

THE INFLUENCE OF TEAM-BASED LEARNING ON THE STUDENTS' LEARNING

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Abstract: This is a report on an action research project conducted in *Classroom Action Research* (CAR) class. Being assigned as the lecturer of CAR course for four years; I see that presentation technique that have been applied years before seems not really effective in helping the students to learn better. The proposal as the project of the course that the previous year students made has not been maximal yet. Few students even still write that the design of the research is other design instead of action research. Thus, I consider utilizing Team-based Learning (TBL) instead of presentation. Team-based Learning is a small group instructional strategy highlights both conceptual and procedural knowledge through team-learning. The design of the present research is action research which is aimed at investigating: 1) the influences of TBL on the students' learning, and 2) the students' responses on the implementation of TBL. The participants of the research are 44 students of CAR A class consists of 9 males and 35 females. The data were obtained from the observation, teacher's journal, and classroom discussion. The result shows that The implementation of Team-based Learning in *Classroom Action Research* class seems to positively influence the students' learning. Particularly, they become well prepared and active in the team discussion when they make a consensus for the team-test. In addition, the students also learn and perform better in the application phase. The students' response are positive, they are excited to have a new experience in learning concept of action research through TBL. They really enjoy the small group discussion in which they can share and get some suggestions from the team. They also have a better understanding on the course content by making a proposal draft in the application phase.

Keywords: *action research, Team-based Learning (TBL)*

Introduction

Third year students of English Department of UMK has to take a subject namely *Classroom Action Research*. They learn the theory and practice making the proposal as the project in the end of the course. From the discussion done in the beginning of the course, it reveals that the students are not really interested in doing any more presentation since they are used to have presentation for all subjects. Moreover, mostly they read the slides and do not really understand what they are presenting. Surely, it makes the rest of the class passive. In addition, the proposal as the project of the course that the students made in previous year had not been maximal yet. Few students even still write that the design of the research is other design instead of action research. Therefore, learning activities which is employed for this course are discussion, group work, individual work, study case, etc. During a half first semester, they learn through those strategies.

The need for helping the students with a new technique triggers me to consult to some literature. The idea of Team-based Learning seems interesting and suitable for teaching content with a big number of students. The students agree to have it in the classroom. The consideration is that most of the students' activities have been in groups. It is similar to Team-based Learning which is characterized with team. The difference is that team requires the same members while group does not. The similarity is on the teamwork in which students are assigned to work together with their friends. There are 3 phases in implementing Team-based Learning, they are: preparation (pre-class), readiness assurance (in-class), and application of course concepts (Basset: 2007). It is stated that it is suitable to teach content and it allows students to practice better.

Expecting to help the students to learn and perform better in this course while giving a real example of conducting action research and being reflective teacher, Team-based Learning is implemented in *Classroom Action Research* class.

Research Questions

This research is aimed to investigate the following:

- 1) What are the influences of TBL on the students' learning?
- 2) What are the students' responses on the implementation of TBL?

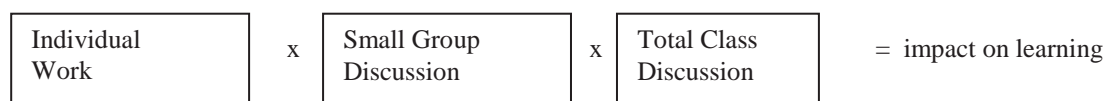
Team-Based Learning

Team-based Learning (TBL) was developed in the 1970's by Dr. Larry K. Michaelsen, a Professor of Management at the University of Oklahoma, who wanted to change the passive learning in his lectures into active learning (Basset, 2007:2). Team-based Learning is small group instructional strategy highlights both conceptual and procedural knowledge through team-learning. There are four key elements that characterizes

Team-based Learning: 1) Groups must be properly formed and managed (group); 2) Students must be accountable for the quality of their individual and group work (accountability); 3) Students must receive frequent and timely feedback (feedback); and 4) Group assignments must promote both learning and team development (assignment design) (Michaelsen, 2008: 8).

TBL provides students more opportunities to work in team in a class with a big number of students. Students are provided with some assignments that have to be completed either individually or in team before learning the concept. In clear, the phases of Team-based Learning are as shown by the following table. (Basset, 2007: 3)

Phase 1 Preparation (Pre-class)	Phase 2 Readiness Assurance (In-class)	Phase 3 Application of Course Concepts
Individual Study • Reading assignments • Lectures • Videos	• Individual Test (IRAT) • Group Test (GRAT) • Team Appeals • Instructor Feedback	Small Group Applications • Case history or clinical scenario • Visuals, Slides



The table shows that the impact on learning will be achieved after students learn through the phases: individual work, small group discussion, and total class discussion.

1. In phase 1, the students are assigned to read books, journals, articles, or other material sources individually before class.
2. In phase 2, the students do multiple choice individual test consist of 5- 10 items (*IRaT*) to assess whether students have a sound understanding of the concepts from the reading. Then, the same test is done in team (*TRaT*) which is continued by intermediate feedback assessment technique (IFAT). *TRaT* and IFAT are powerful tools promoting both concept of understanding and cohesiveness in learning teams. When each member has different opinion on the answer; they have to come to a consensus. In this phase, discussion takes place, team has to explain one to another why the answer is A or B, C, or D. It allows those who know better teach their friends in team and those who have not understood yet will get benefits as well. Next is *team appeals*, at this point students are allowed to “open book” to review what they have read in reading assignment. Students may appeal confusion or questions related to the tests they do by referring back to the books. Then in step *instructor feedback*, the teacher gives feedback and clear up to any confusion that students may have about any of the concepts presented in reading.
3. The last phase is application of course concept. In this phase the team applies the concept in which the activity is usually designed to be real life demand. Case study might be one of examples.

In brief, TBL highlights on the course concept and its application by maximizing teams through some steps: reading, *IRaT*, *TRaT*, team appeals, instructor feedback, and application.

Dealing with TBL, the previous research was conducted by Basset et al (2007), *Using Team-Based Learning to Override the Cram and Dump Mentality in Medical Education*. It was designed for 2 years TBL. The result shows that: 1) students successfully keep up with course material instead of cramming just prior to exams and 2) students peer teach and problem-solve, allowing students to gain skills and knowledge by interacting with their classmates.

Research Method

The Participants

This present research is individual action research which covers four steps including planning, action, observation, and reflection. Due to the time limitation, this research is considered as one cycle action research. The participants are *Classroom Action Research* class A, consists of 44 students, 35 females and 9 males. I have been teaching this course for five years. Trying to be a reflective teacher as stated by Burns (2010: 2) that in action research we have to see a problematic situation to figure out what is happening and what should ideally happen. Knowing that the students did not enjoy presentation any more, I designed the class activities by maximizing group works. They studied in groups for more than a half of the semester when later after consulting

to some literature, I had an idea to shift from group work to team work that is Team-based Learning. For the last three meetings this technique was employed for providing students with a new learning experience on working in teams. The meeting was once in a week which lasted for 200 minutes with a ten minute break.

The Methods of Data Collection

The instruments used were observation notes, teacher's journal, and classroom discussion. Observation and teacher's journal are aimed at knowing the influence of Team-based Learning on the students' learning. In addition, the classroom discussion is aimed at knowing the students' responses on the implementation of Team-based Learning. Those three instruments are needed to do triangulation for the validity of the data obtained.

Findings and Discussion

Almost in the end of the semester I told the students that they would learn in team not in a group, they were so curious. They did not get the idea on the difference of group and team since they had learnt through groups for more than the half semester. Team-based Learning was firstly introduced on June 10, 2014. The students looked impatient to learn through TBL. Because of time limitation, TBL was implemented in three meetings of which each meeting lasted for around 3 hours.

Firstly, I introduced TBL, the steps of learning using TBL, and what the students should do. Since it was not the first meeting of the course, the students had been ready with the material and had read the resource books. There were four books used in this course but each student was obliged to read at least one book. To assure that all students were well prepared after reading the book (preparation phase), the students were assigned to do IRaT (Individual Readiness Test), a 16 multiple choice test items. Based on the observation, the students looked serious and did the test themselves. I told them that the test score would not be taken as the only one score for the course.

Then the students worked in teams (TRaT), doing the same test. They spent quite long time completing the test since they had to come to a consensus for each item of the test. Unfortunately, the test items I made were too many. It should have been around 5 to 10 items. The small group discussion was alive and they were enthusiastic to find the right answer in team. Based on the observation, one boy was inactive in team 1 and team 5. In team 2, one boy was busy finding the answer from the book, in team 3 the discussion is good. Yet, there was one girl is inactive. In team 4 and team 6, the discussion was nice, two students were inactive. They were mostly silent and just nod their heads showing agreement to the team. The next is *appeals*, a time when the students are allowed to open and review the material they have read. There are many students asked and clarified on the answer of the test. Most of them were confused on the multiple choices of which the sentences were quite different from statements on the book. Then the meeting was ended by *instructor feedback*. I re-explained things that have not been clear for the students. The class was over and there was no more time for doing application phase.

In the second meeting, July 3th, the students were not assigned to read any more reading texts and did *individual and team test*. In this meeting, the phase was directly *application phase*. In this phase, the team worked out on making proposal draft .including making the introduction, deciding the statement of the problems, deciding the research design, making the instruments, etc. The case was taken from article from internet about Indonesian teaching learning that still emphasizes on rote learning which focuses on memorization. The students were so enthusiastic discussing an alternative technique to teach English. They were happy to have a new topic and that was such a challenge for them. In this small group discussion, in team 1, there was one boy inactive. In team 2, one boy was trying to find the answer himself by reading a book, team 3 and 4 had a good cooperation, in team 5, there were 2 boys quite silent, and in team 6, 1 girl did not really involve in team. In the last first hour, 6 students left class for teaching practice, the assignment of another course. In the last second hour, 4 students asked permission to do the same assignment. That condition did not influence the teams in making the proposal draft. In *total class discussion*, each team presented the result of the discussion then criticized by the class. From the team performance, all of the teams had got the idea of making action research proposal. Team two even presented the proposal by practicing the technique being proposed. The class was active and lively. There were always some students responded to the other teams' presentation.

In the third meeting, the phase was also directly application phase. The students worked in team preparing their individual proposal draft based on their interest. After some minutes, each member of the team presented their individual proposal draft to the team. In this phase, I assigned the students to do self assessment and team assessment. Some students were absent in this meeting. There were 2 students who had not been ready yet with the proposal. One of them, after some minutes of discussion asked permission to leave the class earlier for she was a bit sick. Unfortunately, she was the one who I believed to be a good student in that team. The rest students were active. All of students presented their proposal draft in around 5 to 10 minutes to the teams. The team members responded by asking question and giving suggestion. They shared freely and were happy to make a consensus on what score they had to give.

After the implementation of TBL was completed, there is an interesting thing found based on the observation, the boy who is inactive in team 1 and the boy who keeps reading the book himself in team 2 are the only one boy in the teams. They truly do the same action in the three meetings. Team 3 and 4 always has a good discussion and cooperation. Coincidentally, all of them are girls. Team 5, the students are quite silent and 1 boy tends to be inactive. Team 6 is a good team but there is 1 girl looks inactive. It can be said that almost all of the students are active and actively involved in the teams. Only some students in each group are not really engaged in the discussion.

From the journal, I find that the students are enthusiastic to learn with TBL for it is a new learning experience for them. They are active in teams and had such a sense of being a team. Yet, the phases in TBL do not really go as what it should have done. The test items I provide are too many that make the students spend quite long time to complete it. The IFAT sheets are not provided for it is difficult to make it. Also, the time distribution for each phase is not really good. Those are understandable since it is firstly implemented and it is nearly in the end of semester. I have limited time of preparation teaching using TBL.

Based on the classroom discussion in the last meeting, they responded that they could learn better especially to make action research proposal. They can share to the teams and get some suggestions. The boy who was quite inactive admitted that he was shy and not confidence in expressing ideas to the team. On the other hand, the other team claimed that the team encouraged the members to be active and cooperative.

After seeing the result of the observation, the journal, and the classroom discussion, it can be concluded that TBL influence the students' learning positively. They are well prepared in class since they have read the material initially. They seem to be confidence in doing the individual test. They are active in making a consensus on the answer for the team-test. The team provides them with interaction and peer teaching in which they can discuss and share opinions freely. They have a better understanding on the content of the course in team. It can be seen from the work in the application phase that is proposal draft. Either individual or team proposal drafts are good and have been met with the concept. Yet, the teaching technique or the media proposed have not been various yet.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Conclusions

From the findings and discussions, some conclusions could be withdrawn as follows:

1. The implementation of Team-based Learning in *Classroom Action Research* class seems to positively influence the students' learning. Particularly, they become well prepared and active in the team discussion when they make a consensus for the team-test. In addition, the students also learn and perform better in the application phase.
2. The students' response are positive, they are excited to have a new experience in learning concept of action research through TBL. They really enjoy the small group discussion in which they can share and get some suggestions from the team. They also have a better understanding on the content by making a proposal draft in the application phase.

Suggestions

After completing this research, suggestions might be useful for teachers who are teaching content and are interested in applying TBL in their classes. Teachers are suggested to utilize TBL for the whole semester. Being ready and well-prepared in the beginning of the course will allow the students to get used to working in teams so that the learning objectives of the course are achieved.

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