

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING: STUDENT TEAMS-ACHIEVEMENT DIVISIONS TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION
(A Case Study in A class of Eight Grade Students at One Public School in Bandung)**

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the benefits of implementing cooperative learning with STAD technique in teaching reading comprehension and the students' responses toward the implementation of STAD technique. This study was conducted based on the assumption that STAD technique can be a recommended technique in teaching English for EFL students (Wichadee, 2006). The study employed case study approach and the data were collected through observation, interview, written documents, and dependent t-test to gain relevant data. The research findings of this study discover six benefits of STAD technique, as follows: (1) engaging students in reading activity; (2) increasing students' motivation to practice actively in the learning process; (3) helping students to solve their problems in comprehending the texts; (4) developing students' social skill; (5) creating enjoyable learning atmosphere; and (6) enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. In addition, the students' responses toward the implementation of STAD technique in teaching reading were positive. Thus, it is recommended that STAD technique be implemented in teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: *Cooperative Learning, reading comprehension, STAD technique.*

Introduction

According to school based curriculum (KTSP) (2006), reading is an essential basic skill which needs to be learnt by junior high school students in Indonesia. However, students seem to often meet difficulties in comprehending the text given. It is in line with Fitrawati (2009) who states that many learners face difficulty in understanding textbooks in English. It indicates that their reading comprehension needs to be improved. Dealing with that statement, it can be said that it is significant to make junior high school students accustomed to reading English texts. In view of this, it is necessary for the teacher to choose the appropriate method(s) that can be used for teaching English at secondary school in order to improve students' reading ability.

In accordance with that, one of the suggested methods proposed by Wichadee (2006) in providing reading activities is cooperative learning. In English as second language, Wichadee (2006) reports the success of cooperative learning (CL) method. From his study, Wichadee (2006) shows that cooperative learning method can increase students' reading comprehension skill. Besides, he asserts that CL can be an effective way to deal with the problems faced by English teachers in Thailand.

Based on the issue above, this study attempted to describe the use of cooperative learning in junior high school learners' reading activity and the learners' responses toward it. The type of cooperative learning strategy to be employed in this study is Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD) method. The scope of this study exposed the use of cooperative learning in reading activities in English for junior high school learners.

Literature Review

Cooperative learning is a teaching method that facilitates pupils to work together in team to assist each other in experiencing learning activities. There are some techniques which have been developed based on these methods. One of the techniques in this teaching model is Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD).

In this technique, Wichadee (2006) states that students are assigned to four or five members learning teams that are mixed in performance level, gender, and ethnicity. In addition, according to Slavin (1995), STAD has five major components, which include: (1) class presentations, (2) teams, (3) quizzes, (4) individual improvement scores, and (5) team recognition. In planning a lesson, teacher designs lesson plan by using STAD technique. The lesson plan refers to standard competence and basic competence of KTSP curriculum for junior high school. Besides, teacher uses some media which suitable for the materials, such as recount texts, pictures, and worksheet.

In the context of teaching English, McGroarty (1989, cited in Olsen and Kagan, 1992) presents six primary benefits of CL for learners acquiring English, as follows:

1. possibility for developing the first language in ways that support cognitive development and increased second language skills;
2. opportunities to integrate language with content-based instruction;
3. opportunities to include a variety of curricular materials to stimulate language as well as concept learning; and
4. opportunities for students to perform as resources for each other, thus assuming a more active role in their learning.

Moreover, Eric (2000) says that CL encourages pupils to perform better than in individualistic competitive environments. Further, he states some advantages for students, as follows:

1. CL helps the pupils in improving better performance.
2. CL helps high and low-achieving learners achieve their academic goals more effectively.
3. CL has positive effects on self-esteem, social skills, attitude and confidence of students who work in a cooperative learning environment.
4. CL Improves peer skills without feel peer pressure.

In addition to social advantages, CL results in greater academic achievement when compared with formal teaching-learning activities (Slavin, 1995; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994).

Furthermore, Slavin (1995) implies three benefits in implementing cooperative learning: STAD technique in the class, as follows:

1. motivate students to learn,
2. gain confidence while learning as a result of peer support,
3. improve student achievement.

In line with the statements proposed by some experts above, Slavin (1995) believes that the benefits of cooperative learning can have important effects on the learning of all students.

Methodology

This research employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods that used case study approach. The decision to use this method was based on the intention to get an in-depth understanding and detailed information about particular participants by investigating the process that occurred in this kind of method in teaching-learning process. As stated by Cohen (2005) that case study may be used to examine a particular case in order to gain insight into the case.

This research was conducted in a class of eight grade students at one public school in Bandung. Data collection techniques used were observation, interview, and written documents (such as, lesson plans, students' improvement points and team recognition points). As stated by Gall and Borg (2003), multiple instruments of data collection, such as observations, documents analysis and questionnaire can be used in qualitative method. Moreover, quantitative data were collected through dependent t-test. The intention to gain the data from the four instruments was aimed to enhance the validity of the case study findings (Gall and Borg, 2003).

Data Presentation and Discussion

- **The Benefits of Implementing STAD Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension of Recount Text**

Based on the data gained from the observation, interview, written document, and dependent t-test, there were six benefits of implementing STAD technique in teaching reading comprehension, namely engaging students in reading activity, increasing students' motivation to practice actively in the activity, helping students to solve their problems in comprehending the texts, developing students' social skill, enhancing students' reading comprehension skills, and creating enjoyable learning atmosphere. Those benefits were similar to the statement proposed by Slavin (1995) and others.

In doing the whole reading activity, the students were willing to follow the teacher instructions. Thus, it can be said that STAD technique can engage pupils in reading activity since they participate confidently in independent action. It is in line with Majoka, Daad and Mahmood (2010) that STAD technique provides

students' opportunity for achieving higher level of engagement in learning activity.

In group work stage, the students were asked to work in group to guess what the story is about according to the key words and the pictures provided. From the observation, it seems apparent that the students in each group participate actively. All of team members could not wait to get their turn. Most of the students spoke at least one time in each meeting. They were also eager to share their opinions and motivate their teammates to participate in the activity to get extra points.

The third benefit found in this research was the use of STAD help the students to solve their problems in comprehending the texts. It was found that most of the students admitted that the use of STAD technique help them to comprehend the text through discussion session. This support the previous research by Wichadee (2006) which shows that cooperative learning can be an effective technique in teaching reading skills.

Besides, the data also reveals that that students support and respect for each others' contribution and explanation in teamwork session. In other words, it can be said that students have more opportunities to learn more effectively from group members. This finding is also in accordance with the statement from Eric (2000) that cooperative learning has positive effect on students' social skill.

Moreover, the data from observation and interview show that the students showed great attention since they were willing to followed teacher's instructions. The students' participation on each meeting was getting better. It affirms Stenlev's (2003: 42) statement that "it is fun to be a student in a cooperative classroom."

In addition, the researcher employed dependent t-test to investigate whether the difference of pretest and posttest means are significant. The result of dependent t-test is presented in the following table.

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Pretest	70.94	36	3.051	.509
Posttest	84.07	36	10.606	1.768

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Pretest - Posttest	-13.125	10.538	1.756	-16.691	-9.559	-7.473	35	.000

The table above reveals that the mean value of base score and the quiz is different. Since the t_{obt} is less than t_{crit} value at 0.05 level of significance (two tailed), there is significant difference between the students' base score and their last quiz. It indicates that the use of STAD technique help students to enhance their reading comprehension skills. The result supports previous research conducted by Osborne (2003) and Majoka, Daad, & Mahmood (2010) that cooperative learning is one of teaching strategies which improves the academic achievement of ESL students.

- **Students' Responses toward the Implementation of STAD Technique in Teaching Reading Comprehension**

Based on the analyzed data, during the lessons, the students were actively engaged in the learning activities. The researcher also found that students' attitudes became more active, confident to share their ideas, and learnt how to interact with their peers cooperatively. These support the previous research conducted by McGroarty (1989, cited in Olsen and Kagan, 1992).

Conclusions

To conclude, it was found that this technique is effective for the second grade students of junior high school in learning reading comprehension. Thus, it can be said that STAD technique is feasible to teaching reading comprehension skills at secondary students. In addition, this research also demonstrated students' positive responses related to the use of STAD technique in learning process.

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