

Welcome to  
*July's Edition of*  
*eCL*  
by [cooperativelearning.works](http://cooperativelearning.works)

*The Dance Floor is made of Lava*

The most basic, versatile and effective CLIPs (see [post](#) on nomenclature) - which I always started with when I taught CL to other teachers - are the ones that get the benchwarmers out of their seats and onto the floor. These activities may last from a few minutes to a full lesson.

By default, getting them up and about needs no preparation, as it requires no pre-formed teams or special table set-up and is simple for learners to grasp, it needs not even be called CL. Because it involves moving around and talking, it's excellent for infusing energy and helps those students who need some action. However milling around on the floor and speaking to partners can be varied endlessly and exploited for very specific purposes.

(Also download the [mind map.jpg](#) from [cooperativelearning.works](http://cooperativelearning.works) in jpg for overview if you haven't already done so. A preview may be found on the final page of this document).

There are two basic variations in input, each with very specific benefits:

1. Input consists of a teacher's question posed each time learners pair up, *Stop2Talk* for reference.
2. Input carried around by the learners themselves in the form of flashcards, homework, exercises, etc. - *Catch1Partner* for reference.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Note: *Stop2Talk* and *Catch1Partner* are sometimes grouped as simply *Catch1Partner* with and without materials.

CLIP #1:

## *Stop2Talk*

1. All learners mill around until teacher gives signal\* to pair up.
2. Students pair up with closest neighbour.
3. Teacher poses a question and gives student pairs a moment to consider.
4. Partners discuss the question.
5. Teacher gives signal\* to mill around again (or just turn to a new partner).
6. Partners bid farewell, find a new partner and proceed from step one.

\*Signals need not be imperatives. For students experienced in this CLIP, try using suitable music to start and stop milling...

### **ICQ: Instruction Checking Questions:**

- When are you going to pair up?
- Are you going to pair with your best friend or the closest person?
- Do you start talking immediately, or do you consider for a moment?
- Who is asking the question, you or your partner? That's right, the *teacher* asks the question.
- Are you going to discuss, or do you take turns talking?
- When do you break up and find a new partner? When you feel you are finished? No, wait for teacher's signal.
- What's the signal to break up and find a new partner?

### **Input:**

Teacher poses questions, using oral or visual means. May be two types:

- questions pre-prepared to teach, focus on or test specific knowledge.
- *or* created on the fly by the teacher as s/he listens in to student responses as the learners move from partner to partner. *This creates an interesting synergy, where the teacher is actually following student interest as well as own intuition.*

### **Note:**

This free sharing information across the class helps spread inspiration, knowledge and solutions/skills helps to keep everyone on the same level.

### **Tips:**

- Divide time between each partner to ensure equal participation, or simply ping-pong (*"Take turns forming as many irregular French verbs as you can."*)
- Students taking notes is fine and can be used for follow-ups.
- Create your own standard all-round list of questions: *"Tell your partner what is happening in this week's chapter of your graded reader."* - *"Discuss what you learned in/remember from the previous lesson."* etc.

### **An example of a reading exercise with Stop2Talk**

Use Stop2Talk in the Lead in: Ask your series of relevant pre-reading questions: *"Look at this picture of the author Oscar Wilde, what type of a person is he, do you think?"* (English Literature) *"What do you know about the cold war?"* (Newspaper article on SALT negotiations in History)

Use Stop2Talk for the text follow-up questions: *"Discuss what Oscar Wilde's contemporaries might have found provocative,"* etc.

(The point here being that you *don't* need to come up with content to use these pre-fabricated CLIPs - rather their fixed nature ensures a CL-compliant form, which frees up your mind to deal with the content. Simply use *Stop2Talk* to avoid students from the same team or desk pairing up).

CLIP #2:

## *Catch/Partner*

1. All learners get up, material in hand, walk around and hook up with another learner.
2. Partner A asks his question.
3. Partner B answers.
4. Partner A gives positive feedback or coaches/comments if necessary.
5. Partners switch roles.
6. Partners swap material/questions. (This may be left out!)
7. Partners bid farewell, find a new partner and proceed from step one.

### **ICQ: Instruction Checking Questions:**

- What material are you going to need to take from your desk?
- Are you going to pair up with people from your table/team or people from other tables/teams?
- When are you going to pair up? Right, when you and your partner are finished, you spot another free student and pair with him/her.
- Are you going to pair with your best friend or the closest person?
- Do you start talking immediately, or do you consider for a moment?
- Are you going to discuss, or do you take turns talking?
- Who is asking the question, you or your partner? (May give instructions on who is first to go; tallest, oldest, darkest clothes...)
- Are you going to discuss, or do you take turns talking?
- What's your response to your partner?
- When do you break up and find a new partner?

### **Input:**

Materials might take the form of flashcards with subject matter (this is where the rote learning of names and dates in British history comes in) or social skills training questions prepared by the teacher, it may be homework to be compared, mused over and corrected, reading aloud a story or poem, describing a picture, etc. Only your imagination set the limits.

**Additions & extensions** [see mind map](#) at [cooperativelearning.works](http://cooperativelearning.works).

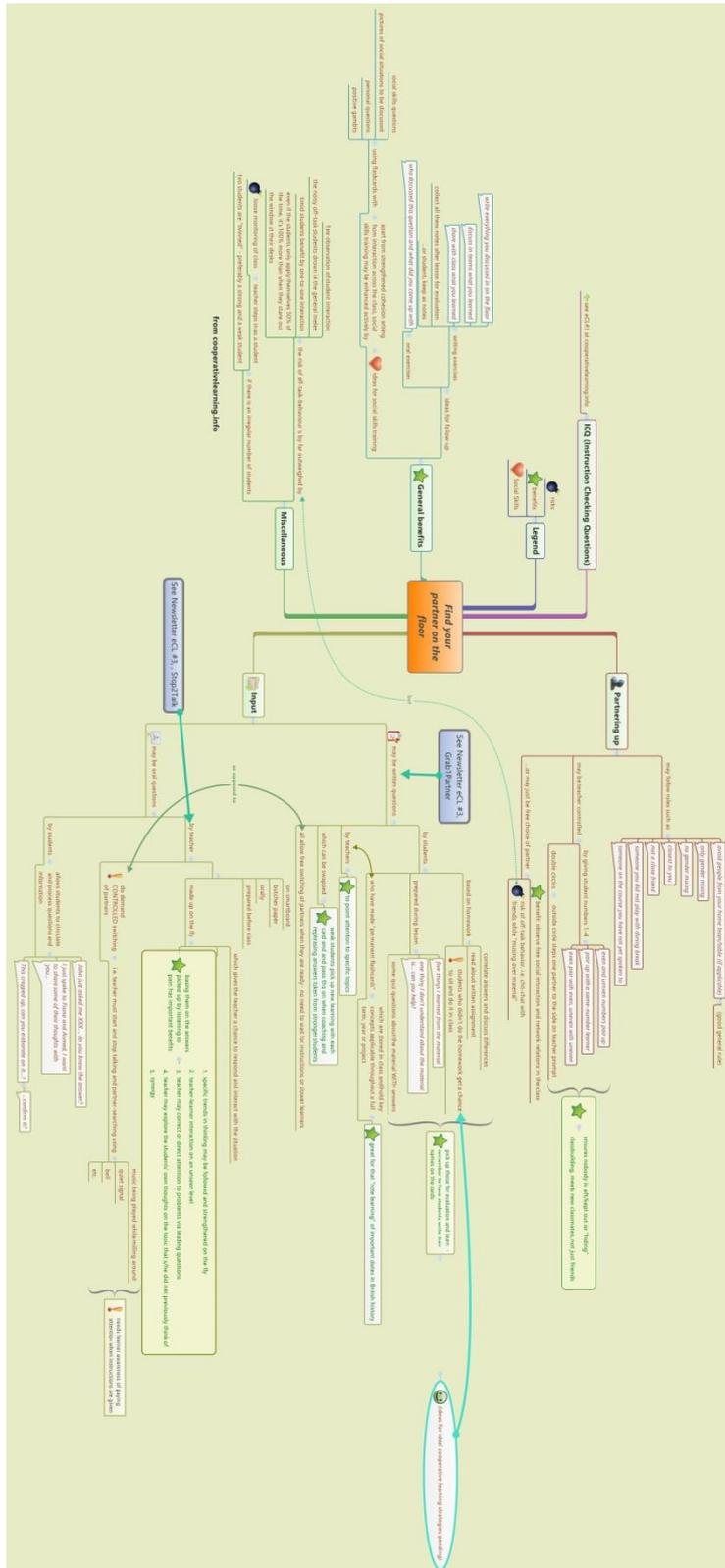
### **An example of reading exercise using *Catch/Partner***

Pre: Students get an appropriate amount of time to read a text and write questions about content/phrases/words they find confusing.  
During *Catch/Partner*: they ask for explanations and write them down in their own words. They re-check answers as they move to new partners.

Post: Conflicting answers are reported to the teacher, giving a good overview of what needs more elaboration.

### **Some tips for *Stop2Talk* and *Catch/Partner***

- If you're a learner short, step in as a learner and leave monitoring to assistant teacher. It will give you a chance to discreetly pick learners you want to have a closer look at or give special support. Alternatively, create Siamese twins from two learners. Preferable pair a strong and weak one - letting the weak twin do the talking to the partners, with the strong twin as coach and backup.)
- The free choice for partners also allows the teacher to observe social network patterns by monitoring preferences.
- In socially incohesive classes, try using carousel (i.e. inner and outer circles) or ladder, where the student simply pairs up with the next person on the left in the circle/line.



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