

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

There is an ever increasing need for interdependence in our educational environment today. Providing students with the tools to effectively work in a collaborative and cooperative environment should be our priority as teachers.

Cooperative learning (CL) is one way to provide students with a well defined framework from which they can learn from one another. According to Slavin (1996 in Strahm, 2007, p.65) CL has been hailed as ‘one of the greatest success stories in the history of educational innovation’. CL is the “instructional use of small groups so that student’s work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (Johnson & Johnson, 1994; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998; Kagan & Kagan, 1994; Slavin, 1995 in Strahm, 2007, p.64). In other words, CL is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for their own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal.

In Indonesia’s educational system, CL has been implemented and incorporated in many educational practices. In fact, there is a tendency to regard negatively a classroom without the label of ‘cooperative learning’ (Tamah, 2014). Furthermore, many studies showed that CL can increase the level of understanding and reasoning, develop critical thinking, and increase the accuracy of long-term retention (Koppenhaver & Shrader, 2003 in Farzaneh & Nejadansari,

2014). Therefore, many of the Indonesian educational practitioners are reflecting from the positive outcome of CL and then applying the CL in their teaching practices.

However, there are some concerns toward the effectiveness of CL practices in Indonesia, especially from the teachers and students point of views. Teachers often find difficulty in applying CL because of minimum student's interdependence toward one another and students also tend to be passive in doing some cooperative tasks. These concerns were highlighted by Race (2005 in Herrman, 2013) who argues that cooperating with classmate is one of the five pivotal factors underpinning successful learning, and from this perspective, the widespread passivity and disengagement is unfortunate.

Derived from the concerns above, this study tries to focus on one of the instructional practices in CL, which is group presentation. According to a recent research conducted by Tamah (2015), teachers often employ group work presentation to assess the outcome of CL through group work activities. She states that there are some concerns when conventional group presentation was carried out by each group member. On her article, Tamah (2015) highlights the diminution of the two most important elements of group work namely positive interdependence and individual accountability. The positive interdependence is less strengthened and the individual accountability is ruined in most group presentation (Tamah, 2015). In other words, a conventional group work presentation is assumed to decrease the value of positive interdependence and individual accountability from each group member.

This assumption is based on the fact that there were some issues regarding the practice of conventional group presentation such as: only some or even one student who mastered the materials while the other only read the *powerpoint* slides while the other group member responsible for the part that they have been assigned for and the term '*Hitchhike*' (Kagan &

Kagan, 1994 as stated in Tamah, 2014) is commonly found among the members of the group during a group presentation.

Prior to the issues stated above regarding the practice of conventional group presentation, it is obvious that the practice seemed to undervalue the basic principle of CL. Referring to Slavin (1990), Jacobs, Lee and Ball. (1996), Tamah (2007) puts forward that in a cooperative learning class, students are required to work together to learn and to be responsible for their fellow students learning as well as their own.

Apparently, these issues are already rooted in many group work presentation practices in Indonesia. Therefore, this recent study tries to apply different kinds of group presentation model to undergraduate students and find out their perspectives towards this different kind of group presentation model.

Meanwhile, the group presentation model is referred to the model namely *A-aikem 3* model (Tamah and Prijambodo on their book *Model Asesmen Pembelajaran Kooperatif: Strategi Menjawab Tantangan*, 2015). After studying different kinds of group presentation models, *Model A- aikem 3* is considered to be an intriguing and challenging model because of several reasons. First, this model facilitates the degree of fairness because it uses a lottery mechanism to determine the role of each group member. Second, this model strengthens the value of positive interdependence and individual accountability among each group member. As mentioned by Slavin (1996) each student in the same group has a unique contribution to make to the joint effort. Team members depend and rely on one another to achieve the goal. Each group member's effort is required and indispensable for group success. Therefore, all students in a group must be accountable for contributing their own share of the work and mastering all of the materials to be learned to the group's success. And the last reason of choosing this model is because of its

novelty. Based on the researcher's teaching experiences, this group presentation model is rarely applied and implemented during a classroom group presentation.

In the past, some studies have explored different perspectives regarding cooperative learning (CL). Herrmann (2013) in his study reports the result of a quasi-experimental real-life intervention with cooperative learning in an undergraduate course. In-class participation and student approaches to learning were measured before and after the intervention to assess the impact on 140 students' engagement levels. In addition, open-ended comments were analyzed, revealing the importance of cooperative learning principles in higher education should be done. The intervention lasted 10 weeks of a 14-week semester. Students were informed of the intervention at the start of the semester, but without revealing the purpose of the study. Herrmann (2013) developed a broader questionnaire to measure the level on student's engagement. The result of this study showed that the intervention was partly successful. However, results also indicate that changing the instructional method is in itself not enough to discourage a surface approach and promote a deep approach to learning as expected.

On the other hand, Campbell (2006) examined Asian student's perception of the much-promulgated collaborative learning concepts in the form of group work and group assignments. Twenty-two Asian students participated in one-hour individual semi-structured interviews. The study found that Asian students valued highly the significance of classroom group discussions where they could interact with students from other cultures and backgrounds, develop their English language skills, enhance their cultural understandings and provide them with opportunities to make friends.

However, Campbell's (2006) study showed that they held intensely negative views about group assignments that require students to complete a project as a group with shared marks

determined by the performance of the group. The study suggested that cooperative learning with constructivism as its theoretical base has its strengths and weaknesses. In terms of pedagogy, constructivism values cooperation between lecturers and students and among students.

In her study, Tamah (2015) highlighted her concern on how positive interdependence and individual accountability are not considered as significant factors on current group work presentation practices. She conducted a small scale research based on her concerns about positive interdependence and individual accountability which are quite neglected in most group work presentation. She was concerned about individual accountability which is ruined by the fact that many students in group presentation are relying only on a certain group member. In order to investigate the reason behind her concerns, an innovative model of group work presentation was implemented by utilizing the idea of representative and role assigning which are determined by lottery on the group presentation day to determine the specific role of each group member. She found out that the students were indeed triggered by the inventive technique and came to an even rigorous idea of how to make students not only read the assigned materials for the group but also the whole semester course materials.

The previous studies mentioned above try to explore the impact of CL (Herrmann, 2013), analyze student's perceptions on student's group assignments (Campbell, 2006) and implement an innovative model in group work presentation (Tamah, 2015). Meanwhile, inspired by those previous studies, this present study is focusing on the student's perspective towards the use of a relatively new model in group presentation coined by Tamah and Prijambodo (2015) on their book *Model Asesmen Pembelajaran Kooperatif: Strategi Menjawab Tantangan* . This present study would also like to investigate the positive and negative feedbacks from the undergraduate

students after they have experienced the *A-aikem 3* model (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2015) in their group presentation practices.

1.2 Research Questions

Deriving from the title of this thesis and the background of the study, two relevant research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How do the undergraduate students perceive *A-aikem 3* model?
2. What are the positive and negative feedbacks of *A-aikem 3* model'?

1.3 Research Objectives

In relation to the research questions above, this study aims to investigate the student's perspective towards *A-aikem 3* model and also their feedback after experiencing *A-aikem 3* model.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Slavin's Cooperative Learning Theory (1985)

Slavin (1985) mentions the main components of group learning interaction and representing the functional relationships among the different theoretical approaches. He focuses on the relationship among group learning goals, motivation, and enhanced learning (Slavin, 1985 as stated in Har, 2013). Therefore, group learning goals produce within team members' motivation to learn, encourage other members to learn, and motivate members to help one another to achieve the same objective. Most important is that cooperative learning develops the diversified abilities of students to increase their cognitive, psychological and social performance, and as such, it is also an effective way to address the problem of individual differences.

***A-aikem 3* Model on Group Work Presentation**

Emphasizing on the importance of positive interdependence, individual accountability and also the need of well-structured instruction in a group work presentation, Tamah and Prijambodo

(2015) construct an innovative model in group work presentation, namely *A-aikem 3* model. This model contains a set of instruction which help teachers and students implement CL within a group work presentation by utilizing the idea of representativeness and role assigning which are determined by lottery. Furthermore, this model also tries to improve the effort in mastering the content of their presentation from each group member, minimizing a 'hitchhiker' group member is also the objective of this model (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2015).

1.5 Significance of the Study

By investigating student's perspective towards *A-aikem 3* model, this study is expected to have theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, this study is intended to give new insights regarding the use of *A-aikem 3* model as a representation of CL approach which can encourage each member of the group to work for their team's learning goals.

In the practical aspect, the results of this study are expected to be helpful for teachers to try to improve their students' cooperative skill by applying a non-conventional model of group work presentation. This might also be used as a reference to improve English education study program or classroom management, as it provides a comprehensive depiction of student's perspectives toward an innovative model of group presentation, namely *A-aikem 3* model (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2015)

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The content of this qualitative study focuses on the student's perspective toward the use of *A-aikem 3* model as they are presenting the result of their group work. Hence, investigating the positive and negative feedback from the students after they experience the model will also be taken as a consideration. The researcher prefers to focus on the student's perspective and the study employs questionnaire and interview as two main research instruments.

The target participants selected from two classes of undergraduate students from a private university in Sidoarjo, Indonesia. They were divided into smaller groups of four or three students. The reasons behind the selection of the participant is mainly because the researcher is currently working there as a lecturer. Therefore, it is considered as a beneficial factor toward this study since the researcher has already been aware of the classroom situation and the student's prior experiences on group presentation.

1.7 Definition of the Key Terms

Cooperative Learning

It is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members.

Student's Perspective

It is a student's cognitive process where student tries to interpret a certain sensory action or impression into a coherent and unified view of the world around them. Though necessarily based on incomplete and unverified information, students' perspective is equated as their practical guidance that leads to their behavior as students in general.

Positive Interdependence

It is a condition when each student in the same group has a distinctive contribution to make to the joint effort. Team members depend and rely on one another to achieve the goal. Each group member's effort is required and indispensable for group success.

Individual Accountability

It is a condition when all students in a group must be accountable for contributing their own share of the work and mastering all of the material to be learned for the sake of the group's success.

A-aikem 3 Model

It is an innovative model in group work presentation promoted by Tamah & Prijambodo (2015), who have constructed a set of group work presentation instruction which represents the idea of representativeness and role assigning process. The role assigning process is determined by lottery on the group presentation day to determine the specific role of each group member.

The word *A-aikem* is abbreviated from the words “*Asesmen aktif, inovatif, kreatif, dan menyenangkan*” (Tamah & Prijambodo, 2015) which can be translated into English as an active, innovative, creative and fun assessment.