, the nature of the learning materials, and so on. CTBL offers a balance between these two extremes -- the middle path of *learning-centeredness* to teaching. In CTBL's settings, it is learning that counts. This educationist does whatever is possible to improve learning and the quality of learning. That is why he strives to subordinate testing and even teaching to learning.

3.4.2. Competitive Team-Based Learning vs. CL Methods Concerning Techniques Applied for Bringing Positive Interdependence

Another factor that distinguishes CL methods is the kind of strategies they employ for bringing, enhancing, and maintaining positive interdependence among students to create appropriate motivating learning environments. Methods like GI, Learning Through Discussion (LTD), and Constructive Controversy (CC), for instance, emphasized asking for one joint product or report or giving extra grades to groups (Envuladu et al., 2022). This strategy usually leads to the 'weak' mode of positive interdependence, to borrow a term from Kagan (1985). A weak mode of positive interdependence exists when an individual in a group can succeed even if some of his group members fail to secure their marks. It can also exist when a group can succeed even when some other groups in the class fail. Despite its positive aspects, this kind of positive interdependence seems to have brought with it a major deficiency in the CL methods that prioritize it: In classes that focus on this kind of interdependence high achievers will not be motivated enough to teach others due to the simple reason that they do not feel that it is necessary. Consequently, weak students will also be disappointed and reluctant to continue to learn because of being ignored by high achievers, who want to secure and improve their marks.

Methods like Jigsaw I and Jigsaw II make themselves avail of strategies like division of tasks and thus the creation of gaps in participants' information for bringing and maintaining positive interdependence. In such situations to complete their knowledge of the topic, students are motivated to ask for further information and listen attentively to one another. Comparing Jigsaw, I and Jigsaw II, Slavin (2004) believed that Jigsaw I patterns positive interdependence better because it provides everyone with the information others lack and therefore makes them all be more carefully listened to, valued, and respected by others. These kinds of strategies, however, contribute to a 'strong form of positive interdependence' among class participants. That is, they bring about an environment where the success of each group member is dependent on the success of other members, and the recognition of a group depends on the success of other groups in class. Although such methods may best satisfy low performers, they would dissatisfy bright students because the evaluation system of these methods is, in their perception, unfair and illogical.

Competitive Team-Based Learning, on the other hand, appreciates moderate positive interdependence. It comes to mediate between the above two mentioned kinds of interdependence: In CTBL classes an individual's success or a team's recognition is not highly related to the success of other members or teams. Individual members' or individual teams' diligence will also play a significant role in shaping their destinies. Considering the weak mode of positive interdependence, the distinguishing point, in CTBL, is that individuals are highly motivated to coordinate their efforts to the success of their teams through different strategies.

Through the different techniques, strategies, and activities CTBL implements, all students have the same opportunities to develop their repertoire of knowledge both through listening to others as well as through elaborating their understandings to them. Among such techniques, strategies, and activities are prioritizing the importance of incentives, appreciating an accurate

procedure for the evaluation of teams and individual team members, assigning rotating roles in teams, valuing the significance of well-designed criterion-based heterogeneous teams, and encouraging teams to take quizzes collaboratively. As a result, the problem of the domination of group discussions by the best minority has been tackled by this approach. High achievers do not have opportunities to dominate the discussions in their teams, which, if so, hampers positive interdependence. This quandary exists in most methods of CL such as STAD and TGT.

Another main feature of CTBL refers to the fact that it tries to subordinate testing to teaching in the sense that it encourages team members to take some exams, tests, or quizzes cooperatively, although they take final exams individually as it is in CIRC, STAD, and TGT. Apart from its contribution to positive interdependence, this strategy subjects' students to more opportunities for the transference of skills, strategies, thinking styles and approaches, attitudes, and so forth in a meta-cognitive way. The other main difference between CTBL and CL methods, concerning positive interdependence, is that whereas most CL methods appreciate both intra- and inter-group positive interdependence, CTBL emphasizes only intra-group positive interdependence, leaving the space for the accommodation of competition at the inter-group level.

3.4.3.   Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning Individual Accountability

Likewise, the level of prominence CL methods give to individual accountability, and the strategies they apply to bring, develop, and maintain it distinguishes them from one another. Too much emphasis on positive interdependence and neglect of individual responsibility is among the most critical problems with most CL methods. Such disregard brings its pitfalls in cooperative learning settings. It, for instance, can develop some individuals as social loafers and free riders. This problem naturally arises in methods like CGBL, GI, and Jigsaw I, which mostly focus on bringing positive interdependence.

To bring individual responsibilities to group members, TGT stresses tournaments; STAD, LTD, and CC focus on individual quizzes, and TMT, TAI, Jigsaw II, and GI emphasize individual assignments. A shared presentation is another strategy used in LTD, GI, and CC to encourage this element among learners. But CTBL may be considered a typical approach that pays special attention to the significance of individual accountability of group members to avoid problems like free riding and social loafing, which are detrimental to the success of humanistic approaches and methods like CL methods. Particularly through test tournaments, its special grading system, and activities, CTBL escalates the sense of accountability among all team members, and thus noticeably intensifies peer tutoring and highly engages learners in the classroom process.

3.4.4.   Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning Pattern of Interaction among Classroom Participants

As regards the pattern of interaction that CL methods prioritize, STAD is quite neutral because it appreciates neither within-group nor inter-group relationships. That is to say, it structures no actual relationships among different teams, neither cooperation nor competition. This is because, as it is in CGBL, all groups can achieve the established criteria for reward or recognition regardless of the existence of such interdependencies. STAD, however, appreciates intra-group cooperation and encourages a kind of competition between the individual with himself as it is in TLM. In contrast to STAD, methods like TGT and GI try to depersonalize competition.

On the other hand, whereas most methods of CL (e.g., CGBL) emphasize merely cooperation, some methods like TGT and specially CTBL apprehend and appreciate the role of competition. Tournaments in TGT and the special grading system in CTBL foster and enhance competition among students. Despite their similarities, there exists a major difference between TGT and CTBL

at the class level: While TGT appreciates only within-group comparisons, CTBL patterns a strong competition not merely among groups' members -- by within-group comparisons in its evaluation system, but among groups also. This is not to conclude that the important role of cooperation is underestimated or devalued in CTBL. This approach prioritizes the significance of both (cooperation and competition) in the sense that it spurs team members to *help one another* on cooperative tasks to *compete* with their same-level opponents in other teams and also win the competition against other teams. CTBL emphasizes a combination of cooperative tasks, team competition, and team rewards to improve individual performances.

Also from a broader perspective, CL methods differ in their outlooks and the outcomes, they are looking for. The evaluation systems in methods like STAD, whereby students' performances are recognized by, for example, a comparison with their past, do not value the realities of the real world and thus bring no considerable motivation to them. As noted earlier, classes should mirror real-world holism, and in the real world, no achievement can be better appreciated without a comparison with the achievements of others. CTBL comes to bridge these gaps. CTBL brings in situations wherein students have to compare their potential and capacities with several others. They will learn to accept what they are and that they could potentially be the best. Such situations spur and facilitate students to do their best, with the scaffold of their team members, which contributes to their academic success. Their success, in their turn, escalates their *intrinsic motivation*.

3.4.5. Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning Evaluation Systems

Concerning grading systems, there are hot arguments among advocates of CL methods on exactly what is necessary for CL to be successful. Arguing against encouraging cooperation through using extrinsic rewards as motivators, Van Lier (2001) notes the argument by several researchers that extrinsic rewards "bribe students to work together" and undermine creativity and intrinsic motivation. Even scholars like Kagan (1995) are stronger in their condemnation. However, I have always strongly dismissed such ideas taking the stand that such assertion is unproved, at least for many parts of the world. Further, if we look into the matter through the perspective of researchers Van Lier has referred to, then we could also say that the world or life is bribing us to work together! No one can deny the significant contribution of rewards to human prosperity. So why should we reject the undeniable contribution of extrinsic motivation to academic success, which is conducive to the intrinsic motivation of our students in our classes? The point is that grading students and their teams supplies an extrinsic reward as a motivator for group members to work collaboratively (rewards could also be non-grade in nature). And collaboration, due to many reasons (e.g., consider ZPD) leads to their intrinsic motivation, which is of very high importance.

Now the question, in the assessment of collaborative work, is whether any joint product produced by a collaborative group should be assessed as a joint product, with the same grade being given to each member of the group. Some methods like CGBL and GI mostly emphasize group recognition and evaluate individuals based on their group performance. In contrast, some other methods like Jigsaw II and STAD recognize groups based on the sum of their members' performances. As was already stated, the fact is that the former methods are ignoring the importance of making individuals responsible for their learning, and the latter are neglecting the significance of positive interdependence both of which, in turn, deter the attainment of group goals. However, some other methods like TGT, CIRC, TMT, and especially CTBL try to take care of both. Besides considering the collective contribution of group members to the attainment of their group goals, the evaluation system of CTBL also foregrounds the importance of individual members' efforts for their progression. The assumption is that students are more likely to work harder under such an evaluation system. For the evaluation system of CTBL (see Hosseini, 2022 and 2023).

The evaluation system of CTBL, therefore, is against undifferentiated group grading for teamwork as it is in Johnsons' methods where all team members receive the same grade regardless of differences in contributions to the total team/class effort. In CTBL motivational incentives are encouraged to sustain individual efforts and immersion in the process of learning in team activities and furthering the cooperation of team members in the course of learning.

3.4.6. Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning Tasks

The type of tasks and especially the ways they are applied to cooperative learning situations discriminate CL methods from one another. As noticed, in contrast to methods like GI which encourage the application of very broad and demanding tasks such as group projects, CTBL focuses on more specific and to-the-point tasks. On the other hand, whereas in some methods like GI, RTR, and CGBL students work together on a single task, in others like Jigsaw I, LTD, and CC group members work independently on one part of a task and then share their findings and understandings with others. Accordingly, the types of interaction tasks pattern in a GI class, to cite an example, are different from that of a Jigsaw I class. Tasks in Jigsaw I encourage dyadic tutoring while in GI motivate students for inquisition, exchange of ideas, and problem-solving. Yet, in CTBL the implementation of both of these tasks is possible, depending on the need of the situations and instructional objectives. What matters in CTBL is that tasks should be interesting and motivating, varied, conceptual, appropriately authentic, communicative, goal-oriented, discursive, and challenging. They are also beyond the developmental level of some, if not all, of the participants. More importantly, they make more effective transitions to real-world settings – even at the global level.

3.4.7. Competitive Team-Based Learning versus CL Methods Concerning Feasibility of Application

Cooperative Learning methods like STAD, CGBL, and GI look easier in terms of the feasibility of their application to classrooms, so they can be more reasonable choices for teachers who want to practice CL for the first time. Most methods of CL, however, demand more work on the part of the teacher. In Jigsaw II, for instance, the teacher must work more to prepare separate meaningful sections of a unit, which should be *self-contained*. The teacher should think of tasks that have several distinct aspects or components. Likewise, in CTBL, the teacher should be equipped with necessary worksheets, quizzes, answer keys, and team recognition forms and be ready to calculate individuals' as well as their teams' marks through CTBL multidimensional grading system. The solution, however, as noted, is to lessen the number of main exams in a semester or put more emphasis on self- or peer-assessment of individuals at least on quizzes which would also contribute to deepening their learning.

In conclusion, CTBL differs from the conventional methods and approaches particularly in the arena of CL because of the mechanism underlying it:

- Helps the best students or high achievers feel satisfied and puts an end to their objections and unwillingness to contribute their efforts to the success of their team members;

- Spurs weak students to have more active participation in class activities;

- Enforces individual accountability of all team members, and thus limits the scope for social loafers and free riders;

- Brings students not merely a zest for true and active shared learning but further opportunities to be more clearly aware of their capacities and capabilities in a broader sense also;

- Equips students for the current globalized environment which requires a workforce and citizens who are competent in skills like teamwork, conflict management, and successful collective decision-making amidst competitive environments;

- Contributes to learning humanitarian democratic principles, norms, and values, and

- Enables our citizenry to confront any sources of hegemonic ideas, corruption, and oppression, and gives them the drive to take the course of action for the elimination of fascism, dictatorship, and apartheid.

3.5. Distinguishing features of CTBL in comparison with the TLM/the banking method, conventional CL methods and approaches, and CLT

Lastly, I have tried to illustrate the distinguishing features of CTBL in comparison with the TLM/the Banking Method, conventional cooperative learning methods and approaches, and CLT in a table: See Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of CTBL with the TLM/the Banking Method, conventional CL methods and approaches, and CLT

	The TLM/ The Banking Method	CL Methods/ Approaches	CLT	CTBL
Orientation	Text-based product-oriented	Context-focused (mostly) product-oriented	Context-focused process-oriented	Socio-political & Problem-focused future-oriented (it entails process also)
Type of centeredness	Teacher-centered	Learner-centered	Learner-centered	Learning-centered, with a special focus on learners as whole persons
Teacher's roles	Autocratic; Predominant mode of dispensing knowledge; Cheater; Depositor, & Mini dictator, in action	Fellow facilitator of the learning process, & Scaffold provider	Communication model, & Facilitator of the communication tasks for language learning	Innovation model; Problem poser, Attitude recalibrate & Agent of critical awareness & social change & development; & Midwife who gives birth to knowledge & challenging ideas in citizens' minds
Teacher's main concerns	Issuing communiqués; Making deposits; Infusing (false) knowledge into receptacles, & Cheating	Hammering effective variables in Learning	Arrangement of class; Cultivating & improving the learners' communication ability, & the syllabus	Problematizing the context & creating cognitive disequilibrium; Decolonizing students' minds, and spreading the truths, transforming sheeple into People - for bringing a change in the patterns of interaction in society
Learner's roles	Numb depositories and acknowledgers	Active participants & accumulators of knowledge	Enthusiastic interlocutors	Proactive discussants, truths explorers, and disseminators, knowledge seekers, analyzers, & evaluators
Learner's main concern	What to memorize to pass the course, enter universities, & become a boss	Gaining grades, rewards, awards, & Recognition	Fluent communication	How to find out; Deep understanding for further investigation; Spotlighting false information, their sources & the philosophy beyond them
Interaction type	If any, it is teacher-to-one-student interaction at a time	Intra- & inter-group cooperative interaction	Person-to-person or intra- group cooperative interaction	Intra- group collaboration but inter-group competition
Grouping	No group work	Mostly buzz groups	Random grouping, mostly homogenous groups	Grouping in such a way that systematically caters to learners with different ability ranges & learning styles

Favorable to	Dominant minority – often extrovert but narrow-minded people	Free riders & social loafers	Extroverts & sometimes clever students	All, particularly weak students/the Other
Main activities	Passively listening, repeating, memorization, recitation, translating, & reproduction	Negotiation, clarification, comparison, synthesis, elaboration, & application of concepts during problem-solving activities	Negotiation, clarification, comparison, elaboration, & application of concepts during problem-solving activities	Discussion about challenging ideas which solicit higher order of incisive & analytical thinking skills such as critical evaluation of causes & effects, analysis, synthesis, creative generalization, & elaboration
Communicative competence	grammatical	Some aspects of communicative competence	Some aspects of communicative competence	All aspects of communicative competence in parallel that include thinking and socio-political competencies also
At the end of a (reading) course, students will be able to	Read the lines	Read between the lines	Read between the lines	Read beyond the lines
Students are treated as	Objects/Animals	Whole persons, & sometimes Subjects	Whole persons/participants	Subjects, & prospective Agents of change
Students' outlooks/ minds are hammered to be	(If any) narrow/shallow	Flexible & wide	So-so	Wide, holistic, realistic & flexible, but unshakable at times
Students are engineered to	Live as sheep in their country	Lead a successful life in their country	Communicate fluently, & sometimes accurately	Survive in more complicated environments, and change their destinies
Students will ultimately contribute to	Dictatorship/ Apartheid, & finally Anarchism – a dog-eat-dog world	Successful humane living in 'cooperative-oriented societies'	Tourism & economic development, mostly at the 'societal' level	Sustainable Futures & World Peace (See Hosseini, 2006, 2007, 2023)

4. Conclusion

Empowering students for successful confrontation with the realities of the present world context, which is highly multicultural, incredibly complicated, and of course developmentally and fiercely competitive, is the necessary proviso for creating more civilized societies, compassionate civilizations, and so sustainable futures and world peace. The truth is that conventional methods and approaches cannot help us meet such a goal. It seems that it was destined for such a wide divergence between what our traditional education regimes intend to make out of our citizenry and what their dream worlds, in today's world context, exact them to be could not go side by side any longer. Therefore, the deficiencies inherent in the present traditional didactic methods and approaches call for urgent and pragmatic overhauling of our teaching systems, and syllabi and textbooks revision in the current scenario of globalization, which is characterized by ever-growing revolutions.

Academia has no option but to take account of real-life situations and move side by side with the constant flux and paradigm shifts that are emerging based on peoples' needs. Learning-/learner- centered rather than teaching-centered activities and strategies should be focused upon as the need of the hour. CTBL has been offered in such circumstances as a panacea to all (language) learning environments. Since our classes are, in essence, microcosms of the macrocosm – a fraction of the real world, CTBL takes heed of the realities of our dynamic and

complicated world, chief among which are local, economic, historical, socio-educational/cultural, and political factors. CTBL has been offered to Education in general and to the Language Teaching repertoire in particular to help citizens and particularly the Other (i.e., the oppressed, the marginalized, the deprived, the impoverished, and the betrayed) in the present world context that is characterized by ever-growing injustice, corruption, racism, tyranny, terror and bloodshed, and destruction also.

Competitive Team-Based Learning is an excellent and of course seminal approach for today's world context as it offers a real hope of salvation of humanity the world over. It does not hurt to repeat here the statement, unfortunately still rejected by even some renowned scholars despite its obviousness, that CTBL is a very useful, effective, and practical 'socio-political' approach to the pedagogy of particularly the oppressed majority. CTBL is indeed a concrete plan of action for empowering and liberating the Other. It is an ensured pathway toward human security, peace, development, and prosperity. This is because contrary to the present immaterial methods and approaches, CTBL's focal area of concern is moral, spiritual, and intellectual revolution towards a big change in the present suffering peasant societies, who are contributing to an unhealthy and uncivilized world, for the ultimate goal of peacemaking and compassionate civilizations building. (Hosseini, 2023).

5. Recommendations

This researcher suggests the implementation of his *approach* to teachers/educators to enable them to nurture students/citizens into Agents of Change who would be able to influence their milieu and even the world. CTBL enables teachers to mutate the present ilk of passive obedient sheeple into some empowered brave capacitated citizens. Such citizens would contribute to just societies, companionate civilizations, and world peace more effectively as they would be willing to take a course of action against any sources of condescending look, Hitlerian outlook, injustice, oppression, repression, fascism, racism, terror, and bloodshed, and destruction. This would be instead of the fact that they would be desirous of choosing love over hatred, hope over despair, friendship over enmity, cooperation over conflict, prosperity over poverty and misery, civilization over barbarity, and incarcerating antediluvian beliefs and ideologies into the depth of history with their coordinated efforts that cherishes diversity.

Most importantly, this researcher suggests theoreticians, linguists, and specialists compare his theory and hypothesis with the present theories/hypotheses from different angles and discuss their impacts on the prospects ahead of education, and as a result on societies and their systems of management. Also, he suggests teachers and researchers at all grade levels in different subjects compare the effectiveness of his approach to (language) teaching (i.e., CTBL) with other methods and approaches, like CLT and CL methods. They can have such research about all skills and sub-skills of language and other subjects like Physics. Furthermore, this researcher is of the strong opinion that his innovative revolutionary approach contributes, in the last analysis though, to nation-building, more civilized societies, fairer systems of governing, modern democracy, compassionate civilizations, and world peace more effectively than the present methods and approaches. Therefore, these areas too could be investigated by researchers in different fields of education. The results of such research could help the authorities of (foreign language learning and language) education in ministries of education and science and technology make decisions about the implementation of CTBL in schools and universities.

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