



香港教育大學

The Education University  
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## Honours Project Research

*The effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing  
intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school  
students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms*

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## Declaration

I, Gan Miu, hereby confirm that this research report (entitled The effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms) is my own work under the supervision of Dr. Mak Wing Wah Pauline, and it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Signed

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# **The effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms**

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## **Abstract**

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has been widely known in Hong Kong education. The adoption of group tasks in Hong Kong secondary schools is not significant with different concerns and traditional pedagogies raised by English Language teachers. This research paper aims at investigating the relation between group tasks and the intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students. Semi-structured interviews were carried out for collecting pre-service teachers' and junior secondary students' opinions on the use of group tasks in English lessons and the challenges they encountered. This article offers an analysis of the reasons and factors of adopting group tasks in Hong Kong English classrooms and the perceptions of the pre-service teachers and students towards the use of group tasks in strengthening students' English learning motivation.

## **Keywords**

Pre-service English teachers, junior secondary students, TBLT, intrinsic learning motivation

## 1. Introduction

Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) has become a major teaching approach in the official English syllabus in Hong Kong since 2001 (Carless 2003). TBLT emphasizes the authentic use of language in which students are asked to complete meaningful tasks using English or other target languages. The use of TBLT is primarily planned for developing students' English speaking fluency and strengthening their confidence when using English. Therefore, it has a significant difference compared with other traditional approaches such as Grammar-translation and Audio-lingual Methods. While TBLT mainly serves a communicative purpose, traditional approaches focus on the accuracy of grammatical structure and pronunciation of the target language. Although TBLT has been adopted in the syllabi of Hong Kong secondary schools for 19 years, it is not fully adopted by teachers. According to Carless (2012), the teacher-centred approach is more preferred by teachers in Hong Kong, since they get used to traditional approaches which are exam-oriented and focus on direct grammar instruction. Thus, this leads to a phenomenon in which English lessons are usually considered as non-interactive and grammar-focused.

This study aims at evaluating the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing the intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong English as a second language (ESL) classrooms. Through working on a group task, students are able to exchange their ideas and negotiate how they will present the ideas with their groupmates. According to Samuda and Bygate (2008), the use of authentic tasks encourages the negotiation of meaning which helps learners to acquire the targeted language. In this research, intrinsic motivation has

been focused as it indicates the rise of students' English learning interest is heavily based on a sense of accomplishment, but not solely on getting a good grade or reward. TBLT enhances students' learning by encouraging student active engagement and improving student language performance (Nemat Tabrizi, 2011) Developing students' intrinsic learning motivation is considered one of the most challenging teaching goals. Although TBLT is viewed as an interactive pedagogy that can arouse students' learning motivation, it is not fully implemented in Hong Kong English language classrooms. Teachers' perception of emphasizing on form instead of meaning hinders the adoption of TBLT in English language teaching (Andrews, 2007). The opinions of pre-service teachers and junior secondary school students towards the adoption of TBLT in ESL classrooms are both significant for understanding the current situation of teachers using group tasks in the classrooms and assessing the relationship between using group tasks and enhancing students' intrinsic learning motivation. Three research questions are addressed and listed as the followings:

1. How are group tasks adopted in ESL classrooms?
2. What are the major factors that influence the use of group tasks in motivating students' learning of English?
3. How effective is it for teachers to use group tasks in enhancing the intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Task-based Language Teaching

TBLT is an approach that focuses on the use of authentic tasks that are related to real life and constitutes the meaning of using English or other targeted languages (Baihaqi, 2016). A task is defined as an activity in which students are able to work together to advance their language skills (CDC, 2007). By adopting TBLT in ESL classrooms, students are expected to be gradually capable of expressing their own ideas and communicating with others using English as they are provided with a creative and exciting learning environment that encourages them to complete a specific task that is highly relevant to their daily life. TBLT is a three-task cycle that includes a pre-task, while-task and post-task (Ellis, 2006). An interactive glossary can be more useful in helping students to learn new vocabulary comparing to an ordinary one commonly used by teachers in a pre-task. Language learners can make great progress by learning new vocabulary with an interactive glossary (Newton 2001). An interactive glossary refers to the new words that they have learnt during the interaction with their groupmates. They have used the new vocabulary to finish the task and meet the targeted learning objectives. Communication and negotiation skills of students are emphasized in the while-task stage. During the interaction with groupmates, listening and speaking skills are heavily used because students are required to actively listen to their groupmates and respond to their ideas. This shows that students are gradually equipped with English listening and speaking skills when they are engaged in a group task. For example, a role-play allows students to apply the vocabulary and grammar they have already learnt in their scripts and performances (Genta, 2015). They are provided with an opportunity to present what they know in a creative way and benefit from viewing others'



performances. Students' confidence in learning and using English is gradually developed with the successful application of their acquired knowledge and skills in the tasks. This will stimulate their interest in learning English. In the post-task stage, self-evaluation and interactional feedback are the main components for students to reflect on their own learning performance and provide useful feedback to their peers for further improvement (Chen & Wang, 2019).

Group tasks constitute an important role in TBLT for facilitating students' language fluency (Geng and Ferguson, 2013). It is believed that the quality of interaction among students during group tasks influences their language fluency.

In addition, TBLT is extensively promoted with its positive impact on students' attention span which is a major factor affecting their learning effectiveness in lesson time. The amount of time a student focuses on listening to his/ her teacher and learning implies how much knowledge he/ she has gained from the lesson. According to Bunce, Flens and Neiles (2010), students' attention shifts between not paying attention and engaging in class in a short cycle. In the research, most participants described that they had more short lapses several times rather than having long lapses. Moreover, they had fewer lapses when there were group work and presentation. This shows that students' attention spans are required to be sustained and they are more attentive when they are working on tasks instead of solely listening to teachers.

Since TBLT is a more student-centred approach that allows students to freely communicate within the context, they may react to the tasks differently and create various outputs. During their interaction and presentation, they may have their individual needs and make errors that

they are not aware of, which require feedback given by teachers and peers for further improvement. According to Hirose (2012), receiving feedback from teachers and peers is useful to facilitate students' learning motivation. The research showed that peers' written and spoken feedback is the most effective form of interaction in the post-task stage not only for motivating students, but also for improving their writing skills. However, TBLT focuses on the use of English in communication instead of correcting errors, so teachers do not necessarily need to correct every mistake that students have made (Rodríguez-Bonces & Rodríguez-Bonces, 2010). This indicates that interactional feedback from teachers to students is similar to an informal assessment in which teachers do not focus heavily on the grammatical errors made by students, but provide feedback on the flow and content of students' communication.

Although TBLT is considered a widely promoted approach, it is underused in Hong Kong ESL classrooms. According to Carless (2007), presentation-practice-production (P-P-P) models were more preferable in the views of many Asian school teachers because TBLT was often seen as a more complex and unfamiliar approach which might not suit students with lower English levels. This shows that many Hong Kong teachers prefer using traditional approaches instead of spending extra time on training for learning how to adopt a 'new' teaching approach (i.e.TBLT), as well as reviewing if TBLT is appropriate for their students. In fact, TBLT is a more complicated approach compared with P-P-P models as students are required to have a basic understanding of the English Language and a higher order of thinking skills in order to complete a communicative task (Carless, 2009). Despite considering the effectiveness of adopting TBLT to teach lower English achievers, teachers prefer using traditional pedagogies for achieving

grammar-focused learning objectives with reference to Hong Kong exam-oriented education system. Some teachers insisted that students should be given more grammar instruction for ensuring the use of grammatical structures (Carless, 2009). They expressed that it was more important for students to firstly obtain sufficient grammar knowledge instead of practicing listening to and speaking in English in a group. Students tend to give up learning easily when they realize they are not well-equipped with high cognitive skills and sufficient related knowledge to complete the learning tasks. Eventually, their attention will shift from learning to daydreaming or doing their own work that is irrelevant to studying. Skehan and Foster (2001) suggested that there are three main reasons contributing to the fact of short attention spans of students, which are the huge difficulty of the language, the requirement of high cognitive thinking skills and stress for completing a task. These factors significantly affect the attentional capacity of students as they add more barriers to their English learning process. According to Carless (2009), a teacher educator reflected that less-motivated students can enjoy the fun of learning English through completing a task because they usually tend to be inattentive when learning grammar. It was also mentioned that students' attention spans are so short that their learning interest is required to be continuously reinforced by interactive and interesting tasks. By comparing TBLT and P-P-P models, TBLT is a more effective approach that can extend students' attention spans in learning English.

## **2.2 TBLT and intrinsic learning motivation**

In order to consider students' learning effectiveness in English, the use and functions of TBLT are concerned. However, simply using teaching approaches cannot fully facilitate students'

learning. Teachers are required to stimulate and cultivate students' learning motivation for achieving the greatest learning effectiveness. Motivation is defined as people's desires and needs for achieving their goals (Dörnyei, 2009). There are two types of motivation, which are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is considered learning for satisfaction while extrinsic motivation is regarded as learning for external incentives (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Referring to Kareema (2016), students' intrinsic learning motivation is the most desirable factor in facilitating students' learning incentives. It is self-sustaining that students can pursue English learning with enjoyment so that learning will also become more long-lasting and self-directed. TBLT is considered a creative approach which has a significant influence on students' learning motivation. According to NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh and Pazhakh (2017), most junior high school student participants expressed that TBLT helped them in learning multiple perspectives such as grammar and the four language skills which are reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as enhancing their learning motivation in English. This shows that some boring learning topics, such as grammar items, in students' perception can be interestingly taught with the use of TBLT for arousing their learning motivation. Moreover, by working with classmates together in groups, students' learning motivation was proved to be reinforced, which ultimately helped them achieve better learning outcomes (Wigfield & Wagner, 2007). Adopting group tasks in English language classrooms highlights the positive impact of group dynamics on students' motivation and academic achievement. Murphy, Falout, Fukada and Fukada (2012) suggested that students will demonstrate a higher level of motivation and involvement as well as better academic performance through cooperative learning.

During the post-task stage, teachers are required to observe how they communicate in their groups before providing feedback to students. The observation process is considered to demonstrate a monitoring purpose because teachers can understand the learning progress of their students by observing how they produce the language and ideas. Despite the use of interactional feedback from teachers to students, students themselves can also provide feedback to their peers. According to Chen and Wang (2019), the written and spoken feedback provided by peers can help motivate students' learning in English and gradually improve their writing skills. Students' confidence and motivation are eventually developed by the positive feedback provided by their peers. Students are guided to give positive feedback starting with phrases such as "I believe..." and "You may..." so that they will feel that the feedback is easier to be accepted. Moreover, writing feedback can facilitate students' writing ability because the writing process can help them practise organizing paragraphs in a logical way. Thus, interactional feedback is a major component for summarizing the knowledge and reviewing one's learning progress.

TBLT is an interactive teaching approach which reinforces learners' motivation and prolongs their attention span by facilitating their learning interests. Students can also benefit from communicating and negotiating with their classmates during group tasks. Moreover, students can gradually develop and maintain a good learning habit by reflecting on their own performances with the interactional feedback provided by teachers and their peers. There is a great number of academic articles discussing the connection between TBLT and learners' motivation. So, this research will focus specifically on one group of second language learners

which are junior secondary school students and the effectiveness of enhancing their intrinsic motivation by using group tasks.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Context of the study**

There were six band 3 co-educational schools involved in the present study. The participants were 6 pre-service teachers (T1 to T6) from five practicum schools and 6 junior secondary school students (S1 to S6) from my practicum school. The pre-service teachers had their practicums in band 3 schools in which students had low English learning ability and achievement.

#### **3.3 Data collection**

The qualitative approach was adopted in the present study for collecting more detailed information and ideas provided by pre-service teachers and junior secondary school students. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were chosen for gathering opinions from the pre-service teachers during their block practices to have a deeper understanding on their practicum schools' objectives and their own preferences towards the adoption of group tasks in ESL classrooms, as well as from junior secondary school students to perceive their English learning situation and participation in group tasks. The interviews mainly contained open-ended questions which allow teachers and students to give further explanation on top of their answers. The theme of the questions was closely-linked to their teaching and learning experiences with the use of group tasks, as well as their personal opinions towards the current situation of adopting group tasks in ESL classrooms.

Eight interview questions were designed respectively for the two separate groups of participants in order to answer the three research questions stated in the significance of the study. Firstly, the pre-service teacher participants were interviewed for understanding their teaching styles and whether they had used group tasks in facilitating students' learning. They were asked to share their teaching and learning experiences with the use of group tasks, which can review the commonality of using group tasks in ESL classrooms and how they are normally used by teachers. Secondly, the pre-service teacher participants were asked to share the possible ideological factors such as school policies, which may affect their teaching using group tasks. For instance, they were asked whether their practicum schools were supportive of them in adopting TBLT during English lessons. This can show the frequency and autonomy of using group tasks in their ESL classrooms.

The junior secondary school students were interviewed for exploring their understanding of their participation in group tasks and their motivation in learning English. This can show how group tasks may change their learning motivation and help them improve their English in an interactive way. The student participants were asked to share their preferences in learning English through group tasks for interpreting the possible contextual factors about the influence of the use of group tasks in their learning motivation. Thirdly, both groups of participants were asked to share their burdens of using group tasks and their views on how effective group tasks can be for facilitating the academic progress. Lastly, both groups of participants were asked to compare other pedagogies with TBLT for understanding their opinions on the relationship



between the adoption of group tasks and the intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Research question 1 - How are group tasks adopted in ESL classrooms?

#### 4.1.1 Frequency of using/ participating in group tasks

Half of the pre-service teacher participants shared a similar number of the use of group tasks, which was “at least twice a week” (T1, T2 & T4). Interestingly, T1 and T2 had opposite views on their same frequency of using group tasks by saying that it is “quite often” (T1) and “not really frequent” (T2) respectively. In contrast, there was a huge variation of the reported use of group tasks for the remaining pre-service teacher participants, including four times a week (T3), once a week (T6) and once a month (T5).

While for junior secondary student participants, there was not a huge difference among their reported participation in group tasks. Three student participants participated in group tasks once a week (S2, S3 & S4), while the other three participants reported their participation in group tasks two to three times per week (S1, S5 & S6). They also expressed their opinions on the frequency of having group tasks,

*Quite frequent, compared to that in my primary school. (S1)*

*I think they are quite commonly used. (S6)*

#### 4.1.2 Types of group tasks and group forms

The pre-service teacher participants mentioned three main types of group tasks that they normally use in ESL classrooms, including poster creation, leaflet creation and role plays. There are also examples provided for illustrating the teaching topics with the use of each type of

group tasks (See Table 1 for the examples of topics integrated with the three main types of group tasks). The pre-service teacher and student participants generally stated the two most common group forms adopted in ESL classrooms were pair work and groups of 4 to 6. Pair work was used to teach daily topics such as introducing classmates, transport and fruit. Forming into groups of 4 to 6 allowed students to contribute to the group tasks by formulating answers and outputs for themselves in group discussions.

**Table 1**

Topic examples integrated with the four main group task types discussed in the pre-service teacher group

Types of group tasks	Examples of topics
Poster creation	A poster made use of “too much”, “too many”, “too few” and “too little”
Leaflet creation	A leaflet about tattooing culture
Role plays	A drama about different teen problems and solutions
Others	A matching exercise of tourist attractions, a quiz for a pre-reading session, literature circle for teaching readers

#### 4.1.3 Adoption of group tasks and reasons

Three pre-service teacher participants expressed the significance of using strategic grouping for group tasks in order to facilitate students’ learning by giving them opportunities to learn from their classmates. They said,

*The more able students would be able to help the less able students. (T1)*

*I usually make heterogeneous groups to ensure that every group includes both weak and strong students. (T2)*

*I put students with different levels of English abilities in the same group for discussions and group activities because I want to facilitate their learning better. (T6)*

“Having fun” of participating in group tasks is concerned by another three pre-service teacher participants. They perceived having excitement as a crucial factor for them to use group tasks in English Language Teaching. They believed that junior secondary students need to enjoy the learning of fun in ESL classrooms through making good use of group tasks by saying that,

*They know that they can come up with something funny. It's associated with magic and anything is possible. (T1)*

*When having group tasks, they have a companion so they have higher initiatives to complete the task. More fun is involved. (T3)*

*Most of the time, when I am using group tasks in teaching reading, readers or the texts in the textbook, group tasks just make the lessons more fun. (T4)*

Group tasks were used to scaffold students' learning under different circumstances such as acting as a warm-up activity for arousing students' interest and consolidation (T3), as well as preparation for creating the final learning output (T5). Some teachers also expressed the importance of learning from peers, they made comments like:

*I think using group tasks allows students to ask and learn from their peers. (T2)*

*They have more opportunities to talk to one another and know more about one another for working together. (T4)*

*4.2 Research question 2 - What are the factors that influence the use of group tasks in motivating students' learning in English?*

#### 4.2.1 School's perceptions

The perceptions of practicum schools had a great influence on the use of group tasks in ESL classrooms. Four pre-service teacher participants revealed that their schools were supportive, in that there was sufficient technological support, and that flexible classroom setting was allowed. All these facilitated the use of group tasks as a part of the school teaching culture. The teachers appreciated their schools' positive views on the use of group tasks,

*There are other teachers frequently using group tasks in their Religion and Liberal Studies lessons. Students are used to doing group work. (T1)*

*There was the support of technology. The application named Dojo has the function of random grouping. (T3)*

*I can change my classroom setting like getting them into pairs or group of 3 or 4. (T4)*

Comparatively, there were two teachers who stated that their practicum schools did not encourage teachers to adopt group tasks in ESL classrooms. Both of them mentioned that the schools considered the English ability of the students, they were "too weak at English" (T2) and "easily distracted" (T6). Thus, group tasks were not preferred in English lessons. This is also coherent with their reported use of group tasks in part 4.1.1, in which T2 described the use of group tasks in his/ her lessons as "not really frequent" while T6 felt that he/ she "seldom used group tasks".

#### 4.2.2 Students' academic performance

The pre-service teacher participants shared different perceptions on the use of group tasks with consideration of their students' academic performance. Three pre-service teacher participants

agreed that students could get better academic results by participating in group tasks. “The rule of speaking English only” (T3) and “having more opportunities of speaking and listening to one another” (T4) were specified for boosting students’ performance in listening and speaking. However, two participants doubted how group tasks were relevant to students’ academic performance,

*Exams in Hong Kong mainly require students to acquire answering skills. It seems that the teaching focus is about how to help students digest the questions and answer what the examination markers want. What students learn in group tasks may not be relevant to the exams that they have to take. (T2)*

*Group tasks really help them categorize ideas and organize their writing, but I can’t say it always helps boost their exam results. (T5)*

Only one pre-service teacher participant explicitly said that group tasks could not help with students’ academic performance with reference to her review of the first exam. She talked about many of her students only got single-digit marks because of a lack of confidence and being lazy. When they were doing group tasks, they got used to saying “I just don’t know how to do it” (T1).

Regarding the relationship between group tasks and academic achievement, all student participants showed agreement on the influence of their academic achievement with the participation in group tasks, which eventually motivated their learning in English. Four participants mentioned that their speaking skills were trained specifically during the group tasks, they shared their opinions and feelings on having improvement in English speaking in

terms of content, organization and pronunciation,

*The group tasks are usually about my school life and the speaking exams are more or less related to my personal experience. (S1)*

*I can listen to others' ideas and learn about how they can present theirs clearly. This helps me to organize ideas in the speaking exams. (S2)*

*By having more group tasks, I am more confident in speaking in English. I feel less nervous when talking to examiners. (S3)*

*I think I have an improvement in pronunciation because my classmates sometimes teach me how to pronounce some words correctly when we are working on the same task. (S4)*

Three of them also emphasized the impacts of group tasks on their listening performance which are “listening to groupmates’ ideas on certain topics that are relevant to the exams” (S1 & S2) and “getting used to different accents that may hear in the exams” (S3). Developing better writing skills was discussed by S4 and S6. They both suggested that their English writing performance improved with “absorption of groupmates’ ideas during group tasks”. They were able to organize and use the ideas in their writing exams.

#### 4.2.3 Psychological burdens

Having heavier psychological burdens is another factor which affected the use of group tasks of our pre-service teacher participants. Four participants clearly stated that there were heavier psychological burdens added when they adopted group tasks with consideration of more teaching preparation (T1, T2, T5 & T6), less capable students’ English abilities (T2 & T6), time limitation (T5) and classroom management (T1).

In the aspect of additional teaching preparation, participants made opinions like,

*I have to prepare lots of PowerPoint slides and think of some ways to simplify my English instructions in order to let them digest the learning content easily. (T2)*

*Designing group tasks for students requires teachers to prepare more teaching materials before the lessons, for instance, several sets of materials for the groups. (T6)*

Both groups of participants also considered the English abilities of less capable students. Half of the pre-service teacher participants shared a similar concern about the negative emotions of less capable students for the adoption of group tasks. They shared their class observation,

*“My students cannot even understand the task instructions so they need a lot of time to digest the topic, instructions and content. It has already lowered their motivation and confidence in doing group tasks.” (T2)*

*“I had a student who feared talking to people, especially those she was not familiar with. Her fear was close to a phobia, so I think it took really much of her every time we had group work.” (T3)*

*“There may also be the chances that they may compare themselves with others which may harm their self-esteem. Gradually, they become really stressful to speak in English and do not have the courage to use English.” (T6)*

When participating in group tasks, the majority of the student participants were specifically worried about their own English language skills such as “being weak at English spelling and



writing” (S3 & S4), “not speaking fluent English” (S2) and “mispronouncing English vocabulary” (S5). The perceptions of the student participants on their English proficiency creates psychological burdens which may demotivate them from actively participating in group tasks. The great pressure experienced in group presentations was also emphasized mainly due to the fear of making mistakes, the student participants expressed that,

*It is a scary thing for me if I make mistakes in front of everybody. I am afraid of being corrected by my teacher. (S1)*

*I think that is quite a heavy burden. I am afraid of being the representative and sharing my thoughts in front of the class. (S5)*

#### *4.3 Research question 3 - How effective is it for teachers to use group tasks in enhancing the intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms?*

All the pre-service teacher participants agreed with the statement of “group tasks can help motivate their junior secondary students’ English learning”. The majority provided the main reason which is “producing interesting ideas” (T1, T3 & T6). They emphasized the importance of allowing students to talk to one another for gaining new insights. The second reason is that less able students can receive help from more able students in group tasks, which can essentially enhance their intrinsic learning motivation when they can achieve the learning outcomes (T3, T4 & T6).

*They were also less nervous because they could discuss and compensate for each other’s’ shortage. (T3)*

*I think those less capable students can develop their confidence and motivation by trying to speak in English during group tasks with their groupmates first. (T6)*

Interestingly, there were contradictive ideas regarding the effectiveness of group tasks in enhancing the motivation of less capable students. Two pre-service teacher participants did not think that the use of group tasks is the most effective way of enhancing less capable students' motivation.

*For the less able students, I don't think it could help. They were just having temporary fun. They already think that they fail in learning English. They won't give in any effort. (T1)*

*I always think about weaker students. They may not be able to understand how group tasks can help them learn English.....Most of the students who are weaker at English are actually afraid of working with their peers due to low self-esteem. (T6)*

For those teacher participants who supported that group tasks being the most effective learning method for stimulating students' motivation, they suggested that three crucial elements that should be included in group tasks, which are "using popular and authentic topics", "adding competitive elements" and "lowering tasks difficulties with peer support".

*If you can find some hot topics that are related to their life or interest, they will be really interested in it and actively engage in the lessons. (T2)*

*I put my students into different groups and design things like competitions or quizzes.*

*They can vote during those competitions. For junior students, they really like those kinds of competitions. (T4)*

*Sometimes, working in groups is more fun and it lowers the difficulty of the tasks probably because they have their classmates to help them. (T5)*

All the student participants were asked to rate how much they like participating in group tasks. They rated between 7 to 9 out of 10 marks with a mean score of 8.17. 4 of them emphasized that they enjoyed having more English communication with their classmates during group tasks (S1, S2, S4 & S5). The participants mentioned three main benefits which are “getting help from groupmates for error correction” (S3, S4 & S6), “receiving good ideas from their groupmates” (S1 & S3) and “reducing the time of listening to teachers” (S4).

*I think my friends help with my pronunciation when we are having a discussion in English. Miss Ho also does that, but it’s more comfortable for me to be corrected by my friends. (S3)*

*There are also lots of good ideas contributed by different classmates in group tasks. After listening to their ideas, I can take and use them when I come across the same topic one day. (S1)*

*I can communicate with my classmates in English and that helps motivate my learning interest. It is sometimes boring for me to only listen to the teacher. (S4)*

There were 4 student participants expressed that participating in group tasks is the most effective learning method for facilitating their intrinsic learning motivation. They shared a similar view with the teacher participants concerning the task difficulties and peer support. However, for the student participants who did not prioritize group tasks as the most effective method, they expressed that they were more motivated when watching English movies mainly

because it is more interesting (S1 & S2). In addition, they were able to acquire standard English (S1) and understand the real contexts of using certain English words, phrases and sentences (S2).

## 5. Discussions

This research aimed at exploring the views of a group of pre-service English teachers and a group of junior secondary students regarding the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation in ESL classrooms by analyzing their interview notes.

The findings revealed that the participants were rather positive towards the adoption of group tasks in which students were able to learn from their classmates and had more excitement for developing higher learning initiatives.

### 5.1 Stimulating learning interest and concerning learning differences

The pre-service teacher participants reported that they adopted group tasks at least once or twice a week. They believed that the use of strategic grouping can help less able students to learn English more effectively with peer support. They also suggested that exciting elements are usually integrated into group tasks for students to learn English joyfully. Wigfield and Wagner (2007) pointed out that students' learning motivation was reinforced when working with classmates in groups. It ultimately helped them achieve better learning outcomes. The majority of the student participants shared the same views with the teacher participants on the significance of receiving peer support in doing group tasks. They were more engaged in the lessons with group tasks mainly because they were able to exchange good and relevant ideas with their groupmates and receive feedback about error corrections. This differs from Rodríguez-Bonces and Rodríguez-Bonces's (2010) research that TBLT focused on successful English communication rather than correcting errors. They suggested that it was not necessary for teachers to focus on correcting students' mistakes during group tasks. However, our student

participants reflected that their learning progress and motivation were fostered with peers' spoken feedback about correcting pronunciation and grammatical mistakes during group work. It is interesting to figure out that error correction is not the original focus of TBLT, but the student participants considered group tasks as a good way of improving their pronunciation and grammar with their peer feedback. Referring to S3's interview, she felt more comfortable when being corrected by her friends instead of teachers, which also developed her learning motivation and enhanced her English pronunciation.

## 5.2 The positive impact on students' academic performance

In this study, both groups of participants discussed different factors affecting the adoption of group tasks in English lessons. Half of the teacher participants and all student participants agreed that students could get better academic results by participating in group tasks. The findings suggested that both groups of participants specified that group tasks are useful for helping students improve their listening and speaking performance. In terms of listening, some students revealed that they were more able to listen to and understand their groupmates' ideas on certain learning topics which are related to the exams. This helped them develop English listening skills for understanding English speakers and making good use of those ideas in the exams. In terms of speaking, students found group tasks beneficial in improving their speaking content, how they organized their speech and pronunciation. This affirms Murphy, Falout, Fukada and Fukada's (2012) research that positive group dynamics were generated through cooperative learning, which allows students to demonstrate a higher level of learning motivation and better academic achievement. To some extent, the findings of this study echo

with NamazianDost, Bohloulzadeh and Pazhakh's (2017) research that most junior high school students agreed with the positive effects of their academic performance with the use of group tasks in multiple perspectives such as grammar and the four language skills. However, this study showed that the students were more aware of the impact on their listening and speaking performance because of more verbal interaction involved in group tasks.

### 5.3 Challenges and suggestions

In spite of the positive impact discussed above, both groups of participants shared the challenges in the aspects of schools' perceptions and psychological burdens. Firstly, a small group of teachers reported that their practicum schools were not supportive of group tasks with the consideration of students' low English abilities and their self-regulated learning skills, so the classroom settings and technological support do not favour the adoption of group tasks in English lessons. TBLT was often seen as a more complex and unfamiliar approach which might not suit students with lower English levels (Carless, 2007), so this could explain teachers' use of group tasks may be greatly affected by the schools' preference. For teachers who worked in supportive practicum schools, some of them (e.g. T5) also criticized the small size of classrooms and insufficient technical support. They believed that their students' learning outcomes were not maximized due to the restricted classroom area and technological teaching tools. Secondly, both the pre-service teachers and students were concerned about the effectiveness of group tasks with students' lower English abilities. As band 3 students have a relatively low English level, some of the teacher participants (e.g. T2 and T3) were worried about the extra time required for the adoption of group tasks. They expressed that their

students needed more time to digest the instructions and get familiar with discussing with classmates. This lowered the students' motivation and confidence in participating in group tasks. In contrast, the student participants were mainly concerned about making mistakes when presenting ideas in terms of speaking and writing. Interestingly, some of the participants (e.g. S1 and S5) reported that they were only scared of being corrected by teachers, but not their classmates at all. This finding supports Chen and Wang's (2019) recent research result that students' confidence and motivation are eventually developed by the positive feedback provided by their peers. Therefore, students preferred receiving peer feedback for correcting their mistakes and improving English skills without weakening their learning motivation.

In order to further stimulate students' learning motivation in English, many teacher participants mentioned the importance of using popular and authentic topics, as well as adding competitive elements in group tasks for more excitement. For instance, T2 observed that her students found the group task more appealing when she made use of Jackie Chan's biography as a reading learning material. The student participants also shared similar views. In S4's interview, she emphasized that she was more motivated and active when the group tasks were related to famous people and popular culture, such as learning about the family problems encountered by David Beckham. This suggested that teachers may need to use popular topics and materials in group tasks for arousing students' learning interest and extending their attention spans in class. In addition, to reduce students' pressure of making mistakes, peers' written and spoken feedback could be used more often instead of teachers' feedback, especially on error correction. The majority of the student participants emphasized the significance of peer



support when doing group tasks. If there are more opportunities for students to exchange feedback, students may feel less stressed with their mistakes being mentioned by their classmates. This can also maintain their learning motivation and enhance their confidence.

## 6. Conclusion

To conclude, this study gives us a deeper understanding of the factors and challenges that may affect the adoption of group tasks and the effectiveness of enhancing students' intrinsic learning motivation. Using more popular topics and materials that are related to students' personal interests and allowing more opportunities for peer feedback can develop students' learning motivation and confidence through cooperative learning. However, there are some limitations to this study. The results and discussion were based on the interviews with the participants. There was no questionnaire distributed to more participants for enhancing the credibility of the study. Therefore, it is suggested that more participants could be invited for taking a survey. In addition, different types of peer feedback could be collected and analyzed to understand its relation with students' engagement and confidence when participating in group tasks.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Interview questions

For pre-service teachers:

1. Which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons?
2. How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?
3. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?
4. Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?
5. Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?
6. Do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improve your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?
7. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?
8. Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

## Appendix 2 - Interview questions

For junior secondary school students:

1. Which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?
2. Referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?
3. Do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons?
4. To what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process?
5. Do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?
6. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?
7. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?
8. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

### **Appendix 3 - An interview with Teacher 1**

#### **(A pre-service teacher who taught form 2 students in the FE semester)**

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T1: Teacher 1)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T1: I used pair work and I asked my students to form groups of four to five.

G: What did you ask them to do? What topics did you ask them to work on?

T1: For groups of four to five, they had to produce a poster one time. I gave them a solution because I was teaching "too much", "too many", "too few" and "too little". Then, I gave each group a scenario, for example, I have too much homework or I have too little time to do my homework. So, they have to come up with a solution of the problem and draw, and come up with a mini script. One person would say, "What's the matter?", and the other person would say, "I have too much homework". After that, probably another would say, "maybe you could use your time more effectively". Another time was that I was teaching tourist attractions. They had to produce descriptions about some tourist attractions. They had to base on what I taught and wrote the names of those tourist attractions, locations, how to get there and draw pictures about the attractions. It's a very easy task for low level English learners.

G: Which form were you teaching?

T1: Form 2 students.



G: Did you only teach form 2 students?

T1: Yes.

G: Alright, how about pair work?

T1: For many of my worksheets, they had to do it in pair work. For example, there was a matching exercise on the topic about tourist attractions. They had to draw lines and match the names of the tourist attractions and what they can do there. There was also a worksheet about transportation. There was a word bank and they had to match the words with the pictures.

G: You would like to take care of less capable students, right?

T1: Yes.

G: Were they required to speak in English when they were doing the group tasks?

T1: No, it's okay as long as they could finish the tasks.

G: How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T1: Quite often. When they do group work, they produce something meaningful. Also, they have a chance to interact with their classmates. Probably, they would feel bored if I don't get them work in pairs or groups.

G: How frequent is that?

T1: I had 7 lessons a week, so at least twice a week, I think.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning? I know you have used lots of group tasks in your English lessons, but how did you make use of those group tasks?

T1: The more able students would be able to help the less able students. Sometimes it works, but sometimes it doesn't.

G: Why is it like that?

T1: The more able students would just finish the worksheet or the product that I was looking for and the other student would just watch him or her, or copy the work, or chat.

G: So, you used strategic grouping in your class for having more able students to help less able students. Next question, it's about your FE school. Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T1: Yep, I think they are supportive. There are other teachers frequently using group tasks in their Religion and Liberal Studies lessons. Students are used to doing group work.

G: Did your school give you any guidelines in designing group tasks? Did they have any expectation?

T1: No.

G: How about your supporting teacher?

T1: No. They let me do whatever I want.

G: Did you think about the school's stance before you actually used group tasks in your lessons?

T1: No, I don't actually know about the school's stance. I just know that other teachers are also doing it. I never really ask the Principal and Vice-Principals how they think about using group tasks.

G: Next question, do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?

T1: Yes, the first thing is that it gives them a chance to talk and not just sit there and be quiet. Secondly, it gives them a chance to communicate with each other and come up with interesting ideas. Sometimes, they would just write or draw silly stuff.

G: Was that relevant to the topic?

T1: Yes. I remembered one time, I had them to do mini books. I was teaching the second conditional. I had them discuss "If I had a magic broom...". I gave them the first half of the sentence, they had to finish the second half and draw a picture of that. They had come up with quite funny sentences like "If I had a magic broomstick, I would fly to girls' bathroom." and "If I had an invisibility cloak, I would rob the bank".

G: Is it like each groupmate had to contribute a sentence? Is that a story?

T1: I wouldn't ask each of you to contribute, as long as they could give me the end-product, because I also asked them to have a presentation. Mostly, I just wanted them to have fun. If they know that they are using the second condition on purpose, they might not have that much motivation to complete the book. They know that they can come up with something funny. It's associated with magic and anything is possible. They can draw as well, it's quite fun for them.

G: Great, do you have any points to that on this question?

T1: I think it's kind of a new experience to them. At least for how I grew up, everyone stayed in their seats and there was no group work. We just listened to the teacher teach at the front. It's quite boring for me. Doing group work, especially in English class, is really helping them. They don't want to learn English and they don't think English is useful.

G: They are too young to understand that English is useful.

T1: They said something like, "I don't think English is useful because I will just go to VTC or into the army."

G: Interesting thoughts. Next question, do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T1: No. They are not motivated in long-term to study English. For example, out of 50 marks in the exam, many of them got single-digit marks. The most hardworking boy got the highest mark which is 27 marks.

G: I can see that you used a lot of group tasks in your English lessons, but it seemed like they did not really like English or having English exams.

T1: They just don't have confidence. Some of them always said, "I just don't know how to do it".

G: Are they lazy?

T1: I think so, some of them actually have the potentials. Some of them just gave up on themselves.

G: Alright, we still have last two questions. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds

psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T1: I think every time I do group work is a challenge. Inevitably, they would talk. That made lots of noise in the class.

G: Yeh, I think it's more like a challenge to teachers.

T1: When I have them to do presentation, they would not like to listen others' presentations. They would just talk. They would be really loud and you could not listen to the presenters.

G: Is there any more challenge to you?

T1: I think it is hard to distribute work to students because more able students usually did all the work. What I tried to do is to ask the less able students to contribute something, at least draw something.

G: Do they have specific roles in their groups?

T1: So, I assigned group leaders every time. The more able students would be the group leaders. I tried to have a less able student to be a group leader, but she just slept through the activity.

G: I see. So, is there a new group leader for every lesson?

T1: It's mostly the same people.

G: Any more challenges? How about your students?

T1: I think they enjoyed doing group tasks.

G: Did you give them any rules to follow during the discussion?

T1: They can't. I had to use Putonghua most of the time during teaching. If I teach in English, many of them will just give up and sleep. They think they won't understand what I am teaching. They just enjoyed coming up with funny ideas and draw when doing group tasks.

G: Let's move on to the last question. Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T1: It depends on who the students are. For the less able students, I don't think it could help. They were just having temporary fun. They already think that they fail in learning English. They won't give in any effort.

G: So, they don't really want to learn English specifically. More importantly, they think English is useless and they don't have the confidence.

T1: Yes.

G: What do you think about the effectiveness of the other pedagogies?

T1: I played a song when they were doing the mini books. They enjoyed quite a lot. It is "When I was a rich man". I think they enjoyed watching video clips, but it is very difficult for me to find relevant videos to the topics that I was teaching.

G: They enjoyed watching videos and listening to songs. Perhaps they need some visual aids for

learning English. Alright, I think we have finished all the questions. Thank you!

**Appendix 4 - An interview with Teacher 2**  
**(A pre-service teacher who taught form 3 students in the FE semester)**

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T2: Teacher 2)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T2: I asked students to discuss in groups of four or worked in pairs, for example, they were required to perform a drama or create a poster etc.

G: How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T2: I use group tasks almost twice a week. Not really frequent.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?

T2: I think using group tasks allows students to ask and learn from their peers. I usually make heterogeneous groups to ensure that every group includes both weak and strong students.

G: Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T2: No, because students are too weak at English. They have difficulties in listening to teachers' instruction when doing group tasks. The in-service teachers at this school usually use traditional teaching methods.



G: I see, but I can see that you really tried to integrate group tasks in your lessons every week. Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?

T2: Yes, but I think group tasks are only applicable to students who have higher level of English. I was having my FE in a Band 3 school. My students are not used to use English to communicate with others and that is why they are too shy or not really motivated when doing group tasks. It takes a long period of time for them to understand teachers' instructions. Also, I don't think that they enjoy doing group tasks because they never compete with other groups. That is really different from what I have experienced at other band 1 schools.

G: Do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T2: I think group tasks help them consolidate their knowledge and give them a chance to apply the things that they have just learnt. However, I doubt if group tasks can help improve students' academic performance. Exams in Hong Kong mainly require students to acquire answering skills. It seems that the teaching focus is about how to help students digest the questions and answer what the examination markers want. What students learn in group tasks may not be relevant to the exams that they have to take.

G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T2: As I have mentioned, group tasks are only applicable to students who have a certain level of English. If students are really weak, they may find it difficult to complete the tasks. For example, my students cannot even understand the task instructions so they need a lot of time to digest the topic, instructions and content. It has already lowered their motivation and confidence in

doing group tasks. Also, it takes time for me to explain everything. I have to prepare lots of PowerPoint slides and think of some ways to simplify my English instructions in order to let them digest the learning content easily. This really increase my workload and add psychological burden to me.

G: Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T2: Yes, I think it helps. If you can find some hot topics that are related to their life or interest, they will be really interested in it and actively engage in the lessons. There was once that I used Jackie Chan's biography as a reading material and asked my students to complete his profile in small groups. They were very motivated by Jackie Chan since everyone knows that his private life is a mess. My students love gossiping and they made fun of him throughout the whole lesson. I have to be honest that they did not know how to comment on him in English but at least they threw a lot of Chinglish words to describe him. They tried their best. Although it was not good to gossip or dig into somebody's private life, it was still a good lesson and those group tasks were in good use.

## Appendix 5 - An interview with Teacher 3

### (A pre-service teacher who taught form 2 students in the FE semester)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T3: Teacher 3)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T3: Pair work and putting students into groups of 4 are often used in my English lessons.

G: How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T3: I use group tasks very frequently, maybe 4 out of 5 lessons.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?

T3: During lessons, I sometimes provide a pair of students with an iPad to conduct activities such as quiz competitions. I used it in reading lessons in the pre-reading session to arouse students' interest in the topic. Sometimes, I use it as consolidation. Two students work together on the quiz competition and I will be able to see how much they have learnt after that period. They get really excited when they get the iPads to use with their partners.

G: I see. How do you make use of groups of 4?

T3: I also tried to help consolidate students' knowledge without iPads. Students formed in groups of 4 and answered questions to gain scores to be the fastest and the most accurate.

They also thought of some questions to challenge their classmates. Groups are also formed for mini dramas and script reading.

G: Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T3: Yes, my placement school was supportive. There was the support of technology. The application named Dojo has the function of random grouping. And the English department encouraged the use of group work.

G: Great. Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?

T3: Yes, especially adding the element of competitions in group work, the motivation of my students was greatly enhanced and they were on task. They were very aware of what they were required to do and they were eager to participate. When they were required to work individually, they were often less motivated and worked much slower. With partners, they discussed and thus were able to brainstorm more interesting ideas in a faster fashion. They were also less nervous because they could discuss and compensate for each other's shortage.

G: Alright, do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T3: Yes. Group tasks train different skills at the same time. Since there is a rule of speaking English only in the classroom, students are forced to train their speaking and listening skills. And having companions in the learning progress poses less pressure on students. So they would feel more comfortable in asking about things they don't understand and discuss with peers, and get answers from the more capable students. It is a good start for students to build up confidence in seeking answers, as well as motivation.

G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T3: To a small extent, I would say. Teachers have to spend more time on thinking about the contexts of activities, feasibility of activities and how to make those activities more engaging. The activities have to suit the interests of students and they can be too difficult for the students sometimes. To some introvert students, it can be a burden. I had a student who feared talking to people, especially those she was not familiar with. Her fear was close to a phobia, so I think it took really much of her every time we had group work.

G: Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T3: Yes I think so. When having group tasks, they have a companion so they have higher initiatives to complete the task. More fun is involved. Students may find it troublesome to conduct activities in any form anyways so having a friend would be better for them, especially when activities are often designed with playful elements. When my students were experiencing other pedagogies such as lecturing (listening to grammar rules), I observed that they forgot the input very quickly and teachers had to repeat for several times. But in group work, they had more motivation to check it on their own. I think it reflects the intrinsic motivation in them.

## Appendix 6 - An interview with Teacher 4

### (A pre-service teacher who taught form 1 students in the FE semester)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T4: Teacher 4)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T4: I use a lot of different group tasks in my English lessons, including information gap, jigsaw reading or research tasks, just any kind of group tasks, and may be role-play. Sometimes, there are group discussions. Basically, every kind of group task.

G: How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T4: I use group tasks at least three times a week. I try to include something communicative. Sometimes, there would be group tasks or individual tasks, at least three times a week I would say.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?

T4: I think using group tasks can actually raise their interest in learning English. Very often, when I design group tasks, it would be more interesting than individual tasks. It is kind of forcing them to figure things out. For example, When I am teaching readers, there are literature circles, so there are different roles in their groups. They are asked to share different things. In that way, they have more opportunities to talk to one another and know more about one

another for working together. Most of the time, when I am using group tasks in teaching reading, readers or the texts in the textbook, group tasks just make the lessons more fun.

G: Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T4: My school is super supportive in terms of using group tasks. I can change my classroom setting like getting them into pairs or group of 3 or 4. This helps me conduct group tasks more easily. My school is very supportive and my panel is very very very supportive as well. We just try to include as many group tasks as we can in the lessons.

G: That sounds great. Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?

T4: I do think that group tasks can help, particularly when it comes to low achievers. Very often, when I assign students in groups, I use ability grouping. In one group, there are both more capable and less capable students. When those less capable students have any problems, they can simply ask the more capable ones. They are also more involved in the lessons. I would say it is especially motivating for lower achievers. Sometimes, for high achievers, it depends. I know some of them do not really like working with low achievers, so they sometimes ask me questions like, "Teacher, why do I have to work with those people?" It just depends for high achievers.

G: Alright, do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T4: Yes, I think it helps enhance their academic performance, especially in terms of listening and speaking. When it comes to group tasks, they have more opportunities to speak to one another as well as to listen to one another. Very often, there will be a presentation after doing a group

task, so it also develops their presentation skills and confidence. Giving presentations is actually a part of TSA tests in junior secondary forms, so using group tasks can definitely improve their English. As I said before, group tasks are more motivating for them, so if they are more relaxed, this can lower their affective filter and enhance their learning.

G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T4: I don't really think that using group tasks adds psychological burden to me or my students because it is actually good for me to use group tasks. When I use group tasks, I can talk less. If I don't use group tasks, it would be me talking all the time. For me, it is always good to include group tasks in my lessons. I do understand what you mean by psychological burdens when it comes to lots of tests and exams, teachers still need to catch up the progress. In that period of time, I may feel a little bit pressured. The classes I taught were mostly high achievers so I was not worried about falling behind of progress. For my students, I think their past learning experience actually affected them a lot. For example, my F.1 students were used to my teaching style, they know what I would like to do for group tasks. However, my F.3 students were not used to group tasks. They like working alone and letting the teacher doing the talking all the time. Their past learning experience or style really matters.

G: Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T4: I do think that group tasks can effectively enhance their intrinsic learning motivation, just like what I said before, when they work in groups, they are less stressful because they have their peers to support them. When they have things that they don't know, they can ask their peers or the high achievers. I think it is always good to have group tasks. I also think of some competitions that I designed for them. Sometimes, I put my students into different groups and design things like competitions or quizzes. They can vote during those competitions. For junior



students, they really like those kinds of competitions. I think not only group tasks, competitions can enhance their intrinsic learning motivation as well.

G: Thank you for your time.

## Appendix 7 - An interview with Teacher 5

### (A pre-service teacher who taught form 3 students in the FE semester)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T5: Teacher 5)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T5: I used poster creation, leaflet creation and also mind-map creation after I had given some articles to my students to read. They needed to present their work after discussion and their friends were going to comment on their products and their presentation. Sometimes, I may ask them to work in pairs. They are too weak and they can't finish the worksheets on their own, so I just put them in pairs and they can help each other.

G: So for the poster, leaflet and mind-map creation, do the students form in groups of 4?

T5: 6 students in one group.

G: How many students are there in your class?

T5: 26 students. Some groups with 6 students and some with 5.

G: For pair work, do you usually ask them to form in pairs mainly for finishing the worksheets?

T5: Yup, actually they sit in pairs. My supporting teacher was their English teacher last year, so she knows them so well. She just assigned a weaker student sitting with a stronger student to make sure that they can help each other to finish the task.

G: I got it. I would like to ask more about your poster, leaflet or mind-map creation. Is there a specific topic for it, like is it based on the school curriculum?

T5: First of all, let me talk about the poster creation. The poster was used to help them write a debate speech. It helped them to categorize and summarize ideas in a much informal way, because at the beginning I had thought about using an outline, but I think a poster would be more fun for the students. The poster can help grab their interest in learning English. Also, there are leaflets for introducing the tattooing culture. It was a topic in the module about popular culture. I just helped them to brainstorm different ideas for finishing a group discussion later on. For the mind-map, it was a minor task. It was based on a reading article that helped them to do the poster and leaflet, so it's easier and it's like a scaffolding for them to do the poster and leaflet.

G: Is it like a pre-task?

T5: Alright, I see.

G: Are there any other forms of grouping in your class?

T5: There are bigger groups. After they have created their products, they are required to present in front of class. I have 6 groups in total. Three groups do the presentations and the other three groups will be commenting on them. Usually I ask them to vote for the best group, the group with the lowest number of votes will comment on the group with the highest number of votes. You may notice the arrangement of the group pairing. I think it helps the weakest group to learn from the best model. That helps facilitate their creation next time.

G: I got it. How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T5: I use group tasks once a month, because sometimes the schedule is really tight and I need to help them prepare for their tests and exams, so I may not have much time to do the group tasks with them. I have to make sure that I teach them about all the test content and exam tips in order to help them get a good grade. The group task I use each time lasts about 3 days or 5 lessons. In total, I have 8 lessons a week.

G: I'm wondering whether those group tasks are related to the textbook or are they extra activities for English lessons?

T5: They are extra activities. For the compulsory part, we have vocabulary lists for the students to prepare for their exams. Also, I have to teach them about different grammar items such as relative clauses or connotation. Those grammar items are usually included in the exams, that's why I have to spend more time on the compulsory part first. Those group tasks are used to motivate their learning. I asked my supporting teacher and she did not do any group tasks with the students before. It was quite challenging, but I feel that they find it interesting and they have a sense of achievement after they have created a product for the presentation.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?

T5: I think group tasks scaffold the creation of their final products. For our school, writing is the final product. For instance, the poster was used to scaffold them to create their debate speech. The leaflet was used to help them categorize and summarize their ideas for finishing the speaking assessment. They were like pre-tasks before the final writing. Also, they were used to motivate the students to enjoy learning English. They usually have no interest in English and refuse learning the knowledge. I just want them to have some fun, concentrate on my lessons and create the final writing seriously with the use of group tasks.

G: Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T5: To some extent yes. The school does not have restricted rules or classroom settings. They are very flexible and I am able to make use of the classroom and my time to carry out the group tasks. However, the classroom environment does not facilitate learning because students sit in pairs instead of groups. The classroom is very small. When I ask my students to form in groups, they have to move their desks and chairs in order to facilitate the group discussion. Actually, I also try my best to walk around and assist them, but I find it difficult due the small classroom. I think if I get a bigger classroom and more advanced IT technological equipment, my teaching will be more efficient and the students' learning outcome will be maximized.

G: I'm wondering if using group tasks is more like a teacher's personal choice. You have mentioned that your school is supportive but your supporting teacher did not really use group tasks in her English lessons with your class.

T5: I think it's personal decision. Most of the teacher do not want to carry out group tasks because of limited time and extra work for preparing group tasks. When I carry out any group tasks, I have to prepare markers for the students to draw or write things. I have to borrow poster paper for them. In addition, I need to mark the posters and leaflets. I need time to do extra things for carrying out group tasks. Also, I think students' ability is another problem. My students have really lower abilities and they cannot achieve much. I have give lots of inputs to help them create a poster or a leaflet. I think some students may not want to give it a try because they believe that they cannot do it. I agree with that. For example, for the poster creation, I had to provide three extra articles. It's really challenging to them. My supporting teacher knows the school and students better and they believe that the students can hardly do that, so they just kind of give up in using group tasks.

G: Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary

students' learning in English? Why?

T5: Yes, I think so. They are more attentive in my class. After creating the poster as the first trial of having group tasks, they know that there are other ways to learn English. They also understand that they are capable of creating some beautiful and attractive products using their language skills and knowledge with my extensive help. They are more motivated because of the new activities they have in the lessons and the achievement that they have got through the progress.

G: Did they say something like they love English after having group tasks in your lessons?

T5: They said they love my lessons, but not English at all.

G: At least they are more motivated when they are having your English lessons. Alright, do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T5: I don't have the statistics about their exam results, but I marked their first writing which was a news commentary. It was really poor, but at the end of FE (like after three months), I think their language skills are more advanced and the writing structure is more logical. Group tasks really help them categorize ideas and organize their writing, but I can't say it always helps boost their exam results.

G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T5: For the first group task, I think we both felt under pressure. However, we got used to the procedures of group tasks. I think they didn't find it challenging for the last group task we had

which was the mind-map creation. Preparing group tasks actually adds my burden because I want to have a try even though I know they have lower English abilities. I think they can do it, so I just searched for more articles in order to provide scaffolding. I also need to mark their final products. Sometimes, I feel frustrated. For instance, I gave them three reading articles, but some of the groups just can't finish the poster at the first trial, so I really had to review my strategy and learning inputs, then found other substitutes within a night, as I had their lessons again on the other day. It's really challenging regarding the limited time and the ways of helping them finish the tasks. Students found it challenging at the first trial because they didn't know what they were supposed to do. They did not know how to present even with the posters on their hands, but we learn from experience. It's okay to have psychological burden, it's worth because it forces us to try hard or try something new for facilitating our learning.

G: I see what you mean. Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T5: I think yes. Sometimes, working in groups is more fun and it lowers the difficulty of the tasks probably because they have their classmates to help them. Other teaching pedagogies like drilling and teacher-centred are the traditional ways of teaching, individual tasks are very dominant in these approaches. You know that my students are weak at English and they will find it more boring with those approaches and that lowers their learning interest in English. Group tasks may be able to motivate them to learn the language.

G: That's all for our interview. Thank you.

## Appendix 8 - An interview with Teacher 6

### (A pre-service teacher who taught form 3 students in the FE semester)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer T6: Teacher 6)

G: Thank you. I'm going to tell you the topic of my research which is "the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms". There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you use in English lessons or during your FE semester?

T6: There are group discussions and also short dramas. There was once that I asked them to form in groups to discuss Hong Kong traditional food which is a part of the school curriculum. For short dramas, I asked them to form groups of 6 and perform dramas about different teen problems and how they sort those out.

G: How often do you use group tasks in English teaching?

T6: I seldom use group tasks, only once a week.

G: Let's move on to the third question. How do you use group tasks to facilitate junior secondary students' learning?

T6: I put students with different level of English abilities in the same group for discussions and group activities because I want to facilitate their learning better. Also, because my students are really weak at English, so I design the discussions and group activities with more instructions in simpler English. There are usually worksheets provided for them to jot down some notes and gather their ideas before the discussions.



G: Is your school supportive and encouraging to teachers using group tasks in ESL classrooms and why?

T6: Not really. Group tasks are not preferred during lessons because the students are really weak and easily distracted. They will discuss unrelated content in their mother tongue during the discussion. If we have to include group tasks in our lessons, our school suggests that we can arrange pair work for them to do small discussions.

G: Got it. Do you think using group tasks in ESL classrooms can help motivate junior secondary students' learning in English? Why?

T6: Yes, group tasks are more interesting and students can gain insights from their groupmates during discussion. More importantly, I think those less capable students can develop their confidence and motivation by trying to speak in English during group tasks with their groupmates first.

G: Do you think using group tasks in teaching can help improving your junior secondary students' academic performance? Why?

T6: I think group tasks are useful because students can learn more from talking to their groupmates about the learning topic. However, teachers have to ensure that weaker students will pay attention and make contribution to the tasks. I would say clearer instructions and sufficient guidance have to be provided by teachers before asking them to form in groups and during group tasks.

G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you or to your students?

T6: Designing group tasks for students requires teachers to prepare more teaching materials before the lessons, for instance, several sets of materials for the groups. Teachers are also highly involved during the process and that may increase their burden. For students with higher ability, there may be less pressure and more motivation for them because they already have an English basis which can understand what the teacher wants them to do in the group tasks. For weaker students, some of them may be able to develop confidence when talking to their classmates in English, but there may also be the chances that they may compare themselves with others which may harm their self-esteem. Gradually, they become really stressful to speak in English and do not have the courage to use English.

G: Comparing with other pedagogies, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary students?

T6: I would say no. I always think about weaker students. They may not be able to understand how group tasks can help them learn English. Also, they may not see the performance of group tasks rewarding. Most of the students who are weaker at English are actually afraid of working with their peers due to low self-esteem. For high achievers, they may compare their peers with themselves, but not truly enjoy the learning process with the use of group tasks. They like group tasks probably because they are able to show that they are better than their peers in English.

## Appendix 9 - An interview with Student 1 (A form 1 student from my FE school)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S1: Student 1)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S1: Using iPads in pairs to search for information, for example, topics about fruits and transports, which are related to the learning content of regular English lessons.

G: Is there any other form of grouping?

S1: 4 students in a small group. I am also allowed to choose my own groupmates. We are asked to discuss some questions provided by the teacher in small groups, then answer the questions and explain our ideas in front of the class.

G: Can you give me an example/ a topic related to the use of this small-group basis?

S1: For example, the teacher asked us to read through a passage and figured out what tense is used for the verbs and the reasons for using that particular tense.

G: I see, after that you may be invited to share your ideas in front of class. Let’s move on to the next question. Referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S1: I participate in group tasks two to three times per week.

G: Was that the same case in your primary school?

S1: I could only participate in group tasks when the Principal supervised the English lessons (around one time per school term). Most of the time, I just listened to the teacher in the lessons.

G: I got it. You just mentioned about having opportunities participate in group tasks two to three times per week in your English lessons now. Do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons?

S1: Yes, quite frequent, compared to that in my primary school.

G: I see, so to what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process?

S1: I prefer participating in group tasks than solely listening to the teacher on my own.

G: Can you rate how much you like participating in group tasks (from 0 to 10)? 10 is the highest.

S1: 7 marks for group tasks and 3 marks for listening to the teacher.

G: There's a big gap between them. Can you explain your rating?

S1: I give 3 out of 10 marks for listening to the teacher because sometimes I could not understand what she is saying. When I am working in a small group, I can ask my groupmates to help me or explain what I don't understand.

G: Any other reasons?

S1: Participating in group tasks is more fun because there is communication between classmates although sometimes they may talk about something that is irrelevant to the discussion topic. Also, it is hilarious when my classmates say something wrong in English. The learning atmosphere is more relaxing.

G: Do you have more ideas to add for this question? If not, let's move on. Do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S1: Yes, I am able to understand what my teacher says gradually because there is more English communication facilitated between classmates. There are also lots of good ideas contributed by different classmates in group tasks. After listening to their ideas, I can take and use them when I come across the same topic one day.

G: Alright, so you think you are benefit from your classmates' ideas. Great. Question number six. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S1: Yes, especially on speaking, because I use English to communicate with groupmates during discussion.

G: I see. In what aspects in speaking?

S1: I think it's the content, because the group tasks are usually about my school life and the speaking exams are more or less related to my personal experience.

G: How about listening? Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance in listening?

S1: Yes, I think so. I can listen to my groupmates' ideas on certain topics. Also, I think if I am

able to present my ideas in spoken English, I must be able to write.

G: I see, but you are required to spell the words when you are writing.

S1: At least I am able to write my ideas in complete sentences or with a clear structure. Spelling is more like a daily practice.

G: How about reading?

S1: I'm not so sure about that.

G: That's okay. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S1: I don't feel much pressure when speaking to classmates because we have quite similar level of English. I am not worried about making mistakes in front of my classmates. We could bear with one another and they would not tease me when I make a mistake.

G: Good. Do you have any psychological burden when presenting in front of your teacher and the whole class? I know that there are usually group presentations in each group task.

S1: I am a little bit pressured when presenting to the teacher. I am afraid of being corrected by my teacher.

G: Alright, last question. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S1: Not sure, perhaps using group tasks can help enhance my intrinsic learning motivation.

G: You may compare your learning experience in primary school with that in secondary school?  
Do you like English more?

S1: Yes, I like it a little bit more.

G: So, what's the most effective learning method for enhancing intrinsic learning motivation?

S1: I think it's watching English movies. It is more interesting and I can access to native English which can help me learn about standard English. I want to learn about standard English.

G: How about doing worksheets for developing your grammar basis? Can it also help motivate your intrinsic learning motivation?

S1: Not likely. I will give 2 to 3 out of 10 marks. However, it may help improve writing skills like writing grammatically correct sentences.

G: Great. That is all for this interview. Thank you for your help.

## Appendix 10 - An interview with Student 2 (A form 1 student from my FE school)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S2: Student 2)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S2: 4 to 5 students form in a group and discuss a topic, then my teacher will ask us to share our ideas in front of class.

G: Is there another type of group tasks involving more or less students in a group?

S2: No, we mainly have 4 to 5 students in a group.

G: Alright, question 2. Referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S2: Just a few when I was a primary student.

G: How often did you participate in group tasks? Once per week?

S2: Once per month. Our learning progress was quite slow.

G: But how did your teacher teach you if he/ she did not use group tasks in the lessons?



S2: I just finished the classwork on my own. Then, the teacher would explain the classwork and homework in Cantonese in the lessons. For example, we were given a piece of reading comprehension, she would translate it into Cantonese for us to comprehend it more easily.

G: Oh, I see, so do you think if there is any difference between the teaching modes in your primary and secondary schools?

S2: Yes. When I was a primary student, my teacher used Cantonese to teach English, but now, my teacher uses English to teach English. At the very beginning, I did not understand what my teacher said in English, but I am more familiar with what is going on in the English lessons now.

G: I got it, so you found it quite difficult to understand the learning topic when you first had English lessons in this school. Do you think that you are more encouraged to participate in group tasks here compared with that in your primary school?

S2: Yes. I participate in group tasks once per week.

G: Why is there such a huge difference between the frequency of using group tasks in the English lessons before and now?

S2: I think I am given more chances to talk to my classmates. The teacher wants us to communicate with one another and also learn more English vocabulary.

G: Let's move on to question 3. Do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons? I think I have asked about this in question 2. Do you have any other ideas to add?

S2: No.

G: Good, question 4 then. To what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process?

S2: I like participating in group tasks because I can communicate with my classmates more often. We practise to talk in English with one another for better communication with foreigners when we get into the society in the future.

G: Oh, so you have already thought about the use of English in the future. You think participating in group tasks can help you with that. If you have to rate the use of group tasks in English lessons out of 10 marks, how many marks will you give?

S2: 8 out of 10.

G: Great. Let's move on to question 5. Do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S2: I think it can because I can communicate with my classmates not only in Cantonese and Putonghua, but also in English.

G: But I would like to know why successfully using one more language can help motivate you learning in English. First of all, have you been interested in learning English for a long time?

S2: I have been interested in learning English since I was in primary 3. I was very lazy when I was small, but I do not know why I would like to give it a try and push myself to learn English in primary 3. I found that it was quite easy actually and I did not need to think much to write in English.

G: I see, so you have the strongest learning interest in English among all the subjects, right?

S2: Yes, and I think my English learning interest is still being facilitated with the use of group tasks in the English lessons here.

G: Okay, is it because of the fact that you can use English more frequently in group tasks or you have realized the fun of learning English?

S2: I think it is because it can boost my English level. Also, I can learn about cooperation skills when doing group tasks.

G: Good. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S2: I think it can. Just like what I said, I have more chances to talk to my classmates in English.

G: So, are you suggesting that group tasks can help you more in speaking?

S2: Yes, as well as in listening. For instance, sometimes I may not be able to present my ideas perfectly in English, I can listen to others' ideas and learn about how they can present theirs clearly. This helps me to organize ideas in the speaking exams. They may also remind me when they see me making careless mistakes in the writing group tasks.

G: We still have 2 more questions left. Question 7, To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S2: At the very beginning, I was pressured because I was afraid of not speaking fluent English, but now I get used to use English, at least I can understand what the teacher asks me to do and I can finish the homework by myself.

G: I guess you found it difficult because you were not yet familiar with the use of group tasks in English lessons. I know that there is a huge difference between the mediums of instruction in

the English lessons in your primary school and secondary school. It's December. Do you still find it challenging to use group tasks in English lessons?

S2: No, because I am already used to it. Also, I think that I have to be more confident in learning English.

G: Great, you think that you have more confidence in learning English. It's the last question. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S2: Using group tasks is not the best learning method. I think it mainly helps me communicate with others better. Doing grammar worksheets and watching English movies are also very important.

G: How are they important?

S2: For example, by doing grammar worksheets, I may be able to write better in English. It can also be a great testing tool for examining if I am really capable in writing sentences/ ideas in English. For watching movies, it allows me to understand the context of using certain words/ phrases/ sentences.

G: I know what you mean. If you have to comparing those three teaching methods, do you think using group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S2: I think watching English movies/ video clips is more effective. I remembered that I found it really difficult to read and comprehend an English story book. Then, I gave up reading English books. After that, there were people reading English books to me, and I realized that it was actually quite interesting.

G: Do you still read English books?

S2: Rarely.

G: Are you suggesting that watching English movies is similar to others reading English books to you?

S2: Yes.

G: By watching English movies, does it enhance your learning motivation in English?

S2: Yes, I think so.

G: Great. Do you have any other ideas to contribute regarding this question?

S2: No.

G: That's it for the interview. Thank you for your participation.

## Appendix 11 - An interview with Student 3 (A form 2 student from my FE school)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S3: Student 3)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S3: Group discussion, as well as using iPads to search information online in groups.

G: How many students are there in a group?

S3: About 2 – 4 students.

G: Do you remember which topics have been covered in group discussion?

S3: Recently, we were taught about charities and shopping, as well as family problems.

G: Is it like asking you guys to solve certain problems?

S3: Yep.

G: How do you make use of iPads to search information? One iPad for each student?

S3: Yes, one iPad for each student. There’s also a worksheet for us to fill in the blanks with the information we find online, such as shopping, one of our recent learning topics.

G: Alright, is there any other form of group tasks?

S3: Nope.

G: Next question, referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S3: I don't know much about other classes, but I am from Class 2B with Miss Ho being my English teacher. There is at least one group task each week. I think it is quite frequent.

G: Comparing with the time when you were in F.1, is there a difference with the use of group tasks in English lessons?

S3: Yes, there were not many group tasks in F.1. As I remember, there were only 3 to 4 times in the whole year.

G: What reasons do you think are related to the huge difference of the use of group tasks between these two years?

S3: Perhaps Miss Ho saw that we were quite active in group tasks last year, so there are more group tasks for us to participate this year. We are quite engaged in the tasks, because supposedly we are discussing with other same-age classmates, but not Miss Ho. It's stressful to talk with her.

G: Do you always use English to discuss in group tasks?

S3: Sometimes we use Cantonese.

G: Does Miss Ho think that it is appropriate for you to use Cantonese in group discussion?

S3: Yes, as long as we use English to present our ideas later on.

G: Question 3, do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons? As you have mentioned about your thought on the frequency of using group tasks in English lessons, do you have other supplementary ideas to share?

S3: Nope.

G: Alright, next question. To what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process?

S3: I don't mind having group tasks every lesson.

G: Wow, so you really like those group tasks. If you have to rate it out of 10, how many marks would you give?

S3: 9 out of 10.

G: Why do you like the use of group tasks?

S3: Although Miss Ho teaches us well, sometimes talking to other classmates allows me to gain some knowledge that I do not expect. I would say Miss Ho may be teaching from her own perspective, but by discussing with others, I can see more perspectives.

G: Can you give me a concrete example on those perspectives?

S3: For example, when Miss Ho taught us about family problems, she might only mention about the money perspective. However, when I was talking with my classmates, since we were



basically clear about family problems, we were able to express our own ideas on this. It's more down to earth, fun and hilarious.

G: Let's move on. Do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S3: Yes, because I think my friends help with my pronunciation when we are having a discussion in English. Miss Ho also does that, but it's more comfortable for me to be corrected by my friends. I feel humiliated when Miss Ho corrects my pronunciation in front of the whole class.

G: I see. Do you have any other ideas about motivating English learning with the use of group tasks?

S3: Yep. I think we would spend time discussing with classmates even after finishing that unit or topic.

G: Okay, are you saying that there are related group tasks designed by your teacher to let you deeply understand the topic itself?

S3: Yes, and I would have deeper impression on that topic. Sometimes, we are asked to read a textbook passage first and discuss related questions in groups, after that there should be a speaker in each group to present ideas to Miss Ho.

G: I see, so there will be a group representative in each group, but all the ideas should be come from group discussions. Question 6, do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S3: It's hard to say. I think boosting academic results is mainly about doing revision on grammar and vocabulary. Group discussions focus more on the learning content.

G: I got it, so you think you are usually tested on your knowledge about grammatical items. The reading comprehensions in the exams are not going to be the same, so it may not be that helpful for improving academic performance. What do you think about other aspects, which are listening, speaking and writing?

S3: It does have some impact on speaking, by having more group tasks, I am more confident in speaking in English. I feel less nervous when talking to examiners.

G: How about listening and writing?

S3: I'm not sure about writing, because I have poor grammar and an insufficient vocabulary bank for writing a good piece of writing. However, I think group tasks may help train my listening skills. I remember that once there was a Japanese speaker, I had no idea what he was talking about. After having more group discussions, I have more opportunities to listen to mainland students speaking English. At the beginning, I also had no idea what they were saying, but I understand their meaning and pronunciation gradually.

G: Great example. Can you tell me how many marks did you get in the Listening Uniform Test?

S3: 29 out of 34 marks.

G: It's great. Do you remember your performance in listening when you were in F.1?

S3: Not good, not bad. I still remember that I just know the Japanese speaker's name, but I don't understand when he was spelling his name.

G: That's interesting. Next question, to what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S3: The biggest challenge is that I have to write down everything my groupmates say when I am a writer in the group. It's quite difficult for me because I am a little bit weak at English spelling. Also, I am also required to contribute ideas during the discussion, so the workload is a little bit too much.

G: I would like to understand the roles in group discussions first. What roles are there?

S3: Speaker, writer, leader and runner.

G: What does a runner do?

S3: A runner is just responsible for taking worksheets or materials from the teacher.

G: I see, is it your decision or Miss Ho's decision on the roles?

S3: We take turns to be each role in the group.

G: I'm wondering if you still want group tasks in whatever role it is.

S3: I don't want group tasks when I have to be a writer, but I want them when I am a speaker. I like speaking.

G: Maybe you are not that engaged in the tasks when you have to be a writer, but more excited when you are a speaker.

S3: Yes! The most exciting part in Miss Ho's group tasks is that we have to answer questions quickly for gaining marks, but only the leader and speaker have the right to raise hands for answering questions. The other groupmates are quite passive, so when I am the writer in my

group, we gain fewer marks and I feel quite aggrieved.

G: Oh, so it's like a competition.

S3: Yes, so my group has got 15 marks fewer than my friend's group.

G: So, are those marks help you to get some sorts of gifts at the end of the term?

S3: I don't know. I just want to have higher marks. When we are eager to answer questions quickly like we are in a competition, the learning atmosphere gets better.

G: Any more ideas about this question? If no, let's move on. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S3: Yes, because when I am the speaker in my group, marks will be deducted if I mispronounce some words, so I would like to improve my language accuracy.

G: I see, but in that way, you want group tasks for getting bonus marks.

S3: I think it is also because of my ambition in getting high marks.

G: Ambition is also more like external motivation. Do you like English?

S3: Yes.

G: You have mentioned that there were not many group tasks when you were in F.1, but now you have more. Do you like English more with the more frequent use of group tasks in English lessons?

S3: Yes, I think so. I have more English speaking opportunities without worrying to be teased by other classmates for speaking English. For instance, my classmates would say something like, 'you are speaking English again. I don't want to talk with you. Let's chat in Cantonese'.

G: I see. If you have to compare group tasks with other learning methods, such as grammar drilling and watching movies, which one do you think is more effective?

S3: I'm not sure, but I really have to choose among these three, I would prefer watching movies.

G: Alright, Which way would encourage you to learn English or facilitate your English learning interest more, watching movies or doing group tasks?

S3: Both are okay. Miss Ho also taught us about watching English movies. For instance, when we finish watching an American drama episode, we should turn off the subtitles when we watch it the second time. However, I could not really understand the episode if I turn off the subtitles and it is quite troublesome. I really want to improve my English to actually understand those episodes.

G: That's the end of our interview today. Thank you for your time.

## Appendix 12 - An interview with Student 4 (A form 2 student from my FE school)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S4: Student 4)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S4: We are divided into groups of 4 or 2 when using iPads. I feel like there are more ideas and help with 4 members in a group comparing 2 in a group.

G: Can you tell me more about the topics related to the group tasks you participated in the lessons? Are they related to what you are learning or are they additional topics?

S4: They are related to the textbooks and other learning materials used in English lessons. For instance, I was learning about Beckham, to be more exact, about the family problems that he has encountered.

G: I see. Can you describe more about what you have learnt in that group discussion?

S4: Yes, as we know that, Beckham loves playing football very much, but actually his wife hated that, especially when his sons also started devoting their time in that sports. She was annoyed by the noise they made.

G: Great. Referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S4: I guess once per week.

G: Do you remember the frequency of having group tasks in F.1 English lessons?

S4: Pretty much the same.

G: What was the case when you were in a primary school?

S4: I have fewer group tasks now. When I was a primary school student, there were 2 to 3 group tasks each week, so I think it will be better if there are 1 to 2 more group tasks added to my English lessons now.

G: Alright, you said you want more group tasks, but do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons?

S4: Yes, quite frequent, acceptable. However, I do think that there should be at least two group tasks in English lessons every week.

G: Is there a practice or preference for the types of group tasks used? For example, once for pair work and once for group discussion?

S4: If we are having lessons with the NET, then it is pair work. For regular lessons, we usually have group discussions with 4 members in a group.

G: Let's move on to question 4. To what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process?

S4: It mainly depends on whether I am interested in the topic. For example, I liked the topic about David Beckham.

G: Is it because of his fame?

S4: Yes, I think I am interested in those topics that are related to famous people and popular culture and things.

G: So, if the group task is not related to those topics, then probably you would not actively participate in the task. Can you rate how much you like participating in group tasks, how many marks out of 10?

S4: 8 out of 10. I particularly like pair work because I can keep my ideas to myself and my partner only, not too many people.

G: I see. Do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S4: Yes, I think I can communicate with my classmates in English and that helps motivate my learning interest. It is sometimes boring for me to only listen to the teacher.

G: Can you elaborate how the communication helps motivate your learning in English?

S4: It's like I am able to listen to their thoughts and exchange our ideas and those inspire me to think more based on the topic given.

G: Can you share an example about how your classmates inspired you during your discussion?

S4: I remember that there was once that I was not so sure about the topic. That's pair work, so my partner told me what he knows and explained the topic to me by giving me an example.

G: What is that topic?



S4: It's about emotions.

G: Do you have any ideas added on this question? If no, we will move on. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S4: Yes, I think so. I can absorb the knowledge more easily from communicating with classmates, because sometimes we are allowed to use code-mixing during our discussion. Our teacher only uses English in the whole lesson.

G: I see, so you are able to understand the topics by exchanging ideas with your classmates in Cantonese and English, which helps you do your revision for exams. In which aspect do you think group tasks can help with your academic performance?

S4: Writing, I absorb more ideas from my classmates' contribution and those ideas help me with my writing.

G: Can you share an example about how your classmates' ideas help with your writing?

S4: For example, I might not be able to use some sentences properly, but by seeing how my classmates used those sentences and made use of some new vocabulary, I could write better in the exam.

G: How about other perspectives? Can group tasks help improve your reading, listening or speaking?

S4: Speaking as well. I think I have improvement in pronunciation because my classmates sometimes teach me how to pronounce some words correctly when we are working on the

same task. As for reading, I may find it difficult to comprehend a reading text, but my groupmates are able to help with explaining the meanings of those difficult words.

G: How about listening?

S4: Not much, I am confused of the accents of my groupmates in some occasions. They do not speak British or American English like the speakers from the soundtracks in the listening exams.

G: During the group tasks, how often is it for you and your groupmates use Cantonese?

S4: We mainly use Cantonese, and I think that may also be the reason why I am not used to listen to English. We usually use English when we have to present ideas to the teacher or in front of the class.

G: Alright. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S4: If there are group tasks every day, then there may be heavier burdens.

G: Why do you think so?

S4: I feel like I may not be able to finish my homework, and having more group tasks somehow adds my burden.

G: Can you give me more details on the linkage between doing homework and having group tasks in the English lessons?

S4: Group tasks can also be one type of the homework given by our teacher. She may ask us to finish an extended task after having a group discussion in the lesson.

G: As you have mentioned that the frequency of having group tasks is appropriate for you, do you think that there is still a great burden?

S4: No, I am good.

G: Apart from the pressures of doing extra homework, how about the pressures that may cause from the speaking or writing activity in the group tasks?

S4: I feel pressured when I have to write something. I feel like my writing skill is not so good.

G: How does your teacher ask you to write? How do usually react to those writing tasks?

S4: After my teacher gives her explanation on a certain topic about the group task, I sometimes do not quite get it, so it is really challenging for me to write something for that topic. And that gives me pressure, especially when she asks us to finish the task as soon as possible but I still have nothing on the sheet.

G: I see. Let's move on to the next question. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S4: Yes, because I think games are involved in group tasks and I can truly love learning English through playing games and doing group tasks.

G: If you have to compare it with other learning methods, is it still the most effective way to enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S4: I think watching movies is better than working on grammar exercises. I do not really enjoy writing and I have comparatively weak grammar basis.

G: So will you feel that you have less interest in learning English when you are asked to finish grammar exercises?

S4: Yes.

G: Which one is more effective in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation, doing group tasks or watching movies?

S4: Doing group tasks. I think I am not an active participant in watching movies. There is a high chance that I will forget about the movie very soon after I have finished watching it.

G: Great. How do group tasks help motivate your intrinsic learning motivation?

S4: During group tasks, we get used to share and write down our answers and it is better for me to have my groupmates correcting my mistakes.

G: Won't you feel that it is a kind of pressure?

S4: Nope, I think I can learn more from those mistakes and the opinions of my groupmates.

G: Is there any other method that is effective to you?

S4: Games.

G: Can you name a game that you play in the English lessons that you think is good?

S4: Kahoot! I like playing little games with some questions on the screen and I can answer them using the iPad.

G: But I think that is an individual activity, right?

S4: It was pair work when I was F.1.

G: I see, so do you still play this game?

S4: Yes, sometimes it is Quizlet.

G: Got it. This is the end of the interview. Thank you for your time.

### **Appendix 13 - An interview with Student 5 (A form 1 student from my FE school)**

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S5: Student 5)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S5: There are interviews. It’s like asking each other questions in pairs.

G: Any other types? Or are there certain topics that are discussed in pairs?

S5: For example, there are questions about asking others’ feelings towards the discussed topics.

G: I see. Are there other types of group tasks which involve more than 2 students?

S5: Not really.

G: Let’s move on to question 2. Referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S5: I guess at least three times per week.

G: Do you think that you have quite a lot of group tasks in English lessons?

S5: Yes, quite a lot.

G: Can you remember if there was the same amount of group tasks per week when you were in your primary school?

S5: No, there were fewer. It's around twice per week.

G: Is there any difference between the types of group tasks used in the English lessons in your primary and secondary schools?

S5: Not much difference.

G: Do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons?

S5: Yes, I think so.

G: Apart from working on group tasks, what are the other learning methods used in English lessons?

S5: Answering teacher's questions. I think that is the most frequently used learning method in the lessons.

G: When you are asked to work in pairs, what does your teacher normally ask you to do?

S5: First interview, then write down the information that I have collected. After that, the teacher may ask us to present the information.

G: Next question, to what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process? How many marks out of 10 do you give for the use of group tasks?

S5: 8 out of 10. I think those group tasks are interesting and I can learn more about speaking skills. Sometimes, I am able to learn how to use some English vocabulary within its context correctly.

G: Good. Are there any other reasons why you enjoy participating in group tasks?

S5: I enjoy interacting with my classmates. I feel less bored.

G: Okay, do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S5: Definitely yes. Those group tasks give me a deeper impression on what I have learnt through the communication with my groupmates.

G: Do you like learning English?

S5: Yes, since I was little.

G: Do you think that the use of group tasks stimulates your learning interest more?

S5: Yes, it does. Since there is lots of discussion going on between my groupmates and me on the topics based on the textbook and what the teacher teaches, the opinions given by my groupmates give me more ideas on those topics such as different types of food.

G: Great. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S5: Absolutely yes. For instance, we had discussed our favourite food as a warm-up activity. That actually helps me pronounce the names of different types of food and understand their corresponding meanings. I could eventually answer questions related to the names of food in the test.



G: I see. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S5: Yes, I think that is quite a heavy burden. I am afraid of being the representative and sharing my thoughts in front of the class.

G: I got it, but do you feel pressured when you are discussing with your groupmates?

S5: No, not at all. I think it is quite relaxing to discuss the topics with my groupmates.

G: But do you think that it is a challenge for you to talk to them in English?

S5: Yes, it is quite challenging. I may not know how to say or pronounce some English words.

G: Any other challenges?

S5: Mainly about mispronouncing some words.

G: You have mentioned about you do not want to present in front of the whole class after discussion. Is it because you do not want to show your mispronunciation in front of everyone?

S5: Yes. It is a scary thing for me if I make mistakes in front of everybody.

G: Last question. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S5: I think group tasks are more effective comparing with other learning methods. Grammar drilling exercises and English movies are boring.

G: Alright, but do you think that those exercises are helpful in motivating your intrinsic learning motivation?

S5: Yes, but with little effects. I guess those exercises help me with the usage of grammar rules and I will be able to use them in daily life and exam contexts.

G: As you have mentioned, why do you think that watching movies is boring?

S5: The words are too difficult to understand. I just do not have interest watching them.

G: What if there are subtitles provided?

S5: If there are Chinese subtitles, then it is okay for me. No English subtitles.

G: What do you think about the content of group tasks?

S5: Simpler comparing to the contents of those English movies. Also, I have chances to speak in English. I think it is very important for me to successfully acquire a language with more listening and speaking chances.

G: That's the end of the interview. Thank you.

## Appendix 14 - An interview with Student 6 (A form 1 student from my FE school)

Transcript: (G: The interviewer S6: Student 6)

G: Thank you for accepting my invitation of being my research participant. The topic of my research is “the effectiveness of using group tasks in enhancing intrinsic learning motivation of junior secondary school students in Hong Kong ESL classrooms”. There are 8 questions in total in the interview. The first question is, which types of group tasks do you encounter in English lessons?

S6: We have pair work and groups of 4. I was really eager to participate in group tasks because I could get prizes or bonus marks. I like competitions.

G: Are there any differences between the group tasks you experienced before and now?

S6: Not much difference, but I feel like I don't have the motivation to participate in group tasks now.

G: Can you give me some examples about the topics discussed in the group tasks?

S6: For example, there are topics like introducing our school and Hong Kong food.

G: Are there any differences between pair work and group tasks to you?

S6: We simply talk about the topic in pair work, but when we are in groups of 4, we need to write lots of words. After writing, we need to hand in our work.

G: Question 2, referring to your English learning experience, how often do you participate in group tasks?

S6: three times per week.

G: Do you think group tasks are commonly used in your English lessons?

S6: Yes, I think they are quite commonly used.

G: If you have to compare the use of group tasks in the English lessons in primary school with those now, did you participate in more group tasks back then?

S6: I remember there were a lot in the second term of P.6.

G: What reasons do you think there were higher use of group tasks?

S6: I think that is because the exams in P.6 were really important for us to get into a good secondary school.

G: So do you feel that there are fewer group tasks?

S6: I think there is not much difference.

G: Next question, to what extent do you like participating in group tasks during the English learning process? How many marks out of 10 do you give for the use of group tasks?

S6: 9 out of 10. I think those group tasks are normally not boring and I will not fall asleep in class. At least there are groupmates chatting with me during group discussion.

G: Okay, are there any other reasons which may contribute to your will on having more group tasks?

S6: Nope.

G: Next question then, do you think using group tasks can help motivate your learning in English? Why?

S6: Yes. I think there is a huge difference between learning on my own and learning with my partner/ in groups. I feel like I am more motivated when learning with others, but my class is too noisy. Sometimes, I may not know the pronunciation or meanings of some words, my groupmates are able to tell me sort those out and be my translator.

G: Do you like learning English?

S6: Yes, I am planning to go to USA.

G: Do you think that the use of group tasks stimulates your learning interest more?

S6: Yes, it does.

G: Great. Do you think using group tasks can help improve your academic performance? Why?

S6: I guess a little bit on my writing, not as strong as motivating my learning interest in English.

G: Why is there such a comparison?

S6: I think I can still absorb more knowledge by learning with my groupmates through discussion and that helps me do my revision at home and have more ideas for English writing. I think it is better than learning on my own in the English lessons.

G: But why do you think that it does not have the same effectiveness as it has on stimulating your motivation?

S6: I don't know, but I could not get high marks even I study a lot. Also, I feel like what I am learning now is easier than what I learnt in P.6.

G: Can you give me some examples?

S6: I think the teacher used more difficult words when teaching, and sometimes I did not get it.

G: Do you think that the group tasks you had before were more challenging?

S6: I think there is not big difference, but they were more fun.

G: Alright, let's move on to question 7. To what extent do you think using group tasks adds psychological burden or challenges to you?

S6: Not at all. I can't think of any.

G: For instance, some students may say that they are afraid of mispronouncing some words or could not speak perfect English. That is why they feel pressured when having group tasks.

S6: I don't have that feeling at all.

G: Last question. Comparing with other learning methods such as grammar drilling and watching English movies etc., do you think participating in group tasks can effectively enhance your intrinsic learning motivation?

S6: Yes, they can effectively enhance motivation.

G: How about the other methods?

S6: Watching movies is challenging for me, because I just can't understand what those people are saying. Some movies even do not have their subtitles. That is really frustrating.

G: How about grammar drilling?

S6: I am not so sure. I think it is important, but quite boring.

G: Do you think that the difficulty of group tasks is appropriate for you?

S6: Yes, I think it is okay.

G: That's the end of the interview. Thank you.